



# **Chapter 14**

## **Upper Potomac Planning District**

Published May 2011

**GREAT PARKS, GREAT COMMUNITIES  
2010 – 2020 Park System Plan**

**Fairfax County Park Authority**

**UPPER POTOMAC PLANNING DISTRICT**

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## UPPER POTOMAC PLANNING DISTRICT

### Location & Character

The Upper Potomac Planning District is located in northwestern Fairfax County. It 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 Dulles Airport.



The Great Falls area, located along the Potomac River is semi-rural. In contrast, the planned community of Reston and the Town of Herndon are more densely developed. Suburban Centers along Routes 50 and 28 and the Dulles Toll Road are planned for high intensity mixed use.

### Park System Summary

Map 1 depicts the public parkland in the Upper Potomac Planning District. There are 58 public parks with a total of about 4,700 acres in the district. These parks make up about 16 percent of the total acreage of the district. About 40% of all the park acreage in the district is owned by the Park Authority, and is within Park Authority Maintenance Areas 5 and 6. The rest is owned by other providers, primarily the Federal government, Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority (NVRPA), Town of Herndon and the Reston Association.

The parks in the district include a lakefront park, working farm, district parks, local-serving parks, historic sites, natural resource protection areas and stream valleys. Facilities include trails, rectangle fields, diamond fields, tennis courts, multi-use courts, volleyball courts, nature center, garden plots, dog parks, playgrounds, and picnic facilities.

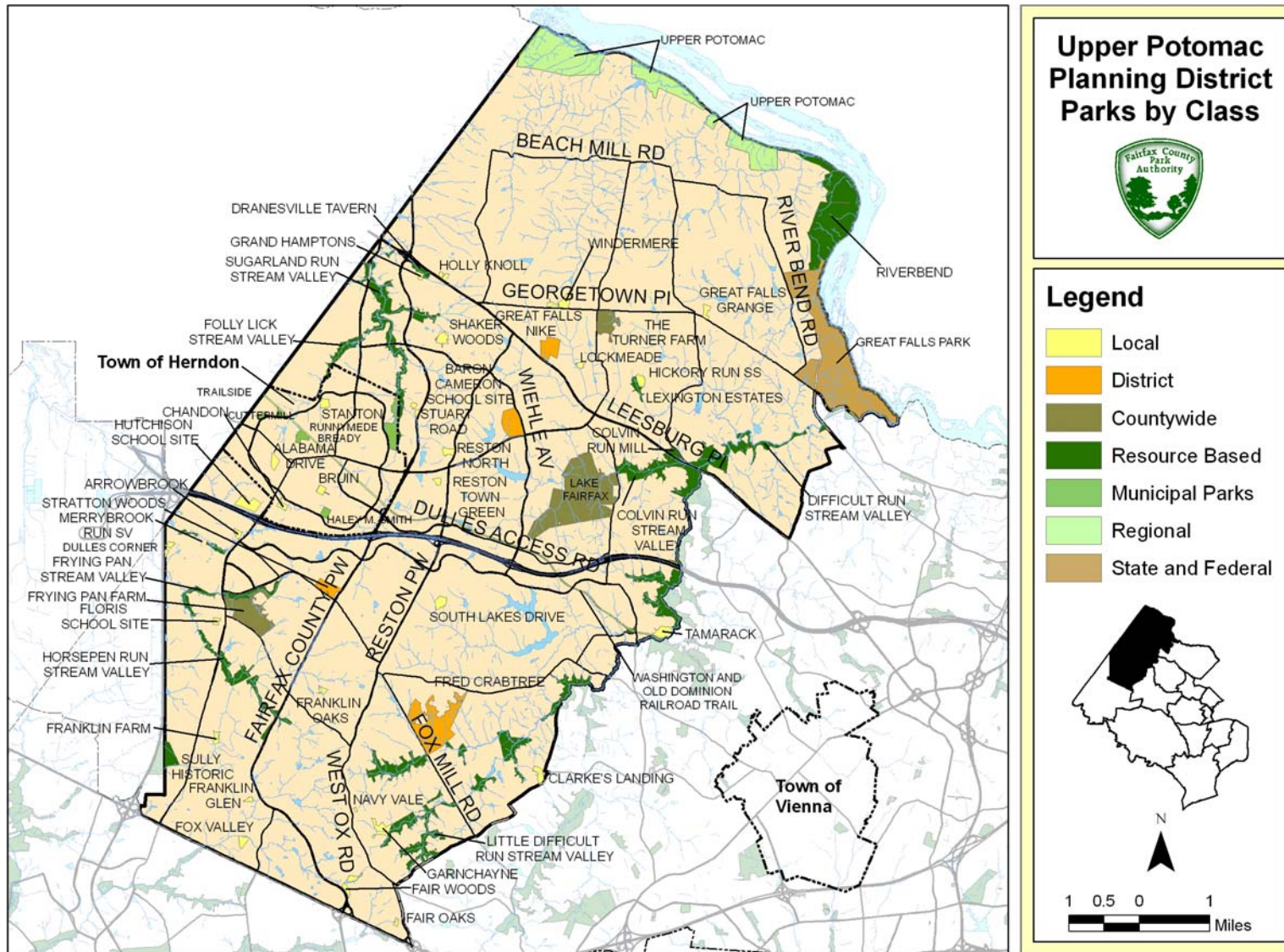
One of the largest parks in the district at nearly 500 acres, Lake Fairfax Park has an 18-acre lake and provides a variety of facilities such as sports fields, group picnic areas, campgrounds, fishing, carousel, Water Mine Family Swimmin' Hole and marina. Frying Pan Farm Park is a working model farm typical of Fairfax County farms of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Turner Farm provides equestrian facilities and an observatory that takes advantage of the darker skies in this part of the county. Significant historic sites in the district include the 19<sup>th</sup> century Sully Historic Site and 18<sup>th</sup> century Colvin Run Mill.

Riverbend Park, Great Falls National Park, Upper Potomac Regional Park and Fraser Preserve owned by the Nature Conservancy protect the majority of the Potomac Gorge shoreline in the district. These parks provide miles of shoreline for hiking, nature watching, kayaking, canoeing and fishing along the Potomac River.

As rail transit is built along the Dulles Toll Road, new urban parks may be created in mixed-use areas. The rural nature of the Great Falls area may offer opportunities to convert open areas to parks, but opportunities in other parts of the district are limited. Map 2 identifies parkland and areas that contain regulatory or other protections including

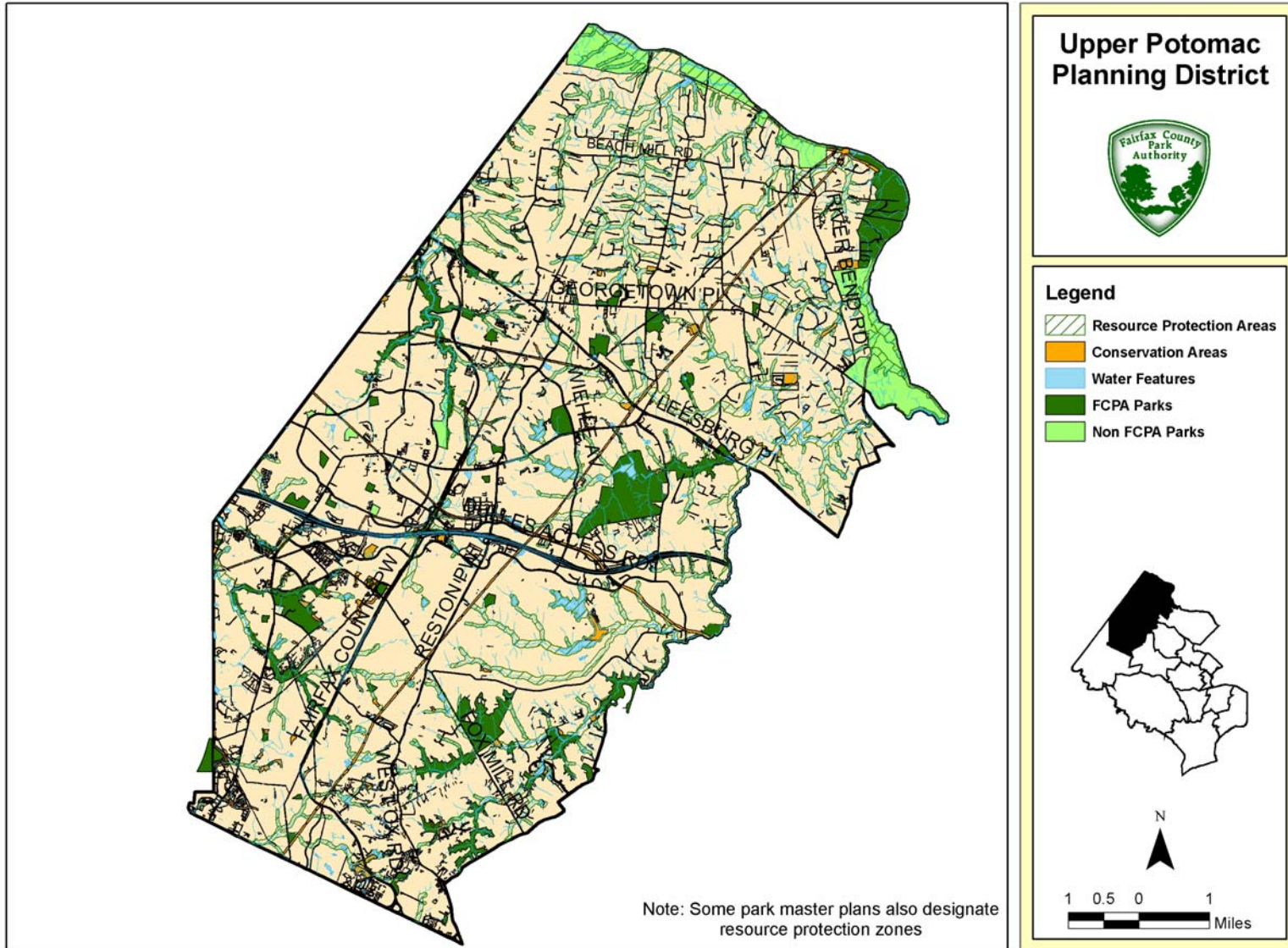
public park ownership, conservation easements, and Chesapeake Bay Ordinance designated Resource Protection Areas (RPA).

Map 1: Public Parks by Class in the Upper Potomac District





Map 2: Protected Land in the Upper Potomac District



## **Park Classification**

In June 2005, a new Park Classification System was adopted and incorporated into the Park and Recreation chapter of the Countywide Comprehensive Policy Plan. The Park Classification System is a general framework intended to guide open space and public facilities planning by grouping parks according to certain common typical characteristics. The park classification gives an indication of the intended use, general park size range, typical facility types, and the general experience a user may expect at a park.

Local Parks serve surrounding neighborhoods and communities and offer a variety of local-serving recreation opportunities, such as playgrounds, trails, athletic facilities, picnic areas and natural areas. Typically these parks are designed to serve up to a 3 mile radius depending on the facilities and can range from 2 to 50 acres in size.

Local parks may be urban or suburban in character. Urban parks (including pocket parks, civic plazas and common greens) are a type of local-serving park that are generally more compact and located within an urban or transit-oriented setting. These parks generally consist of high quality design and construction, are well integrated into surrounding development, uses and the public realm and primarily serve to define local urban character, support outdoor enjoyment, social gatherings, recreation needs and special events. These parks may be privately or publicly owned and are usually privately maintained.

District Parks are larger parks that serve greater geographic areas of the County (3 to 6 miles) and provide a wide variety of indoor and outdoor recreation facilities and park experiences. Generally, these parks are more than 50 acres in size. These parks typically accommodate visits of up to a half day, longer operational hours and a larger number of users. Many district parks also have extensive natural areas.

Countywide Parks are larger parks that serve the whole County and provide a variety of larger-scale indoor or outdoor recreation facilities, or both, and facilities or resources that are unique within the County. Typically, these parks are greater than 150 acres and provide opportunities for passive and active recreation to a wide range of simultaneous users for experiences of up to a day in length.

Resource-Based Parks have significant cultural and natural resources. These parks support nature, horticulture and history programs, gardening, nature watching and appreciation of local, regional, state and national history. Extensive stream valley parks are part of the resource-based parks network. Typically, trails and interpretative features and facilities are the primary uses. Some resource parks may have separate areas designated for recreation purposes.

Regional Parks are lands and/or facilities administered by the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority (NVRPA). These parks have region-wide significance that supplement and enhance the County and municipal park systems.

While some parks are Resource-Based, note that all park types may include areas designated for natural and/or cultural resource protection. In addition, many state and federal parks augment local and regional parks and also serve to protect natural and cultural resources within the County. Table 1 lists and classifies the parks in the Upper Potomac district according to the County parks classification system. Table 1 also includes information about whether and when parks were master planned and if a master planning action (new master plan development or plan update) is needed.

*Table 1: Parks in the Upper Potomac Planning District*

Park Name	Acres	Supervisor District	Park Classification	Approved Master Plan Date	Master Plan Action Needed
Alabama Drive	11.08	DR	Local	1990	
Arrowbrook	6.44	HM	Local	*	
Baron Cameron School Site	60.00	HM	District	2001	
Braedy	14.10	DR	Town of Herndon		
Bruin	8.20	DR	Local	1966	
Chandon	8.00	DR	Local	2002	
Clarke's Landing	13.56	SU	Local		✓
Colvin Run Mill	36.83	DR	Resource-Based	2008	
Colvin Run S.V. <sup>1</sup>	74.63	DR	Resource-Based		
Cuttermill	5.10	DR	Town of Herndon		
Difficult Run S.V. <sup>1</sup>	900.68 <sup>+</sup>	HM, DR	Resource-Based		
Dranesville Tavern	14.59	DR	Resource-Based	1991	
Dulles Corner	6.69	HM	Local	2006	
Fair Oaks	3.69	SU	Local		✓
Fair Woods	14.36	SU	Local	*	✓
Floris School Site	4.80	HM	Local	1986	
Folly Lick S.V. <sup>1</sup>	46.67	DR	Resource-Based		
Fox Valley	11.04	SU	Local	*	✓
Franklin Farm	8.13	SU	Local	1984	
Franklin Glen	3.66	SU	Local	1984	
Franklin Oaks	5.96	HM	Local	*	✓
Fred Crabtree	208.52	HM	District	1995	
Frying Pan Farm	135.26	HM	Countywide	2002	
Frying Pan S.V. <sup>1</sup>	77.08	HM	Resource-Based		
Garnchayne	21.31	SU	Local		
Grand Hamptons	5.01	DR	Local	*	
Great Falls Grange	9.02	DR	Local	1985	



