

Pohick Bay Regional Park Proposed Land Acquisition

NOVA Parks (Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority) is applying for a Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant to acquire a 3 acre in-holding property at Pohick Bay Regional Park in Fairfax County. NOVA Parks is seeking public comment on the acquisition proposal.

Written comments for the record must be sent to:

NOVA Parks
Planning & Development
5400 Ox Road
Fairfax Station, VA 22039-1022

or submitted by email to plandev@nvrpa.org, and must be received by 4:30 p.m. on June 21, 2019. For more information, contact Dan Iglhaut at diglhaut@nvrpa.org or 703-359-4628.

The 3 acre parcel is located on Pohick Bay approximately 800 feet north of the park's overflow campground and approximately 1,000 feet northwest of the park's marina and waterfront parking and is shown on the aerial map below.



NOVA Parks' goals associated with the proposed acquisition are to preserve the property's open space, natural resources and any cultural and historic resources, and for the public to engage in passive recreation activities, such as hiking, picnicking, fishing, and observing the natural landscape. The project need is based on: the need for parkland in Fairfax County identified in the locality's comprehensive plan; the need to protect the Potomac

River shoreline and provide public access to the river per the Virginia Outdoors Plan; and the need to acquire properties and to expand riparian buffers to enhance water quality and wildlife habitat as set forth in NOVA Parks Strategic Plan.

NOVA Parks may install trails and incidental structures such as interpretive signs, benches or picnic tables. The park would accommodate the park's trail network and the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail. Future proposed improvements may include access to the river to launch non-motorized boats.

The property contains 250 linear feet of Pohick Bay frontage. Approximately 30% of the property is within the Chesapeake Bay Resource Protection Area and approximately half of that area is within Potomac River floodplain. The property has two existing residential lots and one existing dwelling. The topography slopes gently downward towards the shoreline. The property primarily contains mature woodland and landscaped areas in the immediate area around the dwelling.

Background

NOVA Parks owns and operates Pohick Bay Regional Park on Mason Neck in southern Fairfax County, located on the Potomac River 25 miles south of the nation's capital. The park was developed with assistance from the Land and Water Conservation Fund in the early 1970's. The park provides 1,007 acres of open space and recreation uses, including family and group camping, rustic cabins, an aquatic center/outdoor swimming pool, marina for renting sail, jon boats and paddle boats and as well as for launching motorized boats and personal watercraft, 12 miles of equestrian and hiking trails, miniature and disc golf, picnic areas, as well as historic and natural resources for conservation and public enjoyment. As stated in Fairfax County's Comprehensive Plan, Pohick Bay Regional Park offers a variety of water-oriented and other recreational facilities which attract users from the entire Northern Virginia and Washington, D.C areas, primarily managed for the protection of wildlife habitats and wetlands, with public recreation as a secondary use.

Pohick Bay Regional Park contributes significantly to the largest natural resource and wildlife preserve in Northern Virginia. Of the 9,500-acre Mason Neck peninsula, over 6,000 acres are preserved as publicly owned lands that include the Meadowood Special Recreation Management Area, Mason Neck State Park, Mason Neck National Wildlife Refuge, and Gunston Hall. The National Park Service oversees the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail, which links the public lands on Mason Neck with existing and planned PHNST trail segments. Directly across Pohick Bay from the acquisition property is the 1,200-acre Accotink Bay Wildlife Refuge at Army Garrison Fort Belvoir. The park serves as a critical link in a major wildlife corridor that extends from the Mason Neck peninsula through Fort Belvoir and north to Huntley Meadows Park near the City of Alexandria.

The acquisition property provides long-term benefits to natural heritage resources and wildlife habitat protection. The mission of the park as stated in NOVA Parks General Management Plan is to conserve riparian lands and other natural and cultural resources of the Potomac Watershed and to provide opportunities for public enrichment through recreational activity, education and scenic enjoyment.