TRAIL MANAGEMENT PLAN

PATAPSCO VALLEY STATE PARK

1998
The Honorable Parris N. Glendening, Governor

Department of Natural Resources

John R. Griffin, Secretary

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Approval of the Trail Management Plan for Patapsco Valley State Park has been granted on this 4th day of August, 1998.

John R. Griffin, Secretary
Maryland Department of Natural Resources
Acknowledgements

A number of agencies and individuals made significant contributions to the development of the Trail Management Plan for Patapsco Valley State Park. The Department of Natural Resources particularly appreciates the efforts of the Citizens Advisory Committee, who contributed their time and energy to reviewing and providing input on the plan.

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INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

Patapsco Valley State Park is located along the borders of Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll and Howard Counties, approximately 10 -20 miles south and west of Baltimore and 35 - 45 miles northeast of Washington, D.C. (See State of Maryland, Regional and Area Maps). The park is centered around the floodplain and valley slopes of the Patapsco River, an important tributary to the Chesapeake Bay. Currently, Patapsco Valley State park contains 13,847 acres.

Patapsco Valley State Park is in the center of Maryland both from a geographic and population standpoint. As a result, the park is one of the most heavily visited in the State. Patapsco Valley State Park, as a large section of open space in a densely populated area, provides important conservation and outdoor recreation benefits. the high visitation coupled with the park’s location in an urban-suburban area compounds the impact on its resources, including facilities and trails.

Major recreation facilities at Patapsco Valley State Park, include picnic areas, playgrounds and camping sites as well as trails. During the past few years, the State of Maryland has faces difficult budget decision that have resulted in a substantial decrease in funds available for the construction and maintenance of picnic areas, beaches and campgrounds, the popularity of trails as a recreational amenity has grown. Mountain biking is a sport that was virtually unknown 15 years ago. Currently, about 58% of the bicycles sold in the United States are mountain bikes. The increasing number of mountain bike owners in the Baltimore - Washington region are searching for nearby locations to cycle. As the population of the area has grown, so has the need for additional places to walk or ride horses in a natural setting. These factors have combined to create significant pressure on the trail system of Patapsco Valley State Park.

In November 1995, the Department of Natural Resources initiated a cooperative effort with the Patapsco Valley State Park Trails Management Committee to address the issues facing the trail system at Patapsco Valley. The committee consisted of members of biking, hiking and equestrian organizations as well as individuals selected by the county governments to represent interested citizens. Trail options were examined during meetings and field investigations. A draft trail management plan was developed and made available for public review in June, 1998. A thirty day written comment period followed. This final document, which reflects the responses received during the comment period, provides a guide for managing the trail system and protecting the associated natural resources of Patapsco Valley State Park.
Patapsco Valley State Park

Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll and Howard Counties
State of Maryland
NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES OF PATAPSCO VALLEY STATE PARK

The Physical Environment

Geography and Topography

Five physiographic regions are represented in Maryland. These regions, which are divided based on topographic and geologic characteristics, consist of the Coastal Plain, Piedmont, Blue Ridge, Ridge and Valley and Appalachian Plateau. The vast majority of Patapsco Valley State Park is located in Piedmont Physiographic Province, an area characterized by rolling hills that are well dissected by streams. Interstate 95 is roughly the dividing line between the Piedmont and Coastal Plain. The southeastern portion of the park has more gradual topography with slower moving stream segments and wider floodplains.

Geology and Soils

Ancient metamorphic rocks primarily from the Pre-Cambrian and Cambrian periods dominate the bedrock under Patapsco Valley State Park in the Piedmont. Gneiss and schist are the most prevalent components of the park’s bedrock, although mineral composition of the major formations does vary to some degree. In the Coastal Plain, unconsolidated sediments from the pleistocene, pliocene and recent epochs are most common.

The soils of Patapsco Valley State Park are a reflection of the area’s geology and topography. Soils from the Relay, Brandywine, Legore, Glenelg, Chester and Manor associations cover the vast majority of the park. These soils vary from moderately developed and thick in relatively flat areas to thin and rocky on hillsides. Floodplains are poorly drained, easily eroded and subject to frequent flooding.

