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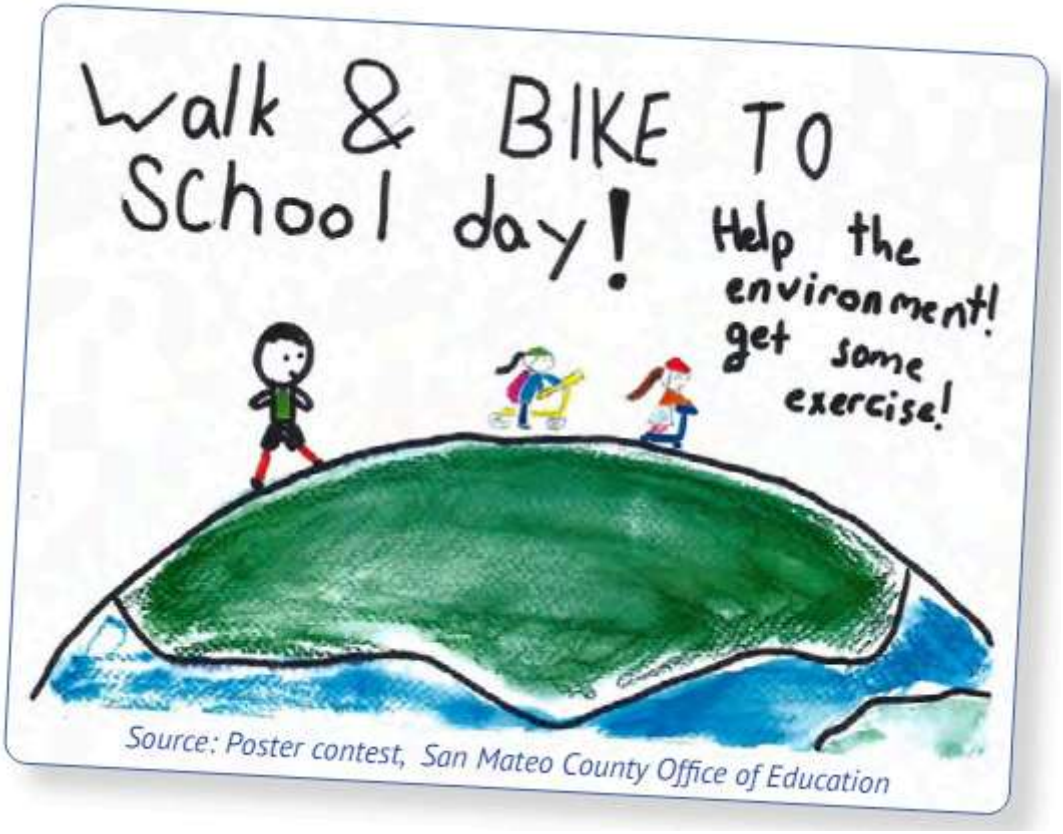
Greater Prince William TRAILS COALITION



May 8: Walk, Bike, and Roll to School Day

There is still time to **plan and register an event** scheduled on any day throughout the month of Mayr. There are over **200 events** in Virginia.

And check out "**Nine strategies cities use to prioritize safe, active trave lfor children and youth**."

new railings have been installed at Hedges Run bridge on Occoquan Greenway to keep people from falling off abutments

May 12: Second Sunday Hike

Check out the **registration link** to get details, including the location of the starting point. Registration will allow us to notify you if the hike is postponed or cancelled because of weather conditions.

May 17: Bike to Work Day

Join us at more than 100 **pit stops** in DC, MD, and VA for this FREE event for a fun and healthy way to start your day.

Prince William County is sponsoring a raffle for registered participants to win one of two bikes, tune-up services, and accessories redeemable at **A-1 Cycling**.

Also, the first 16,000 who **register** and attend at a pit stop receive a FREE T-shirt. Free giveaways, food, and beverages at the **9 participating locations** south of the Occoquan River.

May 18: Sierra Club PRO Hike Along the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail

Come out and hike with **Sierra Club PRO** and members of the **Greater Prince William Trails Coalition** along the **Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail** through Leesylvania State Park and Neabsco Regional Park in Prince William County, Virginia.
Starting near Rippon Lodge, we 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: 8 miles over flat to rolling terrain.
Bring a day pack, hiking boots, lunch, trail snacks, and 2 quarts of water. Meet at 10:00am at the **parking lot of Neabsco Regional Park** on Blackburn Road.
Register online at **https://www.meetup.com/sierrapotomac/events/**

*Manassas National Battlefield Park is **repairing the bridge** over Young's Branch on the First Manassas loop. As a temporary measure, the park created a low water crossing using stepping stones.*

Trails and Blueways Council (TBC) Meeting Notes

Discussion at the April 23 monthly meeting included:
- concerns about the proposed location of the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail in the **Destination Place** rezoning, proposed to be away from waterfront based on Woodbridge Small Area Plan rather than more-recent 2040 Mobility Chapter. Back in February, TBC identified its preference for a route within view of the Occoquan River in **Resolution 2024-4**
- all Public Facility Review (PFR) and rezonings now ensure bike racks are included (*TBC member who biked to the meeting noted that there is no bike rack at the Department of Parks and Recreation headquarters… yet*)
- Countywide Trails Plan kickoff will be in Fall 2024, and the plan will include blueways
- TBC members met on Apr 22 with consultant designing $9 million Powells Creek Crossing, intent is to build a destination rather than just a functional crossing, 5 options near CSX bridge being considered but exact location not determined yet, "crossing" could be bridge or boardwalk like at Neabsco Creek; locating trailhead parking will be a challenge
- review of Neabsco Greenway at meeting noted that several easements are needed to get trail access into Saratoga Hunt and Greenwood Farm parks
- a new 2-mile trail is opening at Long Park

You can watch the monthly TBC meetings online, and see all minutes and agendas for upcoming meetings, on the up-to-date **TBC website**.

Manassas City Council proclamation of "Bike to Work Day" recognized cooperation with OmniRide and Prince William County. Bryce Barrett will be "pit stop" leader at the VRE station on May 17

What You May Have Missed at the April 25 Quarterly Meeting (In addition to Dr. Zarr's Park Rx America Presentation)

- first pedestrian bridge in Princ William County at Brentsville interchange will be opening when project is completed, perhaps in May (second pedestrian bridge is proposed over Route 1 at North Woodbridge)
- Darbydale/Forestdale Avenue Corridor Improvements are a model for making safety/multimodal improvements in older residential neighborhoods
  automated photo enforcement program has already deployed cameras in pilot areas, primarily school zones
- interchange complex at Sudley Manor/Wellington and Prince William Parkway s a car-focused design, but could include shared use path from Sudley Manor to Hornbaker (if at-grade interchange at Wellington) or to Innovation with crossing over PW Parkway (if grade-separated "SPUI" interchange design is used)
- Prince William Transportation Department is planning grant application with Manassas/Manassas Park for Active Transportation Infrastructure Plan
- final FY25 Prince William Cunty budget included $325k and 3 FTE to maintain trails, additional $1.2 million (added to base $1.4 million capital maintenance budget) that can address trails as well as active recreation facilities, and $1 million to build trails

Northern Virginia Regional Commission (NVRC) Trails Planning

NVRC is developing a regional planning framework for recreational trails. Deadline to **respond to survey** is June 7. To stay engaged, **sign up** for the regional trails newsletter.
Also, NVRC is seeking public input on potential route options for completing the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail (PHNST) corridor gap in Loudoun County. Public meeting on Loudoun County Feasibility Study is scheduled for May 16, 6:00-8;00pm at the Lucketts Community Center. You can **register to join via Zoom** at 7:00pm for the presentation.

‘Street Smart’ Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Campaign

Prince William County’s **“Street Smart” education and enforcement campaign** runs from April 21-May 19, 2024. Primary aim in to reduce the number of pedestrian and bicycle crashes with motor vehicles.
Police officers will focus on motorist and pedestrian behavior: speeding, running red lights, running stop signs, and driving without headlights at night or at any time of reduced visibility.

Creating safer infrastructure, such as high-visibility crosswalks and beacons, will be addressed in the **Comprehensive Traffic Safety Action Plan** now in development by the county's Transportation Department.

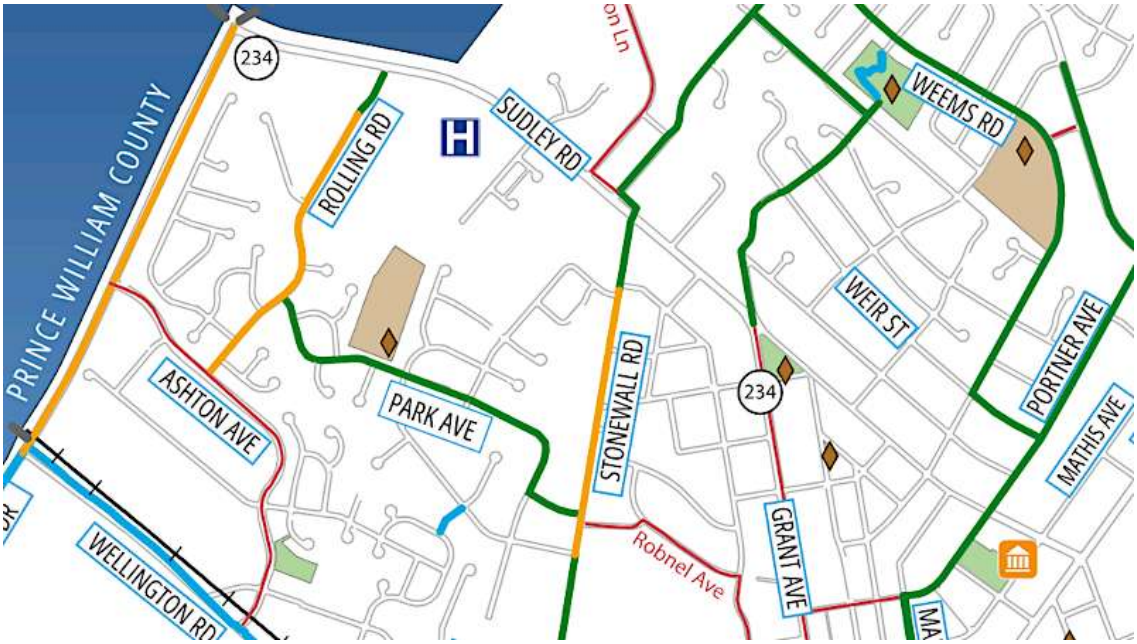
Braemar Park Trail Is A-Coming

Thanks to the initiative of Steve Cover, now a member of the **Trails and Blueways Council**, a trail is being planned in Braemar Park. First step has already been completed - get endorsements from the **Braemar Community Association** and **Prince William County Department of Parks and Recreation**.

Next step: county staff will define exact location of trail (one possible route is shown above). Then volunteers will be recruited to build and maintain the trail.

Trail advocates already know that trails add value to communities, offering opportunities for exercise, recreation, and "chill time" for mental health. What's exciting is that **another homeowners association has joined with the Lake Ridge Association to support expanding the trail network.**

Prince William County has plans to build about **350 miles of new trails and bike routes**. Support of nearby landowners, rather than not-in-my-backyard resistance, will be essential in getting the funding required ($500 million? more?) to build the planned network by 2040.



Trail & Sidewalk Projects in Manassas

The City of Manassas annual Bike & Pedestrian Improvements Meeting is scheduled for May 16 at 5:30pm (virtual). One discussion topic will be the new 1.2 mile bike connection along Sudley Road between Godwin Drive and Grant Avenue. **Check out** the city's Long Range Bike Plan and the Pedestrian Network Plan, and register for the Zoom meeting.

Also, Chloe Delhomme will serve as the bike/pedestrian coordinator in the City of Manassas, now that Brian Leckie has moved to Virginia Department of Transportation.

“walking outside of a crosswalk”

Francisco Rafael Campos Henriquez was killed while crossing Route 1 near Rosedale Court at 10:08pm on April 28. The **police report** says “*the vehicle struck a pedestrian who was attempting*

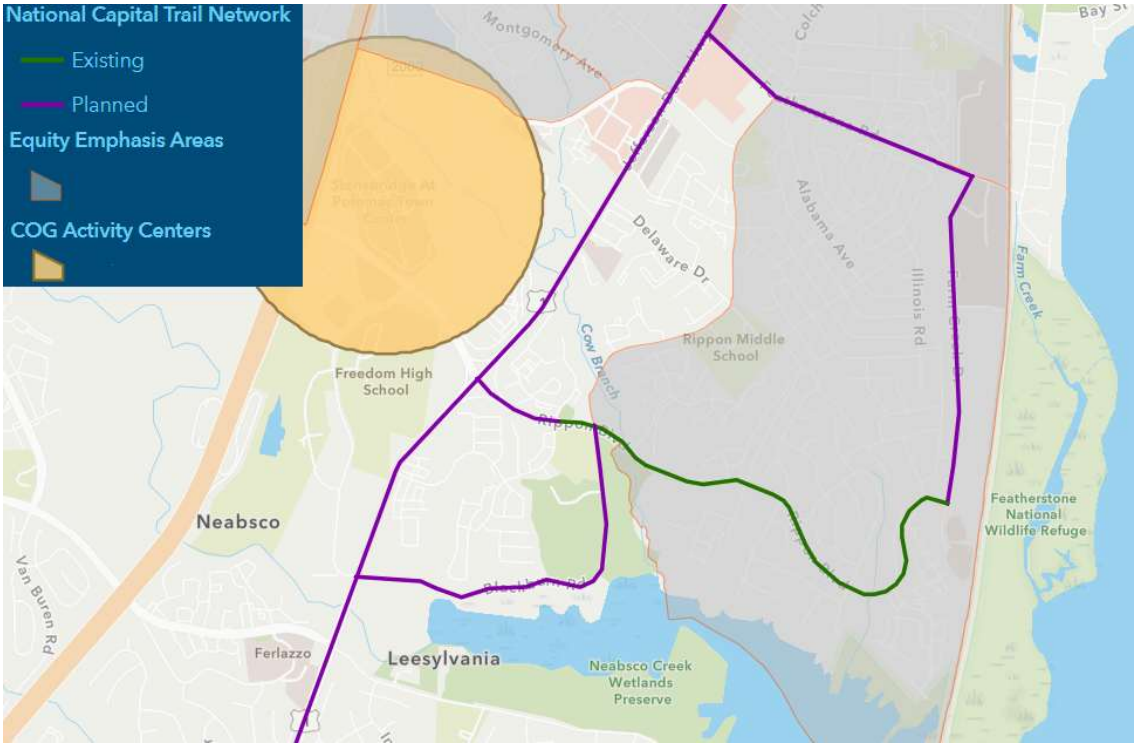
to cross Richmond Hwy. outside of a crosswalk, wearing dark-colored clothing."

