

## **CLAUDE MOORE FARM AREA CONCEPT PLAN PUBLIC COMMENT REPORT**

**JULY 1, 2019**

### **INTRODUCTION TO SCOPING PROCESS**

#### **Project Description**

The National Park Service (NPS) is preparing a Concept Plan for the future of Claude Moore farm area in McLean, VA. The 69-acre Claude Moore farm area is within Turkey Run Park, one of the many sites managed by the NPS along the George Washington Memorial Parkway.

Following the public comment period, the NPS will develop an initial range of concepts for future use and enjoyment of the Claude Moore farm area of Turkey Run Park. The NPS will share these concepts with the public during a second public comment period and provide further opportunities for feedback. The outcome of the effort will be a Concept Plan that contains a range of refined concepts that could then be considered as options for the NPS to implement.

#### **Plan Goals**

The goals of the Concept Plan are to:

- Conduct community outreach and provide opportunities for the public to re-imagine the park
- Explore and identify potential adaptive reuse of existing facilities
- Develop a range of concepts for the park as part of the George Washington Memorial Parkway expanding opportunities for the public to explore the resources and engage in new visitor experiences

#### **Public Comment Period**

The comment period for the Concept Plan began on April 25, 2019 and extended through May 25, 2019.

#### **DESCRIPTION OF PUBLIC MEETING**

A public meeting was held on April 25, 2019 to provide the public with an opportunity to share their vision for the Claude Moore farm area's future and identify any issues or concerns they might have with the project. The public meeting was held from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Madison Community Center at 3829 N Stafford Street in Arlington, VA. Fifty-two attendees registered on the sign-in sheet.

The public meeting was held in an open-house format. Meeting attendees were provided an opportunity to view and ask questions about project-related information on presentation boards arranged in the meeting room. Attendees could circulate the room to speak to the NPS and consultant representatives to address specific issues. The boards addressed the following:

- Plan Goals
- Project Timeline

- Project Location
- Share Your Ideas
- Share Your Ideas (Tell us about your visits to the park and activities that you have envisioned could happen here)
- Play: What would you like to do at the park?
- Activities: What would you like to do at the park?
- Play & Activities: What would you like to do at the park?
- How Can You Submit Comments?

Attendees were provided with post-it notes to respond to questions on the boards for posting to the boards. Attendees were also given dot stickers to place on precedent images of activities that interest them on the boards.

## **SUMMARY OF COMMENTS**

### **Introduction**

Ninety pieces of correspondence were received during the public comment period. Correspondences were received from residents of Alexandria, Annandale, Arlington, Ashburn, Fairfax, Falls Church, Great Falls, Haymarket, Herndon, Manassas, McLean, Reston, Springfield, and Vienna in Virginia. Comments were also received from residents of Bethesda, Chevy Chase, Forest Heights, Frederick, Glen Echo, Potomac, Silver Spring, and Thurmont in Maryland. Five pieces of correspondence were also received from residents of the District of Columbia, North Carolina, Ohio, and Hawaii.

Members or official representatives of several groups, including the Audubon Society of Northern Virginia, Claude Moore Colonial Farm, Friends of the Colonial Farm at Turkey Run, Fairfax County Democrats, Friends of Dyke Marsh, J.R.'s Custom Catering/Colonial Caterers/J.R.'s Goodtimes, Inc., Mid Atlantic Off-Road Enthusiasts, Outdoor Alliance DMV, National Parks Conservation Association, Potomac Appalachian Trail Club, Sierra Club, and Ship's Company Chanteymen, provided comments, which are summarized in the following section of this report.

Comment analysis assists the planning team in organizing, clarifying, and addressing technical information relevant to the development of the Concept Plan. It also aids in identifying the topics and issues to be evaluated and considered throughout the planning process. The following summary of comments is provided to outline the major groupings of comments, along with examples of specific comments to illustrate the trend.

