

UPPER POTOMAC PLANNING DISTRICT

Planning District Overview and Character

The Upper Potomac Planning District is located in northwestern Fairfax County and is one of the largest Planning Districts in Fairfax County encompassing 42,844 acres. The District is bounded on the north by the Potomac River; on the east by Difficult Run; on the south by Route 50; and on the west by Loudoun County and the Washington Dulles International Airport.



The Upper Potomac Planning District provides unique recreational facilities and has a rich array of natural and cultural resources. Its character is one of the most diverse of all the planning districts in the County. The semi-rural Great Falls area is located along the Potomac River. In contrast, the District also has the urban Reston-Herndon area, as well as the suburban neighborhoods along West Ox Road and Route 50. Upper Potomac is located in three Supervisory Districts: Dranesville, Hunter Mill, and Sully; and in six watersheds: Cub Run, Difficult Run, Horsepen Creek, Nichol Run, Pond Branch, and Sugarland Run. The District is located in Park Authority Maintenance Areas Five and Six. There are three growth centers the District: the Reston-Herndon Suburban Center, the Dulles Suburban Center, and the Fairfax Center Area. These suburban centers are the focal points for existing and planned high intensity residential-commercial mixed use. The Reston planned community and the Town of Herndon are located within the Upper Potomac Planning District.

The streams in the Upper Potomac District range in structure and size across the planning area. Cub Run streams have rocky bottoms, Difficult Run is one of the largest streams in the County (both in length and flow), and several of the streams in Nichol Run and Pond Branch are small and drain directly into the Potomac River.

Due to growth in the suburban centers, Upper Potomac has the largest population and non-residential gross floor area of all the planning districts. Upper Potomac is expected to continue its strong growth pattern over the next ten years mainly within the suburban centers and the Town of Herndon. Table 1 identifies the major demographic characteristics of the District.

Table 1: Demographic Indicators for Upper Potomac

Upper Potomac Demographic Data			
	Upper Potomac	Fairfax County	District Rank
Total Population			
1980 Population	70,795	596,901	3 of 14
2005 Population	183,245	1,041,242	1 of 14
2004 Population Density	4.3 per acre	4.5 per acre	10 of 14
Median Market Housing Value	\$378,811	\$349,000	3 of 14
Housing Units 2005	66,256	384,683	1 of 14
Nonresidential Structure Gross Floor Area 2004	48,074,880	229,527,736	1 of 14
2000 Households (HH)	56,903	348,714	1 of 14
w/o Children	59%	63%	11 of 14
w Children under 18	41%	37%	3 of 14
Total Population in 2000	162,010	969,749	1 of 14
White	73.8%	69.9%	4 of 14
Black	6.8%	8.6%	8 of 14
Asian & Pacific Islander	11.7%	13.1%	11 of 14
Other or Two or More	7.7%	8.5%	7 of 14
Hispanic (can be of any race)	9.8%	11.0%	6 of 14

Park System Overview

Approximately 16 percent of the land in the District is public and private parkland, including golf courses. The Fairfax County Park Authority owns and maintains about 40 percent of the public parkland in the District. The majority of park acreage in Upper Potomac is owned and maintained by the National Park Service, the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority, the Town of Herndon, and private landowners, such as the Nature Conservancy, the Reston Association, and various country clubs. Table 2 identifies the parks in the planning district by community planning sector and classification giving the acreage of each park and the date of master plan approval, if applicable. There are a total of seventy-two parks and golf courses in Upper Potomac. Parks in the District are shown on Map 1.

Map 1: Park and Recreation Lands in the Upper Potomac Planning District

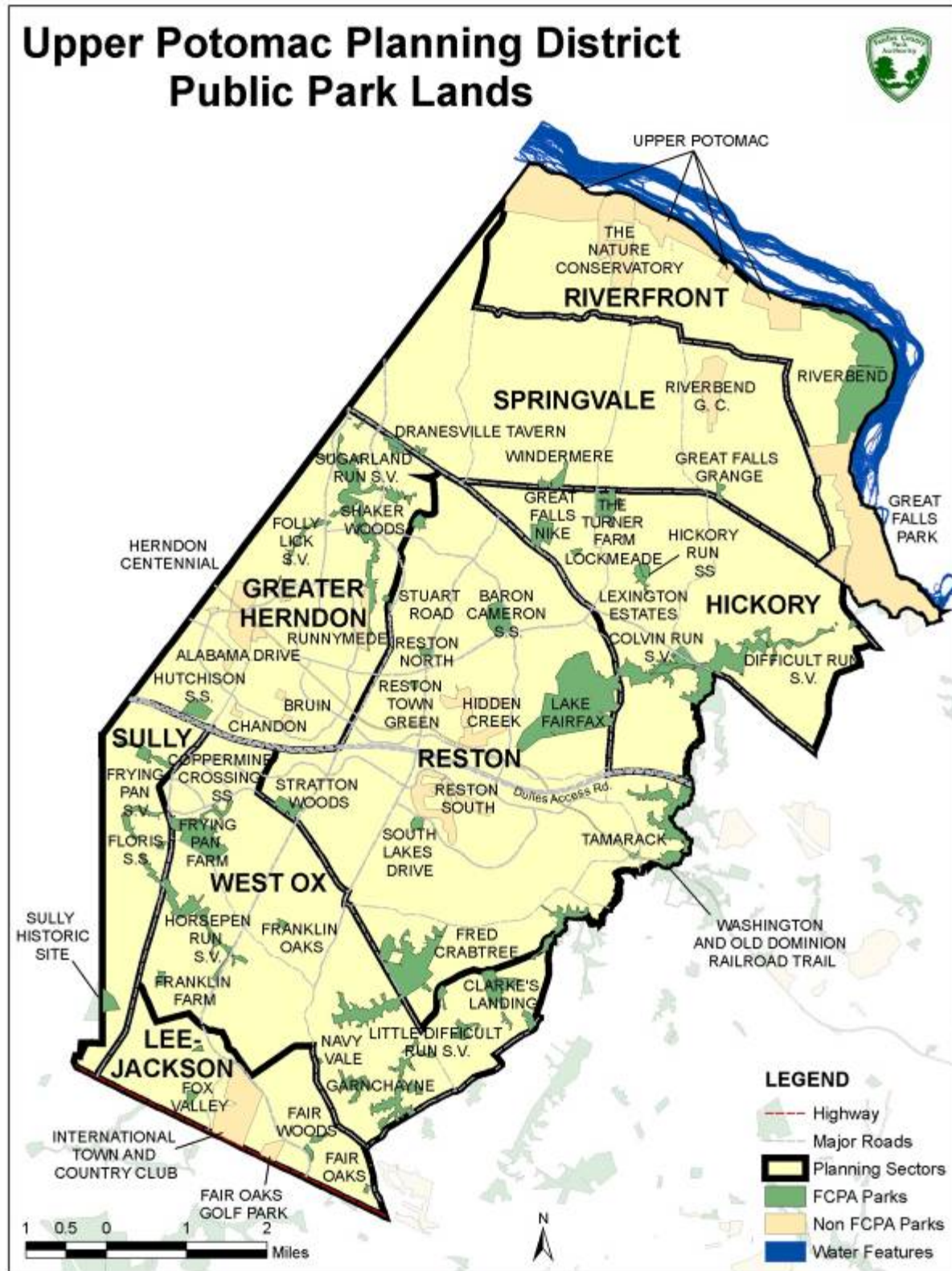


Table 2: Parks by Planning Sector in the Upper Potomac District

SECTOR	Park Name	Park Class	Acres	Current Master Plan Date
UP1 RIVERFRONT	GREAT FALLS PARK	Federal	697.00	
	RIVERBEND	Countywide	406.00	1975
	THE NATURE CONSERVANCY	Private	234.69	
	UPPER POTOMAC	Regional	653.66	
UP2 SPRINGVALE	COLVIN RUN MILL	Cultural Resource	38.17	1972
	GREAT FALLS GRANGE	Community	8.91	1985
	HOLLY KNOLL	Neighborhood	5.85	
	RIVER BEND GOLF & CC	Private	133.85	
	WINDERMERE	Community	24.08	
UP3 HICKORY	ALABAMA DRIVE	Community	11.11	1990
	COLVIN RUN STREAM VALLEY	Stream Valley	74.50	
	DIFFICULT RUN STREAM VALLEY	Stream Valley	206.47	
	GREAT FALLS NIKE	District	45.70	1991
	HICKORY RUN SCHOOL SITE	Community	10.64	
	LEXINGTON ESTATES	Neighborhood	15.11	
	LOCKMEADE	Community	5.15	
	THE TURNER FARM	Community	52.64	2000
UP4 GREATER HERNDON	BARON CAMERON SCHOOL SITE	District	59.57	2001
	BREADY	Town of Herndon	14.10	
	BRUIN **	Town of Herndon	8.12	
	CHANDON **	Town of Herndon	8.03	
	CUTTERMILL	Town of Herndon	5.10	
	DRANESVILLE TAVERN	Cultural Resource	14.12	1991
	FOLLY LICK STREAM VALLEY	Stream Valley	25.61	
	GRAND HAMPTONS	Neighborhood	5.01	
	HALEY M. SMITH	Town of Herndon	9.49	
	HERNDON CENTENNIAL GC	Town of Herndon	137.01	
	HUTCHISON SCHOOL SITE	Community	28.40	1991
	RUNNYMEDE	Town of Herndon	55.88	
	STANTON **	Community	9.62	1976

