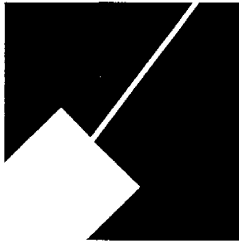


M-NCPPC



MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARK AND PLANNING

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

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Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3760
301-495-4500, www.mncppc.org

October 29, 2004

MCPB Item No. #3

November 8, 2004

Memorandum

To: Montgomery County Planning Board

Via: Jeff Zyontz, Chief
Countywide Planning

From: John E. Hench, Ph.D., Supervisor
Park Planning and Resources Analysis Unit
Norma J. Kawecki
Senior Natural Resource Specialist/Cartographer
Park Planning and Resources Analysis Unit

Subject: **Proposed new Dog Exercise Areas for the Cabin John and Norbeck Areas: Release for Purposes of Public Comment**
(No public comment will be taken at this time)

Recommendations

Staff recommends that the Planning Board take the following actions:

1. Release the Staff Report titled Potential Dog Exercise Areas (DEAs) for the Cabin John and Norbeck Areas for purposes of soliciting public comment (see attachment 1).
2. Accept the Staff recommendation to include parks other than regional and/or recreational parks in the search criteria for the purpose of soliciting public comment.

The full staff report is included as an Attachment #1. The attached report addresses sites within the vicinity of Cabin John Regional Park and Leisure World areas only. Based on the process and analysis discussed in that report staff is recommending the following six park sites for consideration as future Dog Exercise Areas. After receiving input from the Community, Staff will recommend two of the following six sites for implementation, one in each area.

Recommended Sites in or within 2 Miles of Cabin John Regional Park

- #1 --- Noah's Arc
- #2 --- Pee Wee Soccer Field and adjacent open field

Recommended Sites in or within 2 Miles of Leisure World

- #1 -- Norbeck-Muncaster Mill Local Park
- #2 -- East Norbeck Local Park
- #3 -- Olney Manor Recreation Park #1
- #4 -- Olney Manor Recreation of the Park #2

As discussed in the staff report, of the two sites recommended for a DEA near Leisure World are not within a Regional or Recreational Park. At the Planning Board's last meeting regarding this issue on June 26, 2002, the Board expressed a preference that DEAs be placed in Regional or Recreational Parks. The Board's rationale for this preference was based on a desire to minimize noise and parking problems in community-use parks. Park staff believes that the sites recommended herein are suitable for DEAs and will not have noise or parking problems. As such, staff believes that they are the preferred sites. However, until a final determination is made that local parks are acceptable, staff recommends that the two Olney Manor sites also be carried forward for public comment.

Assuming Planning Board approval of staff's requests, staff intends to hold one public meeting approximately 30 days from the current date at MRO, a site equidistant from Cabin John Regional Park and Leisure World.

Potential Dog Exercise Areas (DEAs) for the Cabin John and Norbeck Areas Staff Report

Background

In August, a Site Selection Committee was established as a Standing Committee whose first mission was to find two Dog Exercise Areas (DEAs). The Committee's immediate goal was to recommend suitable sites for two dog exercise areas near two specific locations: one in or around Cabin John Regional Park, and the other near Leisure World. To that end, we submit our site recommendations as follows.

Recommended Sites in or within 2 Miles of Cabin John Regional Park

- #1 -- Noah's Arc
- #2 -- Pee Wee Soccer Field and adjacent open field

Recommended Sites in or within 2 Miles of Leisure World

- #1 -- Norbeck-Muncaster Mill Local Park
- #2 -- East Norbeck Local Park

Site Selection Criteria

The committee was assigned to recommend sites only in buildable areas of 1-Acre in size. We defined buildable as described by The Environmental Guidelines. Our primary criterion was that each site would be located outside of Sensitive Areas and their Buffers, outside of Biodiversity Areas and Best Natural Areas. Furthermore, so as to avoid conflicts with the intended use of a purchased property the sites would not be located in Legacy Open Space Property, and Conservation Parks. We would also look for park sites that had existing and sufficient parking, and were not in good quality forests. Sites would be ranked higher if they were within the Limits of Sewer and Water Envelope and were not forested, however, existence of trees for shade was desirable. Furthermore, the proximity to the targeted area would give the site a higher rating if it were closer. A site would also get a higher rank if it were situated away from occupied residences. Other factors such as consistency with approved master plans, facility, plans, and concept plans, cost to construct, slope of the land, and compatibility with existing or proposed uses in and around the park were also important and gave higher position on the scale. A site would get a higher positive ranking if it fell within the following: Site is in the named location, Site is within a 1 Mile Radius of the named location, Site is within a 2 Mile Radius of the named location.

