

Spanning the Gap

A Plan for Park Trails



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Spanning the Gap
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by Assistant Superintendent Bob Kirby

Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area is now the ninth most visited park in the National Park System, and lies within a four-hour drive of 30 million people. A trail plan that will meet the public's growing demands, protect park resources, and preserve park values is vitally important.

It's been quite a hike but we're on the right path now!

A number of staff members of Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area have spent the better part of the last two years creating and defining a comprehensive trail plan for the park.

The need for a trail plan

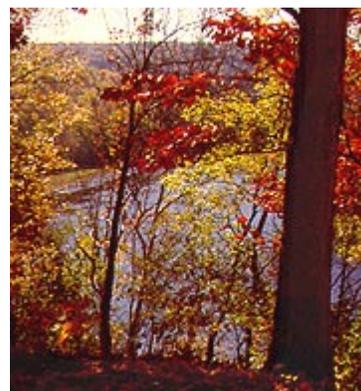
A trails plan is needed because the existing trail network does not meet visitor expectations or management goals. The existing trail network has evolved from "social" trails, old roads, and the Appalachian National Scenic Trail. Threats to cultural and natural resources along some trails are increasing with expanded visitor use. Conflicting trail uses and over-crowding on other trails is causing visitor dissatisfaction.

The process

To provide a comprehensive trail plan, park staff held six workshops to learn what individuals and



Former snowmobile trail in Pennsylvania, proposed under the Trails Plan to be part of McDade Recreational Trail.



A river view from the trail at Rivers Bend Campground NJ. Linking of independent trail systems in New Jersey is one alternative proposed by the

groups thought was important and needed. Studies were conducted to evaluate the affected environment and the consequences of three proposed alternatives. The result of this effort was a 101-page document, the *Draft Trails Plan*, which was presented at three public meetings.

In July 1999, the *Draft Trails Plan* was released to the public. This plan serves three purposes. First, it identifies the trail plan's alternatives. Second, in accordance with Federal law, it is presented as a *Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)*. Finally, since the Draft Trails Plan provides new guidance on trail use and development, it is also presented as a *Draft General Management Plan Amendment. (DGMPA)*

At the end of the comment period for the Draft Trails Plan, the preferred alternative will be identified and modified, if needed, to meet the desires expressed by the public.

Editor's Note: The deadline for comments on the Draft Trails Plan was October 5, 1999. Segments of McDade Recreational Trail opened in 2002 and 2003.

Trails Plan.



Approaching Snyder Farm on the northern segment of McDade Trail, completed in 2003. Atop the cliffs is Cliff Park, a property which is now also part of the recreation area and scheduled to become an area for hiking trails.