Water Resources

Patapsco Valley State Park is a stream valley park with the Patapsco River at its center. The water quality of the Patapsco River and its tributaries as they flow through the park is generally good and safe for recreation. Water quality gradually deteriorates downstream with somewhat elevated levels of bacteria, suspended sediment and nutrients due to agricultural and urban runoff in the watershed.

Vegetation

Five general classes of vegetation are found within Patapsco Valley State Park. These include upland mixed hardwood, bottomland mixed hardwood, tidal and fresh water marsh, cultivated fields/pastures, old field and pine plantation. The first three classes are typical of the Maryland Piedmont and Coastal Plain while cultivated fields/pastures, old fields and the pine plantations are designed environments.
The table below lists the major plant types found in each of the two main natural habitats. Cultivated fields/pastures in Patapsco Valley State Park include grass playing fields, picnic areas and roadsides as well as agricultural lands. The pine plantations are mostly white pine.

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<th>Other Canopy and Understory Species</th>
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**Rare, Threatened and Endangered Species**

The Forestry, Heritage and Wildlife Administration of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources has noted the presence of a number of rare, threatened or endangered species within Patapsco Valley State Park. Twenty plant species are listed as threatened or endangered. Three wildlife species are considered endangered with another three in need of conservation.

**Fish and Wildlife**

A variety of fish are found in the streams within Patapsco Valley State Park. The most common types of fish include small mouth bass, dace, minnows, shiners, darters and sunfish. Some stream segments in the park are popular for put and take trout fishing.

The variety of vegetation coupled with an ample water supply are the main factors responsible for a great abundance and diversity of fauna in the Patapsco Valley State Park. Present in the park are many deer and assorted small game animals, fur-bearers, reptiles, amphibians, waterfowl, songbirds and raptors.

**History and Cultural Resources**

The area surrounding present day Patapsco Valley State Park provided excellent hunting and fishing grounds for native Americans prior to the 1600's. Although Captain John Smith was the first European explorer to visit the Patapsco Valley in 1608, it was more than 50 years before colonial settlers entered the valley in numbers, clearing the woodlands and planting tobacco. In the early 1700's, Elkridge was a navigable port rivaling Annapolis.
The late 1700's and early 1800's brought industry to the Patapsco Valley in the form of mills and ironworks. On May 24, 1830, the initial section of the B&O Railroad was opened through the Patapsco Valley. This line was the first commercial railroad in the United States. The Patapsco region achieved additional recognition when the first commercial telegraph service in the world opened along the B&O in 1844.

Commerce and industry dominated the economy of the Patapsco Valley during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The Patapsco Electric and Manufacturing Company of Ellicott City brought additional fame to the Patapsco River in 1906 when it constructed the world’s first underwater hydroelectric plant. Names after the company’s president, Victor Gustave Bloede, Bloede’s Dam was one of the first dams to be constructed of reinforced concrete.

The last half of the 20th century has seen the Patapsco Valley shift to a service economy. Although agriculture and manufacturing are still important, the region has increasing become part of the extended suburban area surrounding Baltimore and Washington, D.C. As undeveloped land has become more scarce, the park property surrounding the Patapsco River has become an important buffer for protection natural resources and providing area residents an opportunity to escape the urban environment.

Patapsco Valley State Park contains many cultural features. Although some archaeological sites have been recorded, many more have likely been destroyed by development or mining before the park was established. The park has more than twenty historically significant sites and structures including Bloede Dam and Thomas Viaduct.
EXISTING PARK CONDITIONS AND FACILITIES

Acquisition History

Patapsco Valley State Park began in 1907 with donation to the State of Maryland of a 40 acre tract of land. The property was initially called the "Patapsco" State Forest Reserve. Through the late 1940’s parts of Patapsco were operated like a state park. The 1950 "Development Plan for the Patapsco River Valley Park" recommended acquisition of approximately 8,000 acres. During the 1950’s, almost 2 million dollars were appropriated by the Maryland General Assembly for land acquisition. The General Assembly has authorized the purchase of 16, 083 acres of land for Patapsco Valley State Park. The park currently covers an area of 13,847 acres.

Land Use

Patapsco Valley State Park contains many different types of land use patterns not generally associated with parkland. These include agricultural leases, rental properties, historic structure curatorships, communication towers and a major railroad right-of-way. Urban and suburban development requires roads as well as electric, gas phone, water and sewer service. Because of Patapsco Valley State Park’s location in a rapidly growing area and the park’s long linear nature, there are many instances where roadways and utility lines must cross park property. In those cases where projects have been considered important to the public health and welfare, formal rights-of-way have been established.