In order to compile our Long List of Potential Sites (*tables 1 & 2*), the committee agreed to define the search areas by drawing 1 Mile and 2 Mile radius circles around each named target location. A map was made for each site highlighting the targeted areas overlain with all existing M-NCPPC's parks and the circles (*figures 1&2*). The Long List would consist of all the parks within the 2 Mile circle. If no feasible sites were found, in that range then a wider circle would be drawn and we would continue our search.

Sites were eliminated if they were located within sensitive environmental areas and for additional factors as listed above. Each site was then assessed as to its potential suitability by sharing our collective knowledge of the parks and studying the aerial photos and planimetric maps found in PPRA's Park Property Reference Books.

The committee discussed the list at length and settled on a Short List of park sites based on the factors and process outlined above. It was agreed each site on the Short List required a field visit for further evaluation. A field meeting was set and conducted. After discussion of the findings in the field, we made our recommendations. This document represents a complete analysis of each site on our short list including PROS and CONS for each as we see them. The committee was thorough in its fact-finding and submits its recommendations.

The top two site recommendations for each target area are best suited for a DEA based on the criteria described. Given the time frame the committee feels confident that it did a thorough job but also agrees that if these are not satisfactory additional time may be required to look farther away from the two identified target locations.

The Committee Members

Norma Kawecki - Park Planning and Resource Analysis - **Committee Chair**

John Boyd -Northern Region

Carole Bergmann - Natural Resources, Forest Ecologist

Marion Clark - Environmental Planning

Misti Hoffmaster - Park Police

Pam Johnson - Community Based Planning

Bill Mooney - Chief of Enterprise

Karl Noyes -Southern Region

Dilip Pandya - Park Development

Cheryl Winter- Park Police, Special Operations

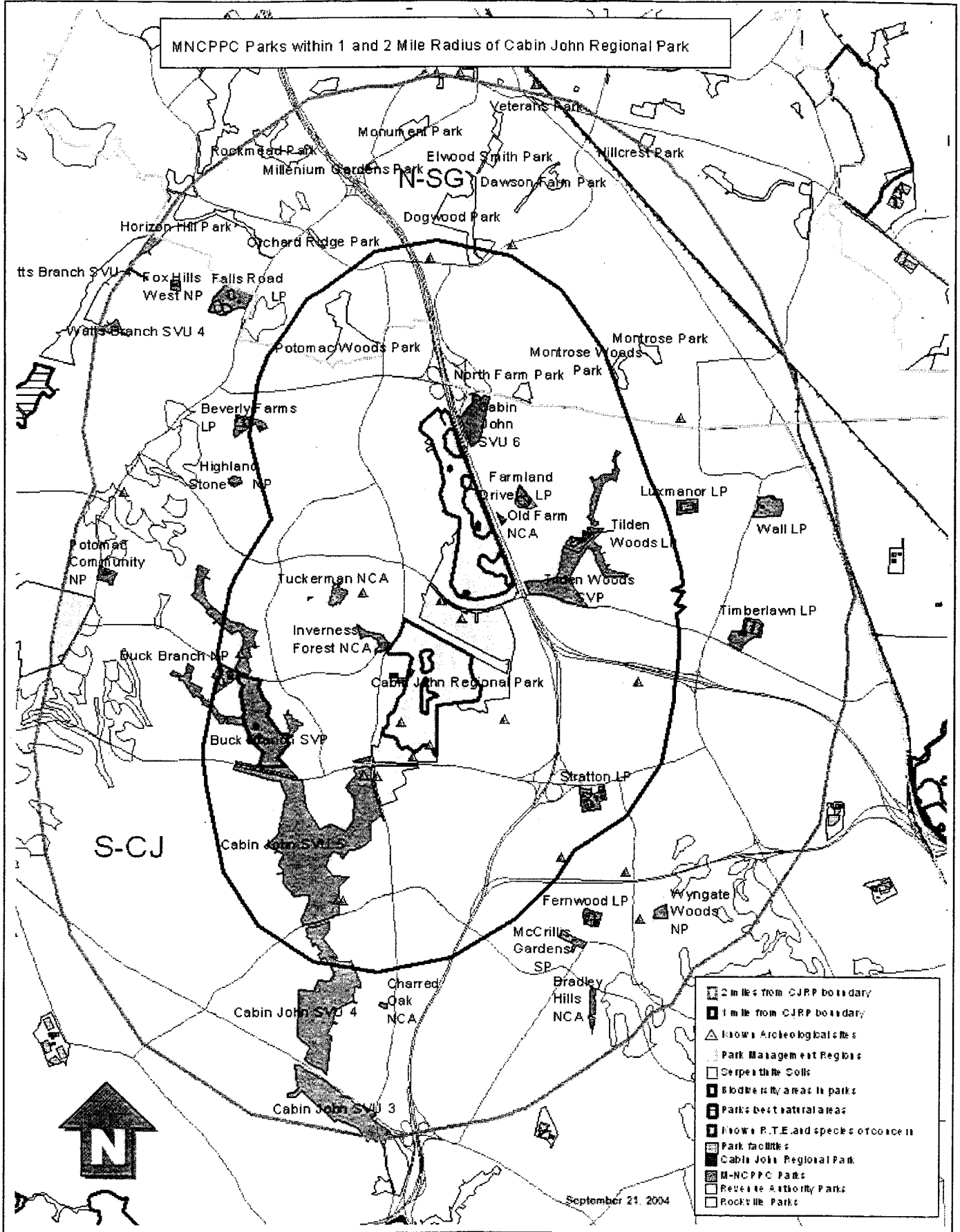
Tanya Schmieler - Park Planning and Resource Analysis