### **General statements that the comments included**

#### Topic Questions

During the public comment period, comments could be submitted at the public meeting, via mail, or via the NPS Planning, Environment and Public Comment (PEPC) website. The comment form at the public meeting and PEPC website asked commenters to answer the following three topic questions.

1. Please tell us about your previous visits to the park. Include information about what activities you enjoyed, how often you have visited, the activities you have participated in, how long you were there, and the time of year you visited.

2. What would you like to see at the park in the future? Please include information about educational programs, new activities, and connections to other local attractions.
3. What other additional comments or suggestions do you have about the park?

Answers to each of these topic questions are summarized below. Comments submitted via mail that answered these topic questions are also summarized below.

1. **Previous Visits - Type of Commenters** A majority of the correspondences received were from commenters who were previously park visitors. **Table 1** summarizes the previous relationship of all commenters to the park.

**Table 1: Type of commenters**

Previous Relationship to Park	Number of Correspondences
Visitor	48
Visitor and volunteer	15
Visitor and volunteer or farm staff	1
Volunteer	7
Volunteer and farm staff	2
Farm staff	1
Contractor	2
Neighbor	1
Interest Group (e.g., Friends of Dyke Marsh)	6
Have never visited	2
Unknown	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>

2. **Previous Visits - What activities did you enjoy or participate in?**

Visitors

**Table 2** summarizes the most common activities visitor commenters stated that they enjoyed or participated in at the park.

**Table 2: Activities visitor commenters enjoyed or participated in at the park**

Activity	Number of Correspondences
Attended market fairs	22
Experienced colonial life/Saw history in action/Interacted with interpreters	13
Visited book store	12
Attended seasonal farm events and/or fairs	10
Visited farm animals	10
Visited gift shop	10

Activity	Number of Correspondences
Attended other farm events and/or fairs (not specified)	9
Walked around the grounds	8
Learned about colonial history and life	7
Attended plant sale	4
Picnicked	3
Attended or helped with Girl Scout events	3

Visitor commenters also stated that they enjoyed or participated in other, less common, miscellaneous activities at the park including:

- Attending field trips
- Hiking
- Playing on paths
- Touring the farm
- Attending farm days
- Exploring historic replica farm exhibits
- Attending weekend living history events
- Helping with farm chores
- Attending the Wassail
- Participating in the Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count
- Camping
- Attending community events at the pavilions
- Attending sporting events
- Attending programs

#### Volunteers and Farm Staff

**Table 3** summarizes the most common activities volunteer and farm staff commenters stated that they enjoyed or participated in at the park.

**Table 3: Activities volunteer and farm staff commenters enjoyed or participated in at the park**

Activity	Number of Correspondences
Worked at market fairs	14
Worked at events	5
Worked behind the scenes	5
Provided interpretation, including first-person interpretation	5

Volunteer and farm staff commenters also stated that they enjoyed or participated in other, less common, miscellaneous activities at the park including:

- Educating visitors about colonial life and farming
- Performing special activities
- Working at the fall harvest festivals
- Performing in the Wassail
- Performing as part of historical music group
- Maintaining facilities
- Performing routine maintenance
- Participating in regular daily operations
- Performing farm chores
- Caring for animals
- Planting or harvesting crops
- Planning programs
- Working at the office
- Rebuilding website
- Rewiring office network
- Indexing books

#### Youth Volunteers/Junior Interpreters

Eleven correspondences stated that the commenter had children/teenagers who previously volunteered at the farm or were previously volunteers themselves when they were a child/teenager. Comments stated that youth volunteers served as junior interpreters, volunteered at the market fair and other events, gardened, farmed, participated in animal care, worked behind the scenes, served as an apprentice, performed farm chores, etc. Some comments described the benefits to the commenter or their children from their youth volunteer experiences. Examples of these comments include the following:

- “My eldest was a Claude Moore junior interpreter and learned a lot about interacting with the public, animals and farming, and better awareness of the lives of people who rarely make it into the history books. She also gained a lot of independence and practice at responsibility because of how the program was run.”
- “When our daughter was old enough, she became a Junior Interpreter and worked at the farm as a volunteer for 8 years until she entered college. . . . The farm was instrumental in my daughter's education and opportunities for personal growth.”
- “My son was a youth volunteer for two seasons. He learned so much about the period and sharing it with others. I credit this experience with giving him a high comfort level speaking to audiences.”

- 3. Previous Visits - How often have you visited?** Comments received in response to this question varied widely. The most common response stated that commenters visited or volunteered at the park was several times. **Table 4** summarizes how often commenters visited or volunteered at the park.

**Table 4: How often commenters visited or volunteered at the park**

Frequency	Number of Correspondences
Once	5
6-8 times in the past several years	1
Couple of times	1
Periodically	1
Regularly	1
Frequently	2
Several times	3
At least once per month	2
Weekly in the spring and fall	1
<b>Per Year</b>	
Few times	1
Several times	7
1-2 times	1
2 times	4
2-3 times	1
3 times	3
3-4 times	1
4 times	2
40 times	1

4. **Previous Visits - How long were you there?** Eleven correspondences described how much time the commenter spent at the park. Overall, commenters spent between 45 minutes to a full-day at the park. Nine correspondences stated that the commenter visited the park between 45 minutes to a full-day at the park. Market fair visitors spent two hours to a full-day at the park. Other visits to the park ranged from 45 minutes to three hours. Two correspondences stated that the commenter volunteered at the park for either a half-day or full-day. One correspondence stated that the commenter was a full-time staff member.
5. **Previous Visits - What time of year did you visit?** The most common time of year commenters stated that they visited or volunteered at the park was in the fall. **Table 5** summarizes how often commenters visited or volunteered at the park.

**Table 5: Time of year commenters visited or volunteered at the park**

Time of Year	Number of Correspondences
Spring	20
Summer	19
Fall	21
Winter	8
Off-season	1
All times/throughout the year	6
All times/throughout the year (when Claude Moore Colonial Farm was open)	4

- 6. What would you like to see at the park in the future?** Comments received in response to this topic question varied widely and in level of detail. Overall, sixty-four correspondences stated that the commenter would like a colonial, living history, or working farm and/or farm-related activities, programs, or events at the park in the future. Thirty-six correspondences stated that the commenter would like see some other feature, activity, or program, not specifically related to a farm, at the park in the future.

#### Farm/Living History

Forty-five correspondences stated that the commenter would like a colonial, living history, or working historical farm at the park in the future. Three correspondences stated that the commenter would like to see a working farm, but did not specify a colonial or historical farm. Two correspondences stated that the commenter would like to see a farm, colonial or otherwise.

**Table 6** summarizes the most common farm-related activities, programs, and events commenters stated that they would like at the park in the future.

**Table 6: Farm-related activities, programs, and events commenters would like at the park in the future**

Activity, Program, or Event	Number of Correspondences
Market fairs	19
First person interpretation/Historical re-enactors or interpreters	6
Heritage breed animals	6
Hands-on learning activities	6
Over-night programs	5
Volunteer program	5
Field trips/school visits	4
Programs similar to what has been presented at the farm in the past (programs unspecified)	4
Educational programs	4

Commenters also stated that they would like to see other, less common, farm-related activities, programs, and events at the park in the future including:

- Special, holiday, and summer weekend events
- Informal colonial events for children and families (e.g., birthday parties)
- Campground events for military reenactment
- Wassailing
- Plant sales
- Scout programs
- Junior interpreters and youth volunteer opportunities
- Junior ranger programs
- Summer day camps
- Lectures/seminars/workshops
- Movies about colonial times
- Crops true to the colonial time period
- Tobacco fields/farm
- Kitchen garden
- Gardens
- Animal husbandry program
- Interpretive outdoor museum

Commenters also stated that they would like to keep the existing farm buildings in place (3 correspondences), keep the giftshop open (3 correspondences), and keep the book store open (2 correspondences). One correspondence stated that the commenter would like free or low-cost meeting rooms and a visitor center with displays and maps.

Three correspondences also stated that the commenter would like for the park to continue as a home for 18<sup>th</sup>-century living research with examples of books and other materials from the time period for research purposes.

#### Other Features, Activities, and Programs

Commenters also noted a variety of other features, activities, and programs not specifically related to a farm that they would like at the park in the future. **Table 7** summarizes the most common features, activities, and programs commenters would like at the park in the future.

**Table 7: Features, activities, and programs commenters would like at the park in the future**

Feature, Activity, or Program	Number of Correspondences
Hiking or Walking Trails	7
Trails (type unspecified)	6
Camping	6
Picnic space	5
Horse activities/riding lessons	4
Educational opportunities/programs	4



Other, less common, features, activities, and programs, commenters stated that they would like at the park in the future are summarized below.

In addition to hiking or walking trails, commenters stated that they would like to see mountain biking trails, multi-use trails, equestrian trails, and a history trail at the park in the future. Three total correspondences also stated that the commenter would like nicer walking paths, trails expanded and opened to bicycles (type unspecified), or to keep the existing trails open but to not expand the trail system. Two total correspondences stated that the commenter would like senior hikes and trails or nature walks.

Additional features commenters stated that they would like at the park in the future include the following:

- Open spaces
- Active recreation areas
- Racquet courts for tennis and pickleball
- Picnic spaces
- Seating areas
- Music shell/covered venue for performances
- Climbing or bouldering areas
- Skiing areas
- Nature preserve
- Meditative walking mandala
- Gardens
- Community garden
- Permaculture project
- Dog park
- Gift shop
- Book store
- Public restrooms
- Concessions
- Information about local cultural activities
- Children-oriented activities and programs (including junior ranger program and volunteer opportunities)

Additional programs and events commenters stated that they would like at the park in the future include:

- Art classes
- Festivals or seasonal events
- Farm-to-table restaurant
- Concerts/music programs
- Environmental education
- Small petting zoo
- Animal visits
- Events hosted at pavilions

Commenters also noted that would like to see nicer restroom facilities, handicap-accessible restrooms, expanded opportunities for handicap access, more informational signage, and signage with NPS rules.

- 7. Trail Connections** Ten correspondences stated that the commenter would like to see new trails that connect to existing trails, the pavilion and baseball fields, Langley Forks Park, Langley Oaks Park, Turkey Run Park, Turkey Run, Dead Run, and the Potomac Heritage Trail. Examples of these comments include the following:

- “Support connecting trails & protecting as much of natural resources as possible”
- “Perhaps the park could connect to and complement Langley Fork / Langley Oaks Parks. E.g., by integrating with local hiking trails”
- “I would like to see the existing trails open to the public, linked to adjacent parks such as Turkey Run Park closer to the Potomac River”

- 8. Park Activities/Features Not Wanted** Fourteen correspondences specified activities or features that the commenter would not like to see at the park in the future. Eight correspondences stated that the commenter would not like active recreation, ball fields, or soccer fields at the park in the future. The Audubon Society of Northern Virginia stated “We

urge that you not assume that the area must continue as an active use area or be continued as a farm park. . . . More development, including active recreation, threaten to cause more degradation to our air and water.” The Friends of Dyke Marsh also noted how additional traffic and development, including active recreation, will likely bring air and water degradation. Additional activities or features commenters stated that they would not like to see at the park in the future include:

- Any kind of development
- Hiking and biking trails
- Park geared solely towards hiking and nature-based activities
- Dogs in general and off-leash dogs
- Playgrounds
- Picnic spots
- Woods clearing
- Hi-tech interactive activities
- Parking or informal access to the park from adjacent residential streets

Some commenters noted that playgrounds, nature trails, ball fields, and picnic spots already exist in the local area.

**9. Perspective offered at Claude Moore Colonial Farm (CMCF)** Ten correspondences stated that the CMCF offered a unique perspective when compared to other sites portraying colonial life. In general, comments stated that the CMCF showed the setup and life of a poorer, average farm whereas sites like Mount Vernon and Williamsburg show the life of the middle and upper class. Examples of these comments include the following:

- “I feel Claude Moore was unique in its approach and its focus, turning instead from large houses of famous founders and bustling capitals like Mount Vernon or Williamsburg respectively, towards a farm family working the land to eke out a living. This was a perspective so often overlooked.”
- “We are hopeful that NPS will consider the option of maintaining a lower-class 18th Century farm. With proximity to Old Town Alexandria and Mount Vernon Estate, this allows the public to view along the GW Parkway and close proximity a broad representation of mid-to-late 18th Century life, from agrarian farmer to city life to the upper social classes.
- “This part of Virginia has many programs and sites that focus on the colonial elites. The Claude Moore Farm filled an important niche as a site that focused on non-elite farmers. Its loss leaves a significant gap in the region's programs.”

Five correspondences specifically described connections to, partnerships with, or complementary programming with Mount Vernon and/or other historic sites portraying colonial life. Examples of these comments include the following:

- “I've often thought there was great potential for the Farm to do some sort of program in conjunction with the National Colonial Farm, in Accokeek, and nearby Mount Vernon, showing the similarities and differences in life and agriculture between a poorer farm, (Claude Moore) a middling farm, (Accokeek) and a well-to-do farm. (Mount Vernon).”
- “Perhaps there could be a sort of history trail linking other similar sites in the area to include Mount Vernon, the restored canal in Georgetown, etc. “

Three correspondences stated that a colonial farm at the park in the future would be redundant in the Washington, DC region. These comments stated that opportunities to learn about colonial life and farming are available at National Colonial Farm, Oxon Hill Farm, Sully Plantation, Frying Pan Farm Park, and Mount Vernon.

- 10. Future Farm Management/Ownership** Thirteen correspondences included comments about the future management and/or ownership of the park. Five total correspondences mentioned the Friends group in the future of the park. One correspondence stated that they “would like to see the return of the Friends to running the park.” One correspondence stated that the Friends of the Claude Moore Colonial Farm should be reconstituted with new leadership to work out a contract or agreement. The commenter stated that the Friends of the Claude Moore Colonial Farm should be given the opportunity to purchase the park and privately run it. Another correspondence stated that the area occupied by the bookstore and pavilions should be turned over to Fairfax County or another organization so that the Friends of the Farm may “engage in other revenue-making projects which benefit the farm.” Two correspondences from the Friends of the Colonial Farm at Turkey Run, Inc. outlined their vision for programs, funding streams, and plans for the park in the future.

Six correspondences stated that the commenter would like a colonial farm opened up again either by another group, under new management, under a different structure, or the commenter has no preference who runs the farm.

One additional correspondence asked if there is an opportunity for the National Park Foundation to steward the site.

One additional correspondence from J.R.’s Goodtimes, Inc. proposed a “MOU style Public/Private agreement that would allow us to complete our previous CMCF contract with its responsibilities under that Agreement and conduct our operations for the remainder of this year and until December 20, 2020.”

- 11. Other Group Comments** Correspondences from the Audubon Society of Northern Virginia and Friends of Dyke Marsh stated that planning should not proceed until a comprehensive biological survey of natural resources in the park is completed and future plans should fully consider environmental impacts. The two groups stated that the park property “offers a prime and rare opportunity to preserve and enhance native habitat,” could be part of an enhanced conservation core, and should improve air quality and water quality of area streams and the Potomac River

The Outdoor Alliance DMV commented that they see the park as having “potential to create a core trail system and trailhead for inside-the-beltway outdoor access.” They stated that they have “begun to develop an outdoor recreation base map for the area, showing existing trail, paddling, and climbing opportunities to help guide the discussion and illustrate potential connections to the Claude Moore Colonial Farm site.”

