

Test the Trails Site Report

Powell's Creek from Minnieville Road Downstream

Site Visit Date: November 14, 2021

Explored by: Neil Nelson, Jason Williams, John Errico, Brad Nance, Rita Romano, Bill Stejskaj, Celia Miner, Tim Miner, Charlie Grymes

Area Explored: Unnamed tributary of Powell's Creek from Minnieville Road downstream to confluence with unnamed tributary coming from Kyle Wilson Elementary School, then back to Minnieville Road via two routes.



Land Ownership: Prince William County, Didlake Foundation (blue boundary), Winding Creek Estates HOA



Prince William County Magisterial District: Coles (Potomac District is on opposite side of creek)

Report: We bushwhacked along the floodplain on the left side (going downstream) of Powell's Creek for 1.5 miles. Understory was easy to pass through, minimal briars or fallen logs.

The forest on the floodplain appeared to be 50-100 years old, with some autumn olive but little stiltgrass except above the Service Authority sewerline. That sewerline was clear of trees.

It was obvious to all very quickly that the best trail route would be through the woods on the ridge across the creek (on right side, facing downstream) rather than going through the floodplain.

There was no easy way to cross Powell's Creek; it is too wide. Powell's Creek is entrenched about four feet into the legacy sediments created by erosion after land clearing in the 1700's-1800's.

Large timbers from an old wooden bridge were found at four locations, along with four tires in the creek. There was a deerstand and one short rope tied to a tree above a small pool, but no other evidence of visitor use. We saw almost no litter.

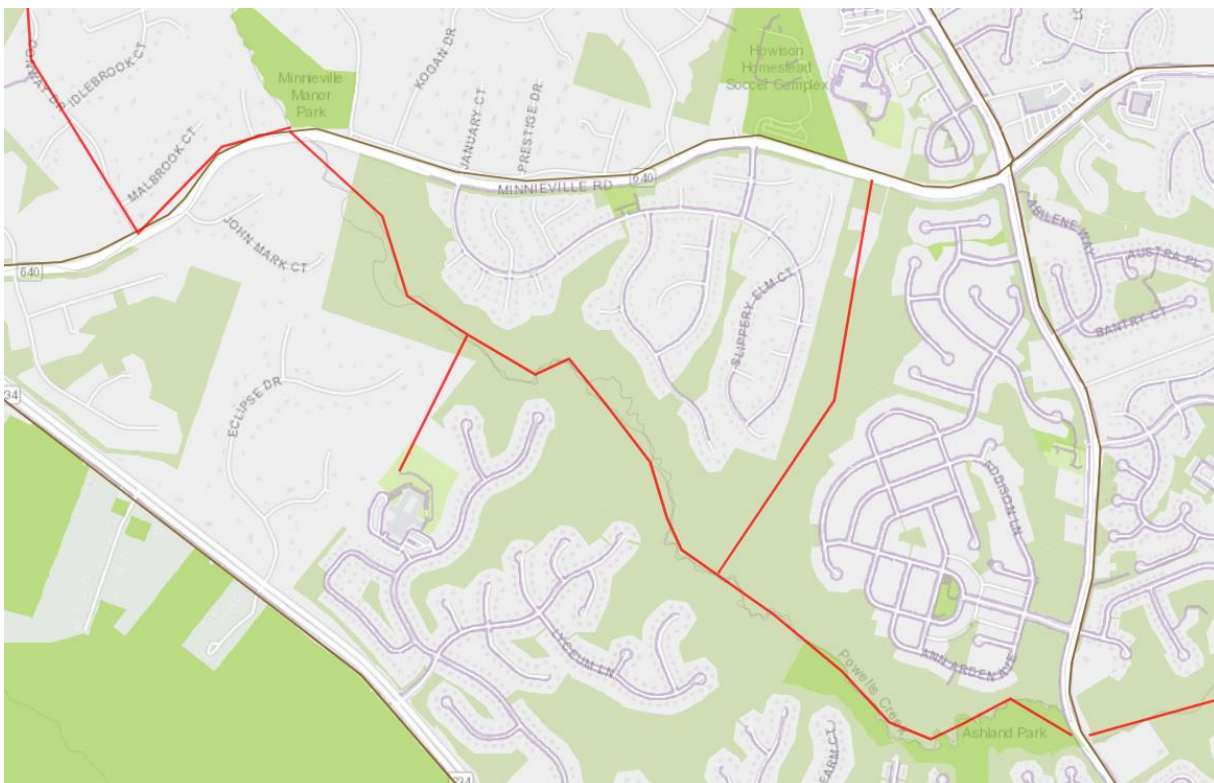
Houses in Winding Creek Estates were out of sight, except for a section about ¼ mile long. Houses on the right side of creek could not be seen because of the forested ridge and width of undeveloped parkland.

The wettest areas was at the confluence of Powell's Creek and the unnamed tributary coming from Kyle Wilson Elementary School. Ruts and gullies made it impossible to cross through 20 yards of the floodplain there without getting boots wet. Any trail down left side of Powell's Creek would have to include several short (<10') bridges and perhaps 50 yards of boardwalk there.

One member of group went back to retrieve a lost item, then bushwhacked to Grassy Knoll Court.

Rest of group split after crossing wet area of floodplain. Two members followed route of unnamed tributary to Kyle Wilson Elementary School. Others followed an unmarked, little-used social trail up the ridge to Nightfall Lane, then used sidewalks to return to beginning of expedition. Because of forest cover and topography, it would be easy to locate a connector trail to Nightfall Lane without intruding on privacy of homeowners.

Greater Prince William Trails Coalition Aspirational Trails Map:



Benefit of this section: The spine of the Powell's Creek Greenway could parallel Powell's Creek on one or both sides of the creek, providing a deep woods experience.

Estimated Costs:

Land or right-of-way acquisition: none

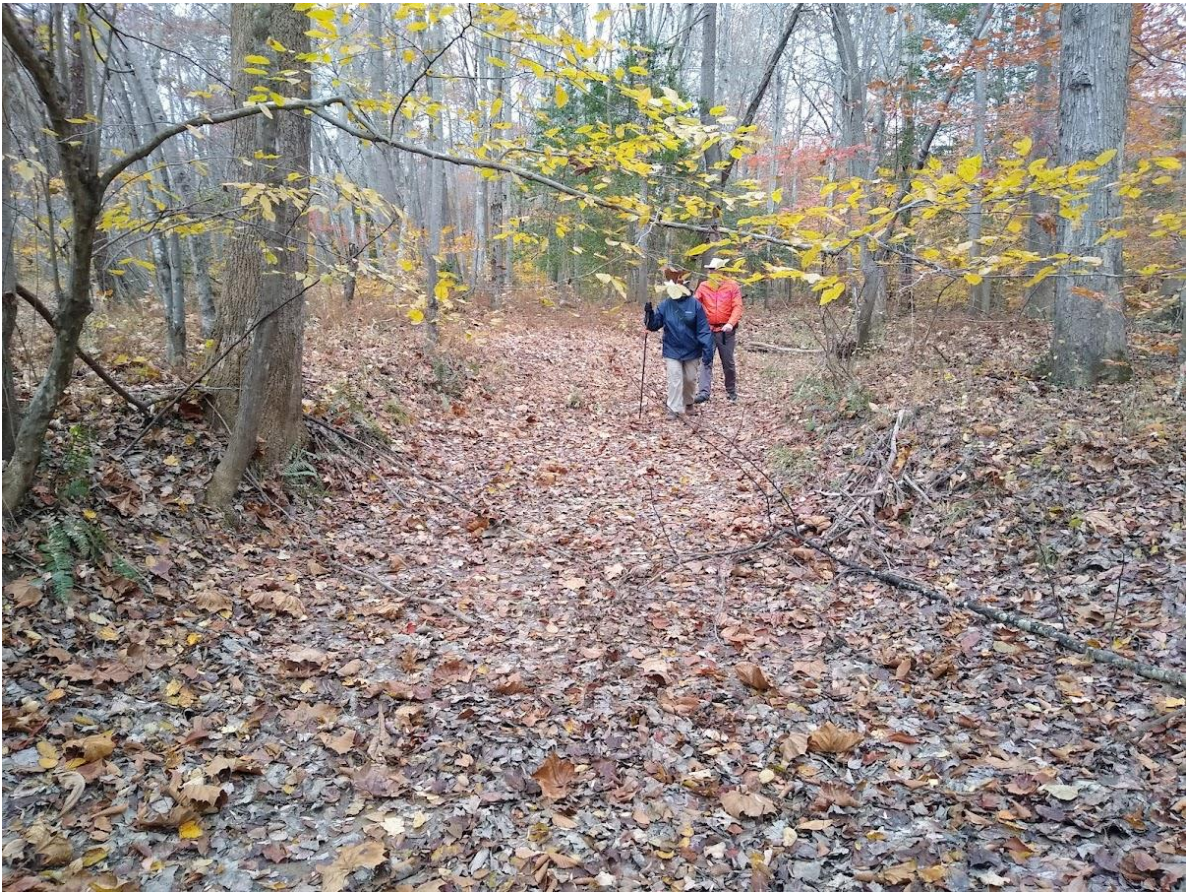
Engineering: _____

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

Annual maintenance: _____

Pictures:











Social trail up ride towards Nightfall Court:

