# Alexandria City Council - December 9, 2014

## Fort Ward Park and Museum Area Management Plan Final Draft

# Fort Ward Park and Museum

- Meaningful and Sacred Space
- Iterative Public Process
- Framework for Collaborative Work

# FWAG Origins

- **2008**
  - Neighbors and citizens noted concerns about overuse and disruptive activities at the park
- **2009**
  - Public meeting held to identify neighborhood issues as well as concerns related to damage to previous home and grave sites
  - Ad Hoc Fort Ward Park and Museum Area Advisory Group established by City Council (**FWAG**)
- **2010-2011**
  - First FWAG develops report and recommendations, including completion of a management plan for Fort Ward and creation of a new FWAG

# Charge to 2012 FWAG

- Provide RPCA, OHA and TES with recommendations on balancing park uses and implementing recommendations of the 2011 FWAG report

- Bring community values, knowledge, ideas and advice into the process of creating a management plan

- Act as liaisons for the neighborhoods and other interested parties in the development process of a management plan

# 2012 FWAG Membership

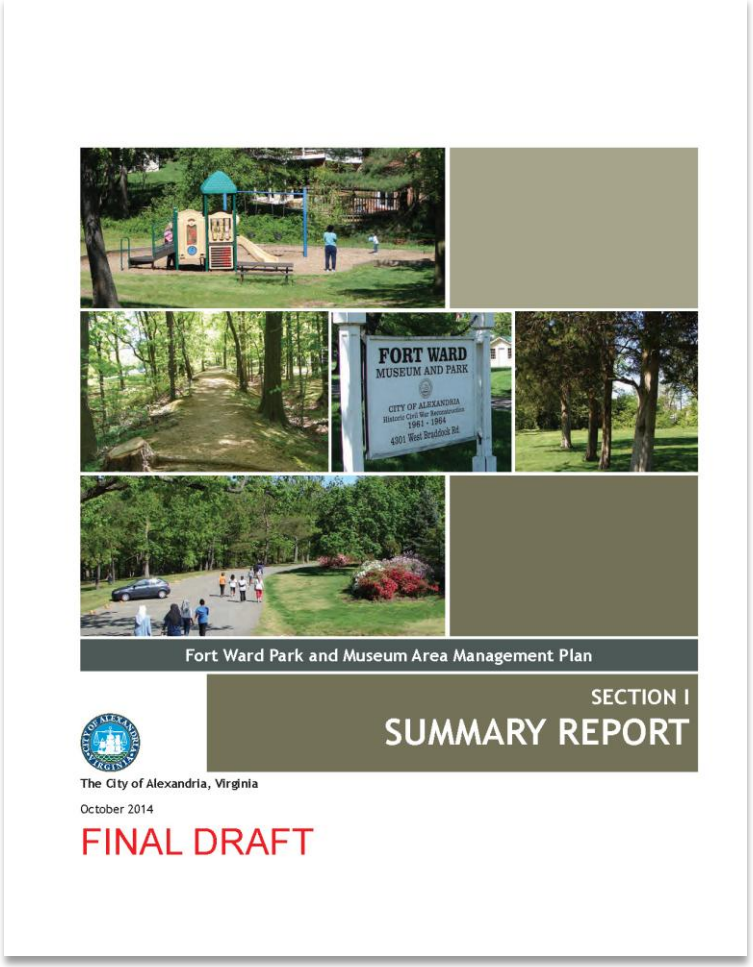
| Group | Member(s) *as of 1/2014* |
|---|---|
| • Park and Recreation Commission (3) | Ripley Forbes<br>Linda Ries (resigned 2014)<br>Robert Moir |
| • Historic Alexandria Resources Commission (3) | Charles (Chuck) Ziegler<br>Ellen Stanton<br>Janice Magnuson |
| • Environmental Policy Commission (1) | Ryan Sloan (resigned 2014)<br>Susan Gitlin (2014) |
| • Ft. Ward/Seminary African American Descendants Society (1) | Adrienne Washington |
| • Oakland Baptist Church (1) | Lena Rainey |
| • Seminary Civic Association (1) | Fran Terrell |
| • Seminary Hill Association, Inc. (1) | Sharon Annear |
| • Citizen at Large (2) | James Walpole (resigned 2014)<br>Richard Brune |
| • Citizen Living within One Mile Radius (1) | Vacant |

# Civic Engagement

- 2012-2014: **18 FWAG Meetings open to the public**
- 6/2013: **Two Listening Sessions**
- Summer 2013: **Web Survey**
- 1/2014: **Draft Plan Released**
- 2/2014: **Public Meeting**
- 3/2014: **Public Open House**
- 9/2014: **Combined Commissions**
- 12/2014: **City Council Session**

# Management Plan

- Provides strategic guidance to park managers and operations for decision-making on complex issues regarding priorities, treatment and care of the park and its many resources



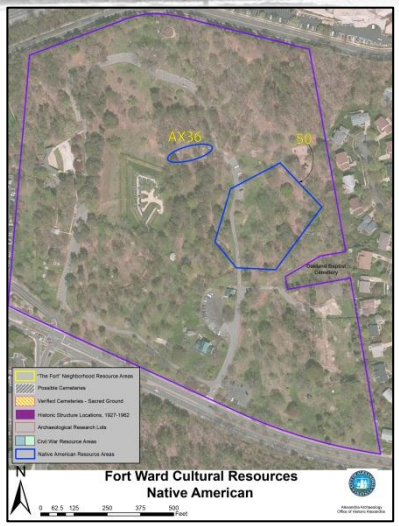
# FWMP Plan Focus

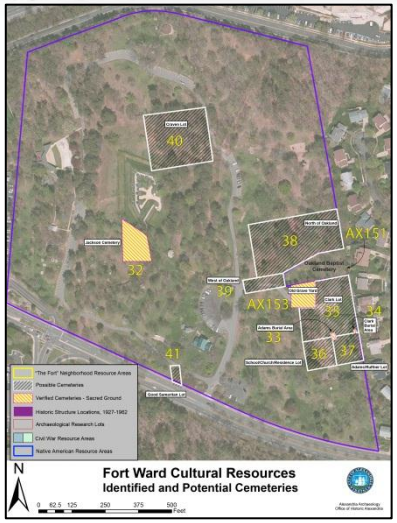
- Protect and interpret African American cultural resources and burial sites
- Redirect and reduce impact of stormwater run-off
- Balance historic, recreational and natural uses of the park
- Provide appropriate management zones and related best practices for routine park maintenance and operations
- Outline future park improvements, maintenance actions and needed funding

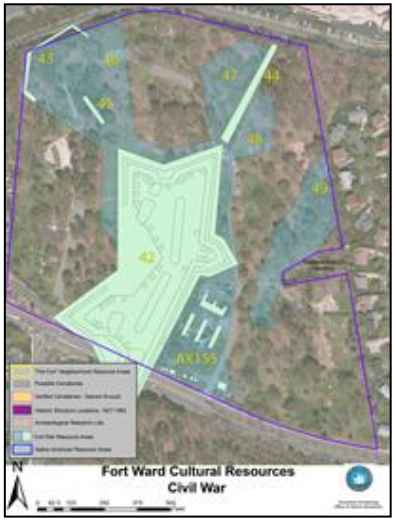
# Archaeological Investigations

More than 1400 shovel tests and more than 100 units and backhoe-scraped areas excavated

# Archaeological Results



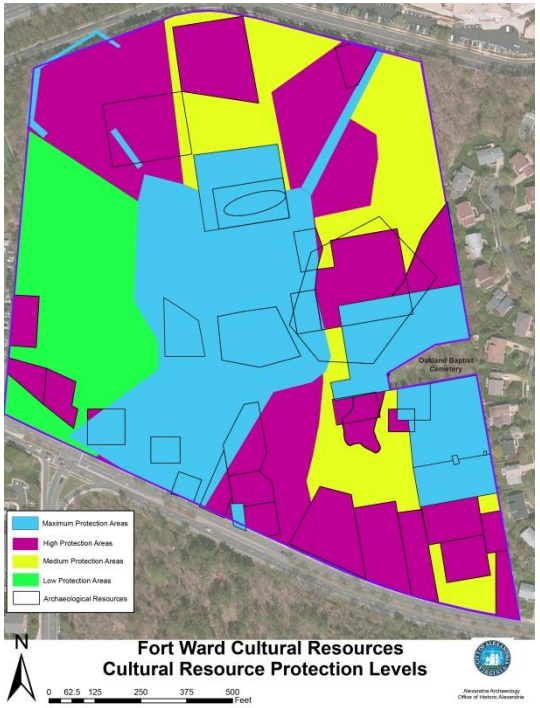



- Evidence of Native American occupation
- Four Civil War resource areas outside of the fortifications
- Four burial areas with 43 grave locations identified
- Seven additional possible cemetery locations identified on the basis of documentary research and oral history accounts
- Locations of 31 resource areas associated with African American life in The Fort community