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Park Name	Acres	Supervisor District	Park Classification	Approved Master Plan Date	Master Plan Action Needed
Great Falls Nike	45.52	DR	District	1991	
Great Falls National Park	697.00	DR	Federal		
Haley M. Smith	9.50	DR	Town of Herndon		
Herndon Centennial Golf Course	137.00	DR	Town of Herndon		
Hickory Run School Site <sup>^</sup>	10.60	DR	Local		✓
Holly Knoll	5.86	DR	Local	*	✓
Horsepen Run S.V. <sup>1</sup>	127.30	SU	Resource-Based		
Hutchison School Site	28.50	DR	Local	1991	
Lake Fairfax	478.99	HM, DR	Countywide	2001	
Lexington Estates	14.71	DR	Resource-Based		✓
Little Difficult Run S.V. <sup>1</sup>	389.69 <sup>+</sup>	HM	Resource-Based		
Lockmeade	5.08	DR	Local		✓
Merrybrook Run S.V. <sup>1</sup>	16.61	HM	Resource-Based		
Navy Vale	1.20	SU	Local		
Reston North	9.54	HM	Local	1984	
Reston Town Green	5.00	HM	Local		✓
Riverbend	411.18	DR	Resource-Based	1975	✓
Runnymede	56.00	DR	Town of Herndon		
Shaker Woods	13.55	HM	Local		✓
South Lakes Drive	13.90	HM	Local	1983	
Stanton	10.85	DR	Local	1976	
Stratton Woods	25.58	HM	District	1999	
Stuart Road	6.36	DR	Local	1986	
Sugarland Run S.V. <sup>1</sup>	224.42	DR	Resource-Based		
Sully Historic Site	31.44 <sup>+</sup>	SU	Resource-Based	2005	
Tamarack	20.85	HM	Local	1989	
The Turner Farm	56.04	DR	Countywide	2000	✓
Trailside	6.00	DR	Town of Herndon		
Upper Potomac Regional	655.00	DR	Regional		
W & O D Regional Trail	172.00 <sup>+</sup>	DR	Regional		
Windermere	24.06	DR	Local		✓

1. Resource-Based Stream Valley parks by practice do not have Master Plans.

\* This park was dedicated by a private developer and may be subject to a Conceptual Development Plan associated with an approved rezoning that takes the place of a park master plan.

+ A portion of this park lies outside of the Upper Potomac district.

^ School Sites operated on an interim basis as parks by the Park Authority do not have master plans as they are owned and governed by the Fairfax County Public Schools.

Acreages for non-FCPA parks are estimates derived from GIS.

## **Park Master Plans**

A park master plan is a general guide for appropriate park uses and their approximate location within a specific park site. The plan serves as a long-range vision (10-20 year timeframe) for future development and programming. Issues typically addressed include planned park elements, natural and cultural resource management, and general design concerns. The plan is conceptual in nature and not intended to address detailed issues related to engineered site design or park operations. The plan is just one of many steps in the process that leads to the development of a public park. An archive of park master plans is available at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/plandev/mparchives.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/plandev/mparchives.htm).

## **Themes, Issues and Strategies**

In early 2008 the Park Authority interacted with citizens at ten *Great Parks, Great Communities* public workshops in all Supervisory districts and at a variety of community festivals and events in the parks to gather input on **long-term planning for the land, facilities and natural and cultural resources of the park system**. In addition, the Park Authority received public feedback on the park system throughout the year via email and the project web site.

Based on the public feedback and staff expertise, staff identified 26 key issues that fit within eight themes relating to the land, resources and facilities of the Park Authority. **The themes are Connectivity, Community Building, Service Delivery, Facility Reinvestment, Land Acquisition, Resource Interpretation, Cultural Resource Stewardship and Natural Resource Stewardship.**

This section describes how the eight themes relate to the park system in the Upper Potomac District and presents strategies for addressing the issues as they apply to the parks in the district. Some strategies include recommendations for construction of facilities, infrastructure and amenities at parks in the district. As part of the planning process for any proposed construction, the project area should first be assessed for possible impacts to natural and cultural resources.

### ***THEME: Connectivity***

Better integrating parks with surrounding land uses (neighborhoods and employment centers) and increasing park-to-park connections within the system will allow for greater access and enjoyment. Strategy suggestions include adding trails, trail connections, bridges and other forms of improved access to and between parks.

Map 3 illustrates existing and planned connections and points of interest within the Upper Potomac Planning District. The map depicts high-level, conceptual connections and incorporates elements from the adopted Countywide Trails Plan and Park Authority Trail Strategy Plan. Connections link natural and cultural resources and recreational destinations, supporting recreational activity and frequently offering alternative transportation options.

Several major trails traverse the Upper Potomac District including the Cross County Trail (CCT) and the Washington and Old Dominion (W&OD) Regional Trail. The major roadside trail along the Fairfax County Parkway provides additional connectivity. These three major trail systems provide long distance trails for a variety of users, including hikers, bikers and equestrians. Trails in Upper Potomac are also used by mountain bikers and there are some equestrian-only trails in the district. In addition, Reston Association provides a well connected trail and park system within the more populated community of Reston. Connections between Lake Fairfax Park to Colvin Run Mill and the CCT are well established. Stream valleys in the southeastern portion of the district offer good potential for future connections to existing trail segments and parks such as Clark’s Crossing and Fred Crabtree Parks. Large subdivisions along the Fairfax County Parkway, such as Franklin Farms, have trail systems and sidewalks that serve local connections within these neighborhoods. The Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail along the Potomac River provides a unique hiking experience. As the district is located on the western edge of the County’s border, connectivity to other jurisdictions via some of these routes is also available. Opportunities for trail connections include the Great Falls gas line easement to Turner Farm and Great Falls Nike Park.

**Issue: *The Park Authority should work to improve non-motorized access to parks from commercial and residential areas and to increase connectivity between park sites.***

Strategies:

UP-C-1. Use criteria provided in the Park Authority’s Trail Strategy Plan to evaluate potential new trails, connections and improvements;

UP-C-2. Implement planned stream valley trails to improve connectivity, including along tributaries of Little Difficult Run to connect it to Fred Crabtree and Clark’s Crossing Parks;

UP-C-3. Coordinate with Town of Herndon, Reston Association, Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority, National Park Service and Loudoun County to comprehensively plan trail connections throughout the various trail systems in Upper Potomac District;

UP-C-4. Complete high priority planned trail connection projects including a stream crossing in Horsepen Run Stream Valley Park, connecting the trail in Dartmoor Woods to West Ox Road and the Windermere connection to the Georgetown Pike trail;

**Heard from the public:**  
“We need pedestrian (walking) areas from neighborhoods next to Lake Fairfax into the park.”

- UP-C-5. Continue to make enhancements to the Cross County Trail through the Difficult Run Stream Valley;
- UP-C-6. Continue small and large scale improvements to the Cross County Trail and trail network to ensure diverse trail user needs are met;
- UP-C-7. Explore trail opportunities along major utility easements in the district such as the Great Falls gas line near Turner Farm and Great Falls Nike Parks; and
- UP-C-8. Connect public trails to community trail systems in Franklin Farms and other residential community trail networks.

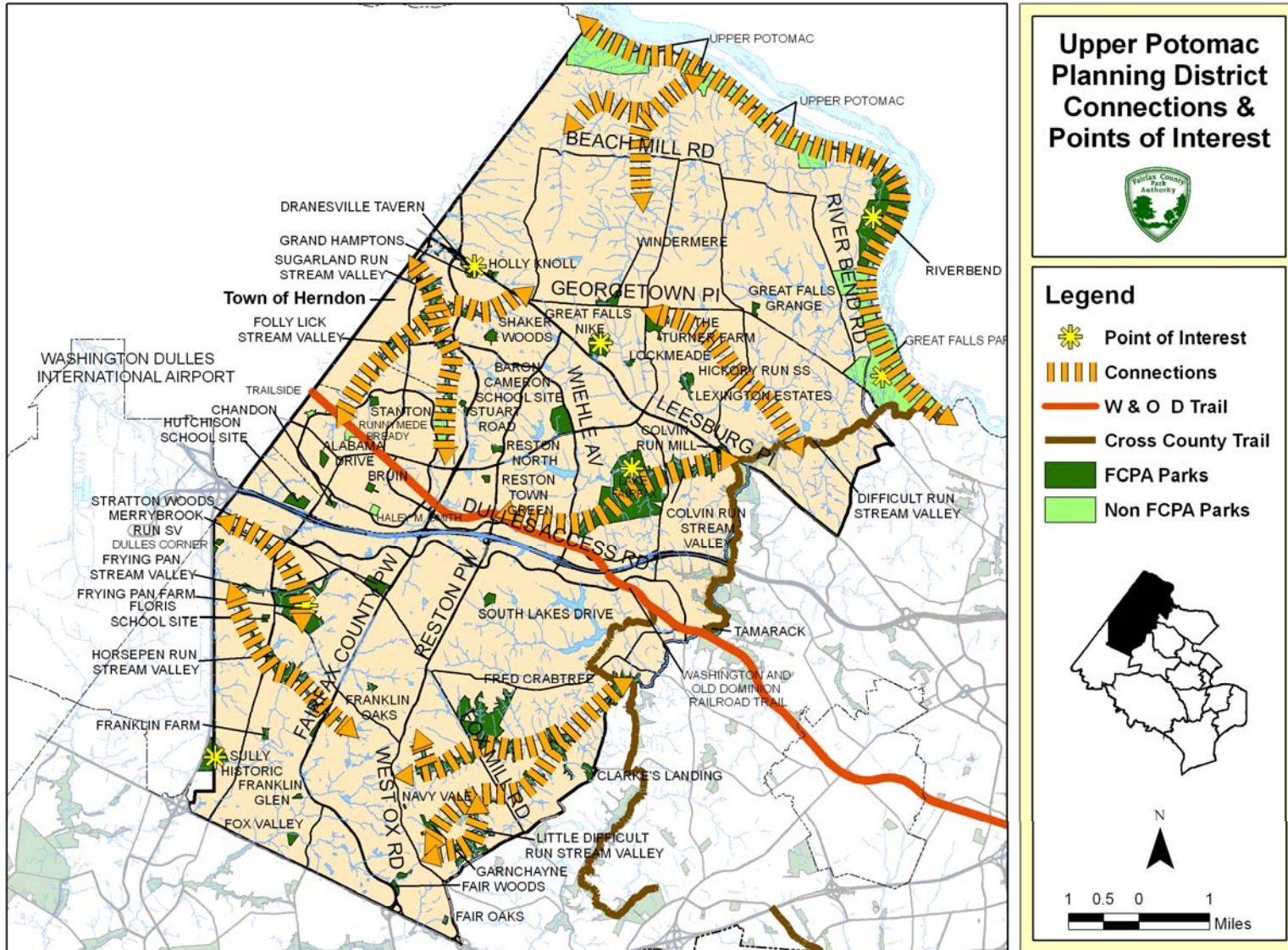
***Issue: Multiple, separate park sites located across Fairfax County should be linked through thematic interpretive connections.***

Thematic connections, emphasized through elements such as signage, maps, or website information, can foster greater public awareness of important features. Increased knowledge of site features could encourage greater support for stewardship and management activities.

Strategies:

- UP-C-9. Include Great Falls Grange, Dranesville Tavern and Sully Historic Site as part of a Civil War interpretive trail;
- UP-C-10. Include Riverbend Park and the Difficult Run Stream Valley as significant nodes along a natural areas interpretive trail within the county; and
- UP-C-11. Connect and coordinate awareness of the segment of the Virginia Piedmont Area Birding and Wildlife Trail within the district to County trail networks with the same qualities.

Map 3: Non-motorized Connections and Points of Interest in the Upper Potomac District



**Issue: *District and Countywide parks and the Cross County Trail should be served by the public transportation system to provide equitable access to recreational facilities.***

Major transportation corridors within the Upper Potomac District include the Dulles Toll Road, Route 7, Route 50, Route 28 and the Fairfax County Parkway. All are served or planned to be served by bus or rail transit. Parks within a half mile of planned transit stops include Fox Valley, Franklin Farm, Horsepen Run Stream Valley, Fair Woods, Chandon, Lake Fairfax, Fair Oaks, Hutchison School Site, Stratton Woods, and Franklin Glen. The future Arrowbrook Park will be within a transit oriented development area. While there is some limited weekend bus service, the majority of the transit in the area supports morning and evening commuting. Transit-supporting commuting times and patterns do not necessarily serve park users.

**Strategies:**

- UP-C-12. Promote the creation of new parks and pedestrian connections that will be within walking distance of the planned new Metrorail transit stations;
- UP-C-13. Work with transit providers to improve bus transit service to parks in the district, especially to Lake Fairfax Park and the numerous district parks. This should include coordination of bus stop locations and transit schedules; and
- UP-C-14. Consider relationship of park access and bus transit in future master planning of parks located in the Fairfax County Parkway, Route 50 and Route 28 corridors that are served by bus transit.

**Issue: *The Park Authority should work to improve access to waterways and promote the use of “water trails” throughout the County.***

Water access for kayaks, canoes and rafts is available at Riverbend and Great Falls Parks. Due to the dam and falls located between the two parks, a connected water trail along the Potomac is not feasible.

**Strategies:**

- UP-C-15. Coordinate water programs and facilities at the parks located along the Potomac Gorge.



**THEME: Community Building**

Local parks are places where people can interact and build community. Well-designed and located parks, park facilities and programs support greater social interaction. Community-building park facilities and activities include reservable picnic areas, amphitheaters, dog parks, garden plots, farmers markets, performances and special events. Collocation of facilities with other community uses can also assist in strengthening communities. Strategy suggestions include ways to increase the community-building role of local parks in residential neighborhoods and providing parks and recreation facilities near other civic uses.

Upper Potomac District is expansive and encompasses four general communities – Chantilly, Herndon, Reston and Great Falls. Each community has a distinctive character and offers community building events and activities that occur in parks, schools, and in town centers. County park facilities and activities that serve community building functions include the Baron Cameron dog park and reservable picnic shelters; Frying Pan Farm Park farmers markets, 4-H events, equestrian and musical events. Major special events occur at Riverbend Park including the River Festival that celebrates its unique setting along the Potomac.

**Heard from the public:**  
“Have a large covered picnic area where families can relax and have a picnic and a small area set up for parties.”

**Issue: Local and urban parks should include a combination of facilities, amenities and gathering spaces to attract and promote social interaction among community members.**

Strategies:

- UP-CB-1. Construct the planned reservable picnic shelters at Sully Historic Site and Franklin Farm Park to serve local families; and
- UP-CB-2. Consider potential community building uses and facilities at Reston Town Green Park in its future master plan.

**Issue: Parks should be collocated with other civic uses (libraries, community centers, senior centers, etc.) to promote social interaction among community members.**

Strategies:

- UP-CB-3. Work with public facility providers, such as schools and libraries, to create park spaces when renovations and improvements are made to existing public structures within the district; and
- UP-CB-4. Partner with Chantilly, Great Falls, Herndon, and Reston libraries to provide park interpretive exhibits.

**THEME: Service Delivery**

The Park Authority provides quality facilities that are well used, but may not be equitably distributed across all parts of the County or accessible to all groups. Countywide and specialty facilities, in particular, may not serve a true county-wide service area. Residents desire recreational facilities and opportunities at parks near where they live and for all age groups and socio-economic populations. Strategy suggestions include creating more facilities, better distributing facilities across the County, and reducing barriers to use.

Service level standards for over twenty park facility types were established through the 2004 Needs Assessment (<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/needsassessment.htm>) process and incorporated into the Countywide Policy Plan (<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/comprehensiveplan/policyplan/parksrec.pdf>) in 2005. Facility standards are countywide goals for providing park and recreation facilities that reasonably satisfy community needs. Standards are expressed in units per population, and are based on extensive analysis of citizen demand and preferences compared with the existing public facility inventories. Based on the Countywide adopted facility service level standards and projected population growth, Table 2 shows the projected surplus or deficit of several key local serving facilities in the Upper Potomac Planning District for the year 2020. While overall facility needs are quantified in Table 2, the location of needed facilities is determined through the site specific master planning process that considers site conditions, context, resources, and community input. For more detailed information on existing facilities in each park and service levels, please see the Existing Conditions Report.

*Table 2: Upper Potomac Planning District 2020 Local Serving Facility Needs Analysis*

		185,092	2010 population			
		200,805	2020 projected population			
Facility	Service Level Standard	2010 Existing Facilities	2020 Needed Facilities	2020 Projected (Deficit)/ Surplus	2020 Projected Service Level	
Rectangle Fields	1 field / 2,700 people	67.7	74.4	(6.7)	91%	
Adult Baseball Fields	1 field / 24,000 people	8.0	8.4	(0.4)	96%	
Adult Softball Fields <sup>+</sup>	1 field / 22,000 people	4.5	9.1	(4.6)	49%	
Youth Baseball Fields <sup>+</sup>	1 field / 7,200 people	27.5	27.9	(0.4)	99%	
Youth Softball Fields <sup>+</sup>	1 field / 8,800 people	13.0	22.8	(9.8)	57%	
Basketball Courts	1 court / 2,100 people	18.0	95.6	(77.6)	19%	
Playgrounds	1 playground / 2,800 people	30.5	71.7	(41.2)	43%	
Neighborhood Dog Parks	1 dog park / 86,000 people	2.0	2.3	(0.3)	86%	

Neighborhood Skate Parks	1 skate park / 106,000 people	0.0	1.9	(1.9)	0%
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<sup>+</sup> 60 ft and 65 ft diamond fields are assigned to the sport where primarily allocated.

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. Planned rail transit along the Dulles Toll Road and growth in the Dulles Corridor will spur the district’s continued growth.

**Issue: The Park Authority should provide and equitably distribute facilities to meet established facility service level standards.**

Facility deficiencies in Upper Potomac are high, particularly rectangle fields and youth baseball fields, courts and playgrounds. Reston Association facilities contribute to offset the deficiency. Opportunities to provide additional local serving facilities and athletic fields should be identified. Several diamond fields exist as interim uses on private commercial property along Sunrise Valley Drive that could be used by the community for adult softball. A developer has proffered to install a natural turf rectangle field on parkland, but a location needs to be identified. A future proffered park near the intersection of Centreville and McLaren Roads will provide a six-athletic field complex. Baron Cameron has operated as a County park for over 25 years on school-owned property. Additional investment in this park should wait until the Board of Supervisors commits to transfer the land to the Park Authority. The approved addition of lights to the 90’ diamond field at Stratton Woods Park will expand capacity of this facility.

Strategies:

- UP-SD-1. Construct planned skate park at Lake Fairfax Park;
- UP-SD-2. Build a new playground at the visitors center at Frying Pan Farm Park;
- UP-SD-3. Build new facilities at Riverbend Park including picnic shelter, boat rental building, maintenance and equipment storage facility, and playground;
- UP-SD-4. Build a picnic shelter and playground at Colvin Run Mill Park;
- UP-SD-5. Build a picnic shelter and playground at Sully Historic Site;
- UP-SD-6. Include local serving recreation facilities as appropriate in future master plans at Reston Town Green, Fair Oaks, Clark’s Landing, Fair Woods, Fox Valley, Franklin Oaks, Holly Knoll and Windermere Parks;
- UP-SD-7. Partner with other park providers to leverage facility capacity and use through shared allocations, such as private diamond fields along Sunrise Valley Drive;
- UP-SD-8. Where appropriate, convert athletic fields to synthetic turf and add lights to increase playing capacity; and
- UP-SD-9. Encourage the BOS-leased land at Dulles Greens to remain in use as an athletic field.

**Issue: *The Park Authority should provide new kinds of parks and facilities and in new ways to meet the needs of the County’s changing population.***

Parks in Upper Potomac District offer several unique facilities and future planned facilities will increase these facility offerings. Lake Fairfax and Riverbend Parks have greatly expanded water related activities including canoeing, kayaking and the Water Mine. Future facilities will include a medium-sized skate park at Lake Fairfax. A small skate facility is now offered by the Town of Herndon. Lake Fairfax offers the only cricket field in

**Heard from the public:** “I am really into skating, however the only skatepark nearby is...a thirty minute drive from my house. I think a skatepark in Lake Fairfax Park...would greatly benefit the local community because there are no skateparks on the west end of the county and it would give kids like me a place to hang out.”

the County park system and growing demand for these fields have been expressed by user groups. Lake Fairfax also hosts Frisbee Football games on its rectangle fields. Synthetic turf fields have been installed at Lake Fairfax, Hutchison School site, Herndon High School and at Arrowbrook Park. Arrowbrook Park, an urban park at the center of a future transit oriented community, offers a synthetic turf multi-use field and bocce ball court as well as an innovative wetlands nature park with boardwalks. Turner Farm provides multiple equestrian facilities.

Strategies:

UP-SD-10. Partner with other park providers to identify and provide new park facility types as needs and desires change;

UP-SD-11. Incorporate new facility needs into the development review and proffer request process;

UP-SD-12. Explore partnership opportunities with private equestrian farms in Great Falls to provide equestrian boarding, riding lessons and trails; and

UP-SD-13. Identify a park location that may be appropriate for outdoor archery.

**Issue: *The Park Authority should re-examine park master plans to determine if parks are planned to best serve the needs of Fairfax County residents.***

Several local parks are unplanned in Upper Potomac District. Understanding the relationship of these parks to the surrounding communities and the resources that may be located in these parks is important to establish through the master planning process. Riverbend Park was master planned in 1973. Since that time, original functions have changed and more information about the park’s resources has led to the development of a site specific Natural Resource Management Plan. These changes should be reflected in an updated Master Plan. An amendment to the Turner Farm master plan is warranted to determine future uses of the added land there.

Strategies:

- UP-SD-14. Revise Master Plan for Riverbend Park to update and reflect current resource stewardship and facility needs;
- UP-SD-15. Conduct Master Plan process for Reston Town Green, Fair Oaks, Clark's Landing, Fair Woods, Fox Valley, Franklin Oaks, Grand Hamptons, Holly Knoll, Lexington Estates, Lockmeade, Shaker Woods and Windermere Parks to augment current local park offerings and identify resource stewardship priorities; and
- UP-SD-16. Amend Turner Farm Master Plan to plan uses and facilities in added acreage.

***THEME: Facility Reinvestment***

The Park Authority has a great diversity of facilities and resources in various lifecycle stages. Funding and schedules for replacement or reinvestment are inconsistent and adding new facilities has sometimes taken precedence over renewal of existing facilities. Strategy suggestions include repairing, replacing, upgrading, and improving utilization of existing facilities and equipment.

***Issue: Repair, replacement, and upgrading of existing park facilities should be addressed through a system-wide lifecycle replacement program that takes into account changing facility needs.***

Park sites in the district have scheduled facility replacements that are reviewed and evaluated on an ongoing basis in relation to resource allocation, safety issues and priority. A long-term phased redevelopment of Lake Fairfax marina and core area is partially complete. Replacement of barns at Frying Pan Farm Park is underway. Athletic field improvements at Lake Fairfax will expand the playing capacity and sustainability of fields. Improvements to athletic fields that were installed prior to 1980 are overdue at Great Falls Grange, Baron Cameron, Bruin, and Chandon Parks.

Continual facility reinvestment is necessary at historic sites including Sully, Colvin Run and Frying Pan Farm in order to maintain the structural and historic integrity and support the visitor experience. Improvements at Frying Pan Farm Park including a new entrance and replacement of the barns will support better equestrian events and revenues.

Strategies:

- UP-FR-1. Consider use patterns in addition to age of facilities in determining replacement schedules and funding;
- UP-FR-2. Complete expansion of the Lake Fairfax core area including retrofitting the amusement area and expansion of the Water Mine;
- UP-FR-3. Undertake athletic field improvements at Great Falls Grange, Baron Cameron, Bruin and Chandon Parks;
- UP-FR-4. Build new visitor center at Colvin Run Mill to include restrooms, office and storage space, and visitor service areas;

- UP-FR-5. Renovate the visitor center at Frying Pan Farm to include a food services area;
- UP-FR-6. Complete the final phase of the equestrian facility improvement project at Frying Pan Farm Park to include new roads entrances, and parking lots, camper hook-ups, and Activity Center;
- UP-FR-7. Build a maintenance and equipment storage facility at Frying Pan Farm Park;
- UP-FR-8. Renovate the visitor center and nature center at Riverbend Park, including upgrades to restrooms, office and storage space, and visitor services areas;
- UP-FR-9. Build new visitor center at Sully Historic Site to include restrooms, office and storage space, and visitor service areas; and
- UP-FR-10. Improve maintenance and storage areas at Sully Historic Site.

***Issue: Parking standards and levels of service should reflect user patterns to minimize impacts on surrounding neighborhoods.***

The Riverbend Park entrance and visitor center parking lot are in particularly poor condition and additional parking areas are needed. Improvements to the park entrances and parking lots are needed at Bruin and Fred Crabtree Parks. Site usage growth at Riverbend and Lake Fairfax Parks justify additional and improved parking areas.

**Strategies:**

- UP-FR-11. Identify overflow parking areas at Riverbend and Lake Fairfax Parks that may be converted to permanent parking as needed; and
- UP-FR-12. Improve parking lots, roads, and trails at Bruin, Fred Crabtree, Frying Pan Farm and Riverbend Parks and at Sully Historic Site.

***THEME: Land Acquisition***

Additional parkland is needed to protect and buffer natural areas and historic sites and to provide room to develop new recreational facilities. Strategy suggestions include ways to continue to add appropriate land to the Park Authority's land holdings to expand the park system.

Service level standards for both local and district/countywide parkland were established through the 2004 Needs Assessment and incorporated into the Countywide Policy Plan in 2005. Parkland standards represent countywide goals for providing land for the two types of parks (Local and District/Countywide) that support service delivery and facility development and are expressed in units per population. Local parks include both suburban and urban park types. Resource-based parks occur where resources are located and therefore do not require quantitative service level standards. Please refer to the Park Classification discussion earlier in this chapter for additional information on park classification descriptions.



Based on adopted service level standards and projected population growth, Table 3 shows the projected surplus or deficit of parkland in the Upper Potomac Planning District for the year 2020.

*Table 3: Upper Potomac Planning District 2020 Parkland Needs Analysis*

<b>185,092</b>	2010 population					
<b>200,805</b>	2020 projected population					
<b>42,844</b>	District Size (acres)					
	<b>Parkland/Open Space Type</b>	<b>Service Level Standard</b>	<b>2010 Existing Acres</b>	<b>2020 Needed Acres</b>	<b>2020 Projected (Deficit)/ Surplus</b>	<b>2020 Projected Service Level</b>
<b>Public Parkland</b>	Local Suburban	5 acres / 1,000 people	635	1004	<b>(370)</b>	63%
	Urban	1.5 acres / 1,000 people plus 1 acre / 10,000 employees				
	District/Countywide <sup>+</sup>	13 acres / 1,000 people	1,702	2610	<b>(909)</b>	65%
	Resource-Based	*	2,362			
	<b>Parkland Total</b>		<b>4,699</b>			
<b>Private Open Space</b>	Private Recreation		923			
	HOA Property		4,967			
	<b>Private OS Total</b>		<b>5,890</b>			
<b>Public &amp; Private Total</b>		<b>10,589</b>				

+ The District and Countywide Parks that serve this Planning District may be located outside the Planning District and this outlying acreage is not reflected in this table.

