

**Friends of Royal Lake  
(FORL)  
Community Vision Plan  
For  
Royal Lake Parks**



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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This document prepared by the Friends of Royal Lake (FORL) is a Community Vision Plan (the Plan) for Royal Lake parks that lays out a vision for Royal Lake enhancements. In our view, Royal Lake consists of four contiguous parks in and around Royal Lake; they include: Lakeside Park, Royal Lake Park, Kings Park West Park, and sections of Pohick Creek Stream Valley Park in the near vicinity of Royal Lake. While these parks have individual names, they are generally experienced as one park, and we believe it should be dealt with as such.

FORL's goal is for this Plan to provide the community's vision to the Fairfax County political leadership, Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) and the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES). Our desire is to provide those important county organizations with significant community input to help guide operations and maintenance, master planning, and secure funding to achieve this vision. As the Plan outlines in the background sections, there has been over the years a significant hands-on volunteer and county government cooperative working relationship to improve the parks and the environment. We want to build on these successful efforts.

FORL's development of this Plan involved a systematic approach with members of all the communities' active participation. In 2017, FORL held a series of community-wide meetings. We sponsored a detailed on-line survey that yielded more than 250 responses. We met with county staff from FCPA and DPWES. These meetings provided a better understanding of the county planning process, funding, and constraints contained in current laws and regulations. Using this information, FORL prepared the Vision Plan and then provided opportunities for community consensus.

The Plan contains useful history and background information to gain a complete understanding of our vision. However, the heart of this Plan is in Section II: Community Vision Projects that lists 11 projects for enhancement and upgrade. Two project categories are of particular importance: trails and stream cleanup/restoration.

Trails are perhaps the most important feature of Royal Lake parks needing upgrades and where the community would like significant effort directed. Trails allow access to facilities throughout the park and are heavily used.

Given the significant lake dredging effort completed in April 2017, the next major improvements needed are stream restoration efforts. Surging storm water run-off continues to erode the banks of streams feeding into the lake, resulting in the toppling of many mature trees along the eroded stream banks. The Plan outlines several concepts for stream upgrade and cleanup.

A high-level plan of action and milestones are provided in Section IV.

As a closing comment, FORL wants to thank the hundreds of individuals who completed the survey and attended the meetings to make this a community-wide consensus document.

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

### **A. PURPOSE**

This Plan lays out both a short-range and long-range vision for the parks in and around Royal Lake, agreed upon by the surrounding communities, to provide both the Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) and the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES) community input in support of their stewardship of the public lands. It is provided as an aid for the identification, planning, design and construction of various projects, and resource management activities.

### **B. SCOPE**

This Plan provides community inputs for four contiguous parks in and around Royal Lake; they include: Lakeside Park, Royal Lake Park, Kings Park West Park, and sections of Pohick Creek Stream Valley Park in the nearby vicinity of Royal Lake. While these parks have individual names or designations, they are generally experienced as one park, and the community believes it should be dealt with as such. Individuals from the following communities, civic associations, community associations, and home-owners associations participated in the development of this Plan:

- Briarwood Community Association
- Chatham Village Homeowners Association
- Glencove Townhome Homeowners Association
- Glencove Community Association
- Hillsdale Homeowners Association
- Kings Park West Civic Association
- Lakepointe Townhomes Homeowners Association
- New Lakepointe Homeowners Association
- Village Park Homeowners Association

FORL coordinated this Plan with the various Associations listed above.

### **C. BACKGROUND**

The Plan has been prepared by the Friends of Royal Lake (FORL) - a group of dedicated individuals focused on working with both the FCPA and DPWES to make improvements around Royal Lake. The Plan incorporates active involvement and input from members of the local communities identified above, as well as park patrons from the neighboring Bonnie Brae and Greenfield communities.

The FORL does not seek any support – financial or organizational – from either the FCPA or DPWES, but rather seeks to provide an organizational entity working on behalf of the Royal Lake community to provide input to the FCPA and DPWES in the execution of their public stewardship responsibilities.

Since its inception, the Kings Park West Civic Association (KPWCA) has had a Parks and Lake Chairperson who has organized events such as clean ups and trail construction / maintenance at Royal Lake parks with the approval of FCPA Park Operations managers. In 2015, individuals specifically concerned with the lake and surrounding parks from more than just the KPWCA came together and established FORL. In 2016, the group worked with the Park Authority and the Park Foundation to successfully install new outdoor fitness equipment that replaced aging and deteriorating equipment.

In 2017, the FORL continued its involvement by holding a series of community wide meetings from January through October. Additionally, they sponsored a detailed on-line survey that yielded more than 250 responses and subsequently met with county staff personnel from FCPA and DPWES to gain an understanding of how to chart a way forward for making improvements at the Royal Lake parks. These meetings provided a better understanding of the county planning process and resource management constraints contained in current laws and regulations. As a result, several upgrades and projects have been identified that are based upon the survey and the community-wide meetings.

New and updated infrastructure, amenities, services, and support facilities consistent with the park's growing popularity are the focus of this plan, which aims to provide an overall vision of the park's ultimate development, above and beyond preserving and maintaining the park's current infrastructure and facilities. This Plan identifies improvements to be made over several years, recognizing that development will be implemented as funding is available.

#### **D. EXISTING MASTER PLANS**

There are currently two FCPA Master Plans for parks surrounding Royal Lake. A Master Plan for Lakeside Park is dated 1969 (See Appendix, Figure 1) and a Master Plan for Royal Lake Park is dated 1973 (See Appendix, Figure 2). There are no Master Plans for Kings Park West Park or Pohick Creek Stream Valley Park. The current Master Plans are concept drawings lacking significant detail, are well over 40 years old, and address less than 15% of the actual park land that surrounds Royal Lake. A significant portion of the park amenities identified in those Master Plans have been established. FORL is providing this Plan to assist in the possible development of a comprehensive, detailed new Master Plan that would cover all 155 acres of the parks surrounding Royal Lake.

#### **E. ASSUMPTIONS AND CONSTRAINTS**

This Plan is based on a number of important assumptions and constraints.

- Royal Lake is a focal point of the neighboring communities and a space for community-building activities. Royal Lake provides a natural space for public education (programs and exhibits promoting an appreciation of nature as well as history), and public recreational opportunities in the Braddock District.

- Significant sections of park land surrounding Royal Lake are within a Resource Protection Area (RPA) with all the constraints that an RPA imposes.
- Royal Lake provides a wildlife habitat for the native biological communities and cultural resources of the Pohick Watershed.
- Park users should have universal access to any future park facilities when access is possible and feasible. This includes accessibility facilities and accessible connections between different areas of the park.
- New amenities proposed in this plan are not anticipated to have a significant impact on visitor traffic and therefore additional parking spaces would not be required and access routes to the existing parking lots will remain in their existing locations. It is our belief that there is sufficient on-road parking availability to handle overflow during special events.

FORL anticipates that FCPA and DPWES will use this document to coordinate and identify projects that will subsequently become a part of the DPWES bond referendum projects. It is the community's desire to work closely with FCPA and DPWES to coordinate projects – both long term and short term – within the Royal Lake parks. DPWES will work closely with the FCPA to coordinate work efforts that minimize disruption to the park and the overall total cost to the county taxpayer. FORL will continue to coordinate community inputs and participation in county-sponsored projects, and use this document to identify community interests and plans to support and inform FCPA and DPWES activities.

FORL seeks to work closely with the Braddock District Supervisor and his staff, as well as FCPA and DPWES staff to coordinate long and short-term projects within the Royal Lake Parks. There is an assumption that FORL will identify and coordinate volunteer opportunities that support agreed-upon FCPA and DPWES Royal Lake Park projects.

## **F. PLAN UPDATES**

FORL anticipates updating this Plan every four years to be presented to both the FCPA and DPWES two years prior to intended Park Authority bond referendums as approved by the Board of Supervisors, to ensure Royal Lake community-supported projects can be addressed and encompassed within the next subsequent park bond project lists.

## **II. PARK BACKGROUND**

### **A. LOCATION & GENERAL DESCRIPTION**

Royal Lake is located in the Braddock District and serves as an important component of the community and the Fairfax County park system. Like other county parks, it serves as a neighborhood focal point by providing open space for recreation, while at the same time preserving green space within the community.

Royal Lake parks are designated as local parks that serve users from the adjacent neighborhoods and the larger community within the service area (roughly defined as a two-three mile radius).

Currently, the parks preserve a sense of the open landscape and woodland areas, serve as a focal point to inspire community sponsored and supported uses that bring the community together while also providing community recreation opportunities that appeal to a variety of users including small groups, families, and individuals who want to enjoy a mix of recreation facilities, open green space, and woodlands. The parks surrounding Royal Lake comprise about 155 acres; Appendix Figure 3 provides a general vicinity map of the area.

**Lakeside Park** is located at 5126 Pommeroy Drive, and Royal Lake Park is located at 5344 Gainsborough Drive. This Park currently consists of a 23-space parking lot (including one handicapped space), a small picnic area, a playground area, a basketball court, an open play area, a ball field, a large soccer field used by the Kings Park West Soccer League, a boat ramp, and a section of the trail that provides a circuit around Royal Lake.

**Royal Lake Park** currently consists of a 26-space parking lot, tennis courts, a smaller playground than that at Lakeside Park, a basketball court, outdoor fitness equipment, a small picnic area, an open play area used for Braddock Nights outdoor concerts as a part of the combined Braddock District Supervisor/Park Authority’s Summer Entertainment Series, a boat ramp, and a section of the trail that provides a circuit around Royal Lake.

**Kings Park West Park** and **Pohick Creek Stream Valley Park** are classified as “stream valley parks” with no address location. Kings Park West Park begins at Commonwealth Boulevard, extends to Royal Lake, and contains a section of the trail that provides a circuit around Royal Lake. It contains several social trails used by the community and an open meadow area that replaced a silt detention basin used for dredging operations. The Rabbit Branch and an unnamed tributary flow through the stream valley and feed into Royal Lake.

A section of Pohick Creek Stream Valley Park included in this plan begins at Roberts Road, extends to Royal Lake and contains both outdoor fitness equipment and a section of the trail that provides a circuit around Royal Lake. In addition, it contains several social trails used by the community. Shane’s Creek flows through the stream valley and feeds into Royal Lake.

Park land surrounding Royal Lake was acquired by the Fairfax County Park Authority either directly or indirectly from the Board of Supervisors, with the DPWES acting as its land agent, incidental to the construction of the various developments surrounding Royal Lake. The table in Appendix Figure 4 provides a listing of the parcels, dates deeded, acreage and zoning for the parcels totaling just over 155 acres. Further, it identifies which parcels are associated with which parks. Figure 4 provides a parcel map of the Royal Lake area.

## **B. ADJACENT COMMUNITIES**

Royal Lake is surrounded by the Kings Park West, LakePointe Townhouse, and Glen Cove communities that consist of townhouses and single-family homes, built between the 1970s and 1980s, many of which border the park along several sides.

Lakeside Park is bordered by Kings Park West Park to the north, single family residential homes in the Kings Park West community along Pommeroy Drive to the east, Royal Lake itself to the west, and residential homes in the Kings Park West community along Richardson Drive to the south.

Royal Lake Park is bordered by Lakeview Swim Club to the north and single family residential homes in the Kings Park West community along Gainsborough Drive to the north, Royal Lake itself to the east and south, and both Royal Lake itself and portions of Pohick Creek Stream Valley Park to the west.

Kings Park West Park is bordered by Commonwealth Blvd to the north, single family residential homes in the Kings Park West community along Pommeroy Drive to the east and Gainsborough Drive to the west, and Royal Lake itself and Lakeside Park to the south.

Sections of the Pohick Creek Stream Valley are bordered by single family residential homes in the Kings Park West community along Gainsborough Drive, Claridge Court, Dundalk Drive and Pumphrey Drive to the north, Royal Lake Park as well as LakePointe Townhouses to the east, Roberts Road to the west, and a series of both single family and townhouse residential units and Guinea Road to the south.

The parks described above are located in the Main Branch Community Planning Sector (P2) of the Pohick Planning District as described in the Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan.

Surrounding areas are planned, zoned, and developed with residential uses ranging from one to twelve units per acre. The parks surrounding Royal Lake are within several residential zoning districts that allows residential use at one to five dwelling units per acre and public facilities, such as parks.

### **C. COMMUNITY HISTORY**

The Royal Lake community has a history of significant community involvement and volunteerism. As mentioned earlier, since its inception in the 1970's, the Kings Park West Civic Association (KPWCA) has had a Parks and Lake Chairperson who has coordinated events such as planned monthly, semi-annual and as-needed emergency storm clean ups at all parks surrounding Royal Lake. Further, several Parks and Lake Chairpersons have worked with Park Authority staff to both construct and maintain the lake circuit trail, and staff other park projects.

Additionally, Royal Lake currently has five Invasive Management Area (IMA) site leader volunteers who work on site with significant community volunteers removing invasive species. The following identifies the recognition of additional community efforts. Several independent project efforts by the community over the past several years have provided upgrades to the Royal Lake parks – some of which were a part of the existing Master Plans and some which were not. The circuit trail that provides a continuous loop around the lake is not on a Master Plan, although the Lakeside Park Master Plan shows a trail through the park.

#### **Ron Craven Bridge**

In 1994, FCPA and the local community recognized the contributions of Mr. Ron Craven in his support of both the Cub Scout packs and Boy Scout troops that were a part of the Kings Park West/Laurel Ridge Elementary/Robinson Secondary School community. Mr. Craven was the guiding force for the scouting program; many events that took place in and around Royal Lake. A sign recognizing Mr. Craven is located by the foot bridge at the far end of the soccer field at Lakeside Park symbolizing Cub Scouts crossing over to become boy scouts, and Boy Scouts becoming young adults.

### **Wusterbarth Court**

In 1997, FCPA and the local community recognized the dedication of Mr. Kurt Wusterbarth in his support of the Kings Park West Soccer League. For years, he maintained the fields and ensured fields were properly lined so that participants could enjoy the games. A sign recognizing Mr. Wusterbarth is located at the basketball court at Lakeside Park.

### **John P McAnaw Woodlands & Recreation Area at Royal Lake**

In 2008, FCPA and the local community recognized the many valuable contributions to the care and maintenance of the trails and parkland around Royal Lake by Mr. John P. McAnaw in his role as the KPWCA Parks and Lake Chairperson. His selfless devotion to the community helped protect the environment allowing others to enjoy this natural area. Two signs recognizing Mr. McAnaw's contributions are located along the circuit trail, one each in Kings Park West Park and Royal Lake Park.

### **Katie Thelin Playground**

In 2011, FCPA and Kings Park West (KPW) residents Joseph Thelin and Tara Mooney dedicated the Katie Thelin Playground at Royal Lake Park, named in honor of their deceased daughter. The Thelins raised funds and then applied for a Mastenbrook Grant to secure funding for the playground, which was on the Royal Lake Master Plan.

### **Outdoor Fitness Equipment**

In 2016, FCPA and FORL dedicated outdoor fitness equipment installed in Pohick Creek Stream Valley Park and Royal Lake Park that replaced outdoor fitness equipment installed in the mid-1980s with support from a Wells Fargo grant. That project was also financially supported by the KPW Civic Association (KPWCA), Lakepointe, Chatham Town and Village Park communities, as well as private individuals within the greater Royal Lake community. This exercise equipment was not on either the Lakeside or the Royal Lake Park Master Plans.

## **D. EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE**

The parks have access to public water and electric services. Water and electric utilities are present along all thoroughfares bordering the parks such as Commonwealth Boulevard, Gainsborough and Pommeroy Drives and Guinea Road.

Access to Lakeside Park is gained at the Pommeroy Drive/Bronte Drive intersection; a driveway leads downhill to a parking lot containing 23 spaces. Access to Royal Lake Park is gained at the Gainsborough Drive/Eastlake Drive intersection; a driveway leads down a slight hill to a parking lot containing 26 spaces. Both accesses are located at intersections that permit right/left turns or proceeding straight. There is no public vehicular access to Kings Park West Park, although parking along Commonwealth Blvd is available. Vehicular access to Kings Park West Park is available via a service road from Lakeside Park for DPWES and Park Authority service vehicles only. There is no vehicular access to Pohick Creek Stream Valley Park, although parking along Gainsborough Drive near Claridge Court and along Dundalk Street are available public access points.

Besides the vehicular access points, there are several pedestrian access points providing ingress/egress to/from Royal Lake. One trail provides a complete circuit of the lake, portions of

which go through each park; the trail contains five bridges: three wood, two fiberglass, and one steel. There are several other social trails in various states of condition.

#### **E. EXISTING USES**

Currently, recreation at Royal Lake parks includes use of the trail (running, walking, hiking, dog walking), picnicking, open area activities (e.g., use of playground equipment, bird-watching, photography, kite flying, exercise, geocaching, observing nature), sporting activities (basketball, tennis, soccer, ballgames), boating, and fishing, among other activities. These experiences are enhanced through interpretive programs and features located along the trail network. Besides the uses consistent with the current infrastructure, the following parks have the additional cited uses:

1. Kings Park West Park accommodates archery hunting during the hunting season from September to February each year as a part of the Fairfax County Police Department's Deer Management Program.
2. Royal Lake Park has been the location for the Summer Entertainment Series Braddock Nights concerts in the Braddock District during July and August. In July 2017, it was also the site of the first Braddock District "Battle of the Bands" competition. Street overflow parking is necessary at Royal Lake Park on Friday nights during the summer months of July and August to accommodate the Braddock Nights concert series
3. Lakeside Park is the location of all games played by the Kings Park West Soccer League each weekend during the Spring and Fall seasons, for T-Ball and baseball games scheduled by the Fairfax Little League during the Spring and Fall seasons. Street overflow parking is necessary at Lakeside Park during games.
4. Lakeside Park is the site for annual KPWCA-sponsored events, such as the Halloween Festival and the Easter Egg Hunt. Street overflow parking is also necessary during these special events
5. Lakeside and Royal Lake Parks are the locations for formal and information, county and community recreation programs. For example, FCPA hosts various nature and exercise programs at park sites, such as Campfire Saturdays. Other county and non-county entities utilize the parks for mixed use recreation, such as the Fairfax County-sponsored Walking Club for senior citizens and local Boy Scouts and Girl Scout organizations for such events as the small-boat regatta.

#### **F. DPWES CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS**

FORL recognizes and appreciates the significant redevelopment efforts DPWES has undertaken to address storm water management issues, including the Royal Lake Auxiliary Spillway Rehabilitation Project (2008), the Roberts Road Dam Rehabilitation Project (2009), and the Royal Lake Dredging and Restoration Project (2017). Further, DPWES also completed a stream restoration project at Crooked Creek Park just across from Kings Park West Park along Commonwealth Boulevard, and a storm water facility project further upstream at Rabbit Branch Park. Details on these past projects can be found at in the Appendix, Figures 5 and 6.

### **III. COMMUNITY VISION PROJECTS**

The following long-term capital improvement and short-term operations and maintenance projects are envisioned by the community for the Royal Lake parks:

## **A. TRAILS**

Trails are significant features in the Royal Lake park system where the community would like significant effort directed. Trails allow access to facilities throughout the site and form a loop through the park for exercise and nature appreciation.

Lake Circuit Trail. The lake circuit trail should be rehabilitated and aligned as necessary, including the replacement of all non-fiberglass bridges. Trail sections should remain as natural trails (rather than paved) to the greatest extent possible. Sections that are relatively flat should provide as much line-of-sight visibility as possible. Certain sections have a very steep slope and require grading, with the installation of appropriate steps with a railing to allow for all community members – especially senior citizens - to take advantage of the trail safely. Where possible, the trail should be moved away from the lake to provide for an adequate natural riparian buffer.

Kings Park West Park Trails. A natural trail should extend from Lakeside and Royal Lake Parks along Commonwealth Boulevard in Kings Park West Park to connect with the lake circuit trail. Clearings should be provided along the trail to allow for the installation of park benches and trash cans at adequate intervals -- while minimizing disruption, to the extent possible, to vegetation -- and safety railings installed where necessary for safety. To the extent possible, it should be considered to locate trails to coincide with DPWES sanitary sewer lines that are cleared of brush/growth on a routine basis.

Lakeside Park Trail. The trail entrance that leads from Richardson Drive into Lakeside Park is very steep, is breaking apart, and presents a fall hazard for park patrons. The ingress/egress route should be re-engineered to provide a less steep and safer approach to Lakeside Park. Additionally, non-native invasive weeds should be removed and replaced with beneficial native species. Entrance traffic should be funneled along a path that results in the least disruption to tree and bush vegetation.

Pohick Creek Stream Valley Trail. A natural trail should extend through Pohick Creek Stream Valley Park from Roberts Road to the lake circuit trail. Midpoint access to this trail includes the entrances at Gainsborough Drive near Claridge Court and at Dundalk Street. Clearings should be provided along the trail to allow for the installation of park benches at adequate intervals, and safety railings installed where necessary for senior citizens. To the extent possible, trails should coincide with DPWES sanitary sewer lines that are cleared of brush/growth on a routine basis.

Glen Cove Access Trail. Natural trails should extend from the Glen Cove community in Pohick Creek Stream Valley Park to connect with the lake circuit trail. To the extent possible, it should be considered to locate trails to coincide with DPWES sanitary sewer lines that are cleared of brush/growth on a routine basis.

Lakepointe Trail Access. A natural or paved trail for pedestrian traffic should extend from the Lakepointe Townhouse community at the eastern end of the dam to connect with the lake circuit trail.

Overall Trail Reversion to Natural State. A number of social trails have developed over time in the stream valley parks resulting in significant disturbance to the landscape. As trails identified in this plan are established, the social trails should be rehabilitated with habitat restoration to revert back to their natural state.

## **B. STREAM RESTORATION EFFORTS**

Given the significant lake dredging effort completed in April 2017, the next major improvements needed are stream restoration efforts. Surging storm water run-off continues to erode the banks of streams feeding into the lake, resulting in the toppling of many mature trees along the eroded stream banks. Two efforts are needed in Kings Park West Park: 1] to address Rabbit Branch from Commonwealth Boulevard to the lake entrance and 2] to address an un-named tributary that runs from the intersection of Commonwealth Boulevard and Pommeroy Drive to the lake entrance. The other stream restoration effort is needed in the Pohick Creek Stream Valley from Roberts Road, down Shane's Creek to the lake entrance.

## **C. INSTALLATION OF STREAM TRASH TRAPS**

The Rabbit Branch ports a significant amount of trash - mostly plastic beverage bottles - from George Mason University, Braddock Road and adjoining communities to the banks of Royal Lake. Likewise, the Pohick Creek also ports a significant amount of trash - again mostly plastic beverage bottles - from Robinson Secondary School, Roberts Road, and adjoining communities. The community has two major clean up events each year to coincide as much as possible with FCPA county-wide park clean ups. The community also holds monthly KPWCA Road Raiders clean-ups to address common areas of concern in the community.

While these efforts are effective in curtailing the amount of trash and debris that enters into the stream valley, they are nowhere near complete. Trash still ends up on the shoreline often times at locations that are not easily accessible for volunteers. A trash trap would collect stream trash which volunteers could empty at designated times. As identified earlier in this document, the community has a very strong volunteer ethos and upon the installation of stream trash traps, would assume clean out responsibilities in coordination with DPWES.

## **D. STORM WATER SEWER OUTFALL REHABILITATION**

Various storm drain outfalls conduct storm water from area streets to Royal Lake. The resultant erosion from these sewers is causing some sewer structures to fail. In other cases, excessive water velocity causes additional erosion damage to outfalls. A review of all the outfalls in the stream valleys leading to Royal Lake should be conducted and corrective action identified to reduce further erosion damage, making as much use of local volunteer assistance as possible.

