Watkins Regional Park
Master Park Development Plan
One of 4 Regional Parks in the County

Regional Parks offer unique experiences to County residents while providing neighborhood park experiences to adjacent communities

- **Fairland Regional Park**
  - Laurel

- **Walker Mill Regional Park**
  - District Heights

- **Watkins Regional Park**
  - Upper Marlboro

- **Cosca Regional Park**
  - Clinton
• 839 acres in size

• Busiest park in the system
  • 300,000 vehicles annually
  • 1,000,000 visitors annually

• Acquisition 1964-1996

• Named after Robert M. Watkins, former Chairman of M-NCPPC
Park Features

- Watkins Nature Center
- Old Maryland Farm
- 4 Basketball, Half Courts
- 1 Basketball, full Court at L/K/P
- 34 Camping sites
- Football/Soccer Combination Field, Lighted
- 1 multi-purpose field at L/K/P
- 5 Lighted Softball/Baseball Fields; 1 at L/K/P
- 5 Indoor Tennis Court
- 4 Lighted Outdoor Tennis Court; 1 at L/K/P
- Miniature Train
- 18 hole Mini Golf Course
- Antique Carousel
- Natural Surface Trail Network
- Paved Walking Loop and Exercise System
- 4 Picnic Areas and 16 Picnic Shelters
- 2 Playgrounds/4 Playgrounds at L/K/P
- 8 Restrooms and 2 porta-potty sites
- Snack Bar Refreshment Depot
- Largo/Kettering/Perrywood Community Center
- Chelsea Historic Site
- 11 Structures in the south (barns, outbuildings)
- CAM and CAO
Why plan now?
Plans have been done in the past…

Demographics are changing.
Increasing population in the Central Region
Population is aging and the size of a yard diminishing

Recreation interests are changing.
New activities, changing demographics

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

- Development Restrictions
  - Western Branch – a wetland of Special State Concern
  - Rare and Endangered Species throughout the north
  - Steep Slopes greater than 25%
  - TCP2 sites (woodland/forest land protection)

- Congestion

- Aging Facilities

- Needed Infrastructure

- Growing Demand for recreational and leisure activities
Themes of Key Recommendations

• Meet Increasing Demand (Current and Future)
• Celebrate the Strengths of the Park and Expand its Regional Reach
• Protect the Natural and Historic Elements
• Make the Park a Life Learning Lab
• Develop a Tournament Sports Facility
• Integrate Largo / Kettering / Perrywood Community Center
• Improve Walking and Biking Connections
• Continue to accommodate Big Events and Everyday Visits
THE PLAN WILL:

- Illustrate the vision for future growth and management of the park

- Direct future renovation, development, and investment of physical improvements

- Outline a coordinated approach for park enhancements, choreographed to **take place over the next 20-25 years** in an orderly and fiscally responsible manner
Framework Plans

- Formula 2040 (2013)
  - Connectivity
  - Health & Wellness
  - Economic Development

- Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan (2012)

Master Plan Guiding Principles

• **Create a Sense of Place** A compelling mix of destinations will enhance the comfort, ambiance, and choice of activities at Watkins Regional Park. Several new features and experiences will entice and engage all park visitors.

• **Education and Environmental Learning** Nature and landscapes will be more central to the visitor experience. Changes will allow visitors to connect with nature and agriculture.

• **Infrastructure Expansion** Maintain and expand the capacity of the park to accommodate larger numbers of visitors as the park continues to grow as a regional destination and attracts new diverse audiences.

• **Family Fun** Activities, spaces, and features that support family togetherness and fun for a whole day in the park -- rain, shine or heat of summer.

• **Personal Health and Fitness** Expansion of the existing trail network for fitness and leisure trail users. Health programming will be available at hours desired by park visitors.

• **Habitat and Wildlife** Educate, celebrate, capitalize, and support the rediscovery of the park’s natural resources through special preservation areas in combination with enhanced active recreation opportunities.
Vision Statement

Watkins Regional Park will continue to **nurture and promote** its **signature outdoor experiences** to attract people from far and wide, further making the park a key contributor to Prince George’s County’s culture and economy. The park’s exceptional **natural resources** will continue to be protected from development, while being utilized to provide greater opportunities for **environmental discovery and understanding**. The park’s historic **agricultural and cultural landscapes will become a new centerpiece for education and innovation**, and better connections will make these experiences more accessible. New leisure activities and refreshed existing activities will fully **embrace an accessible and multi-dimensional leisure environment**. Integrating play, recreation and exploration will foster community ties and learning. Watkins Regional Park will remain a jewel in the Department of Parks and Recreation system and a great outdoor place within Prince George’s County.
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Watkins Regional Park

Master Park Development Plan
EXISTING USES

Northern Section
• Softball / Baseball / Football Fields
• Tennis / Basketball Courts
• Picnic Shelters
• Summer Ops - Carousel, Train, Mini Golf, Wiz of Oz
• Playgrounds
• Camping
• CAO and CAM
• Trails

Southern Section
• Largo/Kettering/Perrywood CC
• Chelsea Historic Manor / Chelsea 1
• Leased Farmland
• Trails
Quadrants: Sports, Play, Nature, Agriculture,
**SPORTS**

- Upgrade Tennis Bubble
- Upgrade Softball Fields
- Replace CAO office with Welcome Center
- Improve Access to Community Center
- Coleville Picnic Area
  - Northern Athletic Complex
  - Southern Athletic Complex
Pavilion Vision

- Rental / Events Facility with a View over the Fields
  - Popup Restaurants
  - Weddings
  - Executive Retreats
NC Pavilion
Chelsea Historic Site
NATURE & AGRICULTURE
Farmland
Watkins Discovery Center
Chelsea Historic Site
Chelsea 1
Watkins Discovery Center

Vision

Knoch Knolls Nature Center

Aldo Leopold Legacy Center
Watkins Discovery Center
Vision
Old Maryland Farm Vision

- Expanded Facilities
- Expanded Pasture
- Better Education, Training, and Meeting Facilities
- Expanded Farming, Gardening Show and Shared Spaces
- Farm Animals and Programs
- Repurpose Barns
Implementation:

Phase 1: Improving the Core
Focused on reinvesting and improving the developed portions of the park by targeting issues related to congestion and aging infrastructure.

Phase 2: The Big Move
Focused on transforming the southern portion of the park. The southern portion of the park will become a showcase of agrarian uses, retelling the history and complex stories of Prince George’s County’s agrarian culture.

Phase 3: Knitting it All Together
Completes the plan by knitting the northern and southern portions of the park together.
Next Steps:

December 12
- Final Stakeholder Meeting
- Release Draft Document for Community Review

January 2019
- Planning Board Presentation
- Releases Final Document
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