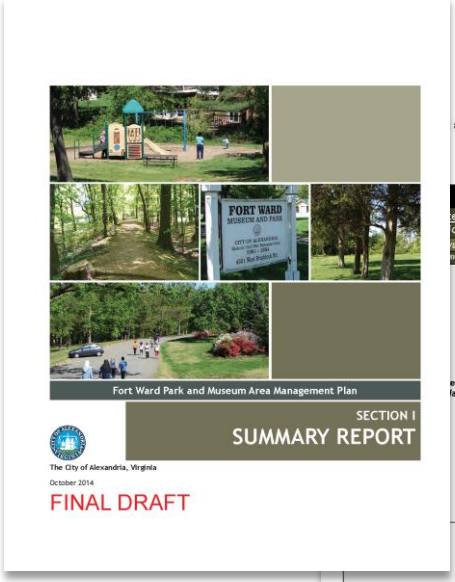
# Preservation Process Established

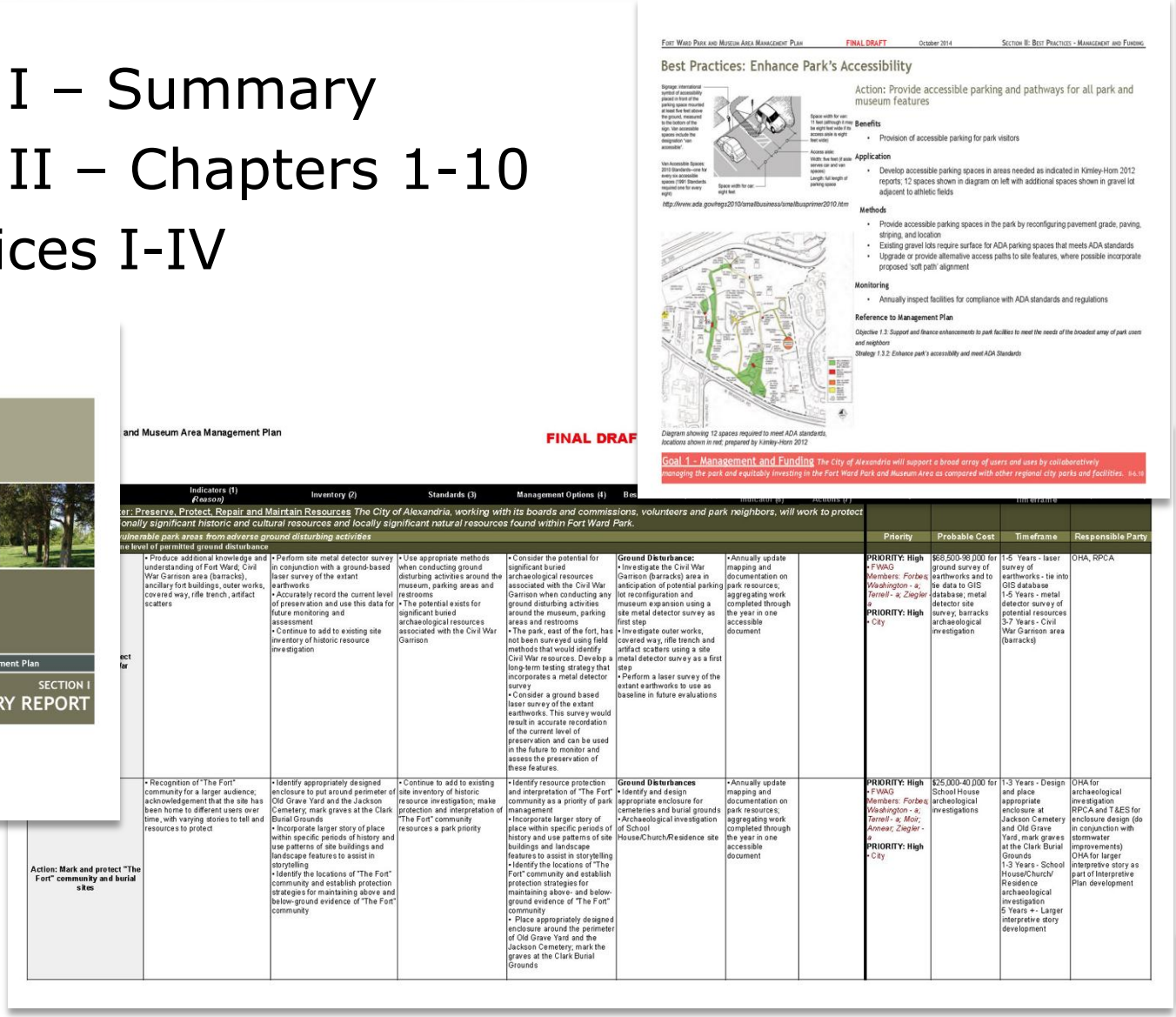
- Minimal Ground Disturbing Activities Allowed *(such as aeration, stump grinding, tree planting, and soft path construction) without archaeological review*
- No Ground Disturbing Activities Allowed without further review by OHA
- No Ground Disturbing Activities Allowed except for placement of formal interpretive elements with archaeological review and investigation



# Management Plan Structure

- Section I – Summary
- Section II – Chapters 1-10
- Appendices I-IV



Fort Ward Park and Museum Area Management Plan FINAL DRAFT October 2014 Section II: Best Practices - Management and Funding

## Best Practices: Enhance Park's Accessibility

Action: Provide accessible parking and pathways for all park and museum features

**Benefits**

- Provision of accessible parking for park visitors

**Application**

- Develop accessible parking spaces in areas needed as indicated in Kimley-Horn 2012 reports; 12 spaces shown in diagram on left with additional spaces shown in gravel lot adjacent to athletic fields

**Methods**

- Provide accessible parking spaces in the park by reconfiguring pavement grade, paving, striping, and location
- Existing gravel lots require surface for ADA parking spaces that meets ADA standards
- Upgrade or provide alternative access paths to site features, where possible incorporate proposed 'soft path' alignment

**Monitoring**

- Annually inspect facilities for compliance with ADA standards and regulations

**Reference to Management Plan**

*Objective 1.3: Support and finance enhancements to park facilities to meet the needs of the broadest array of park users and neighbors*

*Strategy 1.3.2: Enhance park's accessibility and meet ADA Standards*

Signage: international symbol of accessibility placed in front of the parking space mounted at least five feet above the ground, measured to the bottom of the sign. Van accessible spaces include the designation "van accessible".

Van Accessible Spaces: 2010 Standards—one for every six accessible spaces (1991 Standards required one for every eight)

Space width for car: eight feet

Space width for van: 11 feet (although it may be eight feet wide if the access aisle is eight feet wide)

Access aisle: Width: five feet (if aisle serves car and van spaces)
Length: full length of parking space

http://www.ada.gov/regs2010/smallbusiness/smallbusprimer2010.htm

*Diagram showing 12 spaces required to meet ADA standards, locations shown in red; prepared by Kimley-Horn 2012*

