

Test the Trails Site Report

Landfill to Coles Elementary School

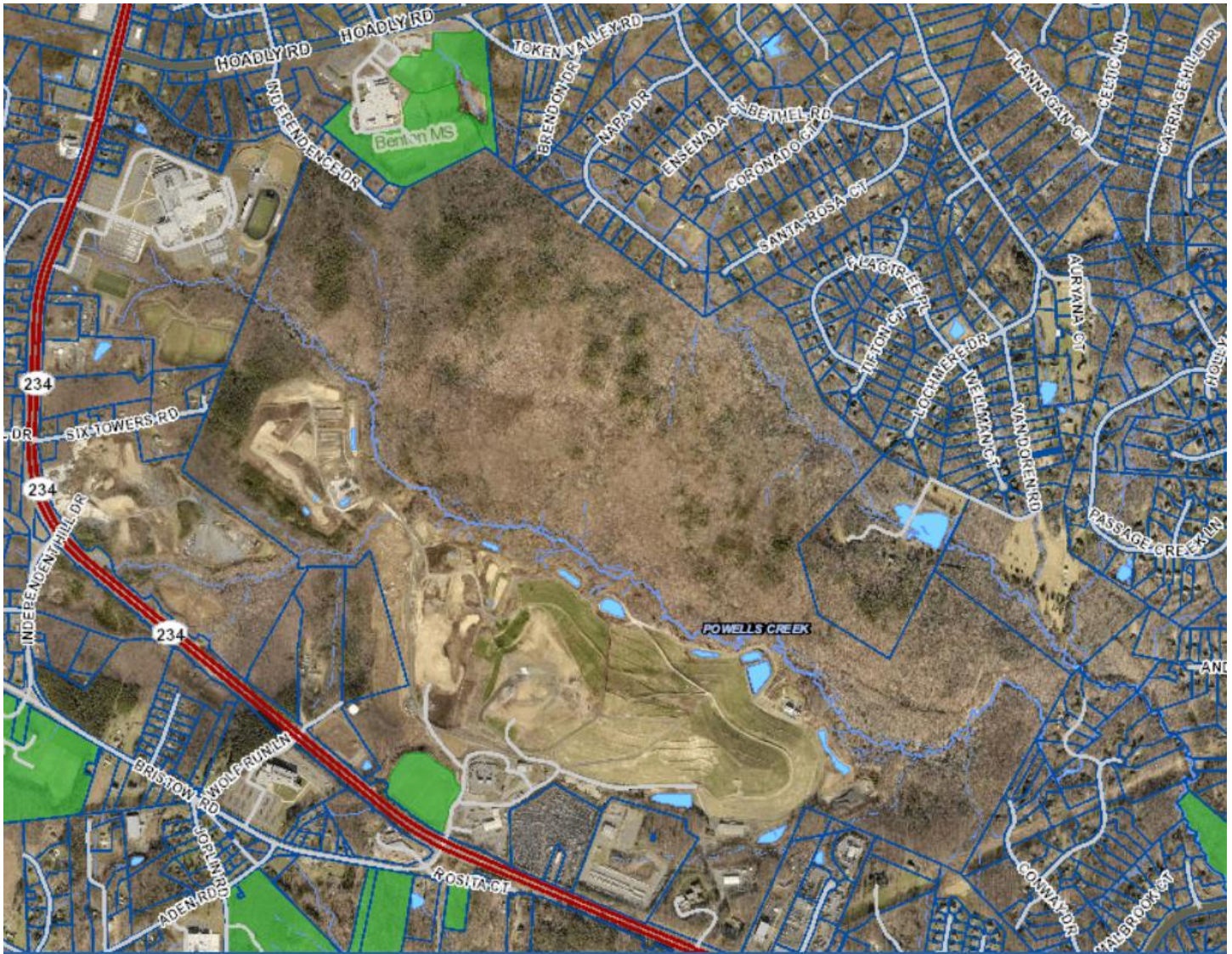
Site Visit Date: November 21, 2021

Explored by: Joe Marshall, Neil Nelson, John von Reyn, Karen Fitzgerald, Martin Jeter, Martin Crim, Celia Miner, Brad Nance, Charlie Grymes

Area Explored: Unnamed tributary of Powell's Creek from soccer field at Landfill to Benton Middle School, with future plans to find the connection to Coles Elementary School plus a loop around "back side" of landfill to Conway Drive.



Land Ownership: Prince William County, PW County School Board



Prince William County Magisterial District: Coles

Report:

There is an existing trail for nearly 2.5 miles from the landfill to Benton Middle School, with an easy connection to the Eco-Park pollinator garden at the landfill and two connections to Colgan High School. The Colgan connector trail, behind the stormwater pond at the southeast corner of the high school, is not useable because the fence around the pond blocks access.

There was no sign at the landfill trailhead indicating a trail existed. Start of trail is well hidden behind storage trailers. After first 200 feet, almost the entire trail is located in woods except at boardwalk under landfill road. There is one overlook of landfill near the water tower; otherwise, landfill operations were well-screened.

The trail, all bridges, and one section of boardwalk were in excellent shape with one exception. Drainage improvement or relocation is need for about 30 feet of trail running through a wet spot, near the Colgan connector trail that leads to the stormwater pond.

