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Greater Prince William TRAILS COALITION

Ducks Unlimited Names GPWTC "Conservationist of the Year"

On February 24, the Prince William Chapter of Ducks Unlimited presented a "Conservationist of the Year" award to the **Greater Prince William Trails Coalition** (GPWTC). The chapter had two Conservationists of the Year for 2022, and also selected Dr. Joe Ivers of **Virginia Waters and Wetlands Inc**.

The Greater Prince William Trails Coalition was honored for our efforts to partner together and create more opportunities for people to enjoy the great outdoors.

Second Sunday Hike - March 12, 1:00-3:00pm

On the Second Sunday of every month, the organizations which created the Greater Prince William Trails Coalition offer a hike to explore places in Prince William, Manassas, and Manassas Park.

We plan to explore the **Discovery Trail at the county landfill** on March 12. Yes, there is a bridge there…

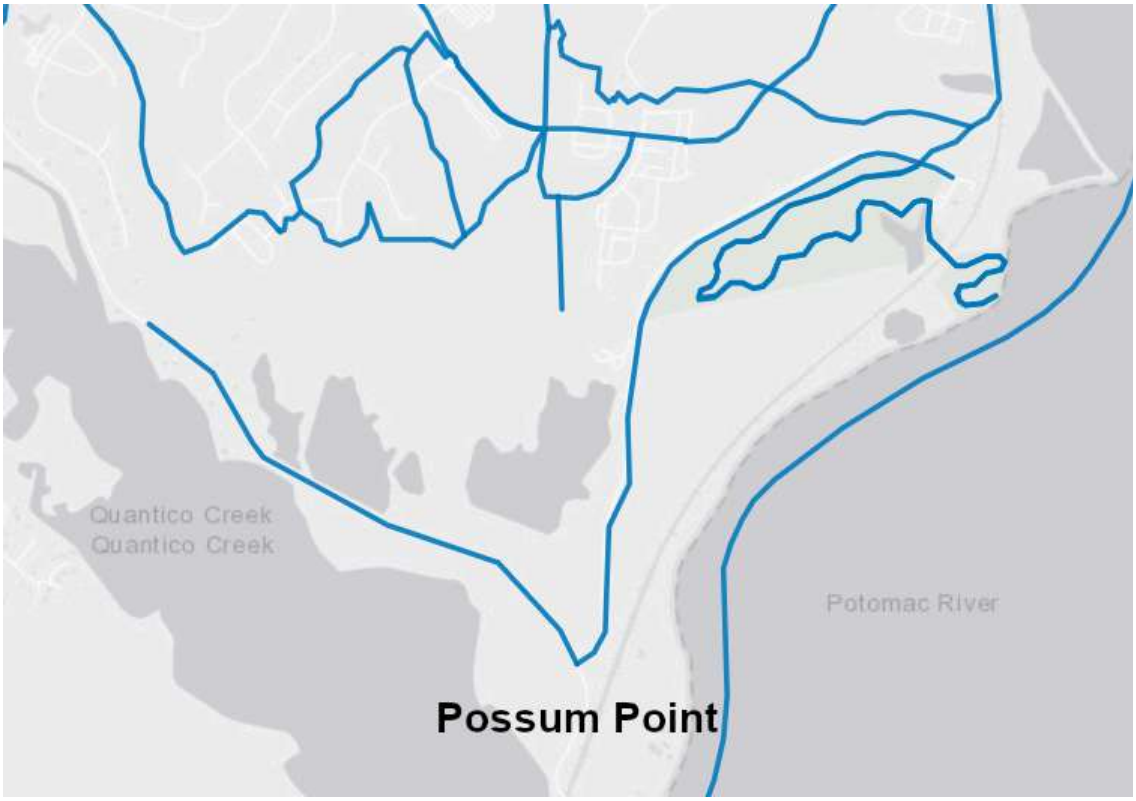
Please register at **https://tinyurl.com/e27h4m8s** to get details, including the location of the starting point. Questions? Contact secretary@pwtsc.org

FY2024 Budget News

Manassas has been steadily funding **trail projects** included in the Capital Improvements Program (CIP). The **bike/pedestrian infrastructure** has been growing steadily.