Site Selection Process

Site Selection Process proposed by the PDCO Committee was followed:

1. Establish Team
2. Establish Purpose and Need for Facility
3. Develop Programs of Requirements for Facility
4. Develop Site Selection Criteria
5. Compile Long List of Potential Sites
6. Develop Short List by gathering site-specific information, site visits, and ranking against site selection criteria.
7. Recommend Site

Figure 1: Search Area within 2 Miles of Cabin John Regional Park

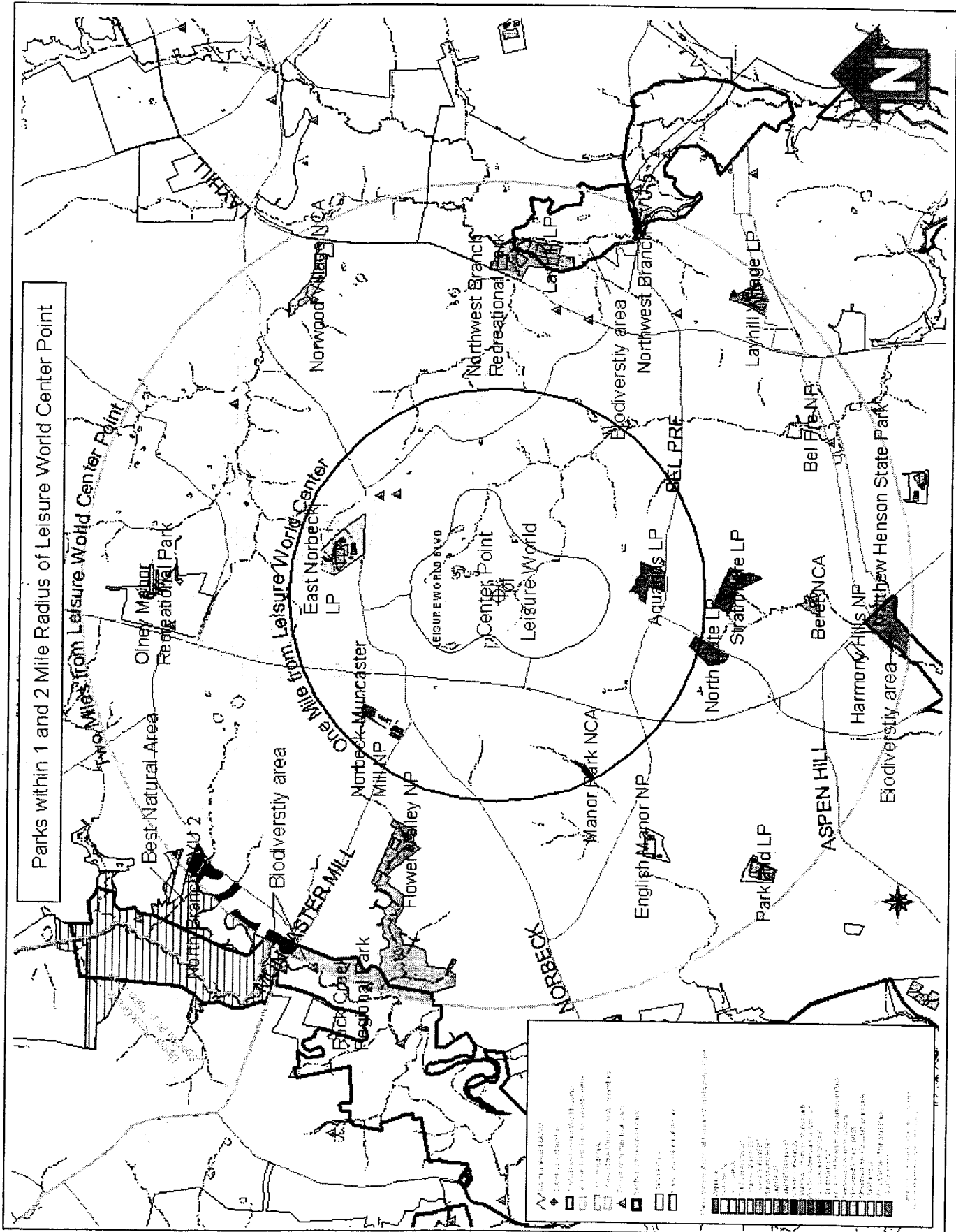


Attachment 1 – Potential DEAs near the Cabin John Regional Park and Norbeck Areas

Table 1: Long List of Parks within 2 Miles of Cabin John Regional Park

OWNER	PARK NAME	CODE	PARK TYPE	ACRES
M-NCPPC	Beverly Farms LP	D08	Local	8.485
M-NCPPC	Bradley Hills NCA	C04	Neighborhood Conservation	3.477
M-NCPPC	Bradley Hills NCA	C04	Neighborhood Conservatio	1.422
M-NCPPC	Buck Branch NP	B04	Neighborhood	9.493
M-NCPPC	Buck Branch SVP	P02	Stream Valley	30.284
M-NCPPC	Buck Branch SVP	P02	Stream Valley	7.135
M-NCPPC	Buck Branch SVP	P02	Stream Valley	0.657
M-NCPPC	Buck Branch SVP	P02	Stream Valley	59.670
M-NCPPC	Buck Branch SVP	P02	Stream Valley	4.029
M-NCPPC	Cabin John Regional Park	G01	Regional	198.234
M-NCPPC	Cabin John Regional Park	G01	Regional	293.634
M-NCPPC	Cabin John Regional Park	G01	Regional	21.987
M-NCPPC	Cabin John SVU 2	P05	Stream Valley	0.702
M-NCPPC	Cabin John SVU 3	P06	Stream Valley	55.531
M-NCPPC	Cabin John SVU 4	P07	Stream Valley	94.153
M-NCPPC	Cabin John SVU 5	P08	Stream Valley	1.282
M-NCPPC	Cabin John SVU 5	P08	Stream Valley	189.657
M-NCPPC	Cabin John SVU 6	P71	Stream Valley	19.788
M-NCPPC	Charred Oak NCA	C07	Neighborhood Conservation	0.912
M-NCPPC	Falls Road LP	D38	Local	19.718
M-NCPPC	Farm land Drive LP	D39	Local	6.791
M-NCPPC	Fernwood LP	D40	Local	5.824
M-NCPPC	Fox Hills West NP	B18	Neighborhood	2.169
M-NCPPC	Highland Stone NP	B26	Neighborhood	2.458
M-NCPPC	Inverness Forest NCA	C40	Neighborhood Conservation	6.680
M-NCPPC	Luxmanor LP	D68	Local	6.553
M-NCPPC	McCrislis Gardens SP	L01	Special	5.295
M-NCPPC	Old Farm NCA	C20	Neighborhood Conservation	0.776
M-NCPPC	Potomac Community NP	D62	Neighborhood	5.123
M-NCPPC	Scotland NP	B47	Neighborhood	0.717
M-NCPPC	Scotland NP	B47	Neighborhood	2.366
M-NCPPC	Stratton LP	E09	Local	10.946
M-NCPPC	Tilden Woods LP	E12	Local	8.822
M-NCPPC	Tilden Woods SVP	P63	Stream Valley	12.439
M-NCPPC	Tilden Woods SVP	P63	Stream Valley	44.199
M-NCPPC	Timberlawn LP	E52	Local	13.706
M-NCPPC	Tuckerman NCA	C27	Neighborhood Conservation	5.700
M-NCPPC	Tuckerman NCA	C27	Neighborhood Conservation	0.160
M-NCPPC	Wall LP	E14	Local	11.766
M-NCPPC	Watts Branch SVU 4	P67	Stream Valley	8.276
M-NCPPC	Windsor NCA	C29	Neighborhood Conservation	4.393
M-NCPPC	Wyngate Woods NP	B64	Neighborhood	3.509
Revenue Authority	Falls Road Golf Course			37.785
Rockville	Dawson Farm Park			7.508
Rockville	Dawson Farm Park			1.827
Rockville	Dogwood Park			34.497
Rockville	Dogwood Park			5.459
Rockville	Elwood Smith Park			3.305
Rockville	Elwood Smith Park			7.558
Rockville	Hillcrest Park			0.820
Rockville	Horizon Hill Park			2.584
Rockville	Horizon Hill Park			20.294
Rockville	Jacquilin Trells Williams			0.974
Rockville	Millenium Gardens Park			1.245
Rockville	Montrose Park			5.692
Rockville	Montrose Woods Park			6.005
Rockville	Monument Park			7.733
Rockville	North Farm Park			5.411
Rockville	Orchard Ridge Park			1.953
Rockville	Potomac Woods Park			40.748
Rockville	Rockmead Park			19.003
Rockville	Veterans Park			0.874

Figure 2: Search Area within 2 Miles of Leisure World



Attachment 1 – Potential DEAs near the Cabin John Regional Park and Norbeck Areas

Table 2: Long List of Parks within 2 Miles of Leisure World

OWNER	PARK NAME	CODE	PARK TYPE	ACRES
M-NCPPC	Aquarius LP	D02	Local	10.944
M-NCPPC	Bel Pre NP	B01	Neighborhood	8.213
M-NCPPC	Beret NCA	C02	Neighborhood Conservation	3.562
M-NCPPC	East Norbeck LP	D35	Local	24.331
M-NCPPC	English Manor NP	M38	Neighborhood	8.151
M-NCPPC	Flower Valley NP	B13	Neighborhood	16.782
M-NCPPC	Harmony Hills NP	B25	Neighborhood	2.644
M-NCPPC	Layhill LP	F06	Local	31.186
M-NCPPC	Layhill Village LP	D63	Local	9.930
M-NCPPC	Manor Park NCA	C36	Neighborhood Conservation	0.380
M-NCPPC	Manor Park NCA	C36	Neighborhood Conservation	1.238
M-NCPPC	Norbeck-Muncaster Mill NP	B39	Neighborhood	6.700
M-NCPPC	Norbeck-Muncaster Mill NP	B39	Neighborhood	0.454
M-NCPPC	North Branch SVU 2	P30	Stream Valley	19.196
M-NCPPC	North Branch SVU 2	P30	Stream Valley	1.265
M-NCPPC	North Gate LP	D81	Local	8.311
M-NCPPC	Northwest Branch Recreational Park	G08	Recreational	61.310
M-NCPPC	Northwest Branch Recreational Park	G08	Recreational	201.089
M-NCPPC	Northwest Branch SVU 5	P36	Stream Valley	3.260
M-NCPPC	Northwest Branch SVU 5	P36	Stream Valley	0.212
M-NCPPC	Northwest Branch SVU 5	P36	Stream Valley	0.942
M-NCPPC	Norwood Village NCA	C19	Neighborhood Conservation	14.013
M-NCPPC	Olney Manor Recreational Park	H05	Recreational	61.152
M-NCPPC	Parkland LP	F09	Local	8.427
M-NCPPC	Rock Creek Regional Park	G10	Regional	86.537
M-NCPPC	Strathmore LP	E08	Local	12.830
M-NCPPC				3.282
M-NCPPC				20.519
M-NCPPC				20.061
M-NCPPC				32.680
State of Maryland	Matthew Henson State Park			16.804

Short List Site Analysis

Recommended Sites in or within 2 Miles of Cabin John Regional Park (CJRP)

- #1 --- Noah's Arc
- #2 --- Pee Wee Soccer Field and adjacent open field

Additional Site Evaluations

Within 2 Miles of CJRP - Falls Road Local Park, Wall Local Park, Timberlawn Local Park

Within CJRP - Deer Pen Area, Campground Road Site

#1 Noah's Arc

It is staffs' opinion that this site is a feasible location for a DEA. (*Figure 4*)

The original area for Noah's Arc was clear and open, approximately 3/4 Acres and was calculated in the Regional Parks' 1/3 Development ratio required for Regional Parks. The area has a slope of 0-3%. An additional 1/4-Acre could be taken from the surrounding forest. If done carefully by hand, according to our park forest ecologist, erecting fencing would not harm large trees, and could make the site a total of 1 Acre in size. According to the park manager, the existing parking lot is shared with other park users and picnickers and would provide usable parking spaces for dog owners. The site would provide plenty of shade, a desirable factor in DEAs, and nearby water could be restored. An existing bridge across the railroad tracks remains from the Noah's Arc activity. It is in good repair and could easily be reopened for dog owner access.

Some negative aspects include the following. Using the existing bridge would take dogs close to picnickers and other park users. A split rail fence could be erected to provide a sense of separation at key locations if necessary. There is another possible entry point. However, users would have to walk across the tracks at grade. This provides an entry point closer to the parking lot. Risk Management will advise us on how to do that safely if it is decided to use this point of entry. Possible solutions include installation of automatic gate which closes when a train is in the vicinity, whistles and lights as for a real train crossing, signs to warn users about trains, or the train itself could be restricted to slower speed at that point which is close to the station anyway.

