



Green Space Advisor

Volume 17 No.1

July, 2015

Streetlight species

Bobby Berg

Here is something to think about the next time you go outside on a clear evening, look up to the stars... and see only three. Think about streetlight design. All streetlights put light on the road, but some also send light up to the heavens and wash out our lovely night sky with “uplight”.

Montgomery County specifies the style of streetlights in our neighborhoods, and the trapezoidal “Colonial post-top” design has been a standard for decades. The old version had a bulb in the middle, which sometimes created glare as well as uplight. A modern version has the bulb tucked into the top, and it has no uplight if the sides are clear or not present. Translucent sides are a problem regardless of the bulb location. On larger roads, the style is usually the “cobra head”. Look at the cobra heads the next time you’re in the car: the ones with a flat bottom usually have no uplight

Why do we still install streetlights that waste energy with uplight? The reasons are tradition, stealth, and county standards. Tradition says that more light is always better, and besides, you should be inside watching TV. Stealth applies because sources of uplight are distributed widely, over tens of miles, and because the increase happens slowly, over decades. Finally, standards are conservative by definition. If the county changed its streetlight specifications every year, the cost of maintaining so many streetlight styles would be large. Nevertheless, it seems time to update the standard to require zero uplight. At the same time, the bulb specification could be changed from sodium to LED. The extra cost, which cannot be ignored, is paid by the developer, and would be perhaps \$300 per streetlight. However, the savings in energy and maintenance paid by the county over the long term would be greater



Upper Rock Creek Trail

by

Joe Fritsch

One of the major benefits gained by preserving greenspace areas is the opportunity to enjoy the many trails we are fortunate to have throughout Montgomery County. Montgomery County Parks is currently working on an amendment to the Park Trails Master Plan. The goal is to develop a network of trail loops and links to better provide a variety of trail experiences and trail access closer to home for walkers, runners, bicyclists, and equestrians.

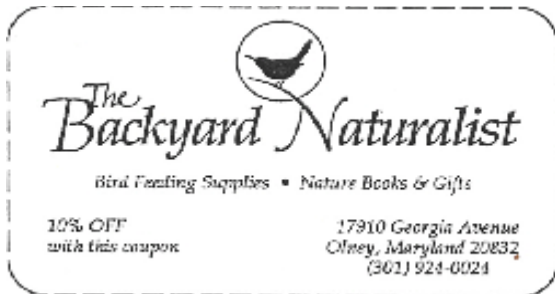
The majority of trails in Montgomery County Parks are natural surface, with fewer miles of paved trails. At the same time, these paved park trails are essential, providing handicapped access to parks and trail connections to the hundreds of miles of paved and natural surface trails in the DC metro area.

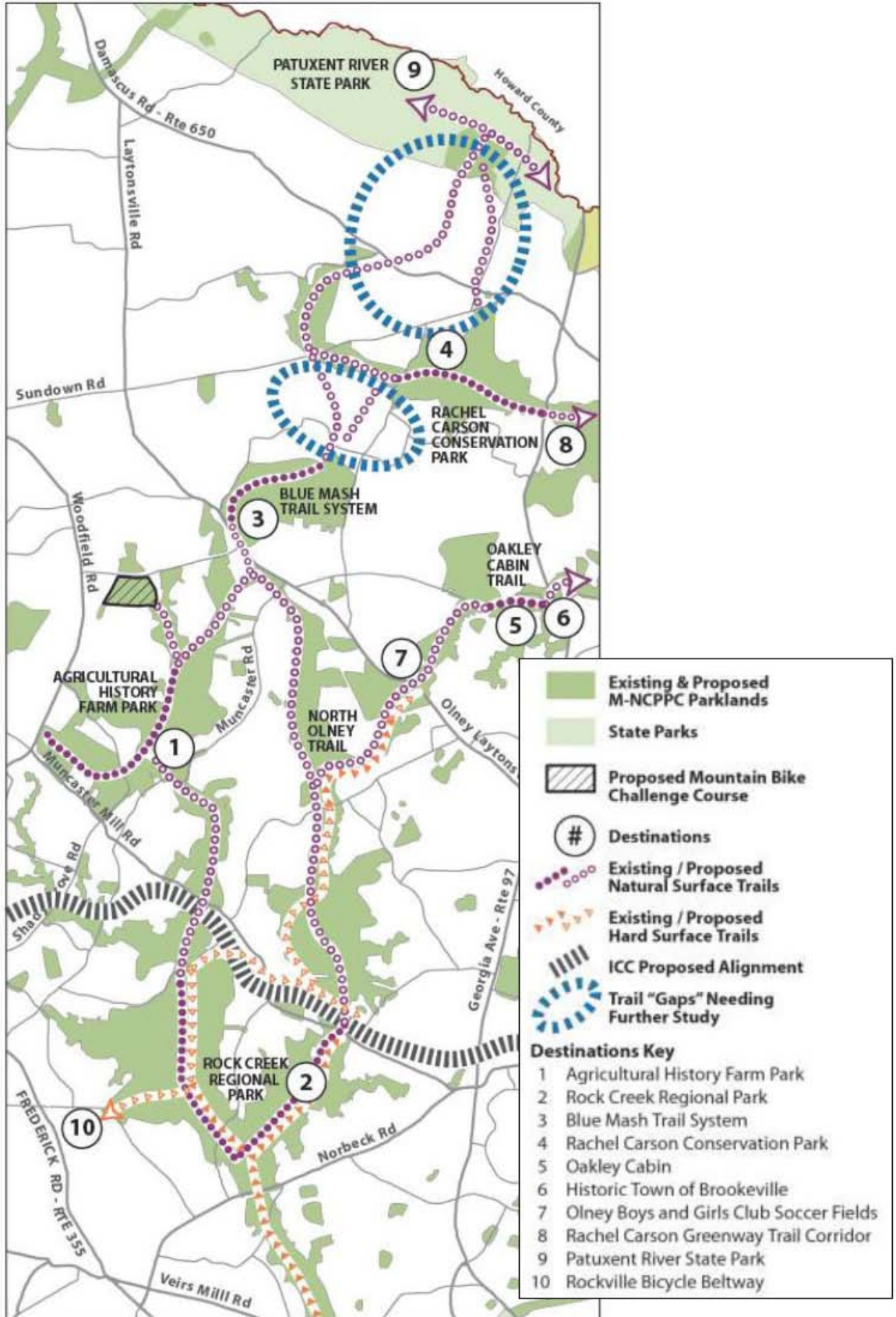
The Upper Rock Creek Trail Corridor Plan will provide both natural and paved trail connections in the Mid-County region. The trail will run between Lake Needwood and Route 108. It will be located on the west side of Olney and to the east of Laytonsville. The majority of the trail will be natural surface. This includes a trail connecting Lake Needwood to the Agricultural History Farm Park, and then heading up to Route 108 near Blue Mash golf course.

There will be a paved trail connection from the Rock Creek paved trail, along the east side of Lake Frank, connecting to the ICC paved trail and Emory Lane paved trail. The plan includes both a paved trail and natural surface trail connecting from Lake Frank to Bowie Mill road, which will connect into another local paved trail. There will also be a natural surface trail linking to the west side of the Upper Rock Creek trail, creating a loop trail around 20 miles long.

Future plans are to connect the Upper Rock Creek trail to the Rachel Carson Conservation Park, Patuxent State Park trails and the Rock Creek Bicycle Beltway. The Upper Rock Creek trail system and connector trails will provide exceptional opportunities to discover, explore, and nurture an appreciation for the greenspace areas which we are extremely fortunate to have all around us.

Upper Rock Creek Trail Corridor Plan link:
http://www.montgomeryparks.org/PPSD/ParkTrails/trail_planning/upper_rockcreek/URCreek_index.shtm





Montgomery County Council Considers Pesticide Restrictions

Sharon Dooley

County Council President Leventhal introduced a pesticide restriction Bill (52 -14) this year. He included certain chemicals which are banned elsewhere such as in the European Union and Canada. This legislation, which admittedly is a modest first step, seeks to decrease chemicals used on lawns for cosmetic purposes. It does not restrict use of controls used for agricultural crops or those used by the county schools, parks or businesses. In fact the parks department requested that it not be included in any voluntary restrictions as it considers herbicides necessary for control of invasive plants. Currently homeowners do not have to post their lawns when harmful products are used, although commercial lawn care companies and gardeners are supposed to do so.

