

FINAL REPORT
of
THE RHOA/RCA LAND USE COMMITTEE

SUBMITTED TO
RESTON COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION BOARD
and
THE RESTON HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION BOARD

May, 1984

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. Introduction/Executive Summary	1
II. Background	4
III. Related Issue Recommendations	
A. Intergovernmental Facility Planning/Construction/Maintenance	8
B. Playing Fields Inventory/System Level of Need Suggested Solutions	15
C. Pathways: The Non-Motorized Access System for Pedestrians, Bicycles and Horses	31
D. Equestrian Facilities Program . .	37
E. Distribution of Open Space Program	39
IV. Committee Recommendations	
A. North Nature Center Area	43
B. Site of the Former Stable on Reston Avenue	52
C. Baron Cameron Park Site	55
V. Tables	
II 1 RHOA/RCA Land Use Committee Membership	6
III A1 Existing Open Space Facilities .	12
III A2 Proposed Parks and Proposed Additional Facilities for Existing Parks	14
III B1 Reston Field Inventory, North . .	17
III B2 Reston Field Inventory, South . .	18

V. Tables (cont'd)

III B3	Demographic Analysis	22
III B4	Comparison of Existing, Planned and Needed Fields	
	Field Inventory, Game Fields . .	25
	Youth Baseball/Softball	26
	Soccer	27
	Football	28
III E1	Distribution of RHOA Open Space Facilities	42
IV A1	North Nature Center Development Costs (Preliminary Estimate)	50

VI. Illustrations

Reston Map, Sites for study	7
Area Open Space and Facilities Map . . .	14
North Nature Center, Sketch A	46
North Nature Center, Sketch B	47
North Nature Center Schematic Facility and Circulation plan	48

VII. Appendices

The following items, on file at the RHOA office, are available upon request.

A. Committee Charge

1. Joint letter from Judi Ushio (RHOA) and Harry Mustakos (RCA), June 25, 1982
2. Memo to committee members from Chair, July 29, 1982
3. Resume, E M Risse

B. Reports

1. North Nature Center

Resource Report, Planning Charrette,
North Nature Area, 4/11/81

Summary, Planning Charrette, north Nature
Area, 4/11/81

VII. Appendices (cont'd)

B1. North Nature Center (cont'd)

Natural Areas Task Force Report on
North Nature Area 5/18/82

1981 Survey Results

Nature Center, 11/67

Nature Center Plan Summary,
National Audubon Society 1967

Related Correspondence

Discussion Paper, Soapstone Cluster
on the North Nature Area 6/16/83

Petition Submitted by Mr. Lance Wallace

2. Equestrian

Request for Proposal
Related Correspondence

Equestrian Plan, Stable Subcommittee,
1/83

Related Correspondence

3. South Lakes Drive Park

Preliminary Master Plan Report/South
Lakes Drive Park Fairfax County Park
Authority, 11/82

Preliminary Master Plan Report - Revised,
11/83

C. Statistics

1. Field Information and Projections,
Reston Fields Task Force, 1/83

Reston Area Athletic Field Inventory

RSA Registration

2. Demographics: Population
(Reston Market Profile)

VII. Appendices (cont'd)

C. Statistics (cont'd)

2. Demographics (cont'd)

Reston Demographics and Growth 6/82
Summary, Actual and Projected Growth

D. Meeting Notes for RHOA/RCA Land Use
Committee

E. Meeting Notes on the Public Hearing
October, 1983

Related Correspondence

I. INTRODUCTION AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A Community's common open space and the recreational activities - both active and passive - carried out within common open space, are synonymous with the superior quality of life associated with planned communities in the United States and around the world. The development of open space in Reston to date is an excellent example of good planning, and has set the standard for the Washington Metropolitan Area. To a large measure Reston is used as an example in the United States - and throughout the world - wherever concern is expressed for the quality of the built environment. There is nearly universal appreciation among Reston residents and visitors/scholars of the importance of the open space system and the activities for which it provides.

With the development of Reston over half completed and with the acceleration of job opportunities in the employment areas, the as yet undeveloped parts of Reston are quickly changing. Within this context, it was the concept of those active in the governance of Reston that it would be appropriate to pause and look at Reston's prime resource - its open space - to determine what changes or modifications might be made in the final stages of Reston's development. To this end the Reston Home Owners Association (which is responsible for the maintenance of the majority of Reston's open space) and the Reston Community Association joined together in establishing a Task Force made up of persons from throughout the community with expertise in the diverse areas of open space utilization and management.

