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Greater Prince William TRAILS COALITION

State Trails Office Town Hall - November 1

Brantley Tyndall at the **Virginia Trails Alliance** reports that the **Statewide Trails Survey** has received over 3500 responses by mid-October. There will be three virtual town halls by region in late October/early November.

Register now for the Northern Virginia session (6:30-8:00pm on November 1) or join one of the other two if more convenient. The prerecorded content at each of the three virtual sessions will be the same.

Also, you can **sign up** to receive updates and participate in a trails-specific focus group discussion. One issue to discuss: *will "recreational" trails such as the **Neabsco Greenway** also be included in state plans and maps, at some point?*

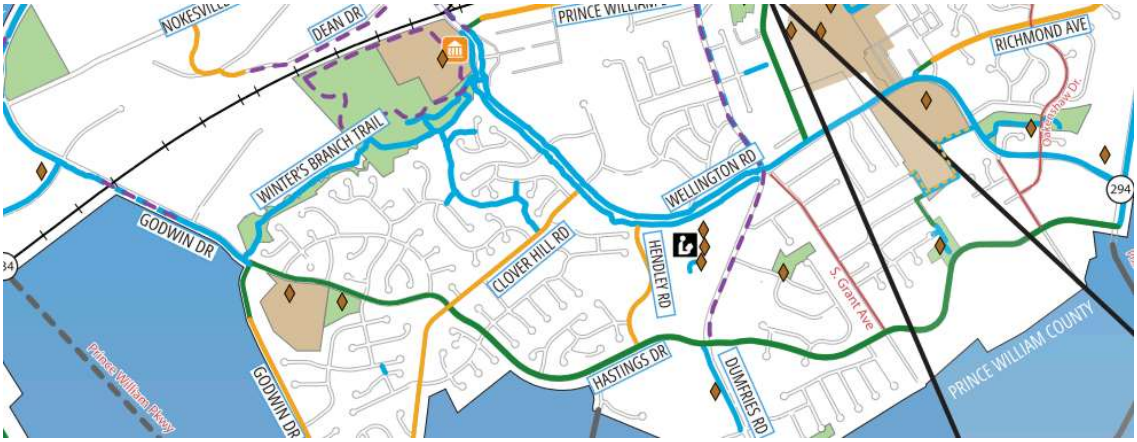
2023 Northern Virginia Recreational Trails Summit

The room was filled on October 24 for the second annual **Recreational Trails Summit** organized by the **Northern Virginia Regional Commission**. Kickoff speech by Torsha Bhattacharya of the **Virginia State Trails Office** described the initial effort to collect data from all jurisdictions to compile a state trails clearinghouse.

The **Rails to Trails Conservancy** highlighted the **TrailNation initiative** and **new Federal funding opportunities**.

There were lots of discussions regarding funding, volunteers, and mapping, as a future NVRC report on the summit will outline. Constructive networking was constant; everyone made connections with someone new.

NOTE: the deadline to apply for the **new NVRC Regional Trails Coordinator job** has been extended to November 7.



New Bike Map - City of Manassas

At the 2023 Recreational Trails Summit, Brian Leckie distributed paper copies of the hot-off-the-press Manassas bike map showing connections to Manassas Park and Prince William County. Of course, the **map is online** as well.

Reducing Carbon from Transportation Sources

On October 18, the Transportation Planning Board (TPB) discussed **state carbon reduction strategies**. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act required states to prepare a Carbon Reduction Strategy in order to qualify for $6.4 billion for "projects designed to reduce transportation emissions, defined as carbon dioxide emissions from on-road transportation sources."

Northern Virginia could end up with $11.5 million in next two years. If you want to remind our current TPB members that TPB has already called for **completion of National Capital Trail Network by 2030** to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, contact:
City of Manassas: **Pamela Sebesky** (alternate: **Ralph Smith**)
City of Manassas Park: **Jeanette Rishell**
Prince William County: **Ann Wheeler**, **Victor Angry** (alternates: **Rick Canizales**, **Paolo Belita**)

On October 26, in a 5-3 vote the Prince William Board of County Supervisors **adopted the Community Energy and Sustainability Master Plan** (CESMP). The CESMP calls for "*developing a strategic Active Transportation Plan that includes recommendations for prioritizing infrastructure improvements and outlines new active transportation policies, processes, and infrastructure*."

FYI, City of Manassas is preparing to send out a draft of Phase 1 of its **Climate Action Plan** later in 2023. Plans for Phase 2 depend upon the response to Phase 1.