Resource Conservation

A primary purpose of Patapsco Valley State Park is to conserve the resources of the Patapsco River valley and contribute to the overall effort to improve water quality in the Chesapeake Bay. Within the park are some of the largest forested tracts and undisturbed wetland areas in the Baltimore region. Maintaining a high level of protection for the park’s natural resources will remain a priority in the future.

Developed Areas

Construction of roads, campgrounds and picnic sites in patapsco Valley State Park was started by the Civilian Conservation Corps during the 1930’s. Currently, the park has five major developed sites (See Location Map). These sites, from southeast to northwest, are Avalon (including the Avalon, Glen Artney and Orange Grove areas), Hilton, Hollofield, Pickall and McKeldin. Each site has picnic facilities, comfort stations and open areas for recreational activities. Park headquarters are located at Hollofield. although the developed areas are the main attraction for the vast majority of visitors, they cover a small portion of the Park’s total land area.
Trails

Patapsco Valley State Park contains many miles of natural surface trails including narrow paths as well as old logging and fire roads. Trail systems are associated with the five developed sites and many of the undeveloped areas. Currently 27 miles of trails are mapped and marked. There are also an unknown number of trails that have not been officially sanctioned by the park.

The park also has the 1.5 miles paved Grist Mill Accessible Trail in the Avalon section of the park. A 1.6 miles section of River Road that accesses the Orange Grove Area has recently been closed to vehicular traffic. After repairs to a small bridge are completed, River Road will be reopened to provide access for additional parking. However, visitors will be able to continue to utilize the road shoulders for hiking and biking.
GENERAL ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Historically, trails in Patapsco Valley State Park have been officially developed by the park staff and often unofficially created by park users. The condition of the trails range from excellent to poor. Trails that have been well designed and maintained can usually accommodate hikers, bikers and equestrians with little difficulty. Trails that have been poorly designed are difficult to maintain, contribute to environmental degradation and can create safety hazards.

Many unofficial trails currently are well established. Others are continually being created. This situation is a major problem as the unofficial trails are almost always poorly designed and unmaintained. Most of these trails are also unnecessary as they do not serve the majority of park users. The unofficial trails also contribute to degradation of the park environment by removing vegetation and promoting soil erosion.

Sections of trails that were adopted in the past as part of the official park trail system also contain portions that are poorly designed and continue to prove difficult to maintain. The park staff and volunteer group resources have not been able to keep pace with the maintenance needs of the official trails.

Use of the natural surface trails has steadily increased as the population in the region has grown. The combination of increased use and many poorly designed and unmaintained trail segments has brought a number of management conflicts regarding the unpaved trails to the forefront. This situation is particularly evident in the Avalon and McKeldin sections of the park.

Future management of the Patapsco Valley State park trail system will require addressing items that apply to the entire park as well as decisions that are directed only to specific locations. This section of the plan discusses and offers solutions to the general trail management issues that have been identified by the Patapsco Valley State Park Trails Management Committee.

Environmental Considerations

Slope, moisture and soil type are the natural factors which have the most influence on the stability of natural surface trails. In general, steeply sloped and wet areas will erode much more intensely than dry, flat environments. The amount of use on a trail also influence erosion as repeated foot, hoof or tire impact loosen soil particles. Within Patapsco Valley State Park, trails located within the wetlands and floodplains or at steep angles on the stream valley slopes are most susceptible to erosion damage, particularly with heavy use.

Eroding trail surfaces have significant adverse effects on plants and wildlife. As trails experience erosion, or depressions containing standing water are created, many users will ride or walk around the bad spots, creating a wider trail. Increasing the width of trails in this manner kills vegetation and creates larger canopy openings, which are detrimental to many wildlife species. Sediment from eroding trails can increase water turbidity in adjacent streams or rivers.
Turbid conditions can reduce the availability of light for aquatic plants, clog the gills of fish and smother the breeding grounds of both invertebrates and fish. Because of these environmental impacts, it is important to locate trails, and especially those that will receive heavy use, in a manner that avoids or minimizes disturbances in west or very steep areas.

