



Lake Accotink Overview

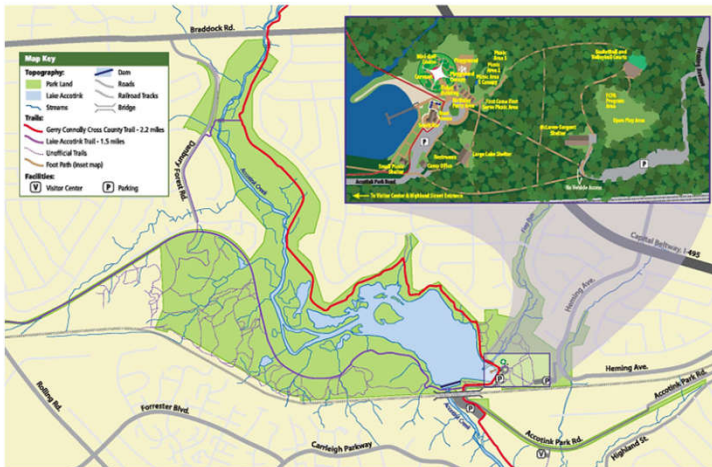
Item Type: Information

Adam Wynn, Project Manager & Senior Planner, Fairfax County Park Authority
Charles Smith, Branch Chief, Department of Public Works & Environmental Services

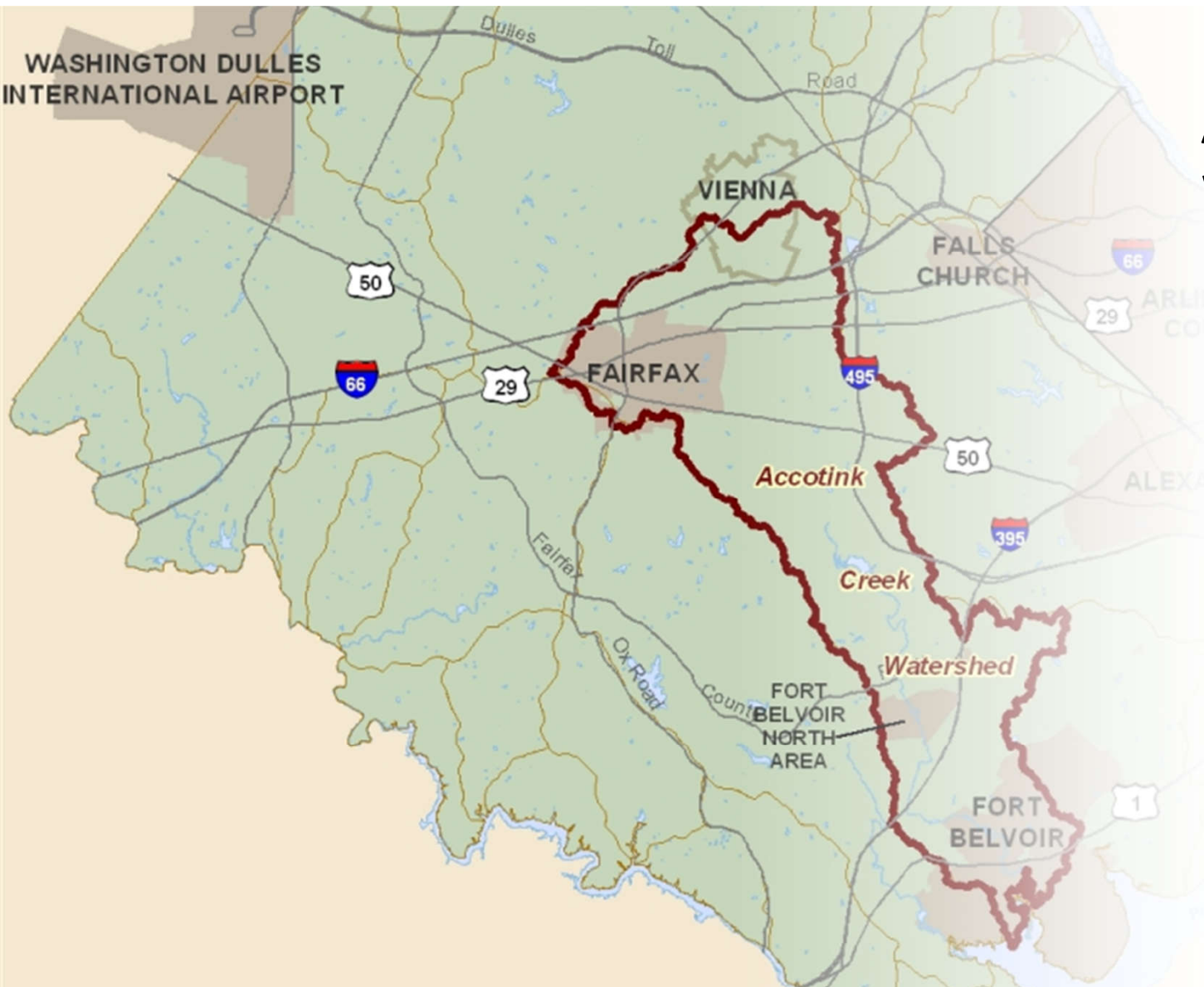
June 26, 2023

Lake Accotink Park

- "Accotink" is an Algonquin name, likely for the largest Native American village which occurred along this stream.
- Current Dam Constructed in 1943 by US Army
- Initial Land Purchased by the Fairfax County Park Authority in the early 60's
- Park is 476 Acres; Lake Accotink is 55 Acres
- Park visited by over 250,000 people per year
- Accessible to residents from numerous communities



