

NOVA Parks

Program Description

The Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority (NOVA Parks) was founded in 1959 under the Virginia Park Authorities Act. Currently there are six jurisdictional members: the counties of Arlington, Fairfax, and Loudoun and the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, and Falls Church. NOVA Parks enhances the communities of Northern Virginia and enriches the lives of their residents through the conservation of regional natural and cultural resources. It provides diverse regional recreational and educational opportunities and fosters an understanding of the relationships between people and their environment. Regional parks supplement local facilities and are distinguished from county and local parks in that they are designed to appeal to and serve the broad-based population of the entire Northern Virginia region or may be of a size or scope that a single jurisdiction could not undertake alone. The Washington and Old Dominion (W&OD) Railroad Regional Park, which extends from Alexandria through Arlington, Falls Church, Fairfax, and Loudoun, is just one example of many NOVA Parks facilities that have region wide characteristics.

NOVA Parks now owns, leases, and holds easements on 13,000 acres of land, of which 8,591 acres are in Fairfax County. The Regional Park system serves a population of 2 million people. Parklands within the system include: Aldie Mill, Balls Bluff Battlefield, Battle of Upperville/Goose Creek Bridge, Carlyle House, Mount Defiance, Mount Zion, and Tinner Hill Historic Parks, Meadowlark Botanical Gardens, the W&OD Trail (Washington and Old Dominion Railroad Regional Park), Algonkian, Ball's Bluff Battlefield, Blue Ridge, Brambleton, Bull Run, Bull Run Marina, Cattail Ordinary, Cameron Run, Fountainhead, Gateway, Gilbert's Corner, Hemlock Overlook, Occoquan, Pohick Bay, Potomac Overlook, Red Rock, Sandy Run, Seneca, Springdale, Temple Hall Farm, Upton Hill, Piscataway Regional Park, Beaverdam Reservoir Park, the Upper Potomac properties, the Rust Sanctuary, Webb Sanctuary, and Winkler Botanical Preserve.

In its conservation role, NOVA Parks is involved in implementing portions of the Environmental Quality Corridors concept, which defines an open space land system designated for long term protection in the County. In this role, NOVA Parks places emphasis on acquisition of the shoreline properties along the Potomac, Bull Run and Occoquan Rivers, while the Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) concentrates on acquiring land along the County's interior stream valleys.

Program Initiatives

From FY 2020 through FY 2024, NOVA Parks received \$26,601,863 in support from its regional membership jurisdictions, plus an additional \$39,223,279 in grants, donations, bonds, and other capital revenue, representing an actual capital program level of \$65,825,142. Accomplishments during these years include, as examples: comfort station renovations at Bull Run and Pohick Bay campgrounds; HVAC and fire suppression upgrades at Carlyle House; construction of a conservatory at Meadowlark Botanical Gardens; opening of the dual pedestrian and cyclist trails on the W&OD in Falls Church; renovation of the Nature Center at Potomac Overlook Regional Park; design and construction of the new Beaverdam Reservoir Park; development of Cameron Run Winter Village; improvements to rowing facilities at Sandy Run; acquisition of Springdale Regional Park, Winkler Botanical Preserve and Cattail Regional Park; improvements to the Bull Run Festival of Lights; linkage of local trails with the W&OD Trail; golf course improvements at Pohick Bay, Brambleton and Algonkian, dock replacement at Pohick Bay, Fountainhead Marina renovations and ongoing renovations and upgrades to existing roads, parking, and restroom facilities.

A portion of the capital improvement program includes the repair and renovation of existing and aging facilities, such as roof replacements, road repairs, replacement of mechanical systems, and similar work to preserve and repair existing facilities. Additional elements of the CIP include land acquisition, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) improvements, energy improvements, expansion of existing facilities, and new features to meet the needs of the region.

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NOVA Parks' Capital Fund revenues consist primarily of capital appropriations received from the six-member jurisdictions. Fairfax County's contribution for FY 2026 is approved at \$3.57 million. Funds for FY 2027 and beyond have not been formally allocated to specific projects and the following schedule lists only projects planned for FY 2026.