Recommendations

- The Department of Natural Resources should continue the process of examining, with input from the Trail Management Committee, each trail in Patapsco Valley State Park. Trails causing significant environmental damage will be repaired, rerouted or closed.

- The decision to close a trail or section of a trail to specific or general users shall be the responsibility of the Department of Natural Resources. However, an explanation will be made to the Trail Committee in the event alterations or improvements are possible which would allow the trail to be reopened.

- Any additional trails developed in the park shall be designed in a manner to minimize erosion.

- Park trails are closed when wet or muddy conditions exist. If this rule is not voluntarily complied with, long term trail conditions will be monitored by the park staff and may result in permanent trail closures.

User Conflict

The experiences desired by unpaved trail users are many and diverse. A large number of individuals prefer a flat, wide surface such as the C&O Canal or Northern Central Railroad Trail (NCRT). Relatively quiet paths where nature observation can be the primary activity are sought by many people. A significant number of users seek trail experiences that provide a strong physical challenge.

Conflicts between trail users are the result of varying expectations, the volume of use and trail width. Wide trails such as the NCRT of C&O Canal can accommodate multiple user groups without undue problems despite heavy visitation. Narrower trails cannot handle a similar volume of traffic without some conflict. While it is often more desirable from a construction and management standpoint to have multi-use trails, the large number of trail users in the Baltimore Washington area has created some overcrowding problems in Patapsco Valley State Park.

Recommendations

- While it is not possible to provide all users what they desire in every instance, the Department of Natural Resources will attempt to provide a wide variety of trail experiences within Patapsco Valley State Park.
In the process of examining each trail in Patapsco Valley State Park, the Department of Natural Resources will determine which trails shall be closed to all users of designated for either multiple of single use. A combination of factors including physical condition, environmental impact, amount of use and potential safety problems will be considered.

The Department of Natural Resources will not institute a complete ban of equestrians, hikers or mountain bikers from the trails of Patapsco Valley State Park.

A combination of multiple use and hiker only trails should be associated with the developed areas of Patapsco Valley State park, particularly the Avalon and McKeldin sections.

Safety

Safety is an issue that concerns all trail users. High volumes of users, differing speeds and in some cases poor trail conditions contribute to potential safety of problems.

Recommendations

- Signs alerting users to control their speed within safe limits appropriate to trail conditions will be posted.

- Right-of-way signage should be posted at trail heads to remind users to yield in an appropriate manner. Bicycles yield to all other trail users. Hikers yield to equestrians.

Parking

Adequate parking is available in the developed sections of Patapsco State Park, although some trail users avoid paying service charges by parking outside designated spaces. This complicates establishing accurate visitor counts. Undeveloped areas have potential problems due to trail users parking along roadways or in unauthorized areas. This situation can cause vegetative damage and erosion as well as unsafe conditions for trail users and passing motorists.

Recommendations

- New trails will not be developed without provisions for parking with Patapsco Valley State Park boundaries or on an adjacent property.

- Unauthorized or unnecessary parking areas will be closed and violators cited.

- Trail users should be educated as to the benefits of utilizing officially established parking areas.
Service Charges

Service charges are assessed seasonally in the developed areas of Patapsco Valley State Park and are collected at the main gate to each section. Users of these areas pay service charges which contribute to the income of the park. Increased income enhances the funds available for park operation and maintenance which includes trail management. Trail users who enter the developed sections from sites other than the main gate avoid paying the service charge. Users who access trails outside the developed sections also don't pay fees.

Recommendations

○ The Department of Natural Resources should establish a land use permit system for Patapsco Valley State Park. All users of the Park will purchase a permit either on a daily or yearly basis. Permits should be available by mail or at park headquarters and would be valid for all sections of the park.

○ Funds collected from the permits should be dedicated by the existing budget process to Patapsco Valley State Park.

Trail Identification

Additional marking of trails and accurate trail maps are needed to assist trail users in Patapsco Valley State Park.

Recommendations

○ All trails shall be continuously and neatly marked so that someone unfamiliar with the area can discern the direction of the route. Standard marking shall be painted blazes, posts and signs. Painted blazes will be a vertical rectangle approximately 2" by 6" placed at adult eye level (approximately 5 feet from the ground) in the center of a tree or a post that is visible some distance ahead from the trail. Where the trail follows in a generally straight or gently curving direction, single blazes can be used. Where there is a sharp change in direction or a trail junction, double blazes, one over the other with a 2" space between them shall be employed. Blazes shall be visible from one location to the next blazed location in both directions.

