



## Trail Management Plan – Public Review of Draft Alternatives

*Frequently Asked Questions (October 4, 2010)*

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### **Plan Schedule and Implementation**

1. *What is the schedule of the Trail Plan process?* The schedule for the Trail Management Plan is generally outlined in the Trail Management Plan Workbook. We are aiming to complete a Draft Trail Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for public review by Summer, 2011 with completion of the Plan/EIS and submission of a Record of Decision in 2012.

2. *What is the timeline for Trail Plan implementation?* Once the Trail Management Plan/EIS is finalized and a Record of Decision is completed, we will begin to implement the plan as outlined in the Plan/EIS. Implementation cannot begin until 30 days after the Record of Decision is filed. Implementation of the Plan will occur over 15 years as funding allows.

3. *How will funding of the Trail Plan occur?* Funding for the final recommended alternative of the Trail Management Plan is not currently identified. A general implementation schedule and associated costs will be developed as part of the Environmental Impact Analysis in order to assess implementation impacts. Potential funding sources will be identified as part of the implementation process.

### **New Uses**

1. *How do “Shared Use” designations affect hikers?* We propose to continue the current park policy of hikers being permitted use of all trails within the park. Alternatives with “Shared Use” trails related only to shared uses between other types of users (mountain bikers and equestrians).

2. *How are “Single Use Mountain Bike” trails defined?* Single use mountain bike trails would allow mountain bike users to utilize designated trails seven days a week. Hikers would also be permitted on these trails at all times.

3. *Would horse users and mountain bike users be on the same trail at the same time under any of the Draft Alternatives?* The current set of Draft Alternatives does not include any proposal to allow horse riders and mountain bike users on the same trail at the same time.

4. *Do the Draft Alternatives include shared use on existing trails?* In Alternative 4, shared use is proposed on two equestrian trails, Wetmore (4.5 miles) and a section in Bedford reservation (1.5 miles) and 6.7 miles on the Plateau/oak Hill hiking trail. The remainder of existing equestrian trails, approximately, 42 miles would remain as equestrian/hiking trails only. In Alternative 5, no shared use trails are proposed and the existing 48 miles of equestrian trails within the park would remain as its current use. In Alternative 6, one equestrian trail is proposed as shared use, Wetmore, with the remaining 43.5 miles of equestrian trail remain as its existing use. Additionally in Alternative 6, a section of the Buckeye Trail near O’Neil Woods park is proposed as a shared use trail.

4. *How is the park defining trailside campsites?* The park defines trailside campsites for the purpose of the Trail Plan as primitive, hike or bike-in sites. The types of facilities at each campsite will be developed during the next phase of planning.



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### **Status of Existing Projects**

1. *What is the status of the Old Carriage Bridges and Old Carriage Connector improvement work?* The park is working with engineers from the Federal Highway Administration to evaluate alternatives for the Old Carriage Trail bridges. Options include repairing the structures, rerouting the trail to avoid the longer spans, or replacing the structures completely. The next step is to conduct a detailed study, a Value Analysis, that considers multiple factors and impacts, including environmental and visitor use impacts, sustainability, construction and life-cycle costs to determine which alternative is preferred. The park expects to undertake this study by early 2011. Depending on the preferred alternative, another evaluation of environmental impacts may be needed. Then a detailed design will be completed and funding sought. Until then, the bridges must remain closed.

The Old Carriage Connector trail has experienced deterioration over the years. We will have work crews stabilizing and improving the trail, starting October 4 through mid- November.

Both of these projects are listed in the Trail Management Plan under "Actions Common to All Alternatives" on page 14 of the Trail Planning Workbook. This section recommends these existing projects continue as they currently are under their individual planning process.

2. *How is the Independence Trail Connector on Hemlock Road part of the Plan?* The Hemlock Trail Connector is currently the subject of a separate plan and Environmental Assessment. It has been identified in the Trail Management Plan under "Actions Common to All Alternatives" on page, 14 of the Trail Planning Workbook.

### **Specific Trail Plan Elements**

1. *Does the plan propose parking as part of a trailhead at the end of Holzhauer Road?*

We have currently identified the area between Boyden Road, Highland Road, Holzhauer Road and the park boundary for a potential trailhead. We have not specifically identified the end of Holzhauer Road as the location at this time. Specific location and feasibility of a new trailhead has yet to be determined or evaluated.

2. *Does the current set of Trail Plan Alternatives include any new areas for Cross-Country Skiing?* The Draft Alternatives do not specifically identify new trails for cross-country ski trails, though the extension of Tree Farm trail is proposed in Alternative 5. With input received during this phase, the park will further refine cross-country ski trail designations. Current cross-country trail designations currently do not change under any of the Draft Alternatives.

3. *How were Blossom Music Center lands considered during the trail planning process?*

The NPS is planning to acquire 583 acres of the Blossom Music Center property. We have funding on hand to acquire approximately 230 acres, but we are still seeking the funding necessary to complete the entire transaction. We are hopeful that funding will be secured in 2011, but nothing is definite at this time. Nevertheless, we assumed for the sake of the trail planning process that this area would be available for potential NPS trail development in the future. One trail is currently proposed on and adjacent to the property (Element #34) under Alternatives 4-6. Much of this area was left without new trail development to help maintain some trail-less park land in areas of high natural values.