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Greater Prince William TRAILS COALITION

Have You Registered Yet for June 27 Quarterly Meeting?

Please tell us if you will join via Zoom or come in person to network, drink coffee/tea, and munch on the oh-so-healthy donuts as we "partner up" and share information.

Among other topics, we will discuss the new monthly Sierra Club "Explore South of the Occoquan" hikes, updates on the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail, and the **joint application** of Manassas, Manassas Park, and Prince William County for an Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program (ATII Program) grant to plan a trail parallel to the Norfolk Southern railroad from downtown Manassas to the Bull Run Trail in Fairfax County.

We will be in Room 1205 (new spot…) at GMU's **Potomac Science Center** at Belmont Bay.

June 8 Trail Workday – Occoquan Greenway

Volunteers are needed 9:00am-noon on June 8 to assist with the **Occoquan Greenway trail** in Lake Ridge, along the Hooes Run section of the reservoir. We will replace a small wood footbridge with a larger bridge, and reinforce the stream bank with stones to impede erosion at the site. Cordless drills and circular saws would be useful if you have them.

Please register **here** so we can let you know if the event is rescheduled due to bad weather, and we have a better idea of how many people to expect.

Glowline Trails Light Up the Night

If you know a business or government agency looking for an ecotourism attraction… the first **Glowline trail** on the East Coast has been installed on the Elizabeth River Trail in Norfolk. Glowstones in the concrete trail absorb ultraviolet (UV) light from the sun during the day, then instantly glow in the dark for up to 15 hours.

Second Sunday Hike on June 9

Please register to get details, including the location of the starting point. We'll be exploring on the western side of Prince William County on June 9, 1:00-3:00pm. If you register, we can notify you if the hike is postponed or cancelled because of weather conditions.

"Walk With a Doc"

A creative way to get people to visit with a medical professional and get questions answered is the **Walk With A Doc** program. It's an innovative way to get people to adopt a more-healthy lifestyle, and they hit the ground ~~running~~ walking.

There's now a chance to **Walk With a Doc in Dominion Valley** at 8:00am on one Sunday morning each month. Other **nearby walk locations** are in Vienna, Falmouth, and Fredericksburg.

Occoquan Greenway Lease Extended to 2044

On May 14, the Lake Ridge Parks and Recreation Association (LRPRA) Board approved the second amendment to the Deed of Lease for the **Occoquan Greenway Trail**.

The original trail agreement was established in April 2014 for 20 years. The new agreement will add additional segments of the trail and extend the county's lease to 2044.

7-Mile Hike on June 15

Sierra Club - Great Falls Chapter is leading monthly hikes to "Explore South of the Occoquan River." Planned hike in May was postponed due to rain, so we will try again on June 15 from 10:00am-1:30pm.

Starting near Rippon Lodge, we will cross the spectacular Neabsco Creek Boardwalk and continue through the Julie Metz Wetlands before entering Leesylvania State Park. Reaching Powell's Creek, we will look out over the future site of the future Powell's Creek Boardwalk that will soon provide another critical link of the rapidly expanding Potomac Heritage Trail.

Highlights include hardwood forests, open marshes, bald eagle populations, and distant views of the Potomac River. Hiking distance: 7 miles over flat to rolling terrain. Capacity limited to 25 people – so **please register**.

Walking Further to the School Bus

Prince William Public School has “tweaked” school bus routes for next year, in part because over one-third of buses are arriving late at schools and the average bus is only half-full. Of the 73,000 students taking the bus, 57,000 walk just the length of a football field to their stop.

The total number of bus stops are being reduced, so students will walk a few extra houses to catch their bus next year. Target distances are:
Pre-K-Grade 5 students - 0.25 miles
Middle school students - 0.5 miles
High school students - 0.75 miles

One School Board member **said** “*I think having those babies walk a little bit farther is good for everybody. You know, zip the coats up, put the tennis shoes on, walk to school, you'll be just fine.*”

Heard About “Born Learning” Trails?

The United Way has installed 750 outdoor **Born Learning** trails with 10 interactive signs at parks, schools, and in communities.

Trail kits include permanent or portable signs in English and Spanish that offer fun, active learning activities for young children/families. The trail experience is designed to enhance early childhood learning and increase the chances of children entering school ready to learn.

*Prince William County Parks **Summer Photo Contest** is open to the public June 15 - July 31, 2024.*

In Other News…

- **Occoquan RiverFest & Craft Show** is June 1-2, 10:00am-5:00pm. The popular *Whatever Floats Your Boat Parade* on Saturday and the annual *Duck Splash* on Sunday will be on the Occoquan River.
- The **5th Anniversary Celebration** of the Neabsco Boardwalk is June 1, 11:00am-1:00pm.
- The League of American Bicyclists designated the City of Manassas as a "bronze" Bike Friendly Community last year. Falls Church was granted only "honorable mention" status this year. Prince William County has never applied - so far. Three years from now, Manassas must reapply for its designation to remain one of 480 designated **Bike Friendly Communities** in the United States.
- **New legislation** passed by the 2024 General Assembly authorizes Prince William County to reduce speed limits on neighborhood streets to less than 25 miles per hour.
- ~~Prfection~~Perfection is great, but "better" is possible without waiting for "ideal." Check out **The Second Best Way to Get Safer Streets** (*Bloomberg*, May 2)
- Decarbonizing transportation is key to meeting the county's goals in the **Community Energy and Sustainability Master Plan** (CESMP). It's possible - see "Resilient Transportation and Mobility Solutions" in the Department of Housing and Urban Development's **Climate Resilience Implementation Guide**.
- The Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation has released a new **Virginia Trip Planner** that helps plan bike/rail/bus trips that do not fit within the fixed routes and schedules. Check out the **bike app**.
- Prince William County has been awarded a **$100,000 grant** from the Connect Trails to Parks program of the National Park Service. It will reimburse the county for already-

completed enhancements to wayfinding and interpretation on the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail (PHNST) at Neabsco Regional Park.

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The Greater Price William Trails Coalition is a 501(c)(3) organization (EIN: 92-3087298).
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