

M-NCPPC



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARK AND PLANNING**

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL  
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

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MCPB 9/29/05

Item No. 1

September 9, 2005

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Jeff Zyontz, Chief, Countywide Planning Division (301) 495-4557  
John E. Hench, PPRA Unit Supervisor (301) 650-4364 *J. Hench*

FROM: Lyn Coleman, Trail Planning Supervisor (301) 650-4391 *L. Coleman*

**SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF PARK TRAILS WORK PROGRAM PRIORITIES: FY 07- 09**

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**Staff Recommendation:**

Approval of Park Trail Work Program Priorities for FY 07-09 (Attachment 1).

Staff will present an overview of key recommendations in a power point presentation.

**Background:**

The latest amendment to the Countywide Park Trails Plan (2003) directs that a Trails Work Program be developed to prioritize park trail projects. The first Park Trails Work Program was prepared for FY04-06 and was approved by the Planning Board in 2003. The priorities are included in Attachment 1.

The proposed priorities for FY07-09 are also shown in Attachment 1. Two new work program categories have been added:

- Trail Volunteer Program
- Trail Events

The Trail Volunteer Program, managed by PPRA staff, created over 25 miles of natural surface trails in FY04-06 and will continue to be the main source of labor for the proposed natural surface trail program in FY07-09.

Since January 1, volunteers have contributed over 1,900 hours of their time to make trails a reality in Hoyles Mill Park, Fairland Park, Seneca Greenway and Muddy Branch Stream Valley Park. The Trail Volunteer Program is essential to the success of the natural surface trails work program and has been added as a work program category.

Trail Events reflects the growing involvement of staff in promoting trail activities and trail walks. Some events are co-sponsored with the Department of Recreation but most are sponsored solely by our Department. These events are very popular; last year's Rachel Carson walks attracted almost 200 people while the Rural Legacy Trail walk during Maryland Emancipation weekend drew more than 100 visitors.

### **Staff Analysis:**

The most significant elements of the Trails Work Program Priorities for FY 2007-2009 are highlighted below.

#### Staff recommends the Rock Creek Trail Corridor Plan be completed ahead of the Upcounty Trail Corridor Plan.

The FY 05-06 Trails Work Program Priorities recommended the Upcounty Trail Corridor Plan as the top trail planning priority. During the planning of the Rachel Carson Greenway Plan, cycling enthusiasts noted with disappointment that the greenway would not generally allow cyclists because of the greenway' interpretive nature. The Rock Creek Trail Corridor does offer opportunities to allow shared use natural surface trails in the same general vicinity. For this reason and because trail connections from Rock Creek Regional Park to the Patuxent need to be identified, staff is recommending the Rock Creek Trail Corridor Plan be the next trail plan priority. This approach would also allow trail planning to guide trail locations in the vicinity of the proposed ICC and to help guide the location of trails required of developers in the Upper Rock Creek Planning Area.

#### Staff recommends completion of a Trail Assessment Study for Muddy Branch natural surface trail to determine if cyclists should be allowed on the trail in addition to hikers and equestrians.

The Muddy Branch Trail Corridor Plan focused on the location and alignment of a potential hard surface trail. As a result, the issue of trail use on the natural surface trail was not fully discussed. Volunteers, under the guidance of staff from PPRA, are completing the natural surface trail from MD 28 to River Road. The natural surface trail is being aligned and designed in accord with the Department's commitment to building sustainable trails and could accommodate cyclists. The Work Program Priorities recommends completion of a Trail Assessment Study to document staff findings.

#### Staff recommends future hard surface trail facility plans be completed in the following priority order :

- Muddy Branch Hard Surface Trail
- Rock Creek Corridor: North Branch Trail
- Sligo Creek Trail to Matthew Henson Trail

#### Staff recommends a Trails Events program that would provide 10-12 trail events per year.

This is an ambitious goal and would required staff involvement from Community Outreach , park naturalists, park managers, Interpretive Outreach support and park planning.

Staff recommends a comprehensive sign plan be developed for the Clarksburg Greenway.

The Clarksburg greenway will feature a hard surface and a natural surface trail. The parkland will be dedicated by developers and the trails provided by developers. To assure the signage is uniform, attractive and easily maintained, a comprehensive sign plan is needed. The signage plan can be used by developers as they construct the trail network.

Staff recommends a Trail Volunteer Recognition event be held every other year.

