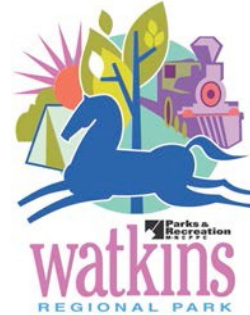




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Watkins Regional Park Master Plan



Agenda

May 24 Public Information Meeting Issues and Opportunities

- 6:30 PM Display Review
- 7:00 PM Welcome and Introductions
- 7:10 PM Presentation
- 7:45 PM Discussion
- 8:15 PM Display Review
- 8:30 PM Adjourn

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Watkins Regional Park Master Plan

M-NCPPC Department of Parks and Recreation
Mission and Vision Statements



Mission Statement

In partnership with our citizens, the Department of Parks and Recreation provides comprehensive park and recreation programs, facilities, and services which respond to changing needs within our communities. We strive to preserve, enhance, and protect our open spaces to enrich the quality of life for present and future generations in a safe and secure environment.

Vision Statement

The Department of Parks and Recreation pledges to:

Provide stewardship of our county's natural, cultural, and historical resources. Foster the need of our citizens for recreational pursuits in a leisure environment.

Provide the highest standard of excellence in public service through cooperative partnership with our diverse community.



Watkins Regional Park Master Plan

M-NCPPC Department of Parks and Recreation,
Prince George's County

- Operates and maintains more than 27,000 acres of parkland
- "Best in the Nation" - Awarded 6th National Gold Medal Award for excellence in Parks and Recreation Management in 2015
- Watkins Nature Center and Old Maryland Farm certified as a Sustainable Maryland Green Center in 2016



Watkins Regional Park Master Plan



**What is a regional park,
who does it serve, what
activities are located
here?**

Park Classification

M-NCPPC's park system in Prince George's County is classified into the following categories:

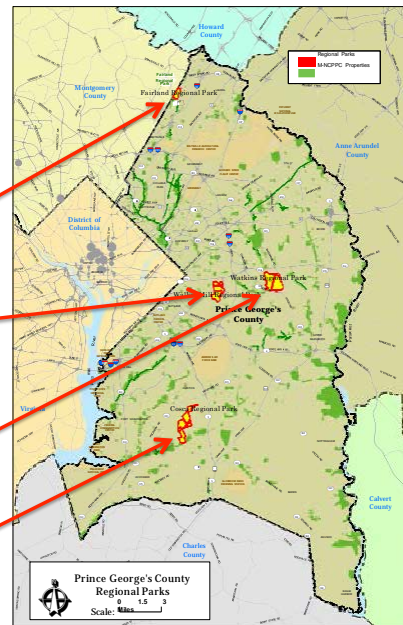
1. Regional Parks
(a developed park over 200 acres in size)
2. Parks
3. Community Centers
4. Park Buildings
5. Specialty Facilities



Watkins Regional Park Master Plan

Watkins is one of four Regional Parks in the County

- **Fairland Regional Park** in Laurel
- **Walker Mill Regional Park** in District Heights
- **Watkins Regional Park** in Upper Marlboro
- **Cosca Regional Park** in Clinton



Watkins Regional Park Master Plan

Watkins Regional Park Encompasses

- The park itself
 - Approximately 845 acres in size
 - Busiest park in the system - approximately 300,000 vehicles and 1,000,000 visitors/annually
 - Walkable park; visitor can park once and walk to all activities
 - First parcels acquired in 1964; acquisition completed in 1996
 - Located in Upper Marlboro
 - Named after former chairman of M-NCPPC, Robert M. Watkins
- Central Area Maintenance and Administration Offices
- Largo/Kettering/Perrywood Community Center
- Chelsea Historic Site (Boys and Girls Club tenant)



Watkins Regional Park Master Plan

Why plan now?

Plans have been done in the past...

Demographics are changing.

Aging/size of home/yard

Population increasing

Recreation interests are changing.

**Balance natural resources and farmland
with recreation and active uses.**



Watkins Regional Park Master Plan

What is a Master Plan?

How frequently is this effort undertaken?

What is the master planning process?