	STUART ROAD	Community	3.50	1986
	SUGARLAND RUN STREAM VALLEY	Stream Valley	213.72	
	TRAILSIDE	Town of Herndon	5.78	
	W & OD RAILROAD TRAIL	Regional	28.67	
UP5 RESTON	COPPERMINE CROSSING SCHOOL SITE	Community	14.57	
	DIFFICULT RUN STREAM VALLEY	Stream Valley	119.44	
	FRED CRABTREE (FKA FOX MILL DISTRICT)	District	208.36	1995
	HIDDEN CREEK GC	Private	157.55	
	LAKE FAIRFAX	Countywide	476.64	2001
	LITTLE DIFFICULT RUN STREAM VALLEY	Stream Valley	42.95	
	RESTON ASSOCIATION HOLDINGS	Private	1,350.00	
	RESTON NATIONAL GC	Private	170.18	
	RESTON NORTH	Community	9.54	
	RESTON TOWN GREEN	Neighborhood	5.00	
	SHAKER WOODS	Community	13.67	
	SOUTH LAKES DRIVE	Community	13.94	1983
	STRATTON WOODS	Community	29.98	1999
	STUART ROAD	Community	2.96	1986
	TAMARACK	Community	20.63	1976
	W & OD RAILROAD TRAIL	Regional	51.61	
UP6 SULLY	CLARK'S LANDING	Community	13.32	
	DIFFICULT RUN STREAM VALLEY	Stream Valley	29.27	
	DULLES CORNER	Community	7.04	
	FLORIS SCHOOL SITE	Community	5.22	1986
	FRYING PAN STREAM VALLEY	Stream Valley	16.81	
	HORSEPEN RUN STREAM VALLEY	Stream Valley	29.61	
	MERRYBROOK RUN STREAM VALLEY	Stream Valley	16.70	
	SULLY HISTORIC *	Cultural Resource	24.65	2005
UP7 WEST OX	FAIR OAKS	Neighborhood	3.62	
	FAIR WOODS	Neighborhood	14.15	
	FRANKLIN FARM	Community	7.90	1984
	FRANKLIN OAKS	Neighborhood	5.96	
	FRYING PAN FARM	Countywide	135.60	2002
	FRYING PAN STREAM VALLEY	Stream Valley	11.94	
	GARNCHAYNE	Neighborhood	21.25	
	HORSEPEN RUN STREAM VALLEY	Stream Valley	97.64	

	LITTLE DIFFICULT RUN STREAM VALLEY	Stream Valley	303.17	
	NAVY VALE	Neighborhood	1.17	
UPS LEE-JACKSON	FOX VALLEY	Community	10.89	
	FRANKLIN GLEN	Community	3.76	1984
	INTERNATIONAL TOWN & COUNTRY GC	Private	226.35	
TOTAL			6,928.30	

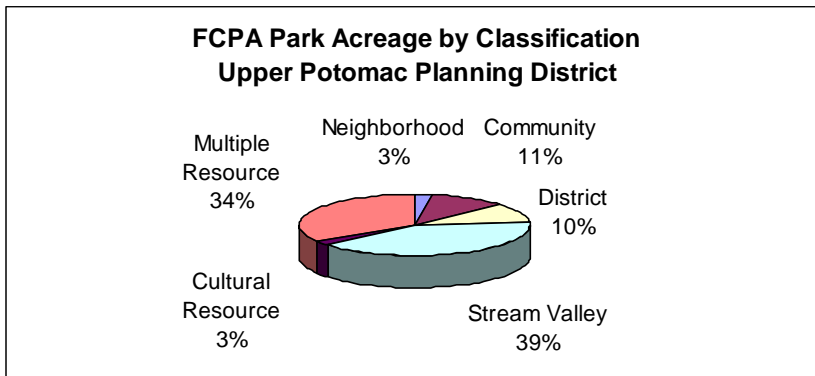
* Acreage in Upper Potomac District

** Maintained by FCPA

The character of the park system varies within community planning sectors countywide. For example, almost 40 percent of the land in the Riverfront (UP1) Community Planning Sector is public parkland. There are numerous parks that serve populations outside the District and even outside the County, such as Frying Pan Park and Riverbend Park, which are described below.

Neighborhoods on the periphery of the District are also served by parks located in adjacent planning districts.

The park system is comprehensive in Upper Potomac, providing numerous and various types of recreation facilities as well as having substantial natural and cultural resources. The Park Authority's dual mission is reflected by the wide distribution of types of County parks, as shown in the chart below. The Park Authority provides proportionally less neighborhood and local parks compared to other planning districts. However, neighborhood and local parks are provided by the Reston Association and the Town of Herndon, which have the greatest proportion of population in the District.



The range of natural and cultural resources in the District accounts for the larger proportion of resource-based parks, such as Riverbend Park, and multiple stream valley and cultural resource parks. The western part of the County was developed at a

time when district and multiple resource parks, such as Lake Fairfax, Fred Crabtree District Park and Great Falls Nike could be provided. The Park Authority provides a range of recreation facilities at parks in all classifications. Map 2 shows the distribution of parks by classification. Table 3 lists the types and number of facilities provided by the Park Authority in the Upper Potomac Planning District.

Map 2: Parkland Classification in the Upper Potomac Planning District

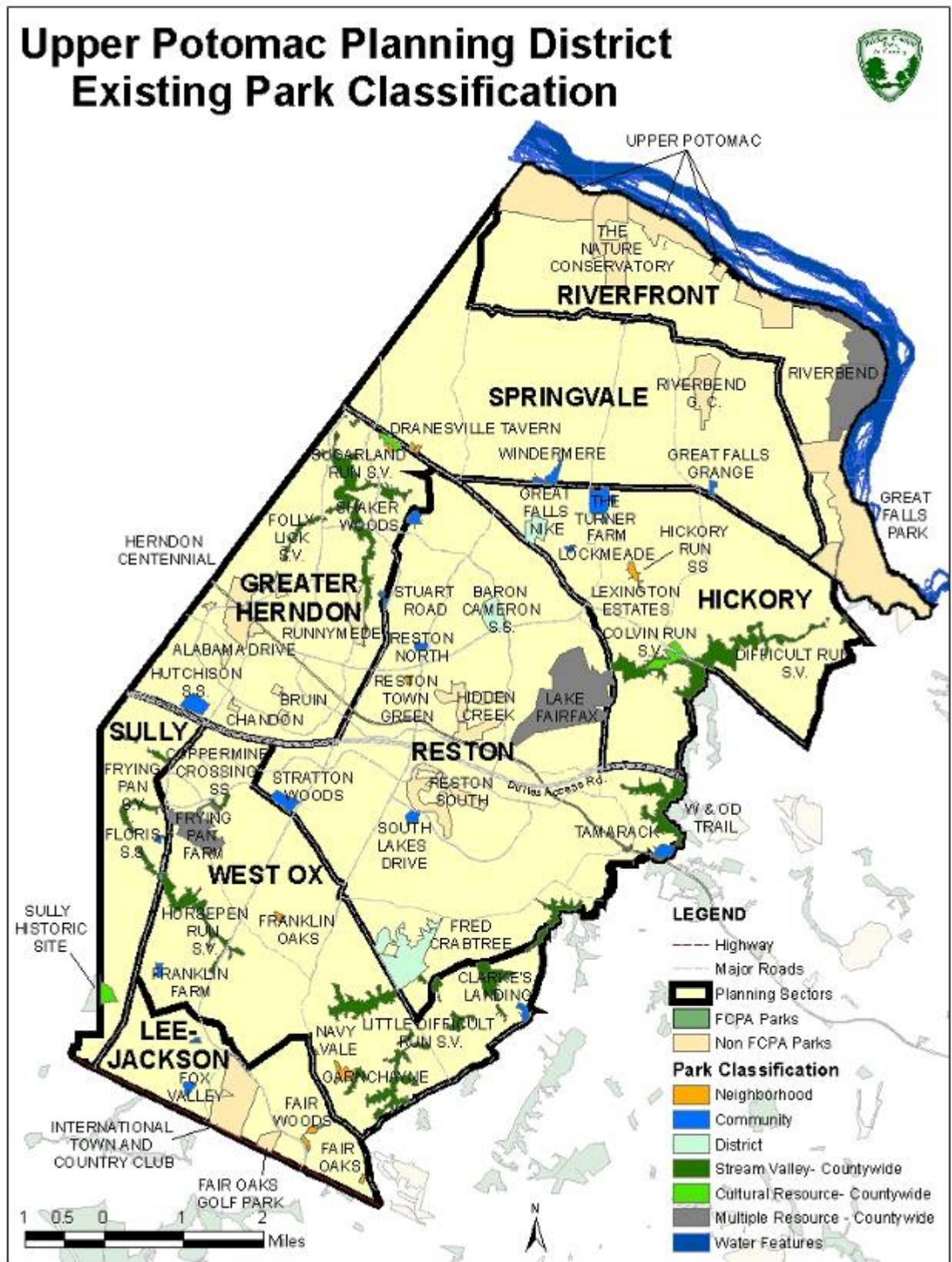


Table 3: Park Facilities provided by Park Authority in Upper Potomac Planning District

