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 2021 through FY 2025, NOVA Parks received $27,525,772 in support from its regional membership jurisdictions, plus an additional $40,279,029 in grants, donations, bonds, and other capital revenue, representing an actual capital program level of $67,804,801. 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.

NOVA Parks' Capital Fund revenues consist primarily of capital appropriations received from the six-member jurisdictions. Fairfax County's contribution for FY 2027 is approved at $3.68 million. Funds for FY 2028 and beyond have not been formally allocated to specific projects and the following schedule lists only projects planned for FY 2027.

Current Project Descriptions

1. **ADA Improvements (Region-wide):** $200,000 for accessibility improvements throughout the park system.
2. **Aldie Mill Renovation (Loudoun County):** $75,000 for repairs to the tail and head race as well as a study and implementation of solutions to ensure adequate water is available year around.
3. **Algonkian Regional Park – Water Park and Cottages (Loudoun County):** $30,000 for permitting and construction of new water park features and waterlines as well as renovations to rental cottages.
4. **Beaverdam Reservoir Park (Loudoun County):** $325,693 for the development of a marina facility, trails, picnic shelters, and boat storage.
5. **Bull Run Light Show (Fairfax County):** $110,000 to add additional lighting features and install underground electrical extensions to reduce generator use.
6. **Bull Run Campground Utilities (Fairfax County):** $400,000 for the installation of a new water main and water connection at campsites.
7. **Cameron Run Ice and Lights (City of Alexandria):** $75,000 for additional winter village enhancements and improvements.
8. **Cameron Run Great Waves Waterpark (City of Alexandria):** $100,000 for upgrades to parking and miscellaneous repairs and renovations to buildings and facilities.
9. **Cattail Ordinary (Loudoun County):** $300,000 for the development of an entrance, parking, and trails.
10. **Golf Course Improvements (Region-wide):** $225,000 for capital improvements at all NOVA Parks golf courses.
11. **Headquarters** (**Fairfax County):** $65,000 for automated systems and building renovations.
12. **Habitat Restoration and Invasive Species Removal (Region-wide):** $50,000 for tree plantings, invasive species removal, and habitat restoration initiatives.
13. **Land Acquisition (Region-wide):** $400,000 for land and easement purchases, to be supplemented by grant funds.
14. **Meadowlark Botanical Gardens (Fairfax County):** $290,000 to construct a new groom's room at the Atrium, expand and improve gardens, and continue the development of the Children's Garden.
15. **Meadowlark Botanical Gardens – Walk of Lights (Fairfax County):** $110,000 to add additional lighting features and enhancements to the light show experience.

16. **Miscellaneous Improvements (Region-wide):** $485,000 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.

17. **Park Development Support and Planning (Region-wide):** $1,508,603 for staffing, project management, development, planning, and strategic initiatives.

18. **Park Energy Projects (Region-wide):** $275,000 for various projects to increase the energy efficiency of parks including new AC systems, solar power, and EV charging stations.

19. **Park Road and Parking Renovation and Maintenance (Region-wide):** $355,000 for the ongoing maintenance and improvement of road and parking facilities.

20. **Pohick Bay and Bull Run Camp Improvements (Fairfax County):** $100,000 for various miscellaneous improvements.

21. **Pohick Bay Pirate's Cove Waterpark (Fairfax County):** $50,000 for renovation of the baby pool and sandy play area.

22. **Temple Hall Farm Regional Park (Loudoun County):** $15,000 for seasonal event facility improvements.

23. **Vehicles and Equipment (Region-wide):** $1,325,000 for capital equipment at all parks, central maintenance, and headquarters.

24. **W&OD Railroad Regional Park (Fairfax, Arlington, Loudoun Counties and Cities of Fairfax and Falls Church):** $350,000 for various trail enhancements, including widening, and repairs including the redesigning and constructing the trail's crossing of Shreve Road and erosion control.

25. **W&OD Vienna Property Development (Fairfax County):** $3,600,000 for the design, permitting and development of a W&OD Trail visitor center in Vienna.

26. **Waterpark Maintenance (Region-wide):** $300,000 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).

27. **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

NOVA Parks

($000's)

	Project Title Project Number	Source of Funds	Budgeted or Expended Through FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030	FY 2031	Total FY 2027 - FY 2031	Total FY 2032 - FY 2036	Total
1	ADA Improvements (Region-wide)	G	***C***	***$200***					$200		$200
2	Aldie Mill Renovation (Loudoun County)	G	***C***	***$75***					$75		$75
3	Algonkian Regional Park - Water Park and Cottages (Loudoun County)	G	***C***	***$30***					$30		$30
4	Beaverdam Reservoir Park (Loudoun County)	G	***C***	***$326***					$326		$326
5	Bull Run Light Show (Fairfax County)	G	***C***	***$110***					$110		$110
6	Bull Run Campground Utilities (Fairfax County)	G	***C***	***$400***					$400		$400
7	Cameron Run Ice and Lights (City of Alexandria)	G	***C***	***$75***					$75		$75
8	Cameron Run Great Waves Waterpark (City of Alexandria)	G	***C***	***$100***					$100		$100
9	Cattail Ordinary (Loudoun County)	G	***C***	***$300***					$300		$300
10	Golf Course Improvements (Region-wide)	G	***C***	***$225***					$225		$225
11	Headquarters (Fairfax County)	G	***C***	***$65***					$65		$65
12	Habitat Restoration and Invasive Species Removal (Region-wide)	G	***C***	***$50***					$50		$50
13	Land Acquisition (Region-wide)	G	***C***	***$400***					$400		$400
14	Meadowlark Botanical Gardens (Fairfax County)	G	***C***	***$290***					$290		$290
15	Meadowlark Botanical Gardens - Walk of Lights (Fairfax County)	G	***C***	***$110***					$110		$110

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	Project Title Project Number	Source of Funds	Budgeted or Expended Through FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030	FY 2031	Total FY 2027 - FY 2031	Total FY 2032 - FY 2036	Total
16	Miscellaneous Improvements (Region-wide)	G	C	***$485***					$485		$485
17	Park Development Support and Planning (Region-wide)	G	C	***$1,509***					$1,509		$1,509
18	Park Energy Projects (Region-wide)	G	C	***$275***					$275		$275
19	Park Road and Parking Renovation and Maintenance (Region-wide)	G	C	***$355***					$355		$355
20	Pohick Bay and Bull Run Camp Improvements (Fairfax County)	G	C	***$100***					$100		$100
21	Pohick Bay Pirates Cove Waterpark (Fairfax County)	G	C	***$50***					$50		$50
22	Temple Hall Farm Regional Park (Loudoun County)	G	C	***$15***					$15		$15
23	Vehicles and Equipment (Region-wide)	G	C	***$1,325***					$1,325		$1,325
24	W&OD Railroad Regional Park (Loudoun County)	G	C	***$350***					$350		$350
25	W&OD Vienna Property Development (Fairfax County)	G	C	***$3,600***					$3,600		$3,600
26	Waterpark Maintenance (Region-wide)	G	C	***$300***					$300		$300
27	Winkler Botanical Preserve (City of Alexandria)	G	C	***$400***					$400		$400
	Total Project Cost			**$11,520**	**$11,866**	**$12,222**	**$12,588**	**$12,966**	**$61,161**		**$61,161**
	Total Fairfax County		C	**$3,679**	**$3,789**	**$3,903**	**$4,020**	**$4,141**	**$19,532**		**$19,532**

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