

**Arbor Day:  
Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority Announces  
Landmark W&OD Trail Vegetation Management Agreement**

Dominion Virginia Power and the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority will sign an agreement to enhance tree preservation on NVRPA's Washington and Old Dominion Railroad Regional Park on Friday, April 29, at 2 p.m. at Grace Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Vienna, adjacent to the W&OD Trail.

The signing ceremony culminates a year of controversy over Dominion's aggressive tree cutting and vegetation removal practices. The church selected as the signing site is located at 2381 Cedar Lane in Vienna, at the intersection of Cedar Lane and the W&OD Trail.

"This landmark agreement will protect thousands of trees and lead the way to environmental and aesthetic enhancements along the W&OD Trail," said NVRPA Chair William C. Dickinson. "This will benefit the more than two million persons who use the trail every year while providing vital protection for the electrical transmission system that also occupies much of the trail park."

NVRPA has owned and operated the 45-mile long W&OD Trail for more than 25 years. The authority built the multi-use trail on the former railroad right-of-way purchased from Dominion Virginia Power's predecessor corporation. Dominion retains a right-of-way easement along the property that allows the company to maintain its transmission lines and remove any vegetation that may threaten those lines, an essential safeguard for public health, safety and electric service reliability.

For the last year, Dominion has faced considerable community opposition as a result of its extensive vegetation removal program on the highly used and popular trail that runs through Arlington, the City of Falls Church, Vienna, Reston, Herndon and into Loudoun County.

"In the almost 30-year history of the W&OD Trail, we have never before had a written agreement on vegetation management for the park," said Dickinson. "Dominion clearly maintains the power to cut any tree that it deems a threat to its electrical transmission lines. NVRPA respects that right. Now, we have mutually agreeable guidelines to plant and maintain "the right tree in the right place." In addition, the agreement governs the use of herbicides by Dominion. Protection of the park trail and its users is

NVRPA's top priority. We salute Dominion and look forward to working with them to fully implement all aspects of this agreement.”

The authority's chair cited Dominion's agreement to allow trees of varying height and providing horticultural expertise for tree restoration. He pointed to the agreement as a guide to cooperative management of a shared resource, enhancing scenic and wildlife habitat while giving highest priority to maintaining reliable electric service. Details of the document include establishing criteria for tree species and use of an Advance Patrol Team of arborists and NVRPA and Dominion representatives to determine actions before trees are cut or vegetation removed.

“I cannot think of a better Arbor Day gift to all the neighbors and users of the W&OD Trail than this agreement which will protect countless trees and restore and enhance the beauty of this wonderful park,” stated NVRPA Fairfax County Board Member Jean Packard. “A great deal of credit for encouraging Dominion to agree to vegetation guidelines goes to the W&OD Task Force, established at the urging of Virginia Delegates Jim Scott and Stephen Shannon, and to the capable chair, Barbara Hildreth.”

NVRPA owns and operates 19 major parks throughout Northern Virginia and is supported by the counties of Arlington, Fairfax and Loudoun and the cities of Alexandria, Falls Church and Fairfax. The Authority holds more than 10,00 acres of parkland, including historic sites, golf courses, water parks, botanical gardens, a working farm, campgrounds, marina and more than 100 miles of trails for public enjoyment.

To examine the agreement, please view <http://www.nvrpa.org>. Highlights of the agreement are attached.

## **Highlights of W&OD Trail NVRPA-Dominion Virginia Power Vegetation Management Agreement**

### ***The Right Tree in the Right Place***

- “a good faith effort to address an issue of substantial importance to both parties [*the Authority and Dominion*] as well as trail users, landowners adjacent to the trail and other Northern Virginians”
- Benefits of Trees on the Trail
  - “provide trail users and nearby residents screening, sound buffering, peaceful vistas, seasonal beauty and other positive aesthetic qualities”

- “improve air quality by removing gaseous air pollution and by intercepting airborne particles such as dust, soot and pollen”
  - “improve water quality by retaining storm water, filtering runoff, stabilizing soil and thereby decreasing erosion and shading streams and wetlands”
  - “trees serve as outdoor air conditioning by providing shade and by cooling the air by the process of transpiration”
  - “trees provide important wildlife habitat, including vertical structure, movement corridors and food and shelter for animals”
  - “trees provide an important opportunity for humans to connect with nature in a wooded environment”
- Establishment of objective criteria to determine what kind of tree can be planted in most areas of the park, without risking the integrity of the transmission lines. Depending on the distance from the towers and overhead lines, trees from a minimum height of 15 feet, up to as high as 105 feet, may be planted and maintained
  - Plans for an “Advance Patrol Team” of representatives from the Authority and Dominion, along with other area arborists, to determine the best action
  - If a tree is selected for pruning or cutting, it will be noted or marked so work crews will know exactly what action is planned.
  - When cutting is determined, efforts will be made to phase the cutting to minimize and impact on any one area and efforts will be made to notify neighbors
  - When the decision is to remove a tree, Dominion will replace it with another that will grow to an appropriate height, at least six feet tall and warranted by Dominion