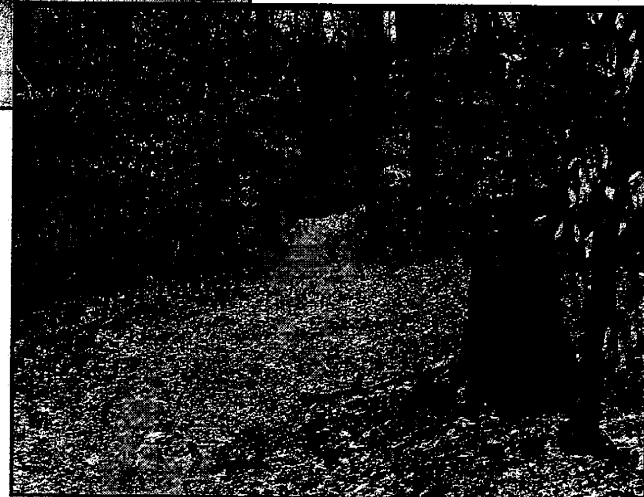


**ENGINEERING AND DESIGN OF PAVED TRAIL
FROM
PICNIC LANE TO SPINNING WHEEL DRIVE
AT
BLACK HILL REGIONAL PARK
PLANNING BOARD REPORT**



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BLACK HILL REGIONAL PARK - ENGINEERING AND DESIGN OF PAVED TRAIL
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to present to the Montgomery County Planning Board the background, concept planning and final alignment of a proposed paved hiker/biker trail in Black Hill Regional Park, located just northwest of Germantown in Montgomery County, Maryland. The presentation of this report will allow the Board to become familiar with the aspects of the proposed project so that it may study its merits and allow for the Board to present its own comments and recommendations.

This narrative describes the existing conditions of the location of the proposed paved trail, the overall design criteria for the trail, the consideration of alternative alignments, description of the proposed final alignment, community and Planning Board input and construction cost estimates.

1.2 Location of Project

The proposed project is located in the northeast section of Black Hill Regional Park, eastwards of the Lake Ridge Drive which is the main means of vehicular access to the park from Old Baltimore Road. The proposed trail runs from the vicinity of Picnic Lane to the vicinity of the cul-de-sac of Spinning Wheel Drive in the Waters Landing development adjacent to the park, for a total of approximately 6100 linear feet. The trail lies within the boundaries of M-NCPPC property. See the vicinity map and public meeting presentation for plans depicting the general and detailed location of the proposed trail. The proposed project will provide a crucial link in a network of paved hiker/biker trails that exist within the park and which provides a means of pedestrian and cyclist access to the core of the park for residents of the Germantown area.

1.3 Project History

On November 4, 1999, the Planning Board approved the Final Staff Draft Master Plan for Black Hill Regional Park, with changes, to be released as a Public Hearing Draft. This draft contained a recommendation to pave the existing natural surface trail between Spinning Wheel Drive and Parking Lot #6 (adjacent to Picnic Lane). This project was part of the original plan for the park and has been in the approved Capital Improvements program for several years. In the meantime, planning studies and public hearings have been completed regarding the insertion of language for the implementation of an enhanced vehicular access to the park from the Germantown (Crystal Rock Drive) area as an alternative to the existing primary vehicular access from Old Baltimore Road. This effort resulted from an earlier inclusion in the Germantown Master Plan of a second vehicular access to the park. The implementation of the additional vehicular access was eventually rejected by the Board on May 9, 2002 because of community opposition, extreme environmental impacts and costs. The park Master Plan has since been revised and finalized for implementation. One of the reasons that the public voiced in opposition was the implementation of the engineering

and design of the subject paved trail, which would essentially provide a reasonable means of accessible travel into the park from Germantown.