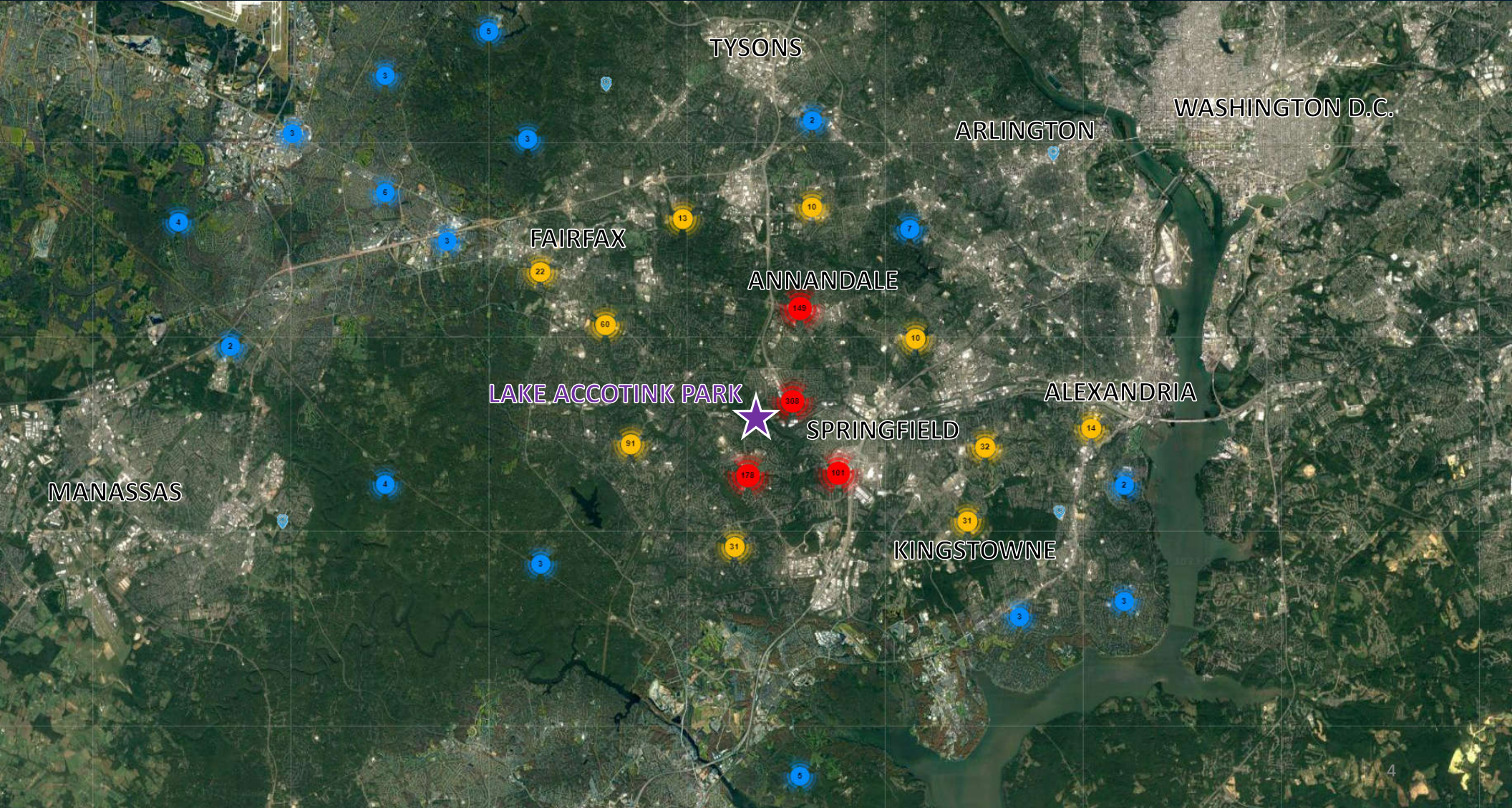
Additional Resources: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/lake-accotink>
<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/planning-development/lakeaccotink>



