

TRAIL USAGE AND INTEREST – COMMUNITY INPUT

On December 5, 2016, the Park Authority hosted a community workshop to better understand how people use the trails at Lake Accotink Park and what might most improve their experience. The same questions were shared on the project webpage to encourage input from those unable to attend the meeting in December. Below is a summary of the responses received to include what we heard at the December meeting and received through the project webpage as of March 1, 2017.

In which age bracket are you?	
2	Under 18
5	18 - 29
10	30 -39
13	40 -49
19	50 -59
23	60 - 69
25	70 and above
Including yourself, how many people do you typically use the park trails with?	
34	Just you
40	2
12	3 to 4
7	5 or more
Do you use the trails with children under the age of 15?	
65	No children
8	1 child
13	2 to 4 children
3	5 or more children
Do you bring pets with you?	
52	No pets
27	1 pet
3	2 to 4 pets
0	5 or more pets
What seasons of the year do you use the trails? (select all that apply)	
86	Spring
83	Summer
85	Fall
75	Winter
How often do you use the trails at Lake Accotink Park?	
14	Daily
9	4 - 6 days a week
34	2 - 3 days a week
12	once a week
7	Every other week
5	Once a month
10	A few times each year

What time of day do you use the trails on WEEKENDS ?	
12	Before 9:00 a.m.
31	Between 9:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.
23	Between 1:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m.
7	After 5:00 p.m.
37	It varies
2	I do not use the trails on weekends
What time of day do you use the trails on WEEKDAYS ?	
15	Before 9:00 a.m.
15	Between 9:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.
27	Between 1:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m.
27	After 5:00
25	It varies
4	I do not use the trails on weekdays
How much time do you spend on the trails in an average trip?	
10	Less than 1 hour
67	From 1 to 2 hours
14	From 2 to 4 hours
2	More than 4 hours
How do you use the trails at Lake Accotink Park? (select all that apply)	
69	Hiking/walking
26	Running/jogging
25	Casual/recreational biking
21	Mountain biking
26	Dog walking
Other	
1	Commuting
1	Volunteering
1	Art

TRAILS WORKSHOP AND QUESTIONNAIRE
 COMBINED RESULTS AS OF MARCH 1, 2017

Why do you use the trails at Lake Accotink Park? (select all that apply)	
56	Relaxation
87	Exercise
70	To enjoy the scenery
28	To get the children outdoors
28	Connection to other areas
59	Wildlife/nature viewing
34	Dog walking
21	Events
Other	
4	Access to Wakefield
1	Local Historical Sights
3	Commuting
1	Physical Therapy
1	"Plein Air" Painting/Journaling
1	Walking to boats
What characteristics of a trail are most important to creating a high quality trail experience? (select all that apply)	
49	Trail length
31	A looped connection
25	Clear signage/wayfinding
30	Maintenance
50	Attractive scenery
1	Use restricted to like users
12	Amount of trail traffic
46	Opportunity to view wildlife
22	Trail challenge
10	Proximity to parking
8	Proximity to restrooms
13	Paved trail surface
48	Natural trail surface
Other	
3	Benches along trails for seniors
2	Paved trails for wheelchair access
1	Consider dirt trails next to asphalt

What trail improvements would you most like to see? (select all that apply)	
23	Longer trails
25	More loop trails
24	Advanced skill trails
19	Increased connectivity
8	Improved trailheads
28	Improved trail signage
28	Increased maintenance
4	Fewer duplicate trails
6	ADA accessible trails
15	Additional benches
28	More environmentally sustainable trails
Other	
4	Clean water fountains
2	Fitness stations
3	Restrooms
4	Trail to avoid Danbury Forest
8	Keep trashcans
1	Less "Deer Hunting" signs
2	None unless for safety
2	Pack it in, pack it out
5	Historical markers
5	Bird blind for photography/viewing
2	Fishing platform
3	Exercise park
1	Less rocks on hills
1	Maintain the existing benches
1	Enforce leash laws

WHAT WOULD YOU SUGGEST TO BETTER BALANCE THE NEEDS OF THE VARIOUS TYPES OF TRAIL USERS WITHIN THE PARK?

- Cyclist give warning when passing
- As a biker, I suggest the “biker yield to runners/walkers” signs to educate other bikers. Careful with earbuds!
- Multiple trails – walking vs. mountain biking. Leave mountain biking areas intact – no paving creep.
- Enforce leash laws. Put signs up about “rules of the trail” that state 1) stay on the right, 2) Announce passing on left.
- Keep some soft trails. Reduce hunting warnings about staying on established trails – or show “established trails”
- Signs at trail entry points to alert bikers to the heavy foot traffic. While most bikers are very respectful (many calling out “passing on left”), some go much too fast for the amount of foot traffic – particularly on weekends.
- Intentionally developed areas along the trails to facilitate viewing, photo take, resting. Near the beach area in wood are many trample areas that people left (*illegible*) of demand for relaxation, resting, viewing.
- Signage explaining the rules of multiuse trails. IMBA good resource.
- Steep hill at dam – make less steep
- More signage for rough spots. I broke my ankle on a hill on the upper side of Accotink. It was the first time I had run that spot so I didn’t know how bad it was.
- Bring back the habit of saying “on your left”. Reminders that bikers must yield on shared use trails
- Signage on the trails that give location and difficulty level of trail
- “Balance” is good now – a non-issue. Take no action.
- Bicycles must yield to pedestrians, especially small children, those who cannot hear them coming, dogs on leashes – or anyone who does not like jumping out of the way
- 15 mph speed limit on shared trails
- Keep the main trail maintained and accessible to all users. Leave the side trails as is.
- Benches to rest along trails for less active
- Signs at trailheads indicating the types of users permitted on each trail. This would help people know which types of users to watch out for, if nothing else.
- Encourage appropriate behavior by all users: yielding right of way, pay attention, acceptance of other types of users, etc.
- Good signage is the best option for addressing this issue.

WITH AN UNDERSTANDING THAT THERE ARE AREAS OF THE PARK THAT SHOULD BE PROTECTED FOR THEIR NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES, ARE THERE AREAS WHERE TRAIL CONNECTIONS ARE MISSING THAT YOU THINK WOULD BE VALUABLE?

- New connections equal habitat destruction. Keep the loop trail on Danbury Forest and improve signage.
- Should be a plan for a trail connection that avoids Danbury Forest. I think it would be possible with a few boardwalks between Danbury Forest and Accotink Creek)
- This trail exists. It is in fair shape from the bridge link to the power line cut. It is fairly impassible from the power line cut north to Braddock. This should be refurbished /rebuilt as part of the Braddock Road project. (reference to trail section within Accotink Stream Valley Park paralleling Danbury Forest Drive)
- A trail around the lake – the current trail is too long and take you into neighborhood
- Make no new connections
- Keep as many mountain bike trails as possible. It is an excellent resource. The more trails there are also reduces interface with other users.
- Trail (loop) should avoid Danbury and school – add trail closer to creek or add another bridge even if shorter.
- Please improve signage when the park exits at Danbury Forest
- A Flag Run trail would be great!
- We would prefer NO TRAIL behind Lonsdale Drive. It would be directly in back yards and cross private property (I think)
- Do not put a trail behind Lonsdale Drive!!
- Consider a connection between the trail just south of Danbury Forest and the paved trail on the east side of Accotink Creek. You need a bridge over Accotink Creek but the trail would only need to be about 750 feet long and would make a nice loop trail around the lake.
- A trail below Danbury Forest would be much more acceptable, and have less impact on the floodplain, if limited to 3-4' wide.
- New installments like new parking be pervious materials – to help with flooding and water quality.
- Re-establish parking on Rolling Road entrance
- Add parking at Rolling Road entrance.
- Mountain bikes got their multiple trails at Wakefield. Don't add any more at Lake Accotink Park.

