



MCPB
Item #11
May 10, 2007

MEMORANDUM

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Mary R. Bradford, Director
Department of Parks

FROM: Terry H. Brooks, Division Chief
Special Program Coordinator

SUBJECT: Dog Park Policy Amendments

Staff Recommendation:

Approve the New Dog Park Policies highlighted in **bold** in the staff report to reflect the Department of Parks experiences in managing and developing dog parks in the Park System since June 2002.

Background:

In June 2002, the Planning Board authorized a pilot program for dog exercise areas based upon a staff report titled, *Locations, Funding, and Operations Criteria for Dog Exercise Areas (DEA's) in Montgomery County*, with input from County residents. (**See Attachment # 1**)

The principal recommendations of the report were:

1. All DEA's must have a Dog Owner's Group (DOG) which will enter into a standard partnership agreement with the agency;
2. Standard DEA's must be constructed according to the facility development guidelines contained in the DEA program;
3. Oversight of each DEA will be the joint responsibility of the sponsoring DOG, the facility users, park manager, and the Park Police;
4. Basic facility funding for all DEA's must be supported by the Capital Improvements Program (CIP). Any additional facility development features beyond those listed in the development guidelines can be supported by private donations; and
5. Each DEA shall post the standard rules and regulations listed in the 2002 DEA locations report for the facility operations.

6. The 2002 DEA facility locations report identified seven (7) sites in regional parks and 2 in local parks.
7. In October 2002, the Planning Board approved three sites located in regional and recreational parks. The three locations are:
 1. Wheaton Regional Park, Wheaton;
 2. Ridge Road Recreational Park, Germantown; and
 3. Black Hill Regional Park, Boyds/Clarksburg.
8. Rules were also adopted for all dog exercise areas (**See Attachment # 2**)

The DEA program at the time was supposed to be initiated by MCDog, Inc. in the form of local community petitions requesting the Planning Board's approval to develop new DEA's. Because the DEA program was a pilot project, the Department conducted a survey of the three operating dog parks in the Fall of 2004. (**See Attachment # 3**)

The purpose of the survey was to find out how well the existing dog park facilities were being used and if new policies and/or programs were requested by the public and/or required by the staff. The general results of the survey revealed:

1. The general public was very pleased to have these facilities in the park for off-lease exercise for their dogs.
2. The public appreciated the Parks Department's installation of trees, benches, mutt-mitts and trash cans for the comfort and convenience of the DEA patron.
3. The public appreciated the use of a bulletin board for posting the rules of the DEA and allowing the public to post local notices.
4. Patrons said their dog's behavior improved their socialization with other dogs.
5. Patrons preferred the use of sod to gravel because it was easier on their dog's feet in warm-hot weather, but understood the need for gravel during inclement weather conditions.
6. Facility peak period usage was early in the morning, 7:30 AM - 9:30 AM; early afternoon 4:30 PM – 7:30 PM; and weekends all day.
7. The average peak usage periods: 25% with 14-22 patrons; 50% with 8-13 patrons; and 25% with 7 or fewer patrons.
8. Vehicles used during the peak periods were around 12-14 with non-peak periods generating 11 or fewer vehicles.
9. The average travel time to the DEA's are: 11.2 minutes on average; 9.0 minutes to the Ridge Road Recreational Park facility; 9.2 minutes to the Wheaton Regional Park facility; and 19.5 minutes to the Black Hill Regional Park facility.
10. DEA use by park patrons averaged 2.7 times a week for all the dog parks.
11. Dog attendance averaged: 21% for small dogs (less than 30 pounds); 31% for mid-sized dogs (30-60 pounds); and 48% for large dogs (60 pounds and above).

12. Most dog park patrons surveyed wanted: larger dog parks (1+ acres); sod as the principal ground cover; dog parks for small and/or old dogs; more dog parks in local community parks for easier access; water; and more shade trees.

Park Managers wanted: less of a maintenance burden with the maintenance of heavy trash cans; more patron self-policing of dog park users that may not pick-up after their dogs in the dog park; and the delegation of all maintenance and management responsibilities assigned to the park staff.

The Department recognized the fact that MC Dog and any other DOG support group should only serve as friends groups and should not be responsible for any of the dog park maintenance or capital development.

As a result of the Department's experience with all dog parks over the course of the past 5 years, the Department recommends the following policy changes and/or adjustments to the Montgomery County M-NCPPC Dog Exercise Areas:

Montgomery County M-NCPPC Dog Park Policy Amendments:

1. **All dog exercise areas (DEA's) shall be called dog parks;** (Staff believes the term dog exercise areas (DEA's) are less public friendly and are not in keeping with the term most commonly used by the public for these facilities and that the Department's term should be in keeping with the public's.)
2. **Dog parks are to be considered a normal park amenity just like playgrounds or ballfields and should not be considered as park extras or unusual additions to parks. Future park developments as well as existing park renovations shall consider dog parks as a part of the park;**
3. **Dog parks shall continue to be a part of the Department of Parks Capital Improvements Program (CIP). Dog parks shall have a dedicated annual funding level with a prescribed number of dog parks developed each fiscal year based upon an adopted parks dog park plan;**
4. **All existing and future dog parks shall be identified on the Department of Parks web site for general public access and use of information;**
5. **CIP funded dog parks will continue to be scheduled, designed, managed and constructed by the Park Development Division's CIP project manager, just like the playground and ballfield programs;**
6. **Public petitions for dog parks will no longer be required to create new dog parks;**
7. **Dog Park waste pick-up in the dog park is the responsibility of the dog owner. The Department of Parks has the authority to require each dog owner pick-up after their dogs in order for the dog park user public to fully enjoy the facility. If the park manager observes a pattern of a lack of dog waste pick-up, the park manager, at their discretion and with the concurrence of the Director of Parks, may temporarily close the facility until such time as the dog park patrons abide by the rules of operation in this matter.**

Dog Parks - New Facility Development Amendments:

- 1. The minimum size of future dog parks should be 3 acres in size. All future dog parks should have sod as the preferred ground cover; the sodded areas should be split into two areas to allow for an "active use area" and a "rest area"; the two areas would be alternated, under the management of the park manager in order to maintain healthy sodded active use areas for dogs using the park.**
- 2. New, smaller, urban-scaled dog parks maybe developed in: (a) down-county areas with less open space opportunities; (b) in designated special dog parks for elderly or small dogs; or (c) special areas identified for the physically or mentally challenged dog owners.**
- 3. All dog park entrance holding areas (5'X15') should be constructed of earth tone colored environmentally sensitive material; contain a covered kiosk with benches and mutt-mitt dispensers.**
- 4. When water is available, dog parks should have water as a desired development amenity when it is financially practical.**
- 5. Dog parks should be allowed in local and community use parks, and under special use, design and maintenance funding allowance considerations, in urban parks as well.**
- 6. Dog parks with three or more acres maybe established without fences if there are natural barriers. Examples of natural barriers are: wooded areas, berms or other natural or man-made features that serve as barriers between the dog park area and the general use areas of the park, and the boundary of the dog park's perimeter is properly posted with dog park signs.**
- 7. Dog park friends groups are always more than welcome to work with the local park manager.**
- 8. Park Rangers may serve as one of the park staff monitors for dog parks along with the park manager, staff, and park police.**
- 9. Dog parks should become an optional park development amenity for future residential subdivisions. The creation of dog parks in privately owned and maintained subdivisions should serve to relieve the park system of some of the obligation for providing dog parks to the public.**
- 10. The future development sites of all dog parks shall be identified in a functional dog park development plan approved by the Planning Board. All local or neighborhood level dog parks should involve the active participation of the local residents whenever possible in order to insure facility use and management compatibility. The Park Planning and Resource Division as well as the park manager shall manage the planning and site identification locations of all new dog parks;**
- 11. Lights in dog parks will be considered where practical and feasible. The placement and use of lights will only be used to extend the use of the dog park for normal park operating hours only. The placement of lights in dog parks will be made on a case-by-case basis with the approval of the park manager and the Director of Parks.**



THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

MCPB 10/24/02
AGENDA ITEM #15

October 18, 2002

MEMORANDUM

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

FROM: Terry H. Brooks, Special Program Coordinator
Office of the Director

SUBJECT: Dog Exercise Area Site Development Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the approval of these proposed development sites - Wheaton Regional Park, Black Hill Regional Park and Ridge Road Recreational Park.

Staff also recommends approval of agreements with Montgomery County Dog, Inc. as prescribed in the dog exercise area policy and program.

BACKGROUND:

In June 2002 the Planning Board adopted a policy and program to develop off-leash areas for dogs within the parks system. (See Attachment A for a copy of the adopted policy and program.)

The adopted policy required, among other things, that a dog owners group must be willing to enter into an agreement with the Commission to assist in the management, maintenance, and operation of each facility. Over the course of the past few weeks, staff has been working with Montgomery County Dog, Inc. (MC-DOG), a non-profit dog owner group with membership of well over 75 dog owners that live all across the county, to create partnerships at each of these sites.

MC-DOG has agreed to serve as our partner on all three sites. (See Attachment B for their letter of support.)

Each site was reviewed and evaluated for conformity with the adopted dog exercise area policy and guidelines by Park Management, Environmental, Design, and Community Based Planning staffs.

A detailed description of each park site, aerial photo, illustrative site plan and budget to develop each site may be found in Attachments C-1 through C-17.

DOG EXERCISE AREA FACILITY FUNDING:

The Planning Board approved funding in the Minor New Construction Local PDF 998799 in FY 03 to be distributed between planning, design, and construction of dog exercise area facilities along with other minor new construction projects. (See Attachments D-1 and D-2.)

DOG EXERCISE AREA FACILITY DEVELOPMENT SCHEDULE:

If the Planning Board approves the three sites recommended, staff anticipates that the facilities recommended for both Wheaton Regional Park and Black Hill Regional Park will be completed prior to the end of the calendar year. The third site, located at Ridge Road Recreational Park, will be developed during the completion stages at this park and made available when the park is opened in the spring of 2003.

ATTACHMENT A

Policy:*

The Planning Board approves the development of off-leash areas for dog exercise areas in the Montgomery County Parks System subject to the management, site selection, and budget guidelines defined in the Dog Exercise Area Program.

Dog Exercise Area Program:

- 1. All dog exercise areas will require a Dog Owners Group (DOG) which must agree to enter into a standard partnership agreement with the Commission to assist in monitoring, maintaining, and managing each facility. The DOG shall also assist the Commission in informing and reminding the general public user to abide by the facility use rules and regulations.**
- 2. Standard dog exercise areas shall be constructed in accordance with the facility development guidelines contained in the Dog Exercise Area Program.**
- 3. Oversight of each dog exercise area will be the joint responsibility of the sponsoring organization DOG, the users, park management and the Maryland- National Capital Park Police.**
- 4. Basic facility funding for all dog exercise areas shall be supported by the CIP. Any additional facility development features beyond those identified in the facility development guidelines can be supported through private donations made through the Montgomery Parks Foundation. Other acceptable sponsoring groups shall also include: retail partners, local community groups, and private corporate donors.**
- 5. Each dog exercise area shall have sufficient funds to maintain the facility prior to construction.**
- 6. The standard rules and regulations contained in the Dog Exercise Area report for the operation of the facility will be posted at each site.**
- 7. The exact location and development feasibility of all sites selected for dog exercise areas shall be decided using the Commission's standard facility planning process prior to development. Both the staff and the public may propose site locations if they comply with the standard site location criteria. Special attention relative to site development feasibility will be given to each site pursuant to the Commission's environmental guidelines for development.**
- 8. Minor adjustments to the Dog Exercise Area Program may be made by the Director as appropriate.**
- 9. The development of all dog exercise areas and the agreements with all Dog Owner Groups (DOG) must be approved by the Planning Board.**

Adopted June 20, 2002

Derick Berlage
Chairman, Montgomery County Planning Board, MNCPPC
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910

October 7, 2002

Dear Chairman Berlage:

I am writing to you on behalf of the Montgomery County-Dog Owners Group (MC-DOG), which represents more than 50 dog owners across the county, to make a formal request for Dog Parks (off-leash dog exercise areas) to be created in several locations in the county.

As you know, we have been meeting regularly with the M-NCPPC staff to discuss, among other topics, the design and needs, long-term operation and maintenance, and daily administration and management as well as optimal sites for the Dog Parks. In concurrence with their recommendations, we have settled on three locations with which to begin. Those sites are parcels within Wheaton Regional Park, Black Hill Regional Park in Boyds and at the Ridge Road Recreational Park that is currently under construction in Germantown. MC-DOG wishes to partner with MNCPPC in the upkeep and administration of the proposed parks.

By way of background, MC-DOG's board of directors has been meeting on a weekly basis since February in an effort to organize dog owners all over the county. We have become incorporated, created a web site, www.mc-dog.org, and formed committees that have, among other things, proposed a set of rules for users of the Dog Parks, formed criteria for potential future Dog Park sites, and created plans for grassroots outreach within communities.

MC-DOG is, in fact, acting as an umbrella organization for other, more localized dog owners groups that have expressed a strong desire for parks in their communities. We have had tremendous success in establishing support for each of the proposed sites, and have rosters of dog owners who wish to take responsibility for the administration of the parks on a daily basis, including enforcing the rules and ensuring that each site offers dogs the socialization they require to remain good canine citizens. For each site, three MC-DOG members have agreed to undergo special Park Police training so that they may act as "key leaders" in the administration of the parks, working with Parks Police and M-NCPPC.

Given the level of support we have received, we wish to work with the Commission on other sites in the future. The site proposed by the MNCPPC staff at the Northwest Branch Regional Park off of Bonifant and Layhill Roads, for example, has garnered the support of more than 30 dog owners in the surrounding communities, including many residents of the Leisure World retirement community. We also have received strong support from dog owner communities at the Cabin John Regional Park, the Waters Landing Local Park in Germantown, and the Olney Manor Recreational Park.

In sum, we wish to establish a lasting partnership with M-NCPPC so that the many dogs and their owners who live in Montgomery County may have safe and healthy recreational opportunities. We wish to begin with the three sites noted above in Wheaton, Germantown, and Boyds.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Jeff Gritz
President, MC DOG

cc: Terry Brooks, special program coordinator

***Wheaton Regional Park—Orebaugh Avenue entrance, Wheaton
(Frank Rubini Athletic Complex area)***

Site Description:

The proposed site is just north of the old ice rink. An attractive, flat, grassy area, the site has a triangular shape and is over one-half acre in size. The site contains a number of trees and is also bordered by woods on two sides. A woodlands trail as well as parking are adjacent to the area. The site incorporates an existing gravel path leading to Pine Lake. This path would be relocated to the west of the exercise area near the edge of the trees.

Site Advantages:

- The site is an attractive, flat grassy area with many trees
- Wheaton Regional Park already serves many dog-walkers in the area
- The parking and ambient lighting from the old ice rink would serve the site
- The site is easily accessible for users, but removed from potentially incompatible activities or neighbors

Site Requirements

- Fencing
- Double-gated entrance
- Mutt dispensers or containers for waste bags
- Signage
- Posted rules
- Trash cans
- Relocate gravel path to west of exercise area

Optional Improvements

- Water fountain

Wheaton Regional Park D.E.A. Site

Revised 10/15/02

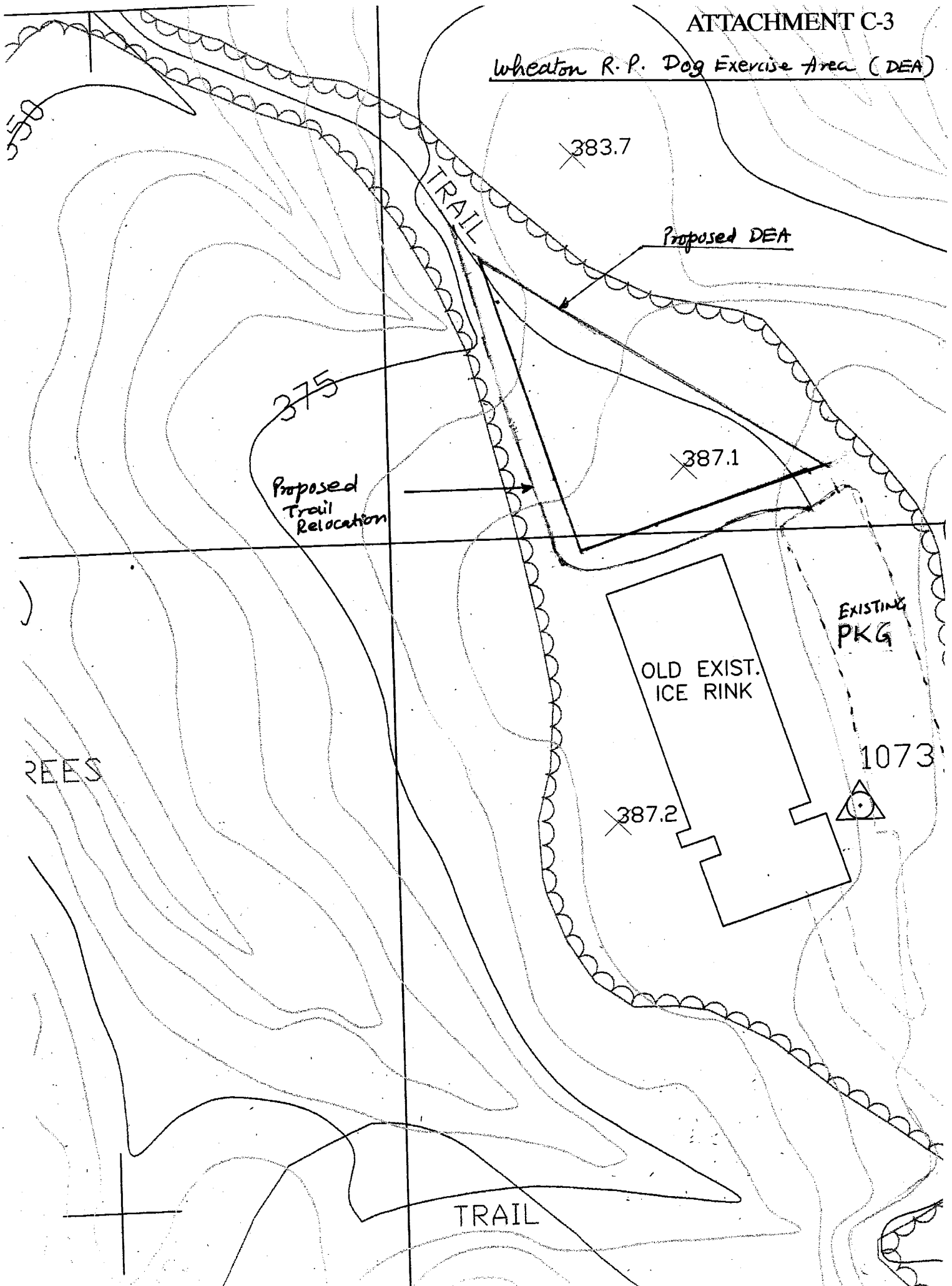
Cost Estimate

ITEM NO	DESCRIPTION	Quantity	Unit	UNIT PRICE	TOTAL
1	6 ft. high chain link fencing with black vinyl coating	840	Linear feet	\$15 per Linear Feet	\$12,600
2	4 ft. x 6 ft. pedestrian entry gate	2	Each	\$350 per Each	\$700
3	12 ft. x 6 ft. equipment gate	1	Each	\$585 per Each	\$585
4	Park Benches	2	Each	\$500 per Each	\$1000
5	Trash Cans	2	Each	\$15 per Each	\$30
6	Standard 12x18 sign	1	Each	\$50 per Each	\$50
7	Mutt Mitt dispensers (Park green)	1	Each	\$70 per Each	\$70
8	Mutt Mitts (800 mitts per carton)	1	Each	\$55 per Each	\$55
9.	Relocate Ex. Gravel Path	300	Square Yards	\$10 per Square Yard	\$3000
10.	Tree Protection Fence	1	Lump Sum	\$250 Lump Sum	\$250

TOTAL= \$18,340.00

Note: The cost estimate does not include concrete mow strip under chain link fence. It can be installed at an additional cost of \$10920.00 (840 L.F. x \$13 per L.F.).

Wheaton R.P. Dog Exercise Area (DEA)





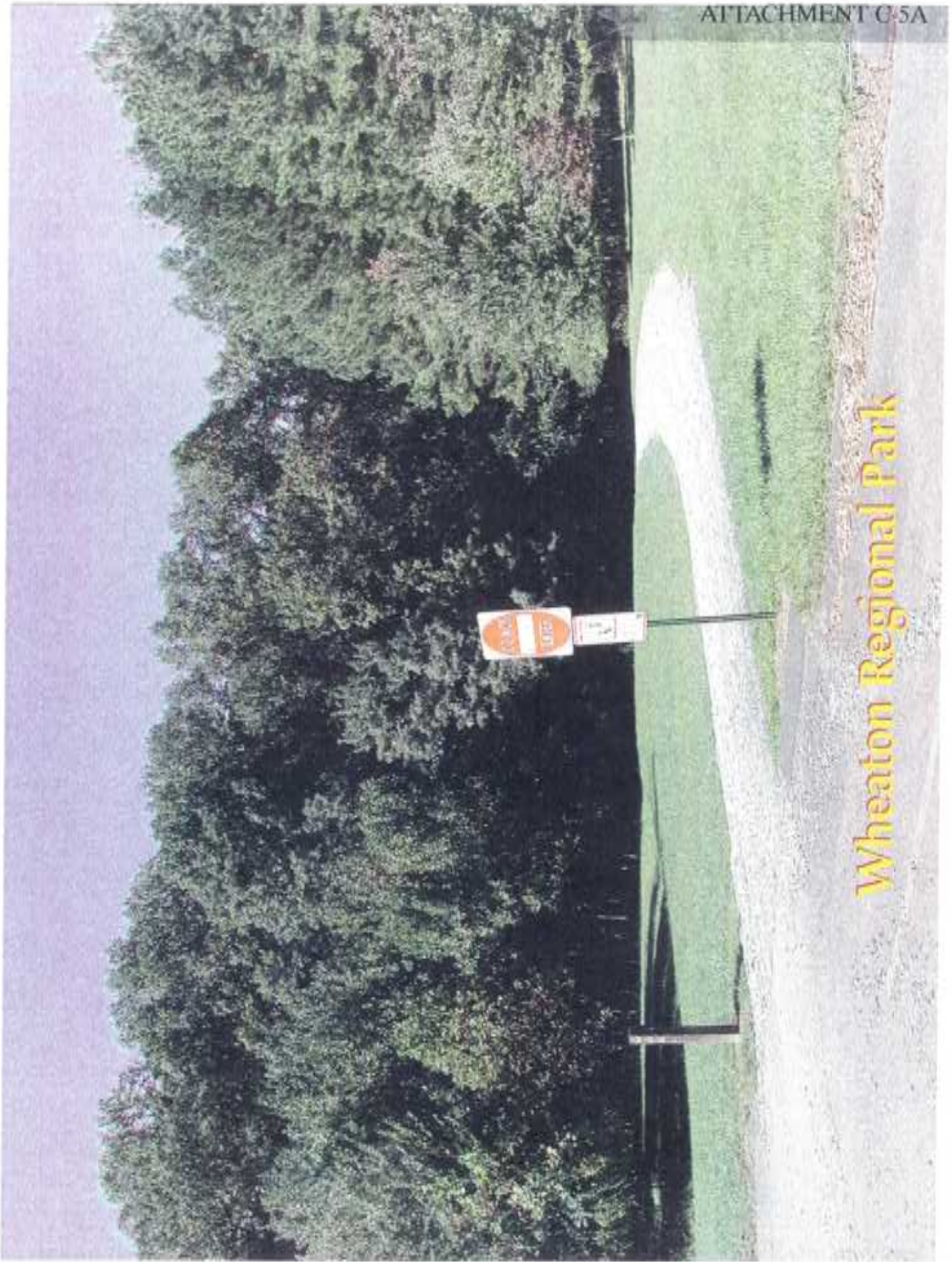
**Wheaton Regional Park
Orebaugh Avenue - Wheaton**



Site Location



Wheaton Regional Park



Wheaton Regional Park

Black Hill Regional Park—20030 Lake Ridge Dr., Boyds*Site Description:*

The proposed site, is off Black Hill Road just above the gravel parking area for the boat launching ramp on Little Seneca Lake. The site is on a knoll just north and east of the nature campfire ring. The park police headquarters is on the opposite side of Black Hill Road. The sizable site is basically an overgrown meadow with various underbrush and weeds, and with some shrubs and trees as well. The location includes a primary site on top of the knoll which will be currently developed and is generally flat. A reserve site, which is separated by a utility right-of-way, slopes somewhat downhill to the east. The park, including forests on two sides, surrounds the site. An existing trail through the park links with the general site area.

Site Advantages

- The meadow, lake, and adjacent woodlands provide an attractive, natural setting for a dog exercise area
- The large site can provide a reserve exercise area as well as a small dog area, and will serve the Germantown and Clarksburg vicinity
- The site is well buffered from outside areas; the site is also removed from the remainder of park and will not conflict with other park activities
- Parking is adjacent to the site, and trails are nearby

Site Requirements

- Fencing
- Double-gated entrances
- Mitt dispensers
- Signage
- Posted rules
- Trash cans
- Mowing, removal of most of the existing underbrush and weeds, and possibly some grass re-seeding
- Possibly, some tree-planting
- Water must be brought to the site from near-by locations since potential water hook-ups are not available on-site
- Buffers from the campfire ring and utility right-of-way

Optional Improvements

- Fencing for the puppy or small-dog play areas

Black Hill Regional Park D.E.A. Site

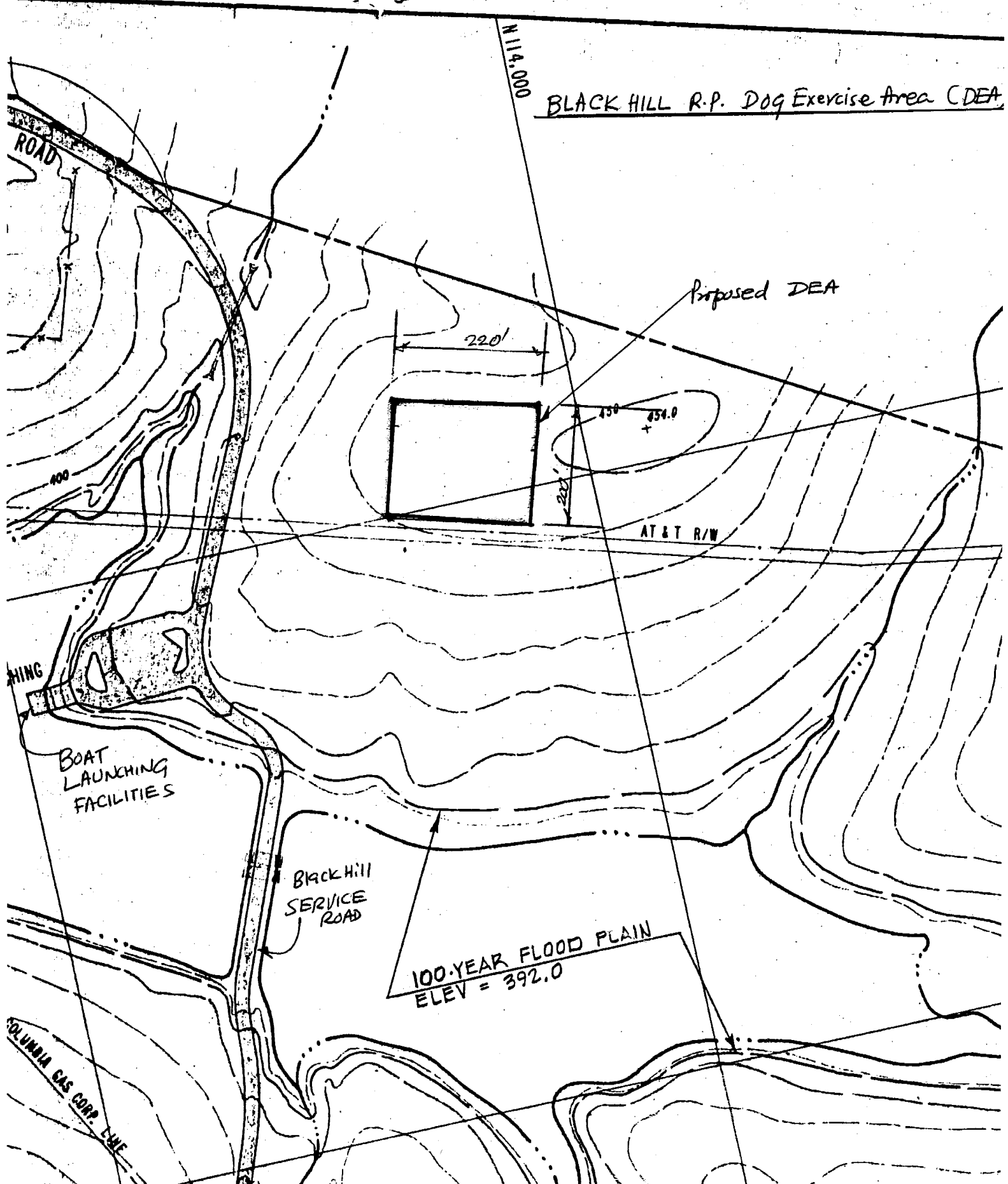
Revised Oct. 16, 2002

Cost Estimate

ITEM NO	DESCRIPTION	Quantity	UNIT	UNIT PRICE	TOTAL
1	6 ft. high chain link fencing with black vinyl coating and mow strip	860	Linear Feet	\$15 Per Linear Foot	\$12900
2	4 ft x 6 ft. pedestrian gate	2	EACH	\$350 Per EACH	\$700
3	12 ft. x 6 ft. equipment gate	1	EACH	\$585 Per Each	\$585
4	Park Benches	2	EACH	\$500 Per Each	\$1000
5	Trash Cans	2	EACH	\$15 Per Each	\$30
6	Standard 12x18 sign	1	EACH	\$50 Per Each	\$50
7	Mutt Mitt dispensers (Park green)	1	EACH	\$70 Per Each	\$70
8	Mutt Mitts (800 mitts per carton)	1	EACH	\$55 Per Each	\$55
9	Reseed the entire site (site clearing will be done by park manager)	1	Lump Sum	\$300 Lump Sum	\$300

TOTAL= \$15,690.00

Note: The cost estimate does not include concrete mow strip under chain link fence. The concrete mow strip can be installed at an additional cost of \$11,180.00 (860 L.F x \$13 per L.F.).



BLACK HILL R.P. Dog Exercise Area (DEA)

Proposed DEA

220'

AT&T R/W

BOAT LAUNCHING FACILITIES

Black Hill SERVICE ROAD

100-YEAR FLOOD PLAIN
ELEV = 392.0

COLUMBIA GAS CORP. LINE

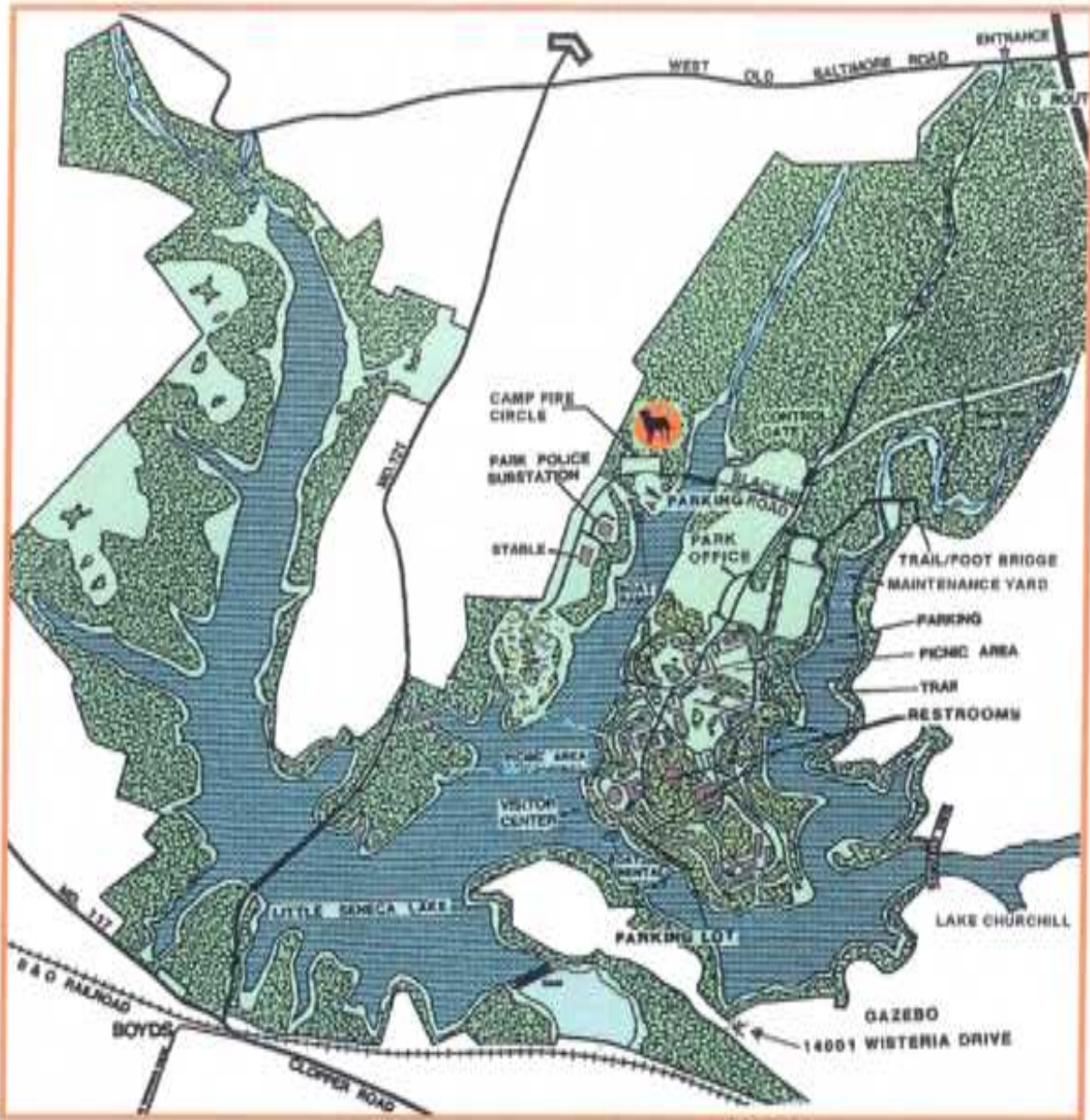
HING

ROAD

N 114,000

454.0

400



Black Hill Regional Park
20030 Lake Ridge Drive - Boyds



Site Location



Black Hill Regional Park



Black Hill Regional Park



Ridge Road Recreational Park—Frederick Rd., Brink Rd., and Father Hurley Blvd., Germantown

Site Description:

The proposed site is in a utility right-of-way perpendicular to Frederick Road; an internal connecting road and two parking lots are to its east. The long, grassy rectangular site is between two stormwater management ponds north of the soccer field in the northwest section of the park. The site is separated by a slight hill on its south side and various taller vegetation on its northern side from the ponds. Some trees will be planted in the southern section of the area.

Site Advantages:

- The site offers a flat grassy area for dog play, and is easily accessible for all users
- The site is buffered by park uses on three sides
- Parking is adjacent to the site
- The area would serve a heavily populated area of Germantown

Site Requirements

- Fencing
- Double-gated entranceway
- Mitt dispensers
- Signage
- Posted rules
- Trash cans
- 12-foot wide gates for utility company vehicular entrances
- Removal of steel barrier sections along park road for user entryway
- Some tree planting.

**Note: The agency has received permission from the Columbia Gas Transmission Corporation to use their right-of-way, and will coordinate final site plans with the company*

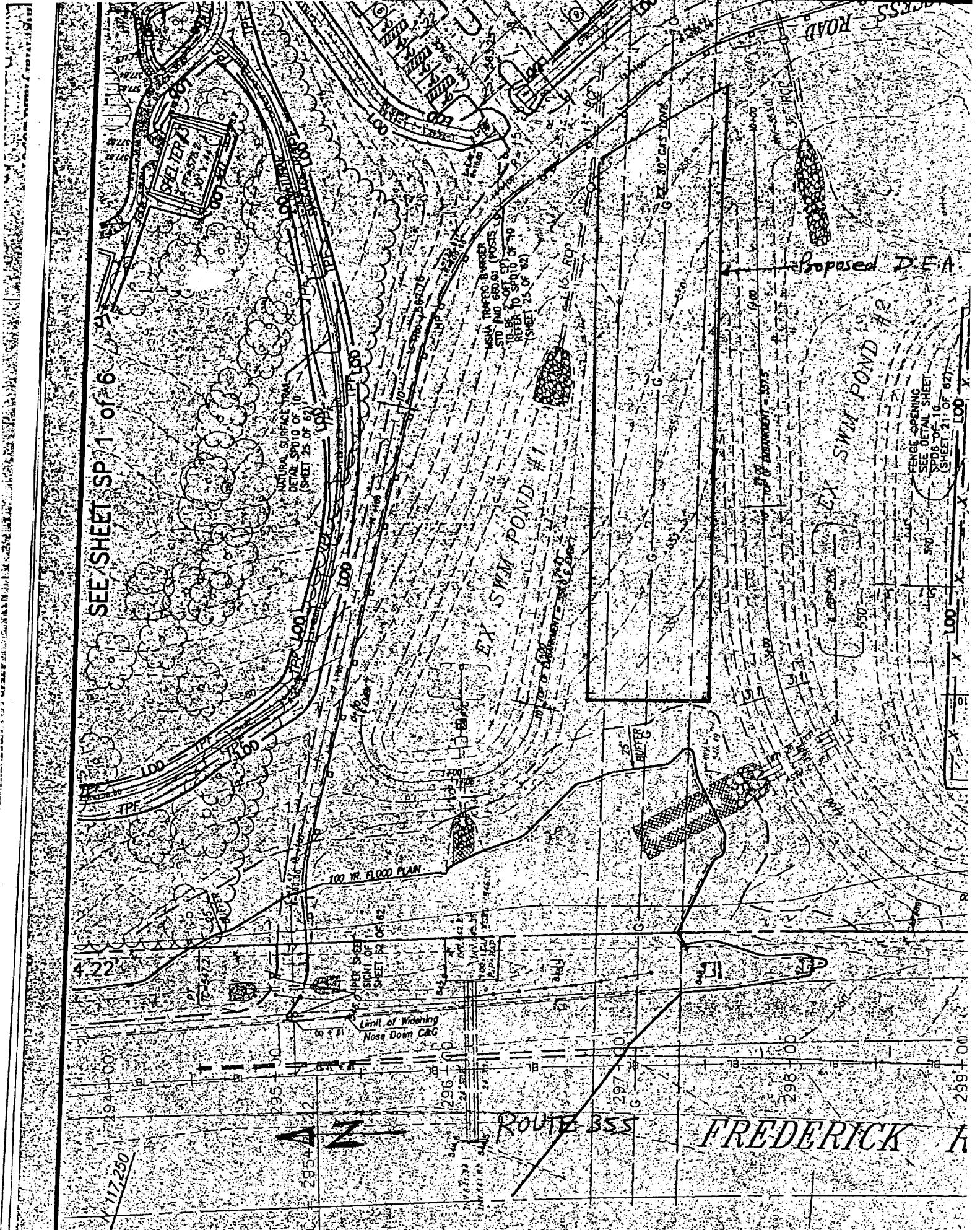
Ridge Road Recreational Park D.E.A. Site
Revised Oct. 15, 2002

Cost Estimate

ITEM NO	DESCRIPTION	Quantity	Unit	UNIT PRICE	TOTAL
1	6 ft. high chain link fencing with black vinyl coating	820	Linear Feet	\$15 per Linear Foot	\$12,300
2	4 ft. x 6 ft. pedestrian entry gate	2	Each	\$350 per each	\$700
3	12 ft. x 6 ft. equipment gate	1	Each	\$585 per each	\$585
4	Park Benches	2	Each	\$500 per each	\$1000
5	Trash Cans	2	Each	\$15 per each	\$30
6	Standard 12x18 sign	1	Each	\$50 per each	\$50
7	Mutt Mitt dispensers (Park green)	1	Each	\$70 per each	\$70
8	Mutt Mitts (800 mitts per carton)	1	Each	\$55 per each	\$55
9	Zoysia plugs for grass	23100	Square Feet	\$60 per 1000 Square foot	\$1380

TOTAL= \$16,170.00

Note: The cost estimate does not include concrete mow strip under chain link fence. It can be installed at an additional cost of \$10,660.00 (820 L.F. x \$13 per L.F.).



SEE SHEET SP 1 OF 6

NATURAL SURFACE TRAIL
DETAIL SP10 OF 10
(SHEET 25 OF 62)

TRAFFIC BARRIER
STM 140 660.01 (POSTS)
REFER TO SP10 OF 10
(SHEET 25 OF 62)

Proposed DEA

EX SWM POND #1

EX SWM POND #2

FENCE OPENING
SEE DETAIL SHEET
SP06 OF 11 OF 827
(SHEET 21 OF 827)

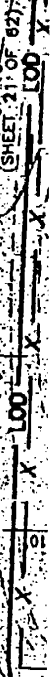
100 YR. FLOOD PLAN

SEE SHEET
SP10 OF 10
(SHEET 25 OF 62)

Limit of Widening
Nose Down C&G

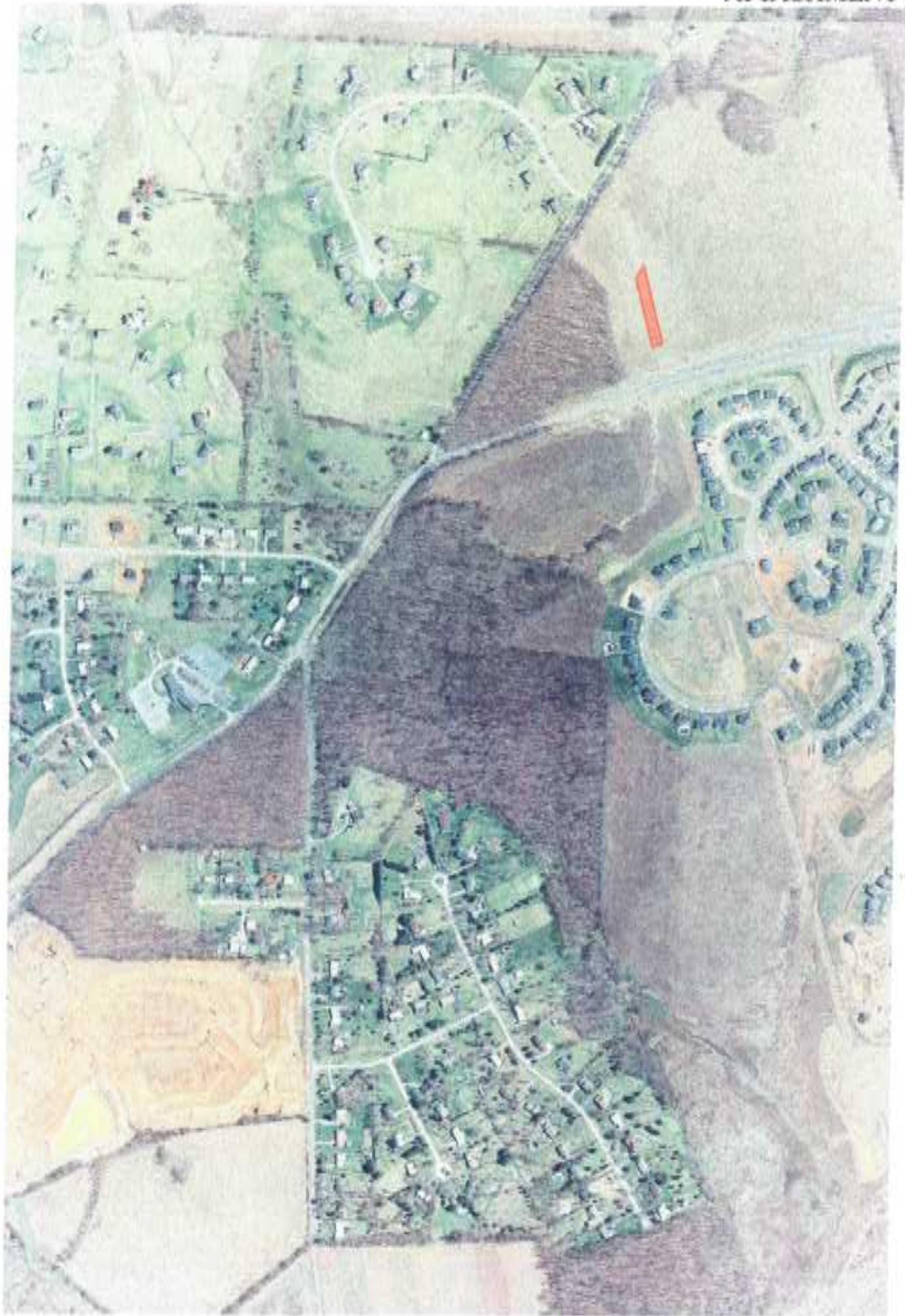
ROUTE 355

FREDERICK ROAD





Ridge Road Recreational Park
21155 Frederick Road - Germantown



Site Location



Ridge Road Recreational Park



Ridge Road Recreational Park



Minor New Construction - Local Parks -- No. 998799
(A Sub-Project of Minor New Construction -- No. 998762)

ADOPTED

Category
 Agency
 Planning Area
 Relocation Impact

M-NCPPC
 M-NCPPC
 Countywide

Date Last Modified
 Previous PDF Page Number
 Required Adequate Public Facility

December 27, 2001
 NONE
 NO

EXPENDITURE SCHEDULE (\$000)

Cost Element	Total	Thru FY01	Estimate FY02	Total 6 Years	FY03	FY04	FY05	FY06	FY07	FY08	Beyond 6 Years
Planning, Design and Supervision	259	9	38	212	23	69	30	30	30	30	0
Land	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Site Improvements and Utilities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Construction	875	22	165	688	127	81	120	120	120	120	0
Other											
Total	1,134	31	203	900	150	150	150	150	150	150	0

FUNDING SCHEDULE (\$000)

Program Open Space	150	0	97	53	53	0	0	0	0	0	0
G.O. Bonds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Park and Planning Bonds	984	31	106	847	97	150	150	150	150	150	0

ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (\$000)

Maintenance				21	1	4	4	4	4	4	0
Program-Staff				240	25	42	44	43	43	43	0
Program-Other				57	25	11	4	3	4	10	0
Net Impact				318	51	57	52	50	51	57	0
Workyears				2.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

APPROPRIATION AND EXPENDITURE DATA	COORDINATION	MAP
Date First Appropriation FY01 (\$000)		
Initial Cost Estimate		
First Cost Estimate		
Current Scope FY03		
Last FY's Cost Estimate		
Present Cost Estimate		
Appropriation Request FY03		
Appropriation Req. Est. FY04		
Supplemental Approp. Req. FY02		
Transfer		
Cumulative Appropriation		
Expenditures/Encumbrances		
Unencumbered Balance		
Partial Closeout Thru FY00		
New Partial Closeout FY01		
Total Partial Closeout		

ADOPTED

Minor New Construction -- No. 998762

Category **M-NCPPC**
 Agency **M-NCPPC**
 Planning Area **Countywide**
 Relocation Impact **None**

Date Last Modified
 Previous PDF Page Number
 Required Adequate Public Facility

January 8, 2002
 7-90 (02 App)
 NO

EXPENDITURE SCHEDULE (\$000)

Cost Element	Total	Thru FY01	Estimate FY02	Total 6 Years	FY03	FY04	FY05	FY06	FY07	FY08	Beyond 6 Years
Planning, Design and Supervision	506	76	145	285	28	73	32	84	34	34	0
Land	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Site Improvements and Utilities	39	39	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Construction	1,500	213	212	1,075	197	162	193	141	191	191	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	2,045	328	357	1,360	225	235	225	225	225	225	0

FUNDING SCHEDULE (\$000)

Program Open Space	150	0	97	53	53	0	0	0	0	0	0
State DNR (P&P only)	55	0	0	55	0	55	0	0	0	0	0
G.O. Bonds	856	297	154	405	75	30	75	75	75	75	0
Park and Planning Bonds	984	31	106	847	97	150	150	150	150	150	0

ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (\$000)

Maintenance				21	1	4	4	4	4	4	0
Program-Staff				240	25	42	44	43	43	43	0
Program-Other				57	25	11	4	3	4	10	0
Net Impact				318	51	57	52	50	51	57	0
Workyears				2.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

DESCRIPTION

This project consolidates minor new construction projects previously programmed in park-specific PDFs. Consolidation facilitates close-out of PDFs which have very infrequent and relatively small expenditures and which are not appropriate to level-of-effort renovation projects. No single minor new construction or reconstruction project shall exceed \$225,000, and most individual projects will cost much less than the \$225,000 maximum.

FY03-08: Projects include, but are not limited to, construction of parking lot improvements at Manor Oaks Local Park; planning, design, and conversion of tennis courts to informal roller hockey; planning, design, and construction of a dog park; planning and design for additional parking at Cloverly Local Park; modifications to Seneca Landing boat dock to make it conform to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA); construction of a horse shelter and fence at Park Police substation at Woodlawn Cultural Park; and planning, design and installation of lights at the parking lot and entrance to Park Police Headquarters at Saddlebrook.