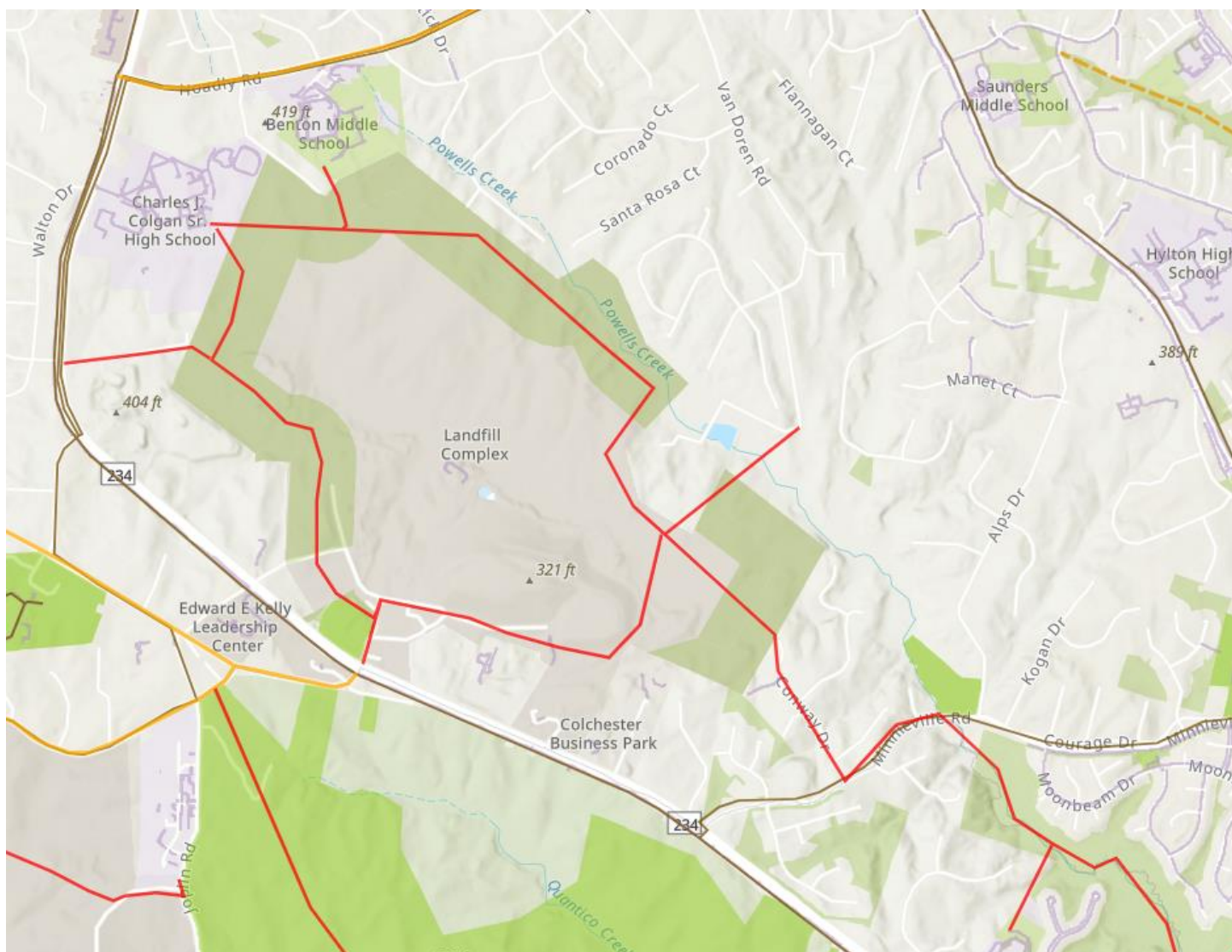
Location of trail through the woods was clear except in a few spots. There were no signs indicating where short connector trails led to pollinator garden or Colgan High School.

There are interpretive signs at pollinator garden and along the trail behind Colgan. Signs identifying trees were all in appropriate places, except for two signs that needed to be re-installed next to correct trees. Most of the blue-top directional signs created for the stretch of trail between Colgan-Benton were piled in a heap rather than installed in correct places. Other interpretive signs about the environment need a cleaning to remove grime, and one needs to be re-installed on a post.

Boardwalk led underneath landfill road, eliminating safety concerns. In addition to a “No Trespassing” sign where old road led across the edge of private property, two old Prince William County signs on edge of trail also said “No Trespassing” at sites far from active landfill operations.

We stopped at Benton Middle School, at the field with artificial turf, in order to return to landfill before dark. A later expedition will identify the connection between Coles and the artificial turf field. Access through school property may be an issue if gates are locked on weekends.

Greater Prince William Trails Coalition Aspirational Trails Map:



Benefit of this section: The trail provides access to Powell's Creek headwaters and the EcoPark, and also provides an off-road connection between Hoadley Road and Independent Hill/Prince William Forest Park.

Estimated Costs:

Land or right-of-way acquisition: none

Engineering: none except for wet spot (30 feet) and potentially on connector to Coles

Construction: _____ (including \$____/foot for natural surface trail and \$____ for _____ bridges/fords)

Annual maintenance: _____

Pictures: