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Greater Prince William TRAILS COALITION



*10 hikes were offered to the hundreds of people who came to the **March 29 2026 Bluebell Festival** organized by the **Prince William Conservation Alliance***

Release of “Pathways 2035 - Trails Master Plan”

Prince William Department of Parks and Recreation will present “**Pathways 2035 - Trails Master Plan**” in a work session at the Planning Commission on April 8 at 6:00pm. Draft plan is not online yet, but by April 8 expect to see almost all maps, graphics, and appendices intended to be in the final version.

The document will identify all proposed new trail segments, including “active mobility” trails with paved shared use paths and “recreational” trails. Many of the recreational trails will have a natural surface, but some are planned with stone dust, asphalt, and wooden boardwalks.

Pathways 2035 is part of the county’s integrated mobility planning, coordinated between the Department of Parks and Recreation and the Department of Transportation (soon to become the Department of Transportation and Capital Construction). Changes to the almost 2,000 miles of existing sidewalks in Prince William County will be managed separately.

Both the Trails and Blueways Council (TBC) and Planning Commission are being asked to review and comment before Pathways 2035 is submitted to Board of County Supervisors (BOCS) for approval.

BOCS approval is expected to occur as soon as May 2026. Staff will propose Pathways 2035 be treated as an “administrative update” to 2040 Comprehensive Plan until the Mobility Chapter that was adopted in 2022 is updated.

In the March 3 presentation to the TBC, county staff provided **Draft District Priority Maps** (scroll to bottom of page) for trail segments in each magisterial district. At the March 24 TBC meeting to review the partially-completed plan, staff revealed that the top criteria in the rubric for prioritizing segments in Tier 1 were:

- increased trail connectivity
- connected to three regional trails (**Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail**, **East Coast Greenway**, and **Bike Route 1**)
- highlighted in public comments

Initial comments at TBC on March 24 included a concern that the second criterion excluded the western part of the county. Staff was confident that the list of Tier 1 trails, when released, would show that there was geographic balance with sufficient projects in all magisterial districts. The trails plan will identify which trail segments can use existing proffers and easements and where new rights-of-way must be acquired.

The plan proposes that Tier 1 projects be constructed first. The Board of County Supervisors will always have the option to fund/request grants for Tier 2 and 3 projects, and to take advantage of opportunities as they develop.

The cost analysis for “recreational trails” in Pathways 2035 produced an average cost per mile for all types of trails, based on recent construction projects. Costs range from \$425,000/mile to \$6,000,000/mile, depending upon the type of trail proposed. Specific cost per segment of planned trails will be developed at a later stage of planning.



trail at the upper end of Catharpin Greenway next to Silver Lake Regional Park has been repaired

Quarterly GPWTC Meeting - April 23, 10:00-11:30am

Focus of this meeting will be review and discussion of the draft **Pathways 2035 - Trails Master Plan** and the opportunities for getting it funded, including a November 2026 bond issue.

There will also be updates on:

- trail projects in Manassas and Manassas Park
- initiation and significance of a Comprehensive Plan for the **Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail**
- bike/pedestrian outreach and safety efforts by Prince William Transportation Department
- development of the **Greater Prince William Community Health Improvement Plan** (CHIP)
- and more..., with lots of information sharing and networking

In addition to discussing items on the agenda, member organizations will provide updates on what's happening with trails south of the Occoquan River. Join us on April 23; stay informed.

Please register so you can join us via Zoom or in person at the **Potomac Science Center** of George Mason University (*where we provide coffee, tea, and oh-so-healthy donuts*).



Second Sunday Hike: Leopold's Preserve on April 12

Plans to explore **Leopold's Preserve** were "snowcreted" out in January. We'll try again on April 12, 1:00-3:00pm.

The hike will be led by naturalist volunteers at the preserve and include discussions of local ecology. Distance will be 2-3 miles, at an easy pace, on natural surface trails. Well-behaved dogs on leash are welcome.

Register so we can alert you in case the weather is uncooperative again.



