

COMMENT

Public Announcement of PIM

Please add an off road bike trail from Wakefield Park (eg. Wakefield Rec Center) to Lake Accotink.

PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING

For your consideration, I would like to see a trail system across part of the wetland areas that is similar to the one installed at Huntley Meadows. It would be designated for walking and photography only, no dogs, joggers or bicycles. Maybe an observation tower could be included. If there are over 116 species of birds at the park this would be a great opportunity for bird watchers and photographers. The advantage that this would have over Huntley is that it would be a clear separation between the more lively park activities with the carousel, picnic and boating area verses a quieter bird watching, nature appreciating area.

I attended the Master plan meeting this evening and forgot to leave my green comment card. I hope you keep lots of nature at Lake Accotink and don't over commercialize it. I love the park and think it is a real treasure!

Following up last night's meeting herewith are some suggestions for the park.

- Don't overdevelop. Current capacity is about right.
- Build the long overdue bridge over the creek below the dam.
- Add a play ground aimed at older kids. The current pre-school lot is not sufficient. All elementary schools have play grounds for their kids, so should the park.
- Improve debris removal from the lake.
- Begin an anti-litter campaign, Multi-lingual signage encouraging folks to put trash in cans might help. Add a trash can to the point where the upper parking lot trail leads down towards the marina. Too many folks do not bother to go over to the trash can half way down the parking lot.
- Dredge the lake.
- Clean up the streams, especially Flag Run and the stream between Heming Ave and Long Pine. It is essentially a sewer for the beltway. Although it does not flow into the lake, it does flow into Accotink Creek inside the park.
- Eradicate poison ivy, at least where it infringes on the trails.
- Remove the yard debris illegally dumped into the park on Heming Ave. across from Heming Court. (Ed said he would take care of this).
- Remove the dog pen from the upper field. It is not used so why have the fenced area?
- Encourage park employees not to drive trucks on soft, mushy fields and trails.
- Clean or better yet remove the gutters from the upper pavilion.

Thanks for your consideration of these suggestions. R. Gribbin

The area of Lake Accotink Park is critical to the Accotink Stream Valley Watershed.

Most--if not all of the ASV north of the impoundment are impaired--incapable of supporting a viable benthic population.

If these wetlands are not protected then the entire ASV will be lost.

The last best hope for the ASV is for Lake Accotink Park to be designated as a natural resource park managed as a conservation management area that applies the ecological approach of resource management to the operation of public recreational lands.

As you know I have been following the master planning process for several years. I have made numerous FOIA requests in an attempt to obtain information on the environmental condition of Flag Run which is a major tributary entering the impoundment now referred to as Lake Accotink.

Before Accotink Creek was dammed in 1918, this tributary would have flowed directly into Accotink Creek.

As you are aware this tributary as well as the upper reach of Accotink Creek along with the lake are designated as impaired by the EPA under the Clean Water Act.

In many ways the Accotink Stream Valley is a microcosm of the Potomac River Valley ecosystem. What has happened to the ASV is currently happening in other stream valleys throughout northern Virginia so what happens here is of relevance to the health of the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem.

I would like to know whether the FCPA intends to perform an environmental baseline study which clearly identifies the condition of both the terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems within the Park as part of the master planning process.

If not then I would like the FCPA to explain the reason an environmental baseline study is not necessary.

I would also appreciate an explanation as to the reason a Natural Resource Management Plan has not been drafted in accordance with the recommendations in both the Lake Accotink General Management Plan approved by the FCPA Director well over two decades ago--as well as the FCPA NRMP adopted by the PAB in January 2014.

Your prompt response answering these questions will be greatly appreciated.

Thanks for all you do for our excellent park system in Fairfax. I have an 'ask' that I would like to put forward. It would be wonderful to have bicycle parking facilities at Wakefield Park, specifically when you enter the park by the softball fields. Covered bike parking would also be nice there.

Here are the specific reasons why I'm asking for this:

-My wife and I have started biking to the park to do our weekly walks around the lake. There isn't any good bike parking there and we must ride all the way to the Audrey Moore rec center.

