Greater Prince William TRAILS COALITION

What Did You Miss at the June 26 Greater Prince William Trails Coalition Quarterly Meeting?

On June 26, Bryce Barrett presented a detailed description of bike/pedestrian mobility initiatives in the Prince William Transportation Department, including plans to request **$11 million for Safe Streets for All (SS4A)** grants. If awarded, the county would have to commit $1.7 million in matching funds.

Next Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) Six Year Plan submission will include Route 234 Trail at Innovation. Proposal might include a bike/pedestrian bridge over Prince William Parkway at Discovery Boulevard, with trail extension to Balls Ford interchange.
By Spring 2026, **Hoadley Road STARS Study** will identify preferred bike/ped facilities. Study will be followed by grant applications.

As noted at the recent public meeting on the Trails Master Plan, the county is planning a bike/pedestrian network with over 600 miles of trails (*see above*). Transportation Department will ensure Safe Streets for All (SS4A) project proposals are coordinated with Trails Master Plan alignments, particularly for Shared Use Paths and bike routes on paved shoulders where roads are not planned to be widened.

The Virginia Department of Transportation's **NOVA Bicycle and Pedestrian Network Study** provided planning-level cost estimates for building active mobility facilities ranging from natural surface trails ($330,000-$675,000 per mile in FY2034 dollars) to shared use paths ($7 million-$14.6 million in FY34 dollars)

Michele Burton with the Community Healthcare Coalition of Greater Prince William announced the latest **Community Health Assessment** (CHA) will be released on July 9. It will be followed by an update to the **2020-2024 Community Health Improvement Plan** (CHIP). The Greater Prince William Trails Coalition is highlighting to the health community, that trails are a low-cost health prevention and maintenance tool, and community health could be improved by expansion of the trail network.

Josh Stringer in Prince William Forest Park announced the new park brochure in 2026 will show current trails more accurately. It is feasible for PHNST to have separate bike and walking routes through the park between entrance station to Spriggs Road. Creating a new north entrance off Route 234 with a parking lot is not actively being pursued now. If ever developed, the public schools would like the entrance to include a bus parking space for school trips.

National Park Foundation **2025 Park Partner Capacity Building Request for Proposals** closes on July 22.

Prince William Conservation Alliance has released its **3Rs of Reaching Our Potential: Reimagine, Reinvest, Redevelop!** proposal for development is Prince William County. It champions creation of live-work-play walkable communities.

A public meeting to gather input on the **Rail With Trail** proposal, connecting the VRE station on Manassas with the Bull Run- Occoquan Trail in Fairfax County, is tentatively scheduled for July 30. Meeting will identify preferred alignment.

Northern Virginia Regional Commission (NVRC) will produce a new viewshed inventory for the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail.

Second Sunday Hike on July 13, 1:00-3:00pm

We will explore the new Blue Trail at **Bull Run Mountains Natural Area Preserve**. Virginia Outdoor Foundation (VOF) will provide a sneak peak of a trail that is not yet open for general public use. It's July, so we picked a trail with lots of shade.

Please **register** so you know where to park, and so we can notify you in case weather forces us to cancel the trip.

You can visit the preserve early on July 6 (8:30-11:30am) for **Wineberry Day, Delicious Destruction**. Join the VOF staff in the annual collection and manual destruction of the non-native wineberry bush.
Note: *no trails* are open to High Point at the preserve now. Access to the rocky cliffs, which are highly visible when driving eat on I-66 through Fauquier County, was closed because sensitive vegetation was being trampled. (The VOF **recently acquired** High Point, so someday....)

Where to Route the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail?

The PHNST Subcommittee of the Prince William Trails and Blueways Council will meet at 2:00pm on July 17 (not July 24, as previously announced). The consultants for the **$375,000 Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) study** are close to providing final recommendations on what they believe to be the most feasible routes to close three gaps. The final report will be over 1,000 pages.

A fourth gap, between the Potomac Shore Virginia Railway Express (VRE) station and Dumfries, was not included in the study. The subcommittee will have to use its expertise to identify a preferred route, if it does not select the one identified in the 2040 Mobility Chapter (*see above*).

There is no current plan to build more trails west from the Potomac Shores Middle School area. Any decisions included in the **Trails Master Plan**, now in development, will go to the Board of County Supervisors in January for adoption.

No funds have been identified yet for design or construction of the trail segments that will be recommended. Next funding opportunity will be the FY27 budget. Staff proposals for that budget begin in earnest in October and public involvement begins next January.

Trails and Blueways Council: June 24 Update

The Trails and Blueways Council (TBC) consists of 16 citizens appointed by the Prince William County supervisors to provide advice. The Parks and Recreation Department is the primary point of contact for the TBC, but the Prince William Transportation Department and Planning Office are actively involved.

There is a separate Parks and Recreation Commission. At the TBC's June 24 meeting, Brodie Freer (chair of the Parks and Recreation Commission) invited TBC members to particpate in the annual bus tour/discussion of county park projects on September 13. A joint meeting of the two groups is tentatively scheduled for October 15.

Other discussion topics:
- Survey and design of the Jefferson Park trail connector project is expected to take 10 months.
- Planning Office reported that bike/pedestrian paths will be considered in threestudies on Sudley Road, Vint Hill Corridor, and Fettler Park (including Van Buren Road).
- Trails Master Plan won't include sidewalks. Sidewalks projects are developed during rezonings, or by the county's Transportation Department.
- Prince William Trails & Streams Coalition manages the **Adopt A Trail** program.
- 2025 **Recreational Needs Assessment** will be discussed in July or August.
- Trails at **Nokesville Park** were built by Nokesville Horse Society and Prince William Trails & Streams Coalition. The Nokesville Horse society is no longer in existence, and the trails are not being maintained.