Permits Required to Walk Into Leesylvania State Park

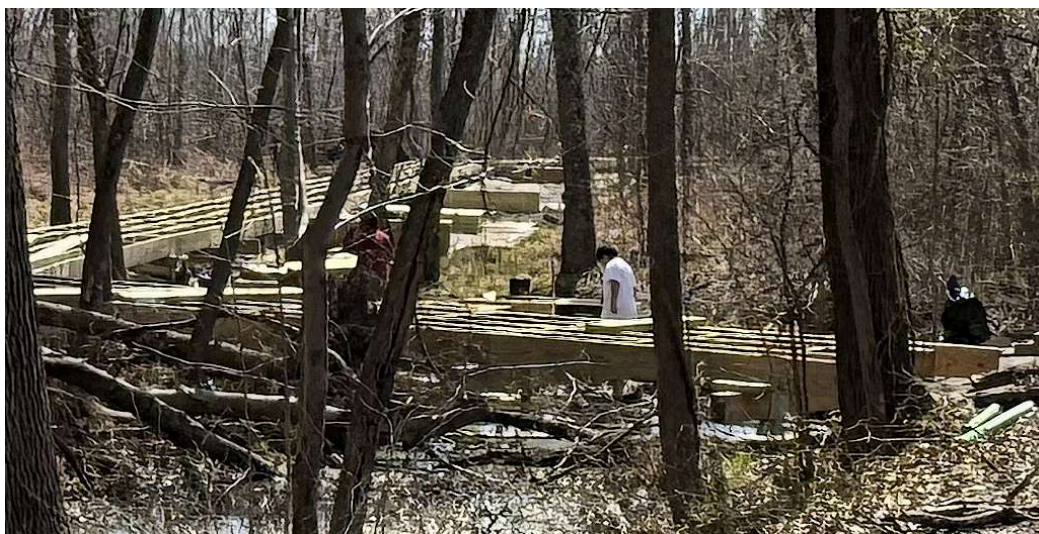
As described in a recent InsideNOVA story "[Leesylvania State Park to require reservations for summer weekends, holidays](#)," a reservation system will start this summer to manage overcrowding at the park. While parking spaces are the primary constraint, even walking into the park will require a permit all weekend and holiday visits from May through September.

On days when a permit is required, access to the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail and potentially the future Powells Creek Crossing will be limited. Trips must be planned in advance rather than on the spur of the moment because reservations must be made no later than the day before arrival. Same day reservations will not be issued.

As described on the state park's website:

Can I walk into the park without a reservation?

No. While reservations are per vehicle, capacity for the site has been planned on a per person basis. This is also to prevent parking issues on adjacent property and roadways near the park.



construction continues on the Featherstone segment of the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail

Trails and Blueways Council (TBC) Meeting Notes

Much of the March 24 meeting focused on review of still-in-development draft of “Pathways 2035 - Trails Master Plan” (see *above*). In addition:

- Featherstone segment of Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail will have stone dust and crushed cinders (from railroad bed) on the southern section. Surface elsewhere will be wooden boardwalk and natural surface; the gravel access road is not the trail.
- feasibility study for Rail With Trail linking Manassas to Fairfax County will include three alternatives for where to connect to the Bull Run-Occoquan Trail
- Prince William Transportation Department is prioritizing pedestrian safety projects starting with four high schools; site visits in April are scheduled for peak times of student bike/pedestrian use
- Hoadly Road **STARS study** will recommend a shared use path on north side of road between Prince William Parkway-Dale Boulevard, then on south side between Dale Boulevard-Route 234; county will seek \$30 million Smart Scale grant (\$16 million for the Shared Use Path) and is studying possible extension of sidewalk to Colgan High School
- adult Learn to Ride class will be on May 9 in parking lot of Development Services Building (5 County Complex Court)
- proposed development of **Kline property** includes new road and shared use path to connect two segments of Prince William Parkway
- **Village at Broad Run** proposal on Vint Hill Road include construction of a segment of Broad Run Trail; **Greenhaven at Broad Run** might offer trailhead parking. Trails and Blueways Council does not endorse land use proposals, but does seek to improve proffers to enhance mobility.
- **Cleanup of Neabsco Creek** on March 7, organized by Prince William Trails and Streams Coalition, gathered 124 bags of trash and 17 tires. The 30 volunteers at the **Marumsco Creek cleanup** on March 28 collected 65 bags of trash, four tires, and one TV remote control.

Next TBC meeting will be on April 28, 6:30-9:00pm at Hellwig Administrative Center. The public can watch online or attend in person.



Preparing for Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail (PHNST) Comprehensive Plan

The National Park Service organized an all-day virtual meeting on March 19 to discuss partnerships, in advance of the public launch for developing the PHNST Comprehensive Plan.

That was followed the next day by a hike with stakeholders along the Washington-Rochambeau Route in Prince William Forest Park.

A possible schedule for planning and funding the PHNST is described in a GPWTC blog post, **“Can the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail (PHNST) be completed through Prince William County by 2031?”**

A Transportation Alternatives grant and funding from the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) are additional opportunities which the county might pursue.



“Walk With Ease” at Silver Lake Regional Park

Walking improves health, both physical and mental. As highlighted by the **American Heart Association**, simply walking reduces stress and the risk of heart disease. Hey, it's springtime - get out of the chair and get outdoors.

The Prince William Department of Parks and Recreation has partnered with the Arthritis Foundation to offer the six-week **Walk With Ease** program at Silver Lake between April 6-May 15 on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday between 10:00-11:00am.

Each session starts with a pre-walk discussion covering a specified topic related to exercise and arthritis, followed by a 10 to 40-minute walk and includes a warm-up and a cool-down. Program is free. **Register online.**



Supervisor Victor Angry exploring the Sinclair Mill trail at Doves Landing Regional Park

Transportation Planning Board (TPB) Approves “Transportation Alternatives” Projects

The **Transportation Alternatives program** funds projects that expand non-motorized travel choices, particularly pedestrian and bicycle facilities - not traditional roadway projects or maintenance.

On February 18 the Transportation Planning Board **approved** \$12.5 million in federal Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TA Set-Aside) Program funding for seven small-scale projects in Virginia that will support safe walking, transit access, and ADA accessibility.

Nearly \$7.5 million was allocated for the Centreville Road Sidewalk in Manassas, Manassas Drive Shared Use Path in Manassas Park, and the Old Carolina/Jefferson Street Sidewalk in Prince William County.



In Other News...

- **Cycling advocates take bike lane cleaning into their own hands** (*The Richmonder*, March 11) “The sweeper is attached to a bike... preferably a cargo or e-bike to make it easier to pull up hills and to empty the bins. Two brushes sweep debris out of the way or up into two compartments through a battery-powered unit.” (See above for the bike-powered sweeper.)
- **2026 General Assembly Wrap-up: Progress Toward Safer Streets in Virginia** (Virginia Bicycling Federation) “Lawmakers broadened options available to localities to help protect people on Virginia roads.”
- **Supervisors explore bond referendum for county parks, library projects** (*Prince William Times*, March 12) “The county’s last bond referendums for parks and road projects were approved in 2019. More than 72% of Prince William voters cast ballots in favor of the \$335 million road referendum, and 68% approved borrowing \$41 million to improve parks.”
- An **Appalachian Conservation Corps** trail crew will be working in Prince William Forest Park for several months, **relocating sections** of North and South Valley trails to reduce erosion.
- **Falls Church approves e-scooter pilot program, looks for companies to sign on** (*ArlNOW*, March 11) “The adopted resolution calls for limiting speeds to no more than 6 mph on sidewalks, compared to 15 mph on streets...”
- **We may soon have 70 million boomers too old to drive, too car-dependent to stop.** (*Carbon Upfront!*, February 25) “By designing our cities for cars, and consequently neglecting our sidewalks, we have siloed our elders in several ways. Not only does an inability to drive confine many seniors to their homes, but corresponding busy roads and inhumane streetscapes add to the isolating effect by also limiting walkability.”

- **Why Are So Many American Pedestrians Dying at Night?** (New York Times, December 11, 2023) *“Sometime around 2009, American roads started to become deadlier for pedestrians, particularly at night. Fatalities have risen ever since, reversing the effects of decades of safety improvements.”*
- **A Wild Ride: Richmond’s mountain biking community has shaped the city’s outdoorsy culture** (The Richmonder, March 15) *“Among the beneficiaries of **rvaMORE**'s trail work are Richmond's next generation of mountain bikers. The sport is gaining popularity among elementary, middle and high school students, evidenced by the dozens of teams that race in the Virginia High School (aka VAHS) **Mountain Bike Series**.”*
- **How Richmond’s proposed budget targets pedestrian safety.** (Axios, April 1) *“Mayor Danny Avula's budget leans heavily on the “Complete Streets” approach that the city adopted over a decade ago, allocating \$105 million through 2031 for adding or repairing sidewalks, pedestrian crossing improvements, more visible crosswalks and other traffic calming measures.”*
- Lake Ridge Park marina **opens** this weekend. Operations are weekends only (10:00am – 6:30pm) until June 14.
- The **contract specifications** for the Route 234 Sudley Manor Drive Interchange Project anticipate construction of a Shared Use Path along Prince William Parkway: *“Grade separated structures at Sudley Manor Drive and Wellington Road shall be designed to not preclude the future addition of the shared use path along Prince William Parkway corridor per Mobility plan of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan.”*



Mid-Atlantic Off-Road Enthusiasts **maintaining trails** at Locust Shade Park



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