

Virginia State Parks and Natural Areas Bond Referendum 2002

Update on Status of Equestrian Campgrounds

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Several people have asked for an update on the Equestrian Campgrounds that were approved as a part of the \$119 million Virginia State Parks and Natural Areas Bond Referendum that was passed in November 2002. I am happy to inform you that the projects remain on schedule as shown in the time table below.

Background:

About \$4.45 million is allocated for new or improved horse camping facilities in the following parks: Douthat State Park, Fairy Stone State Park, James River State Park, Occoneechee State Park, Pocahontas State Park, Staunton River State Park, and Staunton River Battlefield State Park. Additionally, an equestrian center is slated for Pocahontas State Park. Two million dollars are slated for general trail improvements at all of the parks. In addition to these improvements that directly impact our equestrian community, \$30 million is allocated for land conservation efforts such as purchasing Natural Area Preserves and large tracts of land for future state parks. Some the new park properties have already been purchased.

Time Table

Below is the time table for the Equestrian related bond projects that were approved. In general, bond projects are spread over a 6-8 year period since the state must sell the bonds in increments (not all \$119 million at once)

The time table for all of the bond projects (including cabins, and other

infrastructure improvements) was decided upon by the Governor. In making his decisions he and his staff looked at whether or not the project was a revenue generator and if so, how much. Those projects which accounted for the highest income were slated for early completion. He also looked at the user base. The more people that can be served by a project, the greater the chance it had of being done in the first year or two. Of course, one of the problems with having a project later in the time line is that construction costs are continuing to rise, and what may have initially been proposed may have to be adapted to meet the budget. The alternative is using more volunteer labor to move the projects along more quickly and to get more for our money. Hopefully, our equestrian community will step forward and be part of the volunteer effort when called upon.

Time Table for the Bond Projects

I have listed below the tentative construction start/completion dates for the projects that relate to the parks that we ride in. This information was verified with the Director for state parks on Jan. 10, 2006.

- Occoneechee State Park: (\$600,000) Equestrian camping area. Construction to be completed late summer/early fall 2006.
- Fairy Stone State Park: (\$300,000) Construction of the equestrian camping area is slated to begin in early 2007. Completion during summer 2007.
- James River State Park: (\$500,000) Cabin construction should begin in the 2nd half of 2004; Equestrian campground is slated to begin in early 2007. Completion during summer 2007.
- Staunton River State Park: (\$750,000) Construction slated to begin early 2007. Completion during summer 2007.
- Staunton River Battlefield State Park: (\$100,000) Construction to

begin in 2007. Completion during summer 2007.

.- Pocahontas State Park: (\$1.5m for camp & center) Equestrian center & camping area is scheduled for 2007-2008. Completion during summer 2007.

- Douthat State Park: (\$700,000) Trail development grant required. Negotiations underway for land that is more suitable for camp site than the one originally identified (to hilly, to small). Completion date - to be determined.

Of note, Trail Improvements funding will not be available until near the end of the bond cycle.