Approximately 300 volunteers have participated in trail construction and maintenance projects since 1998. Most recently, 17 people worked on Saturday, September 17, from 9 am until 2 pm to clear, groom and blaze the Eastside Trail in Muddy Branch Stream Valley Park. Many people and organizations (like REI, Inc., Coalition for Seneca Greenway, Maryland Off Road Enthusiasts and Appalachian Trail Club) volunteer over and over again. We would like to thank these volunteers in a formal way every other year.

**Public Comment:**

Members of the public have been encouraged to comment on the proposed Trails Work Program. A press release was issued and the work program is posted at the trails web site ([www.montgomerytrails.org](http://www.montgomerytrails.org)). Comments received to date are included as Attachment 2.

Staff will respond to all public comments at the worksession.

ATTACHMENT 1

ADOPTED FY 04 - 06 and PROPOSED FY07 - 09  
TRAIL WORK PROGRAM PRIORITIES: COMPLETIONS

ADOPTED FY 04 - 06 <i>(Projects in italics will carry over to FY07-09)</i>	PROPOSED FY 07 - 09
<p><b>PLANNING:</b></p> <p>Blockhouse Point Conservation Park Plan (FY05)            Rachel Carson Greenway Trail Corridor Plan (FY05)            Hoyles Mill Conservation Park Management Plan (FY05)            Serpentine Barrens Conservation Park Management Plan(FY06)            Red Door Store Management Plan(FY06)            Trail Connector Analysis(FY06)            Veirs Mill Bridge Facility Plan (FY05)            Black Hill Trail Renovation Facility Plan (FY04)            Black Hill Trail Extension Facility Plan (FY04)            Magruder Branch Extension Facility Plan (FY06)</p>	<p>Rock Creek Trail Corridor(FY08)            Upcounty Trail Corridor(FY09)            Little Bennett Regional Park            Equestrian Use at Blockhouse Point            Trail assessment study: shared use on Muddy Branch Trail            Comprehensive Trail Sign Plan, Clarksburg Greenway</p> <p><u>Hard Surface Trail Facility Plans</u> (in priority order)            1. Muddy Branch Hard Surface Trail            2. Rock Creek Corridor: North Branch Trail            3. Sligo Creek Trail to Matthew Henson Trail</p>
<p><b>TRAIL COMPLETIONS:</b></p> <p><b>Natural Surface Trails</b>            Fairland Rec park shared use trails (in cooperation with MORE)            Seneca Creek Greenway, Phase 4            Lower Magurder Branch Trail (formerly Phase 5, Seneca Greenway)            Rachel Carson Conservation Park: Phase 1 trails, parking, signs and kiosks            Bucklodge Forest trail head parking lot            Hoyles Mill Trail: So. Germantown to Boyds            Woodstock Special Park            Two trail loops at Ag History Farm            Muddy Branch, Phase I</p>	<p>Muddy Branch, Phase II            Renovate Black Hill Regional Park trails            Install Hoyles Mill Trail Bridges            Install trail bridges in Segment 3, Rachel Carson Greenway            Provide trail head parking, trails in Lois Y. Green CP, Natural Discovery Area            Implement trail recommendations, Hoyles Mill CP Management Plan            Portions of Clarksburg Greenway (by developers)</p>

ADOPTED FY 04 – 06 (Projects in <i>italics</i> will carry over to FY07-09)	PROPOSED FY 07 - 09
<p><b>Hard Surface Trails</b></p> <p>Crystal Rock connector to Black Hill Regional Park  Portions of Clarksburg Greenway by developers  ADA accessible connector to Rock Creek Trail at Ray's Meadow LP  Connectors to Capital Crescent Trail at Massachusetts Avenue and Bradley Blvd.  North Germantown Greenway (by developers)  <i>Matthew Henson Hiker-Biker Trail</i>  <i>Trail bridge over Veirs Mill Road</i></p>	<p>Matthew Henson Hiker-Biker Trail  Black Hill Trail renovation east side Lake Seneca  Trail bridge over Veirs Mill Road (FY07)  Portions of Clarksburg Greenway (by developers)</p> <p><u>Trail Renovations (includes parts of main trails and connectors)</u>  Sligo Creek, Rock Creek Trail, Long Branch, Little Falls</p>
<p><b>TRAIL SIGNS/ KIOSKS/AMENITIES</b></p> <p><b>Natural Surface Trails</b>  Rachel Carson CP, Lower Magruder Trail, Seneca Creek Greenway,  Woodstock Equestrian Center, Blockhouse Point, Fairland Rec Park, Phase  1 Muddy Branch, Sandy Spring West trail, Ag History Park, Hoyles Mill CP,  Bucklodge CP</p> <p><b>Hard Surface Trails</b>  <i>Sligo Creek Hiker Biker Trail</i>  <i>Rock Creek Hiker Biker Trail</i></p> <p><b>Heart Smart Trails</b>  Brookside Gardens  South Germantown Recreational Park  Martin Luther King Recreational Park</p>	<p><b>Natural Surface Trails</b>  Muddy Branch, Phase II  Rachel Carson Greenway Trail  Lois Y. Green Conservation Park  Clarksburg Greenway (provided by developers in accord with sign plan)</p> <p><b>Hard Surface Trails</b>  Matthew Henson  Rock Creek Hiker Biker Trail  Sligo Creek Hiker Biker Trail  Trail amenities along Capital Crescent Trail</p> <p><b>Heart Smart Trails</b>  Centerway LP  Cabin John Regional Park  Wheaton Regional Park</p>