**Goal 1 - Management and Funding** *The City of Alexandria will support a broad array of users and uses by collaboratively managing the park and equitably investing in the Fort Ward Park and Museum Area as compared with other regional city parks and facilities.* 9-6-14

and Museum Area Management Plan FINAL DRAF

| Indicators (1) (Reason) | Inventory (2) | Standards (3) | Management Options (4) | Priority | Probable Cost | Timeframe | Responsible Party |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| er: Preserve, Protect, Repair and Maintain Resources *The City of Alexandria, working with its boards and commissions, volunteers and park neighbors, will work to protect* | | | | | | | |
| *onally significant historic and cultural resources and locally significant natural resources found within Fort Ward Park.* | | | | | | | |
| *ulnerable park areas from adverse ground disturbing activities* | | | | | | | |
| *he level of permitted ground disturbance* | | | | | | | |
| • Produce additional knowledge and understanding of Fort Ward; Civil War Garrison area (barracks), ancillary fort buildings, outer works, covered way, rifle trench, artifact scatters | • Perform site metal detector survey in conjunction with a ground-based laser survey of the extant earthworks<br>• Accurately record the current level of preservation and use this data for future monitoring and assessment<br>• Continue to add to existing site inventory of historic resource investigation | • Use appropriate methods when conducting ground disturbing activities around the museum, parking areas and restrooms<br>• The potential exists for significant buried archaeological resources associated with the Civil War Garrison | • Consider the potential for significant buried archaeological resources associated with the Civil War Garrison when conducting any ground disturbing activities around the museum, parking areas and restrooms<br>• The park, east of the fort, has not been surveyed using field methods that would identify Civil War resources. Develop a long-term testing strategy that incorporates a metal detector survey<br>• Consider a ground based laser survey of the extant earthworks. This survey would result in accurate recordation of the current level of preservation and can be used in the future to monitor and assess the preservation of these features.<br>**Ground Disturbance:**<br>• Investigate the Civil War Garrison (barracks) area in anticipation of potential parking lot reconfiguration and museum expansion using a site metal detector survey as first step<br>• Investigate outer works, covered way, rifle trench and artifact scatters using a site metal detector survey as a first step<br>• Perform a laser survey of the extant earthworks to use as baseline in future evaluations | • Annually update mapping and documentation on park resources; aggregating work completed through the year in one accessible document | **PRIORITY: High**<br>• FWAG<br>*Members: Forbes; Washington - a; Terrell - a; Ziegler - a*<br>**PRIORITY: High**<br>• City | $68,500-98,000 for ground survey of earthworks and to tie data to GIS database; metal detector site survey; barracks archaeological investigation | 1-5 Years - laser survey of earthworks - tie into GIS database<br>1-5 Years - metal detector survey of potential resources<br>3-7 Years - Civil War Garrison area (barracks) | OHA, RPCA |
| **Action: Mark and protect "The Fort" community and burial sites** | • Recognition of "The Fort" community for a larger audience; acknowledgement that the site has been home to different users over time, with varying stories to tell and resources to protect | • Identify appropriately designed enclosure to put around perimeter of Old Grave Yard and the Jackson Cemetery; mark graves at the Clark Burial Grounds<br>• Incorporate larger story of place within specific periods of history and use patterns of site buildings and landscape features to assist in storytelling<br>• Identify the locations of "The Fort" community and establish protection strategies for maintaining above and below-ground evidence of "The Fort" community | • Continue to add to existing site inventory of historic resource investigation; make protection and interpretation of "The Fort" community resources a park priority | • Identify resource protection and interpretation of "The Fort" community as a priority of park management<br>• Incorporate larger story of place within specific periods of history and use patterns of site buildings and landscape features to assist in storytelling<br>• Identify the locations of "The Fort" community and establish protection strategies for maintaining above- and below-ground evidence of "The Fort" community<br>• Place appropriately designed enclosure around the perimeter of Old Grave Yard and the Jackson Cemetery; mark the graves at the Clark Burial Grounds<br>**Ground Disturbances**<br>• Identify and design appropriate enclosure for cemeteries and burial grounds<br>• Archaeological investigation of School House/Church/Residence site | • Annually update mapping and documentation on park resources; aggregating work completed through the year in one accessible document | **PRIORITY: High**<br>• FWAG<br>*Members: Forbes; Washington - a; Terrell - a; Moir; Annear; Ziegler - a*<br>**PRIORITY: High**<br>• City | $25,000-40,000 for School House archeological investigations | 1-3 Years - Design and place appropriate enclosure at Jackson Cemetery and Old Grave Yard, mark graves at the Clark Burial Grounds<br>1-3 Years - School House/Church/ Residence archaeological investigation<br>5 Years +- Larger interpretive story development | OHA for archaeological investigation RPCA and T&ES for enclosure design (do in conjunction with stormwater improvements) OHA for larger interpretive story as part of Interpretive Plan development |

# Management Plan Contents

- The Plan outlines five goals with related prioritized actions
  - Goal 1: Management and Funding
  - Goal 2: Park Character
  - Goal 3: Landscape Cultural Practices
  - Goal 4: Educate and Engage Visitors
  - Goal 5: Enhance Park Facilities

- The Plan's appendices include
  - Drainage Master Plan
  - Archaeology Findings
  - History Report
  - Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and Ground Disturbing Protocols

# Drainage Master Plan Recommendations

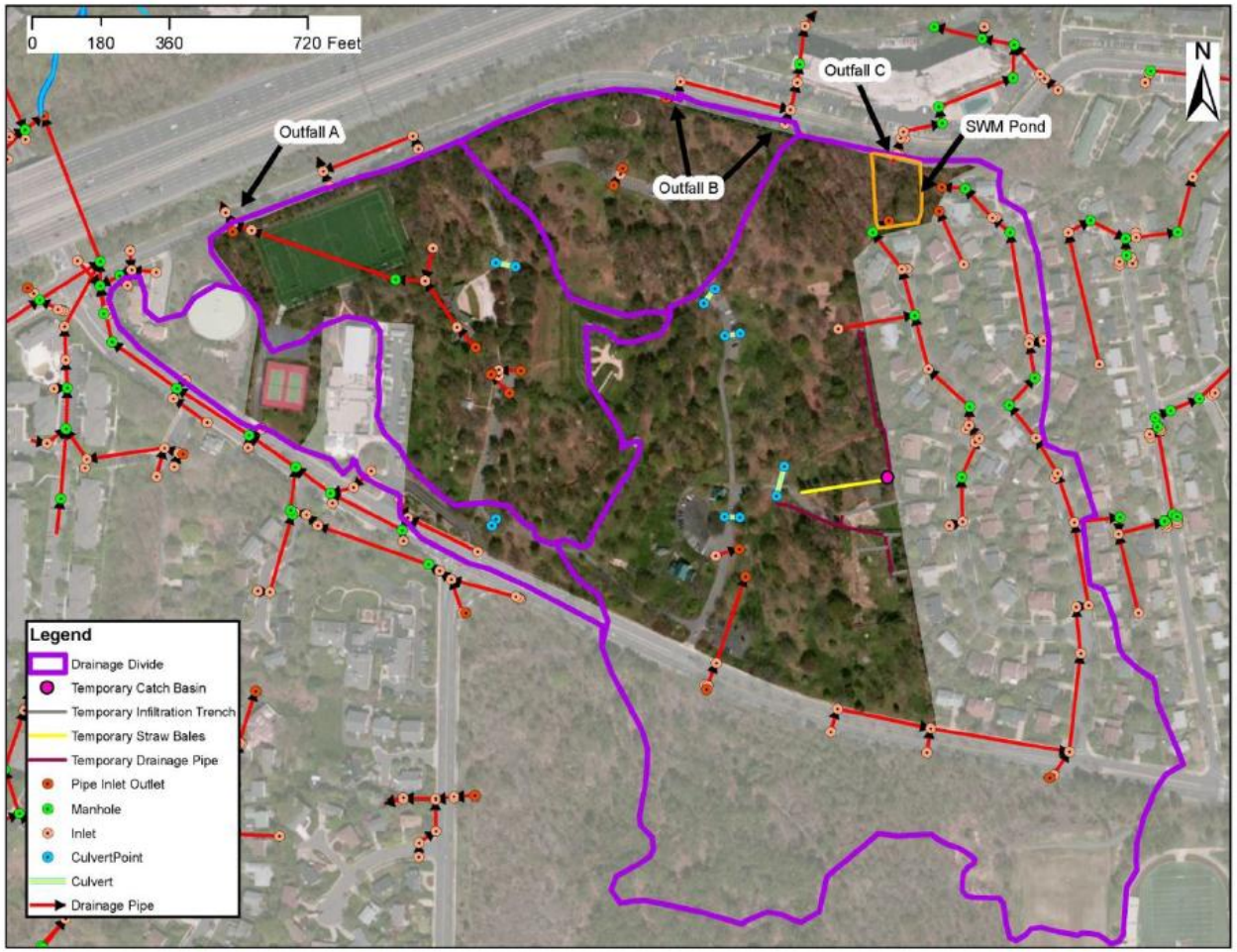
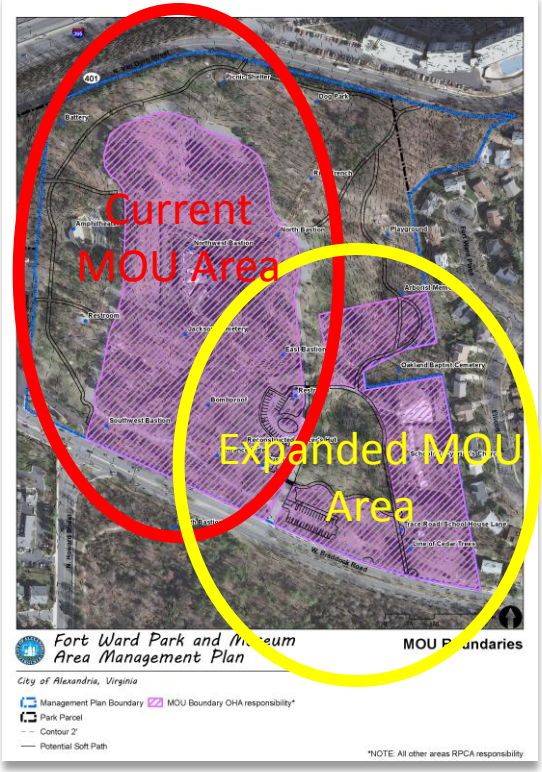



**Figure 2: Drainage Patterns in Fort Ward Park**

# Goal 1 – Management and Funding

*Priority Actions Include*

- Review and Update MOU Annually – Include Ground Disturbing Protocol
- Link financial needs to other City-wide initiatives
- Improve ADA Accessibility for paths, playground, picnic areas, parking



# Goal 2 – Park Character

*Priority Actions Include*

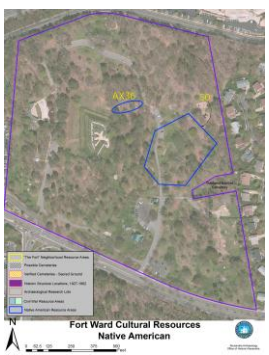
- Mark and protect unrecognized Civil War Archaeology, “The Fort” community and burial sites

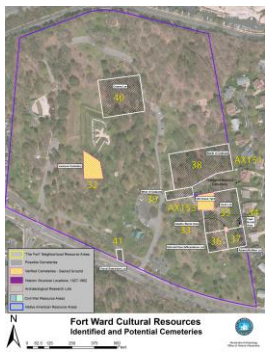
- Redirect storm water and sheet flow away from sensitive cultural and recreational resources

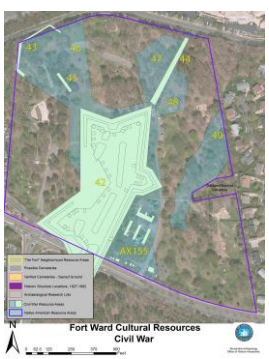
- Protect earthworks and burial sites from undesignated foot traffic and unintentional recreation use

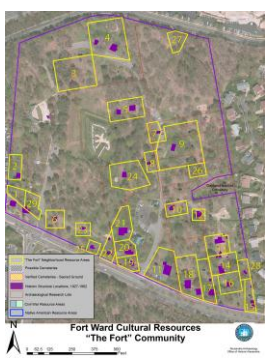
# Goal 2 – Park Character

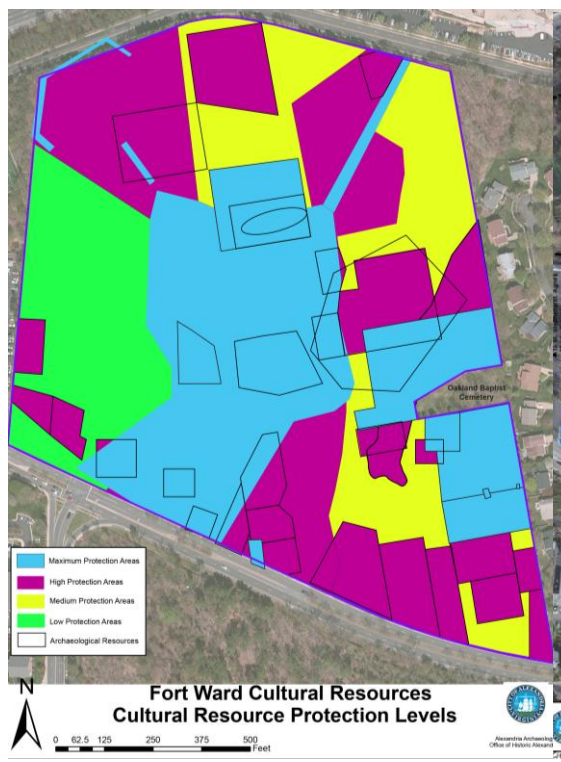
- Identify degree of ground disturbance allowed
  - Minimal Ground Disturbing Activities *(such as aeration, stump grinding, tree planting, and soft path construction)*
  - No Ground Disturbing Activities Allowed without further review by OHA
  - No Ground Disturbing Activities Allowed except for placement of formal interpretive elements with archaeological review and investigation

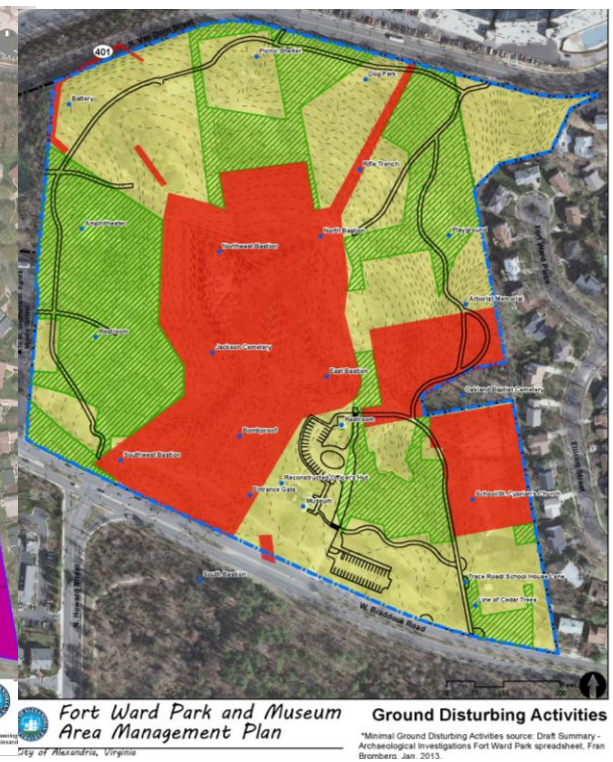


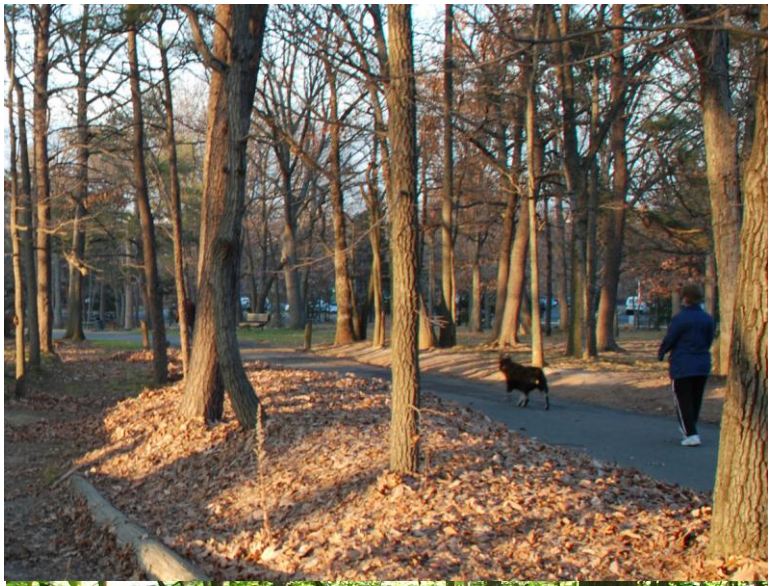



# Goal 3 – Landscape Cultural Practices

*Priority Actions Include*

- Leaf litter treatment *(underway)*
- Core aerate soils to address compaction *(underway)*
- Plant new trees
- Remove inappropriate vegetation from earthworks, burial grounds and cemeteries