○ The Department of Natural Resources recently began an effort to create trail maps using computer technology. A pilot project was conducted at Seneca Creek State Park in early 1997. DNR should make Patapsco Valley State Park a priority area for creation of new trail maps.
Trail Design Standards

The standards identified in this section should apply to all new trails. Every effort should also be made to bring existing trails up to standard. There will, however, be many situations where present conditions and future funding restraints make absolute conformance with the criteria impossible on existing trails.

Recommendations - General

- All trails shall be cleared of vegetation and obstructions that unnecessarily impede user travel.
- The natural earthen surface shall remain.
- Rolling dips shall be used where possible to minimize erosion.
- Stream crossings shall be avoided when possible.
- Stream crossings shall be located where wetland corridors are at the most narrow point and where approach slopes are as flat as possible.
- Water Bars with 3" top width should be utilized at close spacing for steep slopes (25' spacing on 25% slope), gradually decreasing in number as slope decreases (200' spacing on 10% slope).
- All vegetation removal will be done in accordance with existing laws, regulations and policies.

Recommendations - Hiking Only

Trail Clearance:

- 5 feet (3 feet minimum) wide by 8 feet high

Treadway Width:

- 3 feet, 2 feet minimum

Treadway Slope:

- Generally less than 15% to avoid treadway erosion. Grades of up to 25% can be used on short sections with the installation of erosion control devises. Slopes greater than 25% will be avoided whenever possible.
Drainage:

- The trail shall be configured to provide for drainage of the treadway and minimum erosion by utilizing natural terrain features. When necessary, water bars, cribbing, boardwalks and bridges will be employed.

Recommendations - Multiple Use

Trail Clearance:

- 8 feet wide maximum (6 feet minimum), 10 feet high.

Treadway Width:

- 12 feet, 6 feet minimum

Treadway Slope:

- Generally less than 10% to avoid treadway erosion. Maximum sustained pitch (up to 400 feet) will be 12%. Grades of up to 25% can be used on short sections (up to 1000 feet) with the installation of extensive erosion control devices. If grade is broken by a minimum of 500' of less than 5% grade, then multiple 25% slope segments may be designed as part of a trail. No grades greater than 25%.

Drainage:

- The trail shall be configured to provide for drainage of the treadway and minimum erosion by utilizing natural terrain features. When necessary, water bars, cribbing, boardwalks and bridges will be employed.

Unauthorized Trails

A significant number of natural surface trails have been established in many sections without knowledge or consent from Patapsco Valley State Park staff. Many of these trails are used for access to the main trail systems from adjacent properties and are poorly maintained. The access trails have limited value to the majority of park users.

Recommendations

- As a general rule, unauthorized trails in Patapsco Valley State Park are prohibited and will be handled according to encroachment enforcement policies.
Existing unauthorized access trails will be reviewed for compliance with trail standards and may in the future be authorized by park staff if users and adjacent property owners agree to provide responsible maintenance. A signed maintenance and use agreement will be required.

Requests for new access trails from adjacent properties must be submitted in writing to the park manager. Each request will be reviewed for compliance with accepted engineering practice and the management requirements and standards outlined in this document.

**Maintenance**

Maintenance of existing trails is a top priority for the trail system at Patapsco Valley State Park. In general, the park will adhere to the guidelines set forth in "The Appalachian Trail Conference's book "Trail Design, Construction and Maintenance" which provides an excellent reference manual. The following items require particular attention.

**Recommendations**

- It is particularly important that fallen trees are removed as soon as possible from treadway surfaces to prevent trail widening.

- Eroding slopes must be repaired when a trail becomes unsafe for continued use.

- Stream banks will also be closely monitored for erosion. As funding permits, bridges will be constructed over any stream crossing that is heavily impacted. Bridge design and construction must meet accepted engineering standards.

**Signage**

Signs communicate important trail information. This includes trail names, proper etiquette, closures, conditions, special events, designated use and rules.

**Recommendations**

- Signage will be accomplished in accordance with the standards and procedures for trail signing and blazing as adopted by the Appalachian Trail Conference and detailed in the book "Trail Design, Construction and Maintenance".

- Signs will be printed on wood, plastic or metal. Routed signs are an option, depending on availability. Temporary signs may be printed on highly visible laminated paper.

- The size of the sign will be determined by the length of the message.
Volunteerism

The Department of Natural Resources is heavily dependent upon volunteers to maintain and promote the trail system at Patapsco Valley State Park. The future of trails is dependent on public involvement.

Recommendations

- Through the Park's current Adopt-a-park program, groups and organizations are able to adopt a particular section of trail. Trail advocates do routine maintenance such as trash removal, dig out material collected by water bars and trim branches on a continuous basis. Trail maintenance workshops are held periodically to train volunteers.

- The park may consider establishing a volunteer patrol program. Patrollers would be responsible for reminding trail users of proper etiquette and park trail rules. They would also report unsafe trail conditions or complaints or improper trail use to the park staff.

- Patapsco Valley State Park should continue to promote its trail stewardship program. Minimum donations of $5 for trail stewardship stickers is an important source of funds for the park's trail system.

Education

Education plays a large role in trail management. Trail users need to understand the positive and negative impact of their actions on both the environment and other individuals. Information on trails must be disseminated to users in order to promote greater awareness and stewardship.

Recommendations

- Patapsco Valley State Park should produce a trail brochure. The brochure would include etiquette, safety and natural resource information for all user groups. Important phone numbers, such as the headquarters for Patapsco Valley State park, can also be listed. The brochure should be available at trail heads and the park headquarters.

- Continue current efforts by Patapsco Valley State Park to promote responsible trail use including:
  - Trail head bulletin boards should feature educational information.
  - Feature articles in newspaper and magazines.
• Talks to organizations and schools.
• Trail days for events and trail maintenance.
• Trail hikes and interpretive programs.

**Trail Etiquette**

The trail experience at Patapsco Valley State Park ultimately depends on the actions of all trail users. The following "rules of the trail" will help greatly to protect the natural environment and the recreational experience of all users.

**Recommendations**

- Ride/Walk on open trails only, respect trail closures.
- Do not cut new trails.
- Trails are closed when wet/muddy conditions exist.
- Never stray from, and do not widen, officially marked trails.
- Control your bicycle/horse.
- Bicycles yield to all other trail users. Hikers yield to equestrians.
- Never scare animals.
- Helmets are recommended for all riders.
- Do not litter.
- Make other trail users aware of your presence when overtaking.
SECTION MANAGEMENT

The issues facing the natural surface trails at Patapsco Valley State Park are most apparent in the Avalon (including Glen Artney, Hilton and Orange Grove) and McKeldin sections where the trails are most heavily used. As a result, the Department of Natural Resources and the Patapsco Valley State Park Trails Management Committee felt that these areas should be the first portions of the park reviewed.

Because of budget constraints, it is not possible to correct the problems in each section as per the prior recommendations. However, with user demand at an all time high, it is just as unfeasible to close many of those trails that are in bad or poor condition. The following section recommendations, while falling short of achieving perfection, represent the best compromise possible.

Avalon Section

Trails in the Avalon section (See Avalon/Hilton Section Map) were reviewed by DNR staff and the Trails Management Committee. Based upon the physical conditions, environmental impact, pattern of use and safety problems found, the following actions will be taken in order to improve the trail experience in the Avalon section (See Avalon Section Trail System Map).

- The Buzzards Rock Trail in the Hilton area will be designated for hikers only for safety and erosion control reasons.
- The Saw Mill Branch Trail in the Hilton area between the power lines and the Patapsco River, and between the Youth Group Camping Area and the Patapsco River will be designated for hikers only for safety and environmental reasons.
- The Valley View Trail in the Avalon area will be designated for hikers only for safety and environmental reasons.
- The trail leading to Cascade Falls from the parking lot in the Cascade Area will be designated for hiking only for safety and environmental reasons.
- The parking area and access from Landing Road to the trail system will be closed for safety reasons.
- The trails not previously shown on Park maps but now identified on the Avalon Section Trail Map in the Glen Artney, Hilton and Orange Grove areas have been added to the official park trail system.
- All other trails on the Avalon Section Trail System map will be designated for multiple use. However, any trail that is in existence but not on the map will be closed for safety and/or environmental reasons.
**McKeldin Section**

The McKeldin Section is a popular family day use area (See McKeldin Section Map). After reviewing the trails at McKeldin, DNR staff and the Trails Management Committee agreed on the following solutions (See McKeldin Section Trail Map).

