View this email in your browser

Greater Prince William TRAILS COALITION

GPWTC Quarterly Meeting on April 25

You're invited - and feel free to bring a trails buddy - to the hybrid Quarterly Meeting of the Greater Prince William Trails Coalition (GPWTC).

We will assemble with coffee and donuts at the **Potomac Science Center** of George Mason University on April 25, 10:00-11:30am to network, exchange information, and get up-to-speed on what's happening south of the Occoquan River. (*Warning: there is a lot of trails-related activity and advocacy.*) You can also participate via Zoom.

Dr. Robert L. Zarr will speak. He was the first medical director of **Park Rx America**, prescribing nature as medicine. Also by April 25, we will know what funding is (or is not…) included in the Prince William County budget for trail construction.

Please **sign up** so we know if you're coming in person. Registration page has the details for joining by Zoom.

Second Sunday Hike: North Side of Powell's Creek on April 14

Last month we explored the existing trail network in Potomac Shores (see above) south of the Powell's Creek Crossing which is now being designed. This month, we'll examine on April 14, 1:00-3:00pm how the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail might connect on the north side to the boardwalk/bridge over Powell's Creek.

Please register, so we can notify you in case weather forces a postponement. Park **at the trailhead** on Scuppers Lane, under the powerlines.

Proposed Prince William County Indoor Sports & Event Center

Prince William County is considering a Indoor Sports & Events Center. The proposal, which is conceptual in nature, is estimated to cost between $118-136 million, including $16 million for the land at **13505 Telegraph Road** in Woodbridge.
In the **2019 Needs Assessment survey** completed by Prince William Department of Parks and Recreation, the #1 Priority Investment Rating (PIR) was for walking and biking trails (PIR=200). That was followed by natural wildlife habitats (PIR=118.8), small neighborhood parks (PIR=110.6), and indoor fitness and exercise facilities (PIR=109.2).

Residents can learn more and provide input at two community meetings or **online**:

Wednesday, April 10, 6:30 – 8:30 pm
Pat White Center at Ben Lomond
10501 Copeland Dr., Manassas, VA 20109

Thursday, April 11, 6:30 – 8:30 pm
Freedom High School (Cafeteria)
15201 Neabsco Mills Rd, Woodbridge, VA 22191

April 10: Cloverdale Park Rededication Ceremony

Come celebrate with the Department of Parks and Recreation at 2:00pm, April 10 at **15150 Cloverdale Road**, Woodbridge, VA 22193.

Fire Damages Locust Shade Trail

One of 12 trail bridges built by **Mid Atlantic Off-Road Enthusiasts** (MORE) at Locust Shade Park was destroyed when wildfire swept through on March 20. (Check out **some pictures**.)

Yes, **donations** for repair are welcome.

Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail (PHNST) Update

The Town of Occoquan passed a resolution on March 5 saying "the Occoquan Town Council hereby endorses the route of the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail as it takes advantage of the 1-95/Route 123 VDOT right of way going north to, and then under, the 1-95 bridge and then continuing along the shoreline of the Occoquan River under the Route One and railroad bridges…"

The Trails and Blueways Council (TBC) passed a similar resolution on March 8. You can see the complete resolutions in the **TBC minutes**.
On-the-ground field trips to examine possible PHNST routes continue. A March 13 expedition traced a possible PHNST braid from Telegraph Pavilion in Prince William Forest Park to near the southern end of Van Burn Road (*see above*).

For PHNST Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) grant, one consultant will complete the feasibility study, preliminary design, and cost estimates for:
Gap 1: link between Occoquan-Belmont Bay
Gap 2: link between Dumfries-Prince William Forest Park
Gap 3 - link between entrance from Prince William Forest Park to National Museum of the Marine Corps next to Locust Shade Park

Trails and Blueways Council March 26 Meeting Notes

Newest member of 16-member Trails and Blueways Council (TBC) is Bill Selfridge, appointed by Supervisor Andrea Bailey to represent the Potomac District along with Steve Cover.

TBC meets monthly, with additional public gatherings for out-on-the-trail explorations. Meetings and agendas are **advertised online**, with a WebEx link to monthly meetings.

This month TBC got an update on the Community Energy and Sustainability Master Plan (CESMP), new rezonings that could include trail proffers, Powell's Creek Greenway plans downstream from Minnieville Road to the mouth of the creek, plus reports from TrailKeepers, Prince William Trails and Streams, and Greater Prince William Trails Coalition. In addition:

- TBC adopted a FY25 resolution: *NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Trails and Blueways Council recommends that the County's FY2025 budget include $6,381,814 to ensure that the County is able to efficiently provide trails and blueways access points for the following projects:*
  PHNST – *Neabsco Creek Wetland Preserve Boardwalk - $4,020,814* ***–*** *Shovel-ready*
  Neabsco Creek ADA Parking to Boardwalk *- $111,000* ***–*** *Shovel-ready*
  Lake Ridge Marina Dock Replacement *- $2,000,000* ***–*** *Design complete*
  Neabsco Creek Kayak Launch *- $ 250,000* ***–*** *Shovel-ready*
  BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Trails and Blueways Council recommends that the County's FY2025 budget include increased funding for trails maintenance in the amount of $250,000 to ensure adequate support for the 60+ miles of trails currently in the County's trails system.
- Powells Creek contractor will meet with TBC members on April 22.
- Bike/pedestrian bridge at new Brentsville interchange is scheduled to open before June.
- A Countywide Trail Plan, with a "deeper dive" and more-detailed community connections on the future map than the **2040 Mobility Chapter**, will be developed by staff in Department of Parks and Recreation. TBC feedback is requested by staff, particularly on recommended segments to add/revise and on level of detail for the plan. Countywide Trail Plan is projected to be adopted in 2025.
- PW County Transportation Department is identifying a few high priority projects in each magisterial district for future grant applications. TBC input is welcomed.

Transportation Alternatives Set Aside Program (TAP) Funding

For FY25 and FY26, the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) **has approved** $378,000 in Federal funding for Manassas Drive sidewalk improvements in Manassas Park. The Commonwealth Transportation Board District member for Northern Virginia, Mary Hynes, allocated an additional $1,000,000. The project will significantly improve pedestrian connectivity across the Norfolk Southern tracks between Park Central and the Manassas Park VRE Station.

Three Prince William County projects **among seven submissions** totally $14 million received funding:
- Graham Park Road Sidewalk ($2,500,000) along the front of Graham Park Middle School, implementing the sidewalk portion of the Graham Park Road Diet
- Colchester Road Sidewalk ($2,500,000), adding two crosswalk legs and new ramps to create a four-leg ADA compliant intersection crossing at Featherstone Road to Randall Drive
- Lions Field Road Sidewalk ($2,500,000), creating a safe route from Fuller Heights Road to Triangle Elementary School

Projects that **qualify for TAP funding** include on- and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities, recreational trail program projects, and safe routes to school projects.

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) solicits requests for TAP funding every two years; next cycle will be in Fall 2025. In the 2023 cycle, VDOT received 24 applications that totaled 200% of the available funding. Eight of the FY25/26 projects are part of the National Capital Trail Network or are directly connected to it.

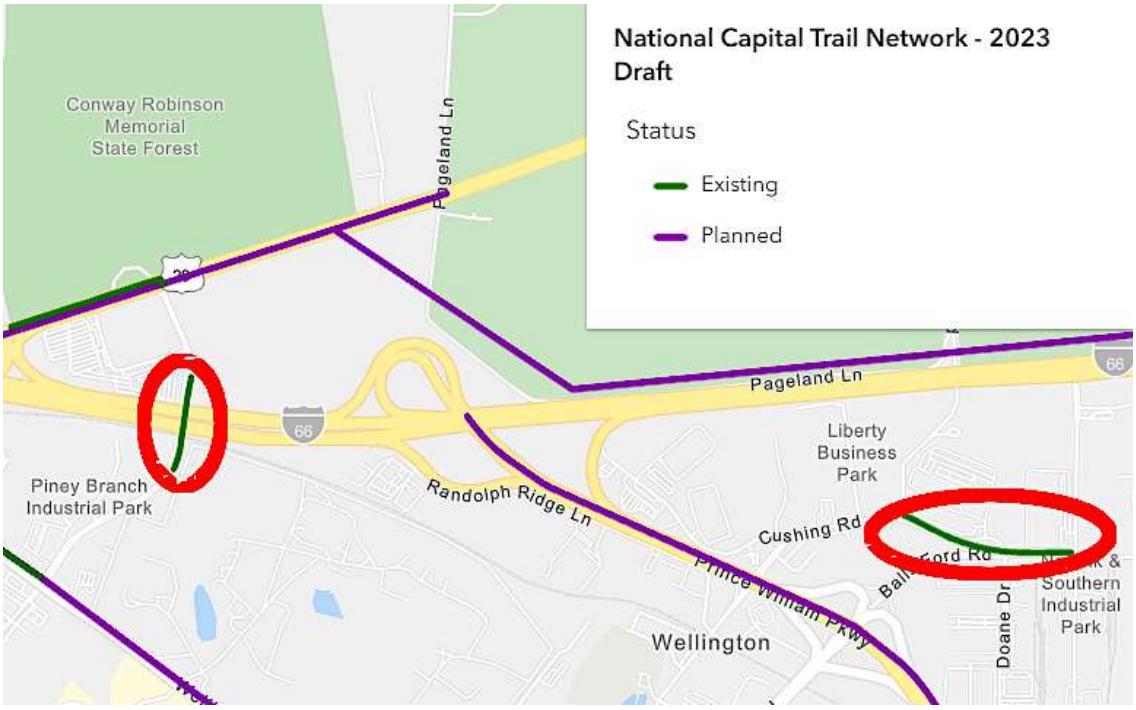
volunteers gathered at the boardwalk

Blueway Cleanups

The Marumsco Creek/Veteran's Park cleanup, organized by the Prince William Trails and Streams Coalition, is now scheduled for April 6 from 9:00am-noon. Trash is carried via stormwater from the developed areas upstream into the wetland, so we gotta haul it out. **Register** in case weather forces another postponement.