Pedestrian and driver behavior are factors in such incidents - but so is infrastructure. If there is *no crosswalk*, is the design of the intersection on busy Route 1 also a factor in this pedestrian death?

Litter Is Endless, But Volunteers Are Busy

In April, **Trail Keepers** collected 30 bags of trash near Devlin Road. **Prince William Trails and Streams** cleaned up Neabsco Creek - and is preparing to do so again, because litter is also an endless stream. **Mid-Atlantic Off-Road Enthusiasts** (MORE) cleared 30 trees from the trails at Conway Robinson State Forest.

And **Keep Prince William Beautiful**, which helps make the county "cleaner and greener," is having a **Spring Fling** at Cedar Run Brewery on May 18.



Climate and Trails

In 2022, the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) approved the **Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan for the National Capital Region** and the **Resolution on the Adoption of On-Road Transportation GHG Reduction Goals and Strategies**.

The 2022 resolution includes seven on-road transportation greenhouse gas reduction strategies as priorities. Now it's time for **Implementation Considerations for On-Road Transportation Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Strategies**, because "*The GHG emissions effects of the strategies depend heavily on how the strategies are implemented and how much incremental changes can be achieved.*"

May 3 TPB meeting will discuss implementation, including first two priorities:
- Improve walk/bike access to all TPB-identified high-capacity transit stations (i.e., six **VRE stations** plus Potomac Shores in the future within Manassas, Manassas Park, and Prince William County)
- Increase walk/bike modes of travel: Complete the TPB's **National Capital Trail Network** by 2030

At the Potomac Heritage Trail Association Meeting…

The **Potomac Heritage Trail Association** (PHTA) meets regularly at the headquarters of the **Potomac Appalachian Trail Club** (PATC). Status of trail segments (from planning to maintenance) are reviewed between West Virginia and King George County, and in southern Maryland as well.

At the May 1 meeting of the PHTA:
- **Jennifer Wampler** reported that the Comprehensive Management Plan for the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail (PHNST) has been funded, and is likely to get started in 2024. There are already **many PHNST plans**, but completing the trail's first Comprehensive Management Plan is key for getting Land and Water Conservation Fund grants and other funding.
- She also reported that annual PHNST Roundtables will start in Fall 2024. These meetings will include people from all states through which PHNST passes, and are separate from the now-annual Recreational Trails Summit hosted by the **Northern Virginia Regional Commission** (NVRC).
- Discussion: Prince Willliam Forest Park needs about $200,000 to complete archeological and cultural resource planning before the PHNST could use the historic **Washington-Rochambeau route** through the park. The 250th anniversary of the march through Prince William County to Yorktown, the climactic battle of the American Revolution, is September 2031.
- One way to highlight the need for better regional trail network planning, with bridges across Bull Run/Occoquan River that link Fairfax trails with Manassas Park/Prince William County trails and create hiking loops rather than dead ends, is to note the "opportunity" when completing the **NVRC Trails Survey** before June 7.
- The **State Trails Advisory Committee** (STAC) will meet **May 15** in conjunction with the **Virginia Land Conservation & Greenways Conference** in Fredericksburg. You do not need to register for the conference to attend the STAC meeting.

In Other News…

- A person in Stafford County may have earned the “most creative” award in the Bike to Work space this year. On April 17 he **robbed a bank**, then fled… on a blue bicycle.
- **Children Need Neighborhoods Where They Can Walk and Bike** (Wall Street Journal (April 19, 2024)
- During the **Virginia Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee** meeting on April 23, Torsha Bhattacharya reported that the State Trails Plan has been drafted and is still undergoing internal review in Virginia Department of Transportation before being released for public comment.

Greater Prince William TRAILS COALITION

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