Watkins Regional Park Master Plan

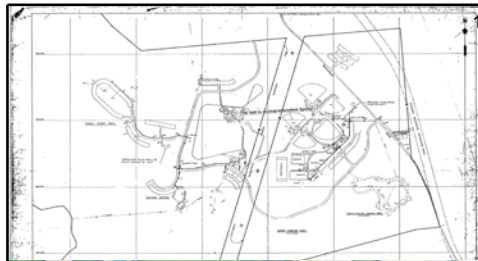


Framework Plans

- **Formula 2040** (2013)
 - Connectivity
 - Health & Wellness
 - Economic Development
- **Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan** (2012)
- **Needs Assessment and 2040 Vision & Framework** (2010)



Watkins Regional Park Master Plan



1970 plan

What will a Master Plan look like?



1998 RV Master Plan

How detailed will the drawn plan be?

What will be written down?

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Watkins Regional Park Master Plan



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Introduction to the Planning Team

**Project Manager, M-NCPPC
Department of Parks and
Recreation, Prince George's
County**

Meeting Project Objectives, Deadlines and Budgets

Project Deliverables

- Evaluation of expanding or eliminating existing recreation programs
- Recommendations to expand existing programs to serve a variety of populations
- Concept layout plans for infrastructure and facility upgrades and improvements for new portion of the park - 200 acres in the southern portion of the park
- Activity-Based Costing Form for up to 8 activities (5 new/3 existing)
- Capital and operations plans for some specific existing facilities – park entrance, Nature Center, playground
- Direct impact, indirect impacts, and induced impacts – spending
- Criteria to establish and locate a Wayfaring Signage program
- Identification of potential funding and grant opportunities

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Consultant Team Final Product



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Existing Park Conditions

Park Events – Spring and Summer

Spring

- Wool and Fiber Day at OMF - April
- PGCPHS High School Tennis Championship Tournament – May

Summer

- Concerts in the Park! - On the Green on Thursday evenings throughout summer
- Family Fun and Fitness nights with movie – 3rd Fridays of summer months
- Terrific Tuesdays (July) and Fabulous Fridays (August) – Discount family nights at Watkins Summer Operations
- Summer Shakespeare Theatre – July
- Host Yoga in the Park (summer)
- Park Police Community Day – August
- Camps at WNC and WTB
- ** New Food Truck Hub site for Summer 2016



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Existing Park Conditions

Park Events – Fall and Winter

Fall

- PGC Firemen's Tournament for Muscular Dystrophy – weekend following Labor Day
- Facilitate PGC Senior Picnic - September
- Kinderfest – first Sunday in October
- KLMB&GC Homecoming – 2nd weekend in Oct.
- Halloween on the Farm at OMF
- Boo Beer Fest – Late October
- Host Tai Chi in the Park (Fall)
- NJTL Championship Tournament – August
- Trash To Treasure Green Craft Fair on Saturday, November 12 at WNC

Winter

- Festival of Lights Grand Opening Celebration – Monday before Thanksgiving
- Festival of Lights – Day after Thanksgiving through January 1st



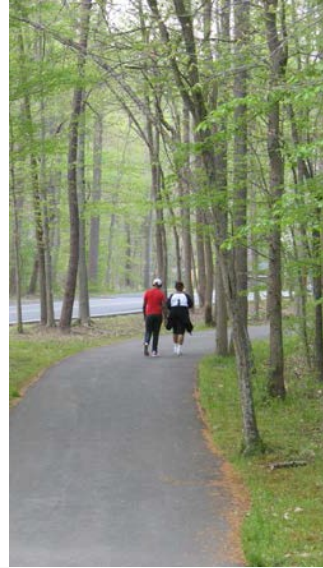
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Existing Park Conditions

Park Events – Most of the Year

Year-round

- Family Fun and Fitness walk/runs – monthly in Spring, summer and Fall
- Tennis Clinics – Fall, Winter and Spring
- Various Regional Tournaments throughout spring, summer and fall
- Facilitate charity walk/runs in the fall and spring, County agency picnics and events.



