

## PARK FACILITIES AND PROGRAMMING – COMMUNITY INPUT

On October 27, 2016, the Park Authority hosted a community workshop to better understand how people use Lake Accotink Park today and what types of facilities and programming they are most interested in. The same questions were shared on the project webpage to encourage input from those unable to attend the meeting in October. Below is a summary of the responses received to include what was heard at the October meeting and received through the project webpage as of **May 5, 2017**.

How do you usually come to Lake Accotink Park?	
47	Walk to the park
20	Ride a bike to the park
18	Drive to the park
3	other

What size is your group when you come to the park?	
33	I come for some ME time
15	Two is company
14	It's more of a family affair
7	A few close friends and family make all the difference
1	You DEFINITELY know it when we show up!

Choose the value that most closely represents the age of your group when you come to the park.	
4	Under 18
11	18-35
42	36-64
8	65 or better
13	Multi-generational

If an appropriate location could be found, would you like to see a dog Park at Lake Accotink Park?	
35	Yes
33	No

If an appropriate location could be found, would you like to see a disc golf course at Lake Accotink Park?	
28	Yes
40	No

What types of programming would you be interested in and willing to pay a small fee to participate?	
18	Archery programs
40	Concerts/performances
30	Cultural resource programs / history exploration
10	Fishing programs
13	Guided tour boat excursions
17	Holiday-themed events
28	Kayaking / boating programs
13	Large, community-focused events
47	Natural resource programs / nature exploration
13	Pet-related classes and programs
15	Scouting programs
20	Sports / fitness-related programs
26	Running / biking events
4	Bike safety programs
2	Competitive obstacle course
3	Orienteering
3	Ice skating/hockey
1	Bird watching
2	Art programs

Accotink Park?	
8	Archery programs
3	Concerts/performances
2	Cultural resource programs / history exploration
3	Fishing programs
4	Guided tour boat excursions
5	Holiday-themed events
2	Kayaking / boating programs
14	Large, community-focused events
1	Natural resource programs / nature exploration
9	Pet-related classes and programs
1	Scouting programs
4	Sports / fitness-related programs
8	Running / biking events
1	Competitive obstacle course
3	Pokemon-Go
2	Ice skating/hockey

When should programs be offered to best serve your interests?	
22	Weekday programs
38	Weekend programs
14	After-dark programs
15	Summer camps
9	After school programs
9	School holiday / teacher workday programs
10	Day-trips programs for children

Would you like programming focused on a particular age group?	
14	Programs for pre-school age children
14	Programs for elementary school age children
10	Programs for teenagers
22	Programs for adults
12	Programs for older adults
26	Programs for family / multigenerational groups

If you had \$1,000 to invest in improving Lake Accotink Park, how would you spend your money?	
\$19,300	Ecological restoration
\$3,900	Expanded programming
\$2,250	Enhanced lakefront amusements
\$1,800	Additional picnic facilities
\$2,900	Additional restrooms
\$18,350	Trail enhancements
\$6,850	Off-leash dog area
\$900	Disc golf course
\$1,700	Sport courts
\$700	Archery range and programming
\$1,000	Dredging
\$100	Bike and kayak trail
\$100	café upgrade
\$100	fitness stations
\$100	Astronomy nights
\$100	Competitive obstacle course
\$100	No wi-fi