The committee was charged with looking at three specific areas:

1. The North Nature Center
2. The site of the former stable on Reston Avenue
3. The Baron Cameron Park

The committee was also asked to look beyond these at the entire open space system.

The results of the committee's study are worthy of consideration by all those interested in the quality of life in Reston. In addition to examining the three specific sites; broader issues of inter-governmental facility planning, construction and management were examined. The committee developed a conceptual framework for playfield planning, construction and use. The committee reviewed the pathway system, the community's equestrian facilities and studied the distribution of open space uses.

Section II of the report provides the background from which the committee undertook its work.

Section III lists recommendations with respect to inter-governmental facility planning, construction and management as they affect Reston's open space. Further, the committee recommends a system of fields related to their functional use, and makes a recommendation for future playfield needs based on demographic projections for the community.

These recommendations, if implemented, would have a far reaching beneficial impact on the large percentage of Reston families who participate in field sports. The field sports matrix is complex: fields owned by RHOA, Fairfax County (School Board and other land), Fairfax County Park Authority; fields improved and maintained by some of the above plus volunteer efforts by sports groups; fields scheduled and controlled by RHOA, Fairfax County Recreation Department and "as luck will have it"; fields used by an array of private groups organized under both local and national charters. Because it is so complex successs will require a political commitment by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, the School Board and the Park Authority plus active cooperation from the senior agency staffs. Leadership must come from Reston - probably through the RHOA coordinated, Reston Fields Sports Council.

The committee also recommends specific steps be taken to improve the pathway system. The pathway system is considered, broadly, to include all paved and unpaved; formal (i.e. appearing on the Reston Pathways and Facilities Map) and informal routes for pedestrian, jogger, cyclist, and equestrian use or access. Excluded from the pathway designation are streets and other roadways with a state route number which are designed primarily for automobile and truck traffic and are maintained primarily by the State of Virginia. The committee recommends that a major effort in upgrading the pathway system be among the most significant improvements that could be made to Reston's open space system.

The equestrian facilities and programs for the community were reviewed, and recommendations outlined. Finally, the committee discussed the distribution of open space uses and suggested a better match between population density and open space facilities.

Section IV deals with the 3 target areas. After careful study the committee made detailed recommendations for each of the three target sites. The committee recommended a specific plan and implementation strategy for the North Nature Center. It further recommended that the North Nature Center not be conveyed to Reston Home Owners Association until the site is developed and a commitment is in hand for programs outlined in the recommendation.

While desirability of a stable in Reston was recognized by the committee and the former stable site was found to be appropriate for a modest stable activity, a stable does not appear to be a viable economic option at this time. In lieu of a new stable, specific long term uses are recommended for the site which are not inconsistent with a modest stable and equestrian activity. The committee further suggests that the economic feasibility be objectively tested in the future if there is renewed interest.

Finally, the committee reviewed the Baron Cameron Park site and made specific recommendations for its enhancement which are consistent with the recently donated exercise course.

Those interested in Reston's past, present and future should read carefully these recommendations. Committee members have enjoyed taking on the task of reviewing Reston's open space, and wish the community well in their implementation.

II. BACKGROUND

In May 1982 the Reston Home Owners Association and the Reston Community Association mutually agreed to the formation of the RHOA/RCA Land Use Committee. The impetus for the committee's creation was several fold. First, the amount of undeveloped land available in Reston is rapidly disappearing. Second, as Reston continues to grow many of its large, natural areas will be developed according to the Master Plan, leaving some residents wondering if Reston is losing all its open space. A prime example of this phenomenon is the development occurring at the corner of Reston Avenue and Glade Drive. Third, there had never before been a concerted, organized, community effort to look at the issue of open space in Reston--its amount, location, and use. Finally, RHOA and RCA felt a need to resolve outstanding issues on three large parcels of open space, at least two of which have been the center of considerable controversy in Reston in the past.

Members of the committee were chosen from among groups which had traditionally voiced an interest in or concern about 20 open spaces and recreation facilities. Several articles appeared in the Reston Times and the RHOA Newsletter inviting any other interested party to notify either RHOA or RCA of his/her desire to serve on the committee. Mr. E M Risse, a specialist in planning and implementation of new communities and large scale development and a Reston resident, agreed to chair the committee. Ms. Peggy Jansons, a member of the Reston Community Center Governing Board and a long-time Reston resident, agreed to serve as co-chair.