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Existing Park Conditions

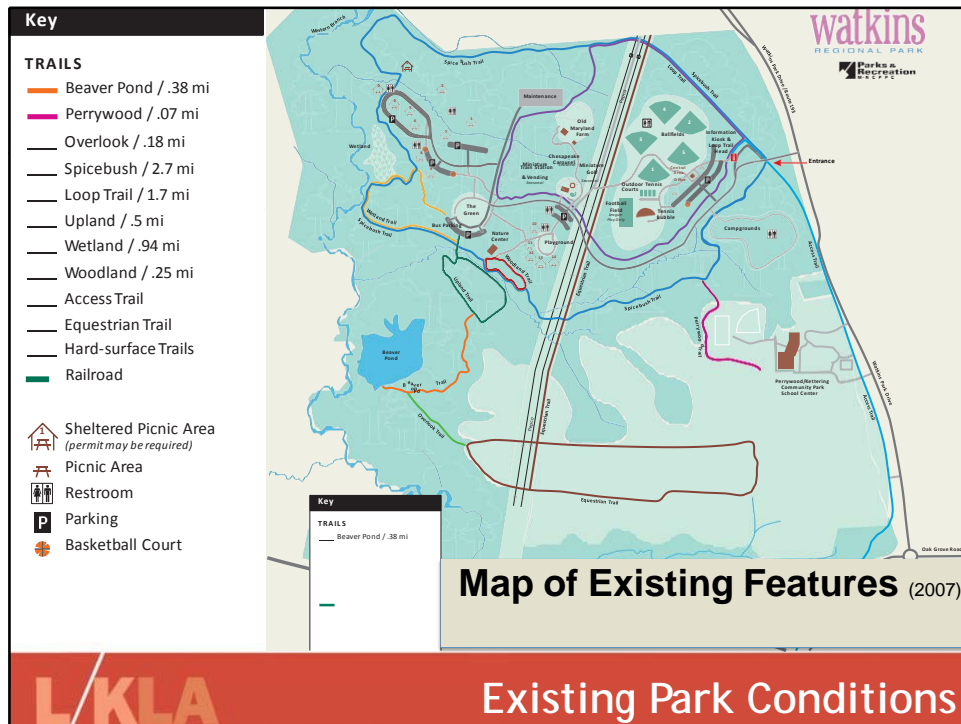
Park Features

- Watkins Nature Center (1)
- Old Maryland Farm (1)
- Basketball, Half Court (4)
- Camping (34)
- Football/Soccer Combination Field, Lighted (1)
- Softball/Baseball Fields, Lighted (5)
- Indoor Tennis Court (5)
- Outdoor Tennis Court, Lighted (4)
- Miniature Train (1)
- 18 hole Mini Golf Course (1)
- Antique Carousel (1)
- Natural Surface Trail (7)
- Paved Walking Loop and Exercise System (1)
- Picnic Area (4) and Picnic Shelter (16)
- Playground (2)
- Snack Bar Refreshment Depot:
Vending Machines (1)



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Existing Park Conditions



Infrastructure - Recent Investments

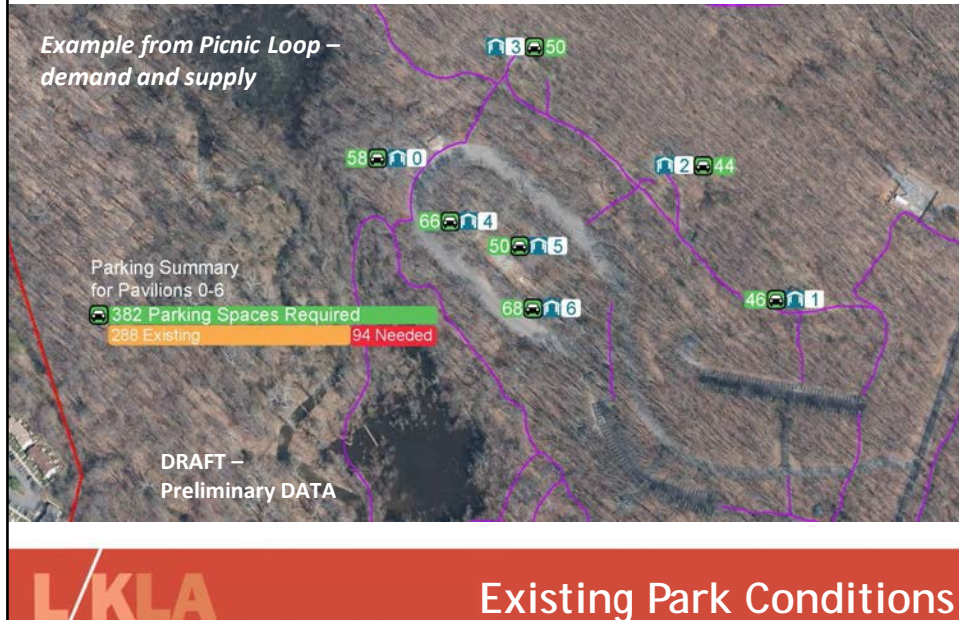
New Imagination Playgrounds

- Wizard of Oz – October 2015
- Watkins Downs – May 2014

New entry to Tennis Bubble with party room for rental use – 2015-2016

L/KLA Existing Park Conditions

Parking Inventory - Sample



Circulation and Access

Two points of vehicle access to park

- New entrance from Landover Road/MD 202
- Entrance from Watkins Park Drive – should a traffic circle be installed?

Lack of formal bus parking and drop-off/pick-up sites

- Currently using informal loop on Pepco Easement

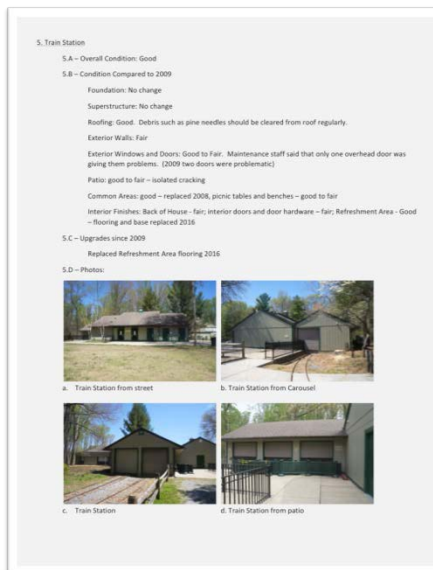
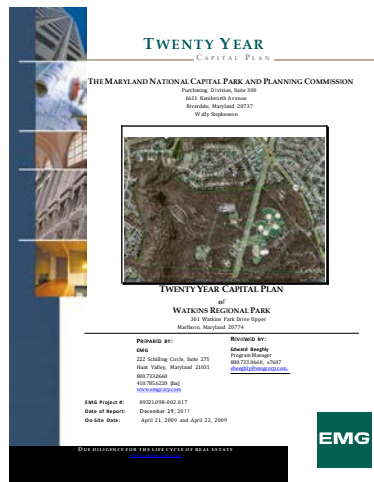
Pedestrian circulation

- Clear separation of pedestrian and vehicle traffic
- Install trail bollards at intersections to prevent cars from accessing pedestrian trail

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Existing Park Conditions

Facilities Assessment



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Existing Park Conditions

Revenue and Use Analysis Tasks

- Understand current state of park use and user attendance within all program areas
- Determine if recreational needs of users are being met
- Assess course attendance and user satisfaction

Outcomes

- What facilities are at or exceeding capacity?
- What are usage trends over operating years and seasons?
- What is diversity of programs and what is overall satisfaction with programs?

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Existing Park Conditions

Revenue and Use Analysis

Data collection on historical annual usage and monthly demand trends shall provide insight to attendance and past surveys shall be analyzed and compared to ascertain satisfaction.

Data Being Gathered

- Programs (drop in and scheduled classes at all facilities in parks)
- Field/Court rentals (recreational and enterprise facilities – soccer/football, tennis)
- General usage (traffic and trail counters)
- Zip code of users
- Facilities (pavilions and campground rentals and carousel)

Sources: Smartlink Data base as well as Site Specific Databases



Existing Park Conditions

Issues - Protection of Natural Resources



Existing Park Conditions

Issues - Protection of Natural Resources

Draft

Potential Old Growth Forest Map



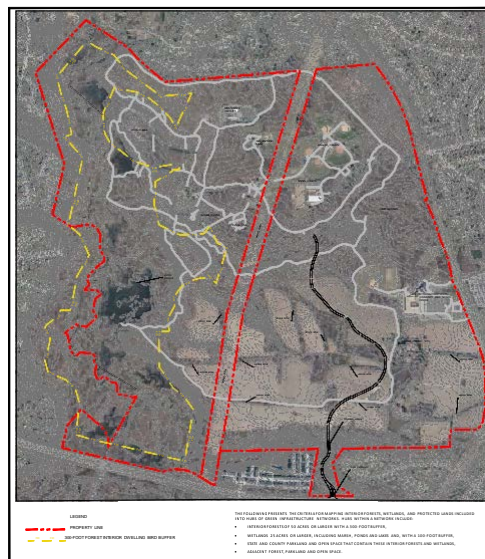
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Existing Park Conditions

Issues - Protection of Natural Resources

Draft

Forest Interior Dwelling (FID) Map



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Existing Park Conditions

Issues - Protection of Natural Resources



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Existing Park Conditions

Issues - Expansion Space Limitations

- **845 acres**
(same as Central Park in NYC)
- **Restricted - regulated**
 - Wetlands (blue)
 - 25% and greater slopes (orange)
 - TO COME – TCP2 lands (Tree Conservation Plan Lands)
- **Restricted – policy**
 - Prime farmland and Land of Statewide Importance (green)
- **Restricted – current uses**



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Existing Park Conditions

Online Survey

Run through June 2016

- Asking questions related to current uses
- Requesting suggested new uses
- Data set can be tied back to surveys from 2010 Needs Assessment



Existing Park Conditions

Tell us what you think – complete our ‘Park Lib’

Five years from now, when I visit Watkins Regional Park, I am most excited about _____. It is a fun park with lots of _____.