## **WHY DO YOU COME TO LAKE ACCOTINK PARK?**

- For a walk in the woods, made the sweeter by seeing the sunlight on the water through the pines
- Walking in a nature park.
- Walking in a nature park.
- Cross County trail runs through it. The Park is a very nice place to visit.
- It's a great destination on the CCT -- love to bring family here, go for a stroll or bike ride, hang out at the marina for a break, then keep riding. Also come here for a walk or fishing. Before the picnic areas were reserved-use only, we had lots of last-minute picnics here. Would love to have a few concerts on Saturday nights or Sunday afternoons here, instead of Friday nights. It overlaps with the other Braddock Nights concert on Friday at Rutherford Park.
- Enjoy the wildlife, take photos, listen to the laughter of people having fun!
- Trail running, both around the loop and in the single track hills. Nature watching at the shore or in my canoe. My children have attended summer camps at the lake. Family nature walks on the trail.
- Have Fun
- fun
- Relax with the family and ride the bikes
- Exercise (walking) and observing nature.
- Unpaved trails.
- relax
- To ride my bike, to go for a run, to go for a walk with my wife and dog, to attend the summer concert series events with my parents.
- To enjoy nature.
- To use the trails.
- To enjoy nature.
- Mostly for exercise – biking, walking – with the family
- Share nature with my family
- Trails
- To go running, to walk in nature, to bike ride with my son, and to enjoy the outdoors and the views of the lake
- To walk my dogs around the lake
- Mountain biking!
- Volunteering, nature conservation, nature restoration
- Running, boating, fishing
- Enjoy the beauty of our park
- The connection to nature through the trails and wooded area and for kayaking the lake

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COMBINED RESULTS AS OF MARCH 1, 2017

- To walk/run around the trails, to be out with nature
- Bike (now), playground (when kids were smaller), fish (when I was younger)
- Hiking and biking with kids and dog plus the playground
- Running and biking trails, quiet trails, lovely views, no WIFI
- Mountain biking!
- To walk my dog on the trail and let her chase deer
- Get away from technology and run!
- To enjoy peaceful nature
- Concerts, boat rides, nature, peaceful time
- It's convenient, it's large, it's nature-filled
- To walk around the lake and enjoy nature, playground/carousel, boat rides, concerts, picnics
- 1) Walking exercise in a natural setting, 2) concerts, 3) share with visiting friends and family, 4) boats!
- Walk – exercise, nature – animals and birds and plants, concerts
- I come to kike and play mini-golf
- To be by the lake and watch for wildlife
- To walk the dog every day; to run and enjoy fresh air; to clear my head; to show off to family and friends what a wonderful and unique backyard we have
- To run, to walk the dog, to see the flora and fauna, to bring my family and friends to a bit of nature and get exercise in Springfield
- I walk around the lake for exercise and solitude on a regular basis
- To take birds-in-flight pictures
- The lake
- Tranquility, exercise, engagement, fun
- Fitness
- Enjoy nature/nature photography, kayak, walk dogs
- For the chance to be on the trails
- Walk my dogs!
- Run, walk, hike, music, cross country ski (if snow!)
- For exercise, to enjoy time with my family
- The lake!
- Peace of mind, limited exercise, and enjoyment in observing nature
- With my kids and dog to enjoy the outdoors and play
- To walk/exercise in nature. To decompress

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- It's right next to where I live and we love the long trails provided to walk our dog. She loves it and wakes up every day on the weekend knowing where we are headed.
- Quite time. Outdoor walking and running. Birds, nature. I enjoy learning about the history of the park and the area around it. I'd like to see more interpretation of the drinking water reservoir period, Native Americans and the Civil War.

**WHAT WOULD ENCOURAGE YOU TO COME TO LAKE ACCOTINK PARK MORE OFTEN?**

- Improved trails
- Better marked trails, directions for bikers/runners to connect with the other trails/how not to get lost in neighborhoods while running
- Stop bow hunting!
- No paved trails! Ecological Restoration/stabilize stream and prevent erosion. Thanks for bringing back trash cans!
- More nature walks
- Places to hang out in woods where I would see no one else
- No more trail paving! Enforce dog leash regulations!
- More natural surface trails
- Dredging the lake!!
- More/improved trails
- A bench or two given that I usually walk in from Carrleigh
- Improve the trails to a natural setting; more solitude would be helpful
- No more trail paving, focus on ecological restoration, no more tree clearing, natural resource conservation
- Night access for mountain biking
- Fewer crowds; easy parking – boat parking only by the marina (that is, you can only park there if you bring your own boat); knowing I wouldn't get stuck in traffic getting to the park
- Historic signs and overlooks to show my son; he would probably like a better snack bar
- Nature programs
- Enforce dog leash regulations
- More trash cans! 😊
- Campfires – weekend night programs
- Keep the concerts, add trail-side exercise equipment
- Theatre in the park