The charge to the committee was to examine in detail existing and potential uses for:

- a. the 30-acre site known as the North Nature Center;
- b. the 20-acre site known as Brown's Chapel Park; and
- c. the 6-acre site of the former Reston Riding Facility.

The map on page 7 shows the locations of these parcels.

In order to adequately assess appropriate uses for these three sites RHOA and RCA recognized that the committee would have to address the following issues:

- a. How much public open space currently exists in and around Reston?
- b. To what uses are current public open spaces being put?
- c. How much public open space is included on existing plans for future development in and around Reston, and what uses are planned for any such spaces?

- d. What are Reston's long term needs for public open spaces, in terms of both acreage and types of use?
- e. What deficiencies exist in Reston's present public open space network which can be met by the sites in question?

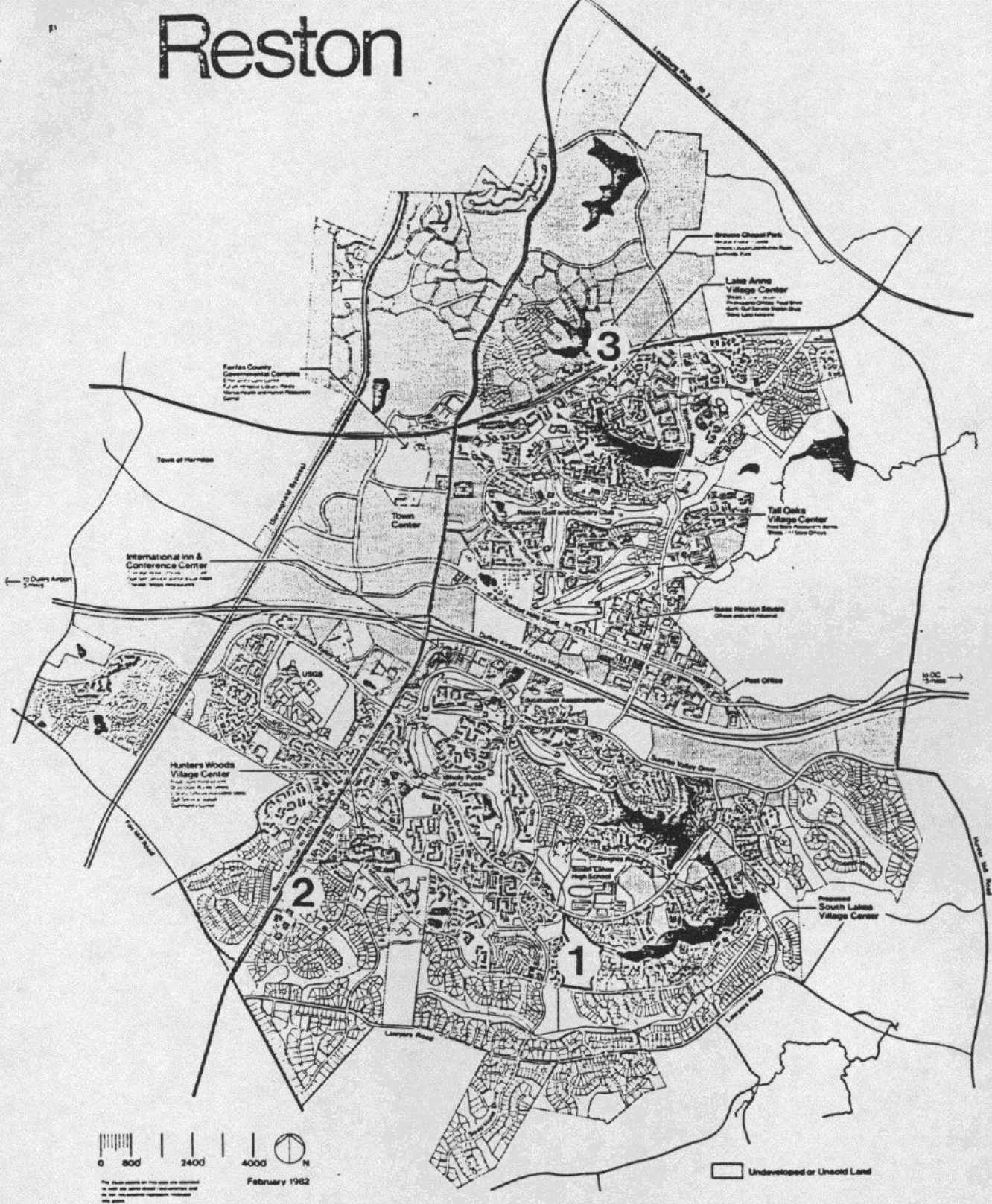
It therefore became the committee's task to make recommendations to the RHOA Board and the RCA Board for the use of these three parcels of land. It had to choose, among various alternatives, those which would best meet the needs of all of Reston's residents. Furthermore, as a result of its efforts, the Land Use Committee has tried to develop guidelines for RHOA and RCA to use in making future decisions on the best use of public open spaces which may become available over the next five to ten years. By looking at long-range community needs, as articulated by those most involved with those needs, the committee has tried to point the way toward a comprehensive, as opposed to piecemeal, approach to future public open space use. It has never been the committee's intent to re-do any of the planning or studies on any of the parcels in question. It has utilized all existing reports, documents, and information on the three study sites. Existing information has been supplemented by Fairfax County staff, Reston Land Corporation staff, RHOA staff, individuals and community groups, and committee members. Notable additions from committee members include population data for Reston through year 2000; projected fields needs through year 2000; and equestrian facilities needs and data. What follows is a synthesis of the needs and desires of the groups and organizations most interested in the future shape of Reston's public open spaces and recreation facilities. A list of the committee members and their areas of expertise appears as Table II-1.

TABLE II-I

RHOA/RCA LAND USE COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP LIST

NAME	REPRESENTATION
E M Risse, Chair	Community Planner
Peggy Jansons, Cochair	Community-wide
John Best	Ballfields
Gary Braithwaite	Reston Community Association
Barbara Ferre	Day Camp
Al Hagelis	Reston Land Corporation
Bob Hirsch	Bike Club
Mary Hofstra	Reston Community Association Liaison
Warren Hofstra	General
George Lavelle	Reston Community Center
Lee Libman	Lake Anne Village Council
Tom Morrison	Natural Areas Task Force
Chuck Novak	Ball Fields
Craig Palmer	Soccer
Nancy Plourde	Girl Scouts
Jerry Sardone	Fishing
Sue Satterfield	Equestrian
Betsy Schultz	City Planner, General
Jim Sperger	Mortorbikes
Tom Vier	Reston Community Association

Reston



1 North Nature Center

2 Reston Avenue Stable Site

3 Baron Cameron Park

III. RELATED ISSUE RECOMMENDATIONS

INTERGOVERNMENTAL FACILITY PLANNING/CONSTRUCTION/MAINTENANCE

In order to make recommendations about the best uses for the three study parcels, the Land Use Committee needed to investigate in considerable detail existing and proposed public open spaces and recreational facilities which are owned and/or operated by non-Reston entities. This section gives an inventory of these parks and other facilities which are located in the Reston area; makes several observations concerning them; and details committee recommendations concerning ways to alleviate perceived deficiencies or problems.

1. Inventory

Reston is fortunate to be located in Fairfax County which has one of the most extensive networks of parks and recreation facilities in the nation. Within a twenty minute driving radius of the new town, there are four small, neighborhood parks, three historic sites/parks, three community level parks, and one county-level park--all owned and developed by the county. These parks and their facilities are listed on Table III A-1. Table III A-2 shows proposed, new facilities and proposed additions to existing facilities. Locations of all open spaces and facilities may be found by consulting the map on page 14.

Of particular interest to Reston residents is the proposed South Lakes Drive Park. This 13.9 acre parcel is situated roughly between South Lakes Drive on the north and Barrel Cooper Court on the southeast. The proposed plan calls for a combination of active and passive recreation areas, some with a family orientation and some with a "team sport" orientation. This park has been of particular concern to the committee because it is located in Hunters Woods in a high density area which lack neighborhood open space and recreation amenities. (See Section III E of this report for a discussion of this issue.)

The W&OD Trail, which bisects Reston from east to west, is the major regional park facility in the area. Future plans call for completion of this hiking/biking/equestrian trail so that a user can travel, uninterrupted, from the C&O Canal to Leesburg. This process includes development of waysides and equestrian staging areas, as well as completion of trail segments.

An often overlooked community resource are the fields and play areas at the public school sites. Six elementary schools are located within Reston's boundaries and an additional 7 are in the Reston/Herndon/Great Falls area. These schools generally have one baseball and one soccer

Great Falls area. However, growth in organized sports activities in this area will increase pressure for their use of county facilities located within Reston and at Lake Fairfax Park.

5. Because of poor maintenance and heavy use during the week, elementary school fields are generally unsuited for organized sports activities. In many instances they are in too poor a condition to even be used for practice.

