

The Frederick Municipal Watershed is a 7,022 acre property owned by the City of Frederick. The property is located on the east side of Catoctin Mountain, 6 miles northwest of the City of Frederick. It is managed as a cooperative wildlife management area by Maryland Department of Natural Resources (MD DNR)—Wildlife. Forest management activities are under the direction of the MD DNR—Forest Service.

Forest Management

Since the last issue of this newsletter in Spring 2015, forest management on the watershed has continued according to the recommendations provided by the 2005 Forest Stewardship Plan. Initial harvesting activities were slow, but thinnings have steadily been increasing. Activity has picked up in the last 5 years with a series of variable-retention sawtimber harvests being completed.



ABOVE: Waterbar installed at stand 8.6 harvest area.

The most recent harvest was stand 8.6, located along Gambrell Park Road north of Hamburg Road. The stand was approximately 74 acres and harvesting was completed in April of 2014. The operators once again provided stellar services and followed all recommended best management practices. Upon completion, all skid and haul roads were retired with waterbars and the landing was seeded to prevent any erosion.

For 2016, a commercial Timber Stand Improvement thinning is proposed for stand 3.1. Stand 3.1 is 226 acres and is located along the east side of Fishing Creek Road, north of Delauter Road and uses the Catoctin Trail as its northernmost boundary.

Both the Catoctin Trail and Left Hand Fork Road will be buffered to protect the scenic nature of this area and also to add to the streamside management zone. Committee review of the harvest plan is set for early Jan. 2016, after which the sale should be sent to the City of Frederick to begin the sale process.

Revenue generated by forest harvest operations is used to support other aspects of managing the watershed property including invasive species control, boundary painting, and other maintenance. All harvest operations are reviewed by a group of natural resource professionals and are conducted according to the Forest Stewardship Plan for the property.

Invasive Exotic Management

Using various chemical and mechanical treatments, 2015 was another very productive year for invasive exotic plant management. Early in the season, over 500 Japanese Barberry shrubs were chemically and mechanically treated. The mechanical treatments were focused in the Pine Swamp region to reduce herbicide usage in this area.

The majority of 2015 was focused on the treatment of two of the most prolific invasive plants on the watershed, mile-a-minute and ailanthus. Numerous small sites were treated for mile-a-minute all before the plants could go to seed. Seeds from Mile-a-Minute remain viable in the

soil for up to 7 years. Vigilance will be required over the next several years to ensure the eradication of Mile-a-Minute from important regions of the watershed.

Ailanthus was another major focus of 2015. Over 2500 Ailanthus have been treated in the last two years. "Hack-&-Squirt" is the preferred method for any tree over 6", and basal bark treatments are reserved for seedlings and saplings up to 6" diameter.

If you have any questions or want to report an infestation or new invasive species, please contact MD DNR Forest Service staff at 301-791-4010.



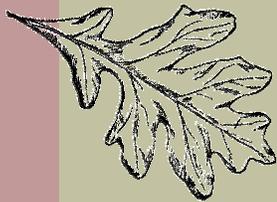
Mile-a-minute
(*Persicaria perfoliata*)

Japanese stiltgrass
(*Microstegium vimineum*)

Japanese barberry
(*Berberis thunbergii*)



White Oak
(*Quercus Alba*)



Recreation Management

The following article was written by Joe Whitehair and Clyde D. Hicks, both Co-Chairs of the Sanctioned Trail Network Subcommittee. This article serves as a short summary on the processes used in developing a sustainable network of trails on the Frederick City Watershed.

Sanctioned Trail Network Subcommittee

Background: The Sanctioned Trail Network subcommittee consists of a subset of Ad Hoc Watershed committee members tasked with developing a proposed sanctioned trail network for non-motorized users. The network is to be developed using the existing trails and forest roads in the Frederick Municipal Forest (also known as the Frederick Watershed) which were GPSed by Maryland Department of Natural Resources (MD DNR) during 2013. The existing trails are a combination of old logging roads, legacy fire trails created by the Civilian Conservation Corps and user-created trails.