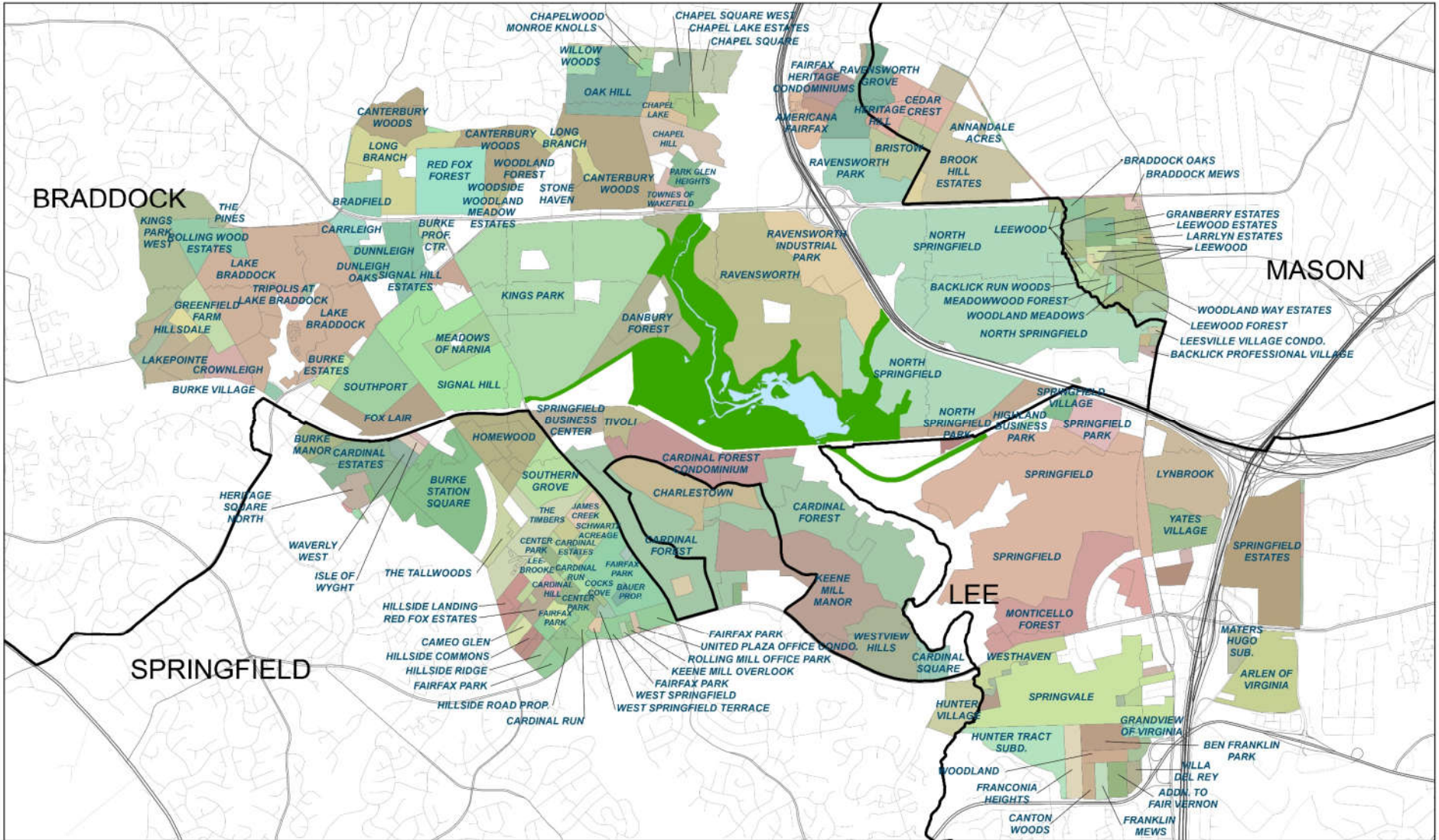
Accotink Creek Watershed

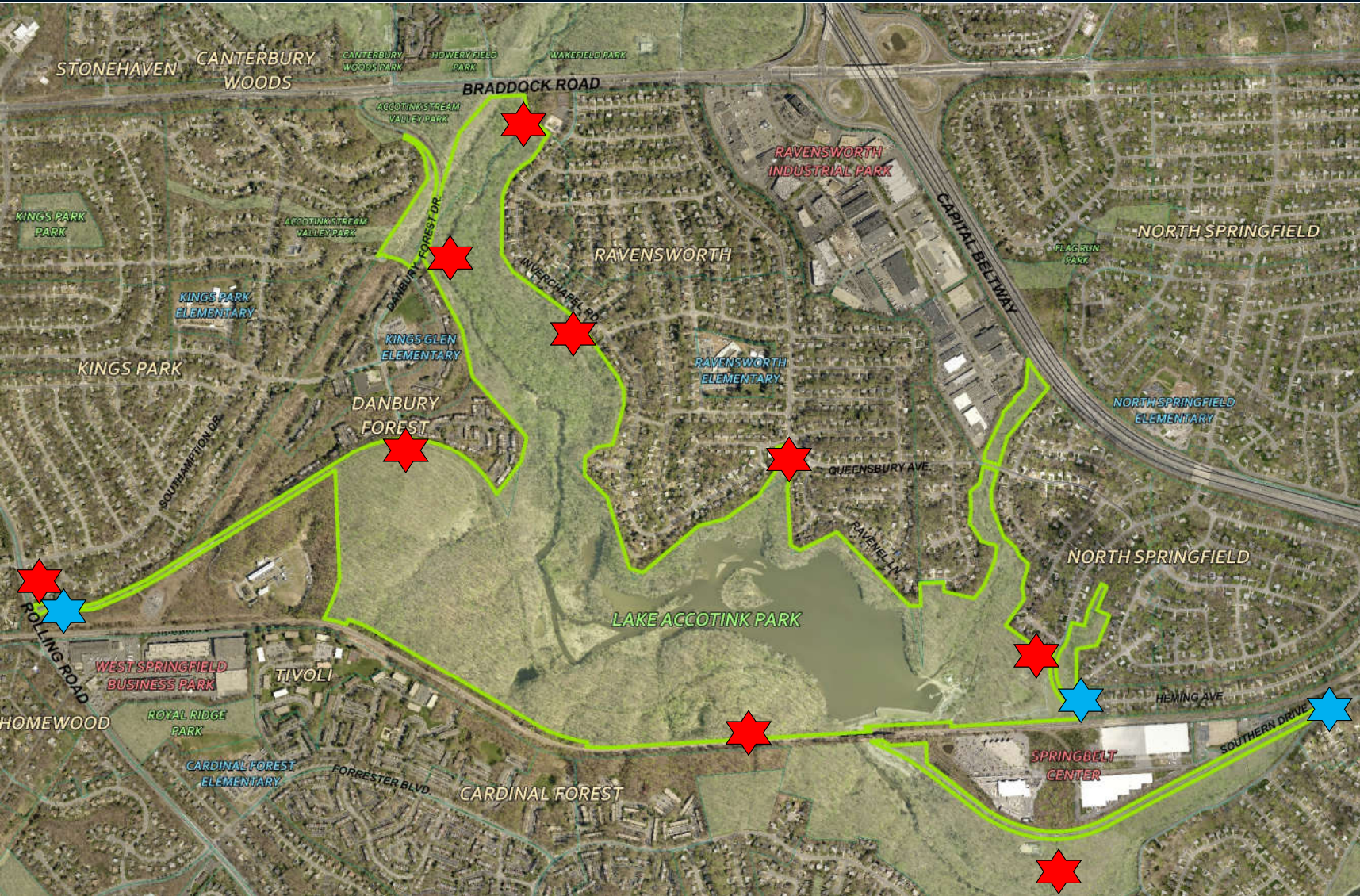
- 51 square miles (32,640 acres) in total size
- 30 square miles (~19,000 acres) to Lake Accotink
- Averages 27% impervious surfaces
- Much of the watershed built-out before stormwater controls were required
- 111 miles of stream
- 68 stream miles upstream of Lake Accotink

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/publicworks/stormwater/accotink-creek-watershed>