# Goal 4 – Educate and Engage Visitors

*Priority Actions Include*

- Develop an Interpretive Plan – Civil War to Civil Rights
  *(OHA to formally invite key stakeholders from the Fort Ward and Seminary African American Descendants Society, Civil War historians, naturalists, educators and community representatives to participate in a new advisory committee)*

- Promote regional interpretation of the Defenses of Washington/Circle Forts

- Design and install an interpretive trail to organize the outdoor interpretive experience

*Shorts House Investigation*

# Goal 5 – Enhance Park Facilities

*Priority Actions Include*

- Soft Path Interpretive Trail along park perimeter
- Clearly mark and develop two park access points from North Van Dorn Street
- Remove off-leash dog exercise area
- Relocate playground and Group Picnic Area 3 to western side of park

PARK
OPEN 9:00A
CLOSE 6:00PM

# FWMP Section I and II

- *Who is in Charge?*
  - **Goal 1: Management and Funding**
- *What Should the Park Become?*
  - **Goal 2: Park Character – Preserve, Protect, Repair and Maintain Resources**
- *How Should the Park Be Maintained?*
  - **Goal 3: Landscape Cultural Practices**
- *Which Stories Should be Told?*
  - **Goal 4: Educate and Engage Visitors – Share the Stories of Fort Ward Park**
- *Which Recreation Facilities Belong in the Park?*
  - **Goal 5: Enhance Park Facilities**

# Site History and Past Use

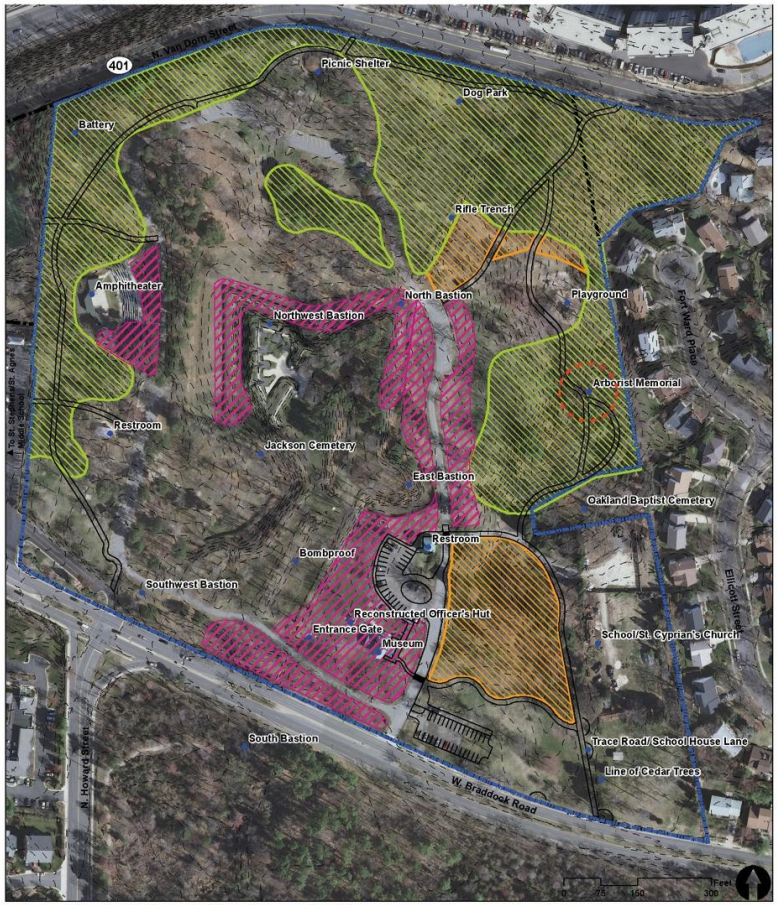
- First 35 acres of the 43.46 acre park obtained in the 1950's to preserve and reconstruct a portion of the fort for the Civil War Centennial and to establish a public park
  - Museum has an outstanding collection of Civil War artifacts, research library and educational and interpretive programming
- Site used as City Nursery and for maintenance operations
- Recent recognition of the century-long legacy of community life and heritage – "The Fort" community
  - Archaeological investigations ongoing

# What to be Accomplished?

- Identify sustainable strategies and best management practices for the use, protection and monitoring of changes at the site over time
- Seek to balance management of natural, cultural and recreational resources - earthwork fort, archaeological resources, interments, “The Fort” community and park features
- Identify enhancement opportunities to interpret site’s significant history, recognize and mark graves/cemeteries, upgrade park facilities and recreation infrastructure, improve public accessibility and plantings

# Goal 3 – Landscape Cultural Practices






Fort Ward Park and Museum Area Management Plan

**Management Zones Land Cover Definition**

City of Alexandria, Virginia

- Management Plan Boundary
- Park Parcel
- Contour 2'
- Potential Soft Path
- Woodlands
- Meadows
- Irrigated turf
- Turf not irrigated
- Arborist's Memorial

Fort Ward Park and Museum Area Management Plan

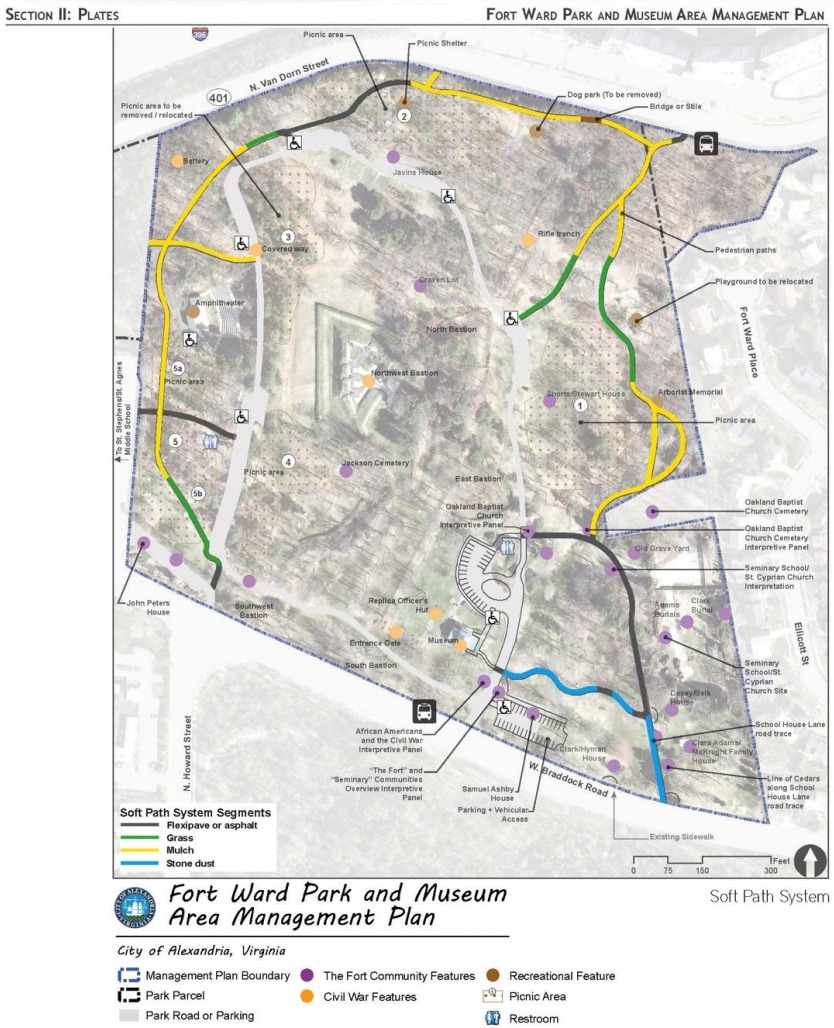
**Aeration**

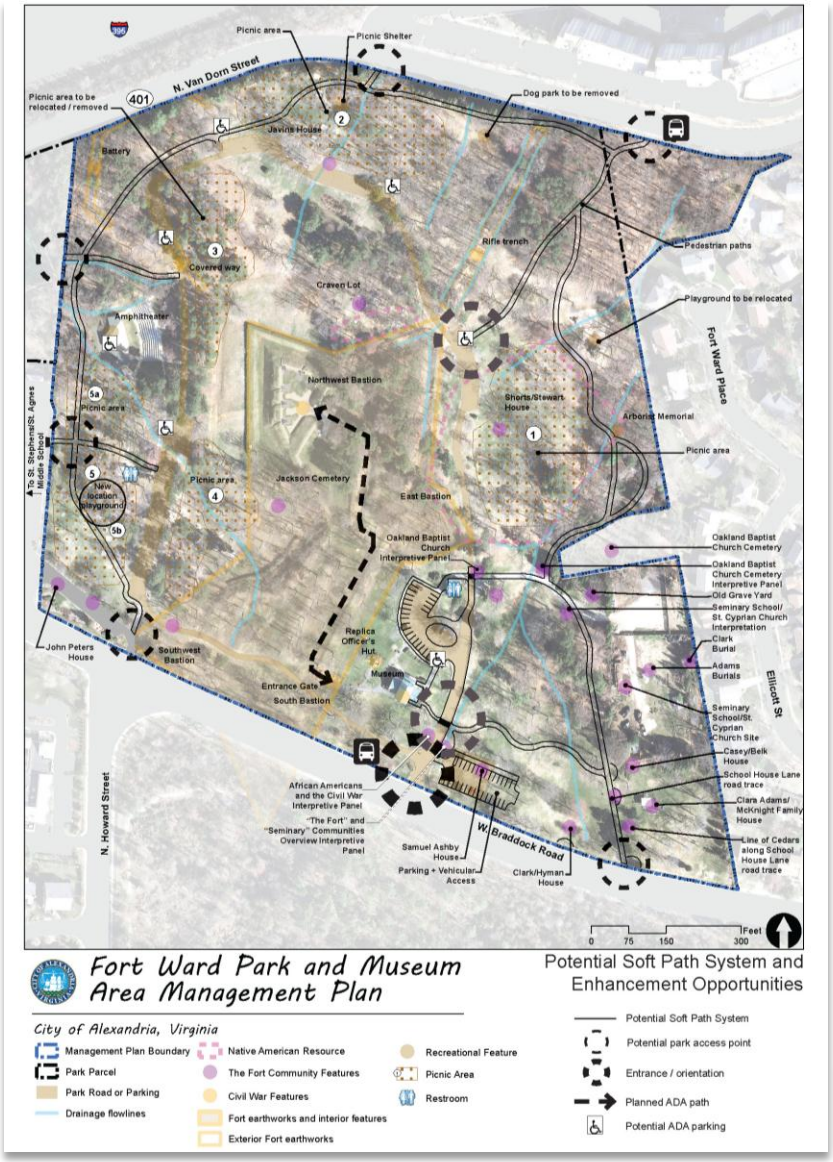
City of Alexandria, Virginia

- Management Plan Boundary
- Park Parcel
- Contour 2'
- No Aeration Area*

*NOTE: "No Aeration Areas" were identified in a sketch by Fran Bromberg 01/10/14 via email. No Aeration Areas at the battery would have to be surveyed for a more accurate location. Aeration is not allowed on the elevated areas of the fort, rifle trench, battery, nor the old grave yard, Adams burial area or Clark burial area.

# Goal 5 – Enhance Park Facilities



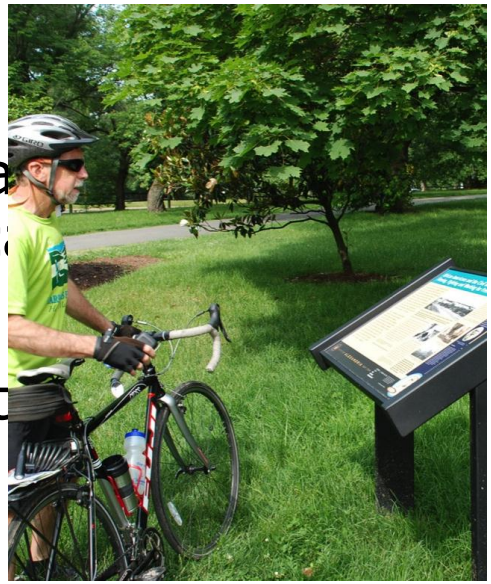



# FWAG Response

- All burial sites must be identified
- Restoration and naturalization of the old maintenance yard
- Permanent citizen stakeholder group to oversee implementation of the management plan
- Funding for the priority items
- Accountability and trust in staff

# Core Recommendations

- Management actions support a broad array of users and uses
- Management actions protect and maintain the park's nationally significa historic and cultural resources and loc significant natural resources
- Management actions serve to educat visitors through innovative and engaging interpretation and programming
- Management actions continue to satisfy the growing needs for passive recreational enjoyment of a shady, natural oasis from an increasing complex urban environment



*Rider using Civil War Defenses of Washington Bike Trail viewing Alexandria Heritage Trail interpretive panel*

# Supportive Documents

Appendix I – Stormwater

- Drainage Master Plan by URS, July of 2013
  - Recommends continuation of work done as interim storm project
  - Identifies major drainage patterns
  - Assesses condition of existing drainage infrastructure
  - Recommends improvements
    - Maintenance Practices
    - New Infrastructure
- Funding for the plan and implementation of some of the recommendations was included in the FY2012 CIP

# Supportive Documents

Appendix II – Archaeological

- Results of three excavation projects
  - 43 grave locations identified in four areas: 20-Jackson Cemetery, 17-Old Grave Yard, 4-Adams burial area, 2-Clark burial area
  - 20 areas with resources related to the African American community
  - 3 scatters of Civil War materials outside of the fortification
  - 1 scatter of Native American artifacts

**Map created showing levels of protection needed in areas across the park**

# Supportive Documents

Appendix III – History Report

- Finding the Fort: A History of an African Neighborhood in Northern Virginia, 1860s-1960s, by Krystyn R. Moon
  - Everyday Life at the Fort, 1870s-1950s
  - Making of Fort Ward Park and Museum, 1950s-1960s

# Supportive Documents

Appendix IV – MOU and Protocols

- Update MOU Annually
- Ground Disturbing Protocols

# Contact

**Laura Durham**

Open Space Coordinator

Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities

1108 Jefferson Street

Alexandria, VA 22314

**(P) 703.746.5493**

**laura.durham@alexandriava.gov**

# Drainage Master Plan Recommendations

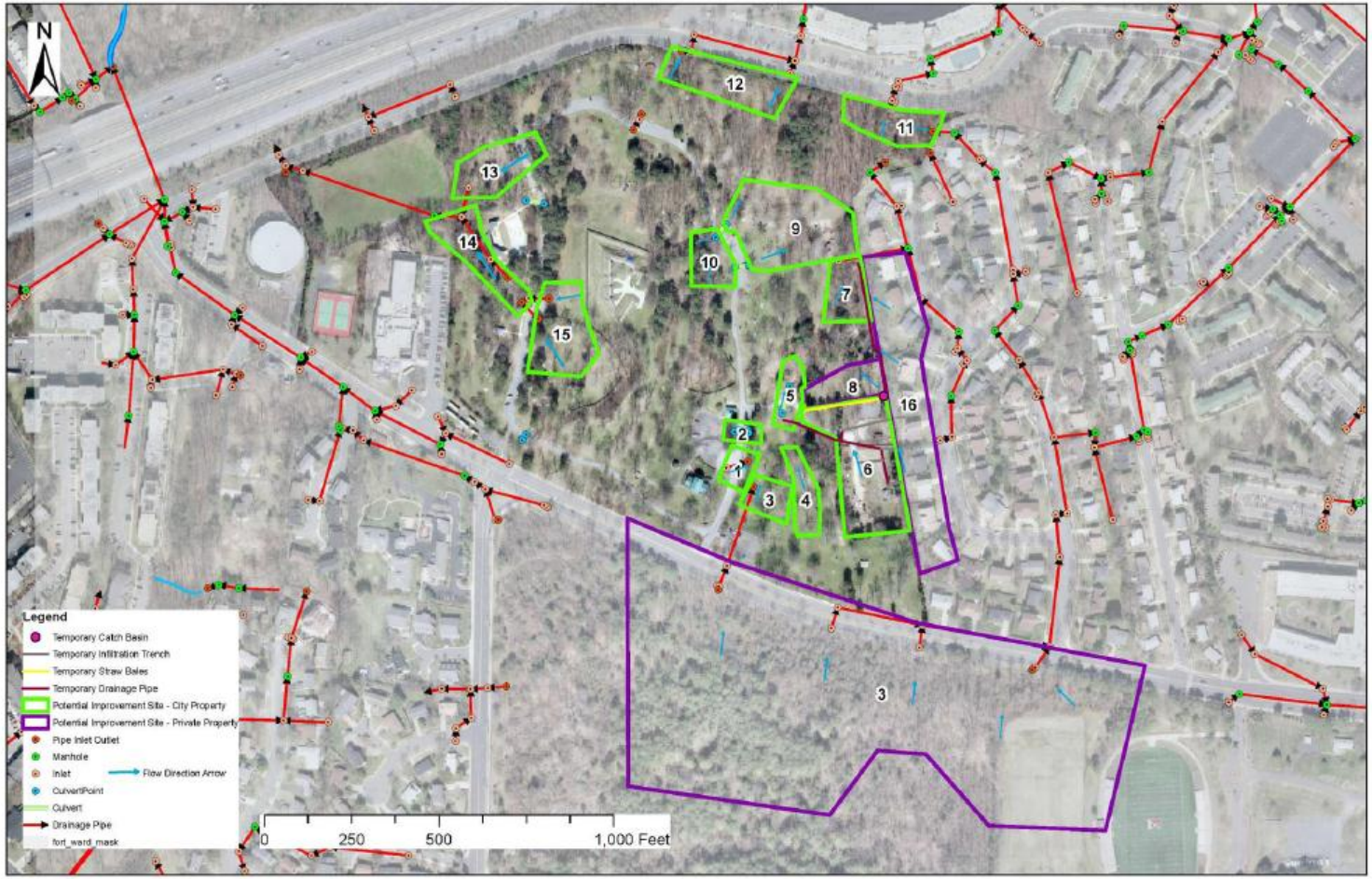



**Figure 3: Fort Ward Park Sites for Potential Improvement**

# Drainage Master Plan Recommendations

- #1 Diversion Berm – OBC Cemetery (Site 6)

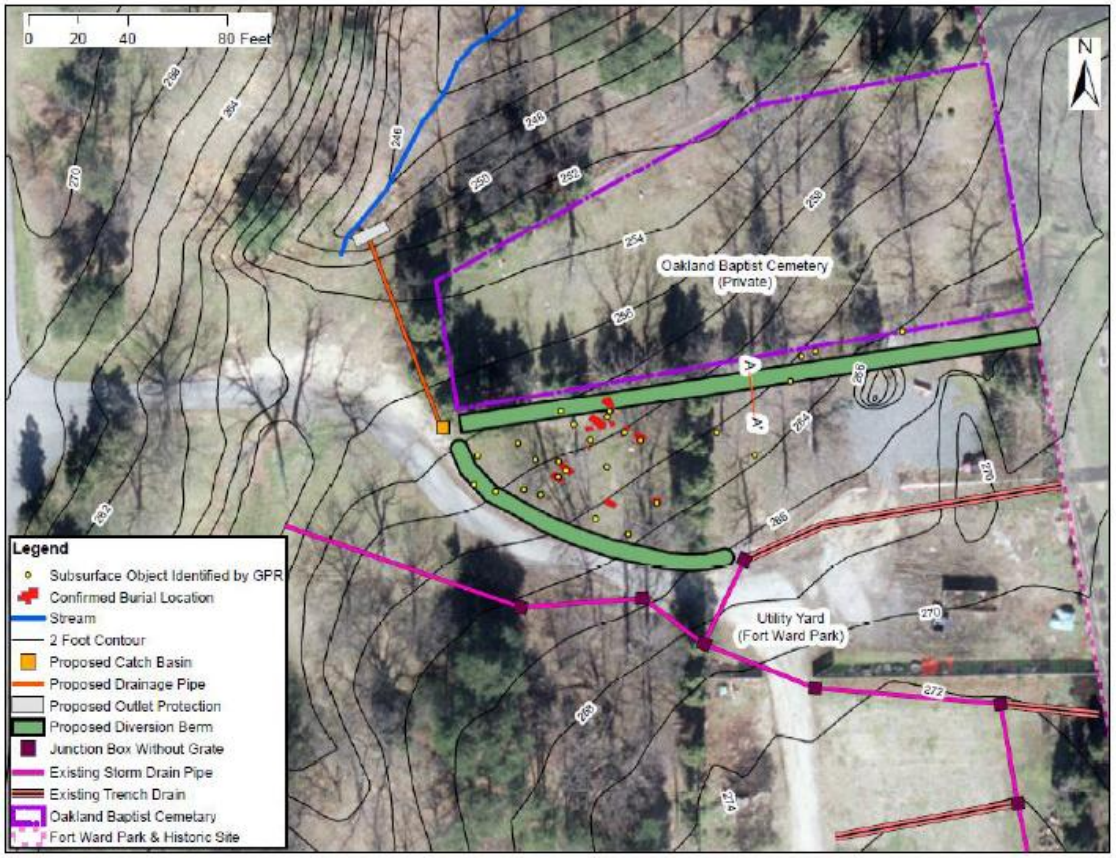



**Figure 8: Proposed Diversion Berm Concept Design**

# Drainage Master Plan Recommendations

- #1 Diversion Berm – OBC Cemetery (Site 6)

