

Silver Lake Park

“An Environmental Jewel for the Citizens of Prince William County”

The Prince William Park Authority Mission Statement states: “The Prince William County Park Authority will create quality recreation and leisure opportunities consistent with the citizens’ interests while effectively managing available resources.” Consistent with this Mission Statement, the Park Authority staff has met with a focus group to assist with determining their interests regarding the development of the Silver Lake Property. While the parcel will still need to go through the Park Authority’s Master Plan process to develop the final approved plan, we believe the following proposal is an accurate representation of the citizens’ desires, combined with staff’s recommendations to ensure the park will be financially viable. When Silver Lake Park is transferred to the Park Authority, a full Master Plan process will occur, ensuring additional input from our County residents.

Silver Lake Park, located in the Gainesville District, offers Prince William County an exceptional opportunity to add a long-desired passive park in the western portion of Prince William to our County parks system. The 2002 Recreational Needs Assessment indicated trails and open space are the two highest recreation priorities of the residents in terms of focus for the Park Authority. Silver Lake Park will provide an opportunity for hiking, boating, fishing, horseback riding, picnicking, camping and environmental preservation and education. This mix of activities will be a good start in complementing activities that balance passive recreation with the active parks in the park system.

Silver Lake Park was operated for over 40 years as a camping, picnicking and boating location by a private owner. Silver Lake is largely undeveloped with woods, natural fields and a 25 acre lake. This location served for many years as a provider of passive recreation for the citizens. Silver Lake presents a great opportunity for the Prince William County Park Authority’s continued offering of these activities.



Rainbow Riding will become a neighbor to the park, providing an equestrian program for individuals with disabilities. The Park Authority will locate an **equestrian ring**, with trailer parking in the area adjacent to the Rainbow Riding property. This will provide a complimentary activity along their property boundary and help ensure a tranquil setting. Equestrian trails throughout the property, with access points into the community will allow our horse enthusiasts to enjoy trail riding along with activities in the ring. Trail connections are planned from Silver Lake Park, along Catharpin Creek and ultimately to the Manassas National Battlefield Park.



In 2006, citizens of Prince William County had the opportunity to vote for a Recreation Bond Referendum that included trails development. More than 77% of Prince William constituents voted positively for the referendum. The referendum will provide resources to assist with the development of the trail connections. The Park Authority will partner with local riding clubs to develop a facility that meets their needs, while

preserving the environmental integrity of the site.

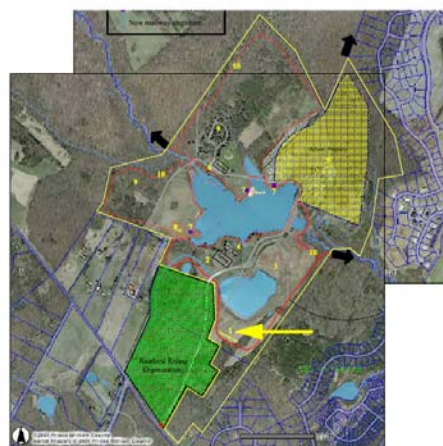
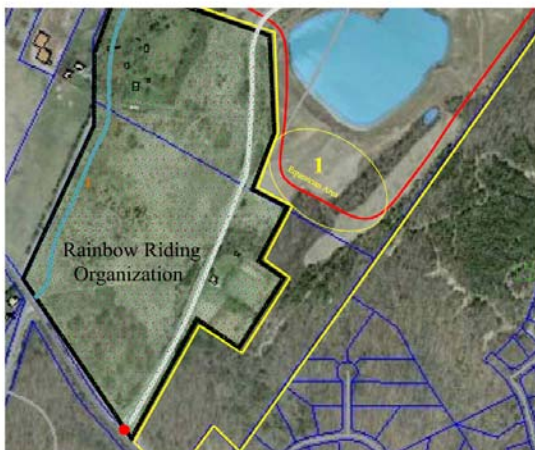


Figure 1: left image denotes area within park for equestrian area; right image denotes full aerial view of park with yellow arrow signifying area within park

Toward the lake side of the Rainbow Riding facility, the Park Authority proposes the addition of a small **Farm Park**. This will provide an excellent science and educational opportunity for the residents of a county that each day is becoming more and more urban. A barn, with surrounding field area will be developed to house a variety of farm animals local to Prince William County, giving the citizens a connection to Prince William County's rural past. In addition to the educational opportunities provided within the barn area, hay rides will be conducted through portions of the park to allow the participants to experience the traditional activities associated with by-gone rural living.



The Farm Park provides an excellent opportunity for the Park Authority to partner with the school system in providing a hands-on learning experience.



Figure 2: left image denotes area within park for farm park area; right image denotes full aerial view of park with yellow arrow signifying area within park

Moving further back into the Silver Lake Property, there is a **quarry** on site. The quarry could potentially be utilized to host dives for scuba programs in the area. The quarry area will have controlled access to facilitate safety issues. There is an area to the north of the quarry that appears to have been stripped during the mining operations, and the Park Authority proposes to restore this area in coordination with interested citizens groups.

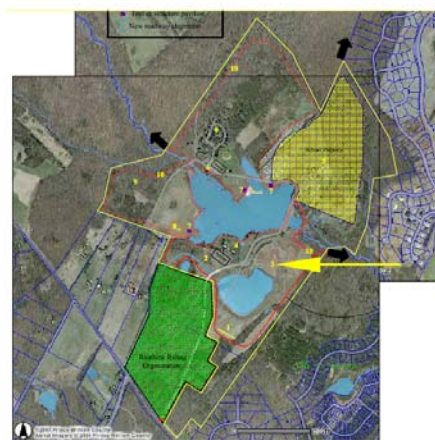


Figure 3: left image denotes area within park for quarry area; right image denotes full aerial view of park with yellow arrow signifying area within park

Overlooking Silver Lake, there are two former **residential structures** that the Park Authority proposes to renovate. After renovation, one structure will be utilized as a security residence for the property to ensure a 24-hour presence in the park.

The second structure will be renovated in a fashion that will provide some indoor, climate controlled, programming space for the park to complement existing Park Authority camp programs.

This programming facility will be utilized to host environmental programs, camps and other activities. The Park Authority has operated State Licensed Day Camps at five locations throughout the County for over 20 years. Our Camps have been utilized and **highly rated by thousands** of participants in the County.



Silver Lake provides the County the unique opportunity to provide an environmentally-focused Day Camp, with all of the necessary elements on site. In our ever-growing population, children have few opportunities to fish, camp, hike, canoe. Silver Lake would also provide opportunities for children to learn about the flora and fauna native to Prince William County, as well as about their role in protecting our resources.

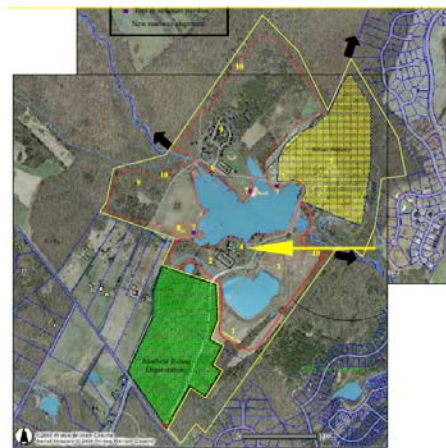


Figure 4: left image denotes area within park for programming area and security residence; right image denotes full aerial view of park with yellow arrow signifying area within park

In addition to the **Day Camp program**, the Park Authority will have the opportunity to partner with local schools and environmental groups to provide a variety of programs to educate our citizens on the wide variety of resources and habitats located in the park. The indoor classroom space can provide cover when the weather is not ideal, but the park will also have several picnic shelters, along with an outdoor classroom that will be perfect for educational gatherings. The lake, streams, fields, woods and wetlands provide varied habitats ideal for educating our community.



The **Prince William County Middle School** adjacent to Silver Lake has an excellent opportunity right at it's doorstep to develop a curriculum with an environmental focus. The Park Authority will partner with this school to identify locations throughout the park that will offer educational opportunities, as it presently does with other schools throughout the County.