<p><b>ADOPTED FY 04 – 06</b> (Projects in <i>italics</i> will carry over to FY07-09)</p>	<p><b>PROPOSED FY 07 - 09</b></p>
<p><b>TRAIL MAPS</b> Added to trail web site (<a href="http://www.montgomerytrails.org">www.montgomerytrails.org</a>): Lake Frank, Lake Needwood, Lower Magruder, South Germantown, Rachel Carson, Fairland, Blockhouse Point, Bucklodge, Muddy Branch Phase I, Oakley Cabin, Woodstock</p>	<p><b>TRAIL MAPS AND DATA BASE</b> Website Update (ongoing) Trail Data Base update (ongoing)</p> <p><b>TRAIL VOLUNTEER PROGRAM</b> Volunteer Appreciation Event: FY 08 (every other year) Schedule work days twice a month, April thru September</p>
<p><b>TRAIL STANDARDS</b> Natural Surface trail standards to be codified in FY 06 Trail Implementation Guidelines to be completed in FY 06</p>	<p><b>TRAIL EVENTS</b> Matthew Henson trail groundbreaking Opening Celebrations: Heart Smart (3) Muddy Branch Trail Hoyles Mill Trail Matthew Henson Hiker-Biker trail National Trails Day Rachel Carson Hikes (March of each year) Special emphasis 100<sup>th</sup> birthday anniversary 2007 Health Freedom Walk (Rural Legacy Trail) Rock Creek Trail Marathons/running events Emancipation Day walk of Rural Legacy Trail</p>
<p><b>TASKS COMPLETED FY04-06 NOT PART OF WORK PROGRAM</b> Fairland Park Trail Concept Plan Coordination with Recreation Department on planning trail events</p>	

## ATTACHMENT 2

Coleman, Lyn

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**From:** ljtandem@starpower.net  
**Sent:** Friday, September 16, 2005 6:49 PM  
**To:** Coleman, Lyn  
**Subject:** MC Trails Plan

Lynn: I am glad to see proposed trails in the trails plan. My concern is that there aren't that many safe hard surface trails in the parks. We would like to see more of these trails in Clarksburg. The development of Clarksburg is several years old and I have seen only one small section of trail along the mid county highway. I hope that you are keeping an eye on the developers that are supposed to build the greenway.

We need hard surface trails in Little Bennett Park. There is a road that goes through the whole park that can be resurfaced and used as a trail since the traffic volume is low--around the golf course and none where the road became grown over with grass. This is Prescott Road.

Please consider bike access on the Muddy Branch trail as a possible Gaithersburg to C&O canal connection.

I am happy to see Matthew Henson trail finally getting built.

If there is some accompanying text to this plan , please post it on the web.

Thanks,  
Lynne Rosenbusch  
26517 Aiken Drive  
Clarksburg, Md. 20871

**Coleman, Lyn**

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**From:** Rob Richie [rr@fairvote.org]  
**Sent:** Sunday, September 18, 2005 12:45 PM  
**To:** Coleman, Lyn  
**Cc:** Perez\_Tom\_w  
**Subject:** Comments on plan to maintain/expand trails throughout the county

Greetings,

I'm glad to see there are ambitious plans to expand hiking and hiker-biker trails in the county. It's a great value to the community.

That said, I'm deeply troubled the attitude toward maintenance toward existing trails that I've experienced in recent months. If the county has a general approach toward trail maintenance that it has for the heavily used bikepath that runs along Sligo Creek, then I suspect it isn't ready to make new trails until it grasp the classic "a stitch in time saves nine" principle.

The bikepath was put in several years ago, and immediately became a success. It's constantly in use, and a great place to introduce kids to biking, to go for runs and to take casual walks. But the trail surface gets absolutely NO regular maintenance -- even the simple act of cleaning the trail after storms wash sand and gravel on large sections of it is NEVER done, let alone analyzing why that runoff is happening and taking steps to prevent it in the future.

