



# FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK AUTHORITY



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*For Immediate Release*

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## *Trail Champion Honored*

### Ceremony Slated to Rename Popular Cross County Trail

A ceremony will be held in the Giles Run Meadow section of Laurel Hill Park in Lorton, Va., Saturday, June 7, 2014 at 10 a.m. to rename the Cross County Trail after U.S. Congressman Gerry Connolly. The 41.5-mile trail connects communities from the Potomac River in the north to the Occoquan River in the south, and is popular with hikers, cyclists, and equestrian enthusiasts. During his tenure as chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, Connolly championed the creation of the trail, working closely with advocacy groups to plan the route and overcome obstacles. Laurel Hill Park is located at 8400 Lorton Road. The public is invited. GCCCT patches will be available for free in limited quantities.

The Fairfax County Park Authority Board voted at their June 12, 2013 meeting to change the trail’s name to the Gerry Connolly Cross County Trail. The board’s decision was unanimous, citing the congressman’s ongoing support at all stages of the multimillion dollar, multi-year project. Park Authority Chairman Bill Bouie said, “Mr. Connolly has demonstrated a steadfast resolve to preserve parkland and create recreational facilities in this community throughout his many years of public service. He is a strong advocate for environmental stewardship and we are so very pleased to name this trail in his honor. He is a deserving recipient of this acknowledgment.”

Congressman Connolly said, “There are a lot of people who share this honor with me. This project is a true example of what can happen when the local community, volunteers and our elected officials work together. Thanks to that effort we are leaving behind a real gem for future generations to enjoy.”

On May 25, 1999, the idea for a cross county trail was presented to the Park Authority by Fairfax Trails and Streams. The proposed route linked existing Park Authority trails together with other public lands owned by the National Park Service, Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority, the City of Fairfax, the town of Reston, and with public sidewalks through each supervisory district in Fairfax County to form a continuous pedestrian route from Great Falls National Park to Occoquan Regional Park.

In the course of the next several years, the Park Authority assembled existing trail sections and rights-of-way to connect longer trail lengths while refining alternatives for missing sections. Then Chairman Connolly was extremely supportive of Park Authority efforts to acquire the necessary links to complete the entire route. One of the last significant sections of trail to be acquired was the Laurel Hill Greenway, a portion of the former Lorton Prison located on the rail bed used to transport goods within the prison property. The Lorton property was acquired by the county from the federal government under Connolly’s leadership as board chairman. He supported the amendment of the county Comprehensive Plan to protect the majority of Lorton as parkland, an action which allowed for the CCT to incorporate the Greenway at its southern terminus. With the Laurel Hill Greenway addition, continuous public right-of-way was established and the trail was officially completed in December of 2005.

For more information, contact the Public Information Office at 703-324-8662.



If accommodations and/or alternative formats are needed, please call (703) 324-8563, at least 10 working days in advance of the registration deadline or event. TTY (703) 803-3354.