JUSTIFICATION

PROS Plan, especially playground needs. In 1997 Park Police Community Services Unit conducted a security survey assessment of Saddlebrook headquarters facility based on the strategies and philosophy of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)--an accepted law enforcement standard. Identified lack of exterior lighting as security risk for employees and visitors to 24-hour facility.

Plans and Studies

PROS Plan. "Roller Hockey, In-Line Skating and Skateboarding Report," submitted to the Planning Board, July 12, 2001.

STATUS

Ongoing.

OTHER

* Expenditures will continue indefinitely.

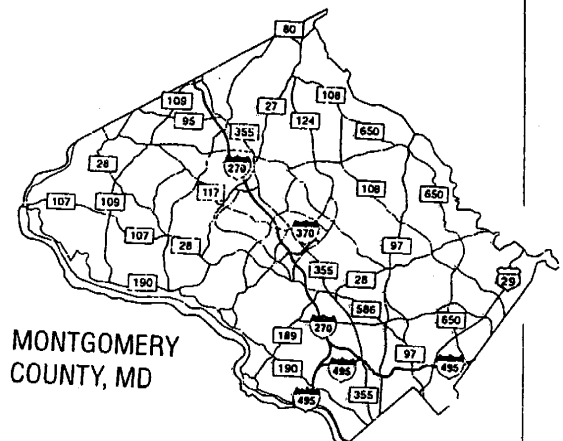
APPROPRIATION AND EXPENDITURE DATA

Date First Appropriation	FY01	(\$000)
Initial Cost Estimate		1,494
First Cost Estimate		
Current Scope	FY03	2,045
Last FY's Cost Estimate		1,683
Present Cost Estimate		2,045
Appropriation Request	FY03	202
Appropriation Req. Est.	FY04	210
Supplemental Approp. Req.	FY02	0
Transfer		0
Cumulative Appropriation		783
Expenditures/Encumbrances		397
Unencumbered Balance		386
Partial Closeout Thru	FY00	0
New Partial Closeout	FY01	0
Total Partial Closeout		0

COORDINATION

M-NCPPC asserts that this project conforms to the requirements of relevant local plans as required by the Maryland Economic Growth, Resource Protection and Planning Act.

MAP



Attachment # 2

M-NCPPC

Commission Adopted Policies for Dog Parks:

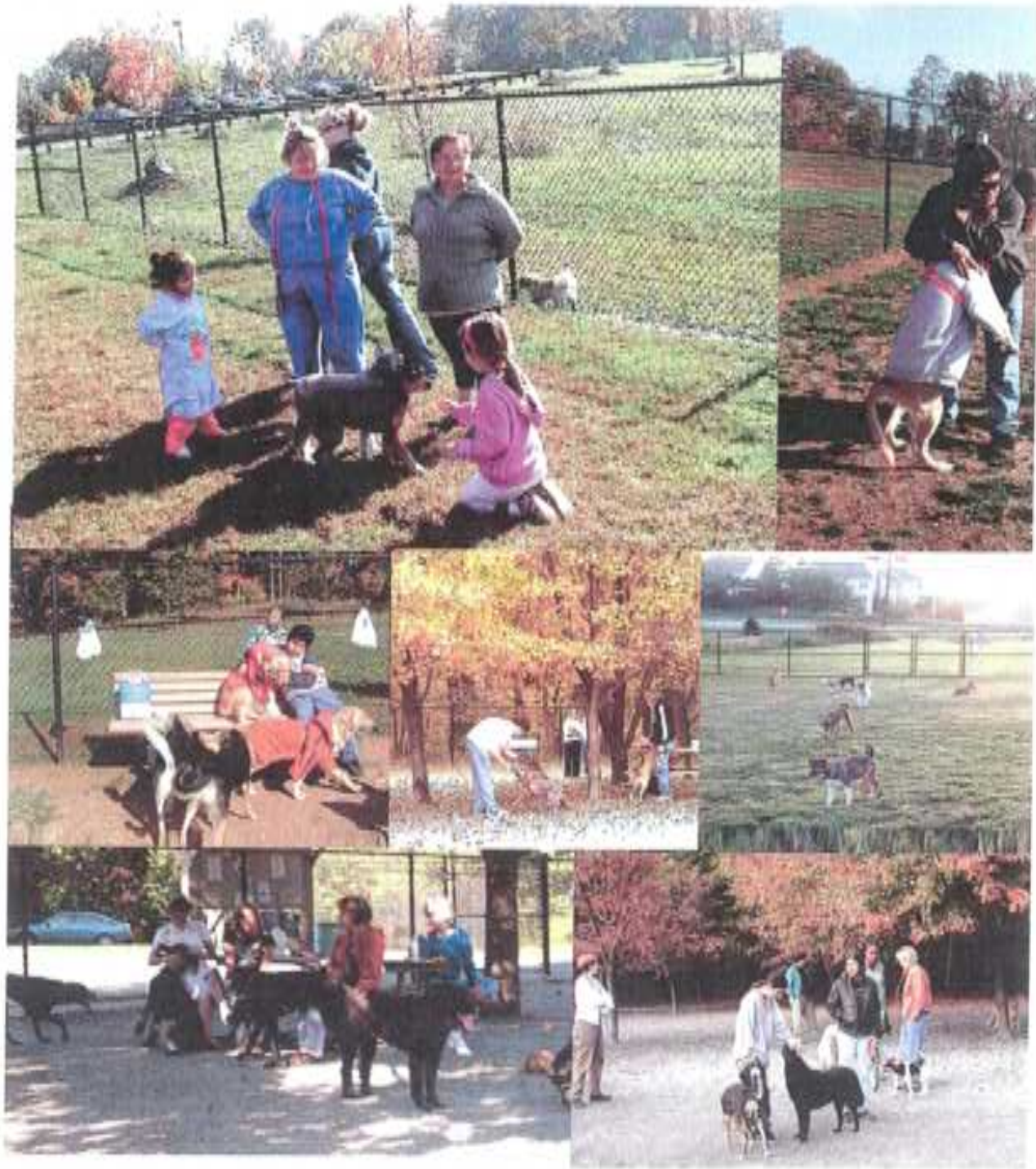
Adopted June 2002

Montgomery County Department of Parks

- Dogs must display current license and rabies vaccination tags.
- Dogs must be over 4 months old.
- Dog-handlers must leash their dogs when outside the dog park.
- Dog handlers must be in control of and in visual contact with their dogs at all times.
- No pet handlers under age 13.
- Parents must be in control of their children.
- No more than 3 dogs per handler.
- Dog handlers must pick up after their dogs.
- No smoking or eating by dog handlers.
- No aggressive dog behavior.
- No female dogs in heat.
- Hours of dog exercise area are the same as hours for the remainder of the park.
- Dog owners are liable for any injuries or damage caused by their dogs.
- No professional dog training unless approved by the Park Managers.
- No glass or metal containers.
- Users of dog exercise areas do so at their own risk.
- Additional rules or amendments may be developed, as needed, and approved by the Director of the Department of Parks.

September 2005

Fall 2004 Survey of Dog Exercise Areas Report



Montgomery County Department of Park and Planning
The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

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Introduction

BACKGROUND

During 2003, the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) opened its first three dog exercise areas (DEA's) to respond to the extensive public requests for these facilities. Demand for DEA's is generated by the estimated one-fourth to one-third of County households that owns dogs.

The Planning Board authorized the pilot program for the dog exercise areas in June 2002 by acting on the recommendations contained in a report entitled *Locations, Funding, and Operations Criteria for Dog Exercise Areas in Montgomery County Parks* with input from County residents. The principle recommendations of the report were:

1. All DEA's must have a Dog Owners' Group (DOG) which will enter into a standard partnership agreement with the agency.
2. Standard DEA's must be constructed according to the facility development guidelines contained in the DEA Program.
3. Oversight of each DEA will be the joint responsibility of the sponsoring DOG, the users, park management and Park Police.
4. Basic facility funding for all DEA's must be supported by the Capital Improvements Program (CIP). Any additional facility development features beyond those listed in the development guidelines can be supported by private donations.
5. Each DEA shall post standard rules and regulations listed in the 2002 Locations report for the facility operations.

The 2002 Locations report identifies seven sites in regional parks and two in local parks meeting the report's criteria as potential DEA locations. In October 2002, the Planning Board approved three of these sites located in regional and recreational parks (all DEA's require Planning Board approval). These latter two types of parks were chosen since they are usually on major roads, and often have parking and space to accommodate DEA's, and thus do not create traffic and other conflicts in local neighborhoods. The three locations are:

1. Wheaton Regional Park, Wheaton;
2. Ridge Road Recreational Park, Germantown; and
3. Black Hill Regional Park, Boyds/Clarksburg.

The Montgomery County Dog-Owners Group (MCDOG) formed in the spring of 2002 to be the "umbrella" DOG for County DEA's. This group gathered petitions requesting each of the three existing DEA's, has worked with the agency on DEA matters, and lobbied for the development of new facilities. In the summer of 2004, MCDOG submitted a petition with about 50 names for the development of a DEA in the vicinity of Northwest Branch Recreational Park in Norwood, and a group of dog-owners from the Leisure World

retirement village in the Olney area submitted a petition with nearly 100 names for the development of a DEA in East Norbeck Local Park near Olney.

On behalf of these groups, Councilmember Steven Silverman asked the Planning Board to identify alternative sites for two DEA's: one in the vicinity of the Leisure World retirement community near the intersection of Georgia Avenue and Norbeck Road in the northwest County area, and one in Cabin John Regional Park in the North Bethesda/Potomac area. (The latter park had been requested by MCDOG and many other dog-owners for several years.)

In response to the citizens' and the Councilmember's request, an agency staff task force was created early in September 2004 to recommend a prioritized list of sites for potential DEA's to the Planning Board. The task force examined various sites and presented a list of recommended sites to the Planning Board on January 20, 2005. The Planning Board approved the first-ranked sites of the task force for each of the requested dog parks, and forwarded these recommendations to the County Council. These recommendations were: (1) for the location requested near Leisure World, a site behind the ballfields in the area including the horseshoe pits at Olney Manor Recreational Park; and (2) a site at Cabin John Regional Park at the "Noah's Ark" area. No funding has been allocated for developing these DEA's.

PURPOSE OF THE SURVEY

To help plan future DEA's, staff believed more information on the operations, amount of use, and patrons' opinions of current dog parks was desirable. Staff was interested in their opinions on such matters as how the existing facilities were functioning, and the current and future needs for parking and other amenities. Information was also sought on patrons' preferred ground surfaces, and whether separate areas were needed for small dogs. Staff also needed to estimate the largest or "peak" crowds (in terms of patrons, dogs and parked vehicles) using the facilities, and to seek patrons' observations about the size of peak crowds and how well the facilities were handling these crowds. To help answer these questions, staff decided to conduct a brief survey of users during "peak-use" times, and to count the number of visitors and parked vehicles during the survey visits.

SURVEY DESIGN

The following survey form poses key questions for planning for future DEA's, but is brief.

1. Where do you live?
2. How long is your trip to the DEA (in minutes)?
3. How often do you come here?
4. How many people and dogs are in your party?
5. What size is your dog(s)?
6. What do you like about this DEA?
7. What don't you like about this DEA? and
8. Other requests/comments.

For those patrons with time to respond, staff asked if they thought small-dog areas were needed; what ground surface they preferred; the size of usual and peak crowds and similar questions.

Staff counted the number of patrons, dogs, and parked cars at the facility at the beginning and end of the visit for 16 of the 18 survey visits to determine peak use of the area. Staff conducted 145 surveys as follows: 66 surveys at Wheaton Regional Park, 48 surveys at Ridge Road Recreational Park, and 31 at Black Hill Regional Park. Patrons at the two "Upcounty" DEA's, Ridge Road Recreational Park and Black Hill Regional Park, were asked about their experiences at both facilities.

SURVEY SCHEDULING

Staff planned to conduct the surveys during high-use or "peak" periods to assess the size of the crowds using the facilities, to determine how the facilities were handling the crowds, and to be able to interview the maximum patrons. Thus, staff primarily conducted its visits after the end of the workday during the week and during the day on weekends, since staff was aware that these were periods of high-use at the DEA's. (Dog-owners generally exercise their dogs before and after work on weekdays and at variable times on weekends. Thus, weekends are always popular times for visiting the DEA's, and weekday evenings and late afternoons in the late spring and early fall are popular when they coincide with daylight and off-work hours. Also, the weather is more likely to be comfortable for DEA visits in the spring and fall than in other seasons.)

To meet our own program objectives, staff conducted the survey in the fall. On weekdays, surveys were usually between about 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. at Wheaton Regional Park and Ridge Road Recreational Park, just before sunset and the DEA's closing. These hours were a busy time at Wheaton Regional Park and Ridge Road Recreational Park. Staff learned, however, that Black Hill Regional Park was little used during those same autumn weekday hours, since it is farther away from most residential areas than the other two dog parks. Most patrons found that the drive to Black Hill Regional Park was too long to make before sunset at this time of year in the heavy evening traffic.

A number of surveys were conducted at all of the DEA's on weekends at various times between 10:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m., and a few during regular daytime hours on weekdays. Regular patrons were asked questions about the general use of the facility at other times.

Sample Survey Form

USER SURVEY OF DOG EXERCISE AREAS, SEPTEMBER, OCTOBER 2004 QUESTIONS ASKED USERS AND/OR OBSERVED												
No.	Park	Date	Weekday/ Weekend?	Where do you live?	How long is your trip to the dog exercise area?	How often do you come here?	No. of people in party?	No. of dogs	Size of dog(s)	What do you like about the dog exercise area?	What don't you like? (if anything)	Other requests/ comments

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission Dog Exercise Areas Fall 2004 Patron Survey

Wheaton Regional Park, Ridge Road Recreational Park, and Black Hill Regional Park: Counts of Patrons, Dogs and Vehicles

BLACK HILL REGIONAL PARK DOG EXERCISE AREA

Date	Weekday/ Weekend	Beginning time	No. of vehicles	Number of patrons	Number of dogs	Ratio of patrons to vehicles	End time	No. of vehicles	Number of patrons	Number of dogs	Ratio of patrons to vehicles
Oct. 10	weekend	2:45 p.m.	5	6	6	1.20	3:45 p.m.	4	5	5	1.25
Oct. 11	weekday	12:10 p.m.	1	1	1	1.00	12:50 p.m.	2	2	2	1.00
Oct. 12	weekday	12:50 p.m.	3	4	4	1.33	1:40 p.m.	3	4	4	1.33
Oct. 16	weekend	11:30 a.m.	3	5	5	1.67	12:50 p.m.	6	8	7	1.29
Oct. 23	weekend	11:15 a.m.	7	9	11	1.29	12:00 p.m.	7	9	13	1.43
Nov. 7	weekend	10:35 a.m.	7	14	10	2.00	11:25 p.m.	7	10	9	1.43

RIDGE ROAD RECREATIONAL PARK DOG EXERCISE AREA

Date	Weekday/ Weekend	Beginning time	No. of vehicles	Number of patrons	Number of dogs	Ratio of patrons to vehicles	End time	No. of vehicles	Number of patrons	Number of dogs	Ratio of patrons to vehicles
*Sept. 30	weekday	5:50 p.m.	11	14	15	1.27	6:50 p.m.	14	17	16	1.21
Oct. 10	weekend	4:15 p.m.	13	17	12	1.31	5:10 p.m.	12	16	14	1.33
Oct. 16	weekday	10:15 p.m.	8	8	8	1.00	11:10 a.m.	6	7	8	1.17
Oct. 23	weekend	10:05 a.m.	6	8	6	1.33	10:55 a.m.	14	22	25	1.57
Oct. 28	weekday	5:45 a.m.	11	17	13	1.55	6:45 p.m.	10	12	14	1.20

WHEATON REGIONAL PARK DOG EXERCISE AREA

Date	Weekday/ Weekend	Beginning time	No. of vehicles	Number of patrons	Number of dogs	Ratio of patrons to vehicles	End time	No. of vehicles	Number of patrons	Number of dogs	Ratio of patrons to vehicles
*Oct. 5	weekday	5:40 p.m.	n.c.	n.c.	n.c.	n.a.	6:35 p.m.	n.c.	n.c.	n.c.	n.a.
Oct. 10	weekend	6:00 p.m.	n.c.	n.c.	n.c.	1.00	6:35 p.m.	n.c.	n.c.	n.c.	n.a.
Oct. 11	weekday	11:30 p.m.	4	4	5	1.00	12:15 p.m.	3	4	5	1.33
Oct. 11	weekday	5:30 a.m.	13	13	12	1.00	12:15 p.m.	12	12	11	1.00
Oct. 23	weekend	1:30 p.m.	9	12	11	1.33	2:30 p.m.	10	13	18	1.30
Oct. 26	weekday	12:00 p.m.	11	17	13	1.55	6:20 p.m.	10	14	15	1.40
**Oct. 30	weekend	12:00 a.m.	n.c.	21	24	n.c.	1:00 p.m.	n.c.	11	10	n.a.

Total vehicles, patrons, dogs	112	170	156		120	166	176	
Average number of vehicles, Patrons and dogs/visit	7.5	10.6	9.8		8.0	10.4	11.0	1.3
Ratio of patrons to vehicles:					1.4			1.3

*On these early survey dates, the survey methods were in the trial stages, and the counts were not conducted. On October 5, however, staff did conduct a running count of patrons only and totaled about 35 to 40 patrons in the 55 minute period. October 10 at Wheaton was a short visit on an uncrowded day.
 **A hockey game was occurring at the same time as the survey, and the vehicles of D.E.A. - uses and hockey patrons were thus mixed together.

SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS


Chief results of the survey and recommendations are as follows:


- Most users are satisfied.
- Peak numbers counted are:
 - 15 to 25 dogs;
 - 14 to 22 patrons; and
 - 12 to 14 patrons' vehicles.
- Chief recommendations are:
 - Larger sizes needed for regional dog parks—minimum one-acre.
 - Separate areas requested for small dogs;
 - Trees and other shade sources stressed as important;
 - Benches, picnic tables, and amenities such as gazebos valued;
 - Patrons' opinions on ground surface varied.
 - Largest number prefer grass;
 - Many also like gravel, but stressed proper maintenance;
 - Some recommended other artificial surfaces;
 - Some mentioned half-grass and half-gravel; and
 - Proper and sufficient signage requested.




Locations of M-NCPPC Dog Exercise Areas in Montgomery County





 Dog Exercise Areas


 Regional/Recreational Parks with Dog Exercise Areas

Parks

 Existing

 Proposed





General Results

GENERAL COMMENTS

Patrons are delighted to have the DEA's. Users praise the agency highly for providing these recreational facilities and are generally pleased with their location, design, and maintenance. They especially enjoy the trees and picnic tables at Wheaton Regional Park and Black Hill Regional Park, and the grass and running area of the Ridge Road Recreational Park facility. They also greatly appreciate the sense of nature at Black Hill Regional Park, the gazebo at Wheaton Regional Park, and for many, the proximity of Wheaton Regional Park and Ridge Road Recreational Park. They are happy to have the various amenities provided, including the benches, mutt mitt dispensers, waste bags, trash cans, and kiosks. Many survey respondents issued only positive comments.

Most users believe the areas function well. Some described adjustment periods after the opening of the DEA's when users were learning appropriate behavior, but most think the operations in the facilities are fairly well adjusted now. Patrons enjoy the opportunity to regularly meet and socialize and various meeting groups have formed. People of all ages are using the areas and new and enthusiastic users appeared at almost every survey visit.

Dog-owners report their dogs enjoy the DEA's very much and many say their dogs' behavior has improved with DEA use. Staff observed that most dogs behaved well during survey visits. Most patrons believed that the dogs generally behaved properly, and that they were the most manageable when the crowds were not too large; unruly dog behavior was more likely on crowded days.

PEAK USAGE

Definition and Use of Peak Counts

Staff notes that "peak usage" or the number of users during times of particularly high use is a key factor in planning DEA's. Designers attempt to plan dog parks, as other park facilities, to comfortably handle "peak" crowds, so that the users can enjoy the park activity at such times, find a nearby parking space, and not be confronted by too many users for the size and design of the facility and its parking area. Also, designers try to avoid designing a facility that will be too small for the number of patrons that will be using the facility and its parking during most peak periods, and thereby potentially creating undesirable impacts for the remaining park and the community. For dog parks, the number of dogs at "peak periods" is especially relevant to the sizing and functioning of a facility, while the number of people is particularly important to sizing parking facilities.

As previously stated, staff visually counted the numbers of people (patrons), dogs, and parked vehicles at the beginning and again when leaving most survey visits. Since some users stayed during the entire length of the survey visit, staff only used the count taken when leaving the DEA for the survey tabulations. (During these simultaneous counts, staff noted each person and dog separately, although during the actual interviews, people and dogs coming together as one party were considered as a single interview, although individuals were noted.)

To measure "peak usage" in this survey, staff examined the user counts from the survey visits and decided to consider the highest 25 percent of the separate counts for dogs and patrons and the highest 27 percent of the separate counts for parked vehicles as "peak" counts. "Average" counts were considered those that were just less than peak counts, and represented 50 percent of the total counts for dogs and patrons and about 47 percent for parked vehicles. "Lows" are the remaining counts.

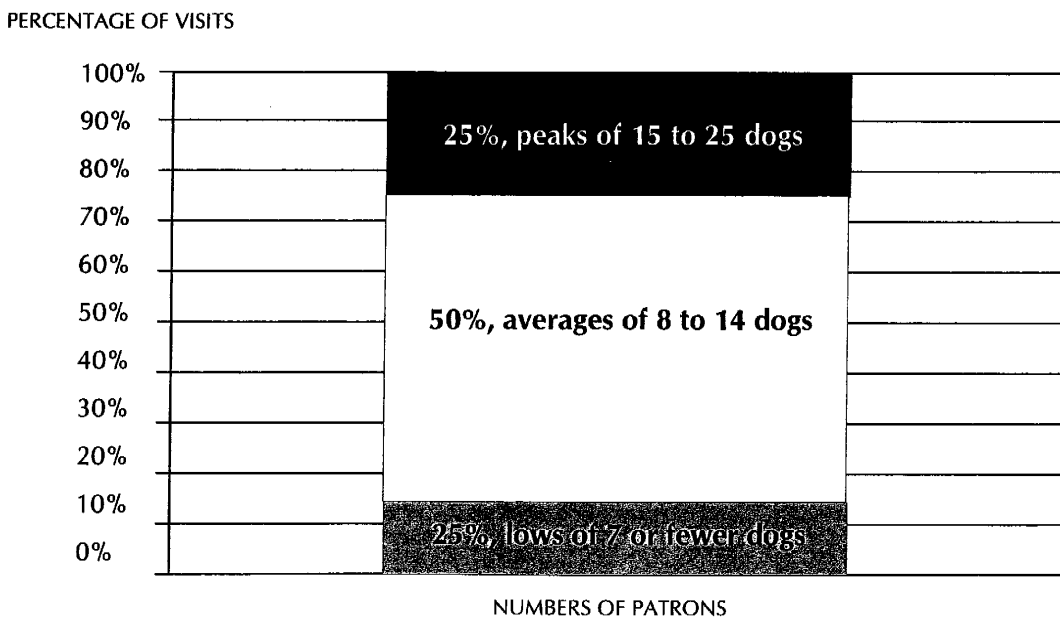
Staff found that in this survey, the numbers of people and dogs were about equal, with slightly more dogs than people. Most people came alone with one dog, but many people brought two dogs and a few brought three. Also, many people came with one other person and a number came with several.

Numbers of Users During Peak Times—Patrons, Dogs and Parked Vehicles

Counts of dogs at the end of 16 survey visits were as follows:

- Peaks of 15 to 25 dogs for 25 percent of the visits;
- Averages of 8 to 14 dogs for 50 percent of the visits; and
- Lows of seven or fewer dogs for the remaining visits.

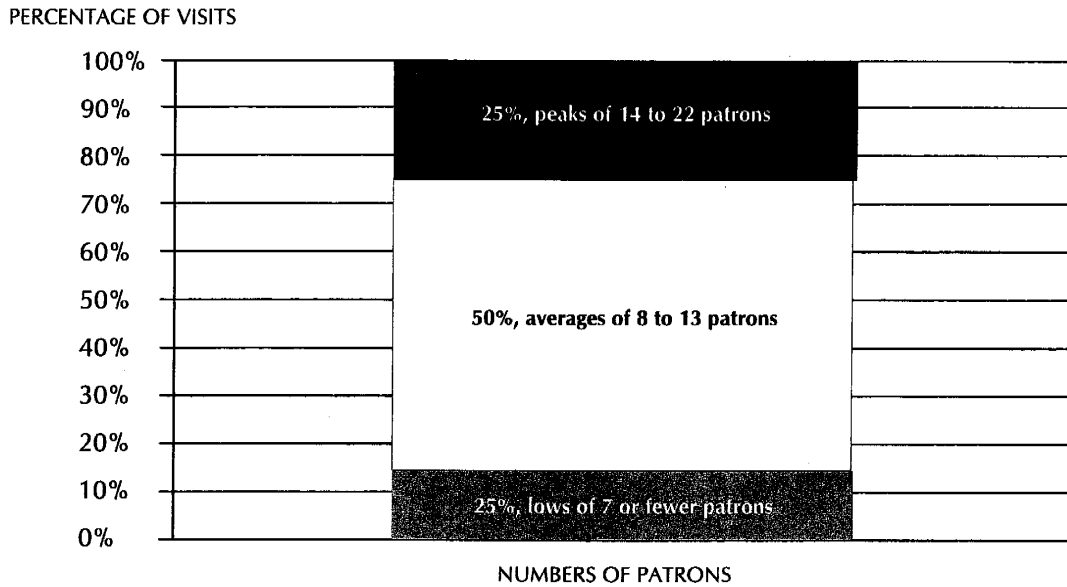
Number of Dogs at DEA's During Staff Surveys



Counts of patrons at the end of survey visits were:

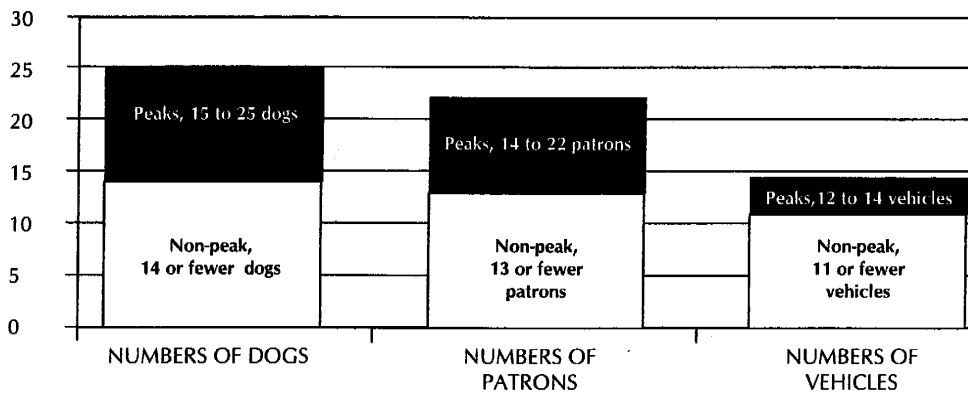
- Peaks of 14 to 22 patrons for 25 percent of the visits;
- Averages of 8 to 13 patrons for 50 percent of the visits; and
- Lows of seven or fewer patrons for the remaining visits.

Number of Patrons at DEA's During Staff Surveys

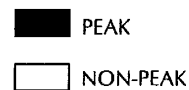


A comparison of the peaks for dogs, patrons, and parked vehicles during staff visits is shown in the following table.

Peak Usage of Dog Exercise Areas



Peak numbers of dogs, patrons, and vehicles are the highest 25 percent of the numbers counted at the end of the survey visits



The comparative chart relates the peak numbers already provided for dogs and patrons with parked vehicles. Staff notes that peaks of vehicles and patrons always occurred simultaneously; peaks of dogs and patrons were usually, but not always concurrent. A comparison of peak attendance during survey visits is as follows:

- Peaks of 12 to 14 parked vehicles were counted for 27 percent of the visits, compared to peaks of 15 to 25 dogs and 14 to 22 patrons for 25 percent of the visits; and
- During non-peak periods, maximums counted were 11 parked patrons vehicles, compared to 14 dogs and 13 patrons.

Staff notes that the largest crowds during survey visits were on the days with the best weather. On weekdays, users came fairly consistently at the end of the normal workday in large numbers. (Staff is aware that a smaller number of dog owners tend to come to the dog-parks regularly before work on weekday mornings. These dog owners were not interviewed at those times, but some were interviewed at other times during the survey.) On weekends, attendance varied, but patrons tended to congregate at certain times, especially in the morning.

Patrons Observations of Peak Crowds

A number of patrons who frequently attend the dog parks were asked their opinions of the peak and normal crowds they usually encounter on weekdays in the late afternoon/early evening and on weekends. Patrons commonly responded that peak crowds were about 25 to 30 people and 30 to 35 dogs; several patrons estimate peak crowds as high as 40 people and 40 or more dogs. Most responders estimated that the average crowd size on weekends and evenings was about 8 to 15 people and dogs. Dogs were estimated to outnumber people by about 20 percent.

Turnover Rate

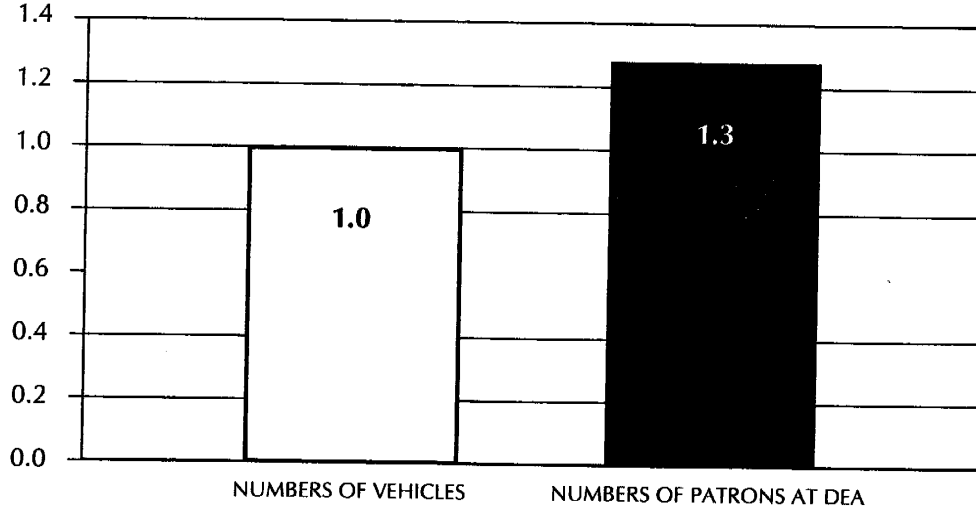
Turnover was quite rapid on the busiest survey days, especially at the end of some of the weekdays visits (between about 5:30 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.). At these times, patrons were coming or going nearly constantly. Over several such visits, staff estimated about 35 to 40 patrons visited in less than an hour. Turnover was slower during other visits.

Parking

Staff observed that the overall ratio of parked vehicles to patrons was one vehicle for every 1.3 patrons, as shown in the following table. Staff notes that parking is plentiful at both the Ridge Road Recreational Park and the Black Hill Regional Park DEA' s. The parking lot for the Wheaton Regional Park facility is shared with the hockey rink and with some hikers in the general Pine Lake area. Staff did not count parked vehicles at this latter dog park when hockey games were occurring.

Average Ratio of Parked Cars to Patrons at DEA's During Staff Visits

AVERAGE NUMBER OF PARKED
VEHICLES TO PATRONS



Some Patrons Walk to the Dog Parks

At Wheaton Regional Park, the only DEA with paths and roads to nearby homes that are suitable for walking, staff observed about one group of patrons walking to the dog park each visit. At the other DEA's, users walked to the area from elsewhere in the park by roads and paths. At Ridge Road Recreational Park, at least a couple of users were observed walking to the facility from outside the park.

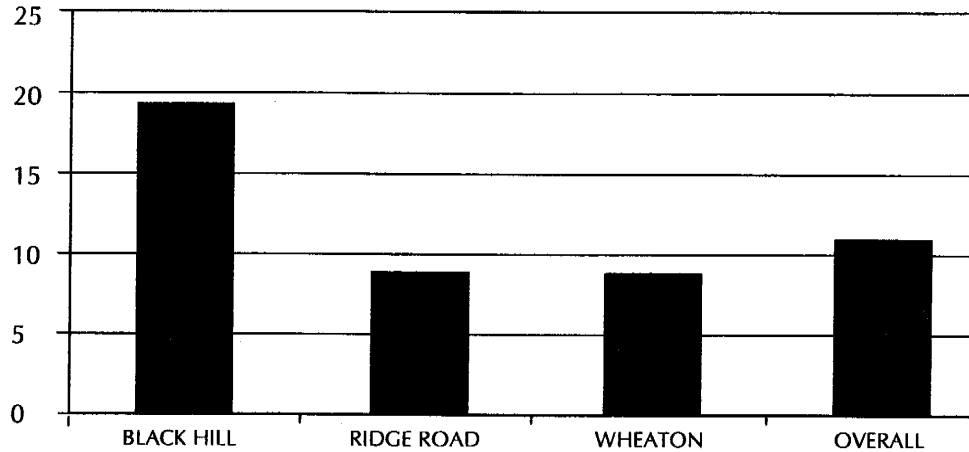
TRAVEL TIME

As shown in the following table, average patron travel time to the DEA's is:

- 11.2 minutes, on average to one of the three;
- 9.0 minutes to Ridge Road Recreational Park;
- 9.2 minutes to Wheaton Regional Park; and
- 19.5 minutes to Black Hill Regional Park, which is two-to-three miles from the main gate and farther from any dense residential development.

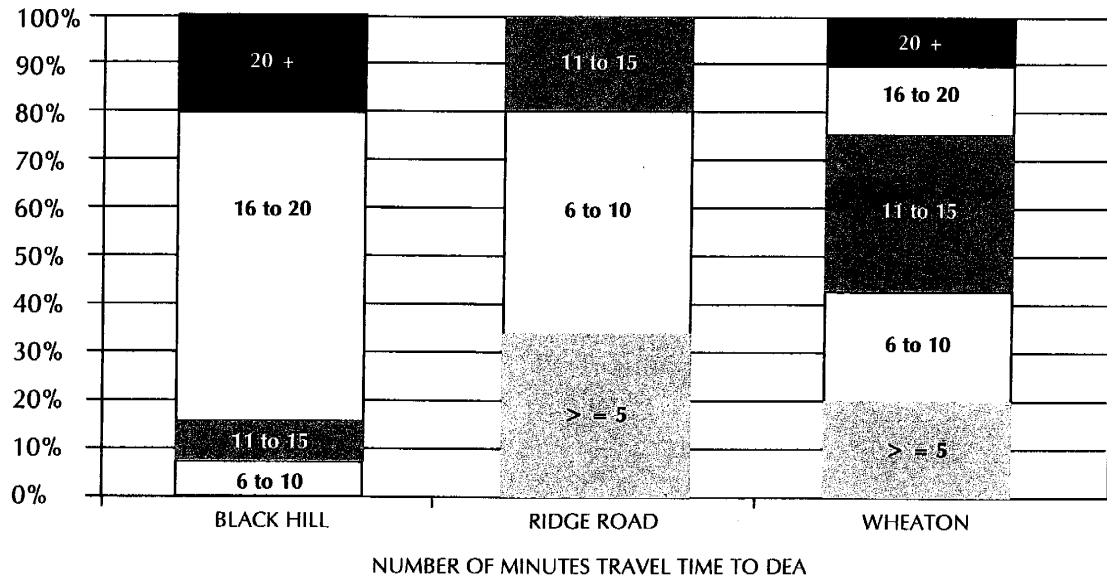
Average Travel Times to Dog Exercise Areas

AVERAGE NUMBER OF TRAVEL MINUTES



Travel Times to Each Dog Exercise Area

PERCENTAGE OF PATRONS



As shown in the above table, patron travel time to Black Hill is much longer than to the other two.

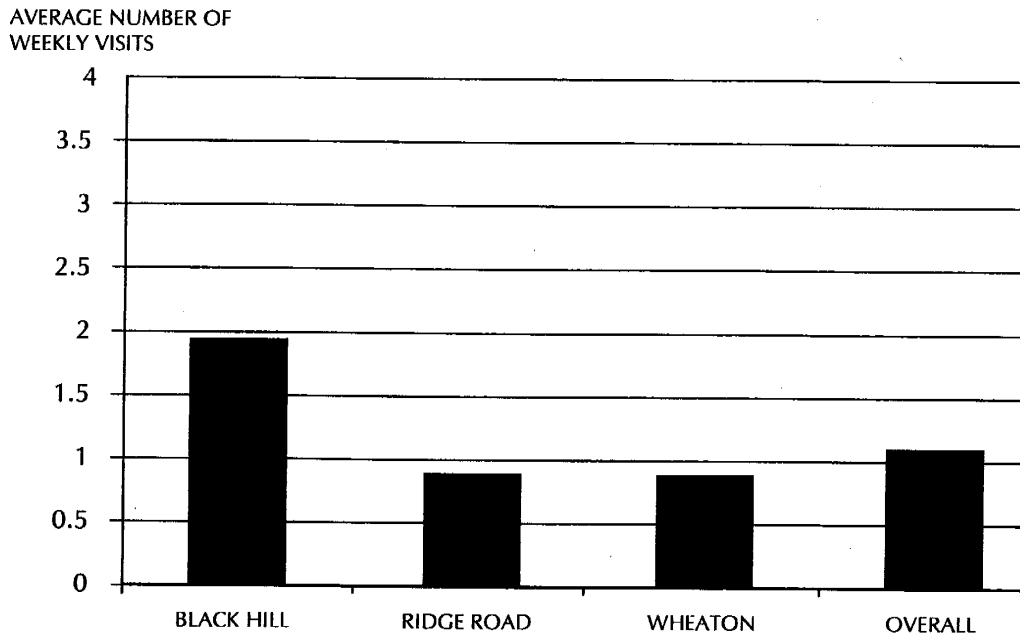
- 80 percent of the Ridge Road Recreational Park and 43 percent of the Wheaton Regional Park patrons, but only seven percent of those at Black Hill Regional Park reach the facility within ten minutes;
- Nearly 80 percent of the Black Hill Regional Park users travel 20 minutes or more to the dog park; none of the Ridge Road Recreational Park users, and only 10 percent of those at Wheaton Regional Park travel for that long; and

- 33 percent of the Ridge Road Recreational Park patrons and 20 percent of those at Wheaton Regional Park travel no more than 5 minutes to the DEA.

FREQUENCY OF USE

As shown by the following table, most users visit the DEA several times weekly.

Frequency of Visits to Dog Exercise Areas



Thus, patrons, on average, visit the individual DEA's:

- 3.6 times weekly at the Ridge Road Recreational Park;
- 2.8 times weekly at Black Hill Regional Park;
- 2.2 times weekly at Wheaton Regional Park; and
- 2.7 times on average to all of the dog parks.

Patrons say their average stay at the DEA is about 45 minutes except for some users at Black Hill Recreational Park, where a few groups of users meet daily and stay several hours at a time during good weather.

SIZE OF DOGS AT DEA'S

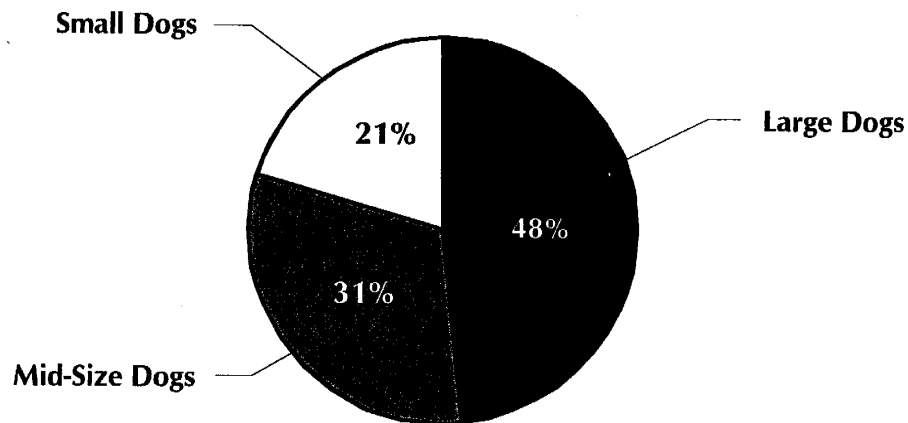
Since the beginning of the effort to establish County dog parks, a sizable segment of dog owners has wanted separate areas for small dogs and puppies (dogs under approximately 30 pounds or one year of age). During this survey, a number of dog-owners again stated that small-dog areas would be desirable. As many small dogs can be easily intimidated or even hurt by larger ones in dog parks (especially on crowded days), a separate area can be helpful. Many users were asked if they thought such separate areas were desirable. Also, staff visually identified and counted small dogs, mid-sized (about 30-60 pounds), and large ones, (60 pounds or more) to determine if small dogs seemed under-represented among the users.

Staff found that the proportion of small dogs to large ones varied at the three dog parks, but that small dogs seemed to be under-represented at all three. As illustrated in the following chart, the size of dogs identified during survey visits is as follows:

- 21 percent of the dogs were identified as small;
- 31 percent as mid-size; and
- 48 percent as large.

Size of Dogs Visiting DEA's

ONLY 21 PERCENT OF DOGS AT DEA'S ARE SMALL; 48 PERCENT ARE LARGE



PERCENT OF DOGS OBSERVED DURING SURVEY VISITS

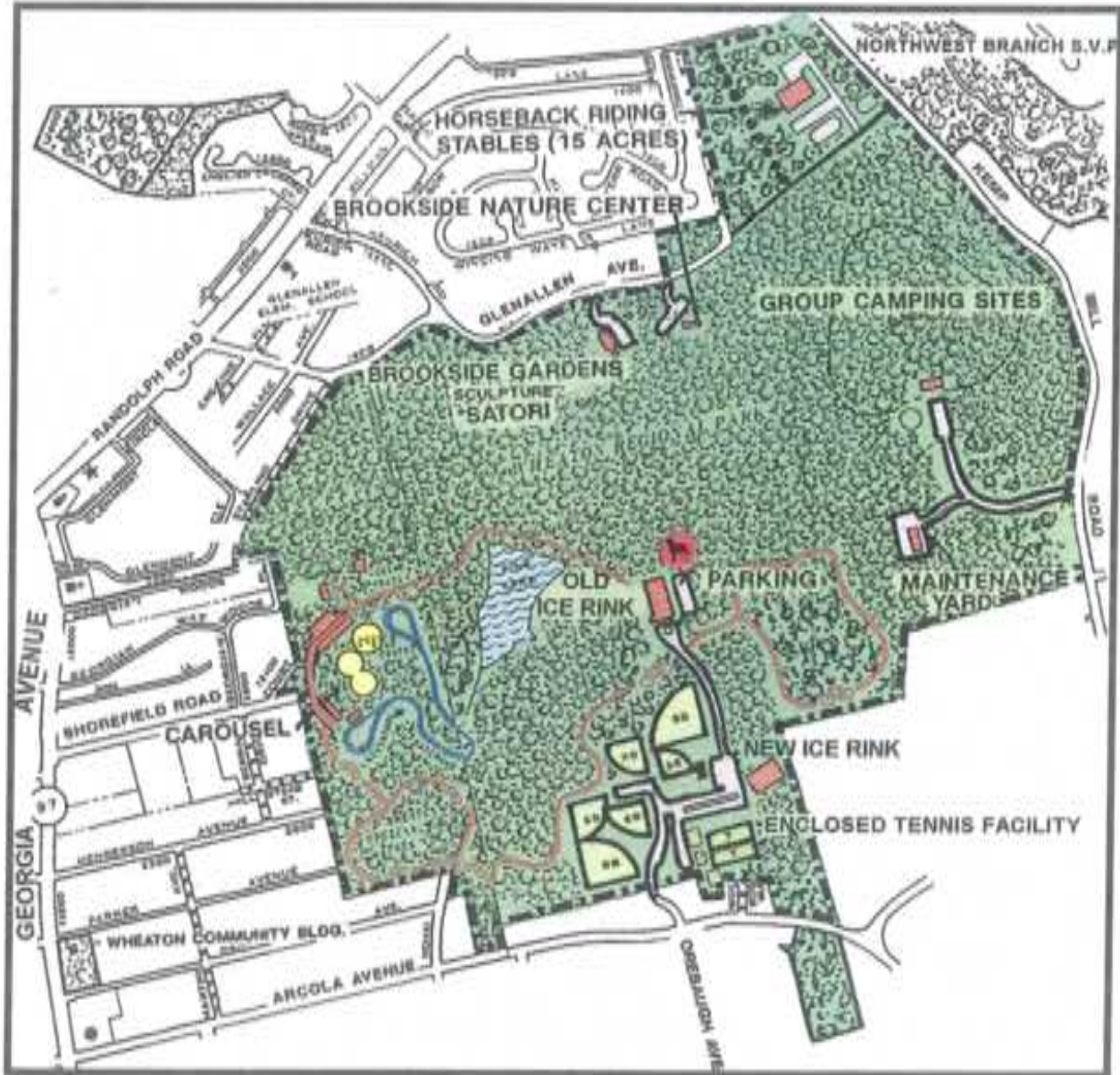
Staff found the greatest proportion of large dogs (66 percent) and the lowest percentage of small dogs (13 percent) at Black Hill Regional Park.

WHERE PATRONS LIVE RELATIVE TO DEA'S

Patrons travel to the DEA's from most parts of the County and beyond, but mostly from the nearest urban areas. For Wheaton Regional Park, the service area stretches from the District of Columbia to Norbeck, and Burtonsville to Bethesda. The service areas for Ridge Road Recreational Park and Black Hill Regional Park substantially overlap. For Ridge Road Recreational Park, the service area reaches from Rockville to Clarksburg, and as far north as Mount Airy. The service area of Black Hill Regional Park stretches from Rockville to Frederick County, and Brookeville to Gaithersburg. Details on the living areas of patrons at the individual DEA's are given on the following pages.



Wheaton Regional Park
2000 Shorefield Road, Wheaton



Results of Surveys at the Individual Dog Exercise Areas

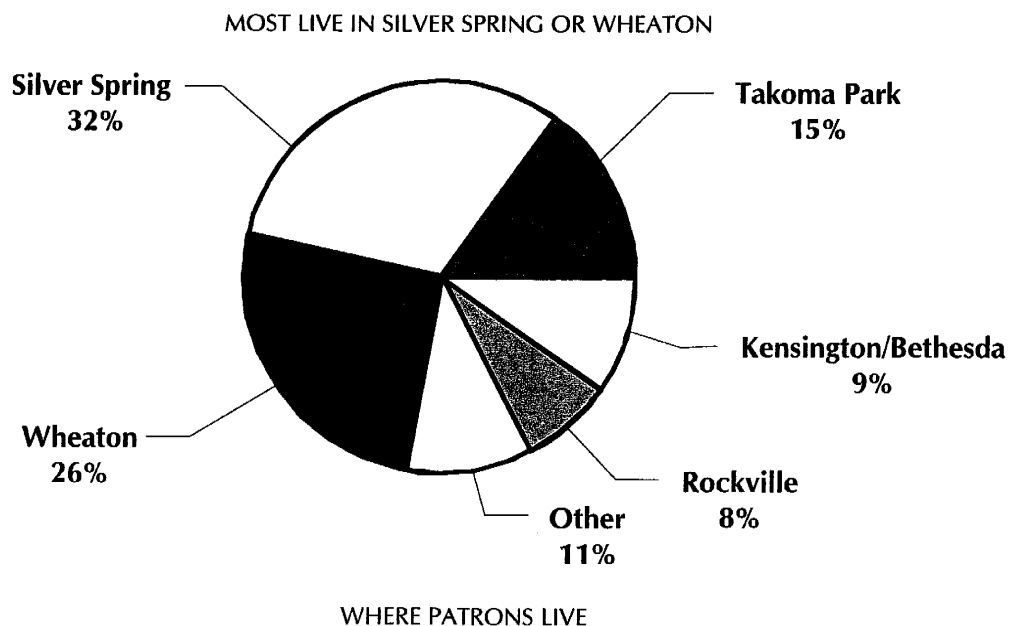
WHEATON REGIONAL PARK: WHERE DEA PATRONS LIVE

- ❑ 26 percent come from Wheaton;
- ❑ 32 percent come from Silver Spring (mostly downtown and in the Four Corners area);
- ❑ 15 percent come from Takoma Park;
- ❑ 9 percent come from Kensington/Bethesda/Chevy Chase; and
- ❑ 11 percent come from other places, including the Norbeck/Olney area, Burtonsville, Brookeville, Poolesville, and the District of Columbia.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE WHEATON DEA AND PATRONS

- ❑ First DEA to open (January 2003);
- ❑ Only "down-County" DEA; serves all "down-County" users;
- ❑ Most heavily used DEA year-round;
- ❑ Near large residential areas;
- ❑ Shaded with plentiful trees and a gazebo;
- ❑ Stocked with two picnic tables, three benches; has a gravel surface; and
- ❑ Is across from the hockey rink and near Pine Lake.

Wheaton Regional Park





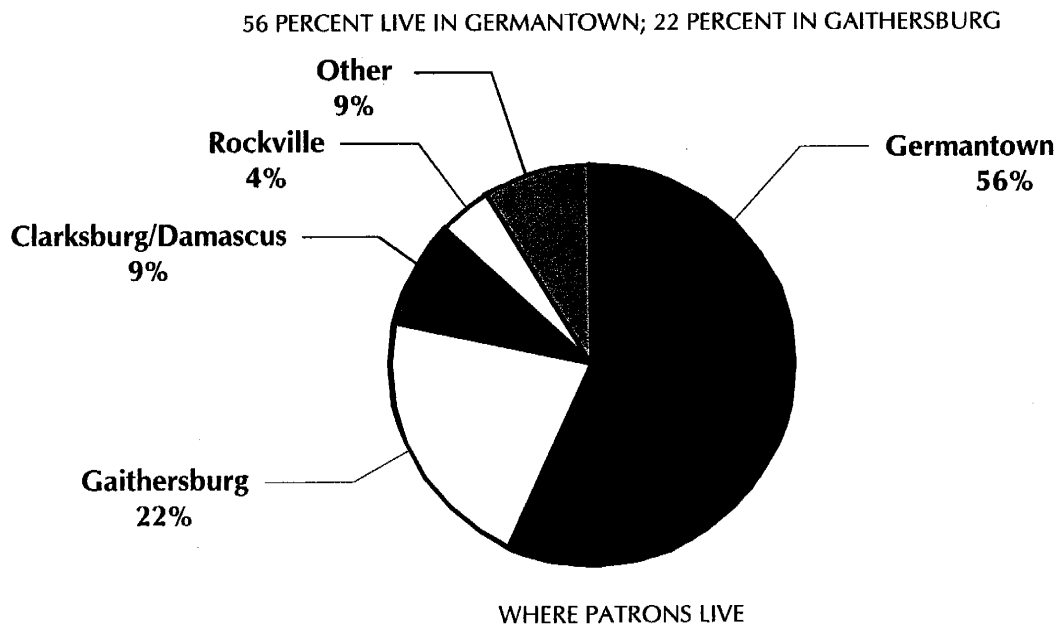
RIDGE ROAD RECREATIONAL PARK: WHERE DEA PATRONS LIVE

- ❑ 56 percent come from Germantown;
- ❑ 22 percent come from Gaithersburg;
- ❑ 9 percent come from Clarksburg/Damascus;
- ❑ 4 percent come from Rockville; and
- ❑ 9 percent come from Boyds, Wheaton, and Frederick County.

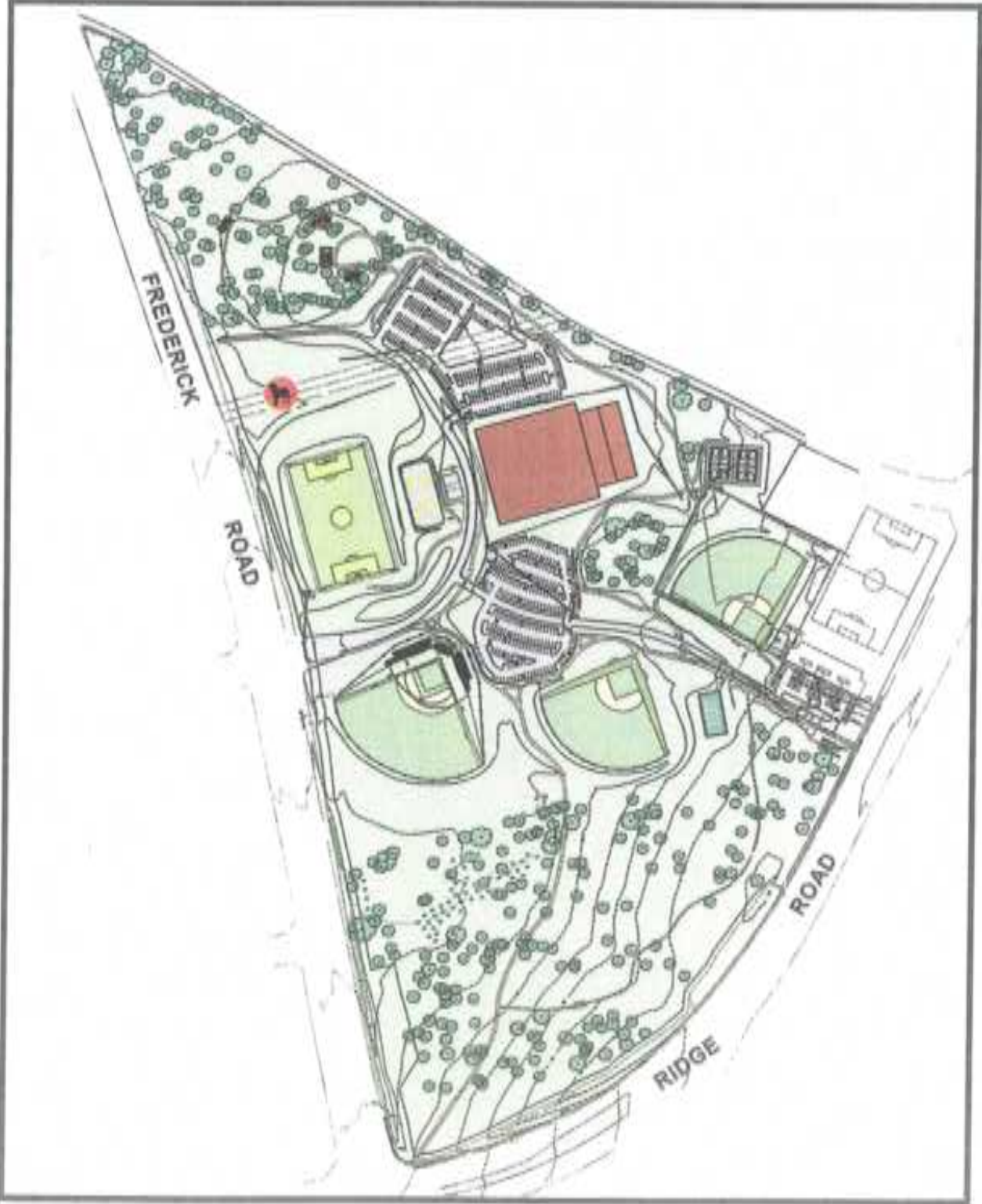
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RIDGE ROAD DEA AND PATRONS

- ❑ Has the only grass surface and the longest running area of all DEA's;
- ❑ Is adjacent to large residential development and faces Frederick Road;
- ❑ Occupies part of a utility right-of-way, thus trees and structures are not permitted in the facility; is flanked by storm water management dry ponds;
- ❑ Has two benches; five shade trees are outside the south fence;
- ❑ Draws large crowds from early fall to late spring; and
- ❑ Attracts "young patrons and young dogs".

Ridge Road Recreational Park



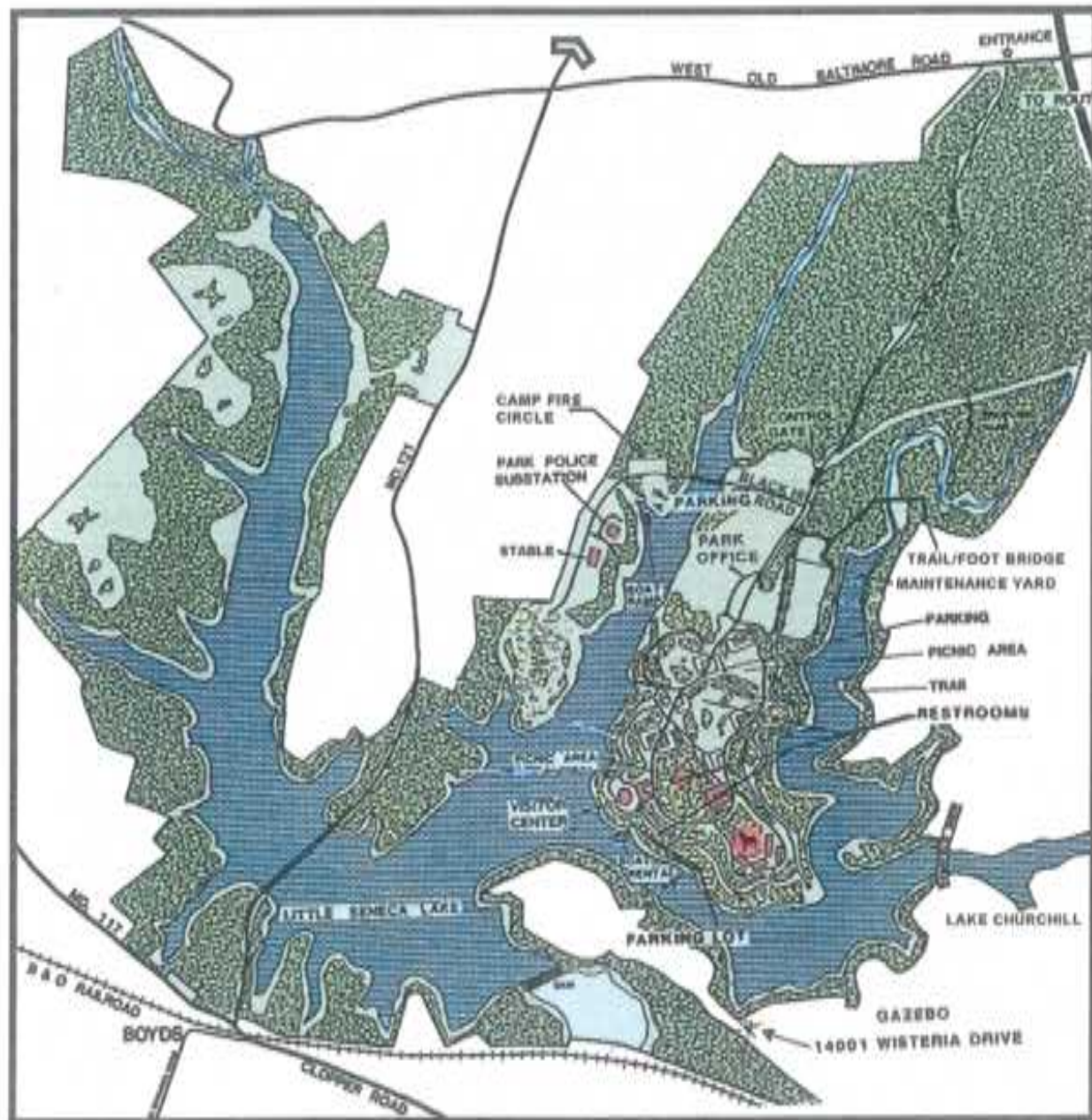
Ridge Road Recreational Park
21155 Frederick Road, Germantown



"UP-COUNTY" DEA PATRONS--SOME SWITCH DOG PARKS BY SEASON

Ridge Road Recreational Park and Black Hill Regional Park both serve Upcounty patrons; many switch between the two depending on the season. In the early fall, when the sun sets relatively soon after the end of many patrons' workdays, many of them flock to Ridge Road Recreational Park, which is closer to many of their homes, and thus an easier drive after work. (Many users also like the long, unobstructed, grassy running area and some find the fall acorns at Black Hill Regional Park irritate their dogs' digestive system.) But in the latter spring and summer, many users switch to Black Hill Regional Park, where the trees and picnic tables provide welcome relief from the sun and heat. And during the late spring/summer season, longer daylight hours allow patrons to reach the dog park after work on weekday evenings.

Black Hill Regional Park
20030 Lake Ridge Drive, Boyds



BLACK HILL REGIONAL PARK: WHERE DEA PATRONS LIVE

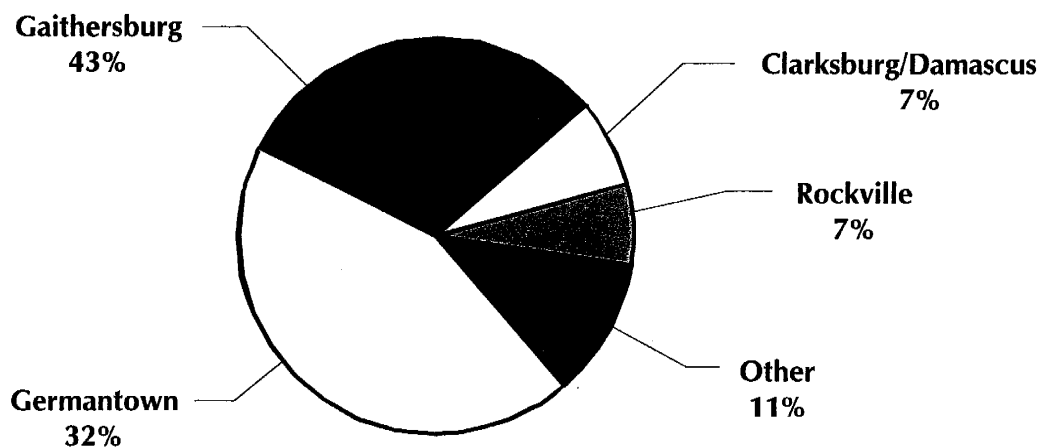
- 43 percent come from Gaithersburg;
- 32 percent come from Germantown;
- 7 percent come from Clarksburg/Damascus;
- 7 percent come from Rockville; and
- 11 percent come from places such as Brookeville and Frederick.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BLACK HILL DEA AND PATRONS

- Has a gravel surface and a row of large oak trees inside the DEA; a row of shade trees was recently planted outside the eastern and southern fences;
- Is located two to three miles from the park entrance gate, and is beside walking paths and forests and near a lake;
- Is very popular in the spring/summer for the trees and picnic tables, and when sun sets later on weekday evenings;
- Is less crowded in the fall when the drive is too long for many on weekday evenings and the acorns irritate some dogs' digestive systems;
- Has regular groups who meet several hours daily in good weather;
- Has three benches and two picnic tables; and
- Attracts patrons who enjoy the surrounding trails.

Black Hill Regional Park

43 PERCENT LIVE IN GAITHERSBURG; 32 PERCENT IN GERMANTOWN



WHERE PATRONS LIVE



Qualitative Input from Patrons of Dog Exercise Areas

Patrons are very pleased to have the three DEA's, and are basically satisfied with their maintenance and individual elements. The following section highlights specific patron's comments on the facilities.

EXISTING HALF-ACRE DEA SIZE

- 13 patrons state the half-acre DEA is too small to adequately handle a large number of dogs, or to provide the running space needed by many larger dogs. Some concerns mentioned by other patrons, such as days when they felt some dogs acted aggressively, may be influenced by an excessive number of dogs for the half-acre facilities at times.
- Some Ridge Road Recreational Park patrons believe grass would grow better in a larger area.

CROWD BEHAVIOR (PEOPLE AND DOGS)

The great majority of patrons think the DEA's are functioning well, patrons are responsible, dogs are behaving, and that the "peer pressure system" of crowd control is working. Relatively few problems have been reported at the DEA's, and overall the number of problems occurring are proportional to the size of the crowds at the individual dog parks. Thus, at Wheaton Regional Park, which has the greatest attendance year-round, five surveyed patrons noted some problem dogs; at Ridge Road Recreational Park, three cited the same problem dog and one user stated that when the crowds are too large the dogs are often unruly. At Black Hill Regional Park, only one patron noted a few problem dogs. Only a few users at Wheaton Regional Park and Ridge Road Recreational Park, and just one at Black Hill Regional Park, noted irresponsible patron behavior, primarily for not picking up after their dogs.

GROUND SURFACE

Most users like the ground surface of the DEA they patronize. Thus, patrons at Black Hill and Wheaton Regional Parks tend to like a gravel surface and the majority at Ridge Road Recreational Park prefer grass. More specific comments are:

- *Wheaton Regional Park:* 14 patrons like the gravel surface; 16 think the gravel needs changing or replenishing because it is too dusty, is irritating some dogs' paws and eyes, and may be giving some dogs eye infections; and seven prefer grass.

- *Ridge Road Recreational Park:* 17 like the grass and say their dog runs better on grass; four want more grass, but realize maintenance can be difficult and grass can be muddy, and three prefer gravel. Some users suggest that the grass could be better maintained if the benches were spaced throughout the facility along both sides of the fence, and a hardier variety of grass were planted.
- *Black Hill Recreational Park:* 12 like the gravel; and seven prefer grass, but several realize grass in a small area can be a problem.
- *Requests for other surfaces:* three suggest a part-grass/part man-made surface, like the dog park in the City of Gaithersburg; and three recommend mulch.

OTHER ELEMENTS OF DEA OPERATIONS AND AMENITIES

Requests for Informational Signs

Patrons request the following signs or posted information:

- *Signs with Park Police phone number for emergencies and the Park Manager Office for operations.* Some users at Ridge Road Recreational Park and Black Hill Regional Park stated that they would like signs posting numbers to call for emergencies and maintenance. (While these numbers are prominently displayed at Wheaton Regional Park, they were not at the other two at the time of the survey.) Also, some users asked that information be posted on procedures to follow in case of an aggressive dog incident.
- *Posted information on the Dog-Owners' Group associated with the DEA and contact names and phone numbers or e-mails.*
- *Directional signs on park trails and in the park to the DEA.* Several Wheaton Regional Park users want directional signs on the park trails and on the other side of Pine Lake to the dog park; and
- *Reminder signs to pick up after your dog(s).* Some patrons think such signs would prod others to be more responsible (one such sign is at Wheaton Regional Park).

Gates–Safety Problems Noted with Fittings of Two Gates

Patrons noted a gap under the Wheaton Regional Park facility gate permits some dogs to escape; also that the Ridge Road Recreational Park gate is hard to close; hence, some patrons think the gate is closed when it is not, and some dogs escape.

Handicapped Parking

Patrons noted that the handicapped parking space at Black Hill Regional Park is on the opposite side of the parking lot from the gate rather than beside it.

REQUESTS FOR SPECIFIC DESIGN ELEMENTS OR AMENITIES

- *Trees/shade* - 16 patrons consider the trees and/or shade at Wheaton and Black Hill Regional Parks as one of their strongest drawing points or wish there were more trees/shade at Ridge Road Recreational Park; five patrons note the saw-toothed acorns at Black Hill Regional Park are a problem in the fall because they hurt their dogs' paws or irritate their digestive systems; also, they can be bothersome if they fall on patrons.
- *Benches, picnic tables, gazebo* - Many patrons are very appreciative of those provided; several would like more benches, and several would like picnic tables at Ridge Road Recreational Park, where they are not now provided.
- *Water spigots* - 19 patrons request spigots.
- *Other requested amenities* - Several patrons asked for lighting, a second mutt-mitt container at the opposite ends of the DEA's (already provided at Wheaton Regional Park,), agility courses/play equipment, a larger gazebo at Wheaton Regional Park, and a swimming feature.

OTHER GENERAL COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS

- *Future of Black Hill Regional Park site* - Several patrons asked about the future plans for the current DEA site, since its current site was indicated as temporary pending a move to the old maintenance yard at the time of its construction.
- *Other requested DEA locations* - Silver Spring, Takoma Park, Olney/northwest County, Rockville, Gaithersburg, Shady Grove, and Burtonsville.

Planning for Future Dog Exercise Areas

RECOMMENDATIONS, STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND USER COMMENTS

Size of Facilities

At Ridge Road Recreational Park, patrons of the DEA think that this facility draws more patrons than any other facility at that park on a yearly basis. DEA patrons of Wheaton Regional Park believe that the dog park attracts more patrons per square foot than other facilities at that park. These patron statements as well as staff observations and survey user counts show that all three are certainly very popular park facilities.

Peak survey counts for the facilities were 22 people and 25 dogs at one time at the Ridge Road Recreational Park facility, and close to that number one day at the Wheaton Regional Park DEA. Although patrons report seeing larger crowds, even on the noted peak survey days [for dogs], the number of dogs seemed to fill the space and to be close to if not at the facility's desired capacity level. Some of the patrons explained that when too many dogs are in the facility, some dog owners will have more difficulty controlling their dogs, some dogs will be more likely to run in bands, and the potential for one or more dogs creating problems is significantly greater than on other days.

Quite a few patrons mentioned that they had come to the facilities on some days and left because they were too crowded. Since no additional DEA's are currently funded (the sites recently approved for Cabin John Regional Park and Olney Manor Recreational Park are not funded) and new users are continuing to visit the DEA's, crowded days can be expected to continue. Staff notes that the 2003 Park User Satisfaction Survey cited that DEA users patronized these latter facilities more times per year than patrons use other facilities, and that DEA's were the third-highest among park facilities where patrons saw shortages.

Properly maintaining ground surface is also difficult with a heavily used half-acre DEA. Patrons reveal that heavy use coupled with inadequate facility size have challenged the maintenance of both the gravel at Wheaton Regional Park and the grass at Ridge Road Recreational Park. In fact, the original staff task force for the pilot program for DEA's recommended a minimum one-acre facility size, but due to various constraints reduced this size for the pilot program. In recognition of the limitations of the half-acre regional sites, the approved sites for DEA's at Cabin John Regional Park and Olney Manor Recreational Park are about one-acre. (Other large jurisdictions in the metropolitan area are now typically building dog exercise areas of one-to-several acres.)

Larger Sizes Needed for Regional Park DEA's

The survey, as well as the two-year's experience with the pilot program indicates that future regional DEA's would be better built to a minimum of a one-acre size, (preferably larger than one acre), to meet patronage demands and also for safety, ground maintenance and environmental reasons. The enlargement of the DEA's at Wheaton Regional Park and Black Hill Regional Park to at least one acre or larger is also recommended. If land becomes available, the expansion of Ridge Road Recreational Park to meet the demands of current crowds and the expected continuing patronage increases would also be desirable.

Small-Dog Areas Recommended for Regional DEA's

Survey comments and observations also indicate that small-dog areas in regional dog parks are desirable. Some patrons state they sometimes do not feel their small dogs are safe in the current facilities, and thus do not use them; some others relay they know dog owners who do not feel safe bringing their small dogs to the facilities and thus do not come. Survey counts of a disproportionately low number of small dogs at the DEA's also seem to indicate that separate areas for small dogs would be helpful. Some Wheaton Regional Park patrons relayed that some dog owners were even using the holding area as a small-dog area because they felt such a need for a separate area. Small-dog areas are often just a quarter-acre or less with lower fencing than dog parks for larger dogs, and hence may not be difficult to provide. (Grass is much easier to maintain in areas for small-dogs than for larger ones because of the lighter weight of the dogs, and the fewer numbers of patrons in them.) Small-dog areas would be beneficial additions to our existing DEA's, including Ridge Road Recreational Park, where a small-dog area might be accommodated on one of the nearby grassy areas.

Parking Needs—Promote Walking, Provide Signs to Reduce Parking, Road Trips

Based on the survey and parked vehicle counts, the parking provided at our existing DEA's seems adequate. Survey counts support staff's assumption that about 20 spaces is reasonable for a half-acre DEA. For larger facilities, some additional parking will be needed. Experience in other nearby jurisdictions, however, indicates that the peak numbers of dogs and patrons do not usually increase proportionately with the amount of land area provided, since the users (especially the dogs) tend to spread over the area. Required parking spaces would relate to the number of expected peak patrons. Somewhat fewer spaces would be needed if a DEA were close to residential areas with good connecting paths.

A number of DEA patrons walk to the Wheaton Regional Park facility; and patrons at all three dog parks may combine hiking or other park trips with dog park visits. (Two couples revealed they regularly attend the DEA's during their child's ballgames.) Many patrons would like to combine trips for their dogs' exercise with their own or other household members' exercise if possible. To reduce parking and road trips for DEA use, the planning, siting and design of dog parks should include plentiful trail links to other popular park areas, as well as trail and sidewalk links to residential areas to the extent feasible. Signs with arrows to the dog parks should be liberally placed on roads and paths leading to them and in the surrounding park.

Requests for Additional Signage or Posted Information

Most surveyed patrons believe the DEA's are operating smoothly now, and that most difficulties that did occur with the facilities were in the initial adjustment period after they first opened. The majority of patrons believe behavior in the facilities is under control, and prefer handling matters by themselves to calling officials. A few did note situations involving police calls, and some at Ridge Road Recreational Park and Black Hill Regional Park wanted to know whom to call for emergency situations or for maintenance matters. Some also wanted to know the proper procedures to follow if an aggressive incident occurred. Others asked that the name of a contact person for the dog owner group in charge of the area be posted in the kiosk, and still others asked for signs reminding patrons to pick up after their dogs. (One such sign is posted at the Wheaton Regional Park facility.)

Peak Parking Requirements of Larger Dog Exercise Areas in Nearby Jurisdictions

Local Jurisdiction	Dog Exercise Area	Size (in Acres)	Estimated Peak Parking (Number of Spaces Needed)
City of Gaithersburg, MD	Green Dog Run—Bickerstaff Road And Muddy Branch Road	1.5	30 to 35
Howard County, MD	Worthington Park, Hillsboro Road Ellicott City	2.5	50
City of Bowie, MD	City of Bowie Dog Park on Northview Drive near Enfield Chase Neighborhood Park	1	20
Anne Arundel County, MD	*Quiet Waters Park Road, Annapolis 600 Quiet Waters Park Road, South River	1.5 to 2	*75
	Broadneck Park 618 Broadneck Road, Arnold	2 to 3	35
	Bells Branch Park 2400 Davidsonville Road, Gambrills	3	35
Arlington County, VA	Maryland City Park	3	35
	Shirlington Community Canine Area in the Shirlington Park section of Four-Mile Run Stream Valley park at South Nelson Street and South Four-Mile Run Drive	1.5 to 2	25 to 30

*NOTE: Part of this dog exercise area includes a dog beach on the South River that attracts users from all over the region during hot weather. This estimate is for a hot day when many dogs are swimming at the beach

Signs posting numbers for emergency and operational assistance are usually standards for dog exercise areas, and should be posted in a prominent place in all DEA's. Also, many dog parks have posted information stating procedures to follow if an aggressive incident occurs, and/or prominent warnings to remove aggressive dogs. Many patrons find such postings are reassuring and eliminate confusion if an incident should arise, and may be desirable for future consideration (especially if the DEA's become more crowded.)

Other signs requested by some of the patrons are also common to DEA's and usually enhance their operation. Posted signs reminding patrons to pick up after their dogs normally promote cleanliness. A posting of the DOG in charge of the area, with contact names and numbers, provides an easy mechanism for newcomers to meet others at the dog park and reassures users that there is a group assuming some responsibility for the area. (The contact persons for the individual DOG's are intended to be the key link with the management office on maintenance matters in the dog park, and to be chief figures in organizing and guiding the DOG for the DEA) As for other park friends' groups, the local DOG's promote the appropriate use of the facility and socialization among patrons.

Selecting and Maintaining Ground Surface

The DEA at Wheaton Regional Park was planted with grass just before opening, January 2003, and re-surfaced with gravel soon afterwards. Insufficient funds remained for replenishing the gravel at the two-month frequency that occurs at Black Hill Regional Park [and which the latter patrons have found to be adequate]. Staff recommends that the ground surfaces of all DEA's be maintained so as to be healthy for all users; funds for such maintenance should be budgeted for all DEA's. For any proposed ground surface for new DEA's, appropriate maintenance and its costs should be investigated and projected in the facility planning stage.

For the selection of new DEA ground surfaces, when the facilities will be large enough for maintenance and the area suitable, a number of patrons state their dogs run better on grass and that grass is healthier for their dogs' feet. Grass is also the most environmentally friendly surface, which, unlike manmade surfaces, filters urine before it enters the soil. If the area is large enough, different areas of the DEA can be set aside and alternated for use, to help maintain the grass. As some patrons recommend, the type of surface of the City of Gaithersburg's dog park, which is part grass (and is closed during the colder months for rejuvenation and replenishment) and part man-made surface, is very popular and a potentially desirable surface. Consultation with the patrons who will be using the surfacing of any new DEA is advisable.

DEA AMENITIES AND OTHER MINOR FACILITY ELEMENTS

Trees and Other Shade Sources

The trees and shade are major attractions of Black Hill and Wheaton Regional Parks during the warmer months; a number of patrons find Ridge Road Recreational Park too hot in summer except in late evening due to lack of shade. (Shade is an especially important feature in dog parks since dogs overheat more quickly than humans.) The provision of trees and shade should thus be a major element in planning dog parks. Since Ridge Road Recreational Park is in a utility right-of-way, trees are not permitted within the facility, although additional trees can be planted outside the facility, or equipment can be placed outside the fence to shade parts of the facility. Ridge Road Recreational Park management indicated at the time of the survey that some additional shade was being considered for the southeast corner of that facility. Such shade would be a great help for this facility and would be greatly welcomed by patrons. The planting of additional trees along the south side of the fence of this facility could also be helpful.

Staff emphasizes that trees and other shade-providing elements should be a major consideration in selecting, siting, and designing future dog parks. If sufficient shade does not already exist at selected sites, trees or other shade should be provided. To the extent possible, trees with nuisance fruit or nuts should be avoided or minimized.

Benches, Picnic Tables, and Gazebos

Patrons have especially expressed appreciation for the benches, tables, and the gazebo provided at Wheaton, and have asked for more. Also, picnic tables have been requested at Ridge Road Recreational Park, which now does not have any. The agency provided the benches at all three DEA's, the tables at Black Hill and Wheaton Regional Parks, and the gazebo at the latter park. Staff notes the initial DEA concept was that the agency would provide a basic amount of amenities such as benches and tables and that patrons could work together to provide additional ones if they wanted. Thus, patrons can contribute to provide additional furniture to these areas if they would like and if management agrees.

Staff notes that a generous provision of benches and picnic tables encourages socialization and group familiarity, and thus, the general oversight of the dog park. Hence, the liberal agency provision of such furniture is desirable. Also, based on the patron survey, the agency can expect that as more residents retire, more of them will potentially want to use the dog parks as places to socialize and recreate. Staff does note, that due to the basically long and linear form of the Ridge Road Recreational Park dog park, a picnic table cannot be as easily accommodated as at the other DEA's. A number of patrons indicated they value the long, running areas of this dog park, which might be interrupted by the placement of a picnic table.

Entry Gates/Handicapped Spaces

The heavy use of the three facilities continually wears the gates and ground beneath the gates at the DEA's. According to surveyed patrons, adjustments were needed to the DEA gates at the Wheaton Regional Park and Ridge Road Recreational Park. For all DEA's, gates, fastenings, and the gaps beneath them should be checked periodically. Communication should be maintained between park management and users on such matters.

All handicapped spaces at the facilities should meet the standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and should be located beside the gate to the facility.

Spigots, Lights, Play Equipment

Spigots, lights and play equipment were all listed as optional equipment in the facility guidelines for DEA's in the 2002 Locations Report. Thus, this equipment may all be provided by users with consent by park management. Spigots are especially requested by users. Patrons at two facilities stated they are willing to raise money to provide them. Staff notes that individual parks and sites have specific circumstances and sometimes rules affecting potential ability to provide water or lighting for that location. Patrons who may be interested in specific amenities and who may want to raise money for them, are recommended to consult with park management on their feasibility. Various community and volunteer groups, including a number of youth groups are known to help with such public projects.

Guard Fences

Although DEA's would usually be located away from major roadways, in some cases, such as at Ridge Road Recreational Park, no other site was available. Staff notes that the DEA's and other park facilities located near major roadways do present potential safety concerns. DEA's sometimes attract children who like to watch the dogs through the fence, or as was observed at the Ridge Road Recreational Park facility, children may run outside the fence chasing balls. Also, some patrons were observed walking their dogs around the outside of the fence, and apparently some dogs occasionally escape the dog park under the gate. Further, some nearby residents apparently sometimes cut across Rockville Pike at the location of the DEA to reach the park. A fence preventing or at least discouraging people or dogs from entering the highway at this point would be helpful at Ridge Road Recreational Park, or any future dog park located near a busy roadway.

Management Improvements Responding to DEA Survey

Staff recently relayed park staff and management most directly involved with the DEA's copies of a draft version of this report. In the past few months, as suggested by surveyed patrons, the Park Manager at Black Hill Regional Park has completed key improvements to that DEA and Ridge Road Recreational Park management has stated that it has completed one improvement, and is definitely planning and/or considering others. These include:

Black Hill Regional Park - Recent Improvements:

- Posted prominent signs with the Park Police number for emergencies and the Park Management number for maintenance.
- Planted a row of shade trees outside the eastern and southern fence of the dog park.
- Moved the handicapped parking space to a location beside the entrance gate.
- Added a second mutt-mitt container at the opposite end of the facility from the existing one.



New trees recently planted at Black Hill Regional Park Dog Exercise Area

Ridge Road Recreational Park - Completed Improvements:

- Fixed entrance gate to close properly so that dogs cannot escape from area.

Planned Improvements:

- Posting signs with Park Police and Park Management numbers.
- Installing a shade facility (which has already been ordered).

Improvements Under Consideration:

- Adding one or two benches.
- Re-sodding the bare area near the gate to the dog park.

Conclusion

The existing three DEA' s at Wheaton Regional Park, Ridge Road Recreational Park, and Black Hill Regional Park are very popular facilities. Patrons are quite pleased to have the dog parks and believe they are generally well-located, well-designed and well-managed, and that they are operating smoothly. The facilities do become overcrowded at times and larger regional facilities would be desirable to handle peak crowds and expected patron increases and to provide more room for large dogs. Separate areas for small-dogs would also be especially desirable. In planning future such facilities, adequate funding for maintenance should be projected. The maintenance budget for the Wheaton facility should be examined and probably increased so that the gravel can be reinforced more often and thus maintained at a higher quality level.

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...and special thanks to all the park patrons who contributed to this survey.

*Former Staff Member



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