Many negative comments were received during council hearings; some were from homeowners speaking about the pleasure of coming home and enjoying their green lawns; lawn care companies spoke of their responsible use of these chemicals. The Chemical industry is also mounting a strong campaign against any restrictions with a blog by a group called RISE – Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment. EPA states that chemicals, when used responsibly, can generally be considered safe. However the EPA also notes that many pesticides are known endocrine disrupters – both for male and female reproductive systems. But when chemicals are sold widely and use is not monitored in any way, we could again be creating another disaster such as described by Rachel Carson in a Silent Spring. When the state sprays for weed control along county roads and residents nearby have wells on their property, no notice is given, nor are their wells tested for harmful residue of runoffs.

What is laid down on lawns can flow to the Chesapeake Bay and rush down sidewalks and

local parks and neighborhood streets. There is much exposure which we do not know about because this use is not routinely monitored. Hormonal changes have already been noted in local aquatic life such as frogs and fish. Pesticides and other chemicals are part of the problems with the decreases in bees and Monarch butterflies. Bees have susceptibility to neonicotinoid preparations found in fungicides and several other products; Monarch butterflies are dying because herbicides are destroying their habitat and they are unable to find untainted plants on which to feed and nest. Some materials are dangerous when wet and okay when dry, so integrated and educated distribution is necessary. Carbaryl (Sevin), acephate (Orthene), and diazinon (Spectracide) are known to be toxic to bees. Organic pest and weed control is possible and used widely elsewhere, but is not often tried as a first pass at lawn care here.

According to news reports, the World Health Organization also recently indicated that there is strong evidence that a chemical known as 2,4-D is a carcinogen. This chemical is made by Dow and is found in common lawn products Weed B Gon and Bayer lawn weed and Crabgrass killer. It was also a common ingredient, among others, in Agent Orange. Agent Orange has been identified as interfering with certain hormonal functions and as a causative in non-Hodgkin Lymphoma. (Washington Post Health News June 30, 2015)

All of the pressure has delayed action by the County Council, which is not now scheduled to vote on this until September. Some members are trying to delay implementation and decrease the effectiveness of the proposals. Very simply the proposal requests that the county:

(1) require posting of notice for certain lawn applications of pesticide;

(2) prohibit the use of certain pesticides on lawns; (3) prohibit the use of certain pesticides on certain County-owned property; (4) require the County to adopt an integrated pest management program for certain County-owned property; and (5) generally amend County law regarding pesticides.

I think that these are measures which deserve our support. If you agree, please let the County Council know that you support this bill.

A copy of the bill can be found here: http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/COUNCIL/Resources/Files/bill/2014/Packets/20141028_4C.pdf

Most of what Greater Sandy Spring Green Space achieves is through its volunteer board of directors. Please join us in welcoming our newest board member, Sharon Hill.

Sharon Blinder Hill has lived in Gaithersburg since 1980. She and her husband moved to this area from NYC and truly appreciated the abundance of quiet spaces in which to hike and enjoy nature at that time. Her two daughters are also deeply committed to living a sustainable life. The mission of preserving green spaces so that humans and wildlife can continue to thrive is close to her heart.

At the beginning of her career, Sharon worked in strategic planning, market analysis & planning and market consulting. She served on the PTA, volunteered in Montgomery County Schools and Junior Achievement. Currently she volunteers with Rebuilding Together and is a Chief Judge for the Montgomery County Board of Elections.

Sharon is a Vice President and Branch Manager at Sandy Spring Bank. Her branches are in Sandy Spring and Ashton. Sandy Spring Bank has deep roots within the community. Sharon graduated with Distinction from University of Rochester and received her MBA from the Wharton Graduate School of Business. Sharon also graduated with honors from Maryland Banking School.

You will have noticed on page 2 a new innovation in the Advisor: we are now taking ads from select local businesses which are sympathetic to our goals and interests. We are grateful for their support, and for yours, as well. Another possible avenue for supporting Sandy Spring Green Space endeavors is the sponsorship of issues of the Advisor--one of our major expenses. If you are interested in making a donation specifically to support this newsletter, please contact Bobby Berg at P.O. Box 92, Sandy Spring, 20861, or by email at robert.berg7@verizon.net.

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using the Donate button on our website.**