To respond to the planned implementation of the paved trail, the staff hired a consultant, Frederick Ward Associates, Inc. (FWA), in October, 2001 to provide the necessary engineering to design and construct the paved trail. Since that time, FWA has provided topographic and environmental surveys, conducted numerous site meetings and met with staff and agencies in order to develop alignment alternatives, and developed the preliminary design that is being presented for Board approval. Subsequent to Board comment, approval and any necessary revisions, FWA will provide a detailed design for bidding purposes, obtain agency approvals and permits and oversee construction of the project.

2.0 EXISTING CONDITIONS

2.1 Existing Trail

The portion of the Black Hill Trail under study runs from Picnic Lane on the south to the vicinity of Spinning Wheel Lane, connecting with existing paved trails on each end. The trail is easily accessed from several locations directly from Lake Ridge Drive, is convenient to parking and traverses easy-to-difficult terrain. Access from Spinning Wheel Lane is by way of an existing paved trail that was previously constructed by the developer of Waters Landing. This same paved trail continues west along the southern shore of Seneca Lake and is approved for by the Planning Board in July 2003. Also at this end of the trail is the terminus of a new boardwalk trail, constructed by WSSC, which provides pedestrian access from Crystal Rock Drive. Paving this trail (or alternate alignment) should create a very popular and well used amenity for all ages and physical abilities.

In walking the trail and observing its physical characteristics, recreational opportunities and challenges to improvement, the project breaks down to three distinct areas. The southern portion of the trail is in a densely wooded area, moderately steep in sections, relatively narrow (4-6 feet), and offers wonderful vistas of Little Seneca Lake, particularly when the leaves are off the trees. The center section is relatively level and wide (6-10 feet), opens into very light woods at times and begins to display a very stony trail base. The northern section is again in dense woods and narrower than the center section (4-8 feet), has a very stony base with many observed rock outcroppings, and is moderately to steeply sloped, falling to the existing steel bridge across Little Seneca Creek.

The southern section leaves an existing paved trail just off Picnic Lane near an existing parking area, making it a very convenient starting point for hikers. The trail is moderately sloped with grades of 7-13 percent over the majority of the stretch. A buried fiber optic line is near the trail and care must be taken in design to avoid any impact to this line. There are two crossings of small tributary streams, both culverts, before the trail rises steeply in a partial switchback, rising over 40 feet in a 400-foot run. The trail

will have to be realigned to meet ADA requirements in this area or will need to be posted as non-accessible. The two stream crossings can be accomplished with a culvert pipe for one and a steel bridge for the other. All wetland impacts and other environmental compliance issues would need to be fully considered and incorporated into the design. In both the widened areas, as well as the realigned segments of the trail, great care will be taken in setting the trail location and grade relative to existing trees. Creating a natural setting, minimizing the loss of trees, minimizing grading and slopes, and minimizing maintenance requirements are primary goals in the design of this trail improvement project.

The center section of the trail is fairly straight-forward. The new paved trail will follow the existing trail alignment for the most part and minimal grading challenges are anticipated. One short section should be re-aligned in order to avoid a rock outcropping that will hinder ADA compliance. It is in this section that several mid-trail connections to Lake Ridge Drive are proposed. These connection points are to be carefully evaluated and recommendations for providing safe crossing points from parking and walking areas across the main road will be presented. Alternate locations may need to be considered. One proposed connection point, an existing cleared area adjacent to the maintenance yard is rather steep (12 percent existing grade) and may be considered as non-ADA compliant.

The northern section of the trail has a very stony base and rock excavation is expected with any grading. From the connection with Hard Rock Trail (aptly named) in the vicinity of old Black Hill Road the trail drops very steeply down to Little Seneca Creek. There are two trails from this point to the bridge, a direct and very steep trail (old Black Hill Road) and a switch-back (also quite steep, but less so). The provided topography indicates that even the switch-back trail exceeds 12 percent grade for significant stretches which may warrant complete realignment of the trail in this area. In the vicinity of this area, and sometimes directly adjacent to the trail, are numerous stone foundations that are thought to be the homes and outbuildings of workers who attended to the nearby Waters Mill. The historical importance of these foundations will complicate the re-alignment of the trail in this area.

Once down the slope, an existing steel and wood decked foot bridge in very good condition crosses Little Seneca Creek. This bridge is proposed to be used without alteration or further evaluation for this project. The crossing is extremely scenic and the area appears to be a popular spot for exploration of the creek. Near the creek, and also close to the trail, are foundation ruins of Waters' Mill, headrace and headrace bridge, which are identified archeological sites. All proposed work near this site will be coordinated with M-NCPPC archeologists confirm that no there will be no impact to the historical resource with the improvements to the trail. A rock embankment along the trail and a stone culvert crossing are immediately above the foundation ruins and will require special care in design.

In reviewing the alignment of the existing trail, it is obvious that new alternates must be pursued if compliance with American with Disabilities Act (ADA) is to be

followed. The final report of the Regulatory Negotiation Committee on Accessibility Guidelines for Outdoor Developed Areas allows for non-compliance with the guidelines when significant impacts to natural features must happen to comply with the guidelines. It is therefore possible that certain compromises with ADA accessibility can be implemented in the project if fully approved by the staff.

2.2 Environmental Features

Frederick Ward Associates, Inc. conducted field surveys to determine the locations of non-tidal wetlands, Waters of the U.S. and specimen trees. These surveys were conducted in the areas where the original concept alignment was designated. Subsequent surveys were done as the trail alignment was changed due to agency/staff comment and as more detailed topographical information was obtained from the actual field surveys. These natural features, as well as steep slopes, are identified in the Preliminary Forest Conservation Plan (FCP), which will serve as the basis the existing Natural Resources Inventory/Forest Stand Delineation Plan (NRI/FSD) for the park.

Non-tidal wetlands were found only in the vicinity of Seneca Creek at the northern (Spinning Wheel Drive) end of the alignment. These wetlands and their buffers are not impacted by proposed alignment of the trail. Waters of the U.S. were found at the edges of Seneca Creek and at a drainage swale on the south end of the trail at STA 12+50. This swale will be crossed with a proposed 15-foot long steel bridge founded on stone abutments.

Impacts to trees will be limited as much as possible by circuiting the trail around significant specimens, by root pruning techniques and construction of retaining walls and by limiting construction vehicle impacts by fencing off critical areas. These techniques will be identified in the final FCP to be approved by the staff and Planning Board.

2.3 Historical Features

Through its meetings with the M-NCPPC staff and field visits to identify features of possible historical significance, FWA has located important historical features that will need to be preserved during construction and afterwards. The presence of these historical features can enhance the experience of the user of the subject trail and can invite public interest in the history of the region. For this reason, these features can be pointed out to trail users via interpretive signs or other means. On the contrary, their presence can also endanger their existence if known to the public. It will therefore be necessary to work with staff to include some measure of protection in the ultimate design of this trail.

One interesting historical feature, though small, is a property corner marker located next to the trail at STA 24+00 near the an opening to Lake Ridge Drive near the children's playground. This stone marker is engraved with the initials "W&M" and is thought to be an original property marking for the land grant known as "William & Mary".

Another historical feature is the old Black Hill Road. This road traverses down the hill near the north end of the trail and fords Little Seneca Creek at the location of the existing steel footbridge across which the trail current traverses. This road is thought to have been main turnpike of east-west commerce through this section of Montgomery County. At the intersection of Black Hill Road and Lake Ridge Drive is an existing stone foundation which is believed to be that of a home which was intentionally burned and which caused loss of life. The person arrested, tried and executed for the deed was the last person hung in Montgomery County under court of law.

The main historical feature of the trail is Waters Mill and its numerous outbuildings. The location of the mill is at the northern terminus of the trail near Spinning Wheel Drive. The mill was a working grist mill up until the end of the 1800s. An existing historical marker is posted at the existing trail. In addition to the millhouse foundation are the headrace, headrace bridge (across which the existing trail passes), the miller's house foundation and numerous foundations thought to be the homes of workers or mill support structures. Detailed archeological investigations have not been performed at these sites although it is understood that these will be undertaken at some future time.

3.0 PROPOSED TRAIL

3.1 Trail Criteria

The criteria for the design of the trail were given to FWA both in the SPR for this project as well as in the initial meeting with staff members. The established criteria for design of the trail are listed as follows:

A. Compliance with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA): The ADA is civil rights legislation that promulgates accessibility guidelines for public and private accommodations. Guidelines for accessibility for outdoor recreational areas are listed in the "Regulatory Negotiation Committee on Accessibility Guidelines for Outdoor Developed Areas – Final Report September 30, 1999." The guidelines contain numerous items, but those most important to the subject project are those pertaining to longitudinal slopes – the steepness of the trail as it goes up or downhill. The guidelines stipulate that no part of the trail can be steeper than 12.5% (1:8). For trails up to 5% (1:20), no wheel chair rest pads are required. For trails between 5% and 8.33% (1:12), resting pads must be provided at 200-foot maximum intervals. For slopes between 8.33% and 10% (1:10), resting pads must provided at 30-foot maximum intervals. For slopes between 10% and 12.5% (1:8), resting pads must be provided at 10-foot maximum intervals. The guidelines also stipulate that trail cross slopes be no steeper than 5% (1:20) and that no more than 30% of total trail length exceed a running slope of 8.33%. Resting pads are a minimum of 5 feet in length and width with a side slope of no more than 5%. Using the above criteria, and working out the geometry considering the rest pads, the maximum slope a trail can therefore traverse is approximately 8.33%.

In other words, an ADA-compliant trail cannot be laid on any terrain that exceeds 8.33% in slope unless switchbacks or rerouting is used.

The outdoor accessibility guidelines permit departures from its specific technical provisions under certain conditions. These conditions include compliance that would cause substantial harm to cultural, historic, religious or significant natural features; where compliance would substantially alter the nature of the setting or the purpose of the facility; where compliance would require construction methods that are prohibited by Federal, State or local statutes; or where compliance would not be feasible due to terrain or prevailing construction practices. The subject project demonstrates many of these attributes in complying with the regulations; therefore, M-NCPPC has the ability to make decisions regarding the level of ADA compliance. Nevertheless, FWA will work with the staff to comply as much as possible with the intent of the ADA legislation.

B. Trail Width: The paved width of the trail shall be 8 feet. The SPR originally called for a 10-foot width; however, the staff agreed that a 10-foot width would cause increased environmental impacts in the rugged setting of the trail. The shoulders on either side of the trail shall be one-foot in width, planted in grass and follow the cross slope of the trail. The embankments outboard of the shoulders (as may be necessary) shall be laid at a maximum of slope of three horizontal to one vertical, or 33%.

C. Pavement Type and Thickness: The pavement shall be bituminous concrete (asphalt), Band SF, for a minimum thickness of three (3) inches. The base course shall be a minimum of four (4) inches of graded aggregate with a width of nine (9) feet. In order to provide a trail that is visually compatible to the historic surroundings of the Waters Mill site, FWA proposes that the trail be paved with a natural soil binder that will provide a durable, hard surface that has the appearance of soil. A proprietary product such as Road-Oyl can be used to for this purpose. Consisting of natural plant resins, the soil binder is mixed with the existing soil of the trail, then rolled and compacted and allowed to cure to provide the hard surface. The use of soil binder is proposed between STA 45+20 and STA 53+60.

D. Trail Access Points: Provide two ADA-accessible access points to Lake Ridge Drive. The access points shall connect to the road at points that can be used as trailheads (parking lots, other trailheads). Safety considerations shall be evaluated in the locations of the points of access.

3.2 Consideration of Alternative Alignments

Even prior to the commencement of the engineering of this project it was obvious that the trail could not follow the existing alignment of Black Hill Trail if ADA guidelines were to be fully implemented. The existing trail at the northern end of the project is too steep in many areas such that compliance with the ADA outdoor accessibility guidelines is impossible. Furthermore, the location of the historic building foundations in the area of Waters Mill makes it difficult to re-align the trail in that area to provide compliance.