- A new hiking only loop will be established south of A field.
- Highly eroded sections of trail south of D field will be closed. A new trail segment has been partially constructed to keep the main loop intact.
- The trail segment along the South Branch of the Patapsco River from the parking lot south of C field to the confluence of the North and South Branches will be for hikers only due to environmental and safety concerns.
- The main trail in the northern portion of the McKeldin section along the North Branch of the Patapsco River will be designated for hiking only for environmental and safety reasons.
- A new trail utilizing upland areas and paralleling the the North Branch will be part of the official park trail system and open for multiple use.
- The remaining portions of the trail system will be multiple use.
PATAPSCO HERITAGE GREENWAY TRAIL

Although the primary focus of this document has been the unpaved trails, Patapsco Valley State Park has also been considered for additional paved trail possibilities, particularly in the section of the park between BWI Airport and Ellicott City/Oella. During the early 1990’s the Maryland Greenways Commission was formed to promote the establishment of linear areas of open space. As paved trails were proposed or established from Annapolis to BWI as well as around the airport, the Commission began to examine the possibility of extending the trail network up the Patapsco Valley. In 1995, the Patapsco Heritage Greenway Committee was formed by interested citizens to promote the natural, cultural and recreational heritage of the Patapsco Valley. The Heritage Greenway Committee has asked the Department of Natural Resources to consider if a linear trail in the lower portion of the park is feasible.

An examination of potential routes from BWI to Ellicott City/Oella revealed that construction of a spinal trail along the Patapsco River is not feasible at the present time due to breaks in public ownership and formidable construction obstacles including bridges, extensive grading and retaining walls. However, a paved hike/bike route is possible if existing roads are utilized and a section of River Road is graded and paved. A hiking only trail from Oella to Union Dam should also be considered. The Patapsco Heritage Greenway Committee and the Department of Natural Resources have agreed that the following items should be the main focus for development of the Patapsco Heritage Greenway Trail (See Patapsco Heritage Greenway Trail Map).

• Maryland DNR and DOT should fund construction of an eight foot wide, paved trail between Bloede Dam and Ilchchester Road.

• Maryland DNR and DOT as well as Baltimore, Howard and Anne Arundel Counties should designate and sign a on-road/paves trail route between Ellicott City/Oella and the BWI trail.

• SHA should consider improvements to the section of Frederick Road between River Road and Ellicott City/Oella for non-motorized travel.

• Baltimore, Howard and Anne Arundel Counties should consider improvements to the other segments of the proposed route for non-motorized travel.

• Establish and open to the public an unpaved hiking only trail between Ellicott City/Oella and Union Dam along the Baltimore County side of the Patapsco River. This trail will utilize both public and private property. Interpretive signage for the trail needs to be developed. As an interim project, open a trail segment along the Dickey Mill Race in Patapsco Valley State Park on an appointment basis.
• Highlight and develop interpretive signage for the historically significant sites on the existing unpaved trails in the Glen Artney/Avalon/Hilton/Orange Grove areas of Patapsco Valley State Park.

• As a longer term project, seek non-MD DNR funding for a pedestrian bridge over the Patapsco to link Oella and Hollofield.

• Prepare a 1"=100' or 1"=200' drawing/map showing the final alignment and necessary improvements for the Patapsco Heritage Greenway Trail between Union Dam and Elkridge. This project includes the unpaved trail from Union Dam to Ellicott City/Oella and the non-motorized transportation route/trail Ellicott City/Oella and Elkridge.
ANNUAL WORK PLAN

This document calls for a review of each trail within Patapsco Valley State Park. Currently, the official trails in the day use areas of the park have been reviewed and addressed in this document. This same process will initiated from all of the other commonly used public trails in other areas of the park. Completing that task in a thorough manner is a multi-year project due to the among of area and trails. The Department of Natural Resources and the Trail Management Committee will review the trails in one or more segments of the park each year. After completing the trail review, a plan of action shall be developed in cooperation with the Patapsco Trails Management Committee. Projects will be prioritized and trail improvements scheduled as funding permits.
FOOTNOTES


The facilities and services of the Department of Natural Resources are available to all without regard to race, color, sex, national origin, physical or mental disability.

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