-My wife started a job in Tysons Corner and would like to take the 495 bus to work from the bus stop there on Braddock Road at the entrance to Wakefield. She would like to ride her bike to the park from our home along Ravensworth and leave her bike there while she rides the bus to work, then ride back home after returning on the bus. This would mean one fewer car on the roads.

Bike parking is also needed at the marina at Lake Accotink.

Are there currently any plans to put more bike parking in these locations?

I was able to attend the initial Public Information Meeting regarding the Lake Accotink Park Master Plan Revision.

Like so many others in the area, I consider Lake Accotink “my park.” My husband and I have lived less than one mile from the park for over 30 years. Lake Accotink provides a welcome respite from the frantic pace of Northern Virginia. It is a place for quiet reflection, being in nature, exercise and so much more.

In thinking of a future Master Plan, I believe the natural areas, trails and waterways should be kept and protected. If additional modifications must be made, they should be kept in the already developed areas. Protect the wildlife, trails and woods for the future. Keeping the developed, commercial area of the park the location for boats, events, mini-golf, parking and the like. I strongly disagree with putting any form of a dog park at this park.

As you know, Lake Accotink is home to numerous wildlife, water fowl and other birds – to include Bald Eagles. The Park trails and woodlands should stay naturalized. Above all, there is a great need for staffing and monitoring of the Park – it is desperately understaff/manned.

One side of Lake Accotink (the parking/carousel/vending area) should be treated as the event center. Preserving this park for people to walk, nature watch, run/bike ride responsibly and enjoy. Treating the undeveloped areas as a true Park/Wildlife refuge.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback. I look forward to future meetings and discussions.

LAKE SUSTAINABILITY WORKSHOP

request for bike racks in the park

Here was Group 8's input/observations:

- We would like to hear about Lessons Learned from other Lake Sustainability efforts within Fairfax, Commonwealth of Virginia or Lakes nationwide to have an understanding on expected/un-expected impacts.
- Need some, even limited analysis on wildlife impacts to form any sort of opinion on Options A-E; Our questions were what is the impact to the Eagles that we assume need fish or other wildlife; or will mosquitoes increase dramatically with Option D or E.
- For Options A, B, and C that require Dredging; use the Trains to help in the removal of the dredged material; Or can you simply pump it onto the areas of the land that are full of invasive plant species, realize it will also harm/kill good plant species so return on investment will have to be evaluated.
- Option D, we did not like this option.
- Option E, interesting idea that offered boating and wetlands as well as retaining hiking and biking trails; if you had to dredge parts of the lake, this material could be used to form the barrier between the Lake and the Stream..

Submitted Design solution;

Move the lake spillway to the entrance of Accotink Creek from the Dam site.

This would be accomplished by installing a dual water weir at lake level where creek enters lake.. One weir would provide water to fill and keep lake full from evaporation ; plus in event of rain on lake it would allow reverse flow out of lake.

The other weir [at same level] would be connected to a lake by-pass to below Dam. this would be an open lined designed near lake level and catch additional runoff from western shore between Accotink Creek and Dam. The by-pass would discharge downstream from dam.

In this design most of the steady state silt would bypass lake.

At time of severe flooding the water would split between by-pass and over existing lake spillway. In long run minimum silt to lake.

In addition the by-pass could be used to "trickle-down" existing silt with from a slow low flow dredging facility permanently at lake. [This is the same technique that the reactor water from the Three mile island disaster was disposed of].

PS; Gayle, if this is not clear / let me know and I am willing to sit with you or other persons on this subject to discuss.

Gayle, Please consider this request from the Friends of Accotink Creek:

Lake Accotink Park Master Plan – Environmental Baseline Study

The Friends of Accotink Creek express concern that the FCPA will proceed with the Lake Accotink Park Master Plan without a thorough science based study and evaluation of the ecological condition of the Park.

We note:

- The General Management Plan for Lake Accotink Park states the first purpose of Lake Accotink Park is to preserve, protect, and restore natural resources--both terrestrial and aquatic.
- The Lake Accotink Park Master Plan website omits reference to the FCPA's Natural Resource Management Plan.
- Although the Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan*, the FCPA Natural Resource Management Plan, and the General Management Plan for Lake Accotink Park indicate the Park should be managed to protect native ecosystems, the FCPA has not developed a Natural Resource Management Plan for the Park.

Preservation of the treasured natural resources of Lake Accotink Park (and parks in general) is an imperative to achieving Fairfax County's environmental vision and responsibility. The Friends of Accotink Creek request the FCPA to complete an Environmental Baseline Study as a prerequisite to Master Plan revision.

* Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan 2013 Edition, Area 1, Annandale Planning District, Amended through 4-29-2014, A6-Accotink Community Planning Sector, Page 134, Parks and Recreation Recommendations Sector A6, Park Classification identifying Lake

Gayle, Some comments from the Friends of Accotink Creek:

Lake Accotink Park Master Plan – Lake Sustainability

Here lies the quandary for those who must ponder the future of Lake Accotink:

- Everyone wants the esthetic, recreational, and sediment-collecting benefits of the lake.
- Everyone wants the benefits of wetlands habitat.
- Everyone wants the aquatic wildlife benefits of a free flowing stream.
- No one wants the responsibility of maintaining the dam.
- No one wants the cost and complications of dredging.

The Friends of Accotink Creek cannot easily resolve this quandary, but we do offer some thoughts:

- Decisions must consider the impact on freshwater mussels below the dam. This sole surviving population in Accotink Creek seems dependent upon the dam, as described in the recent biological survey found here:

http://www.accotink.org/2015/AccotinkCreekMusselSurvey_20160316.pdf

- Option A, continued periodic dredging, is an obvious financial and logistical burden, does not reconnect the stream, and begs the question of how long before maintenance of the dam itself becomes unfeasible. Yet, the sediment capture benefit is great.
- Option B, installation of a forebay with annual dredging, would require construction of a permanent truck road through wooded areas, inconsistent with the natural resource stewardship mission of the Park.
- Option C, installation of steel “beaver dams” upstream would offer little lasting benefit while fragmenting the stream habitat and filling the Park’s environment with what will become piles of man-made junk. However we urge any and all measures that would encourage real beaver dams built by real beavers (or possibly man-made equivalents of natural materials).

I understand that you are the FCPA project manager for the Lake Accotink restoration project near Braddock Road and I-495.

I am a resident of the Ravensworth Farm neighborhood. I understand that you held a public consultation meeting about 2 months ago. Unfortunately, I could not attend.

Like many residents of my neighborhood, I also enjoy Lake Accotink and would like to see it revived and restored.

I understand that there are several options being considered and I would like to voice my support for the option to dredge the lake and deepen it.

Given the runoff entering the lake is stormwater runoff from I-495 and other neighborhoods, it contains sediment as well as contaminants. From talking with Lake Accotink FCPA staff during the last dredging operation I understand that a major concern is the high cost of disposing of the dredging material as it contains contaminants from I-495 - possibility asbestos. I would like to voice my support for keeping the dredging material within the park so that it does not have to be treated. At the same time, the accumulation of sediment in the lake has to be slowed and sediment forebays are needed.

Please find attached a concept plan figure attached to this email. The area proposed for the deposition of dredging material takes into account the following initial estimate computations:

- Assuming 23 ft of sediment is removed, the volume of sediment removed will be approx. $3,770,140 \text{ ft}^2 * 23 \text{ ft} = 86,713,220 \text{ ft}^3$.
- For initial estimation purposes, assume that the sediment is placed in a pile approx. 63 feet high. Approximating the pile as a pyramid we would need a pyramid 1,383 ft² in base area - please see footprint on attached figure. (Volume of pyramid, $V = \text{Base} * \text{Height} / 3$, Base = 1,383.2 ft², Height = 63 ft, $V = 86,713,220 \text{ ft}^3$).

I am willing to discuss this with you if you like.

Thank you for taking this information into consideration.