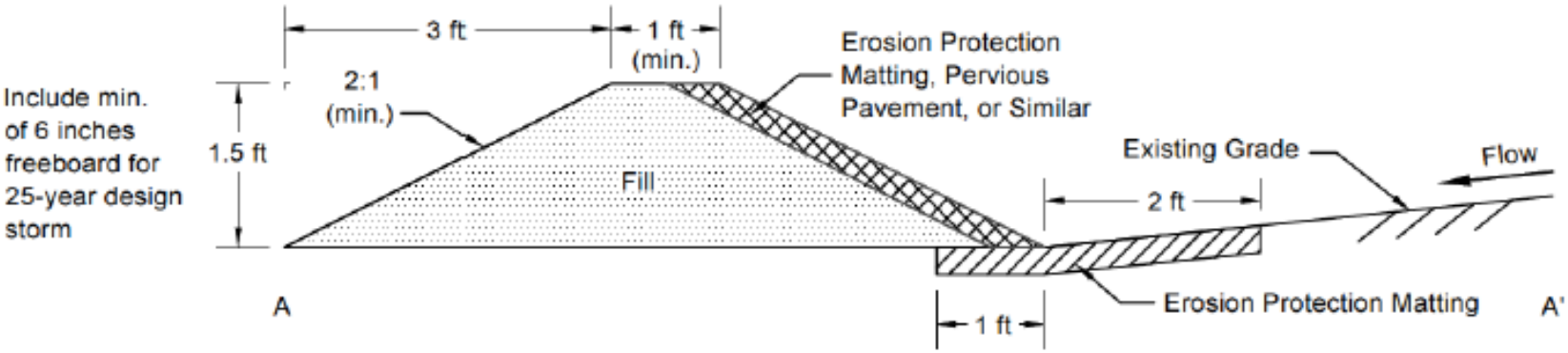



**Figure 9: Proposed Diversion Berm Concept Design Cross-Section A – A'**

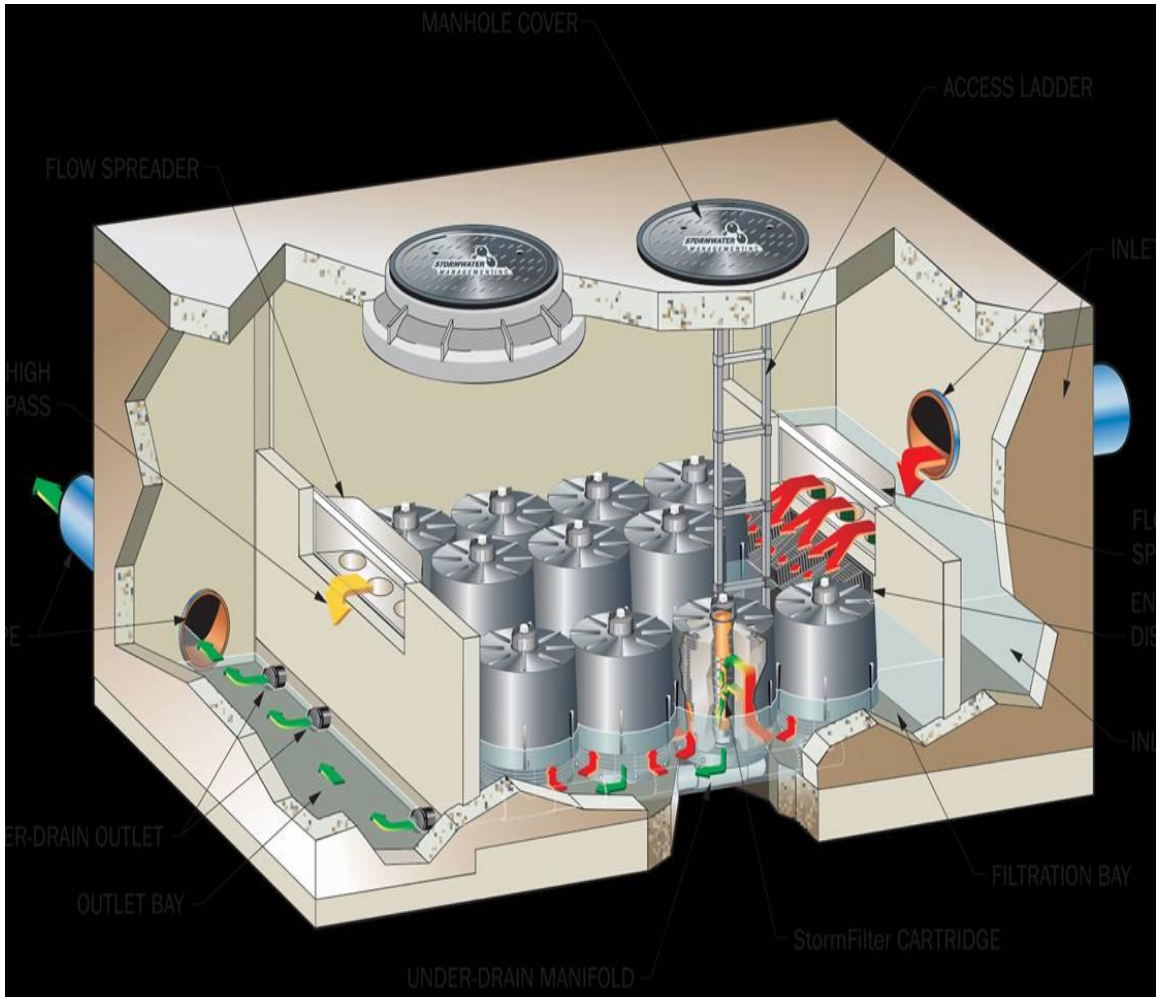
# Drainage Master Plan Recommendations

- #2 Water Quality BMP (Site 3)

Figure 6: Proposed Stormwater Filter Concept Design

# Drainage Master Plan Recommendations

- #2 Water Quality BMP (Site 3)



# Drainage Master Plan Recommendations

- #3 Stream Stabilization & Restoration (Site 7)

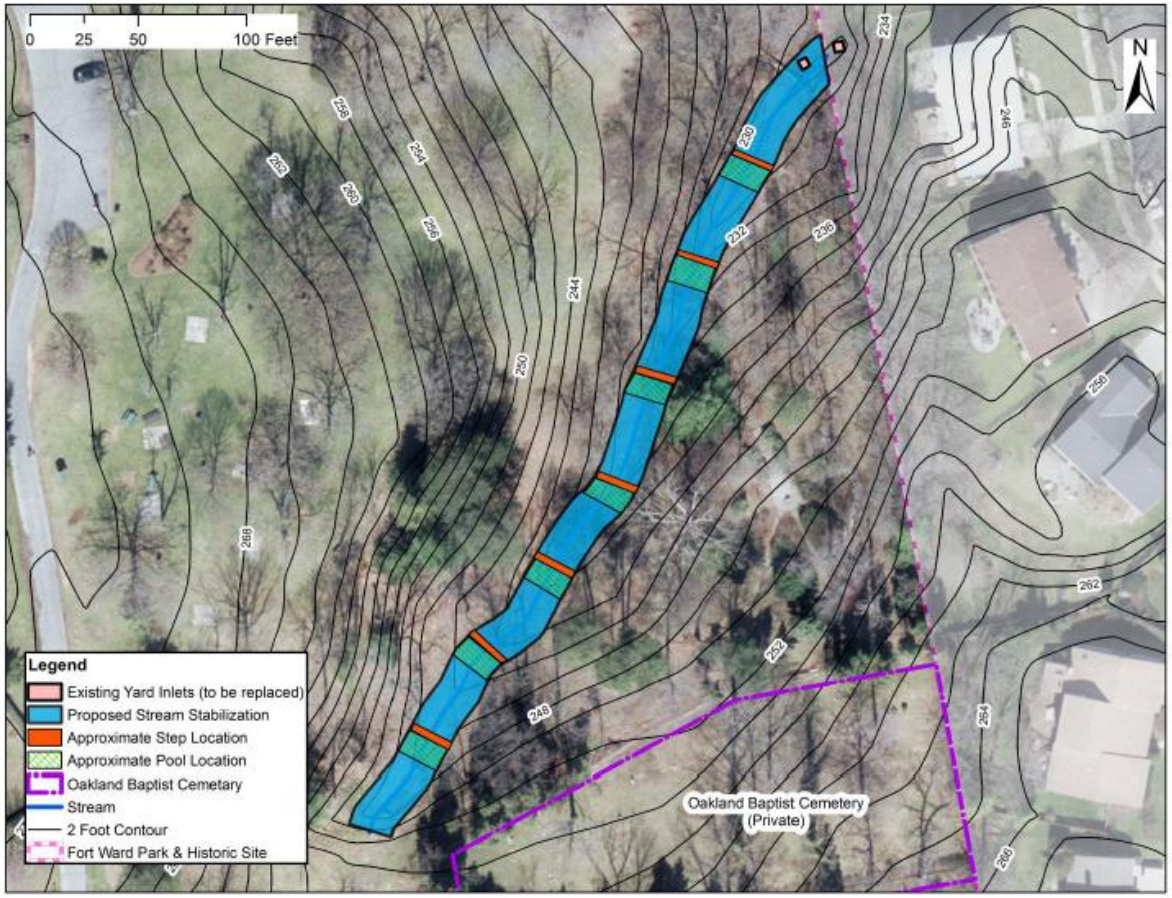



Figure 10: Proposed Stream Stabilization Concept Design

# History Report Summary

**Finding the Fort: A History of an African Neighborhood in Northern Virginia, 1860s-1960s, by Krystyn R. Moon**

The Fort Community: Family, Land and Work

- Contrabands drawn to Union-occupied areas, worked on expanding Fort Ward in 1864
- 1870 census—African Americans living at Fort Ward (Shorts family)
- Beginning in 1878—African Americans purchase property at Fort Ward (Before 1900--Millers, Shorts, Ashbys, Cassius and Robert McKnight, Jacksons, Adams, Javins)--importance of "family land" as a form of economic security, fusing family and extended kin with the soil that freedom helped purchase
- Cemeteries established
- Work—19th and early 20th centuries—close connection to Virginia Theological Seminary; expansion of opportunities as a result of WWI and WWII with some leaving area; starting in the mid-1920s, much of the land slated for suburban development

# History Report Summary

Everyday Life at the Fort, 1870s-1950s

- Education—Land for African American school on Fort Ward given by Clara Adams to Falls Church District of Fairfax County, 1898; used until 1926 when replaced by Seminary School built near present-day T.C. Williams site with Rosenwald Fund support
- Religion—Episcopal mission for African Americans founded at Seminary in 1878,St. Cyprians chapel moved to the abandoned school building on Fort Ward in 1930s; Oakland Baptist Church founded by members of The Fort and others in 1888
- Consumerism—archaeology--artifacts demonstrate ties to middle-class identity and respectability at a time of political disenfranchisement

Making of Fort Ward Park and Museum, 1950s-1960s

- Presented in the contexts of the Civil War Centennial commemoration which celebrated military history and of the process of urban renewal which displaced African American populations in Old Town, T.C. Williams area, and The Fort
- By 1950s, only about 30% of the land was owned by African American owners, with 70% owned by investors, mostly white, with one exception; many of the African American owners were no longer living on the property
- Purchase of the land met with resistance; threats of condemnation under Health and Hygiene Act took place; most properties sold—three condemnations to identify heirs; some African Americans purchased land at Woods Ave—others, especially renters, displaced

# Early Actions

- Turf aeration
- Leaf litter mulching
- Completion of additional archaeological investigations