The best reason to visit the park in the winter is _____ and in the summer is _____.

I wish _____ could change.

I miss _____ and am glad that the park has _____.



Watkins Park in Five Years



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Park Issues and Opportunities

Infrastructure - Parking Shortage for CURRENT uses

Parking shortage for current users

- Two uses - permitted picnic shelters and ball fields **absorb more than all of the provided spaces within the park**
- Overflow parking sent to Pepco Easement

Isolated and unconnected parking lots

- Traffic flow inhibited; requires u-turning and backing up instead of pulling through another parking lot

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Park Issues and Opportunities

Infrastructure - Peak Use/Picnic Demand

16 Picnic Pavilions require permits for use

- Fully booked on weekends
- Range from 50 to 150 people per pavilion
- Attendance often exceeds permitted amount – particularly at #4, #5, #6 inside the loop near Watkins Downs playground

Minimal open access, family picnic facilities available

- 4 Picnic Areas – open for use without permit
- 1 near Train Station/Mini Golf
- 1 near Central Administration Building
- 1 near Tennis Bubble
- 1 reserved for Birthday Parties – near Train Station



Park Issues and Opportunities

Infrastructure – Facility Mix

Park serves as location for Central Area Operations Building

- Maintenance vehicles serve larger region from park
- Can/should maintenance vehicle traffic be separated from park users traffic?
- Can/should maintenance and administration facilities be combined?



Park Issues and Opportunities

Infrastructure – Upgrades Needed

Watkins Tennis Bubble

- Desire to replace bubble with new fixed structure

Restrooms

- Accessibility – not all of the facilities are ADA accessible
- Age of existing facilities

Picnic Pavilions

- More and larger group accommodations desired

Athletic Fields and Supporting Equipment

- Scoreboards
- Concession Facilities



Park Issues and Opportunities

Park Issues – Infrastructure Needs

Watkins Nature Center

- Transform into 21st Century environmental and education facility
- Roof collapse/bracing/building needs
- Add outdoor recreational elements for physical fitness that tie into the nature trail
- Replace raptor enclosure and decking
- Redesign amphitheater, new level seating, larger fire pit(s)
- Address erosion issues on site



Park Issues and Opportunities



Park Issues – Infrastructure Needs

Old Maryland Farm

- Train cuts through farm – good for viewers, but hard to move animals across to new pasture land
- Need for new livestock pasture area for grazing (fencing, grass establishment and site work)
- Control erosion and runoff
- Opportunity to install new barn to provide an antique farm equipment display
- Ground is saturated much of the year

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Park Issues and Opportunities



Park Issues – Infrastructure Needs

Miniature Golf Course

- Renovate to make ADA-compliant

Renovate Watkins Summer Operations Building

Picnic Pavilion Maintenance Needs

- Erosion, storm damage around slabs
- Structures need paint and repair
- Grill replacement underway
- Identifying signs screened by parked cars
- Shelters are not readily accessible from parking area

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Park Issues and Opportunities

Limited Expansion Space

Although large, much of the park is protected from future development by

Regulations

- Wetlands
- Rare and Endangered Species
- Slopes greater than 25%
- TCP2 sites (woodland/forest land protection)

Adopted Policy

- Prime Agricultural Land (soils)
- Land of Statewide Importance (soils)

3. Identify suitable locations for large and small scale food production within parkland in rural, urban and suburban areas.

Action Steps

- a. Develop a long-term agriculture preservation program on parkland in balance with provision of needed active recreational facilities. (Formula 2040, page 108)



Park Issues and Opportunities

Where to go Next? How to Address Challenges?

Questions

- What could be removed to make room for existing and new activities?
- Should admission be charged on peak use days? Resident/Nonresident?
- Should the park close its gates on busy days – it is FULL?
- What would you like added to the park?
- What should be improved?



What is Important to YOU?



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Discussion

Next Steps

- Online Survey
- Smaller Focus Groups
- Fall 2016 Public Meeting with Alternative Master Plan Strategies and Concepts



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Next Steps



Watkins Regional Park Master Plan 2016

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