In Manassas Park, the upcoming "opportunity" is to get $$$ committed to implement the Active Transportation Plan which is now being developed. Bike/pedestrian projects could be added to **currently-planned transportation projects**.

In Prince William County, trail projects that were included in the bonds approved by voters in 2019 are in the FY24 budget. However, no General Funds were designated for trail construction in the **Capital Improvement Program** (CIP) through FY29. In addition, the County Executive's budget proposed cutting three existing positions from the Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism (DPRT).
The FY24 budget process is now in the public involvement phase, so trail advocates can express their recommendations to the Manassas **City Council**, Manassas Park **Governing Body**, and Prince William **Board of County Supervisors**.



Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail Update

Register now for the March 15 webinar on the Corridor Analysis, when the latest alignment of existing/planned segments of the **Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail** (PHNST) will be released. Through agreements with different agencies, the **Northern Virginia Regional Commission** and **PW County Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism** are the authoritative source of the existing/planned alignment of the PHNST.

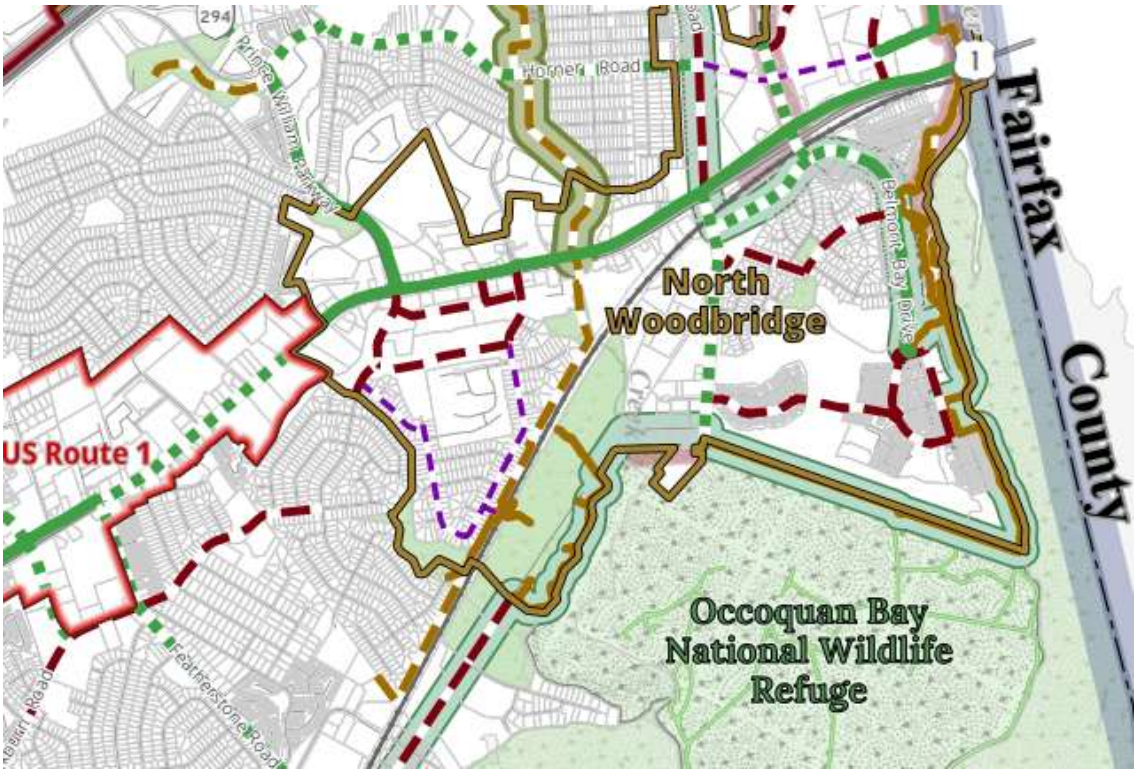
The trail could follow the alignment of the **Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route** in **Prince William Forest Park**. Construction in time to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the **semiquincentennial** of the Battle of Yorktown in 2031 will require funding the required archeological studies for the route within the park.