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- As a destination . . . for hanging – pick up trash, better concession offerings, nicer marina area. Otherwise, I enjoy the trails and spend plenty of time on them. For my kids, programs, camps
- More Daisy Scout activities, more community activities, nice weather
- Better condition of the trail system to other amenities (Metro, Swiss Bakery, shopping center)
- More than everyday seems excessive but bike speed seems to be an issue
- Outdoor classes/walking tours
- More running/connected trails
- More benches in the hilly areas- nice for grandparents and grandkids
- More variety of birds and closer way to watch/take pictures of birds
- Less trash and rubbish, lower lot area is used for car cleaning
- Campfire, story hour
- Botanical garden like Green Spring
- Orks and Zombies
- Concerts
- An off-leash dog park for sure.
- More spare time.
- More spare time.
- It's so nice now, hard to tell.
- "Cleaner, more attractive patio area and better concessions.
  
- Pickup the trash.
- Buy tables/chairs/umbrellas that are attractive and can be put out each day during the summer. Or, have some (nicely-designed) built-in standing bar setup with shade (take a look at the outdoor patio of Caboose Brewery on Mill Street in Vienna off the W&OD bike trail) and have it face the lake for the beautiful view."
- Restrictions (that are enforced) limiting bikes to just some of the trails.
- "Continue to pave the trail for the Cross County connection. It would allow road bike riders to make it past the lake in both directions. I would use that as part of a route to the east or south rather than riding on the streets. Keeping the other side of the lake trail natural is fine.

I don't need much encouragement- I live close."

- Have Fun
- fun
- Off-leash dog park with water activities
- A cleaner park. More organized layout. picnic area real trails, not dirt paths
- We presently come daily.

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- Less crowded and noisy in summer.
- accessible (flat) walking access to lake side
- Cleaner water. A wading area for little kids.
- Large covered picnic shelters
- More community and family oriented activities. It would be great to know if and when the carousel or mini-golf were actually open. Also, making the park look more accessible to the surrounding communities would be great. From our perspective, there is nothing but woods from the outside. It's hard to know that there is actually a park inside. We also see a lot of people pass by our area because they don't know where the actual entrance to the park is. Making it more open and enticing from the outside would go a long way to attracting members from the surrounding communities.
- I am quite happy with my current rate of visitation.
- Scheduled interpretive guided walks about local natural plants and local history.
- Programs, I suppose.

## **WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR LAKE ACCOTINK PARK?**

- Keep natural beauty but add restrooms and benches on trail.
- The peaceful place I'll be able to walk with my children and dog during the day. Where I can teach them about animals, nature, and conservation. And a place where my husband and I can enjoy a beautiful run together.
- I would like to see less lake and more loop trails with bridges over the creek and a boardwalk over a smaller lake (like Huntley Meadows). There would be historic signs and you would be able to see the historic culverts and railroad tunnel
- Wildlife refuge area
- A park that will be enjoyed and used for generations to come – save the park!!!
- My four boys and my husband and myself to run or bike safely to our hearts' content.
- Ice skate in the winter. Walk to Swiss Bakery for hot cocoa and come back at dusk for a camp fire and music. Meet friends for an autumn hike or summer swim in the lake.
- Keep it a lake park. Restore nature throughout.
- Keeping a sustainable, natural area. Improve public education on being a good neighbor – no dumping, littering, reduce impermeable surfaces and lawns (helps water quality), reduce lawn chemicals.
- Ecological, archaeological, cultural programs. Dredging. Trail upgrades in specific areas but not concrete.
- A place where young people can learn from old and cut loose or hand out without supervision or structured time.
- A place to get away from it all, to reconnect with nature and look at the beautiful lake! Dredge it!
- An outdoor natural area where my family and I can exercise, enjoy nature, be outside in a stress-free environment with wildlife and other natural things only possible around a lake.

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- An efficient park with a fixed sedimentation problem and returning wildlife, namely freshwater mussels.
- Make the park areas more joined together. Too broken up in current configuration.
- More trails. More Interpretive and archaeological (illegible).
- DREDG!! DREDG!! DREDG!! (sic)
- More nature. Areas for activities are good as is. Replace asphalt trails.
- Keep the lake and surrounding area as rustic and natural as possible.
- A park with a lake (of some size) to walk to and through with my grown children and ultimately grandchildren to view nature at its best.
- We need a park with a lake. Maybe we can't keep the lake that we have, but even if it is smaller, it will anchor the park in the community.
- A place where my family can continue to experience nature without having to drive. We use all assets of the park.
- An oasis of nature in the DC Metro area.
- Maintain excellence. I bought my house here two years ago because of its proximity to the park.
- A location should be set aside for a bicycle safety school since it is on the cross county trail. Safe trail on access road.
- Keep multi-surfaces for running and biking. Please do not pave all trails! It's hard on old knees!
- Please keep the natural character of Lake Accotink Park. If structures are replaced, make them natural and sustainable in look and feel and operation. The environment is #1 here!
- Keep playgrounds, mini-golf, and trails.
- I would love to see the park as it is, maintained and kept up. It is a wonderful park with just enough activities to stay entertained while still keeping the nature focus with trails and nature.
- Improve facilities, keep lake and trails and woods clean and help preserve the ecology and wildlife of the lake and surrounding areas. Please don't remove the lake!!!
- We need to protect the natural resources that we have left. We should not disturb any more land for each type of activity that some special-use group wants. There isn't enough land at LAP to do that. The land should be a place to come and be restored in health and spirit. It's not an amusement park. We need it for future generations, and setting the example now that we will cater to each special-use group means we will have no natural land left soon.
- That we can keep the lake despite the siltation problem. That's a tough one.
- That it remain a nature park.
- That it remain a nature park.
- A natural place to go and enjoy.
- "I would like to see the lake remain, in some form, at Lake Accotink Park so future generations can enjoy it as much as I have. If it is a partial wetland, there will be more habitat for wildlife, especially birds, and more opportunities for people to enjoy wildlife watching. The trail system is a real highlight,

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so I would like this in good repair. I also see the marina area as a hub for activities and re-development, while keeping the rest of the park in a natural state.

- Dog parks have never been supported by residents for countywide parks, like Burke Lake, Lake Fairfax, Riverbend and Huntley Meadows parks. Find a few other locations nearby for local dog parks, as a priority, and do not add this to Lake Accotink Park."
- focus on the nature experience of the trails. Activities while immersed in the environment
- About the same- keep the main loop trail well maintained, continue paving one side of the lake loop trail. Leave the single track trails rough- more fun for hiking, running, and mountain biking. It would be nice to have a numbered trail system like at Huntley Meadows- so that the staff can publish guides based on the season. If not that, then at least some more history and nature signs along the main loop trail.
- Have Fun
- fun
- Long term preservation as a recreational and cultural resource, with the lake and trails as a centerpiece. As the population changes, uses will evolve, but the lake and viable trails are the core.
- Less development. Focus on water quality and general clean up.
- safe, natural, pet friendly,
- I pretty much like it as is. Minus the carousel.
- Lake Accotink is the dividing line between North, West, and Springfield proper. It should be one of the center pieces of our community....a connecting point and bridge that brings these communities together. All members of the surrounding community should look at this as a gathering place to enjoy the lush history, greenery, and outdoor activities of Virginia.
- For me it is difficult balance, I have my preferences more relating to observing nature and having green space as a buffer between urban development. Others may want more recreation activities such as boating, fishing, picnicing, and limited sporting capabilities. I do believe this park has unique quality (e.g. lake surrounded by forest in an urban setting) that many other parks in the county do not have such characteristics. My hope is try to keep most of the aquatic environment in place with minimizing the recreational impact to the lake, that people can visit the park fifty years from now and still see the lake, woods, and associated wildlife surrounded by urban environment. I am not suggesting a 'wilderness' where no development takes place only limited development to balance those of natural processes such as siltation.
- I appreciate it as it is today. I know the lake is manmade; if we were starting from scratch it would be best to leave the area as nature made it; but having built the dam and lake, I think it should be maintained as the rare inner-suburb lake environment that it has become.

