



Welcome to Bull Run Regional Park Planning Website

The Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority has developed a General Management Plan (GMP) for over 900 acres of the 1563 acre Regional Park to help guide future planning and resource management of the park.



The GMP for Bull Run Regional Park includes the following:

- Identification of park mission, purpose and significance statements
- An inventory and description of the existing natural resources
- A history, inventory and description of the existing cultural resources
- A description of current Park programming
- An inventory and description of the existing public recreation facilities
- Identification of various park resource management zones and a description of the activities appropriate for each zone.
- Opportunities for future plans and projects

A key element in the planning process is public involvement. A public meeting for this plan was held 4/30/03 to obtain citizen comment on all draft planning documents. The NVRPA Board adopted the GMP 11/16/06.

All documents, including the color site maps and aerial photos, are posted on this website or can be reviewed at NVRPA headquarters or the Centreville Regional Library, 30 days prior to any public meeting.

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Hours of Operation:
8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Monday - Friday

Copies of the planning documents noted above can be obtained by contacting NVRPA's Planning and Development Department at 703-352-5900. Site maps and aerial photos are available in reduced scale, black and white. Questions regarding the Bull Run Regional Park Planning Process or this website should be directed to the NVRPA Planning Department at 703-352-5900 or Plandev@nvrpa.org.

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General Management Plan

for
BULL RUN REGIONAL PARK
Fairfax County, Virginia

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Development of the General Management Plan for Bull Run Regional Park should be viewed as the first part of an integrated plan to manage the park. It is an active and ongoing process for making choices about how to effectively plan and manage the resources we steward, how to achieve goals and objectives identified in the Policy Plan and how to uphold the mission of NVRPA. The General Management Plan (GMP) will serve as an important problem-solving tool, assisting in park planning, development, operations and management.

This plan provides a management framework for park resources, designating resource management areas or "zones" within the park, each having appropriate recreational uses and development designated, in order to sustain park resources. The delineation of management zones is based upon an evaluation of many factors, including the established purpose of this park, the nature and significance of the park's natural and cultural resources, the ability of each site to support identified uses, the desired visitor experience and park management objectives.

The approved GMP is a comprehensive plan that will vary in detail with the size and complexity of a given park, which will guide subsequent planning and project implementation. Detailed plans and studies detail specific management practices for each of the respective resource management zones, consistent with the approved GMP. All future plans and projects will be consistent with the direction established in the GMP. The GMP components will be reviewed periodically and revised or amended as necessary to reflect new issues or changes in management objectives.

Throughout the park planning process, opportunities for public participation and comment will be provided. These may include public meetings and workshops, informal work sessions on specific issues and public review and comment on draft documents. Involvement of the public will be initiated at the earliest stages of the planning process, before planning decisions have been made.

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INTRODUCTION

Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority's *Policy Plan* establishes policies and procedures to guide the Authority in the management, operation and administration of the regional park system. It articulates the role of the Park Authority and includes a Park Classification System that provides the framework for development and revision of individual park management plans. Individual park management plans, in turn, provide the basis for the development and operation of each park.

Creation of a park's General Management Plan (GMP) should be viewed as the first part of an integrated park planning process. All future plans and projects for a park will be consistent with the direction established in the park GMP.

Typically, more detailed implementation plans such as Resource Management Plans, Conceptual Development Plans or Interpretive Plans, detailing specific uses and management practices for each park, may be generated, consistent with the approved GMP. Implementation plans and future projects are prioritized and funded through the five-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

The park General Management Plan is subject to review as park conditions and needs

change with time and use. The Authority will continue to review and amend the plan with input and coordination with the citizens of NVRPA's six member jurisdictions, user groups and community groups, to better serve public and community interests.

I. THE PLANNING PROCESS

A. THE GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

Seven key elements form the foundation of a General Management Plan (GMP) and are guided by the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority (NVRPA) *Policy Plan*. The scope of the elements, the order in which they are initiated and the methods used to complete them may vary in different situations, however, all elements are necessary to implement a General Management Plan. Key elements include: assembling an interdisciplinary project team; developing a public involvement strategy; developing statements of Park mission, purpose and significance; analyzing existing resources; describing potential uses and resource conditions; allocating management areas or zones within the park; and recommending management action plans. Public comment on the draft GMP is considered throughout the process, prior to finalization and adoption by the NVRPA Board.

B. PURPOSE OF THE GMP

Created to fulfill the stated goals and objectives of the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority as described in the NVRPA *Policy Plan*, the GMP serves as a guide to ensure that resource protection and recreational facility development remain balanced and compatible with one another.

The *Policy Plan* includes a park classification system that helps focus planning for individual parks. This system categorizes each of NVRPA's nineteen parks based upon the purpose and defining criteria for that type of park.

Mission, purpose and significance of a park are derived from its classification and form the foundation of park planning. Demographics and adjacent land uses are also considered in development of a GMP to provide a context for future planning.

- Park Mission states the broad vision for the future of a specific park, supporting the overall mission of the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority.
- Park Purpose defines the specific reasons why a park was created and included in the NVRPA system.
- Park Significance clearly articulates the most important aspect of park resources and values, based upon the park purpose.

Extensive research is conducted to determine the existing natural and cultural resources within the park and to identify park facilities and recreational opportunities. Based upon this research, resource management zones have been established, accompanied by potential uses for each zone. From this research, primary interpretive themes can be identified in the GMP to help identify the visitor opportunities that could be provided in the park. These management zones and their permitted uses will serve to control all

future development of the park. With a finalized GMP, other, more detailed management plans can be undertaken. Suggestions for additional plans, future projects and further studies are identified in each General Management Plan.

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C. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE GMP

Goals and objectives are visions for the future of the Regional Park Authority. The goals and objectives of a General Management Plan support the larger goals and objectives of NVRPA as stated in the *Policy Plan*.

GOAL: Meet park planning, development and operations challenges using innovative solutions.

- Provision of a clear direction for management decisions by the General Management Plan, based upon the purpose of the park, contributes to effective decision-making, flexible planning and management of the park.

GOAL: Acquire, protect and manage natural and cultural resources by developing and implementing long-range strategies.

- Establishment of a database of existing park resources inventories, provides up-to - date information necessary for determination of appropriate management actions and identification of lands for potential acquisition.

GOAL: Balance facility development and high quality service.

- Consideration of citizen input and demographics of potential park focus planning efforts upon the visitor's needs and desires. With this information, the Capital Improvement Plan can be developed.

GOAL: Manage park resources through the establishment of specific use areas.

- Identification of one or more resource management areas or "zones" for the entire park site, bases uses and management actions on the park mission, purpose and significance, existing park resources and impact guidelines established for each resource management zone.

(Refer to [Appendix A](#), *NVRPA Policy Plan, Goals and Objectives*, for details.)