The subcommittee's primary objective is the "development of a City-sanctioned trail network system that preserves water quality, environmental habitats and sensitive areas while providing multi-use, sustainable recreational trails"

Process: The subcommittee has met on a monthly basis, and at times more frequently, since its inception in August 2014. The committee first defined what a sanctioned trail network is (below) and then established objectives to achieve their assigned task of developing a trail network:

Definition of Sanctioned Trail Network:

"Sanctioned Trail Network is a system of trails in the Frederick Municipal Watershed that is open to the public for non-motorized use. It is mapped, signed, and maintained to a Trail Construction Standard, and approved by the City of Frederick."

The objectives included: identify trail users groups, developing trail classifications, adopting a trail construction standard based on current US Forest Service and industry best practices, and developing a trail assessment tool to use for field assessment of the existing trails.

The group developed a trail classification matrix using US Forest Service Standards. The Matrix has a lot of detail but as a summary, a Class 1 trail is minimally developed and 24" to 36" in width, a Class 2 trail is moderately developed and 36" to 48" in width, a Class 3 trail [typically a fire road] is developed and 48" to 84" in width, and a Class 4 trail is a one way developed trail and included to account for the biking gravity (downhill) trails.

A field assessment tool was created with the intent of being as objective as possible. Information collected consisted of segment length, typical grade, typical width, trail class, maximum short pitch, water crossings, average use, structures and features like bridges, water bars, check dams, gates, and rock outcroppings. Space was given to describe erosion, cupping, or standing water issues. If a realignment was needed, a space for explanation was provided. Space was also given for other comments about the segment.

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ABOVE: A new sign installed at the intersection of Delauter Road and Fishing Creek Road. New signage was another product of the AD-HOC Watershed Committee. The signs were produced to convey the rules and regulations of the watershed as well as give a point of contact in case of emergency and non-emergency incidents.



Recreation Management

Over the course of several months the subcommittee members and volunteers performed field assessments in groups of two or more.

The subcommittee used the assessment information, potential parking areas, and feedback from user groups to create a map with desirable trails and trails that would not be recommended for the network. The map started with 80 miles of trail. 50 miles of trail have been sent to MD DNR for Heritage [Flora and Fauna] review. It is important to note that the assessment tool did not make any Heritage assessment. That assessment is being left for MD DNR.

The map is a result of the process described above, with the goal of providing a desirable user experience while considering water quality, environmental impact and eliminating redundancy in the trails. The majority of the trails selected have existed for decades as logging roads or fire trails. In more recent times users have created trails to meet their needs for specific types of experiences or to reach certain destinations. Inclusion of trails that meet the desired user experiences will help prevent future, unauthorized trail construction.

The majority of the trails included on the map meet the trail construction standards and are in good condition. There are a few areas where trails are included which need some sections improved, or in a few cases, would require realignment. These were included because they are important trails such as the Catoctin Trail, or provide needed connections. Additionally, there are a few areas where bridges will be recommended at water crossings. Finally, there are several trails identified as “single direction gravity trails” which provide a specific, unique user experience for a segment of the mountain bike community

During this process the subcommittee noted that the biggest contributor to sediment is the network of gravel roads throughout the property. While the roads are not part of the network, the subcommittee recommends a plan be developed to manage and remediate this issue.

The next steps are very important. The City Frederick Department of Public Works team and Maryland Department of Natural Resources will the review draft map for comment and feedback on Heritage and other issues they see. The Ad Hoc committee will revise the draft map based on their recommendations, recommend realignments and any work which should be prioritized. Parking improvements and wayfinding plans will be identified. Once other committee tasks are ready, the committee will ask for Mayor and Board approval.