See also: **Cutting Vehicle Pollution Is Key to Curbing Climate Change** (Fairfax Connection, October 19)

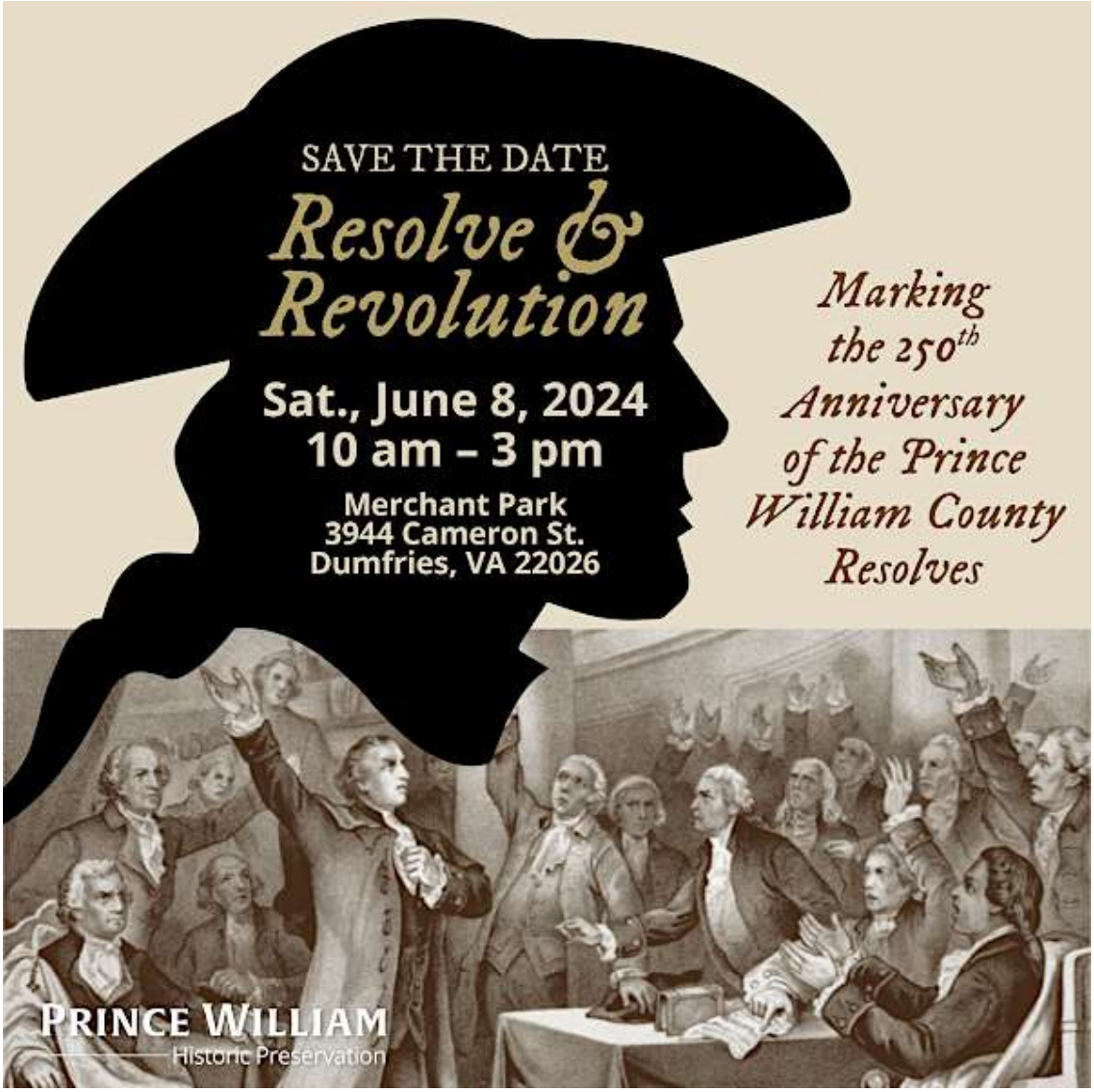
Trails and Blueways Council (TBC) Update

At its October 24 meeting, the **Trails and Blueways Council** unanimously passed a resolution calling for better planning of trail crossings underneath major highways (such as Quantico Creek underneath Route 1, above). The State of Minnesota has published "**passage bench lessons learned**" showing how such trails are compatible with standard bridge and roadway design.