Portions of the existing trail in the southern end of the project are also very steep and would require re-alignment away from the existing trail and into mature forest.

In spite of the difficulties encountered, FWA investigated and field-marked two alignments in the northern area which followed more-or-less closely the existing trail, yet complied with ADA guidelines. These alternative alignments (#1 and #2) are identified in the "Alternate ADA Alignments" plan located in the Appendix. Alignment Alternative 1 followed the switch-back but was "flattened out" to moderate the steepness. This resulted in a longer switch-back, but the trail was found to cut through un-surveyed building foundations and higher-priority forest with very old and large specimen trees. The building foundations are thought to be related to the nearby Waters Mill. This alignment was rejected by staff due to environmental and unknown historical impacts. For these reasons, a second alignment (Alternative Alignment #2) was investigated and field-marked. This alignment attempted to avoid the building foundation area as much as possible by leaving the existing trail early at the top of the hill and starting downhill sooner for a more gradual slope. A switch-back was still found to be needed in the area of the foundations but it avoided any known locations. The trail crossed an area of steep slope and would have required excavation into the rocky hillside, impacting many trees. Rocky outcrops were encountered. FWA recommended that another alignment be considered that would have less impact to the rocky steep slope, and avoided the foundation area further. Park and Planning staff agreed.

FWA therefore investigated and identified a third, completely new alignment for consideration in the northern area. By aligning a new trail gradually up and across the steep slope of the hill on the west side of Little Seneca Creek, it would be possible to provide an ADA-compliant trail and avoid the historical features in the vicinity of the existing switchback trail. This trail cuts through a forested area of lesser quality and milder side-slopes. Specimen trees and notable surface features could be identified in the field and avoided when setting the final alignment. Two field meetings were held with the staff, who agreed to the implementation of the new virgin alignment as part of the overall preferred trail alignment. This section, from STA 32+00 to STA 48+00 is the major departure from the existing trail.

Also in the northern area on the east side of Little Seneca Creek near the mill foundation, is a short section of trail that crosses up and over a rock outcropping. Removal of the rock would possibly be deleterious to the integrity of the mill site, and doing so would not allow compliance with ADA guidelines. Therefore, it was proposed by FWA and agreed to by the staff that the trail would divert away from the existing alignment, bend and then traverse sideways over the rock by means of a retaining wall and fill. The trail would then be ADA-compliant. The retaining wall would be constructed of interlocking false stone block in a color and texture that would match as closely as the native rock used in the mill foundation.

Another proposed departure from the trail is from STA 26+60 to STA 30+00, where the existing trail rises over a hard rock outcropping and would require intensive rock removal to comply with ADA. This area is near the existing maintenance yard near

the park office. It was proposed by FWA and agreed to by the staff that the trail would leave the existing alignment to the east and follow an aesthetically-pleasing old tree and fence line. No major trees would be disturbed and the existing trail would be allowed to revert to vegetation.

Another proposed departure from the trail was from STA 13+00 to STA 19+00 in the southern portion of the trail. The steepness and topography of the existing trail in this segment meant that a major realignment in this area would be required to comply with ADA. FWA proposed and flagged a new alignment (Alternate Alignment #3 in the "Alternate ADA Alignments" plan) in this area and presented it to the staff at a field meeting. This area of the park contains many large specimen trees that would be severely impacted by any realignment. After consideration of the impacts, the staff agreed that the trail should not be changed in this location and that the existing trail would be used for the paved trail. This section of the trail, hence the whole section of trail from STA 0+00 to STA 19+00, would therefore be designated not ADA-compliant. Because of the location of a proposed access trail (itself being ADA-compliant) from Lake Ridge Drive which connects to the trail at STA 19+00, the remainder of the trail from STA 19+00 could be considered compliant using the proposed alignment.