These solutions carry a variety of price tags and differing degrees of liability, on which Risk Management should advise (*Figure 3*). The Miniature Train operates full time, 7 days a week 4 Months of the Year; May - August and during the months of April and September runs only on weekends. It does not operate October through March. The surrounding forest has an under story of plants which will have to be removed or will eventually be trampled. The site was reforested approximately 10 years ago and is now grown into a sparse forest with under story consisting mainly of non-native invasive species. Dangerous and dead trees within and around the proposed DEA fenced area would have to be removed for safety but no living trees would have to be removed. According to our Forest Ecologist, it is not something she would have suggested given the fact that CJRP is already very close to the 1/3:2/3 ratio, however, since it is in a preexisting disturbed area, if this is the best location for a DEA, clearing the under story will be excusable for the better public good.

Staff also feels that the public will have serious opposition to adding any new development anywhere in the park. Clearing a forested area will also be their concern.

#2 Pee Wee Soccer Field and the Adjacent Open Field (Figure 5)

This site is next to the Pee Wee Soccer Field at the southern end of Cabin John Regional Park and accessed by way of the main entrance road from Westlake Drive. At first thought, this was the most ideal site and a number one choice for a successful DEA, according to the park manager. The site can accommodate 1 Acre in size, utilizes existing parking areas, has a water source nearby, is in no apparent conflict with existing park uses.

The main conflicts for this site are two. The issues include: conflicts with overflow parking and probable protest from local citizens.

Povich Field issue: Regular games for permitted games throughout the park start at 5:30 PM during the permit season. On a regular night in the summer, all parking lots are full to capacity. In addition to ball players, the park is open to ice skaters, tennis players, walkers, joggers, basketball players, spectators, etc. and all the parking spaces are needed. With the addition of the Povich Field, additional parking was necessary. There are approximately 25 - 30 games a year and each has potential to draw large crowds. It cannot be predicted when there will be those extra large crowds. It was estimated that spaces for up to 50 cars was needed. The Pee Wee Soccer Field was fitted with lights by Bruce Adams in order to provide safe overflow parking to address the problem. *Staff's solution:* Share the site with overflow parking. The figure drawn on the map allows for a 1 Acre DEA and still leaves 16,000 sq. ft. for over flow parking. According to our park engineer, one parking space measures 8 x 10 feet or 80 sp. ft. The area as drawn would accommodate 4 times as many spaces as suggested parking up to 200 cars.

Staff is aware that neighbors have objected vehemently to other facilities being proposed at the sight as well as other places in the park. They feel that the park is completely built out and no more facilities should be constructed. The residents immediately adjacent in the high-rise apartments have stated they don't want to look out their windows and see anything but green space.

Additional Site Evaluations within 2 miles of Cabin John Regional Park

Falls Road Local Park (Figure 6) a possible location exists only in the 1 acre spot nearest to Falls Road on the east side of the park. The size is right, there seems to be enough parking but the aerial photo shows cars using the grass as overflow parking even though there is no game in progress. The area is flat and large enough for the 1 acre DEA, has water near by and some trees for shade. Rachel Newhouse, park designer, and landscape architect, is of the opinion that having a DEA close to that type of playground may enhance the experience. Theme-wise she feels they are compatible. The playground was provided by McDonald's Frontier Village.

The other two areas at Falls Road are not suitable. They are too close to the ball fields. Both are now grown up with clumps of shrubs and small trees that are not mowed. They may have field drain outlets in them or are rocky. There was 1 dog walker in the park and 2 others were walking on the sidewalks around the park but not in. One staff experienced a very crowded parking lot around the playground. According to the park manager: "While Falls Road has the space, additional parking would be a necessity. The playground is heavily used meaning the existing parking is strained to the max between ballgames and the playground. The neighborhood has also had issues with people parking on the side streets. That area in question is the closest to adjacent neighbors to the north, which could present an issue".

Wall Local Park: (Figure 7) Not recommended. The three polygons as outlined on the attached maps are not suitable. The existing trees and wooded areas act as buffers to the busy traffic on the 3 adjacent roads. Old Georgetown, Nicholson, and Executive. Putting up a fenced DEA would necessitate clearing the under story and thus exposing the area. There appears to be enough parking. There were no dog walkers there on Monday morning.

- 1) In the wooded area on the west adjacent to Old Georgetown Road are paved trails with an exercise course. Putting up a DEA would interfere with use of the trails. In addition, the area is wooded with mature trees and well established under story of holly, pines and other bush species. Some non-native invasive species exist as well but mostly at the edges. Furthermore, after the weekend rains the northern end was wet.
- 2) The area due south of the Swim Center is now a parking lot.
- 3) The area in the corner adjacent to Executive Blvd. and Nicholson Lane has a storm water management facility in the open unforested area and would be dangerous to dogs and their owners, and not to mention, most likely not allowed as a shared use. The rest of the area has a few picnic tables and the wooded strip is not suitable mainly because of size.

Timberlawn Local Park: (Figure 8) Not recommended. The area outlined is wooded with mature forest and steep slopes. A paved trail winds through the area as well. There appears to be enough parking spaces. There was no visible water source. There didn't seem to be any place there to put a DEA without displacing other facilities. The soccer fields were worn in the middle indicating heavy use. There were no dog walkers there.

Additional Site Evaluations within Cabin John Regional Park

The following sites in CJRP were ruled out.

Deer Pen Area (Figure 9) This site was eliminated from the list primarily because of it being completely forested and it was only about 3/4 Acre in size. Furthermore, a known archaeological site is located very near or within the site. Although the site has adequate parking, a suitable path directly to it, which is now used by hikers and dog walkers, and is otherwise acceptable for a DEA, staff felt that the site should be deleted from the list. This site is in the middle of a high quality forest. Other sites that were not forested could be utilized. According to Carole Bergmann, Forest Ecologist, the woods are of high quality with tree girths averaging 10-20", and consisted of several species of oaks and tulip poplars. The under story was also present and healthy which is a rarity in this area of large deer population.

Campground Road Site at Tuckerman Lane (Figure 10) The site was eliminated from the list primarily because of its location in the 100 yr. Floodplain. Much of the site is wetlands and contains many wetland species of plants as were described by Carole Bergmann. One acre could be drawn there but staff agreed to eliminate it.

Recommended Sites within 2 Miles of Leisure World

- #1 -- Norbeck-Muncaster Mill Neighborhood Park
- #2 -- East Norbeck Local Park

Additional Site Evaluations within 2 Miles of Leisure World

– Olney Manor Recreational Park, Northwest Golf Course

#1 Norbeck-Muncaster Neighborhood Park (Figure 11)

Staff recommends this location as its # 1 top choice. The site has existing parking for 16 cars and 2 more could be striped. There is water, and 1.5 acres is currently mowed. The mowed area is almost level with a slope of about 2% to the north. According to Park Forest Ecologist, the forested area is of low quality. It could be fenced in to provide shade with little harm to its quality. This site would accommodate at least one acre and could even be 2 or more acres in size with few limitations. According to the park Manager this site gets very little use. It is ready to be built.

There are a few concerns that need to be addressed. Direct access to the site is a bit cumbersome as turns off of Muncaster Mill Road at this time. Improvement to Norbeck Road may or may not improve this situation. Presently vehicles must make a tight turn onto a narrow driveway soon after turning off of Norbeck Road. Leaving the facility one must make a right turn only onto Muncaster Mill Road. The short distance for Norbeck Rd. currently makes this dangerous.

There is currently one existing home located immediately adjacent to the park boundary on the south side below the existing ball field. One staff was concerned about opposition from adjacent landowners and residents. The house itself is 100' from the park boundary. The DEA we would install could easily be separated from the property line further by locating it at the back of the site.

The 16 parking spaces are currently shared by park users, Recreation Center users and with the churchgoers immediately adjacent to the recreation center. One staff was concerned that a DEA would not be compatible with the church and recreation center. Gwen Wright of Historic Preservation states the significance of that historic church. It is a freedman's black church and the community center which was an historic black school from the 20's are all that remain of the historic Norbeck settlement; a settlement of freed black slaves who settled in this area.

The recreation center was not designated as historic because it had been altered. According to the park manager, church services occur only on Sunday morning and Tuesday evening. Scheduling the DEA to be closed during those times can solve that conflict. Also, according to the park manager, the recreation center building occasionally hosts a summer camp during the morning hours however it's use should not be a conflict with DEA users.

There is a possible conflict with pending development in the wooded area to the east as part of Smalls Nursery project and the widening of Norbeck Road. According to Doug Powell of Park Development Review and Dan Hardy of Transportation Planning, there is nothing in either the timing of or the design of either project that would prevent building a DEA at that site. Preliminary plans previously discussed for Smalls Nursery are on hold. Originally, we were to get some land enough to build a soccer field there and improve the entrance to the park however, that has all changed and the soccer field was moved to East Norbeck LP. At this time, September 20, 2004, no new plans are complete. Nothing has been submitted. The last plan for the development of that area showed a storm water management facility, parking, and elderly day care housing as possible use of the wooded area adjacent to the park boundary. The future residents at that site won't be moving in for at least 5 years and probably longer. The developer

is likely waiting for the State Highway Authority (SHA) to complete upgrade of Norbeck Road since they (SHA) will take some of the corner to redo the intersection with Muncaster Mill. SHA will likely break ground in 2-3 years from now for Norbeck Rd./ Muncaster Mill intersection improvements. Design and engineering will occur in the next 1 - 2 years from now since SHA is now just beginning working on designs.

M-NCPPC will most likely get some land in dedication but that is not clear at this point.