## **E. SIGNAGE / UPGRADE EXISTING KIOSKS**

Lakeside and Royal Lake Parks both have an orientation area with a small kiosk that provides general information about the park, which enhances a self-guided park experience. The existing kiosks should be upgraded to accommodate weather and signage installed to provide visitors an overview of the complete trail network in the 155 acre park. The community would also like to see "No Dumping" signs posted, as well as signs encouraging patrons to "carry out what they carry in" and a designated "Lost & Found" area.

## **E. SCENIC OVERLOOK SITES**

Picnic tables and/or benches with trash cans should be provided in appropriate locations throughout the park to support scenic overlook sites. Scenic overlook sites should be cleared, while taking into consideration minimizing disruption to vegetation, and maintained to provide line-of-sight views of the lake. Additionally, where possible and applicable, picnic tables and/or benches at the scenic overlook sites should be installed on a framed, mulch bed similar to fitness equipment installations.

## **F. AQUATIC OPPORTUNITIES**

During the 1980s, staff from Lake Accotink Park staffed a rental boat concession at Royal Lake Park. During the dredging of Lake Accotink, various vendors such as L.L. Bean used Royal Lake for various aquatic classes such as kayaking lessons. The dredging of Royal Lake, the reconstruction of a boat ramp at Royal Lake Park and the construction of a new boat ramp at Lakeside Park provide a possible opportunity for boating. There is an opportunity to re-establish a rental boat concession consisting of canoes and kayaks at Royal Lake; however, FORL believes that additional community dialogue should be undertaken prior to this being pursued. If pursued, the vision is that the concession could be staffed by members of the community, with all net receipts used to fund additional amenities in the park as identified in this Plan.

Both of the current boat ramps are not accessible to patron traffic as both are behind locked service gates for FCPA / DPWES service vehicles. However, a re-positioning of the gate at Lakeside Park leading into Kings Park West Park would permit trailered vehicles to port their boats to the boat ramp, and a sufficiently sized black-top area is available to provide a trailered vehicle parking lot. These ramps should be clearly marked as “No Fishing Areas.”

Further, a safe entry kayak structure should be provided in the vicinity of the boat ramp for patrons using kayaks.

## **G. SHADED PICNIC AREA / PAVILION**

The current picnic area at Lakeside Park should be enlarged to accommodate groups of greater size and a removable canvas-sail shade structure should be provided. Since this is an unstaffed site, this facility should be built of the most durable materials available to minimize maintenance requirements. In December 2017, three red oak trees were planted that will, in time, provide additional shade protection.

## **H. BUTTERFLY GARDEN**

A site with adequate sunlight should be set aside for use as a butterfly garden.

## **I. RESTROOMS**

The lack of restrooms is a concern to park patrons. However, recognizing the sensitive, flood-prone location of Lakeside Park, the community seeks environmentally-friendly, modular flush restrooms to be provided at Royal Lake Park encompassing solar power, extreme water conservation, and minimal ground disturbance for a reduced environmental impact.

## **J. DOG AMENITIES**

The lake circuit trail is very popular with dog walkers; two pet waste stations should be located in the park, one at Lakeside Park and one at Royal Lake Park. FORL believes that community volunteers could be engaged to support or maintain these dog waste stations.

## **K. VEGETATIVE**

The existing landscape and vegetation have been impacted by human activity, especially land disturbance incidental to construction of the housing developments within the community. At Lakeside Park, the following actions are desired:

- The existing stand of privet between the parking lot and the picnic area should be removed and replaced with native species shrubbery.
- The Chinese juniper bushes between the main loop trail and the soccer field/baseball diamond should be removed and replaced with native shrubs that are easier to manage.
- Native species shrubs should be planted around the picnic area and the playground, allowing for line-of-site and unhindered access between the picnic area and playground.
- Native species shrubs/bushes that provide shade should be planted between the ball field and the Open Play Area.
- The existing stand of vegetation along the trail bordering the lake at Lakeside Park should be removed and replaced with native species incidental to the widening of the trail.

## **IV. PLAN OF ACTION AND MILESTONES**

The Friends of Royal Lake intend to take an active role in providing input to the District Supervisor, his staff and both FCPA, DPWES staffs with respect to activities and projects impacting Royal Lake. FORL will act as the liaison with the community for public outreach and will maintain and coordinate sustained volunteer efforts in support of various projects.

The Park Authority's Planning and Development Division provides planning and execution of major capital improvement projects using bond and proffer funding. The Park Authority's Operations Division provides periodic maintenance and repairs to park facilities. This includes mowing the grass, removing leaves from developed areas, trimming underbrush, emptying trash, and other similar tasks. Other maintenance tasks include inspection of facilities and equipment; cleanup; repairing pavement; re-lining of parking lots, pruning; dead wooding; and removal of hazardous trees as needed. The maintenance crew also responds to any park issues brought to their attention by citizens or staff.

DPWES is structured similarly to the FCPA with a Planning & Development and an Operations branch. Recognizing the various branches and functions of both the FCPA and DPWES, FORL will seek to meet with FCPA and DPWES staff as per the following schedule to discuss park actions and projects.

| <b>Meeting</b>                      | <b>Freq</b> | <b>Agenda Focus</b>       |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| District Supervisor & Staff         | 1X / Year   | Status brief              |
| FCPA Planning & Development Branch  | 1X / Year   | Long term FCPA projects   |
| FCPA Park Operations Branch         | 3X / Year   | Short term FCPA projects  |
| DPWES Planning & Development Branch | 1X / Year   | Long term DPWES projects  |
| DPWES Operations Branch             | 2X / Year   | Short term DPWES projects |

All meetings will review accomplishments since the last meeting, identify specific actions for upcoming projects for the next time-period, establish a project timeline with roles and responsibilities for all involved players, and schedule a notional date for the next meeting.

The FORL will take meeting notes, develop project-specific plans of action and milestones as agreed upon at the meeting, and distribute them to all involved parties.

## **V. LONG TERM PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

The connectivity of the Royal Lake parks with other aspects of the county’s trail system is beyond the scope of this effort, but certainly worthy of consideration.

To the north, future plans should consider the development of a trail that runs from Crooked Creek Park all the way to Braddock Road, and a trail that runs from the site of the current Northern Virginia Training Center (NVTC) to the Crooked Creek trail as the NVTC site transitions to an Erickson Assisted Living facility.