In Prince William County, the largest stretch of right-of-way to be acquired for the PHNST is between Potomac Shores and Prince William Forest Park.

Over 700 acres at Possum Point are owned by Dominion Power. In the future, a new full-sized waterfront park could be developed there on Quantico Creek. That would relieve some of the excessive demand that forces Leesylvania State Park to close its gates on summer weekends. A braid of the PHNST could go through such a park.

The possibilities will become ripe for discussion once a decision is made on how to manage the coal ash now in a pond at Possum Point. To hear more on that topic, consider attending the **Community Town Hall meeting** scheduled by Potomac District Supervisor Andrea Bailey on March 30, 6:00-8:00pm at **Potomac High School**.

Check out the **video** or the **printed report** on the 2022 accomplishments of the Prince William County Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism, including the illumination of the Neabsco Boardwalk in December.



Prince William Board of County Supervisors Action on Sustainability and Trails

Last September, the county's Sustainability Commission identified easy and obvious "low hanging fruit" action steps, **starting points** in a roadmap for the county to reach its Climate Mitigation and Resiliency goals. Those include a **commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions** countywide to 50% of the 2005 level by 2030.

One strategy in the county's upcoming **Community Energy and Sustainability Master Plan** (CESMP) is to encourage a "mode shift" from cars to bike/pedestrian/transit trips. This will require upgrading the trails network, improving bike/pedestrian safety, incentivizing the use of alternative modes, enhancing outreach, etc. (**Bike to Work Day** is May 19…)

Long journeys start by making first steps. On February 28, the Board of County Supervisors **passed a resolution** including a proposal to update the **Trails Plan** in the Mobility Chapter of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan:
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Prince William Board of County Supervisors hereby directs the County Executive and County Staff to analyze the implementation of the following "fast-track" measures and return to the Board with information and recommendations including, but not limited to, feasibility, pricing, and timelines:...
● Incorporating the Trails and Blueways Council's aspirational trails map, dated April 26, 2022, and submitted to the Prince William Board of County Supervisors on May 31, 2022, into the Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Master Plan as well as the Countywide Trails plan found in the Comprehensive Plan's Mobility Chapter.

In Other News…

- Manassas has submitted an application to the **League of American Bicyclists** to be designated as a Bicycle Friendly Community. The league now seeks input from local bikers on their experiences and perceptions of biking conditions in Manassas. **Survey** needs to be completed by April 5.
- Bikers wear helmets - but did you know Virginia Tech has a **Helmet Lab**?
- National Recreation and Park Association **reports**: "Sixty-six percent of U.S. adults say that they support their local government dedicating revenues, taxes and levies that specifically target park and recreation operations or expansion projects."
- Kristofer Butcher has been selected as the **new permanent superintendent** at Manassas National Battlefield Park
- Torsha Bhattacharya has been hired as the Program Manager for the newly created State Trails Office in **VDOT's Local Assistance Division**. She comes from the Rails to Trails Conservancy.
- Virginia Recreational Trails Program (RTP) **grants program opens March 16**. This year, only trail maintenance, repair, and amenity projects on existing land and water trails are eligible for funding.
- Check out the **Best New U.S. Bike Lanes**.
- **Prince William County Awarded $992,000 Federal "Safe Streets and Roads for All" Grant** (Prince William County, February 14)
- **Advocates say underfunding safety to blame for high pedestrian death count in Fairfax County** (FFXNow, February 28)
- **On beautiful country trails, fights over e-bikes can get ugly** (Washington Post, March 2)
- **Neabsco park project receives $750,000 grant** (InsideNOVA, March 2)

*As shown by the **1953 photo** above, Safe Routes to School is not a new concern…*

***Save the Date** - next Greater Prince William Trails Coalition Quarterly Meeting will be April 20, 10:00-11:00am. It will be hybrid, on Zoom and in-person at GMU's Potomac Science Center. If coming in person, please **register at SignUp Genius**. If joining this hybrid meeting electronically, please **register** at Zoom.*

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