I'm an experienced biker who's biked thousands of miles, both on long tours and regular commutes, but have twice had my bike go out from under me when using the trail instead of the road. My two girls have both had bikes slide out from under them due to hitting sand/gravel on the trail. That's led me a couple times to take a few hours to work on cleaning the trail with home-brooms, but I don't keep up with it. Repeated calls to Ken Ferrari and the maintenance center has not led to ANY action since a big storm swept lots of gravel and sand onto the trail more than two months ago. They both point fingers at the other as the place to take action, and then make empty promises of doing something. A friend of mine who knows the people responsible for biking policy in the county connected by email with several folks, but they seemingly couldn't care less.

Furthermore, there are at least two sections of the trail near Piney Branch where the asphalt is coming off in chunks due to water erosion. I'm sure a county crew could fix this quickly, but I've been told that such action is "at the bottom of the list." One of the spots has been flagged by the county so that it has a plastic barrel marking it, but the other doesn't even have that -- that barrell was put up months ago, apparently without any accompanying belief that anything should be done about it. (While there out there, they could put asphalt on the sections connecting the path to the bridges, which is a gap of about 2 inches on some bridges, quite a jolt to a 5-year-old learning how to bike.)

I'm copying my friend Tom Perez - -not because he doesn't have a heckuva lot of more important things to think about, but to help flag the fact that I think it's incumbent on the county to take such steps to make it seem like government works. When you can't get the basic things done, it undercuts faith in the bigger things that may not be as immediately visible. I don't understand how the county can have big tax dollars for ambitious new projects, but can't seem to find any resources for something like this. I'm not going to lead a tax revolt, but if I was that kind of person, this inaction would be putting gas on that fire.

Good luck in your planning, and please make sure that planning includes more attention to maintenance,

Rob Richie  
7401 Jackson Avenue  
Takoma Park, MD 20912  
(301) 270-4981, [rr@fairvote.org](mailto:rr@fairvote.org)



**Coleman, Lyn**

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**From:** alkjkljfd [roost4416@hotmail.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, September 19, 2005 3:54 PM  
**To:** Coleman, Lyn  
**Subject:** What I want from Mo County Trails

MORE natural surface trails.

MORE protected land/open space with natural surface trails.

More protected green space/mature forest with natural surface trails.

Natural surface trails should be open to all forms of non-motorized transport.

Trail along the ENTIRE ICC.

MORE pathways made that go around mature trees (make the path curve). I noticed this being done in California, and it made sense. Make the path fit the terrain.

Thanks! What time is the hearing on the 27th?

Respectfully,

andy goglia

**Coleman, Lyn**

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**From:** Joe Fritsch [joe.fritsch@verizon.net]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 21, 2005 3:32 PM  
**To:** Coleman, Lyn  
**Subject:** Comments on Trail work Programs Priorities

Lyn,

I am writing as a citizen of Montgomery County with Comments on the Trail works Programs.

**Rachel Carson Greenway** - Delay this project or allow mountain bikes on the Rachel Carson trail. Currently there are NO trails which allow mountain bikes near the Rachel Carson Greenway Trail while there are all ready hiking and equestrian trails in the area.

**Rock Creek Trail Corridor Planning** - Make this the priority project and allow mountain bike on this trail. Currently there are no trails which allow mountain bikes in the area.

(Note: There are no trail markers or signs of any kind at Blue Mash allowing bicycles, therefore, since I have been told a trail is closed to bicycles unless signed for bicycle use, bicycles are not allowed at Blue Mash).

**Rock Creek Corridor, North Branch Trail (Paved)** - This trail should be moved up in priority to allow better access to the current Rock Creek Paved trail with out having to use roads or drive to the trail. This would promote more commuting by bicycle as well as more recreation with out having to use a motor vehicle.

**Matthew Henson Trail** - This trail is much need to connect citizens who live near by to the Rock Creek Paved trail.

**Trail bridge over Veirs Mill** - Great to see efforts being made to make the Rock Creek Trail safer and more of a continuous trail!!

**Renovations of the Sligo Creek, Rock Creek, Long Branch and Little Falls trails** - Much needed as these trails are currently to narrow for the amount of users seen on weekends and nice weekdays. These trails should be upgraded and widened to increase their use for commuting by bicycle.

Thank you for asking for comments from the community.

Joe Fritsch  
17717 Buehler Rd  
Olney, MD 20832  
301-260-9688