#2 East Norbeck Local Park (Figure 12)

Staff recommends this location as it's # 2 top choice. The site proposed at East Norbeck Local Park is an open 1.8 Acre site across Norbeck Road from Leisure World. The site is currently mowed 1-2 times a year by park maintenance to keep it open for development. The approved Concept Plan calls for a Wildflower Meadow with a mowed path around its perimeter for walking and nature study as well as some tree planting to increase the forested edge. This site is number two on our recommendation list because of timing for construction. In it's current condition there is not enough parking and no access. However, once completed the renovations in the park would allow for sufficient parking, a paved 8' wide paved path 545' from handicapped parking, and few if any user conflicts.

A cross walk is being planned for Norbeck Road near the location. Parking will be approximately 545' from the DEA but an 8' wide paved path is proposed to access the site. Accessibility was considered during the facility planning because many folks from Leisure World will be using it.

According to Linda Komes, the Project Manager, the Planning Board approved the Facility Plan for East Norbeck in June of 2003. She sees no serious conflict with the approved plan although an amendment to the approved plan would be required. The RFP for Design work is being drawn up now and will go out in the next few months. According to the Adopted FY05-10 CIP, moneys for design and construction documents were made available. Site improvements and utilities installation will begin in FY07 and continue through FY09.

Staff expressed concern about the timing of the project renovations, the distance from the parking lot to the site, and with citizen approval of Concept Plan changes.

Timing of renovations: Staff is concerned because renovations will likely not begin for another three years and assumes the Department would like to build a DEA within this fiscal year. The proposed parking lot will be 545' feet away. The distance is of concern for people with disabilities and difficulty walking or in wheelchairs. Some staff feels that is too long of a distance for someone in a wheel chair. However, the public had no concerns about that during the public hearing to approve the concept. Finally, Staff cannot predict what the citizens will want or not want in their Local Park. Nonetheless, the citizens were quit strong-minded about their desire to keep the field for passive uses, specifically a path through a wildflower meadow. Because this Concept Plan was approved it is strongly recommended that it be taken back to the public for input before amendments are made.

Additional Site Evaluations within 2 miles of Leisure World

Two sites at Olney Manor Recreational Park

The committee looked at two proposed sites in Olney Manor Recreational Park (*Figure 13*). The two sites numbered 1 and 2, as drawn on the aerial photo, are approximately 1 Acre in size. Both sites could utilize the existing out field fence of the respective ball fields, which would lessen the overall cost. Parking and water is available within 50'. Both areas are presently mowed grass with a number of good shade trees. Security is not a factor. Current use of both sites is as open space and un-programmed

The park manager states: "The park is categorized as a Recreational Park and as such is built out with active use facilities and according to the park manager is built to capacity. The primary draw back of these sites is a matter of what value is non-programmed open space. Because it is a highly active use area, un-programmed open green space is very limited and the park manager feels that it is something the park users value. Users who wish to lay out a blanket and read a book, picnic, or throw a Frisbee utilize these areas. Site number 1 is also used for Horse Shoe games; 2 horseshoe pits are present.

Another concern in both cases is liability of injury from fly balls, which could and does occur. According to the park manager balls come over the fences regularly. Fly balls could potentially drop into the DEA, causing harm to people and dogs that are not necessarily paying attention to the game as spectators do". Staff suggests that mesh screening similar to that used at golf driving ranges may be installed to prevent that. It would also add to the expense of the site construction.

Site # 2 has unanswered questions about the PEPCO Right-of-Way. Whether that is an allowed use in the their ROW. Staff was unable to get a conclusive answer from PEPCO at this time.

Based on the above factors, staff feels these sites could be considered however, pending solutions to the unanswered questions. Furthermore, staff feels that these factors should be considered and weighted very heavily in the decision. Staff does NOT recommend them as a primary SHORT LIST sites.

The North West Golf Course (NWCG) (*Figure 14*)

The area WEST of the parking lot at NW Golf Course seemed to be a possible site. It is mowed and water is at the nearby golf course. Much of it is in the Sensitive Area Buffer. The site is previously disturbed. Park Police attest that it would be good for security of the parking lot since a lot of vehicles are broken into there during the day. Dogs and owner presence would deter that.

Questions remain about conflict with existing uses of golf course. It may have been a site where sludge from dredging the pond was put. Staff has not been able to determine that at this time. If it is decided that the site is not in conflict it could possibly be used as DEA in the future. Staff does NOT recommend it as one of our primary SHORT LIST sites.

Conclusion

All other parks within the 2-mile radius of Cabin John Regional Park and Leisure World were eliminated from our Long List based on our site selection criterion.

Staff's suggestions: Conduct a public meeting to brief the public on the entire issue and the process followed by the Site Selection Committee. Review the need, the process and the alternatives. List all the pros and cons and facilitate a discussion.