Burke Lake - 35 ft deep- clearer water- strong fish populations -is dramatically different because it isn't a repository for runoff water- and the state owns the lake- people get this- Accotink Lake is great to walk around- to see the birds, some small time fishing- moving the pontoon boat to Burke(where it is popular) should be seen as an omen, a sign that boat lake recreation, financed by the county, should end/shift- to Burke. Keep the lake healthy, attractive//

Thanks for sharing. It appears keeping the lake is costing Fairfax 1m a year or \$4 for each of the 250K visitors that drives to the park. I would not be surprised if there were 1m visits per year to the lake. I probably bike or run around the lake 10 times each year and I always enter from wakefield park or the surrounding neighborhoods. Long story short in my opinion is that the cost of dredging is not that unreasonable given the number of visitors.

My opinion aside, I do think the dredging challenges is worth a mention in the Truro Trails to remind our community of the positive impact that the stream restoration has on Lake Accotink.

As requested, here are a few suggestions for improving the park trail. I have been running on the trail at least three days a week since 1985.

Improve/pave the Lake Accotink trail within 100 yards each way of the intersection of the Carrleigh Parkway Trail and the Lake Accotink Trail. The Lake Accotink trail in that area is very rough - many rocks, roots and erosion problems. This area is now the worst part of the whole lake trail. I have fallen two or three times in that area. It badly needs smoothing and paving.

The planned bridge at the Lake dam spillway also needs to be completed.

And an additional portajohn or two scattered around the trail would be helpful.

Thank you again for the chance to comment! Overall the trail is much better now than three years ago. Thank you for your fine efforts to upgrade the trail!

There is a tremendous need for kids to have a place to be outdoors and active. TrailsforYouth works with hundreds of kids from several schools that surround Lake Accotink. We provide outdoor recreation opportunities that mentors the kids on healthy lifestyles, environmental stewardship and engaging in the outdoors safely. We are currently working with FCPA to implement a bicycle pump track at Brookfield Park. Many years ago, when we were seeking a partner park for a bicycle pump track originally thought of LAP but was told a Master Plan revision was not being done. Well here we are.

I highly recommend using the Ravenel Field space to construct a bicycle pump track that kids from all the surrounding communities could use to enjoy honing their bike skills, improving bike skills and getting many hours of much needed exercise. Bicycle Pump Tracks are hugely popular, require minimal upkeep/maintenance and provide hours of exercise to kids of all ages and abilities. They appeal to a wide range of kids (and adults).

TrailsforYouth.Org would welcome the opportunity to work with FCPA to construct and maintain a bicycle pump track particularly at Ravenel or McLaren Sgt. fields.

I am writing today to voice my concern of the process for the master plan community discussions. I have attended 2 of these meetings so far, both on the western side of the park. I live and work on the eastern side of Lake Accotink Park. There are many communities who use this park. I am wondering why there are not meetings being held and open to the community on the east side of the park? We are a diverse community with many ideas on it's use and future, and our many voices need to be heard. Is FCPA planning on conducting community input sessions from the communities on the east side of Lake Accotink Park in the 22150 zip code? Please advise, I will continue to promote the community meetings as it's important for all of us that use and love the park, to have a say in it's future. But I do request that efforts are made to include ALL the communities that surround the park on all sides.

FACILITIES AND PROGRAMMING WORKSHOP

Dear Park Officers, I'm writing to propose a project to build a bird-watch trail and a bird blind for bird photography at Lake Accotink Park. I live near Lake Accotink Park and really enjoy going to the park to take bird pictures. Lake Accotink attracts a lot of birds because of its wide variety of water body, bushes, grasses, and trees. A hidden bird-watch trail and a permanent bird blind will make the park even more unique and attractive to people who love nature, animals, and art.

If such an idea is acceptable, I would like to volunteer to lead such a project, to donate my money and to seek help and contribution from the bird-watch and bird photography groups to support such a project, and to work with the Park Authority and staff from the site selection, design, construction, through maintenance stages to assure such a trail and blind are built properly and maintained for good use.

Thank you for your consideration of this proposal. My contact information is: Haiping Luo, hpluo@yahoo.com, 202-709-5218

I am a regular (5+ day/week) user of the trails at Lake Accotink. I've been unable to attend the meetings about the master plan revision – the one on 12/5 is also in conflict with 2 other things I must attend, and so I would like to offer some comments via email.