## **SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS . . .**

- Too bad more people didn't show. The park is used by many – Dredge the lake!!
- Thanks – The current park is really excellent. Concentrate on maintaining existing features rather than creating a second Audrey Moore. The lake and trail are the anchor and the character – would not mess with what has been working. Programs to get more kids (the



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future) are good. No WIFI or digital stuff – those folk can stay home – or leave their devices home.

- 1) Stop paving trails – in addition to creating impervious surfaces which increase speed of stormwater run-off which contributes to the soil erosion – paving of the trails seems to have given bike riders a license to speed – endangering walkers/hikers/kids and dogs. STOP PAVING!!! 2) Lake Accotink's surrounding communities are dog friendly – a properly designed – walk to off leash dog area (dog park) with grass or other permeable surface (recycle synthetic turf from athletic playing fields) – seek corporate grants – sell naming rights – solicit or require paid membership to provide funds needed to establish & maintain such area. 3) Concentrate on restoration of natural environment.
- Misuse of park is often by folks who aren't participating in the planning of parks. Example: excessive litter and trash in from picnic people and others who come in to clean vehicle. Please consider outreach to non-English speaking community – signs about littering in Spanish, Vietnamese, Hindi, Arabic, Korean, Chinese, etc. More signage about litter in lower level parking lot. More signs/pictographic about trail etiquette, ex. "Say hi", "Stay to the right", "no headphones", "don't litter" . . . Dog walkers and people with headphones are a safety issue. Signs in multiple languages. Outreach to non-English speaking community through their churches, temples, etc. about trash in the watershed, opportunities in park to (*illegible*).
- That derelict baseball field up by Ravenel Lane could easily be turned into a fine small dog park.
- For those that are interested in sports activities, there is Wakefield Park, next door.
- Thanks for all the public meetings and please keep us citizens part of this process. Thank you for finally showing some attention to this Cinderella of a park!
- Redesign the storm water system so silt stays in each neighborhood.
- If possible, it would be nice to have some trail indicators for the Danbury Forest road/sidewalk part of the trail. Better signs pointing the way, and perhaps some trail markers embedded in the sidewalk or posts along the way so people know they are still headed in the right direction.
- Have Fun
- Preserve the lake - this is not Accotink Marsh Park.
- Please, no more paving and development. There are plenty of "programs" in Fairfax County. Let's preserve the quiet and streams.
- Lake Accotink is nice, but it isn't great. The sad part is that it has so much potential to be great. It requires community engagement, upkeep, and relevancy. Also, putting some trash cans for animal waste bags along the trails would be a nice touch. I think the question to be answered is -are you a nature conservancy, or a community park? Why not both? Right now, you seem to be more of one than the other.
- Please re-open the water fountains. We are long past the danger of freezing temps. It's April 5, there is no need to adhere to an artificial deadline! Thanks!
- This park is somewhat unique considering it is located in an urban environment, mostly residential in its immediate surrounding, but some many of the tributaries that feed into the lake are heavily urbanized. Part of the issue is the lake is only one part of the watershed, but an easily seen because of the 'openess of lake'. The streams, that feed into the lake, are difficult to recongize their importance to the health of the lake and its sustainability. It may be

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necessary to look at the watershed that feeds the lake and determine its health and sediment load, looking at the entire system instead of just one part of the system. ( I am still deciding on what alternative relating to lake sustainability would be an acceptable choice.)

- Invest in dredging rather than letting the lake fill in. Have more frequent cleanups of the accumulated detritus that floats down to the dam.