The National Parks Conservation Association commented that the park “is an important green oasis in an ever increasingly developed landscape and provides many of these opportunities for recreation.” They described what they have heard from their area members about future uses, which are summarized in previous sections of this report.

### Public Meeting Comments

At the public meeting, attendees were provided with post-it notes to respond to questions on the boards and dot stickers to place on precedent images of activities that interest them on the boards. The following section summarizes major groupings of comments from the post-it note text and dot stickers.

**12. Previous Visits** The boards included the following questions regarding previous visits to the park:

- How often have you visited?
- What have you enjoyed doing at the park?
- What do you like to do at the park?
- What of year did you visit?
- How long did you stay?

Eighteen post-it notes included text that responded to the above questions. Responses varied widely and in detail. Examples of these responses include the following:

- “Visited regularly for 15 years, spring, summer, winter & fall for farm events”
- “Walked nature trail and trails”
- “Visited many times a year. Brought my child & friends from age 2 to 16. Came to see special events on farm site, & to market fair. Volunteered. Our whole family volunteered and learned.”
- “6-8 times/year since 1988. colonial farm. Stayed all day/many days attended picnics @ pavilion.”
- “My homeschool child volunteered weekly as a junior interpreter. He learned history & skills. He was there for 2 years.”

**13. What would you like to do at the park in the future?** The most common activity attendees indicated through the dot stickers and post-it notes that they would like to do at the park in the future was experience a colonial-style or living history farm, colonial living history, or living history. **Table 8** summarizes the most common activities meeting attendees indicated that they would like to do at the park in the future with dot stickers and post-it notes.

**Table 8: Activities Meeting Attendees would like to do at the park in the future**

Activity	Dot Stickers	Post-It Notes	Total
Experience a colonial-style or living history farm, colonial living history, or living history	69	23	92
Walk/hike/jog on trails	29	9	38
Learn a skill	29	0	29
View nature or wildlife/study nature/enjoy natural resources	26	3	29
Visit a farm	27	0	27
Go on an interpretive nature walk with a Park ranger	26	0	26
Have a picnic	19	1	20
Go mountain biking	11	7	18
Use accessible trails	17	0	17
Attend a pop-up event	14	0	14
Practice photography	10	1	11

Other activities that received more than one, but less than ten, dot stickers or post-it note comments included:

- Host gatherings/events
- Use large picnic pavilion area
- Tend to a community garden
- Attend a junior ranger program
- Participate in youth programs (e.g., volunteer programs, organized school tours, colonial-related programs and workshops, day camps)
- Take an art class
- Learn farm skills/activities
- Explore using a GPS/Wayfinding
- Throw or hit a ball/athletic fields/recreational fields
- Use open space
- Go horseback riding
- Play frisbee golf
- Play volleyball
- Visit a dog park/exercise and walk dog
- Use biking (not specified) trails or road biking trails
- Use multi-use trails
- Restore and protect natural habitat
- Go tent camping
- Experience colonial camping/living
- Attend festivals
- Attend market fairs
- Attend a renaissance festival
- Visit an environmental living center

**14. Trail Connections** Some attendees described on the post-it notes areas they would like trails to connect to from the park. Nine post-it notes stated that attendees would like to see connections:

- To the current trail network
- To Langley Oaks
- To Langley Fork Park
- To Turkey Run Park
- To Turkey Run Park trail system
- To the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail
- From N. Randolph Street in Arlington to Turkey Run Park and Old Georgetown Road and eventually to American Legion Bridge and Great Falls

Some attendees explicitly stated that these connections should be made via walking/hiking and biking trails.