D. NVRPA PARK CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

The NVRPA Park Classification System, as defined in the *NVRPA Policy Plan*, includes six categories, each with its own defining purpose and criteria. These criteria identify the purpose of each park; provide resource management and use policies and planning and development guidelines for the park. While the system is comprehensive, it is not mutually exclusive. Parks may qualify for more than one classification.

| | |
|--|--|
| Regional Shoreline Park | Preserves land along rivers and other regionally significant water bodies for public use and enjoyment. The purpose is to protect valuable water resources of the region, to promote public access to these water resources and to enhance the recreational, educational, environmental and scenic value of regional water bodies. |
| Regional Trail and Greenways Park | Provides a linear corridor along streams, rivers and other natural landscapes. Primarily for pedestrian, equestrian and bicycle uses, a regional trail or greenway may extend through two or more jurisdictions or link components of the regional park system. |
| Regional Recreational/ Special Multi- Use Park | Contains recreational facilities that, because of their specialized nature, cost or demand, are not generally offered by local park and recreation agencies. |
| Regional Conservation Park | Places in public ownership large tracts of undeveloped land to protect and preserve the land's unique environmental, ecological or scenic value. |
| Regional Historical Site | Preserves structures, archaeological sites, battlefields and cemeteries deemed significant to the history of Northern Virginia. |
| Regional Land Bank | Provides NVRPA with an administrative mechanism to hold undedicated lands on a temporary basis pending a decision on classification. |

(Refer to [Appendix B](#), *NVRPA Policy Plan, Park Classification System*, for details.)

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E. MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

From the information derived from park resource inventories and the resulting constraints and opportunities identified within the park site, a framework for park resource management was developed. The management framework integrates the research, site analysis and basic data information

about the park into the General Management Plan by designating specific resource management areas.

Resource Management Zones

Resource management areas or " zones" define particular areas within a park that share similar management concerns and challenges. Each resource management zone has a unique combination of park resources, visitor and facility uses and a defined management direction, consistent throughout all NVRPA properties.

Recommendations for appropriate kinds and levels of activity, included in the following glossary of potential uses and consistent with the goals of the park, determine what activities should and should not occur within each management zone.

Evaluation of a proposed activity or project is based upon a variety of factors in addition to potential impacts on cultural and natural resources described in the GMP. Different management actions may be taken in different zones depending upon the types and levels of uses and facilities and their anticipated impact on the existing park resources. Inclusion in the list of potential uses does not indicate that such use would automatically be approved or endorsed by NVRPA. Other factors influencing management actions may include the availability of capital funding, availability of park staff and maintenance resources and the impact on adjacent properties and existing park activities.

Zone Descriptions

SENSITIVE RESOURCE PROTECTION ZONE

Identifies a protected area or fragile feature that may be lost through human impact, such as areas of threatened or endangered species , prehistoric site or historic feature. Neither visitors nor development will be permitted within these areas.

Potential uses permitted:

- Research
- Resource protection
- Resource management

NATURAL RESOURCES PROTECTION ZONE

Protects existing habitats and identifies areas that warrant restoration. May include areas identified as an outstanding resource or areas considered undevelopable because of site constraints. Human impact to these areas shall be minimal; environmental degradation will be prohibited. Vehicular traffic, structures and facilities will be strictly regulated.

Potential uses permitted:

- Research

Resource management
Interpretation and education
Low impact recreation
Limited support infrastructure

CULTURAL RESOURCES PROTECTION ZONE

Protects existing cultural resources, and provides opportunities for educational and interpretive use. Cultural resources may exist within any other zone. Cultural resource surveys will be undertaken prior to any land disturbing activity.

Potential uses permitted:

Research
Resource management
Interpretation and education
Low impact recreation
Limited support infrastructure
Historic restoration

RECREATION ZONE

Provides visitors with a variety of recreational experiences. May include existing or future recreational facilities, park infrastructure and visitor services. Research and analysis of potential cultural or natural resources will be completed prior to any site development or land disturbing activity.

Potential uses permitted:

Research
Resource management
Education/ Interpretation
Low impact recreation
High impact recreation
Support infrastructure

F. GLOSSARY OF POTENTIAL USES:

- **LOW IMPACT RECREATION** - Includes recreational activities that are determined to cause minimal disturbance to the park's natural and cultural resources and require little if any infrastructure. Many recreational activities could be categorized as low impact or high impact depending upon their intensity and frequency of use. For example, most hiking trails would likely be categorized as low impact. However, if a hiking trail were heavily utilized to the point at which it caused severe environmental degradation, the trail activity could be classified as a high impact recreational use.
- **HIGH IMPACT RECREATION** - Includes recreational activities that are determined to cause noticeable but acceptable levels of disturbance to the park's resources. High impact recreational activities may require substantial infrastructure development. Examples of high impact recreational activities may include golfing, organized sports requiring athletic fields and picnic areas requiring large shelters and parking areas.

- **INTERPRETATION AND EDUCATION** - Involves communicating information specific to the significance of the park, including the unique characteristics of the resources associated with the park and the relationships of human and natural systems, to increase visitor enjoyment and involvement in resource protection. Interpretive programs and educational workshops, brochures, displays and signage at the park are methods of conveying this information.
- **RESOURCE MANAGEMENT** - Involves the understanding of natural processes, recognition of human influence upon the land and the need for stewardship of that land. Resource Management Plans will establish guidelines for managing natural, cultural, recreational or facility resources existing within the park. The selection, integration and implementation of resource management plans and actions will be based upon ecological, sociological and economical consequences of the proposed action on park resources. These plans and recommended actions may include protection, mitigation, interpretation, monitoring and administration of park resources.
- **RESEARCH** - Involves the investigation aimed at the discovery and interpretation of facts, the revision of accepted theories or the development of practical applications in light of new facts. One time, periodic or ongoing research could include archaeological and historic surveys and studies, water and air quality monitoring studies and vegetation and wildlife inventories. Public agencies, educational organizations, professional consultants or volunteers could be authorized by NVRPA to conduct this work
- **SUPPORT INFRASTRUCTURE** - Includes development necessary to support major park operations and activities. Support infrastructure may include visitor centers, specialized recreational facilities, administrative and maintenance facilities, roads, parking areas, utilities, etc.
- **LIMITED SUPPORT INFRASTRUCTURE** - Includes facilities limited in scope and impact but critical to provide minimal support of park operations and activities. Special care will be taken during the planning, design and development of limited support infrastructure in Resource Protection Zones in order to protect existing park resources. Where feasible, the Park Authority shall utilize design and development techniques that avoid or minimize negative impacts to existing resources. Limited support infrastructure may include the following:
 - Recreational facilities and trails supporting low impact activities and causing minimal disturbance to the environment and existing park resources.
 - Small structures, such as shelters or restroom facilities that do not exceed 800 square feet in size.
 - Essential utilities and access routes for park maintenance and emergency vehicles provided there are no other feasible alternatives available.

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II. BULL RUN REGIONAL PARK GMP

The General Management Plan (GMP) for Bull Run Regional Park is intended to help guide current and future planning, management and development of this multiple-use

park and its resources. This GMP focuses on a 995-acre section of the 1563-acre park. A separate GMP will be developed for the remaining 568 acres of the park property, from Ordway Road to Hemlock Overlook Regional Park.