Upon review of the Preliminary Forest Conservation Plan by the environmental staff of M-NCPPC, the section of trail from STA 0+00 to STA 19+00 was determined to have too great of an environmental impact on the existing trees and their roots systems. The staff therefore requested an investigation of a comprehensive alternative to this section of the trail. FWA was directed to consider a paved trail that would be aligned adjacent and parallel to Picnic Lane and Lake Ridge Drive. This alignment is shown as Alternate Alignment #4 on the "Alternate ADA Alignments" plan. The trail would extend from the existing paved trail where it connects to Picnic Lane, and thence run directly adjacent to the aforementioned roads and connect to the proposed trail access connection "A" point at Lake Ridge Drive. This trail, while not as aesthetically pleasing as the original alignment through the woods, is ADA-compliant and would therefore agree with the original design mandate of making the complete trail project accessible. The original trail alignment (STA 0+00 to STA 19+00) would remain natural surface and remain in use for those desiring a natural setting. The staff advised FWA to pursue Alternate #4 for the preferred alignment.

There are no further alignment departures from the existing Black Rock Trail. Compliance with accessibility guidelines would be accomplished through minor regrading and the provision of wheelchair rest pads.

3.2 Description of Preferred Alignment.

The proposed paved trail to be constructed for this project consists of 5580 linear feet of 8-foot wide paved trail, with an additional length of 520 linear feet of 8-foot wide paved trail for intermediate access from Lake Ridge Drive. See the preliminary alignment drawings in the presentation slides in the Appendix.

As mentioned above, the section of trail from STA 0+00 to STA 19+00 would not be part of the project but would remain in its natural state. As an alternative, a 1420-foot ADA-compliant section would be constructed. This section starts at an existing paved trail at its connection to Picnic Lane, then follows directly adjacent and parallel to Picnic Lane and Lake Ridge Drive until it meets the proposed 520-foot access trail to Lake Ridge Drive. This alignment would require extensive retaining walls varying from two to six feet in height in order to avoid steep slope and tree impacts. Minor alignment and grade adjustments will be proposed to avoid tree and root impacts. The trail slope varies from flat to a section of 8.8%. The access trail then takes the preferred alignment to STA 19+00. Wheelchair rest pads are proposed at the required intervals where needed.

The trail from STA 19+00 to STA 32+00 follows in the path of the existing natural trail except from STA 26+60 to 30+00 where the trail would be realigned to avoid the rocky surface. Minor alignment and grade adjustments will be proposed to avoid tree and root impacts. The trail slope varies from flat to 7%. Wheelchair rest pads are proposed at the required intervals.

The trail from STA 32+00 to STA 48+00 follows a completely new alignment through forested land. The existing Black Rock trail will remain as it for use by those who desire a more rugged hiking experience. This proposed section of the trail brings the trail from the ridge top down to the level of Little Seneca Creek. The trail slope varies from flat to 12.5%. Wheelchair rest pads are proposed at the required intervals. This section passes by a large stone foundation that is thought to be related to Waters Mill. Fencing and interpretive signing can be used here for the benefit of educating trail users as to the aspects of the mill site.

The trail from STA 48+00 to the end at STA 54+00 completes the trail length. It follows in the path of the existing natural trail except from STA 50+50 to STA 52+00 where the trail would be realigned to avoid the rocky outcrop and to provide for ADA compliance. Minor alignment and grade adjustments will be proposed elsewhere to avoid tree and root impacts. The trail slope varies from flat to 10%. Wheelchair rest pads are proposed at the required intervals. Fencing and interpretive signing can be used here for the benefit of educating trail users as to the aspects of the mill site. At the terminus of the trail will be connections to the end of the existing WSSC boardwalk trail, approximately 100 feet to the east, and the existing paved trail which is scheduled for improvements to be completed in 2004 by M-NCPPC.

In addition to the main stem of the trail, two connection points are proposed that will connect the main trail to convenient access points along Lake Ridge Drive. The southernmost access point is at a parking lot near the large picnic pavilions and playground. This proposed access trail is ADA-compliant. For safety reasons, this connector was aligned to cross the road at a point with relatively good site distance for drivers on the road. The easternmost access trail is 520 feet in length and connects STA 30+85 of the main trail to the paved Black Hill Trail which ends at to the park office at Lake Ridge Drive. This access trail is aligned along a WSSC right-of-way for a water

main service to the park. This access trail is not ADA-compliant. During the design review meeting with the staff, one staffer voice opposition to the location of the trail connection to Lake Ridge Drive, citing safety problems with vehicle site distances and speeds at this location. Transportation staff visited the site and believe the access point is safe from the standpoint of site distances.

3.4 Stormwater Management

Because the proposed trail introduces a paved surface into an area where none existed before, it will be necessary to provide stormwater management facilities to accommodate and treat increased run-off from the trail and to protect Seneca Lake. To this end, FWA met with the Montgomery County Wetlands Coordinating Committee and Montgomery Department of Permitting Services (MCDPS) to determine the type of treatment that will be required. Realizing the unusual circumstance of a long, narrow paved trail and the ability to treat run-off from same without significant impacts to natural features of the park, FWA received approval of a compromise position for stormwater treatment provided that certain drainage criteria are met. Essentially, water quality management can be provided in lieu of quantity management. See the signed approval letter to MCDPS in the Appendix.

The MCDPS conditions of approval and directives for design are as follows:

- 1) At no point in the along the alignment will there be an increase of more than two c.f.s. in point flow for a 10-year storm.
- 2) Where soil conditions permit, provide infiltration trenches or pits in areas of concentration of flow.
- 3) Where the shallow bedrock does not permit infiltration trenches, provide vernal pools at points of concentration.
- 4) Where sheet flow is possible, provide flow disconnection of at least 100 feet through forested terrain.

3.5 Trail Signage

The proposed trail will be posted with new signs that would serve for both safety and interpretive purposes. The signage will comply with standards used by M-NCPPC for trail signage. Parts of the trail are steep and some intersections of the trail are blind. The trail access points cross vehicular roadways. These areas would benefit by having warning signs posted at appropriate distances to apprise trail users of the features ahead. Signage will be posted to identify those sections of the trail that are suitable for handicap accessibility. ADA signage will also be posted to advise trail users of the steepness of the trail sections ahead. The trail also crosses historic areas such as Waters Mill. There are also other known historical points-of-interest in the vicinity of the

trail. Signage can be used to inform and educate users of the trail of the historical attributes of the areas through which the trail crosses.

3.6 Construction Cost Estimate

A construction cost estimate for the preferred alignment was developed based upon prevailing unit prices applicable to the year 2002. The estimated cost of construction is **\$1,439,000.00**. A breakdown of the unit pricing of the estimate may be found in the Appendix.

4.0 COMMUNITY MEETING

4.1 Public Presentation

On November 20, 2002, FWA and members of the staff conducted a public presentation on the preliminary alignment of the proposed paved trail. This presentation was held at the Upcounty Service Center, Conference Room A, located on Middlebrook Road in Germantown. The alignment and the design criteria were presented to the invited public and oral and written comments were solicited and received as contained in the Appendix of this report. Eight members of the public attended in addition to the FWA and M-NCPPC staff present.

4.2 Public Meeting Comments

Public comments received were generally of an inquisitive nature, but those opinions expressed were almost all in favor of the project. One participant questioned the need for the project and lamented further negative impacts to the park features. Staff explained the master planning process for the park. One aspect of the project is that the construction of the paved trail can be seen as an alternative to the vehicular access road that was being studied and was subsequently rejected for implementation by the Planning Board.

One participant stated that because the first 1900 feet of the trail at the western will not be ADA-compliant, consideration should be given to leaving this portion of the existing trail as is with no improvement, and provide an alternate paved trail from Picnic Lane to the proposed westernmost access trailhead at Lake Ridge Drive. The trail would perhaps be aligned parallel and adjacent to Picnic Lane and Lake Ridge Drive. This alternative was subsequently studied as Alternate Alignment #4 on the "Alternate ADA Alignments" plan located in the Appendix.

6.0 APPENDICES

6.1 Community Meeting Presentation Slides (with alignment drawings)