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- Close trail proximity maximizes the limited acreage for MTB. Riding the same trails in opposite directions doubles the trail distance. Winding trails take advantage of land contours to aid sustainability. Stacking those trails provides variety.
- A trash can for the trash issue here or better enforcement or trash trap on creek (reference to area near dam and spillway)
- Concern that the work done on the dam was done improperly. Visual cracks.
- Access trail (CCT) from this area and further downstream (reference to area south of Lake Accotink Park within Accotink Stream Valley Park).
- Add the trail that connects Highland Street to the CCT to the map!
- Maintaining the old Flag Run trail and keeping it from eroding would be nice.

MOUNTAIN BIKING IS A SPORT WITH INCREASING POPULARITY IN FAIRFAX COUNTY. MANY ENTHUSIASTS CURRENTLY RIDE THE TRAILS AT LAKE ACCOTINK PARK. HOW CAN MOUNTAIN BIKING BEST BE ACCOMMODATED WITHIN THE PARK? WHAT CAN BE DONE TO INTEGRATE THIS POPULAR ACTIVITY WHILE PROTECTING PARK RESOURCES AND RESPECTING OTHER PARK PATRONS? WHAT WOULD IMPROVE THE RIDERS' EXPERIENCE?

- Nothing can be don't to "integrate this popular activity while protecting park resources." Mountain biking is inherently destructive of natural areas and is incompatible with preservation. It is an activity only slightly preferable to ATV/dirt bike riding.
- As a taxpayer, the mountain bike trails are the best thing going at Lake Accotink and the gravel trails. Keep the mountain bike trails.
- Suggest consideration be given to making the Accotink trail a closed loop within the park by connecting the trail behind Kings Glen School and Danbury Forest communities.
- Love to mountain bike here – please preserve this activity
- Stay back from water's edge/stream banks. Hold education summit for bikers – they are happy to help!
- Signage on trails – signage should include location and trail difficulty.
- Night riding – allow mtbing to be the eyes and ears of the park.
- Allow night riding at Accotink
- Suggest signage for "sensitive" areas – just trying to block them merely creates an obstacle course/"more fun"
- Leverage partner organizations ability to apply for RTP grants and matching.
- By allowing volunteer organizations to partner with the park on maintenance, development and patrolling, the integrity can be maintained.
- Please consider alternate natural surface trails next to paved paths.

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- Agree with this! (referencing previous comment)
- Consider trail along Flag Run as part of the Flag Run stream restoration project from Queensbury to the lake.
- Nice to ride/run in here (Flag Run) but erosion is an issue
- Signs help keep bikers and other park patrons aware of each other. Open areas also help visibility. Town hall meetings & local news help spread the work and bring others to the park.
- The mountain bikers that follow the posted rules are just fine – BUT there are a few that don't follow the rules and are therefore dangerous to all and will someday cause a serious injury to worse – the rules need to be stressed to the bikers (and the walkers and hikers that insist on taking up the entire path!)
- Trails need to be built to accommodate multi-use (bad sight lines, room to pass and ways to check speed). Intersections should not be 90° between the bike trails and cinder walkway
- Good signs and other ways to make everyone understand the rules of the trail (keep right-pass left, etc). I walk and I mountain bike, so I see both sides. The uses are not incompatible if everyone would just follow simple rules.
- Maybe bikes have their own place in more challenging areas.
- The singletrack trails are like a spider web. Simple signs with "you are here" dots at some of the more prominent intersections.
- Fountainhead Park closes its trails to bikes when they are too soft (ie, from rain). That would really help preserve the trails at Lake Accotink too.
- "- Continue to work with MORE
- - Encourage mtn bikers to ride the trails responsibly via signage or other (yield, warn when passing, avoid wet trails)
- - Make other users aware that mtn biking is legitimate activity at Accotink
- - Consider directional trail
- Create "mountain bike only" offshoots from the loop trail. common rules/speed limits etc. should apply to the main common trail, and mountain bikes can have right of way on their specific trail areas.