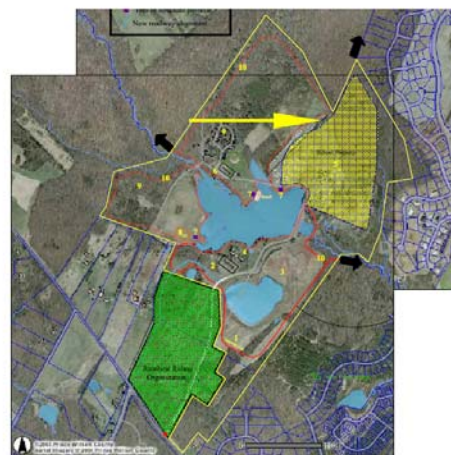
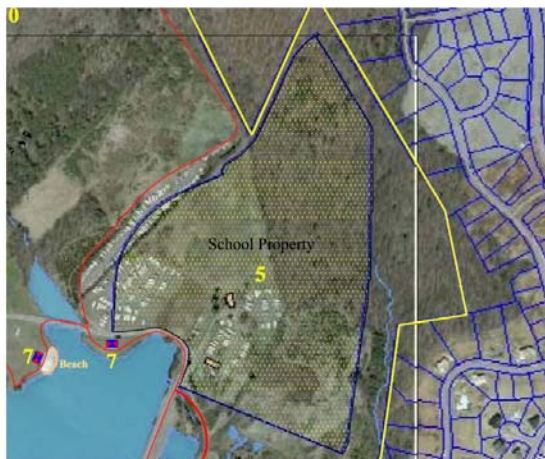


Figure 5: left image denotes area of school property area; right image denotes full aerial view of park with yellow arrow signifying area

The next feature in the park, **Silver Lake** itself, is a 25-acre stream-fed lake, filled with fish and other wildlife. This lake has been a habitat for birds, fish and reptiles for many years. The Park Authority will continue to manage the lake responsibly to ensure these animals have a home.

The Park Authority plans to provide opportunities for fishing along the shore, from a pier and from boats, similar to programs offered at Lake Ridge Park and Locust Shade Park. The Park Authority has enjoyed a strong relationship with Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries to maintain a healthy fish population in the pond at Locust Shade Park.



The Park Authority plans to extend the relationship with Game and Inland Fisheries to Silver Lake to ensure an appropriate balance is maintained.

The boating on the lake will be limited to Jon boats, canoes and kayaks to maintain the serenity of the lake setting. The boats will be available for individuals and families to utilize on the lake, as well as for instructional programs that will teach residents how to boat safely in a controlled environment. Boating is another excellent venue for teaching the residents about the habitats a body of water provides to wildlife.

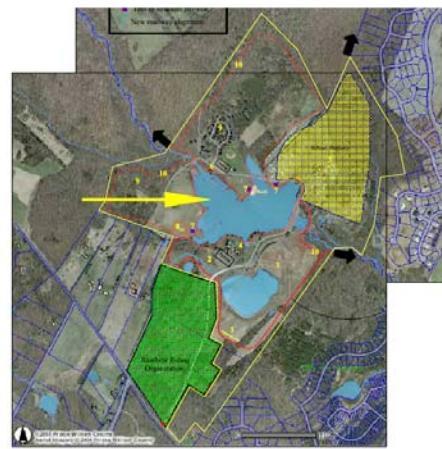


Figure 6: left image denotes area within park for boating and fishing on lake; right image denotes full aerial view of park with yellow arrow signifying area within park

The Park Authority has **picnic shelters** at a number of our park locations. These have provided the citizens of the County an ideal site for family reunions, church picnics, and business gatherings. The Park Authority will locate several small picnic shelters at several locations around the lake. The shelters will have picnic tables, grills and trash cans conveniently located. These pavilions will be ideal for family outings to the park, as well as for small outdoor classrooms for camps and other environmental programming.



In addition to the shelters provided for picnicking, there will be clusters of picnic tables throughout the park to provide for more casual family outings.

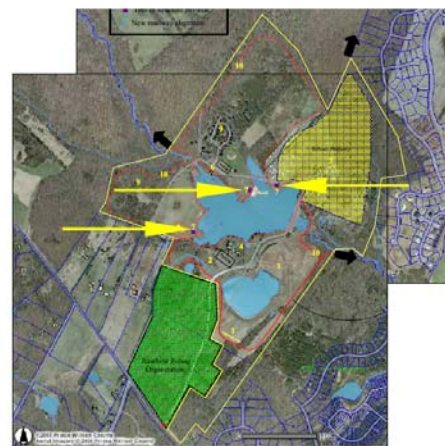


Figure 7: left image denotes area within park for pavilion areas; right image denotes full aerial view of park with yellow arrow signifying areas within park

A historic cemetery is located on the hillside along the eastern portion of the lake. The Park Authority will preserve the cemetery, ensuring that no development mars this sacred site. The hillside provides a beautiful view of the entire lake.

On this hillside, the Park Authority will develop a **primitive outdoor classroom** (several rows of benches) that will provide an additional location for educational programs. While the classroom is not in use, hikers, picnickers and campers will have a beautiful location to sit and enjoy the views of the lake from the hillside.

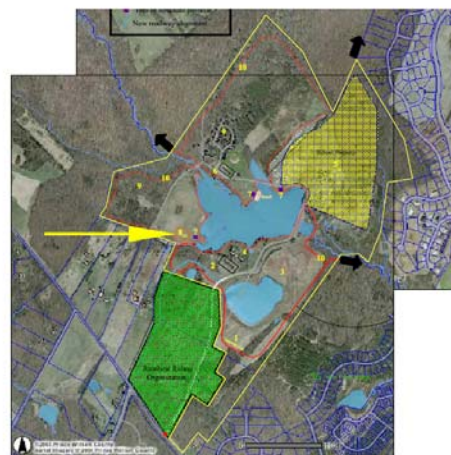


Figure 8: left image denotes area within park for outdoor classrooms; right image denotes full aerial view of park with yellow arrow signifying area within park



Silver Lake Park presents a new opportunity for both the residents of the County as well as visitors to the area: **camping**. The park has had a long- running camping operation, providing for tent camping as well as hook-ups for RV's. Most of the tent camping is on the hillside overlooking the lake, while the RV camping has been along the north shore of the lake, close to the camp store and bathhouse facility.

The Park Authority will begin the park's camping operation with tent camping. The Park Authority proposes replacing both the camp store and the bathhouse to provide clean, **updated facilities** for park visitor use.



The tent camping can be utilized by Prince William County residents that would like to share an outdoor adventure with their families, visitors to the Washington, D.C. area looking for affordable accommodations and camping programs offered by the Park Authority and other organizations located in Prince William County. The camping experience will be heightened by the recreational amenities in the park, allowing families to entertain themselves without ever leaving Silver Lake Park.



The Park Authority will develop the area presently designated as RV camping as tent camping initially, with the potential to make the change to RV camping in the future if the citizens' need warrants this addition.

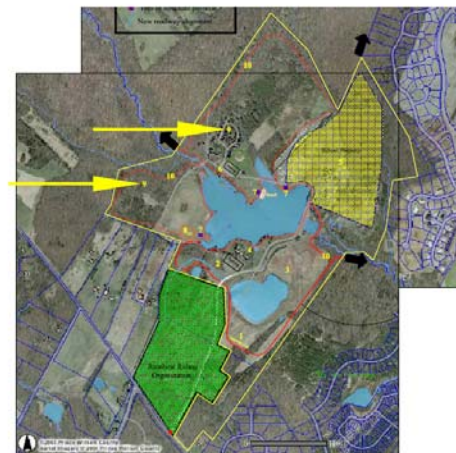


Figure 9: left image denotes area within park for camping area; right image denotes full aerial view of park with yellow arrow signifying areas within park

Throughout Silver Lake Park there will be a multi-purpose **trail system**, developed to accommodate equestrian as well as pedestrian use. These trails will be developed in cooperation with Prince William County's Trails and Streams Coalition to ensure the needs of the community are met.

In addition to providing an excellent opportunity to enhance health and fitness in the community by developing an attractive location for walking, biking and jogging, the trails provide a wealth of educational and interpretive opportunities for youth and adults of the County. The trails will pass through the park's meadows, woodlands, wetlands and alongside the lake and streams. These multi-use trails will be ideal for equestrian



use, which will further expand the equestrian experience in the park. According to the Prince William County Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment trail usage ranks high in our residents' desires and this will be a significant addition to Prince William County's presently limited trail system.