PARK NAME	Restrooms	GOLF	Mini Golf	TRAILS	PICNIC SHELTERS	Picnic Tables	PLAYGROUNDS	RECTANGLE FIELDS	DIAMOND FIELDS	Sand Volleyball Courts	TENNIS	MULTI-USE COURTS	RECenter	Garden Plots	HISTORIC FEATURE	WATER ACTIVITIES	Nature Center	Dog Park	SPECIALTY FEATURES
ALABAMA DRIVE				●		●	●	●	●		P	●							
BARON CAMERON SCHOOL SITE						●	●	●	●					●				●	
BRUIN	P				●	●	●	●	●		●	●						●	P
CHANDON						●	●	●	●										
CLARKE'S LANDING						●	●												
COLVIN RUN MILL	●					●										●			
COLVIN RUN STREAM VALLEY				●												●			
COPPERMINE CROSSING SS																			
DIFFICULT RUN STREAM VALLEY				●												●			
DRANESVILLE TAVERN	●			P												●			
DULLES CORNER									●										
FAIR OAKS				●															
FAIR WOODS																			
FLORIS SCHOOL SITE						●	P					●			●				
FOLLY LICK STREAM VALLEY				●															
FOX VALLEY				●															
FRANKLIN FARM	P			●	P			●	●										
FRANKLIN GLEN				●				●											
FRANKLIN OAKS				●			●												
FRED CRABTREE	P			●		P	P	●	●		P	P			●		P	P	P
FRYING PAN FARM	●			●	●	●	●								●		P		●
FRYING PAN STREAM VALLEY				●			●												
GARNCHAYNE																			
GRAND HAMPTONS								●											
GREAT FALLS GRANGE	●			●	●	●	●	●	●						●				
GREAT FALLS NIKE				●	P	●	P	●	●	P	●	●			●				
HICKORY RUN SS																			
HOLLY KNOLL				●															
HORSEPEN RUN STREAM VALLEY				●			●					●							
HUTCHISON SCHOOL SITE				●			P	●	P			P							
LAKE FAIRFAX	●		P	●	●	●	●	●	●						●	●		P	●
LEXINGTON ESTATES																			
LITTLE DIFFICULT RUN STREAM VALLEY				●															
LOCKMEADE								●											
MERRYBROOK RUN SV																			
NAVY VALE											●								
RESTON NORTH				●			●	●	●										
RESTON TOWN GREEN																			
RIVERBEND	●			●	●	●	P								●	●	●		P
SHAKER WOODS																			
SOUTH LAKES DRIVE				●		●	●	●	●			●							
STANTON				●	●	●	●												
STRATTON WOODS				●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●							
STUART ROAD				●	●	●	●				●	●							
SUGARLAND RUN STREAM VALLEY				●		●	●					●							
SULLY HISTORIC SITE	●			●	P	●	P								●				P
TAMARACK				●		P	P												
THE TURNER FARM				●		●	●								●				P
WINDERMERE				●															

Facilities Exist ●
Facilities Planned P

Upper Potomac is served by Park Authority RECenters located outside of the district. The southern portion of the District is in the Cub Run RECenter

service area. The south-eastern portion of the District is in the Oak Marr RECenter service area. The north-eastern portion of the District is in the Spring Hill RECenter service area. The Herndon Community Center serves similar recreational needs for Herndon residents and the Reston Association offers an abundance of recreational amenities for residents of Reston, who pay a fee for residence in Reston.

Summary of Major Parks and Facilities

Park Authority Parks and Facilities

The major parks in Upper Potomac provide natural and cultural resources, such as the Potomac River or significant historic structures. Sully Historic Site and Colvin Run Mill, Fairfax County Park Authority sites, hold events for the public related to history throughout the year. Colvin Run Mill helps visitors understand early industry and building material manufacturing in the 18th and 19th centuries. Sully Historic Site, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, provides insight into the early nineteenth century life of Richard Bland Lee, Northern Virginia's first Representative to Congress, and his family, tenant farmers and slaves. Dranesville Tavern and Great Falls Grange are major historic site parks in this district and their historic properties are available for special event rentals.

Frying Pan Farm Park is a working model farm typical of Fairfax County farms of the early twentieth century. The park preserves and interprets a farm that was worked from the 1920's through the 1950's. The equestrian facilities, special events, and farm animals (and their baby birthing) are major attractions at the park, which is unique in the Fairfax County park system. Additional stream valley acreage protects Horsepen Run stream, including forest, wet meadow and unique geologic features.

Riverbend Park is the Park Authority's Potomac River front park. Located within the Potomac Gorge, the park provides 2.5 miles of shoreline for hiking, kayaking, canoeing and fishing along the Potomac River. A visitor center helps to interpret the many natural and cultural resources at the park. Riverbend has unique flora and fauna, some of which are state and globally rare species. A 14-acre meadow, large stands of Virginia bluebells, and unusual migratory bird sightings throughout the year, are among the unique natural resources of the park. Boats are available for rent, along with fishing poles and supplies.

The Turner Farm provides both educational and recreation facilities. The Observatory is located in a semi-rural part of the County which allows people to take advantage of the darker skies and use celestial telescopes for star gazing. Educational programs are provided all year. A substantial equestrian facility is planned for this park in the future. A large equestrian facility, including dressage, cross-country course and riding rings (opening 2008) is co-located at this site. In addition, the park contains the headwaters of Captain

Hickory Run; unique low impact development stream crossings are demonstrated here.

Lake Fairfax is a 500-acre park built around an 18-acre created lake and it provides a variety of facilities such as sports fields including two with synthetic turf, group picnic areas, camp grounds, fishing, and a marina complex. It has a unique feature, the Water Mine Family Swimmin' Hole water park, which offers more than an acre of slide, flumes, sprays, showers, floatables and interactive play features, all encircled by a tubing river. The park's large open areas are utilized for outdoor classes, summer camps, and recreation programming throughout the year. From a natural resources perspective, the large uninterrupted tract of forest provides habitat for interior forest habitat for dwelling species.

The Cross County Trail is over 40 miles long and connects the northern and southern boundaries of Fairfax County serving as the County's primary north-south trail corridor. The Cross County Trail runs south from Great Falls Park through the Difficult Run Stream Valley Park in the eastern portion of Upper Potomac. The trail passes through some of the most diverse floodplain communities on parkland.

A complete list of Park Authority parks and their major facilities are listed for the District in Table 3.

Parks and Facilities Provided by Other Entities

Almost 60 percent of parkland in Upper Potomac is managed by entities other than the Fairfax County Park Authority: the National Parks Service, Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority, Town of Herndon, and private landowners such as the Nature Conservancy, the Reston Association and the many private golf courses. Table 4 indicates the entities that own and maintain the different parks in Upper Potomac.

The National Park Service operates Great Falls Park, an 800-acre park that is part of the George Washington Memorial Parkway and provides trails and viewing areas to the scenic falls on the Potomac River. River access, fishing, picnicking, hiking and climbing are activities provided for in the park. This park protects a large proportion of the globally unique Potomac Gorge habitat. Great Falls Park is also connected to Riverbend Park on its northern boundary, allowing hiker's to hike, ride horses and bikes between the two parks.

The Potomac Heritage Trail, a National Scenic Trail, is also administered by the National Park Service. This trail will be a 425-mile corridor between the Chesapeake Bay and the Allegheny Highlands when it is completed. A trail segment is complete in Upper Potomac that allows trail users to follow the Potomac from Great Falls Park for eight miles into Algonkian Regional Park in Loudoun County.

The Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority operates the Washington & Old Dominion Railroad Regional Park, which incorporates the Washington & Old Dominion Trail. This trail is one of the County's major non-motorized trails. It is located mid-County and extends east-west from the Potomac River in Arlington for 45 miles to Purcellville in Loudoun County. It is a federally recognized National Recreation Trail.

The Town of Herndon operates its own comprehensive park system with nine parks. The Alabama Park and Staunton Park are operated in conjunction with the Fairfax County Park Authority. The Town has an 18-hole public golf course and the and the Herndon Community Center, which features numerous recreational facilities including; an Olympic sized pool, fitness gym, sauna, an indoor tennis center, tennis courts, and racquetball courts. These facilities are similar to the Park Authority's RECenters.

The Reston Association is the community association established to maintain the open space resources in the Reston planned community. One of the visions of Reston is to create a community where residents can "live, work, and play". The Reston Association maintains 1,350 acres contained in 65 locations that offer a variety of recreation facilities: 15 pools, a nature education center, a variety of classes and interpretive opportunities, and 55 miles of trails linking these locations. Brown's Chapel is a historic structure that Reston maintains for meeting space and summer camps. The Reston Community Center maintains two facilities Hunter's Woods (pool, locker rooms, spa, woodshop, photography lab, Center stage, meeting space, classrooms) and Lake Anne (classrooms, meeting space, and pottery lab).

The YMCA Fairfax County Reston near Reston Town Center is a state-of-the-art recreation and activity facility that offers a variety of and facilities and programs, including a swimming pool, fitness center, indoor track, organized fitness classes, camps and activity programming to encourage people to make a lifelong commitment to physical activity and wellness.

The Nature Conservancy is a conservation organization that operates The Fraser Preserve in Great Falls. This site is managed to protect the 110 species of birds, wood turtles and other vertebrates, 300 varieties of wildflowers; and significant archaeological resources found on-site.

Four privately-owned golf courses are operated in Upper Potomac: the Hidden Creek Golf Course, the International Town & Country Golf and Country Club, Reston National Golf Course, and the River Bend Golf and Country Club.

A complete listing of non-Park Authority parks and significant recreation facilities offered are listed in Table 4.