I've lived in North Springfield since 1998. We moved from the City of Alexandria to Heming Avenue – just a few houses from the park entrance – when our children were 4 and 2. The park with its beautiful lake, the playground, trails, and merry-go-round were all BIG factors in our decision to purchase. When we acquired a dog in 1999, she had so much energy that I started running again, and the loop around Lake Accotink became a regular favorite. It's about 4.25 miles from my house, around the lake and back – a perfect distance for a run or a long walk.

Over the years I have come to feel Lake Accotink is a place where “the veil is thin” – it is a special, special little spot of near-heaven in the midst of suburban blight. The beauty of the light on the water is incomparable. There are places along the path where you feel like you are far from everything and that brings a kind of peace you cannot find many other places in our busy area. Being able to run across a variety of wild-life is both entertaining and meaningful to people of all ages.

On October 8, 2015, our only son Mark was tragically killed at Va Tech after a car hit him as he rode his bike to classes. In the days, weeks and months that have followed, being able to get out of my house and walk around the lake has been deeply healing to me as we've struggled with this horrendous loss. God has walked with me along those familiar paths.

I recognize the challenges of keeping the lake usable and the upkeep necessary as facilities age (all while it seems like less and less money is available). I've supported

TRAILS WORKSHOP

Thank you for the invitation to attend the Trails Workshop. Unfortunately I will not be able to attend, but I do have a few comments that I submit for your consideration. My family has lived on Carrleigh Parkway in Springfield for 31 years and as a lifelong runner, I have used the Accotink Trail at least three times a week during that time. First, I commend you on the recent improvements to the trail - including the additional paving in the valley area and the paving of the Kings Park playground hill. They have made a significant positive difference - especially when the trail is wet. Thank you! Second, I recommend that you next pave the trail for the first 100 yards in each direction where it intersects with the trail coming down from Carrleigh Parkway. The Accotink Trail in this area is very eroded with rocks and roots exposed that make the trail dangerous. I have tripped and fallen a number of times in this area. I consider it the most dangerous portion of the whole trail around the lake. Third, I recommend that a couple of portajohns be strategically placed around the trail. Fourth, I recommend that the discussed and planned bridge across the dam spillway area be completed. The flooding in this area continues to be the weak link in the whole trail experience.

Again, thank you very much for the opportunity to comment and for your continued fine efforts to improve the Accotink Trail!

First, congratulations on the new trail access by the tot lot in Danbury Forest. I know that creating this easement with Danbury Forest took a lot of time and paperwork, but the result is excellent

A Coherent Trails Plan

It is time to create a coherent trails plan – and trail marking plan -- for Lake Accotink Park. (Scotts Run Park has recently done this.) This plan should reflect people’s needs as they actually use the trails.

I would suggest that this plan include:

1. The Cross County Trail segment through Lake Accotink Park. This is already (sparsely) marked.
2. A Lake Accotink Loop Trail. (This includes a section of the Cross-County Trail.)
3. Feeder trails leading out to various trail access points in the neighborhoods (to the Carrleigh Parkway access, to Rolling Road, to Ravensworth Farms, etc.).

Many people walk the loop trail around the lake. We see them every day at the end of our street.

The trail plan should include a designated Accotink Lake Loop Trail. It should be clearly marked around the lake.

This trail includes sidewalk which is owned by the Virginia Department of Transportation. (But so does the Cross-County Trail.) This may offer a bureaucratic challenge, but I’m sure you can make it happen. There is particular need for trail indicators in this section.

The Park Authority should provide clear signage where the trail continues onto public sidewalks in Danbury Forest. People often emerge from the woods and ask “Where is the trail?”. In the interim, Danbury Forest residents have posted signs at each end where the trail emerges from the woods.