Current Project Descriptions

1. **ADA Improvements (Region-wide):** \$200,000 for accessibility improvements throughout the park system.
2. **Algonkian Regional Park – Water Park and Cottages (Loudoun County):** \$830,000 for permitting and construction of new water park features and waterlines as well as renovations to rental cottages.
3. **Beaverdam Reservoir Park (Loudoun County):** \$300,000 for the development of a marina facility, trails, picnic shelters, and boat storage.
4. **Bull Run Light Show (Fairfax County):** \$110,000 to add additional lighting features and install underground electrical extensions to reduce generator use.
5. **Bull Run Atlantis Waterpark (Fairfax County):** \$800,000 for design, permitting and construction of renovations and new pool equipment to replace aging pool features.
6. **Cameron Run Ice and Lights (City of Alexandria):** \$75,000 for additional winter village enhancements and improvements.
7. **Cameron Run Great Waves Waterpark (City of Alexandria):** \$100,000 for upgrades to parking and miscellaneous repairs and renovations to buildings and facilities.
8. **Carlyle House Renovation (City of Alexandria):** \$75,000 for miscellaneous improvements and garden renovations.
9. **Cattail Ordinary (Loudoun County):** \$200,000 for the development of an entrance, parking, and trail system for a recently donated 86-acre park.
10. **Fountainhead Marina Renovation (Fairfax County):** \$200,000 to improve access to fishing piers and install a new floating launch dock.
11. **Golf Course Improvements (Region-wide):** \$345,000 for capital improvements at all NOVA Parks golf courses.
12. **Headquarters (Fairfax County):** \$65,000 for automated systems and building renovations.
13. **Habitat Restoration and Invasive Species Removal (Region-wide):** \$75,000 for tree plantings, invasive species removal, and habitat restoration initiatives.
14. **Land Acquisition (Region-wide):** \$400,000 for land and easement purchases, to be supplemented by grant funds.
15. **Meadowlark Botanical Gardens (Fairfax County):** \$90,000 to expand and improve gardens, including the children's garden.

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16. **Meadowlark Botanical Gardens – Walk of Lights (Fairfax County):** \$110,000 to add additional lighting features and enhancements to the light show experience.
17. **Miscellaneous Improvements (Region-wide):** \$523,000 for capital maintenance projects, interpretive and signage improvements, rental house maintenance, branding and other maintenance not specifically assigned to a particular public use facility or park location.
18. **Occoquan Regional Park (Fairfax County):** \$50,000 for the planning and design and possible grant match for a mountain bike trail.
19. **Park Development Support and Planning (Region-wide):** \$1,093,936 for staffing, project management, development, planning, and strategic initiatives.
20. **Park Energy Projects (Region-wide):** \$350,000 for various projects to increase the energy efficiency of parks including new AC systems, solar power, and EV charging stations.
21. **Park Road and Parking Renovation and Maintenance (Region-wide):** \$321,497 for the ongoing maintenance and improvement of road and parking facilities.
22. **Pohick Bay and Bull Run Camp Improvements (Fairfax County):** \$100,000 for various miscellaneous improvements.
23. **Pohick Bay Marina (Fairfax County):** \$250,000 to design, permit and construct a new floating dock to provide safer water access to boaters.
24. **Pohick Bay Pirate's Cove Waterpark (Fairfax County):** \$100,000 for renovation to pools and equipment.
25. **Temple Hall Farm Regional Park (Loudoun County):** \$15,000 for seasonal event facility improvements.
26. **Vehicles and Equipment (Region-wide):** \$1,150,000 for capital equipment at all parks, central maintenance, and headquarters.
27. **W&OD Railroad Regional Park (Fairfax, Arlington, Loudoun Counties and Cities of Fairfax and Falls Church):** \$400,000 for various trail enhancements including widening and repairs including the redesigning and constructing the trail's crossing of Shreve Road.
28. **Waterpark Maintenance (Region-wide):** \$500,000 for renovations and repairs at all NOVA Parks waterparks including Volcano Island (Loudoun County), Great Waves (City of Alexandria), Dunes (Arlington County), and Atlantis (Fairfax County).
29. **Winkler Botanical Preserve (City of Alexandria):** \$400,000 for the improvement and maintenance of existing donated facilities as well as design and engineering for parking expansion.