Table 4 Parks Provided by Other Entities in Upper Potomac Planning District

Agency	Park Name	Facilities
NPS	GREAT FALLS PARK	Visitor center, multi-use trails, designated climbing areas, and picnic areas
NVRPA	UPPER POTOMAC	Hiking trails
NVRPA	WASHINGTON & OLD DOMINION RAILROAD REGIONAL PARK	45 mile paved trail, 32 mile gravel trail
Private	HIDDEN CREEK GC	Private 18 hole course, 4 outdoor tennis courts, 2 indoor tennis courts, 25m pool
Private	INTERNATIONAL TOWN & COUNTRY GC	Private 18 hole course, 8 tennis courts, exercise facility, Junior Olympic pool
Private	RESTON ASSOCIATION	1350 acres of open space including; 55 miles of trails, 65 recreation amenities sites offerings 15 pools, 49 tennis courts, picnic areas, 6 picnic pavilions, basketball courts, 2 community buildings, 26 ball fields, play meadows, 39 tot lots, garden plots, and a nature center
Private	RESTON NATIONAL GC	Private 18 hole course
Private	RIVER BEND GC & CC	Private 18 hole course
Private	THE NATURE CONSERVANCY'S FRASIER PRESERVE	Trails, wildlife viewing
Private	YMCA FAIRFAX COUNTY RESTON	Swimming pool, fitness center, indoor track, sauna and steam rooms, fitness classes and programming
Town of Herndon	BREADY	6 lighted tennis courts, indoor tennis and activity center, picnic tables, soccer, softball, and little league fields
Town of Herndon	BRUIN*	Large play area, picnic shelter, 2 tennis court, baseball field, basketball court
Town of Herndon	CHANDON*	2 tennis courts, tot play area, softball field, dog park
Town of Herndon	CUTTERMILL	Tot lot, baseball/t-ball fields, walking areas, multi-purpose court,
Town of Herndon	HALEY M. SMITH	2 60' baseball/softball fields, soccer/multi-use field, basketball court, volleyball court, open play area
Town of Herndon	HERNDON CENTENNIAL GC	Public, 18 hole course, driving range, practice greens
Town of Herndon	RUNNYMEDE	Hiking trails
Town of Herndon	TRAILSIDE	Picnic shelter, grills, play apparatus, open play area

* The Park Authority maintains Bruin Park and Chandon Park.

Summary of Natural Resources

The majority of the natural resources in Upper Potomac are clustered in the southwestern portion of the District and are often connected by small stream corridor parks. Many of the natural resource areas are composed of a mixture of narrow swaths of low-lying lands and uplands. The larger parks, including Riverbend, Lake Fairfax Park, Fred Crabtree Park (and adjacent Little Difficult Run Stream Valley Park) and Difficult Run Stream Valley Park contain fairly healthy wetlands and habitat that supports uncommon plant and animal species. These parks and several adjacent private parcels constitute the best wildlife habitat in the planning district. The aerial photo in Map 3 illustrates parkland in a landscape context of land use and waterbodies.

There are many significant natural resources in Upper Potomac, including those located in the following parks:

- *Riverbend Park* is significant for both the county and the nation. Helping to preserve the globally rare Potomac Gorge habitat, Riverbend Park is known to contain 13 percent of North American dragonfly diversity. Riverbend Park also has a unique flora that does not exist in the rest of Fairfax County.
- *Little Difficult Run Stream Valley Park* has a diverse assemblage of flora. Chain net fern and lady slipper orchids live in this narrow stream valley that is heavily utilized by trail users.
- *Stratton Woods Park* contains one of the best examples of an upland forested wetland in the County.

There has not been coordinated assessment, research and documentation of natural resources on public and private properties in the planning district, except for two Park Authority parks, Frying Pan Farm and Lake Fairfax. There is a draft natural resource management plan for Riverbend Park.

Summary of Cultural Resources

The Upper Potomac Planning District contains four Historic Overlay Districts. Three of the historic districts are established around historic structures at county parks; including the Colvin Run Mill Historic Overlay District, the Dranesville Tavern Historic Overlay District, and the Sully Historic Overlay District. In addition, the Lake Anne Historic Overlay District was established around Reston's Lake Anne Village Center. Lake Anne is the historic heart of the planned community of Reston and serves as an important example of the planned community concept upon which Reston was founded.

Many significant Native American sites exist in abundance in the district. These sites include Native American campsites, hunting stations and stone quarries. The district contains Native American sites that date from the earliest known occupations in the country, some 12,000 years ago.

Sully represents the property of Richard Bland Lee and is an example of an 18th – 20th century agricultural property. Colvin Run Mill, operated in the 18th-20th century. Great Falls Grange and school house and Dranesville Tavern are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Cornwell Farm in private ownership, the Herndon Railroad Station in the W&OD Railroad Regional Park, and Matildaville Ruins and the Patowmack Canal Lock Ruins, both within Great Falls Park, round out the remaining structures on the National Register of Historic Places found within the district.

Upper Potomac contains many important archaeological sites related to the Civil War. Great Falls Nike Park and Turner Farm are remnants of the Cold War when Nike missile silos, America's first operational anti-aircraft missile system, were deployed to protect Washington, DC from a Soviet attack.