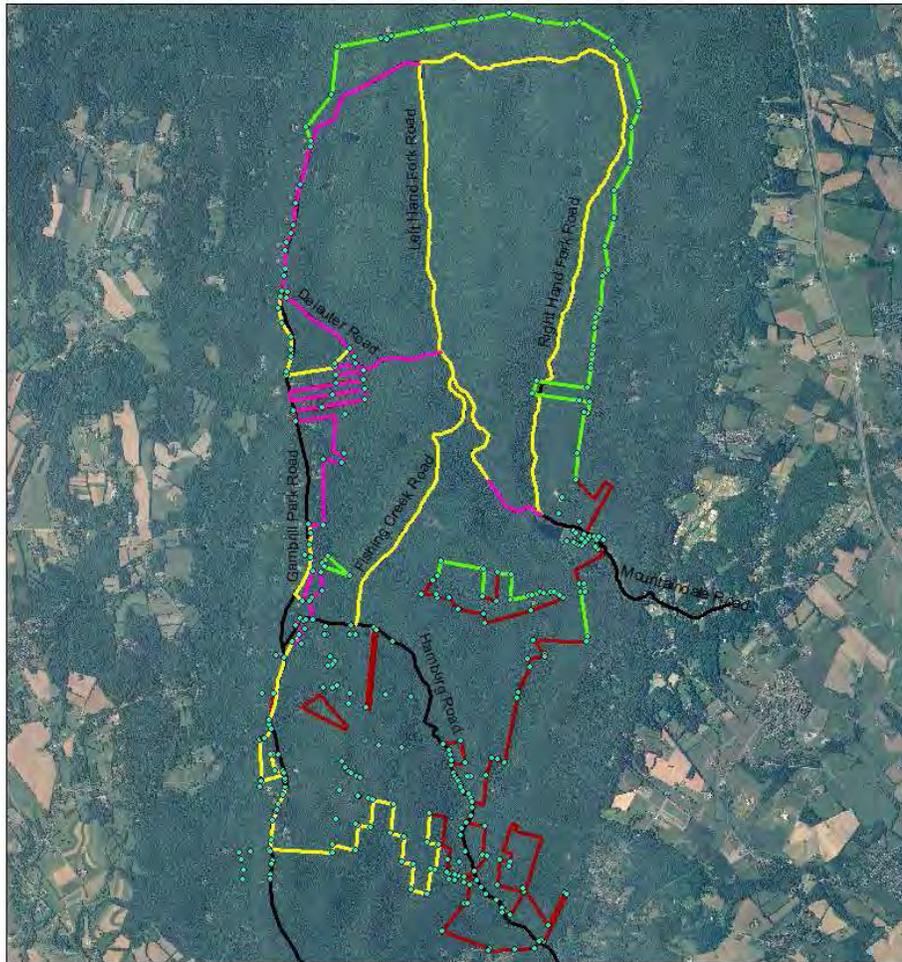
Photo at Left: Catoctin Trail heading East at intersection with Fishing Creek Road. Also known as the “Blue Trail” it is currently the only sanctioned trail on the watershed. Marked with blue blazing, the trail was created by the PATC (Potomac Appalachian Trail Club) and is used by both hikers and bikers, as well as equestrians. To this day it is maintained by the PATC.



Photo at Right: Blue Trail heading West at intersection with Left Hand Fork Road. Although being the only currently sanctioned trail, the Blue Trail suffers from overuse. The AD-HOC committee’s goal of a sustainable trail network will better the Blue Trail and all future sanctioned trails by having a set of standards for trail construction and maintenance. These standards follow those of the U.S, Forest Service and industry best practices.

Boundary Management

Map 1 - Frederick Watershed Boundary



Legend

- 2014/15 Boundary Painted
- 2013 Boundary Painted
- 2012 Boundary Painted
- FCW Boundary Current
- ◆ Corners

0 0.250.5 1 1.5 2 Miles
Map Scale - 1:49,500



ABOVE: A map of the current boundary completion on the Frederick City Watershed

Boundary Management has been an on-going effort on the watershed for over 10 years. Corners were originally recovered in 2006-2007, and since then efforts have been made to connect the corners and establish a visible property line.

The most recent efforts yielded the most productive year to date. Over 9.5 miles of boundary were painted during winter 2014/15 (represented in lime green on the map to the left) Over the course of the winter 2014/15, the entire northern and north-eastern boundary was completed.

Focus for winter 2015/16 will be to continue line painting along the eastern edge, with special emphasis placed on the Mountaineer Road and lower Hamburg Road areas. Both of these areas have had changes in boundary in recent years, adding acreage to the watershed. The additions of new parcels to these areas rendered prior corners and boundary obsolete. Maryland DNR Forest Service staff will be working closely with Frederick City surveyors to ensure accurate and precise marking of these areas.

Frederick Municipal Watershed Management Update

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Entering the Watershed



Leaving the Watershed