3. Recommendations

The Land Use Committee makes the following recommendations that the RHOA and RCA Boards:

1. Support the county proposal for the South Lakes Drive Park, with the one change suggested by the Reston Fields Council, that instead of an overlay soccer/baseball field the site have one soccer/football field and one baseball/softball field. Their plan is shown in the Appendix. The committee feels that the proposed plan is the best compromise between the no development and the intensive development options. It also addresses deficiencies in that neighborhood's open space requirements.
2. Strongly suggest and support development of active recreation areas in Herndon and Great Falls to alleviate pressure on those types of facilities in the Reston area. Reston should not be punished for providing its own facilities by being denied its fair share use of county facilities.
3. Encourage timely funding and completion of recreation facilities for the Stevenage Road park. Erect a sign on the site which clearly identifies its future park use to prospective home buyers.
4. Support local organizations in their efforts to up-grade the quality of the facilities available at elementary school sites so that full advantage may be taken of the school/park concept. Such support could include RHOA staff assistance in designing/developing apparatus areas; petitioning the School Board and Recreation Department for better maintenance of existing facilities.
5. Support and encourage development of the facilities available on Reston's periphery, including working with the county to make any additions and improvements known within the Reston community.

field, in addition to playground equipment or a general play area. Two high schools and two intermediate schools also service the Reston area. Intermediate schools usually have one baseball, one soccer, and one practice field. While high schools ordinarily have more fields, their facilities are not readily available for public use due to heavy scholastic schedules.

School fields are maintained jointly by the Recreation Department and the School Board. Individual users are responsible for pre-game preparation of the fields. At this time, two additional elementary schools are planned for the North Point Village area of Reston. It also appears that no additional intermediate or senior high schools will be in the county's Capital Improvements Program for the foreseeable future.

Finally, the PTO/PTA of several area schools, notably Navy and Fox Mill Elementary Schools, have provided funds and parent labor for the design and construction of extensive, elaborate apparatus areas for their children. These areas are a significant improvement to the minimum facilities provided by the county.

2. Observations

The Land Use Committee made several significant observations regarding the above mentioned county and regional facilities:

1. There are only 3 county park facilities proposed for or located within Reston's boundaries. Of these three, two--Baron Cameron Park and the North County Governmental Complex Site--are temporary. Play fields on the latter are located on a proposed hospital site. The Baron Cameron School site is still listed on the School Board's property inventory. While no school is planned here for the next five years, area growth could force the county to construct intermediate and senior high schools on this parcel at some future date.
2. Fox Mill District Park Could be forced to accommodate an elementary school some time before the year 2000.
3. Growth in the Herndon population and in organized athletic activities in town will place significant pressure on those facilities, virtually excluding them from use by Reston residents and organizations.
4. No new facilities for organized sports activities--i.e. ball fields or soccer/football fields--are planned in the next five years for the western

Great Falls area. However, growth in organized sports activities in this area will increase pressure for their use of county facilities located within Reston and at Lake Fairfax Park.

5. Because of poor maintenance and heavy use during the week, elementary school fields are generally unsuited for organized sports activities. In many instances they are in too poor a condition to even be used for practice.

3. Recommendations

The Land Use Committee makes the following recommendations that the RHOA and RCA Boards:

1. Support the county proposal for the South Lakes Drive Park, with the one change suggested by the Reston Fields Council, that instead of an overlay soccer/baseball field the site have one soccer/football field and one baseball/softball field. Their plan is shown in the Appendix. The committee feels that the proposed plan is the best compromise between the no development and the intensive development options. It also addresses deficiencies in that neighborhood's open space requirements.
2. Strongly suggest and support development of active recreation areas in Herndon and Great Falls to alleviate pressure on those types of facilities in the Reston area. Reston should not be punished for providing its own facilities by being denied its fair share use of county facilities.
3. Encourage timely funding and completion of recreation facilities for the Stevenage Road park. Erect a sign on the site which clearly identifies its future park use to prospective home buyers.
4. Support local organizations in their efforts to up-grade the quality of the facilities available at elementary school sites so that full advantage may be taken of the school/park concept. Such support could include RHOA staff assistance in designing/developing apparatus areas; petitioning the School Board and Recreation Department for better maintenance of existing facilities.
5. Support and encourage development of the facilities available on Reston's periphery, including working with the county to make any additions and improvements known within the Reston community.

6. Strongly recommend trail and/or pathway links between Reston neighborhoods and county facilities, located both within and on the periphery of Reston.
7. Encourage and support, in any feasible way, completion of the W&OD Trail.