Clear Signage

Lake Accotink Park should have clear signage designating trails, and indicating distances. Each trail intersection should have a clear sign with directions and distances. (And signs on the Accotink Loop Trail should indicate the distance to the marina in each direction.) For example, the T-intersection east of the bridge could have the following signs (distances are estimates for illustration only):

Cross-County Trail

- ☒ Braddock Road 0.4 mile
- ☒ Wakefield Park 1.1 mile
- ☒ Potomac River 25.5 miles
- Accotink Marina 1.9 miles ☒
- Occoquan Creek 16.2 miles ☒

Accotink Loop Trail

- Accotink Marina 1.9 miles ☒
- ☒ Accotink Marina 1.8 miles

Signs about the high-water flooding when it rains should be posted where the trail user makes a choice of trails (for example, not just south of Braddock Road, but at the T intersection).

Large, clear trail maps should be posted in each of the information kiosks around the lake.

Clear and consistent trail markers or blazes should also be adopted. There are currently remnants of at least three systems of trail markers.

I note also that the park activity information in the kiosks around the park is inconsistent, and is often not current.

Non-designated Trails

The park has a network of non-designated trails, especially in the woods on the west side of the park.

The park staff should be vigilant that no new “rogue” trails are created which would further fragment the natural forest habitat.

Hazards

Repeated budget cuts have taken a serious toll on maintenance of trails.

Rogue bike trails on steep slopes by the trail, which are a safety hazard, and which cause damaging erosion to slopes, are slow to be closed off.

Fallen limbs across the trail are removed promptly, but a fallen tree with massive poison ivy vines has been encroaching on the trail for months.

I wanted to follow up on our brief meeting at the Accotink Trails meeting the other week in regards to my interest in improving accessibility to our water parks for seniors and people with disabilities. Specifically, I wanted to suggest that the Park Authority look into the possibility of installing docks that are designed to allow people to easily access the water with kayaks or canoes. Here is one example of what I am suggesting:
<http://ezdockusa.com/products/ez-dock-products/ez-launch-kayak-and-canoer/>

I have used something like this at the Bladensburg Waterfront park in MD and it works great. http://outdoors.pgparcs.com/Sites/Bladensburg_Waterfront_Park.htm

A representative of the Park Authority made a presentation at a recent Commission on Aging meeting and showed data from your community needs assessment. If I understood the findings correctly, they seem to have shown that “boating/fishing/camping” was the 4th most desired program in the 50-69 age group and the 10th most desired need in the 70 and older group. These data suggest that there could be interest in accessible launch ramps by this age group. I do not know the extent to which people with various disabilities would want to take advantage of such ramps. But if Maryland Parks found a need for these ramps, I would think the same need would exist in Fairfax.

At the meeting you suggested contacting Chris Goldbecker. Would you please send me his email address as well as any other suggestions for how I can best advocate for the accessible boat ramp.

Hello FCPS,

I take from the latest email release that the you are awaiting the receipt of the VDEQ report, after which time you will release a Draft Master Plan for public input. I would like to better understand how the input at the public meetings is being interpreted in the draft plan.

I feel like even before the VDEQ report is in hand, it would be possible for FCPS to release, via the project webpage, the results of public usage questionnaires and how input that is being interpreted into general goals and priorities for Accotink park. This information would provide an integral step between public input to the process and draft master plan. It would also clarify how FCPS came to the conclusions it used to guide the draft master plan.

I hope you will consider my input.

I use Lake Accotink to hike around the lake. There are 2 issues I wish to raise assuming the Lake is to be preserved. The first is a bridge across the dam so when there is precipitation you can cross any time.

Second, the section of the hike around the lake that takes a hiker past a townhouse community, then an elementary school then a second townhouse community. I realize that to do so means an elevated walkway behind these locations such as exists in other parks due to the soggy ground and maybe excavation of hillsides at certain points but that has been done in portions of the trail around Lake Mercer and the SouthRun trail section in Springfield and it works well.

As you develop the Master Plan for Lake Accotink, I would ask that installing exercise equipment like was done last year at Royal Lake Park be incorporated. Outdoor experiences such as exercise is certainly a part of the Park Authority's long term plan (or should be). Funding needs to be identified; for comparison purposes, the Royal Lake project cost about \$45K, including all equipment, materials, and installation for 14 stations. Burke Lake Park has exercise equipment very similar to what Royal Lake has and believe Accotink would benefit as well.

I was the neighborhood volunteer for the Royal Lake effort. Should you have any questions on equipment types, placement, and selection please let me know.