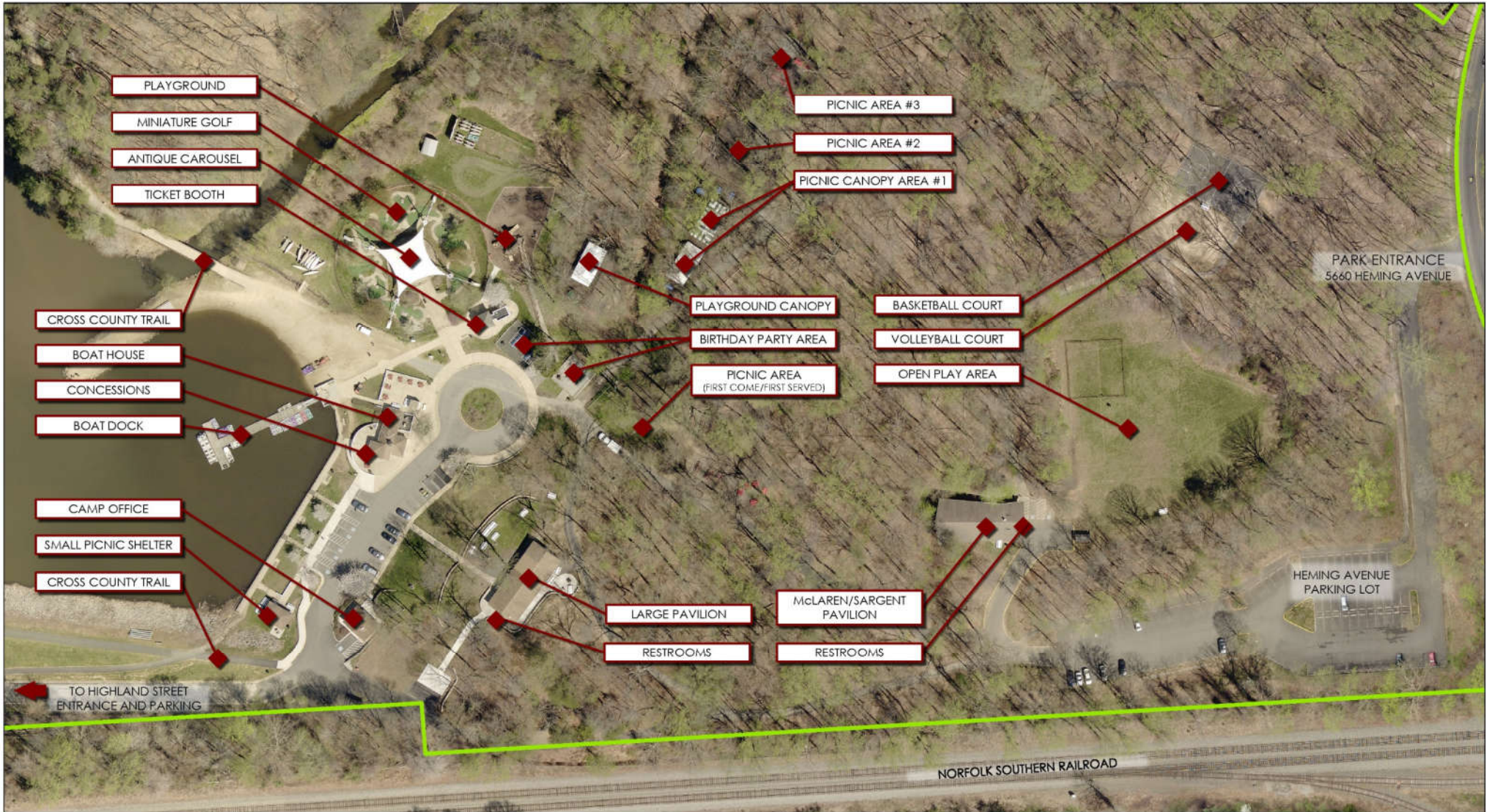


FAIRFAX COUNTY
VIRGINIA





- ★ VEHICULAR ACCESS
- ★ PEDESTRIAN ACCESS



A HISTORIC TIMELINE OF LAKE ACCOTINK PARK

NATIVE AMERICANS



The original inhabitants of the lands around Accotink Creek lived as semi-sedentary hunters and gatherers who moved seasonally to follow game. 12,000 Years ago until European contact, Native Americans hunted, gathered and camped here.



CIVIL WAR ENCAMPMENTS & CULVERTS

Because the O&A was an important part of the Union army's supply line in Northern Virginia, it was a prominent target for Confederate raiders including JEB Stuart's cavalry and John S. Mosby's raiders. In addition to these attacks by organized soldiers, civilians participated in night-time guerilla raids tearing up tracks and attempting to derail trains. These culverts underneath the rail bed serve as evidence of guerilla activities. These culverts provided shelter for soldiers and civilians waiting to sabotage passing trains. In response to a failed derailment attempt on 26 July 1863, Union General George G. Meade issued a proclamation calling for severe punishment to be levied against civilians interfering with railroad activity. Soldiers of the 155th New York and 4th Delaware camped on the south side of the railroad tracks in 1863 to combat these attacks on the railroad



RAVENSWORTH TRACT

In 1685, the area of Lake Accotink Park was part of the 22,000 acre Ravensworth Tract (House built ca. 1795) and originally served as a tobacco plantation. In 1829, Robert E. Lee's mother died there. After Robert E. Lee's death, Mary Custis Lee moved to Ravensworth, which she had inherited. With her death there, it passed to the Lee's second son, W. H. F. Lee, in 1874. In August of 1926, arson destroyed the mansion.



ORANGE AND ALEXANDRIA RAILROAD & THE CIVIL WAR

The trestle was built in 1851 to help trains on the Orange and Alexandria Railroad Line cross the creek. However, this location became an attractive target for the Confederacy. During the raid on Burke Station on Dec. 28, 1862, Maj. Gen. J.E.B Stuart led the burning of the trestle by the command of Robert E. Lee's son, Brig. Gen. Fitzhugh Lee



THE DAM

Originally known as the Springfield Dam when it was first built in 1918, the structure created Lake Accotink as a safe, stable water source. The dam originally cost \$100,000 to build and was contracted to the Ambursen Construction Company. The reservoir it created covered 110 acres and was 23 feet deep. Because the dam threatened the integrity of the railroad bridge, the first dam was dismantled in 1922. In 1943, the Army Corps of Engineers rebuilt the dam for \$19,000. Due to siltation caused by storm water runoff, the lake has now shrunk to 55 acres and a depth of 3-5 feet.



PARK HISTORY

The Fairfax County Park Authority began leasing the land from the federal government in 1960. The primary public services offered were boating and concessions. Picnic areas, covered shelters, trails and a playground were added soon after. In 1965 the Park Authority purchased the land under the federal Land to Parks program for \$88,250. Today, an 18-hole miniature golf course, antique carousel, diverse classes, camps, events, and programs compliment the basic services begun in the 1960s.



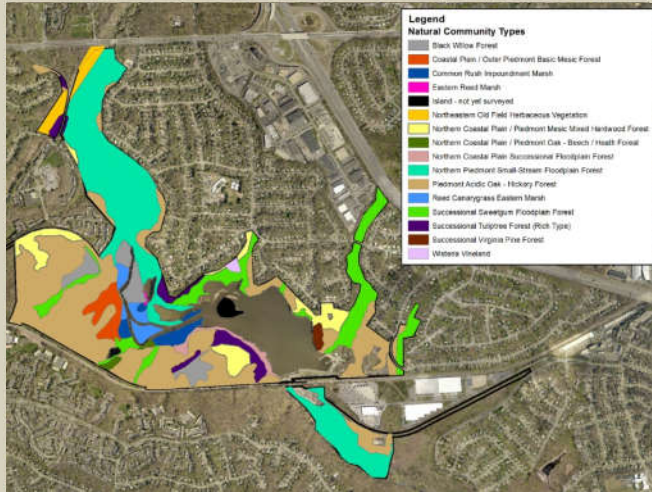
1600

1700

1800

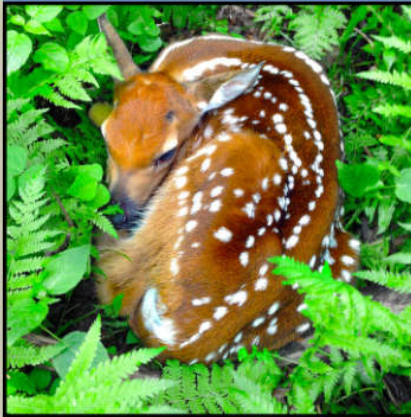
1900

2000



LAKE ACCOTINK VEGETATION MAP

WILDLIFE



At least 146 species of birds have been sighted by users of Lake Accotink Park, including a nesting bald eagle. Common bird species found throughout the year include Canada Goose, Mallard, Great Blue Heron, Turkey Vulture, Red-shouldered Hawk, and Red-bellied Woodpecker. For mammals, coyotes, raccoons, red foxes, white-tailed deer, Virginia opossums, and gray squirrels are the main residents in the area. Outside of birds and mammals, Lake Accotink Park is also home to many species of fish, amphibians, and reptiles.

MANAGEMENT



Lake Accotink Park has been surveyed for invasive species under the non-native invasive assessment protocol. Throughout the park, invasive species of plants have been treated, especially in areas where there has been parkland development to ensure that invasive plants species would not become worse. Species considered invasive within Lake Accotink Park include phragmites and mile-a-minute weed. To act as a biological control for the mile-a-minute weed, stem-boring weevils were released under a national project run by the University of Delaware.

While not an invasive species, deer management is also done at Lake Accotink Park. The management program is overseen by the Police Department and has been in effect since the 2011-2012 hunting season. The primary method of hunting has been by archery, though sharpshooting was implemented once during the 2012-2013 hunting season. In addition, deer browse levels are being monitored at several sites throughout Lake Accotink Park.

RESTORATION



LAKE ACCOTINK PARK MASTER PLAN REVISION



SO MANY THINGS TO SEE AND DO

Lake Accotink Park provides opportunities for outdoor recreation and enjoying nature across its 449 acres. Central to the park is a 55-acre lake which is surrounded by wetlands and forest. As one of Fairfax County's three lakefront parks, Lake Accotink Park attracts visitors from across the county but feels like a neighborhood park to the many residents who live nearby. Lake Accotink Park offers opportunities to hike and bike miles of trails, fish from the shoreline, and observe the changing of the seasons. From May through October, the park offers bike, canoe, and paddle boat rentals as well as tour boat rides around the lake to expand on the ways to explore the park. A 9-hole miniature golf, historic carousel, and playgrounds provide family amusements. Lake Accotink is a great place to enjoy a family picnic or social gathering – among the trees, on the grass, or in a covered pavilion. A concessions stand and restrooms add to the comfort of a visit to the park. Lake Accotink Park also serves to build a sense of community through hosting summer concerts and camps as well as perpetual favorites such as the Bark in the Park pet events and the yearly Cardboard Boat Regatta. Whether young or old, active or a little more laid back, two-legged or four, Lake Accotink Park continues to provide enjoyment to thousands of visitors each year.

PICNICKING

Each year thousands of people gather at Lake Accotink Park for picnics to celebrate cultural holidays, family reunions, or just to be together while enjoying a change of scenery and a change of pace. The park has four open-air picnic areas and three covered shelters, all of which can be reserved for a fee. In addition, there are several clusters of picnic tables in a semi-wooded area that may be used on a first-come, first served basis. A sand volleyball court, basketball court, and open play area are available for casual use.



TRAILS

The park's varied trail system attracts nearby residents as well as others from around the region. The park rents out bikes during marina operating days, so visitors need not own a bike in order to ride the scenic park trails.

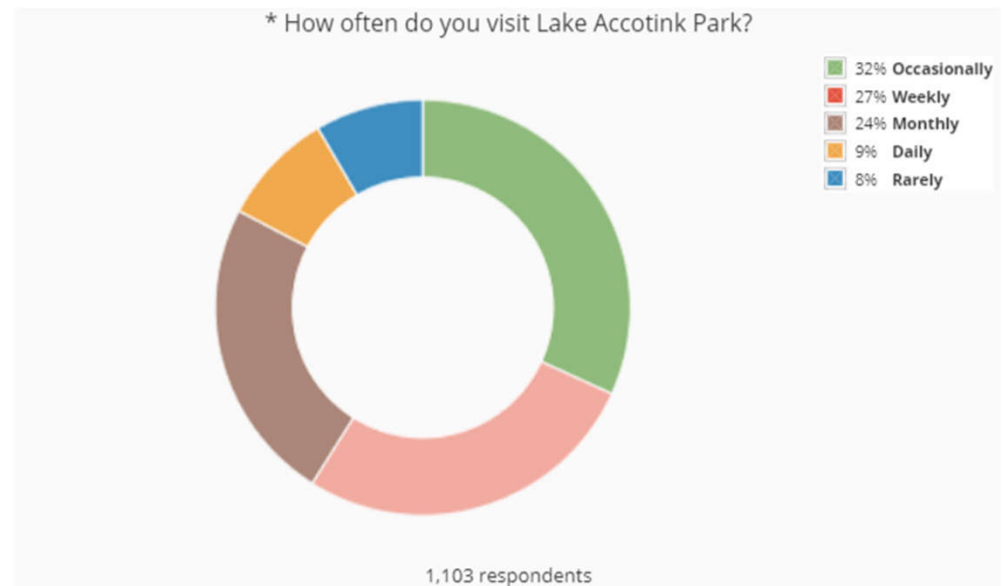
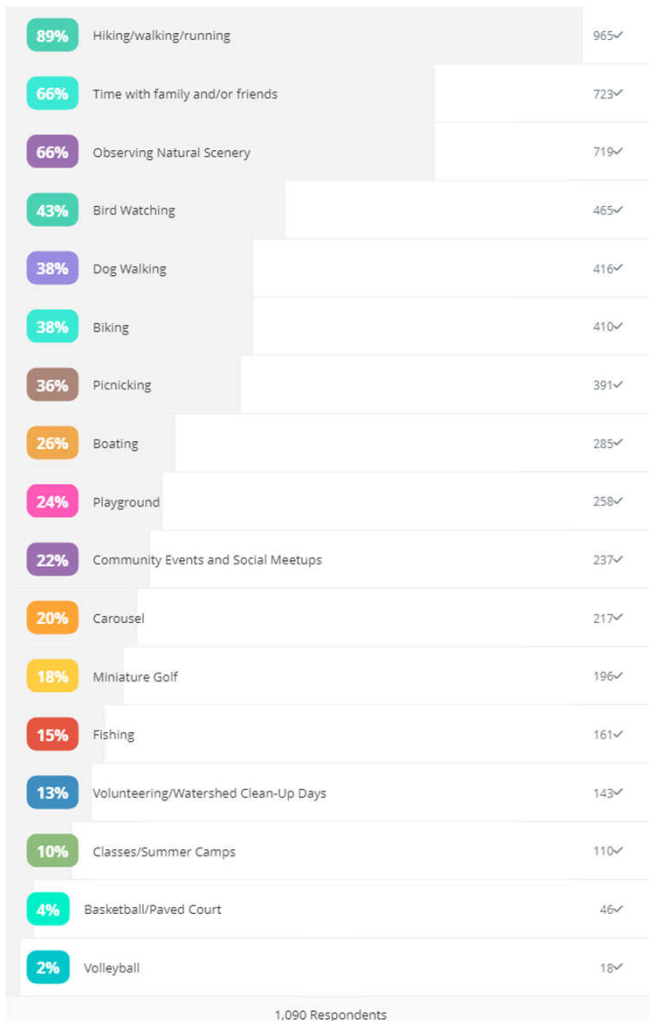


EVENTS

Each year the park issues dozens of permits to external groups conducting events such as 5K runs or walks, often for charitable purposes and to build community. The park also hosts one of the Park Authority's largest annual events. The Cardboard Boat Regatta, now in its 27th year, attracts hundreds of spectators who witness as many as 50 boats made entirely out of cardboard competing for prizes and glory.



2023 Community Survey Results



STAYING CONNECTED



TRAIL AND PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS IN AND NEAR LAKE ACCOTINK PARK

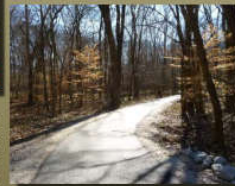
Lake Accotink Park offers a variety of trails that attract hikers, bikers, strollers, and dog walkers. These trails allow visitors a safe route to explore Lake Accotink's 449 acres. Many of these trails provide links to the surrounding communities, making Lake Accotink Park accessible to thousands of nearby homes without the need to get in a car.

GERRY CONNOLLY CROSS COUNTY TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS 5,500 LINEAR FEET TRAIL RESURFACED PROJECT COMPLETED: DECEMBER 2015



Improvements to the Gerry Connolly Cross County Trail, as it runs through Lake Accotink Park, were recently completed.

5,500 linear feet of gravel trail was resurfaced with asphalt or concrete to provide an all-weather surface. A wooden bridge was replaced with a fiberglass bridge. The project included funding for treatment of invasive plant species.



Due to the location of the trail in the floodplain, it is not uncommon for trails to become inundated. An asphalt trail is less prone to washing out, reducing maintenance time and cost.

Asphalt trails ultimately decrease impacts on the surrounding forest area. When natural surface trails become wet and muddy, trail users generally go around the mud. This leads to an ever-widening path and increased disturbance to forests and wetlands.



DANBURY FOREST DRIVE CONNECTOR 220 LINEAR FEET TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS DESIGN 100% COMPLETE FUNDING ESTABLISHED WITH 2012 BOND

- This project will replace an existing trail with new 8' wide asphalt trail. The current trail is narrow, steep and in poor condition
- The rerouted trail will reduce slopes from 30% to 2-15%, making the park more accessible to nearby residents.



EXISTING TRAIL



PLANNED TRAIL CONNECTION



PROJECT LOCATION



LAKE ACCOTINK DAM CROSSING 220 LINEAR FEET TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS DESIGN 98% COMPLETE

The existing pedestrian and vehicular crossing at the outfall of the Lake Accotink dam floods suddenly and frequently, often stranding trail users and tempting them to wade through swiftly running water. Excessive damage due to major storm events has required a total reconstruction of the trail twice in the last five years.



TRAIL CONCEPT



The scope of work for this phase of the project includes:

- Design and permitting of construction documents for approximately 300 linear feet of asphalt trail improvements and 325 linear feet of elevated pedestrian crossing over the Lake Accotink dam outfall in Lake Accotink Park.
- Preparation of a detailed construction cost estimate

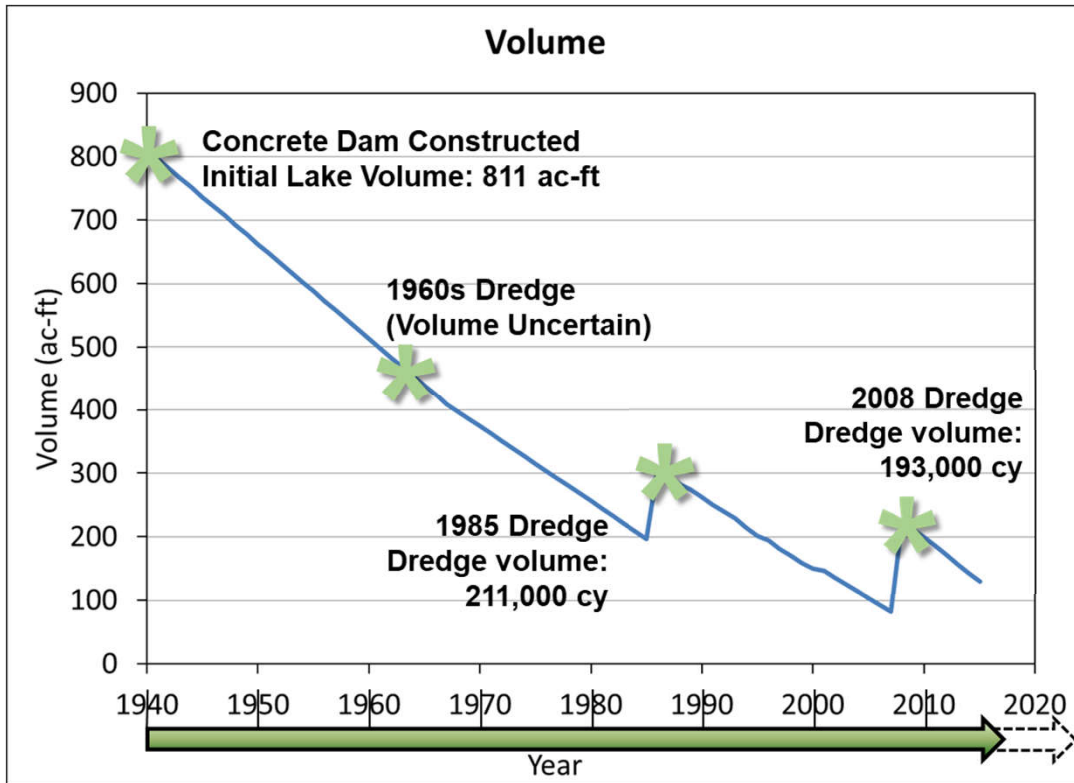
The trail approaching the crossing from the Cardinal Forest community is excessively steep and members of the community and trail users have requested that the Park Authority look at reducing the slope of the trail in this area as well as improve the trail conditions at the dam outfall. By improving these conditions the Park Authority will also be able to support a wider variety of activities at the park.



PROJECT LOCATION

LAKE ACCOTINK PARK MASTER PLAN REVISION

Lake Accotink Management History



Lake Accotink dredging operations June 21,
2006 – Photo by Fairfax County DPWES

Lake Accotink Management Decision Process

- Community engagement process in 2016 – 2019 to discuss management options results in decision to implement a permanent dredging program
- Dredge program project goals:
 - Establish 8 ft average lake depth
 - Implement maintenance dredging program
- Dredge program intended to maintain lake as aesthetic and recreational amenity



Additional Resources:

- [Lake Accotink Dredging \(AC89-0009\) | Public Works and Environmental Services \(fairfaxcounty.gov\)](#)
- [The Story of Lake Accotink Park: https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/b85512da45b8420085167291998d194f](https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/b85512da45b8420085167291998d194f)

Dredging Project Timeline

2016 - 2019	Community engagement process on management of Lake Accotink resulted in a decision to implement a permanent dredging program
October 29, 2019	BOS approves Lake Accotink Dredging Financing Plan
June 25, 2020	BOS authorizes staff to apply for \$30.5 million for Lake Accotink Dredging from the Virginia Clean Water Revolving Loan Fund (VCWRLF)
September 2020	County staff hire Arcadis and begin dredge program project
September 2020 – February 2023	Project team gathers data, develops alternatives analysis, develops cost estimates, holds stakeholder and public meetings, and re-evaluates alternative smaller off-line lake option (once cost of dredging understood)
July 27, 2021	BOS authorizes staff to apply for an additional \$30 million for Lake Accotink Dredging from VCWRLF based on revised estimates
February 9, 2023	DPWES staff launches story map with updated estimates of cost and environmental and social impacts and recommends not to pursue dredging
February 15 & 16, 2023	Public Meetings
February 16 to April 1, 2023	Public Survey and Comment Period