The Prince William Trails and Streams Coalition completed a successful cleanup at Neabsco Creek and Boardwalk on March 16. At the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church site, volunteers removed about 40 bags of trash, 8 tires, and 12 construction barrels.

Location	bags of trash	tires	miscellaneous items
Neabsco Boardwalk and stream corridor	112	30	large metal tank
Neabsco Creek near Neabsco Rd	40	5	large plastic tubs
vicinity of GSL Church	45	8	12 construction barrels, lengths of plastic pipe from utility construction
Total	**197**	**43**	



National Capital Trail Network Update

On March 19, the **Bike/Pedestrian Subcommittee** of the Transportation Planning Board (TPB) discussed the updated the National Capital Trail Network Map. Updates have incorporated

segments that have been built since July 2020, plus re-routings and new segments added at the request of the TPB jurisdictions.

Changes for Manassas, Manassas Park, and Prince William County include updates to planned/existing status, plus addition of two segments on University Boulevard and Balls Ford Road (see above).

As described by the Bike/Pedestrian Subcommittee:
- the updated National Capital Trail Network will provide a continuous pedestrian and bicycle network of 1,549 miles of trails and other low-stress facilities, of which 752 miles already exist and 797 miles are planned, serving the entire region in an equitable manner
- 63% of the region's population and 72% of region's jobs are within a half-mile of the network; 136 of the region's 140 Activity Centers are within a half-mile of the network, as are334 of the 364 Equity Emphasis Areas

Another update, which could include new segments, is scheduled to kick off later in 2024.

In Other News…

- Brian Leckie is moving from the City of Manassas - but not moving far. He has accepted the **Bike and Ped and Park and Ride Coordinator** position at the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT). That fills the position Heidi Mitter left when she got promoted.
- **National Walking Week** is April 1-8, 2024.
- **Officials must act on promise to fix the region's Visualize 2050 transportation plan** (*Greater Greater Washington*, March 21). The Transportation Planning Board staff have ranked project submissions for the draft long-range **Visualize 2050** transportation plan. The Graham Park Road proposal to create on-road bike lanes and five foot sidewalks along both lanes received a surprisingly low score, according to the Coalition for Smarter Growth.
- **Traffic Safety and Our Need to go From Auto-Centric, to People-Centric Streets**, (by Supervisor Keny Boddye, in *PWPerspective*, March 9)
- At the National Bike Summit, Jeremiah Lowery, Advocacy Director with the **Washington Area Bicyclist Association** (WABA), was honored by the League of American Bicyclists as the **Professional Advocate of the Year**.
- The **Partnership for the National Trails System** will offer the Southeast Conservation Blueprint for Ecosystem Resilience **webinar** on April 23, 3:00-4:00pm. The 2024 National Trails Workshop will be in Tucson, Arizona on November 17-21.
- **Arlington Co. looks to cut down on pedestrian crashes with 'hardened centerlines'** (WTOP, March 11)
- **States must assess road safety for pedestrians, cyclists under FHWA proposed rule change** (*SmartCitiesDIVE*, March 6). Changes will incorporate the **Safe System Approach** with five elements of a safe transportation system - safe road users, safe vehicles, safe speeds, safe roads, and post-crash care.
- **New York City Just Had Its Safest-Ever Year For Pedestrians, What Went Right?** (*Bloomberg*, March 11) One solution was daylighting, removing parked cars near crosswalks so all road users see one another better.

- **The Biking Boom: Expanding Bicycling in the DMV** (Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, March 13) "*The percentage of people who bicycle in our region more than tripled from 2008 to 2018…*"
- **Parents upset after Fairfax County police say they won't provide crossing guards next school year** (Fox5, March 20) According to the **GazetteLeader** (March 29), "*Fairfax County police have 72 crossing-guard positions, 53 of which currently are filled*."
- **A More Walkable World: Ideas to Get Us Moving**(National Public Radio). TED Talks on how we can change car-centric cities and screen-filled lives that keep us sitting.
- **BMX racing league for young riders planned in Woodbridge** (*Prince William Times*, March 22) "*An open house where riders can try the track is set for Tuesday, April 2 from 5:30 to 7:30 pm*." **NOVA BMX** operates the track at the McCourt Administrative Center.
- Spring 2024 **Street Smart Safety** campaign by the Transportation Planning Board will run "Shattered Lives" ads on buses in April/May plus virtual reality challenges. On April 21, a car parked at Springfield Town Center will let "drivers" with headsets deal with bike/pedestrian safety scenarios… virtually.

Greater Prince William TRAILS COALITION

Copyright (C) 2024 Greater Prince William Trails Coalition. All rights reserved.

The Greater Price William Trails Coalition is a 501(c)(3) organization (EIN: 92-3087298).
Our mailing address is P.O. Box 1674, Woodbridge, VA 22195
To subscribe/unsubscribe, contact us at info@gpwtrails.org

INTUIT mailchimp

This email was sent to <<Email Address>>
why did I get this? unsubscribe from this list update subscription preferences
Greater Prince William Trails Coalition · PO Box 6351 · Woodbridge, VA 22195 · USA