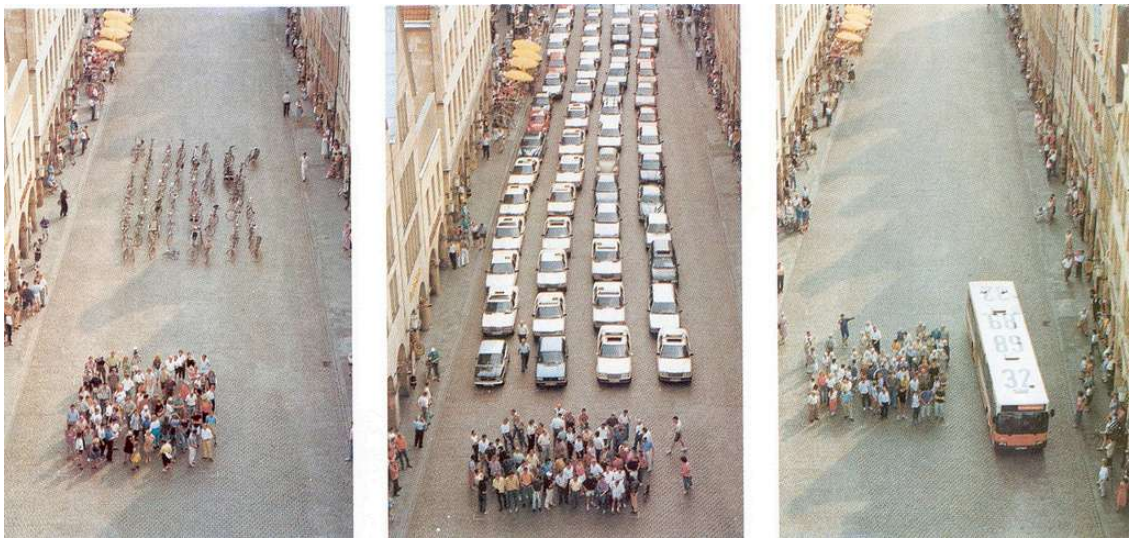
Parks Foundation Launches Campaign to Fund Two Self-Service Kayak Rental Units

The Prince William County Parks Foundation is **raising funds** so visitors to Silver Lake and Neabsco regional parks can use an app on their phone to rent a kayak, paddle and safety gear from self-service units. Each unit, with concrete pad and metal storage cage as well as equipment, will cost $50,000 to install.

The units will enable people without their own boats to enjoy a water-based recreational experience - and after some experience, decide if they want to acquire their own equipment.

In Other News…

- New stone dust **trails in Valley View Park** in Prince William County (*see above)* are expected to be open for use in July.
- On July 8, Prince William Board of County Supervisors will declare July to be **Parks and Recreation Month**. Resolution includes "*…parks and recreation promote spending time in nature, which positively impacts mental health by increasing cognitive performance and well-being.*"
- **Prince William Co. plans to connect trails by going under, rather than over busy stretch of US 15** (WTOP, June 19)
- Northern Virginia Regional Commission (NVRC) and Fina Trails are offering a **Half-Day Trail Maintenance Workshop** on July 12, 8:30am-12:30pm. It is an in-person workshop on tools and techniques for key maintenance topics.
- **Trail Maintenance Funding 101** This NVRC/Fina Trails webinar is July 29,10:00am "*This session is designed for local governments, nonprofit organizations, volunteer groups, and community advocates who lead and support trail development and maintenance programs.*"
- **Discarded Tires Pile Up in Occoquan River**, (*Potomac Local* [paywall], June 19) "*A troubling cluster of discarded tires was recently found lodged on a sandbar near channel marker 15, just downstream from the Route 1 bridge over the Occoquan River.*"
- American Trails is offering a free webinar, **Volunteer Trail Builders: How to Attract Them and Retain Their Involvement Over the Years** on July 10 at 1:00-2:00pm.
- **5 new National Recreation Trails to explore this summer** (*Washington Post,* June 24) One is the 10.5-mile Elizabeth River Trail in Norfolk, started in 2003 by local boosters and now connected 28 neighborhoods. It includes the **Glowline**, the first glow-in-the-dark trail on the East Coast
- **Virginia Beach Trail Phase 4 gains $23.8 million grant** (WVEC, June 25) "*In planning since 1981, the trail is the city's top-priority project in its Active Transportation Plan…"* The **Virginia Beach Trail** (VB Trail) was included in the CIP for the first time in the FY24 budget. The $23.8 million for Phase 4 came from Virginia's SMART Scale program.
- **RV There Yet?** filmed a 20-minute segment at Prince William Forest Park. There are 37 miles of **hiking trails** and 21 miles of **biking routes** (paved and unpaved) at the park.
- **Greenway Groundwork: Trail surfaces from Maine to Florida** (East Coast Greenway video). Learn about the East Coast Greenway designation process, how design criteria and local community priorities influence surface choices and how a background in landscape architecture shapes the approach to trail development
- Leopold's Preserve offers walks with a naturalist programs on **July 2** and **July 13**. The **5K and 10K races** also are on July 13.
- **Bikeshare Beat: Ridership shifts into high gear with over 690K rides**(Greater Greater Washington, June 23) "*May also marked the 41st consecutive month of year-over-year growth, pushing the annual total past 2.6 million trips for 2025.*"



space required to move 72 people by bicycles, cars or bus

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