To the south, future plans should consider the development of a trail that would allow individuals to walk to the Roberts Road VRE station.

VI. APPENDIX

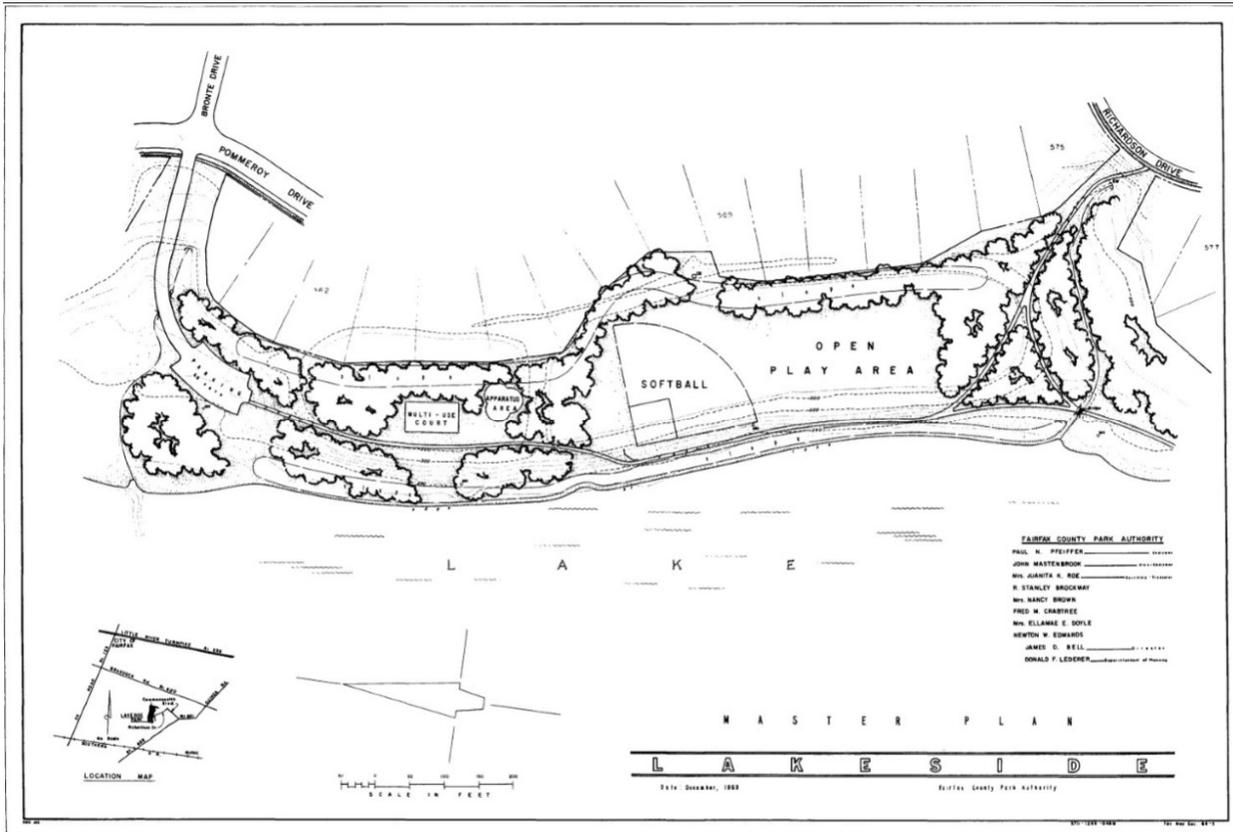


Figure 1. Lakeside Park Master Plan - 1969

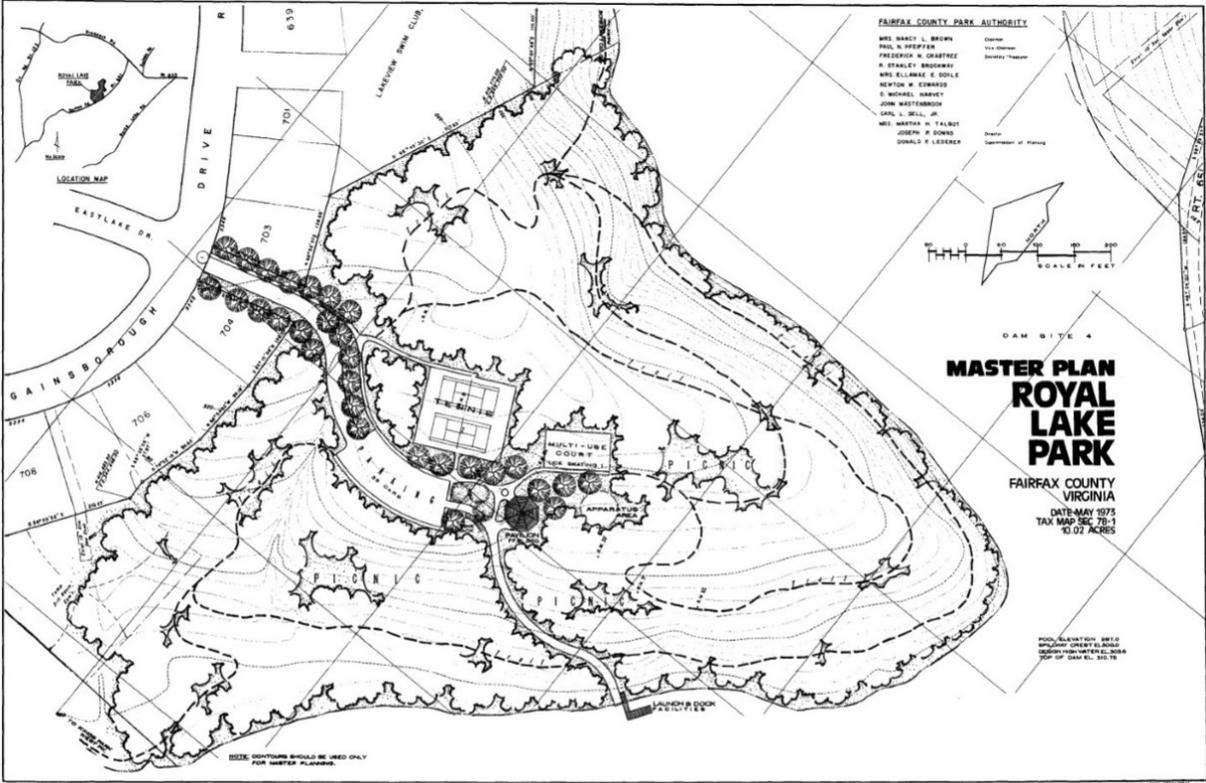
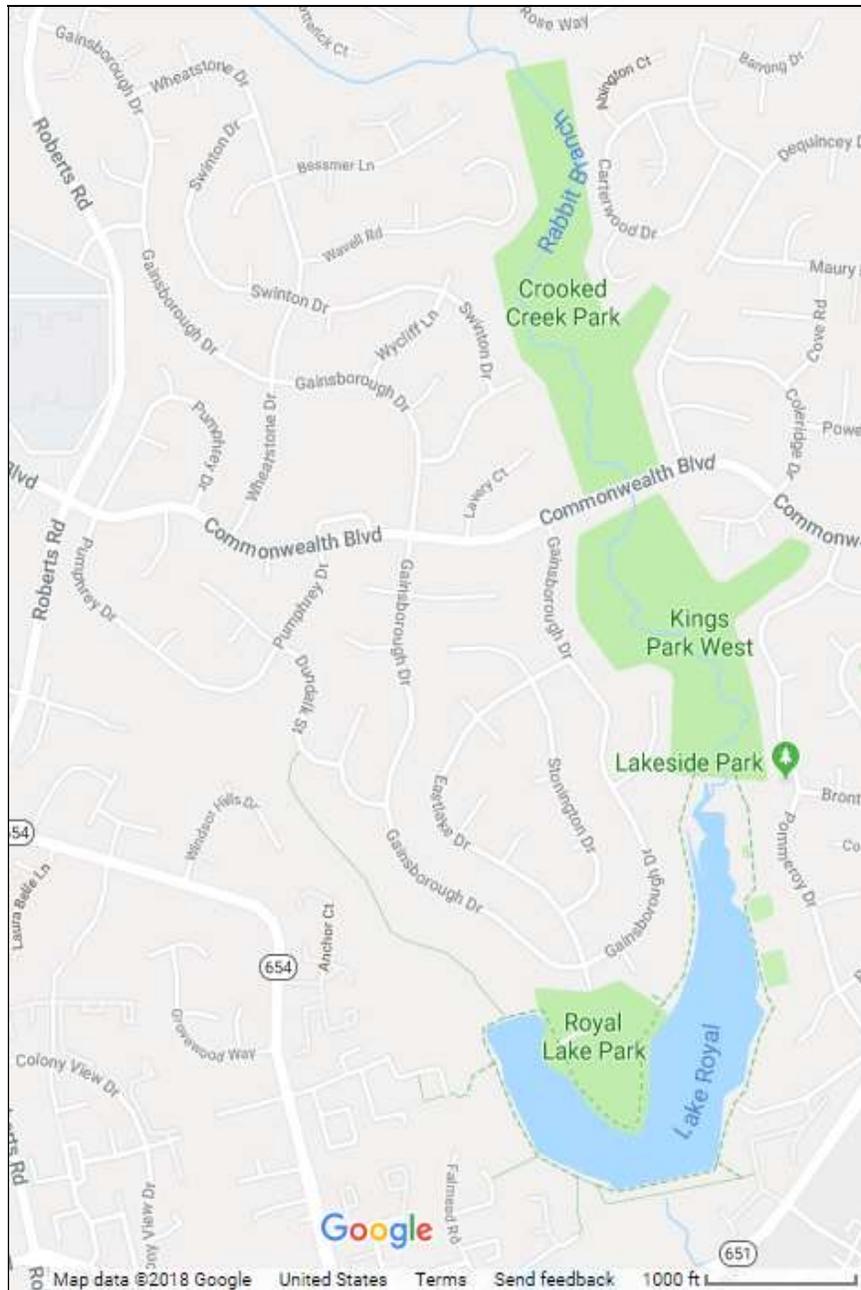


Figure 2. Royal Lake Park Master Plan - 1973



**Figure 3. Royal Lake Vicinity Map**



**Figure 4. Parcel Map of Royal Lake Parks**

The table below provides a listing of the parcels, dates deeded, acreage and zoning for the parcels totaling just over 155 acres. Further, it identifies which parcels are associated with which parks. Figure 4 provides a parcel map of the Royal Lake area.

