Agenda

May 24 Public Information Meeting

Issues and Opportunities

6:30 PM  Display Review
7:00 PM  Welcome and Introductions
7:10 PM  Presentation
7:45 PM  Discussion
8:15 PM  Display Review
8:30 PM  Adjourn
Mission Statement
In partnership with our citizens, the Department of Parks and Recreation provides comprehensive park and recreation programs, facilities, and services which respond to changing needs within our communities. We strive to preserve, enhance, and protect our open spaces to enrich the quality of life for present and future generations in a safe and secure environment.

Vision Statement
The Department of Parks and Recreation pledges to:

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

Provide the highest standard of excellence in public service through cooperative partnership with our diverse community.
What is a regional park, who does it serve, what activities are located here?

**Park Classification**

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

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

Watkins Regional Park Master Plan

Watkins is one of four Regional Parks in the County

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

Watkins Regional Park Master Plan
Watkins Regional Park Encompasses

- The park itself
  - Approximately 845 acres in size
  - Busiest park in the system - approximately 300,000 vehicles and 1,000,000 visitors annually
  - Walkable park; visitor can park once and walk to all activities
  - First parcels acquired in 1964; acquisition completed in 1996
  - Located in Upper Marlboro
  - Named after former chairman of M-NCPPC, Robert M. Watkins

- Central Area Maintenance and Administration Offices
- Largo/Kettering/Perrywood Community Center
- Chelsea Historic Site (Boys and Girls Club tenant)

Why plan now?
Plans have been done in the past...

Demographics are changing.
Aging/size of home/yard
Population increasing

Recreation interests are changing.

Balance natural resources and farmland with recreation and active uses.
What is a Master Plan?

How frequently is this effort undertaken?

What is the master planning process?

Framework Plans

- **Formula 2040** (2013)
  - Connectivity
  - Health & Wellness
  - Economic Development
- Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan (2012)
What will a Master Plan look like?

How detailed will the drawn plan be?

What will be written down?

Watkins Regional Park Master Plan

Introduction to the Planning Team
Planning Team

Project Manager, M-NCPPC
Department of Parks and Recreation, Prince George’s County
• Carol Binns, Senior Planner
• Sonja Ewing, Planning Supervisor

Lardner/Klein – Lead Consultant
• L/KLA  Elisabeth Lardner
• L/KLA  Cara Smith
• SIRI, LLC  Lisa Siri

Support Team
• MIG  Phil Myrick
• CHM  Margaret Bailey
• ESA  Mark Burchick
• JMA Preservation  Ashley Howell

Meeting Project Objectives, Deadlines and Budgets

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<td>Inventory of Existing Conditions</td>
<td>Feb/March/April/May</td>
<td>Evening public meeting – May 2016 Help us understand your park!</td>
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<td>Task B</td>
<td>Inventory of Natural Resources</td>
<td>April/May</td>
<td>Ephemerals -- spring</td>
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<td>Citizen’s Survey of User Needs</td>
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<td>Task H</td>
<td>Final Master Plan</td>
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Project Deliverables

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

Consultant Team Final Product

Existing Park Conditions
## Park Events – Spring and Summer

**Spring**
- Wool and Fiber Day at OMF - April
- PGCPS High School Tennis Championship Tournament – May

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

## Park Events – Fall and Winter

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

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

## Existing Park Conditions
Park Events – Most of the Year

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

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

Infrastructure - Recent Investments

New Imagination Playgrounds
- Wizard of Oz – October 2015
- Watkins Downs – May 2014

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

Two points of vehicle access to park
- New entrance from Landover Road/MD 202
- Entrance from Watkins Park Drive – should a traffic circle be installed?

Lack of formal bus parking and drop-off/pick-up sites
- Currently using informal loop on Pepco Easement

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

Revenue and Use Analysis Tasks

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

Outcomes

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

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

Data Being Gathered

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

Sources: Smartlink Database as well as Site Specific Databases
Issues - Protection of Natural Resources

Existing Park Conditions

Draft

Potential Old Growth Forest Map

L/KLA

Existing Park Conditions

Issues - Protection of Natural Resources

Draft

Forest Interior Dwelling (FID) Map

L/KLA

Existing Park Conditions
Issues - Protection of Natural Resources

Existing Park Conditions

Issues - Expansion Space Limitations

- **845 acres**
  (same as Central Park in NYC)

- **Restricted - regulated**
  - Wetlands (blue)
  - 25% and greater slopes (orange)
  - TO COME – TCP2 lands (Tree Conservation Plan Lands)

- **Restricted – policy**
  - Prime farmland and Land of Statewide Importance (green)

- **Restricted – current uses**
Online Survey

Run through June 2016
- Asking questions related to current uses
- Requesting suggested new uses
- Data set can be tied back to surveys from 2010 Needs Assessment

Existing Park Conditions

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

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

The best reason to visit the park in the winter is ______________and in the summer is ______________.

I wish ______________could change.

I miss ______________and am glad that the park has ______________.

Watkins Park in Five Years
Infrastructure - Parking Shortage for CURRENT uses

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

Isolated and unconnected parking lots
  - Traffic flow inhibited; requires u-turning and backing up instead of pulling through another parking lot
Infrastructure - Peak Use/Picnic Demand

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

Minimal open access, family picnic facilities available
- 4 Picnic Areas – open for use without permit
  - 1 near Train Station/Mini Golf
  - 1 near Central Administration Building
  - 1 near Tennis Bubble
  - 1 reserved for Birthday Parties – near Train Station

Infrastructure – Facility Mix

Park serves as location for Central Area Operations Building
- Maintenance vehicles serve larger region from park
- Can/should maintenance vehicle traffic be separated from park users traffic?
- Can/should maintenance and administration facilities be combined?
## Infrastructure – Upgrades Needed

### Watkins Tennis Bubble
- Desire to replace bubble with new fixed structure

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

### Picnic Pavilions
- More and larger group accommodations desired

### Athletic Fields and Supporting Equipment
- Scoreboards
- Concession Facilities

## Park Issues and Opportunities

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

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

#### Miniature Golf Course
- Renovate to make ADA-compliant

#### Renovate Watkins Summer Operations Building

#### Picnic Pavilion Maintenance Needs
- Erosion, storm damage around slabs
- Structures need paint and repair
- Grill replacement underway
- Identifying signs screened by parked cars
- Shelters are not readily accessible from parking area
Limited Expansion Space

Although large, much of the park is protected from future development by Regulations:
- Wetlands
- Rare and Endangered Species
- Slopes greater than 25%
- TCP2 sites (woodland/forest land protection)

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

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

Action Steps:
- Develop a long-term agriculture preservation program on parkland in balance with provision of needed active recreational facilities.

Where to go Next? How to Address Challenges?

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

What is Important to YOU?
Discussion

Next Steps

• Online Survey

• Smaller Focus Groups

• Fall 2016 Public Meeting with Alternative Master Plan Strategies and Concepts
Thank you for your time today!

Watkins Regional Park Master Plan 2016

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