Project Cost Summaries

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(\$000's)

	Project Title Project Number	Source of Funds	Budgeted or Expended Through FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030	Total FY 2026 - FY 2030	Total FY 2031 - FY 2035	Total
1	ADA Improvements (Region-wide)	G	C	\$200					\$200		\$200
2	Algonkian Regional Park (Loudoun County)	G	C	\$830					\$830		\$830
3	Beaverdam Reservoir Park (Loudoun County)	G	C	\$300					\$300		\$300
4	Bull Run Light Show (Fairfax County)	G	C	\$110					\$110		\$110
5	Bull Run Atlantis Waterpark (Fairfax County)	G	C	\$800					\$800		\$800
6	Cameron Run Ice and Lights (City of Alexandria)	G	C	\$75					\$75		\$75
7	Cameron Run Great Waves Waterpark (City of Alexandria)	G	C	\$100					\$100		\$100
8	Carlyle House Renovation (City of Alexandria)	G	C	\$75					\$75		\$75
9	Cattail Ordinary (Loudoun County)	G	C	\$200					\$200		\$200
10	Fountainhead Marina Renovation (Fairfax County)	G	C	\$200					\$200		\$200
11	Golf Course Improvements (Region- wide)	G	C	\$345					\$345		\$345
12	Headquarters (Fairfax County)	G	C	\$65					\$65		\$65
13	Habitat Restoration and Invasive Species Removal (Region-wide)	G	C	\$75					\$75		\$75
14	Land Acquisition (Region-wide)	G	C	\$400					\$400		\$400
15	Meadowlark Botanical Gardens (Fairfax County)	G	C	\$90					\$90		\$90
16	Meadowlark Botanical Gardens - Walk of Lights (Fairfax County)	G	C	\$110					\$110		\$110

Project Cost Summaries

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(\$000's)

Project Title Project Number	Source of Funds	Budgeted or Expended Through FY 2025						Total FY 2026 - FY 2030	Total FY 2031 - FY 2035	Total
			FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030			
17 Miscellaneous Improvements (Region-wide)	G	C	\$523					\$523		\$523
18 Occoquan Regional Park (Fairfax County)	G	C	\$50					\$50		\$50
19 Park Development Support and Planning (Region-wide)	G	C	\$1,094					\$1,094		\$1,094
20 Park Energy Projects (Region-wide)	G	C	\$350					\$350		\$350
21 Park Road and Parking Renovation and Maintenance (Region-wide)	G	C	\$321					\$321		\$321
22 Pohick Bay and Bull Run Camp Improvements (Fairfax County)	G	C	\$100					\$100		\$100
23 Pohick Bay Marina (Fairfax County)	G	C	\$250					\$250		\$250
24 Pohick Bay Pirates Cove Waterpark (Fairfax County)	G	C	\$100					\$100		\$100
25 Temple Hall Farm Regional Park (Loudoun County)	G	C	\$15					\$15		\$15
26 Vehicles and Equipment (Region- wide)	G	C	\$1,150					\$1,150		\$1,150
27 W&OD Railroad Regional Park (Loudoun County)	G	C	\$400					\$400		\$400
28 Waterpark Maintenance (Region-wide)	G	C	\$500					\$500		\$500
29 Winkler Botanical Preserve (Alexandria)	G	C	\$400					\$400		\$400
Total Project Cost			\$9,228	\$7,890	\$7,110	\$7,360	\$7,580	\$38,919		\$38,919
Total Fairfax County			\$3,578	\$3,605	\$3,641	\$3,678	\$3,715	\$18,217		\$18,217

Notes: Numbers in bold italics represent funded amounts. A "C" in the 'Budgeted or Expended' column denotes a continuing project.

Key: Source of Funds

B Bonds
F Federal
G General Fund
S State
U Undetermined
X Other