A TBC subcommittee proposing specific routes to close gaps in the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail has discovered that getting under the proposed I-95 & Route 123

intersection, along the Occoquan River, will require special access permission from the Commonwealth Transportation Board.

Prince William County staff are drafting updates for Section 600 of the **Design and Construction Standards Manual (DCSM)** to make it consistent with 2040 Comprehensive Plan Mobility Chapter. Bike/pedestrian components and trail standards have not been addressed yet.



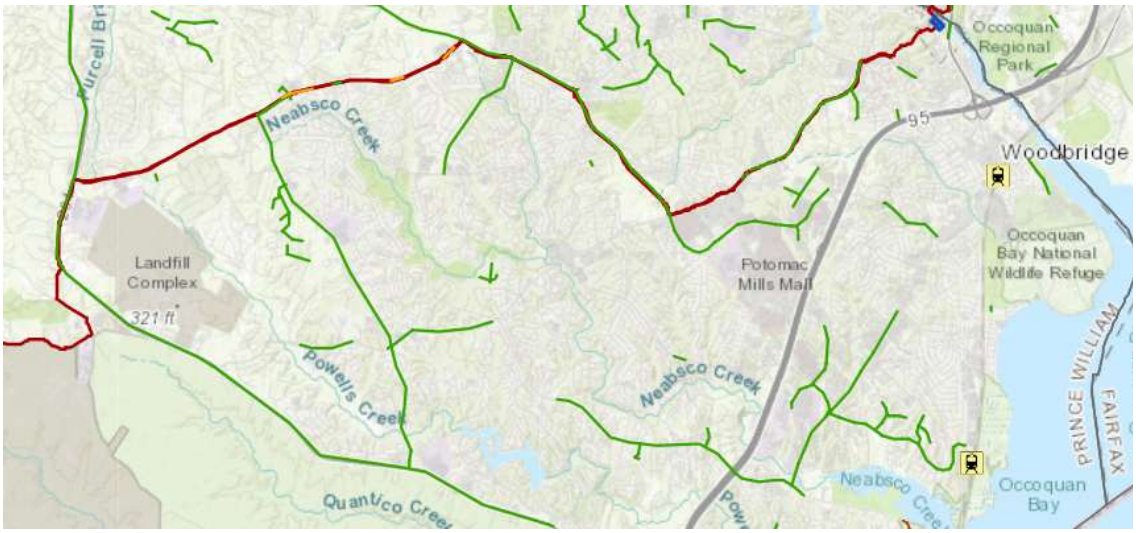
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Prince William County Trails and Blueways Council recommends that the County creates a plan to ensure a continuous PHNST route within its boundaries by March 31, 2031, in order to fully participate in the commemorations of the 250th Anniversary of the United States Declaration of Independence and the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route.

Getting Ready for the SemiQ

The kickoff event in Prince William County of the semiquincentennial (250th anniversary) of the American Revolution will be **June 8, 2024**. That will be 250 years and two days after residents in Dumfries resolved "*that no person ought to be taxed but by his own consent*."

In September 2031, look for events marking the march through Prince William County of the French army led by the comte de Rochambeau and the American army led by George Washington on the way to Yorktown.

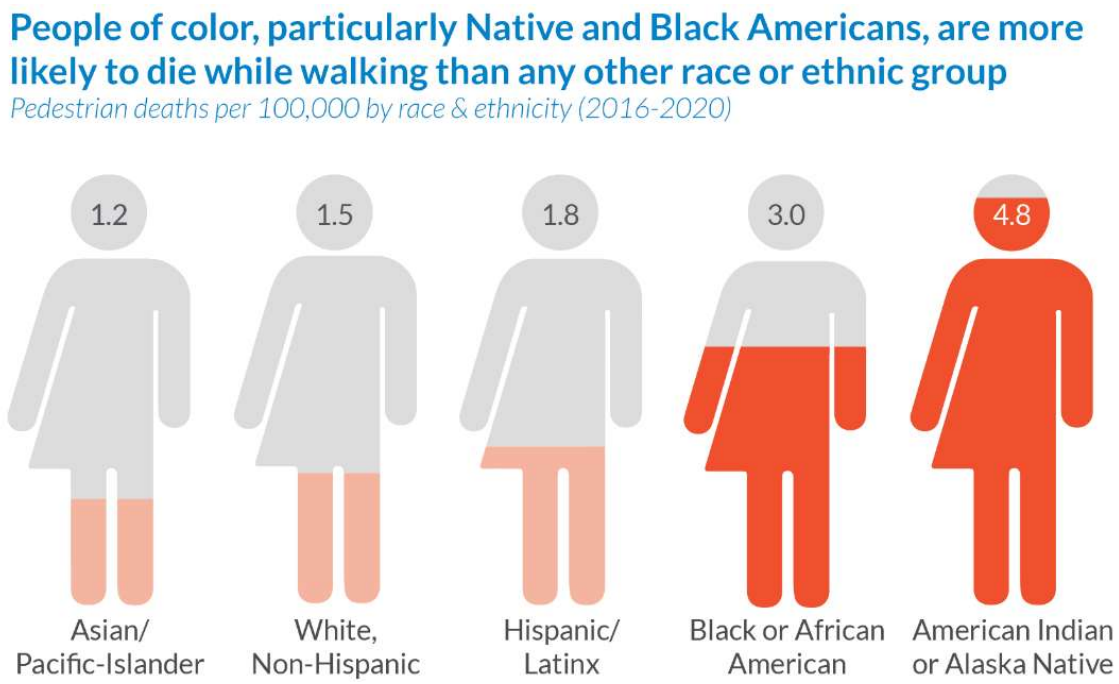
In anticipation of the SemiQ, back on March 28 the Trails and Blueways Council **passed a resolution** calling for completion of the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail (PHNST) through Prince William County. The PHNST could follow the Washington-Rochambeau route through Prince William Forest Park.



New Virginia Bicycle Facilities Map

Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) has a completely updated version of the **Virginia Bicycle Facility Inventory Map** in addition to the **Virginia Interactive Bicycle Web Map**.

VDOT requests people review map for accuracy and provide corrections/feedback via e-mail to **david.cook@vdot.virginia.gov**



Pedestrian Deaths: An Equity Issue

Pedestrian deaths are at a **40-year high**. The Governors Highway Safety Association **reports** "Pedestrian deaths rose a troubling 77% between 2010 and 2021, compared to a 25% rise in all other traffic fatalities."

The 2022 **Dangerous By Design** report from Smart Growth America notes "*Low-income communities are significantly less likely to have access to parks and other opportunities for safe recreational walking and are less likely to have sidewalks, marked crosswalks, and street design to support safer, slower speeds.*"

2024 Virginia Land Conservation and Greenways Conference - Request for Proposals

Virginia's United Land Trusts (VaULT) has issued a **Request for Proposals** for the 2024 Virginia Land Conservation and Greenways Conference. It will be May 14-16, 2024 at the University of Mary Washington in Fredericksburg. All proposals are due Friday, November 10.

Conference will have four tracks:
- Trails, Greenways, and Blueways
- Conservation Challenges and Opportunities
- Community Partnerships
- Best Practices for Easement Holders

In Other News…

- On October 10, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors authorized the Fairfax County Department of Transportation to sign an update to the 2020 **Memorandum of Understanding** for the promotion of the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail in Fairfax County. Though the PHNST is a unit of the National Park Service, it arranges for local governments to manage segments within their jurisdiction. The towns of Occoquan and Dumfries, Prince William County Department of Parks and Recreation, Leesylvania State Park, and Prince William Forest Park are also signers of the collaborative MOU.
- On October 21, 80 volunteers organized by the **Friends of the Occoquan** cleaned up the Occoquan River/Reservoir. They removed 45 trash and 49 recyclable bags, tires, tarps, and multiple balls. As noted by the Friends, "*Three balls were taken home by the children*."
- Prince William Trails and Streams Coalition has scheduled **Powell's Creek trail work** on November 10-12. Project includes building a boardwalk over a wet area.
- **D.C. approves e-bike vouchers plan to get people out of their cars** (*Washington Post*, September 21)
- **Think you need another car? Consider an e-bike instead** (*Washington Post*, October 17)
- **America's bicycling hot spots, mapped** (*Axios DC*, October 12)
- **'Street Smart' Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Campaign Runs Through November 19** (Prince William County Police Department)
- **Foursquare** has been hired as the contractor for the $80,000 **Transportation Land-Use Connections (TLC) Program grant** for the Yorkshire Multimodal Corridor Planning Study to "evaluate opportunities to create a more walkable, transit-oriented corridor to include bus pull-off areas, bus shelters, and pedestrian/bicycle facilities/amenities" as improvements to Route 28 occur within and around the corridor.

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