Park Accessibility and Connectivity

Because of the great variety of land uses and development in Upper Potomac there are varying degrees of park and natural resources connectivity throughout the District. In northern Upper Potomac with the large lot, semi-rural residential character there is little opportunity to link residential neighborhoods to the park system. The middle of the District, where the Reston-Herndon Suburban Center and the Town of Herndon are located, there is a substantial and often comprehensive system of pedestrian trails linking parks and the surrounding communities. Southern Upper Potomac has suburban neighborhoods that provide opportunities to develop linkages between parks and residential areas by connecting existing and planned trails and sidewalks.

In general, all major parks in the District are accessible by car and the majority of the parks are accessible for bicyclists and pedestrians. Unlike many areas of the County, major roads accommodate non-motorized transportation. The

Dulles Toll Road has multiple pedestrian crossings and the Fairfax County Parkway has a trail along the majority of the road.

In northern Upper Potomac parkland is primarily aggregated in a few large parks along the Potomac River that are all connected to each other. The Potomac Heritage Trail, which is a National Scenic Trail, allows trail users to follow the Potomac River from Great Falls Park through Riverbend Park, the Upper Potomac holdings of the NVRPA, and Fraiser Preserve and end at Algonkian Regional Park in Loudoun County. Most of this trail system is still in development but when it is completed these parks will be integrated into the national trail system.

The Cross County Trail of Fairfax County is located along the eastern boundary of the planning district and its northern terminus is in Great Falls Park. The Cross County Trail is forty miles in length and connects to the northern and southern boundaries of Fairfax County making it the primary north-south trail corridor. The Cross County Trail runs south through the Difficult Run Stream Valley Park and connects to the Washington & Old Dominion Trail.

The W&OD Trail, which is administered by the NVPRA and is one of the major non-motorized trails in Fairfax County, runs through the middle of the Upper Potomac Planning District. This federally recognized National Recreation Trail is 45 miles long and traverses Northern Virginia from Alexandria to Purcellville. It is one of the primary east-west corridors in the County and serves not only recreational activities but as a transportation mode. Many County parks are located along the trail, which also runs through the heart of Reston and the Town of Herndon, connecting to their park systems.

The Reston Association maintains 55 miles of trail for use within the Reston planned community, including linkages to the W&OD Trail. The Herndon park system has ensured that there is a park within a half mile of every residence within the town, which is the Town's standard for being within walking distance of parks.

The Little Difficult Run and Sugarland Run Stream Valley trail systems are mature networks that comprise numerous miles of trail creating important trail connections in those areas. Horsepen Run and Frying Pan Stream Valley trail systems are not designated stream valley trails in the County's Comprehensive Plan but the Park Authority owns and maintains them and is developing them to create linkages to adjacent communities.

The proposed Silver Line expansion of the Metro rail system, which is expected to be established soon, will extend service to Dulles International Airport and will add four transit stations along the Dulles Toll Road, Route 123 and Route 7. These stations and the transit line will create opportunities to link the

existing park system and trails to the major mass transit system in the Washington metropolitan region.

Anticipated Land Use and Demographic Changes

The population of the District has rapidly increased over the past twenty-five years due primarily to the growth in its suburban centers. In 1980, the population was approximately 70,000. In 2004, the population had increased to 180,192, an increase of over 250 percent, which was the second highest amount of growth of any planning district (Table 5). The population is expected to continue to increase over the next ten years to 206,470 in 2015, primarily in the three suburban centers and the Town of Herndon. Table 5 identifies historic and projected growth rates. Upper Potomac has the most population and housing units of any district in the County and it is projected to continue to have this distinction for the next ten years. Upper Potomac also has the largest amount of nonresidential structure gross floor area, currently.

A major facilitator of the projected population growth in the Reston-Herndon and Dulles Suburban Centers is the Metro Silver Line extension through the Tysons area and along the Dulles Airport Access Road. This facility will enable additional planned residential, commercial and employment, which will increase the need for all types of park and recreation facilities.

Without increases in stormwater management, control of human activities and encroachments, and population control of white-tailed deer and non-native invasive species, the quality of preserved parkland is threatened.

Table 5: Growth Rates for Upper Potomac Planning District

Upper Potomac Planning District			
	Upper Potomac	Fairfax County	Rank
Total Population			
Forecast 2005	183,245	1,041,242	1 of 14
Forecast 2015	206,470	1,179,258	1 of 14
Growth Rate 1980-2005	159%	74%	2 of 14
Growth Rate 2005-2015	13%	13%	9 of 14
Housing Units			
Forecast 2005	66,256	384,683	1 of 14
Forecast 2015	75,024	436,436	1 of 14
Growth Rate 1980-2005	158%	78%	3 of 14
Growth Rate 2005-2015	13%	13%	9 of 14