A. PARK DESCRIPTION

Bull Run Regional Park is located in western Fairfax County, Virginia. This park was the first of the nineteen parks acquired by NVRPA in the 1960's in an effort to preserve and protect riparian lands and drinking water resources for the region and to provide the public access to these lands for recreational enjoyment and use. It is the northernmost in a series of adjacent park properties now comprising approximately 5,000 acres along the Fairfax County shoreline of Bull Run and the Occoquan River.

Bull Run Regional Park also functions as part of a larger greenway that extends more than 25 miles, from the upper reaches of the Cub Run Stream Valley to the Town of Occoquan, where it joins the Potomac River. Consisting primarily of expansive, undeveloped areas of forest, field and wetland habitat, the park makes a significant contribution to the largest and most extensive biological corridor within Fairfax County.

The 995-acre study site, bounded by Route 66 on the north and by Ordway Road to the southeast is characterized by nearly flat to gently rolling terrain. The study site is predominantly wooded, dominated by second and third growth forest with a number of cleared areas, encompassing a "core" of recreational facility development and park infrastructure, including primary and secondary park access roads. Cultural resources within Bull Run Regional Park include a number of prehistoric and historic sites, including a portion of the Centreville Military Railroad, the world's first exclusively military rail line.

B. BACKGROUND

Prior to inclusion in the Regional Park system, the lands comprising the present day park were inhabited by prehistoric Native Americans from the Archaic and Woodland periods and later by European colonists. Much of what would become Bull Run Regional Park was included in the enormous landholdings of the powerful "King " Carter, agent of the Northern Neck Proprietary that controlled much of northern Virginia during the colonial period. Carter's land, including a tract of 2,860 acres passed to his son Robert "Councillor" Carter in 1732. Robert Carter divided his land into several smaller plantations, named for signs of the zodiac. Much of Bull Run Regional Park was encompassed by the "Leo" plantation, which would remain in then hands of the Carter family heirs well into the nineteenth century. Throughout this period, the land was leased in smaller parcels to tenant farmers.

By the 1860's issues of slavery and states rights had resulted in armed conflict and the site of Mitchell's Ford, immediately east of the 900 acre park site became the first campaign of the Civil War in the summer of 1861. In July 1861, the first significant combat of the war took place at nearby Blackburn's Ford and the subsequent First and Second Battles of Bull Run. An early military map shows the entire park site area was wooded during the 1860's, with one single structure located in the uplands and the route of the

Centreville Military Railroad depicted through the southeast portion of the site, between Cub Run and Mitchell's Ford.

Four years of war had a devastating impact on the economic and social landscape of the postwar era Virginia. Large family farms were increasingly subdivided, with many producing only enough to sustain family and livestock. A 1904 Army Corps of Engineers Map shows large areas along Cub Run and Bull Run to be heavily wooded, with upland areas in the central portion as cleared agricultural fields planted in wheat and corn. Four residential structures were shown within the area along with a number of unimproved farm roads, one of which parallels what is now the Interstate Route 66 corridor.

Western Fairfax County remained predominantly rural through World War II, but by the 1950's, rapid sub-urbanization of Washington D.C. was having a noticeable effect on the Centreville area. Fearing the loss of the regional rural character and historic resources, Mrs. R.F. Starr, Chair of the Northern Virginia Regional Economic Development and Planning Commission began urging the purchase of property for parkland, in 1957. Negotiations for land began the following year and in 1960, the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority opened its first park, Bull Run Regional Park, including 500 acres within the current park site, that provided camping and picnic space along Bull Run. NVRPA continued to develop the park through the 1960's, adding a special events center for the performing arts, skeet and trap shooting range and what was then Virginia's largest swimming pool. By 1971, an 11-mile stretch of land had been acquired along Bull Run, linking Bull Run Regional Park to Bull Run Marina, on the Occoquan reservoir.

C. PARK CLASSIFICATION

Bull Run Regional Park can be considered both a Regional Shoreline Park and a Regional Recreation/ Special Multi-Use Park, based upon the purpose and defining criteria for these two park classifications as described in the NVRPA Policy Plan.

"While the park classification system is comprehensive, it is not mutually exclusive and several parks may "qualify" for more than one classification. Inclusion in a particular classification does not dictate specific uses for a park but is intended to provide guidelines for park development, management and use."

(Refer to [Appendix B: NVRPA Policy Plan, Park Classifications](#) for details.)

- **Regional Shoreline Park**

"Preserves riparian lands adjacent to regionally significant water resources and provides public access opportunities for recreational and scenic enjoyment, educational and environmental study."

"For an area to be considered a Regional Shoreline Park, it must be contiguous to a regionally significant water body or a water resource, having substantial environmental, scenic and recreational impact upon the Chesapeake Bay."

Bull Run Regional Park is a Regional Shoreline Park because it adjoins Bull Run and Cub Run, which flow into the Occoquan River, a tributary of the Potomac River and ultimately the Chesapeake Bay. The parks undeveloped lands provide a riparian buffer zone contiguous to these perennial streams of Cub Run and Bull Run and the Occoquan watershed. Bull Run Regional Park also provides public access and opportunities for recreational and scenic enjoyment of these lands and access to the waters of Virginia.

- **Regional Recreational/Special Multi-Use Park**

"Regional Recreational/Special Multi-Use Parks contain recreational and other public facilities or opportunities, which, because of their specialized nature, cost or demand are not generally available within local parks or offered by local park and recreation agencies."

"For an area to be considered a Regional Recreational/Special Multi-Use Park, it must be an area or facility that has an attraction capability that is region-wide; or supplements or compliments local park and recreation facilities."

Bull Run Regional Park is a Regional Recreational/Special Multi-Use Park because it provides the public a opportunity to experience unique recreational activities using public facilities not found elsewhere in the region.

D. PARK MISSION

The mission of Bull Run Regional Park is to provide regionally significant opportunities for public enrichment through recreational activity, education and scenic enjoyment while conserving riparian lands and other natural and cultural resources of the Occoquan watershed.

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E. PARK PURPOSE

- Providing a wide array of recreational opportunities with emphasis on a unique public recreational facility and programmed activities, for people of all ages and abilities, to experience in the out-of-doors.
- Conserving and protecting the natural environment along Bull Run and Cub Run relative to the water quality of the Occoquan basin and watershed of the Chesapeake Bay.
- Protecting biological diversity in northern Virginia by preserving: existing natural resources, habitats and ecosystems including habitats for rare, threatened or endangered plant and animal species; exemplary natural communities; and other significant natural features.
- Providing educational opportunities for interpretation of the natural resources to foster awareness of and appreciation for the natural environment.
- Protecting and interpreting historic and archaeological cultural resources significant to the citizens of northern Virginia

F. PARK SIGNIFICANCE

- The park provides public and private groups and individuals an opportunity to experience unique activities, events and programs conducted in an outdoor environment.
- The park's location and extensive tree cover contribute to protection of water quality in Cub Run, Bull Run and the watershed of the Chesapeake Bay, to which they contribute.
- The park's diverse vegetation, including non-tidal wetlands and river shoreline, provides habitat for numerous wildlife species and includes several significant trees, most notably a 72 inch diameter Swamp White Oak and the largest stand of native Virginia Bluebells on the East Coast.
- The park property contributes to a large singular expanse of open space along Bull Run and Occoquan River shoreline, providing a critical link in a larger environmental and genetic corridor.
- Known cultural resources within the park, particularly those associated with the Civil War, demonstrate its significance throughout human history in the cultural development of northern Virginia and the nation.

G. EXISTING CONDITIONS

Vicinity of Bull Run Regional Park

Bull Run Regional Park is located near Centreville, Virginia, in western Fairfax County, a fast growing suburban center approximately 20 miles outside of Washington, D.C. The area has grown rapidly since the 1980's due in part to the ease of access to Dulles International Airport, and proximity to Interstate Route 66, which provide an incentive for businesses and residential development in the area.

Prior to growth and development of the 1980's, the Centreville area had a distinctly rural character evidenced by large tracts of farmland and low-density residential development. Much of the rural character remains within certain parts of this area of the county today, as a result of development restrictions adopted by Fairfax County to protect the Occoquan River watershed.

Commercial development consists of high tech companies and professional offices, neighborhood service businesses, light industry and quarrying operations. Construction aggregates, produced from stone resources, continue to be actively quarried.

The study site is situated in close proximity to the 1,400-acre Manassas National Battlefield Park and was involved in the First and Second Battles of Manassas, also known as the Battles of Bull Run. Properties immediately adjacent to Bull Run Regional Park include established low-density residential developments and a state-of-the art sewage treatment facility, the Upper Occoquan Sewer Authority (UOSA) at the confluence of Bull Run and Cub Run. Several Prince William County parks adjoin Bull Run Regional Park across Bull Run.

The Comprehensive Plan for Fairfax County, Virginia

The Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2000 Edition, describes the County's long range planning vision for logical and orderly development and growth within the county. The Comprehensive Plan for Fairfax County is divided into four Area Plans, each comprised of several Planning Districts; each District is subdivided into several planning sectors.

Bull Run Regional Park lies in Area III, in the Bull Run Planning District, within the Stone Bridge Community Planning Sector. For each Area Plan and Planning Sector, recommendations for land use planning are made. These recommendations are based upon the predominant use, character and intensity desired for the specific Planning District.

The entire Bull Run Planning District is located within the Occoquan watershed. Protection of water quality has a significant impact on land use planning and development in this area. The Environmental Quality Corridors for Bull Run and Cub Run are major environmental features of the sector. Most of this sector is undeveloped and includes forest and farmland.

The Comprehensive Plan's Concept for Future Development provides for a rural character by maintaining a very low-density development pattern. Most of the Stone Bridge Community Sector is recommended as a Low Density Residential Area, consistent with its existing pattern of widely scattered housing and several longstanding, large lot residential communities.

Planning objectives in the Bull Run Planning District include the following: protection of the Occoquan Reservoir watershed, establishing Centreville as a focus of development in western Fairfax County; maintaining a low density transition area between the Fairfax Center and Centreville Development Centers and preservation of significant heritage resources.

A major challenge within the Bull Run Planning District, for future parks and recreation development, lies in achieving a balance in the divergent needs of an expanding population and the preservation of significant land for wildlife habitats and cultural resources protection.

The Cub Run Stream Valley and Bull Run Regional Park are recognized to contain sensitive ecological resources vulnerable to the negative impacts of fragmentation and offsite development. The Comprehensive Plan states that intrusion of non-recreational development should therefore be restricted at these sites and that any impacts be mitigated. A combination of land conservation techniques are recommended for use by Fairfax County Park Authority or the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority, to preserve identified wildlife habitats, identified on the County's Ecological Resources Inventory, as the top priority for protection.

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General Site Conditions

The study area, located at the confluence of Bull Run and Cub Run is predominantly wooded and is dominated by deciduous forest with small areas of pines scattered throughout. Topography of the site is generally low

lying and gently sloping, with approximately 70% of the site within the 100-year floodplain.

A large percentage of the park site remains undisturbed. Facility development is concentrated in the central upland portion of the park comprising a "core" area for recreational activity. Less intensively developed areas of the park can be accessed by various trails, for hiking and equestrian use. Diverse plant communities existing within the park provide habitat for numerous wildlife species of amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals.

The high percentage of undeveloped land existing at Bull Run Regional Park makes a significant contribution to the total undeveloped acreage necessary for watershed protection and habitat conservation. It promotes the rural character of the landscape typical throughout the Occoquan stream valley.

Park Resources

Baseline inventories of natural and cultural resources and existing conditions assessments were prepared for NVRPA in 2002. Development of these documents was based on available existing resource information and field reconnaissance surveys.

These reports document existing park resources and their conditions and make recommendations for further study. The inventories and assessment provide a basis from which management plans for park resources will evolve and from which planning decisions for future recreational use and development will be made.

NATURAL RESOURCES

The *Natural Resources and Existing Conditions Assessment Report for Bull Run Regional Park* characterizes and maps existing park site conditions.

- **Topography, Geology and Soils**

The topography of the study area is characterized by nearly flat to gently rolling terrain, with elevations ranging from 210 feet above sea level in the eastern part of the site in the vicinity of the Special Events Center to 150 feet above sea level along the eastern and northeastern portion of the property overlooking Cub Run. The extreme southeastern portion of the park is dominated by two ridges, located 200 feet above sea level, overlooking Bull Run to the south and Cub Run to the east.

The geology of the site is located within the Leesburg Triassic Basin Physiographic Province of Virginia and consists largely of red sedimentary rock over igneous bedrock. Soils over the sedimentary rock are often shallow, only 2 to 10 feet deep. Rock outcrops can be observed on the steep slopes in several areas along Bull Run and Cub Run.

Soils within the study area consist of two primary associations. The Rowland-Bermudian-Brownsville soils in the floodplain of Bull Run

and Cub Run are alluvial soils, deposited with seasonal flooding and have poor engineering and drainage characteristics. The higher areas in the central and northwestern upland areas of the site include a mix of soil types, with Croton-Readington-Birdsboro predominating. Readington soils have good foundation support but are otherwise poor for development. Croton and Birdsboro have poor engineering and drainage characteristics. All of these soil types are highly erodible. The majority of soils within the park are potentially erodible when they are without vegetative or other protection.

Unprotected slopes of greater than 15 per cent are especially susceptible to erosion loss. Hydric soils, those that are saturated, flooded or ponded soils with anaerobic (oxygen deprived) conditions, were encountered in large areas in the floodplains including many road and picnic sites in low lying areas of the park.

- **Water Resources**

Bull Run Regional Park sits astride the confluence of Bull Run and Cub Run within the watershed of the Occoquan River. Both streams drain areas of mixed land use, including agricultural, pastoral, urban and suburban regions. Cub Run adjoins the park property to the north and east enters Bull Run at the southwestern boundary of the park. Bull Run meets the Occoquan River downstream and together these feed the Occoquan Reservoir.

Both streams have been severely degraded by poor land use practices within their watersheds. This finding is based on erosion of the stream banks, a lack of adequate riparian forest buffers and the deposition of sedimentation in the streambed. The reduced amount of suitable habitat for invertebrates results in a reduced amount of food available for animals higher in the food chain.

Bull Run is the subject of a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) monitoring effort led by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and mandated by the Clean Water Act. Bull Run has been determined to be "impaired" according to state water quality standards. The TMDL effort and implementation plan is intended to bring the stream into full compliance with regulations by reducing non-point source pollution.

Cub Run suffers from the effects of draining a suburbanized area: habitat, macro-invertebrate community health and fish communities are poor to fair and will only improve unless watershed management practices in the upper portion of the basin improve.

Jurisdictions within the Potomac River Watershed, including Fairfax County, are subject to requirements of the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act of 1988 and the Fairfax County's Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance, both enacted to protect the water quality of the Chesapeake Bay, by designating and mapping Resource Protection Areas (RPA's) and Resource Management Areas (RMA's). Development and land disturbing activities are generally

restricted in RPA's.

Cub Run and Bull Run are tributary streams. Large areas of non-tidal wetlands are present, adjacent to both these tributary streams. These wetland features and the tributary streams are considered to be core components of the RPA. In addition to the wetlands and the RPA, areas included in the Fairfax County Environmental Quality Corridors (EQC), as defined in the Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, would have to be considered in cases involving land use rezoning.

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- **Plant Communities**

Ten different plant communities, some with multiple forest cover types, have been identified at Bull Run Regional Park. The plant community types are based upon the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation's (DCR's) classification system and delineated by field observation. Plant community types are most strongly influenced by site topography, soil type and previous land use.

- Acid Oak Hickory Forests: these mixed forests of upland habitat dominate the central and northwestern portion of the study site, an area of approximately 200 acres. Hickories are a prominent tree species; dominant oaks include white oak, black oak, scarlet oak, southern red oak and chestnut oak. Deciduous shrubs such as low-bush blueberry and deerberry are present in patches. Habitat value of deep forest stands is high and is especially important for many species of neo-tropical migratory birds and large mammals requiring a more extensive range for foraging and cover. Large stands of this forest community type are becoming increasingly rare as development in the region continues.
- Piedmont/ Mountain Swamp Forests: these seasonally flooded deciduous forests are found in back swamps and sloughs, along rivers and large streams of the Piedmont and commonly occur in the floodplain areas. Characteristic trees in this community include pin oak, willow oak, green ash, red maple, and sweetgum. Swamp white oak is abundant in areas of the northern Piedmont such as Bull Run Regional Park. Small trees, shrubs, woody vines, a rich herbaceous layer and species tolerant of seasonal inundation are prevalent, providing wildlife habitat of high value. Large, well-developed swamp forests are somewhat uncommon in the Piedmont. Piedmont Swamp Forest covers approximately 60 acres within the study site, found in linear areas along the floodplains of Bull Run and Cub Run.
- Piedmont/Mountain Bottomland Forests: Three small occurrences of this type of forest are found within the study site of the park, representing about 12 acres in total. One stand exists on the east side of Cub Run; one is on the north

side of Bull Run, below the confluence with Cub Run; and the other is south of the Special Events Center in the northeast corner of the park. These forests are temporarily and intermittently flooded forests including most river floodplain habitats of the Piedmont, except for those occupied by swamp forests. These forests consist of silver maples, box elder, hackberry, black walnut, American elm and sycamore. Small tree, shrub and herbaceous composition is highly variable, depending on geography and site conditions.

Most Piedmont/Mountain Bottomland Forests have been severely impacted by clearing, grazing, agricultural run-off and invasive exotic weeds. Many of these forests have been destroyed and few of the remaining stands are in pristine condition.

- Piedmont/ Low Mountain Alluvial Forests: These forests exist in temporarily flooded forests of the smaller stream floodplains, where distinct alluvial landforms including levees, terraces and back swamps occur on a very small scale. Microhabitats, flooding regimes and floristic composition are diverse. Typical trees include sycamore, box elder, green ash, river birch, American elm, red maple, black walnut and black willow. Herbaceous composition varies greatly with site conditions and geography.

These smaller, more topographically heterogeneous areas carry a lower diversity of vegetation. Forest communities of this type are poorly documented in Virginia. Most that have been documented are in fair to poor condition, resulting from extensive clearing, grazing, catastrophic flooding and invasive exotic weeds.

This is the largest and most rare forest community type at Bull Run Regional Park study site, covering 375 acres, dominating the flood plains of Cub Run and Bull Run, where the forest type has not been altered by human activity.

- Eastern Red Cedar: This evergreen forest community type is native to eastern North America. It has been an important component of cedar glades, which typically do not experience fires. Peak seed production occurs between 25 and 75 years of age and culminates in a canopy of red cedar with bare ground underneath.

A large, nearly pure stand of Eastern Red Cedar is found in the eastern portion of the study site, south of the UOSA facility boundary. Smaller stands are found on the southern edge of the Special Events Center and outskirts of the soccer fields. These areas of Red Cedar appear to be early succession growth in abandoned pastures from past agricultural use.

- Virginia Pine: Another needle leaf evergreen, Virginia Pine, is indicative of early succession forest of old fields or other land clearings. Virginia Pine in pure stands or greater than 70 per cent dominate. This community is found in a large stand on the northwestern side of the campground area and in smaller plots surrounding the soccer fields, covering about 26 acres in total.
- White Pine: is found in planted stands, near the entrance to the shooting center and east of Cub Run on the Road to the Special Events Center. This community type covers approximately 6 acres within the study site.
- Turf: This category includes maintained areas of grassland that are mowed regularly or occasionally to prevent woody species growth. Approximately 200 acres of turf are found in the study site area.
- Floodplain Ponds and Pools: Are defined as semi-permanently to permanently flooded natural wetlands within the floodplains of major streams in the Piedmont. These wetlands are typically developed in abandoned oxbows and cut-off meanders of streams. Dominant vegetation varies from shrub lands to submerged or floating aquatic species in deeper ponds. At least two aquatic plants found in these communities, yellow water crowfoot and featherfoil, are listed by the State of Virginia as being rare or uncommon. Wetlands in this group also provide important breeding habitats for turtles and amphibians, including the state listed rare mole salamander. Well-developed floodplain ponds and pools are rare communities needing additional inventory and study. These communities are found along Cub Run and Bull Run and within abandoned oxbow meanders located throughout the floodplain portion of the study site. These increasingly rare communities comprise approximately 46 acres within the site and warrant special protection.
- Old Field community type is characterized by abandoned fields and clearings in the early stages of succession, when grasses and wildflowers dominate. Loss of Old Field habitat due to development has caused a dramatic decline in many wildlife species in Virginia. Old fields have often not been viewed as a natural habitat type but are now considered to be valuable wildlife habitat for raptors, owls, shrikes, ground nesting birds such as meadowlarks and sparrows, as well as foxes, rodents, groundhogs and a variety of insects including butterflies.

Dominant species include asters, goldenrod thistle, broomsedge, tall fescue and bushclover. Several small areas exist within the park and a larger area, created by mowing of the Virginia Power right-of-way, totaling about 21 acres in all.

- **Understory Species**

An important criterion in the classification of natural communities, these plants are critical to differentiating between forest types and important as forage and habitat for wildlife. It is apparent that with the area of the study site, the understory species are suffering from browsing by white-tailed deer.

- **Significant Trees**

Significant trees on site were noted during reconnaissance of plant community types. All trees noted registered greater than 36 inches diameter at breast height (DBH). Of particular importance is an outstanding swamp white Oak found on the west bank of Cub Run. This tree is approximately 72 inches in diameter (DBH) and is one of the largest and presumably oldest oak trees in the region. Several other red oaks were noted near the same area of the park, each registering more than 48 inches diameter DBH.

- **Wildflowers**

Many species of spring wildflowers were observed within the park during field reconnaissance to identify existing plant communities in the park. The most significant of these is the extensive stand of native Virginia bluebells, which follows along miles of the Cub Run and Bull Run stream valley embankment and are considered by many to be the largest in the region. The park also supports numerous wildflowers typical of the Eastern Deciduous Forest, including spring beauty, growing among the stands of bluebells and several state-ranked rare species including yellow troutlily. There is potential for additional species to be identified within the course of a more comprehensive natural heritage resources wildflower survey.

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- **Exotic and Invasive Plant Species**

An exotic species is defined as any species not native to a geographic area. Eleven exotic species including trees, vines, herbs and grasses, were identified within Bull Run Regional Park as potentially invasive.

An invasive species is one that spreads rapidly and occurs in greater abundance than may be desirable. Often out-competing native plant species found in its vicinity, invasive species displace native plant species, may reduce wildlife habitat and alter ecological ecosystems.

Locations and relative abundance of invasive and exotic plant species have been noted so that they can be monitored as part of future park management activities.

- **Wildlife**

Various habitat types provided by the diverse plant and aquatic communities at Bull Run Regional Park provide for a wide variety of wildlife species. Approximate numbers of wildlife species known or likely to occur at the park are based upon species range and habitat preferences and known occurrences at nearby locations. These include 31 species of amphibians and reptiles, 120 species of birds and 25 species of mammals. Although much of the open water habitat is not located within the park boundaries, birds and other wildlife species that use this type of habitat have been observed from the park along Cub Run and Bull Run.

(See [Appendix C](#), *Natural Resources Inventory and Existing Conditions Assessment Report for Bull Run Regional Park* for details).

- **Rare, Threatened and Endangered Species**

The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) defines Natural Heritage Resources as: "the habitat of rare, threatened, or endangered plant and animal species; unique or exemplary natural communities; and significant geologic formations."

Field investigations were conducted to identify potential habitat for rare, threatened, or endangered species, with particular emphasis on potential sites suitable for the wood turtle and the small whorled pogonia.

Although no wood turtles were observed during the two-day survey, there is a historical record of wood turtles existing in the Cub Run watershed approximately 4 miles north of the park site at Cub Run. Appropriate habitat exists within the study site, suggesting that this state listed, threatened species may exist at Bull Run Regional Park.

Small whorled pogonia is known to occur in adjacent Prince William County. This plant species is currently federally listed as threatened and state listed as imperiled. Thirteen areas within the study site were identified as exhibiting good potential habitat for the plant, then field surveyed for occurrences.

As a result of the survey, the possibility of occurrence was considered low, based upon existing topography, vegetation and soil factors. A comprehensive assessment for the presence of these or other natural heritage resources has not been completed for the study site. Further studies should be conducted prior to any decision making for development activity.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

A comprehensive cultural resources assessment was conducted for the study site portion of Bull Run Regional Park. The purpose of the assessment was to gather information concerning known resources on the property and

to examine current site conditions to define those areas within the site with the greatest potential for previously unidentified cultural resources.

Documentary research, review of previous archaeological investigations and a pedestrian survey of the entire site was conducted with judgmental shovel tests to evaluate site conditions and assess potential for intact archaeological resources. Subsurface testing throughout the study site area indicated that generally, areas of wooded parklands include soils that are relatively intact and therefore have a higher potential for undisturbed cultural resources.

- **Documentary Research**

A search of the archives of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR) indicated three previously identified archaeological sites are situated within the area of the study site. The first is a prehistoric Native American site dating to the archaic period; the second has both prehistoric and historic elements and the third is a historic cemetery, possibly dating to the Civil War, with approximately 22 marked and unmarked graves, with several rough cut red sandstone markers still existing.

An additional forty-eight archaeological sites have been identified within a 1.5 mile radius of the study area, representing a wide range of time periods, including Native American prehistoric camp sites, Civil War military features and nineteenth-/twentieth century domestic occupations and cemeteries. Numerous Native American sites have been identified along the eastern margin of Cub Run, underscoring the extent to which similar resources are likely located in upland areas west of Cub Run and north of Bull Run.

No previously identified architectural resources are situated within the study area; however, 17 resources within a one-mile radius of the study site have been inventoried. These include assorted resources: from dwellings dating to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to Civil War era fortifications and encampments and the battlefields of Bull Run and Blackburn's Ford.

Most significant in the context of the study site are the remains of the Centreville Confederate Military Railroad, constructed in early spring, 1862. This 5.5-mile spur line traversed the eastern portion of the study site. Remains of this line have been identified just northeast of the study area and have been determined to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR).

A Civil War Sites Inventory has been commissioned by the Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) to identify and record known and previously unknown sites within the County. At this time, a draft report is under review by FCPA. When completed, this inventory may reveal additional historic resources relating to the Civil War, within Bull Run Regional Park.

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- **Pedestrian Survey of the Study Site**

The site was divided into eight discrete survey areas. Cleared recreational areas and wooded locales within each area were surveyed and limited judgmental subsurface testing was conducted, the following results detail the findings of the pedestrian survey and indicate the potential for additional cultural resources:

- Area 1 includes the central portion of the park, centered around a modern campground that is located on a series of broad ridges. The margins of Area 1 extend to the equestrian (White) trail bounding the survey area to the north, east and west, with a southern boundary formed by Bull Run Drive. Ground disturbance within the campsite area has been minimal with only limited grading for the campsites and loop roads. The southern part of Area 1 has been impacted to a greater degree, with the construction of the swimming pool complex and other recreational activity areas. Despite the presence of modern buildings, only limited clearing has been conducted within the complex. The remaining, wooded portion of Area 1 is dominated by mature hickory and oak trees, with a sparse understory of secondary vegetation. There is a moderate potential for prehistoric resources and a somewhat higher potential for historic resources within this area, particularly within those areas that have remained wooded and have not been impacted by land disturbance.
- Area 2 consists of the soccer field complex and associated parking lot, located southwest of the campground. The forest surrounding the complex is dominated by mixed hardwoods, with some pine and a sparse understory. The construction of modern soccer fields required clearing and some leveling of landforms. It appears unlikely that intact archaeological resources would remain in these areas with a greater likelihood of intact sites with the remaining wooded areas.
- Area 3 is located in the southwestern portion of the study site, overlooking Bull Run to the south and west. The floodplain portion of this area has been cleared for the construction of Bull Run Drive and a series of picnic shelters located on either side of the drive. The wooded portion of this area is dominated by mixed hardwoods and some pine. The cleared areas have been minimally cleared and landscaped. Mature hardwood along Bull Run and the immediate margins of the stream show little or no recent disturbance, and impacts to any potential archaeological resources appear to be minimal. As such, there is at least a moderate potential for the presence of prehistoric and historic resources within this area with a greater potential for intact resources in the wooded areas.
- Area 4 is located in the northeast portion of the site and is

currently used as a trap, skeet and archery range. The cleared shooting range overlooks a small wetland to the north and Cub Run to the east. The construction of the access road, ranges and structures has resulted in significant ground disturbance, though largely confined to the immediate range area. The surrounding forest is dominated by mixed hardwoods to the south and some planted pines and third growth hardwoods to the north. The forested portion of this area appears to retain good soils integrity. A high east/west trending ridge north of the range overlooks Cub Run immediately to the east. This small landform appears to retain a high potential for the presence of both prehistoric and historic resources. The elevated landforms to the south and west of the range also appear to retain high potential for the location of prehistoric and historic cultural resources.

- Area 5 is located in the southern portion of the study site, between Areas 1 and 3. This area is bounded to the north and west by the soccer field complex, to the east by the equestrian trail and to the south by Bull Run. Area 5 is largely wooded with shelters in cleared sections overlooking Bull Run to the south. The wooded portion of Area 5 is dominated by mature hickory and oak with cedar present in some locales. Three archaeological sites have been previously identified in this area including: a prehistoric Native American site that likely dates to the Archaic period. The second is a multi-component resource, with prehistoric and historic elements. The historic association may be related to the James R. Harris farm site, indicated on a 1904 map. A third site, consisting of a historic cemetery with 22 marked and unmarked graves, may also be associated with the late nineteenth-/early twentieth century Harris occupation. The cemetery includes 35 grave depressions marked by 40 vertical headstones and footstones of native rock, with no identifying inscriptions. It is probable that additional resources are located within the portions of Area 5, given that three sites have been previously identified.
- Area 6 is located in the southeastern portion of the study site and is bounded by Cub Run to the east and Bull Run to the south. No large scale clearing has been conducted in this area, which is dominated by stands of mature oak and hickory and secondary vegetation. Natural levees are present along both Cub Run and Bull Run and both have secondary channels and oxbows along these levees. These elevated hardwood ridges overlooking the drainages would have provided ideal conditions for prehistoric occupation. Potential for prehistoric sites in this area is very high and would likely mirror that of the previously surveyed fourteen archaeological sites on the east side of Cub Run.
- Area 7, in the extreme southeast portion of the study site is bounded on the west by Cub Run, to the north by the Fairfax County UOSA sewage treatment plant, to the east by Ordway Road and to the south by Bull Run. The southern

section of Area 7 consists of a level floodplain. No clearing has been conducted in this area, which is dominated by stands of mature oak, sycamore and hickory with attendant secondary vegetation of holly and dogwood. Many of the larger trees indicate repeated flood episodes; groundcover in the floodplain is largely grasses and sedges. Natural levees are present along both drainages, and Cub Run and Bull Run both have secondary channels and oxbows along the levees.

The northern portion of Area 7 has been clear cut and planted in red cedar trees. These extend north to a point near the crests of two ridges on the extreme northern edge of the study site. Relict hardwoods are present on the eastern ridge crest. Visible concrete foundation walls and corrugated steel roofing indicate that a structure was located on this landform. A cellular phone tower has been recently erected on the crest of the landform producing a scatter of historic ceramics and oyster shell that extends some 200 feet down slope from the crest. This suggests the possible presence of other, historic structures that may once have been located on the landform. The western landform has been severely impacted by clear-cutting and cedar tree plantings, with no visible cultural material noted.

Documentary and cartographic sources indicated that Area 7 was traversed by a section of the Centreville Confederate Military Railroad, a spur line constructed to link Manassas Junction to the Confederate winter camps at Centreville. A section of the railroad bed has been identified to the north of the study site, but the portion that would have been situated within the Bull Run Regional Park study site has not yet been inventoried with VDHR. It is possible that physical evidence of the spur line may be identified through more intensive subsurface testing or may be included in the Fairfax County Park Authority's *Civil War Sites Inventory*.

- Area 8, located in the extreme northeastern portion of the park site is the most extensively disturbed area within the study site. Development associated with the Special Events Center and construction of Interstate Route 66 crossing of Cub Run has seriously degraded the landscape and introduced considerable amounts of fill into the area. The western portion of Area 8, immediately adjacent to Cub Run consists of a broad floodplain with mature oak, sycamore and hickory that indicate evidence of repeated flood episodes. Natural levees with associated secondary channels and remnant oxbows exist along Cub Run. The terrain gradually increases east of Cub Run to the highest landforms, two ridges, in Area 8 in the extreme northeast portion of the site appears to offer the highest potential for the location of historic occupations.

- **Conclusion**

Despite its use as a recreational park over the past 40 years, the approximately 950- acre study site within Bull Run Regional Park offers considerable potential for both prehistoric and historic archaeological resources in numerous locations. In general, it is expected that historic domestic sites will be situated along the crests of high, broad ridges that dominate the central, western and extreme eastern portions of the property. These landforms also have a high potential for earlier, prehistoric occupations. It is predicted that the majority of resources that retain a high degree of integrity will be located within the woodland areas. Though no visible evidence of the Centreville Military Railroad, the first exclusively military rail line, has been identified within the park site, a nearby intact segment has been determined to be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Any segment within Bull Run Regional Park would likely be deemed eligible as well.

(Refer to [Appendix D: Cultural Resources Assessment of Bull Run Regional Park](#) and [Appendix E: Resource Inventory Maps](#) for details.)

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Recreational and Facility Resources

Bull Run Regional Park recreational resources are intended to serve a broad cross section of the public, providing: a complex of sports facilities and areas of intense use; specialized programs and events; and non-structured activities and undeveloped areas that are less intensely used. Trails for non-vehicular use exist throughout the park providing access for hikers and equestrians to various areas within the park and links to other trails outside the park.

The core of the developed recreational facilities located in the northeast and central sections of the site includes: a tournament soccer field complex, drawing soccer teams from throughout northern Virginia and the region; a public shooting center for skeet, trap, sporting clays and indoor archery that provides opportunities for shooting and instruction; a swimming pool complex; a miniature golf course; a family and a group campground; and the Bull Run Special Events Center, an outdoor arena for performing arts, festivals and other large events.

Two major trails for hikers and equestrians traverse the park, allowing visitors to experience the varied topography, flora and fauna of the site. The White trail is a loop trail restricted to the confines of the park. Designated for equestrian use, several parking areas are available for horse trailer parking. The other trail of major importance is the 17 _ -mile Blue Trail that commences near the campground area of the park, continues southeast through adjacent NVRPA property and follows the Bull Run and Occoquan River shoreline through several parks to its conclusion at NVRPA's Fountainhead Regional Park.

The majority of the park's buildings are located within the core recreation I

area; Park roads are maintained by NVRPA. Northern Virginia Electric Power provides electric service to the park; domestic water is supplied from wells throughout the park; sewage disposal is provided by connections to the Upper Occoquan Sewage Authority (UOSA). Other infrastructure within the park includes natural gas pipelines, electrical power lines, sanitary sewer lines and a cellular phone tower. [Appendix C](#): *Natural Resource Inventory and Existing Conditions Assessment Report for Bull Run Regional Park*, and [Appendix E](#): *Resource Inventory Maps* for details.)

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H. SITE CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The *Natural and Cultural Resource Inventories and Existing Conditions Assessment Reports for Bull Run Regional Park* identifies areas within the park that present possible constraints and opportunities for future development of the site.

Constraints

For the purposes of this plan, site constraints are defined as areas within the park where the condition of a certain resource or physical site conditions presents a significant restriction for development.

Poor soils, wetlands, the 100-year flood plain and Fairfax County's designated Resource Protection Areas (RPA's) limit development opportunities for approximately 70 percent of the park study site. Steep slopes and sensitive resources, including significant trees, sensitive natural communities and known archaeological sites exist particularly along Cub Run and Bull Run.

Constraints to site development that could not be mapped relate to the presence of previously unidentified threatened or endangered species and archaeological sites. Potential for these resources exist within the park property, requiring further, site-specific investigations. These should be included for any proposed development during the design/development process to ensure avoidance or minimization of any adverse impacts on those resources.

Additional constraints associated with the future site development may include constraints that are not under the control of NVRPA, including possible development of county-wide or interstate roads, lack of available public utilities or adverse effects to the park resulting from decision making by other authorities outside of NVRPA.

Road projects and studies in the vicinity as of 2002 include the Interstate Route 66 Widening/ Metro Rail Extension, Tri County Parkway, Western Transportation Corridor Study and the Route 234 Bypass Project. All of these proposed projects could directly impact Bull Run Regional Park, if constructed.

Existing site development or current uses such as: existing buildings and infrastructure, utility easements and locations and sensitive resource areas including the shot fallout area of the shooting center, may preclude use of

certain areas for other purposes.

Opportunities

Opportunities for recreational uses of additional areas within the park could include education and interpretation of the unique natural and cultural resources of the park, restoration or enhancement of existing environmental and historic resources, low impact activities and programming such as hiking, birding and primitive camping. Potential trail development of new trails, both aquatic and terrestrial, exist along Bull Run, Cub Run or elsewhere in the park.

Physical and environmental conditions may limit facility and infrastructure development to areas within the central portion of the study site, adjacent to the existing core facilities and the northeast corner of the site near the Special Events Center where park infrastructure is already in place, making future development more feasible.

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I. PARK RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ZONES

Resource management zones for Bull Run Regional Park conform to the resource management and use guidelines in NVRPA's *Policy Plan and Park Classification System*, for Regional Recreational/Special Multi-Use Parks and Regional Shoreline Parks.

These include a Recreation Zone, to accommodate a variety of compatible recreational facilities capable of withstanding intensive public use and a Natural Resource Protection Zone, for protecting and restoring important natural areas, including marshes, wetlands, wildlife habitats, the region's water resources and significant archaeological sites and scenic areas.

Identification and delineation of zone boundaries within Bull Run Regional Park was based upon physical site constraints and opportunities, existing cultural and environmental resources, current land use and potential for future uses and management within the park.

Cultural resources at Bull Run Regional Park may exist within any of the resource management zones. Therefore, cultural resource surveys will be conducted to identify potential sites or features prior to any potential site development or land-disturbing activity.

Recreation Zone

The Recreation Zone includes the "core" of developed recreational facilities and park infrastructure, including roads, parking areas and utilities. Expansion of the existing recreation zone may be possible in areas adjacent to the core facilities area, where existing infrastructure is already in place and physical site constraints and potential for sensitive resources is low.

The primary purpose of the Recreation Zone within Bull Run Regional Park is to provide park visitors with a variety of recreational and educational

experiences not generally available at local parks or recreational agencies. This zone may include existing or future recreational facilities, park infrastructure and visitor services. Research and analysis of existing resources will be completed prior to any site development or other land-disturbing activity.

Potential uses permitted:

- Low impact recreation
- High impact recreation
- Interpretation and education
- Resource management
- Research
- Support infrastructure

Natural Resource Protection Zone

Much of the area designated as the Natural Resource Protection Zone provides opportunities for resource enhancement, protection of the watershed, significant wildlife and plant species and preservation of prehistoric and historic archaeological sites and cultural resources.

The primary purpose of this zone is to protect existing resources and to identify areas that warrant special resource management. This management zone may include areas identified as outstanding natural or cultural resources or areas considered un-developable because of site constraints. Human impact to the environment shall be minimal. Vehicular traffic, structures and facilities will be strictly regulated.

Potential uses permitted:

- Low impact recreation
- Interpretation and education
- Resource management
- Research
- Limited support infrastructure

(Note: See [Bull Run Regional Park Resource Management Zones Map](#), for details.)

J. FUTURE PLANS AND STUDIES

Planning Projects

The General Management Plan is the foundation of the park planning process and provides the basic data and guidelines for all future actions. Plans and projects should be completed utilizing current data and implemented as funding, staffing and priorities allow. Subsequent plans to the GMP could include:

- Park Operations and Management Plan
- Interpretive Plan

- General Management Plan revisions

Research Projects and Studies

Future planning and management of Bull Run Regional Park could benefit from additional studies and research into the following areas as funding and staffing becomes available:

- Detailed natural resource inventories
- Detailed prehistoric and historic archaeological surveys
- Visitor use surveys (periodic)
- Volunteer program development

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K. LAND ACQUISITION

A stated goal of the NVRPA is to protect regionally significant resources through acquisition of strategic lands as they become available and to incorporate the management of these resources into General Management Plans. Acquisition of lands may proceed by the dedication process, purchase or other means.

As financial and staffing resources and other special opportunities become available, NVRPA should determine potential acquisition sites to provide areas for resource protection, recreational use and water access, as part of a regional greenway system.

L. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (CIP)

Design and construction projects are implemented through NVRPA's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) in order to provide sufficient Regional Park lands and facilities to meet the growing needs of Northern Virginians. Public hearings are held throughout the six member jurisdictions of NVRPA, to obtain citizen comment prior to adoption of the CIP. These comments are an important factor in considering future planning and development at all NVRPA parks.

Typically, the CIP involves a five-year plan for development projects throughout the Regional Park system. Additional elements of the CIP include land acquisition, development of interpretive and educational displays and providing park features to meet the needs of the disabled. All development plans should be implemented under the guidelines presented in the General Management Plan. Detailed resource surveys should be conducted to identify potential heritage resources and rare, threatened or endangered species, prior to potential site development or land disturbing activity.

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