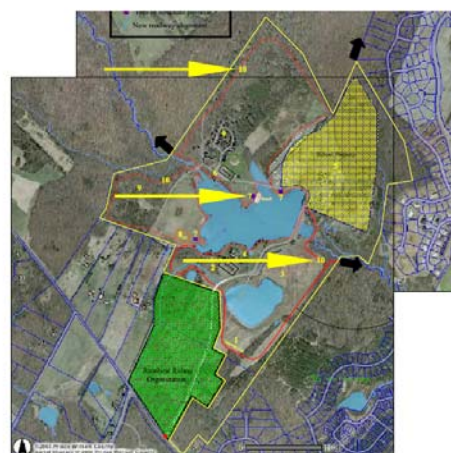
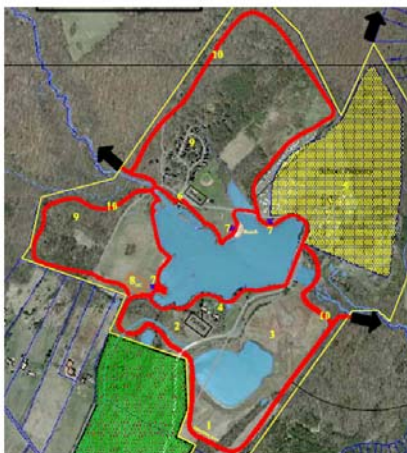


Figure 10: left image denotes area within park for trail areas (marked in red); right image denotes full aerial view of park with yellow arrow signifying areas within park

The proposed development of Silver Lake Park **does not require any clearing** of the beautiful woodlands on the site, but rather works within the areas cleared and developed by the previous owner. With the proposed development occurring on 18 acres that are already cleared, the site will retain 116 acres of woods and another 96 of open space. This well-rounded plan of passive recreation will be operated 365 days a year, from sunrise to sunset (except overnight camping), allowing for maximum access to County residents. Silver Lake Park will be operated at the Park Authority's high level of customer service and excellent maintenance standards. The Park Authority has enjoyed very high ratings by the residents over the years, with the most recent UVA survey indicating an 87.6% satisfaction rating for Park Authority facilities and services, and a 94.3% satisfaction rating for providing efficient and effective services. These ratings clearly indicate that the citizens of Prince William County feel the Park Authority provides high-quality services. Silver Lake Park will provide the Park Authority with the opportunity to expand its expertise to a part of the County that is under-served with park facilities, and to meet the needs of a large portion of the County that desires increased passive recreation.

FUNDING AND DEVELOPMENT COSTS

The Park Authority plans to upgrade existing facilities at Silver Lake Park and reopen portions of the park to the community within a year of the park's transfer to the Park Authority. The Park Authority has identified \$1.6 million in proffer dollars from the Dominion Valley re-zonings to assist in developing the park. The initial improvements will allow the Park Authority to open the park to the community with fishing, hiking, boating, camping, equestrian and environmental programming opportunities. Future funding would allow for full enhancement of the park, with the potential for RV camping, additional picnic shelters and additional equestrian facilities.

The ultimate design and construction of the park amenities will be driven by a Master Plan process that is citizen driven. The process to Master Plan the park will include more than adequate opportunities for continued **citizen input to help direct** the opportunities for passive recreation.

Park operations will largely be funded through user fees at the park. While the park will be open to visitors for hiking, picnicking, fishing and enjoying the wildlife, activities such as camps, camping, programming and hay rides will be fee-based.

The Park Authority will look to Prince William County to provide \$215,000 in annual operating costs to support this passive park while the park becomes re-established, with the possibility that operating costs could diminish in future years. With all of the recreational opportunities provided by Silver Lake Park, the relatively small annual cost will ensure regular access and appropriate park oversight and maintenance.

Plans for long-term maintenance and enhancement of Silver Lake Park will be included in the Park Authority's Capital Improvement Plan, both as a part of the Capital Maintenance Plan as well as future General Obligation Bond projects.

In closing, Silver Lake Park, owned and operated by the Prince William County Park Authority, ensures the residents of Prince William County will have an incredible natural resource that will be developed to meet citizens' needs and maintained and preserved as a public park for generations to come. The Prince William County Park Authority provides the most favorable option for the citizens of Prince William County.