**Woods Committee Minutes**

**Monday November 1, 2021 - 7:30 PM**

Approved: December 6, 2021

**Attendance:** Pat Klein, Joan Mahaffey, Dave Cosson, Tom Land, Joli McCathran, Meghan O’Connell, Virginia Quesada, and Krista Zanetti. A quorum was present.

**Call to order**

The meeting was called to order at 7:33.

**Draft Agenda Approval**

The Draft Agenda for this meeting was unanimously approved (Virginia 1st/Joan 2nd)

**Approval of Draft Meeting Minutes**

There was a correction to the October 5 minutes concerning the Champion Blackjack Oak in the East Woods, Quercus marilandica. Minutes for the November 1, 2021, were unanimously approved as amended (Virginia 1st/Joli 2nd)

**Public Appearances**

There were no public appearances.

**Update - WG Deer Management Program – Fall 2021/Winter 2022 Bow Hunt**

The ​deer hunting season opened September 10th.   ​Two does have been harvested to date by BHFFMD - one in the East Woods, the other in the West Woods.

**Woods Preserve Ordinance**

The Woods Committee cochairs had a meeting with the mayor about postponing discussion on protocol on Woods Trails. Both the Mayor and the Co-chairs want to avoid confusion between the Shared Use Bike Path issue and the use of bicycles on trails in the Woods. The WC decided to postpone discussion of the Woods Preserve Ordinance until the Shared Use Bike Path issue is resolved.

**East/Woods Trail Maintenance Projects**

*Trail Maps*

The ​ WC continued discussion ​on using GPS-based ​mobile apps to improve the accuracy of ​our East and West woods trail maps. ​ Several members ​will test out these apps, such as Map My Run and Garmin and report ​back on use of the systems. We need the capability to overlay different trail runs onto a wetlands map. The maps could later be posted on the Woods Committee page on the Town website. Incidentally, the trail which parallels Center Street should be called the Frankland Trail according to Town historical records.

*Traversing Wet Trail Areas*

The WC reevaluated its earlier intention to extend the “timber turnpikes” through the portion of Maple Avenue Extended that is chronically wet.   ​Based on recommendations by the MC Parks trails expert manager, the WC is considering closing off the wet ​trail section and rerouting the trail to higher ground to ​intersect with the McCauley and Pine trails.  Trees might be planted along the original Maple Avenue trail to reforest areas damaged by compaction. ​Closed portions of rerouted trails should be blocked with downed tree logs. Signage might also be necessary in some areas. Other ​MC Parks recommendations include limiting trail use ​​in sensitive and protected areas to walkers only. This trail work is still under discussion.

*Re-establishing West Woods Trail from Day Lilly Lane to Poplar Trail*

Following discussion at the October meeting, a ​West Woods trail has been​ created from Daylily Lane connecting to the Poplar Trail ​to provide safe passage for Daylily Lane residents to Maple Lake and the WGL crosswalk.  Thanks to Tom Land, Bruce Rothrock, Jay Everhart, and Joey Fones for their work on this project. ​The WC decided to name the new trail the Ironwood Trail in recognition of the many Ironwood trees in the area.

*November 11th Workday*

A notice was posted in the November Town Bulletin to recruit town volunteers to help on the East Woods workday.  A reminder will be posted on the Town listserv. One focus will be completion of the new Bradford Crossing and ​rerouting the trail. Volunteers will also scout the nearby spur to the champion Blackjack Oak (Quercus marilandica).  Town maintenance has already ​packed soil over the new culvert.   The ​culvert will be reinforced with rocks. The trail to the former crossing will be blocked.  Additional activity will include ​placing tree protectors on trees with evidence of deer rubbing.  There was a request to check for illegal dumping near the Ridge Road entrance to the East Woods.

**West Woods Stormwater Management**

The WG Storm Water Management Committee was disbanded several years ago after compiling considerable background information and resources concerning stormwater in Washington Grove’s residential and forest areas. The WC agreed to revisit stormwater management and focus on the West Woods. American Rescue Plan funds up to $450,000 are available until 2024 for projects which align with the Environmental Protection Agency’s Clean Water Act. The WC will review information which Virginia Quesada and Robert Johnson have provided as former Cochairs of the Stormwater Management Committee. Several historic issues were identified:

* drainage from Town Crest and deterioration of the catchment basin
* the effect of new paved roads on the volume of water draining into the Woods
* the effect of Town drainage culverts under Washington Grove Lane
* the effect of drainage off Washington Grove Lane directly into the West Woods
* erosion and undercutting of tree root systems in several areas of the West Woods
* and better understanding where the water goes when it leaves the West Woods

The Committee ​expects its review of that work may lead to an RFP for engineering assistance.  Coordination with the Montgomery County and the City of Gaithersburg will be necessary.

**Final Updates, Announcements, Comments, and Action Items**

* Continue to investigate applications to format trail maps in the East and West Woods.
* Initiate a workday on November 11 to prepare the Challstrom Trail with the new Bradfield Crossing.
* Publicize the new crossing trail spur.
* Investigate dumping along Ridge Road in the East Woods.
* Publicize the new Ironwood Trail in the West Woods.
* Begin collecting background information for a stormwater management plan for the West Woods.

**Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 9:02 (Meghan 1st/Krista 2nd).

Next Meeting:Monday, December 6th, 7:30 pm. January meeting will be January 3rd.

Respectfully Submitted: Joan Mahaffey and Patrice Klein, Woods Committee Co-chairs