\* There is no service level standard for Resource-Based parkland. The amount of resource based parkland owned and/or protected is based on the existence and sensitivity of the resources.

Table 3 indicates that the Upper Potomac district is highly underserved by local parkland. However, it also shows that there is more homeowner association owned (HOA) open space than public parkland in the district. About 1,350 acres of the HOA owned property is provided by Reston Association (RA) local parks. Although Reston parks are not public, they function like public parks and serve Reston’s population of 58,000 at an overall level of 23 acres per 1,000 population. Future parkland will likely be added through development proffers, stream valley additions/easements for trails and through a limited number of purchases.

**Issue: Parkland for recreation should be provided according to adopted service level standards and distributed equitably throughout the County.**

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

Additional parkland is needed for recreation facilities, especially athletic fields and facilities that support teen and senior activities. Parkland for trail networks and connections is highly desirable.

Strategies:

UP-LA-1. Request local parkland dedication as part of the development plan review process;

UP-LA-2. Request trail connections and park facilities to be constructed as part of the development plan process; and

UP-LA-3. Partner with the many other park providers in this district for accessible recreation facilities to improve facility service levels.

***Issue: Urban parks should be provided in higher density/mixed use areas of the County (i.e. Tysons Corner, Transit Station Areas, Commercial Revitalization Districts).***

Strategies:

UP-LA-4. Use the Urban Parks Framework to set developer and community expectations for urban parks and review development proposals in transit oriented areas along the Dulles Toll Road;

UP-LA-5. Master Plan Reston Town Green as an urban park near Reston Town Center; and

UP-LA-6. Use Arrowbrook Park as a model for well-integrated local parks in other transit oriented developments.

***Issue: Property acquisition is important for protecting cultural resources in Fairfax County and ensuring their preservation for future generations.***

Strategies:

UP-LA-7. Monitor availability of properties adjacent to Colvin Run Mill as possible additions to the site;

UP-LA-8. Acquire new land parcels adjacent to Frying Pan Farm Park in order to be able to develop a village concept at the park; and

UP-LA-9. Gain a lease agreement with WMATA for property south of Sully Historic Site.

***Issue: Property acquisition is an important strategy for protecting natural resources in Fairfax County and ensuring open and natural areas for future generations.***

There are several large, relatively undisturbed private parcels in the Difficult Run stream corridor, in Nichol Run and Pond Branch watersheds that provide important linkages between areas with high-quality natural resources but are not protected through

easements or other mechanisms. They may be suitable for acquisition for resource protection as park land.

Strategies:

UP-LA-10. Seek to acquire and/or protect through purchase, donation, development dedications, or conservation easements remaining natural areas in the district, especially large tracts connecting to other natural areas and those containing unique or significant natural resources; and

UP-LA-11. Explore acquisitions and/or easements in Difficult Run, Nichol Run, and Pond Branch Watersheds to link and protect high quality natural areas.

***THEME: Resource Interpretation***

Residents may not be aware of or understand the importance of the vast number of natural and cultural resources the Park Authority holds in public trust. Strategy suggestions include adding to the existing interpretive facilities, signs, and programs. Roadway and trail waysides permit park visitors opportunities to stop and view interpretive signage.

***Issue: The full range of natural and cultural resources within Fairfax County should be interpreted through facilities as needed.***

Currently resource interpretive programs primarily occur at Riverbend Park, Sully Historic Site, Colvin Run Mill and Frying Pan Farm Park. Interpretive information is also provided at Great Falls Grange, Dranesville Tavern and along the Cross County Trail. Stewardship education of park users, residents and neighbors continues to be an ongoing initiative, need and focus in order for resource protection and management efforts to succeed. Issues such as non-native, invasive plants and encroachments are priorities for education. Great Falls has recently become a Certified Community Wildlife Habitat with the National Wildlife Federation, joining Reston's 2000 Certification for a Community Wildlife Habitat.

**Heard from the public: "Look for opportunities to fight against what Richard Louv calls 'nature deficit syndrome.' Provide opportunities for kids to connect with nature."**

Strategies:

UP-RI-1. Develop new and improve existing interpretive exhibits including waysides, signs, and kiosks at Colvin Run Mill, Frying Pan Farm, Riverbend Park and Sully Historic Site;

UP-RI-2. Restore historic outbuildings in culturally sensitive areas at Colvin Run Mill Park;

UP-RI-3. Restore the historic corn crib at Riverbend Park;

UP-RI-4. Implement landscape treatment plans recommended in the cultural landscape report for Sully Historic Site;

UP-RI-5. Complete furnishing plans for historic buildings at Colvin Run Mill, Frying Pan Farm and Sully Historic Site; and

UP-RI-6. Improve the pond at Frying Pan Farm Park to enhance the visitor experience and interpretive opportunities.

***THEME: Cultural Resource Stewardship***

Many factors threaten the health, protection and viability of natural and cultural resources on county parkland. Strategy suggestions include focusing on managing threats and actively managing existing natural and cultural resources consistent with guidance provided in the countywide [Cultural Resource Management Plan](#) and [Natural Resource Management Plan](#).

The Upper Potomac Planning District contains four Historic Overlay Districts. Three of the historic districts are established around historic structures at county parks; these include the Colvin Run Mill, Dranesville Tavern, and Sully Historic Overlay Districts. In addition, the Lake Anne Historic Overlay District was established around Reston's Lake Anne Village Center.

Many significant Native American sites exist in abundance in the district, especially along the Potomac River. 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.

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, D.C. Frying Pan Farm Park contains many structures and interpretive features that represent Fairfax County's agricultural history.

***Issue: Historic structures should be stabilized, repaired, renovated and/or restored to ensure their preservation and availability for public viewing and interpretation.***

Sully was the property of Richard Bland Lee and is an example of an 18<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> century agricultural property. Colvin Run Mill operated in the 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century. Great Falls Grange and school house and Dranesville Tavern are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Threats to these historic structures include deferred maintenance, repairs and renovations and weather related events.

Strategies:

UP-NR-1. Prioritize repairs to the structurally unsound Colvin Run Mill Miller's House that is used for staff offices and interpretation;

UP-NR-2. Restore and recreate historic structures at Sully Historic Site including barn, cabins, and house; and

UP-NR-3. Make interior and exterior building improvements to historic structures at Frying Pan Farm Park.

**Issue: *Cultural Resources should be identified and evaluated prior to any proposed construction activity.***

Strategies:

UP-NR-4. For any site subject to proposed construction activity, a preliminary assessment of the property will be carried out using GIS and pedestrian reconnaissance. Should potential resources be present, a cultural resource survey will be conducted and mitigation measures will be developed, as necessary.

**Issue: *Impacts to National Register eligible cultural resources should be avoided where at all feasible. If impacts cannot be avoided mitigation level documentation or data recovery should occur.***

Strategies:

UP-NR-5. Document and record buildings and structures using Historic American Buildings/Historic American Engineering methods (research, measured drawings and archival photographs) and conduct data recovery excavations for archaeological sites, as appropriate.

**Issue: *New, expanded and upgraded facilities are needed to house artifact collections to ensure their preservation for future generations.***

No district- or park-specific strategies exist for this issue in the Upper Potomac Planning District. This is an issue of countywide concern that should be addressed with centralized facilities.

***THEME: Natural Resource Stewardship***

There are many significant known natural resources in this district including Riverbend, Little Difficult Run Stream Valley and Stratton Woods Parks. Riverbend Park is significant as it helps to preserve the globally rare Potomac Gorge habitat and 10% of North American dragonfly diversity. Little Difficult Run Stream Valley Park has a diverse assemblage of flora. Stratton Woods Park contains one of the best examples of an upland forested wetland in the County.

**Issue: *Natural habitats and the wildlife they support are disappearing due to development and are fragmented from development, trails, easements and utilities. Meadow and upland habitats are especially scarce.***

The Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority and the National Park Service own large amounts of land east and west of Riverbend Park. These public land holdings provide

large contiguous land holdings that protect the Potomac shoreline and high quality terrestrial and aquatic communities. Natural areas and stream corridors are in highly degraded conditions in the more developed areas of the district.

Strategies:

- UP-NR-6. Seek to acquire and protect remaining natural areas in the district especially large tracts, those connecting to other natural areas and those containing unique or significant natural resources;
- UP-NR-7. Protect and improve existing corridors, linkages and watersheds;
- UP-NR-8. Provide new linkages between remaining public and private natural areas;
- UP-NR-9. Manage utility corridors and other easements consistent with natural resource goals, not just utility service goals;
- UP-NR-10. Designate permanent resource protection zones on parkland that define appropriate uses and development; and
- UP-NR-11. Continue to work with numerous partners to improve and reroute trails along the Potomac to minimize impacts on rare plant communities and cultural resources.

***Issue: Water resources and stream valleys are degraded due to development and associated stormwater runoff.***

Six watersheds exist in Upper Potomac, including Cub Run, Difficult Run, Horsepen Creek, Nichol Run, Pond Branch, and Sugarland Run. Many stream valley parks are located along these streams. Difficult Run is one of the largest streams in the County (both in length and flow), and is a significant natural resource for the park system.

Natural areas and stream corridors in the Sugarland and Horsepen Run watersheds are in highly degraded conditions overall; streams have cut banks (as much as 12 feet), silted stream bottoms and low stream fauna diversity. There are very few stormwater controls to capture and/or treat stormwater, thus greatly impacting water quality.

In an effort to protect natural resources, the Park Authority works closely with the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES) on stormwater management. One example is the renovation of regional pond SU-5 next to Dranesville Tavern. Innovative stormwater management techniques are demonstrated at Arrowbrook Park, combining a natural setting, butterfly garden and interpretive area with a stormwater management pond.

Strategies:

- UP-NR-12. Work with the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES) and private land owners to capture and treat stormwater. This could take the form of incorporating Low Impact Development (LID) methods on residential and commercial lots and renovation of larger properties to provide new or enhanced stormwater facilities;



UP-NR-13. Encourage private property owners to adopt wildlife and water friendly landscaping practices to improve water quality and habitat;

UP-NR-14. Encourage the incorporation of creative stormwater management techniques at new urban parks in the Dulles Suburban Center; and

UP-NR-15. Restore riparian buffers on parkland where feasible.

**Issue: *The Park Authority does not have an adequate inventory of natural resources on parkland, nor the capacity to actively manage and protect natural resources.***

Two parks in the district, Sully and Riverbend, have been assessed through a natural resource inventory. Very little is known about what resources exist on other parks in the district and the specific threats they face. Riverbend Park staff has worked with volunteers, students and consultants to survey natural resources and there is a draft natural resource management plan for the park. Numerous management activities are already underway including meadow management, plant community surveys, buffer restoration along the Potomac River, bird surveys and nest box monitoring.

Strategies:

UP-NR-16. Direct development of park infrastructure to areas that, when inventoried, reflect few or poor quality natural resources, unless otherwise incompatible;

UP-NR-17. Ensure that natural resources are assessed prior to any park development. Use design principles that minimize natural resource impacts and include monitoring and restoration of impacted natural areas as part of development plans;

UP-NR-18. Conduct natural resource inventories and develop and implement natural resource management plans for natural areas; and

UP-NR-19. Continue and expand resource management efforts at Riverbend Park.

**Issue: *Non-native invasive plants are threatening natural resources by reducing the diversity of native species and impacting wildlife habitat.***

Non-native invasive (NNI) plants are prevalent throughout the district and are degrading native plant communities. Many of the invasive plant issues plaguing park land stem from invasive introductions from private lands. Citizens are often unaware of the problems associated with invasive plant species. Citizen participation is critical in order to limit or eliminate invasives on private property near parks and to prevent new introductions of invasive species.

Invasive removal events have occurred at Lake Fairfax, Turner Farm, Frying Pan Farm, Riverbend and Fred Crabtree Parks as part of the Invasive Management Area (IMA) pilot program. Staff at Riverbend Park has coordinated several volunteer efforts to remove non-native, invasive plants within the park.

Strategies:

- UP-NR-20. Continue and strengthen the Invasive Management Area (IMA) program that is currently established at parks in the district including Lake Fairfax, Turner Farm, Frying Pan Farm, Riverbend and Fred Crabtree Parks;
- UP-NR-21. Insure proper park development methods that reduce the opportunity for invasives to be introduced when development takes place;
- UP-NR-22. Educate citizens on the problems associated with invasive plant species. Work with them to eliminate or limit invasives on private property near parks and to prevent new introductions of invasive species; and
- UP-NR-23. Expand non-native invasive plant management and habitat restoration on parkland by implementing the Non-Native Invasive Plant [Prioritization Plan](#) and [Assessment](#).

**Issue: *The County has a goal to expand tree canopy. The Park Authority should contribute to this goal wherever possible by ensuring existing forested areas are sustainable and expanding canopy where possible.***

Tree cover is low in developed areas and on farms within the district. The large amount of public lands, stream valleys and HOA owned land, however, represents nearly a quarter of the district and provides potential for maintaining and adding trees. A conservation easement protects the majority of Stratton Woods Park's forested wetlands.

Strategies:

- UP-NR-24. Construct new park facilities in areas that require minimal removal of trees;
- UP-NR-25. Ensure sustainability of tree canopy on parkland by developing and implementing management plans and controlling threats such as non-native invasive plants and deer herbivory;
- UP-NR-26. Encourage tree planting and natural landscaping techniques on private land;
- UP-NR-27. Incorporate natural landscaping techniques on parkland, avoid tree loss from development and where possible increase tree canopy;
- UP-NR-28. Designate permanent resource protection zones in park master plans that define appropriate uses and development; and
- UP-NR-29. Reforest in and adjacent to impacted easements to the extent allowed.

**Issue: *The Park Authority should utilize innovative practices in construction of recreational facilities and buildings to minimize impacts to the environment and demonstrate stewardship.***

No district- or park-specific strategies exist for this issue in the Upper Potomac Planning District.