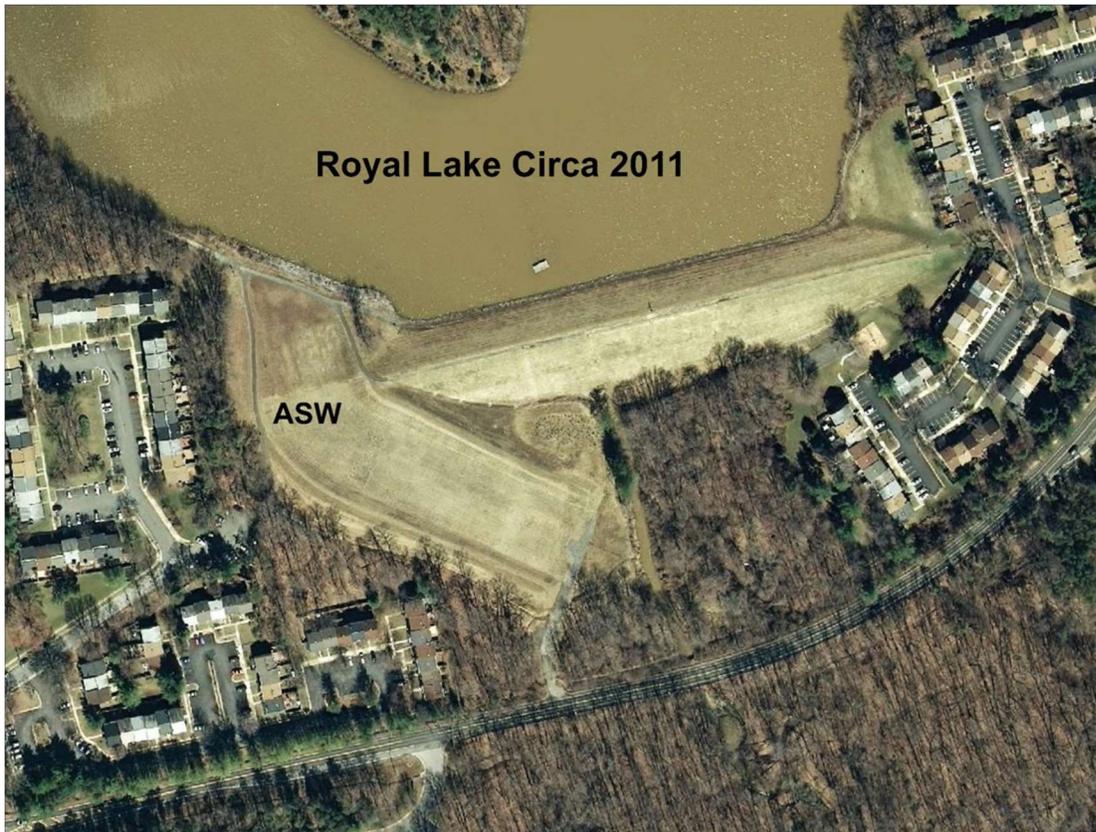
| <b>Parcel</b>    | <b>Deeded</b> | <b>Acres</b> | <b>Zoned</b> | <b>Park</b>                           |
|------------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|---------------------------------------|
| 0693 05 C        | 04/04/1967    | 52.4990      | R-2C         | Kings Park West Park, Lakeside Park   |
| 0781 03 Q        | 06/26/1970    | 46.2092      | R-2C         | Kings Park West Park, Royal Lake Park |
| 0684 08 B        | 02/06/1973    | 22.1501      | Res          | Pohick Creek Stream Valley            |
| 0684 21 A        | 01/11/2001    | 00.75        | R-3          | Pohick Creek Stream Valley            |
| 0684 14 A        | 02/29/1984    | 2.6474       | R-3C         | Pohick Creek Stream Valley            |
| 0684 09 D1       | 04/01/1977    | 2.7412       | R-3C         | Pohick Creek Stream Valley            |
| 0684 2202 F      | 08/13/2004    | 0.3138       | PDH-3        | Pohick Creek Stream Valley            |
| 0684 09 E1       | 04/01/1977    | 11.4538      | R-3C         | Pohick Creek Stream Valley            |
| 0772 01<br>0031A | 01/15/1974    | 0.0816       | R-8          | Pohick Creek Stream Valley            |
| 0772 04 A        | 10/10/1975    | 1.0336       | R-8          | Pohick Creek Stream Valley            |
| 0772 03 C        | 02/06/1973    | 2.6766       | R-5C         | Pohick Creek Stream Valley            |
| 0781 01 0002B    | 01/08/2002    | 2.2000       | R-5C         | Pohick Creek Stream Valley            |
| 0781 01 0002C    | 01/08/2002    | 4.2727       | R-1          | Pohick Creek Stream Valley            |
| 0781 01<br>0003A | 01/08/2002    | 6.5589       | R-1          | Pohick Creek Stream Valley            |

Royal Lake Auxiliary Spillway Rehabilitation Project

In 2006 federal officials determined that the Royal Lake Auxiliary Dam Spillway no longer met current design and safety criteria. The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District entered into a project agreement with the US Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to share costs to upgrade the dam spillway. NRCS provided \$1,484,718 of the project costs and the sponsors covered the remaining \$799,463 of the \$2,284,181 project. The rehabilitation project included: (1) widening and realignment of the auxiliary spillway to direct water away from existing townhouses; (2) raising the training dikes to direct the auxiliary spillway flow from the toe of the dam to protect townhouses downstream; and (3) armoring the auxiliary spillway and training dikes with articulated concrete blocks covered with soil and grass to prevent erosion. Construction commenced in June 2008 and concluded in April 2009. Figures 5 and 6 show the Royal Lake dam and spillway before and after the Royal Lake Auxiliary Spillway Rehabilitation Project.



*Figure 5. Royal Lake Dam and Spillway Circa 2007*



**Figure 6. Royal Lake Dam and Spillway Circa 2011**

Roberts Road Dam Rehabilitation Project

The Roberts Road Dam Rehabilitation Project was a minor project in Pohick Creek Stream Valley Park (Kings Park West Section 118) to reinforce the earthen dam walls upon which Roberts Road travels, and upgrade storm water infrastructure to bring it to current design and safety criteria. Work commenced in March 2011 and was substantially completed in June 2011, at a cost of about \$375,000.

Royal Lake Dredging And Restoration

The Royal Lake Dredging and Restoration project consisted of the dry dredge removal of about 80,000 cubic yards of sediment; installation of two forebays (one at each stream feed entrance), partial shoreline restoration, installation of fish habitat structures, silt detention basin removal and area restoration, dam structure riser modifications, partial stream restoration, and infrastructure repairs to service roads, culverts, and boat launch ramps. The project commenced in May 2016, and was substantially completed in April 2017, at a cost of about \$6.457M.

Rabbit Branch Tributary Restoration Project (Crooked Creek Park)

The Rabbit Branch Tributary project (PC9263 Stream Restoration project) consisted of restoring approximately 1,515 linear feet of highly degraded tributary of Rabbit Branch using natural channel design techniques. The tributary merges with the Rabbit Branch stream just prior to its entry into Kings Park West Park. The project commenced in October 2013 and was substantially completed in April 2014 at a cost of about \$915,000.

Rabbit Branch Park Storm water Facility Project

The Rabbit Branch Park Storm Water Facility project (Project No. SD 000031-089) consisted of removing a pool house, tennis courts and an asphalt parking lot at the defunct Kings West Swim Club along Tapestry Drive, and providing for re-vegetated porous surfaces, and storm water facility improvements. The project commenced in January 2013 and was substantially completed in April 2013, at a cost of about \$450,000.