

**ELLISON PARK AREA MASTER PLAN  
(DRAFT)**

**Presented on 2/26/09**

**Public comments received via letter**

**2/26/09 – 3/16/09**

Sarah Piecuch  
83 Schnackel Drive  
Rochester, NY 14622

Monroe County Department of Parks  
171 Reservoir Avenue  
Rochester, NY 14620

March 13, 2009

Dear Monroe County Parks Advisory Committee:

We, the undersigned, respectfully submit the following comments and recommendations on the Ellison Park Area Master Plan Update (DRAFT).

**Chapter 5 Summary of Park Resources:** Please be more generic when discussing the presence of threatened and endangered species. Do not list species by name. It is appropriate to say "several plant species that are listed as threatened or endangered in New York State have been identified in the vicinity of X Park. Release of this sensitive information to the public can potentially lead to illegal collections, especially species of rare orchids. Correspondence from NY Natural Heritage Program included in the document clearly states that this information is sensitive and should not be readily available to the public.

**Chapter 7 B. Recommendations for Devil's Cove Park.** A restroom facility of some sort should be added to the list of necessary improvements. The addition of a boat landing area, picnic tables and benches will encourage people to come ashore. In order to accommodate a need for restrooms, perhaps pit toilets similar to those used in other remote parks across NYS can be placed at this site. Containing and properly treating human waste will help protect water quality of this unique ecological area.

**Chapter 7C Recommendations for Ellison Park.** Dog impacts on water quality is discussed quite nicely, however dog impacts on the fishery resource is not mentioned. One possible solution to protect the fishery and still have a dog park with creek access would be to restrict dog access to Irondequoit Creek during trout spawning. NYSDEC will be able to provide the exact dates.

**Chapter 7D Recommendations for Ellison Wetlands 7. Habitat Enhancement.** Cattails are a native species that also becomes invasive when there is a lack of water level fluctuation. In addition to planting root wads in shallow water corridors, water level control devices should be installed at key locations throughout the park. The use of water level control devices would restore the natural fluctuating water levels regimes historically exhibited in this area prior to lake level stabilization. Fluctuating water levels will restore the natural regime that leads to plant diversity, and more open water among the cattails. This increase in habitat and plant diversity will result in increased wildlife diversity. Dense monotypic stands of cattails have low species diversity.

**Chapter 8 Implementation C. Recommended General Operations and Maintenance Policies, Exotic Plant Species Management.** The document currently states “Invasive species are non-native species...” That is not always true. There are native species that can be invasive. For example, cattails, ferns, and deer can invade and take over an area. If the goal of invasive species management is to focus on non-native species, clearly state that. Suggest using a better definition of invasive species or clearly state that for the purpose of this plan, the goal is to focus on “non-native” species. Suggest working with the Finger Lakes Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (FLPRISM) to stay current on best practices, new invaders to watch for, and a potential source of volunteers.

**Chapter 8 Implementation C. Recommended General Operations and Maintenance Policies, Wildlife Management and Habitat.** The bullet that starts with “Preserve large mast-producing trees...” perhaps the following text could be added to this sentence “by facilitating understory growth through the use of deer exclosures.

**Chapter 8 Implementation, Permit Process.** Recommend adding a step number five. Coordinate with United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) regarding selected projects and potential impacts to nesting Bald Eagles. Even though Bald Eagles have been delisted from the Federal Endangered species list they are still protected by the Bald and Golden Eagle Management Act. All activities in parks located on Irondequoit Bay will have to comply with the Bald and Golden Eagle Management Act.

We, the undersigned are acting as private citizens but are also affiliated with the Town of Irondequoit’s Conservation Board.

Respectfully,

*Sarah Picuch on behalf of undersigned*

Sarah Picuch

Karen Faris

Kimie Romeo

Stephen Greive

Noreen Stanlecker

64 Brentwood Drive  
Penfield, NY 14526  
March 12, 2009

Larry Staub, Director  
Monroe County Dept. of Parks  
171 Reservoir Avenue  
Rochester, NY 14620

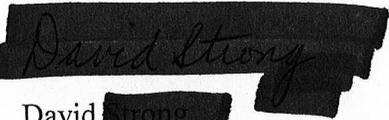
Dear Mr. Staub,

I am writing to request that existing Monroe County Parks trails remain closed to mountain bikes. The existing trails are not suitable for shared use, especially where most are simple paths.

I attended the November meeting on the Ellison Park Wetlands, at which time a mountain biking project was proposed for Tryon Park. I am aware that this park has the challenging terrain enjoyed by mountain bikers. If the decision were made for trial use for mountain biking in Tryon Park, I would not like to see any expansion of biking on the existing trails of the Ellison Park Wetlands. These trails are environmentally fragile, readily eroded and subject to permanent damage by mountain biking.

I would encourage Monroe County to consider a separate mountain biking trail network, which would cater to this sport, which has many adherents. I recently spent a week with my son, a Resource Management Specialist with the State of North Carolina. He said the state is putting in single-lane mountain bike trails in some of their parks. The biking trails are closed when conditions are not suitable for biking. Separate hiking trails are available. See attached.

Thank you for your attention in this matter.

  
David Strong

c. Tom Robinson  
Attachment

# LITTLE RIVER REGIONAL PARK

## TRAIL DISTANCES & TRAVEL TIMES

(distances and times are approximate)

- South River Loop Trail: 2.5 miles / 2 hours
- Ridge Trail & the North River Trail: 3.5 miles / 4 hours
- Homestead Trail: .33 mile / 30 minutes
- Interpretive Loop Trail (paved): .25 mile / 15 minutes
- Bird Trail: .5 mile / 30 minutes—1 hour

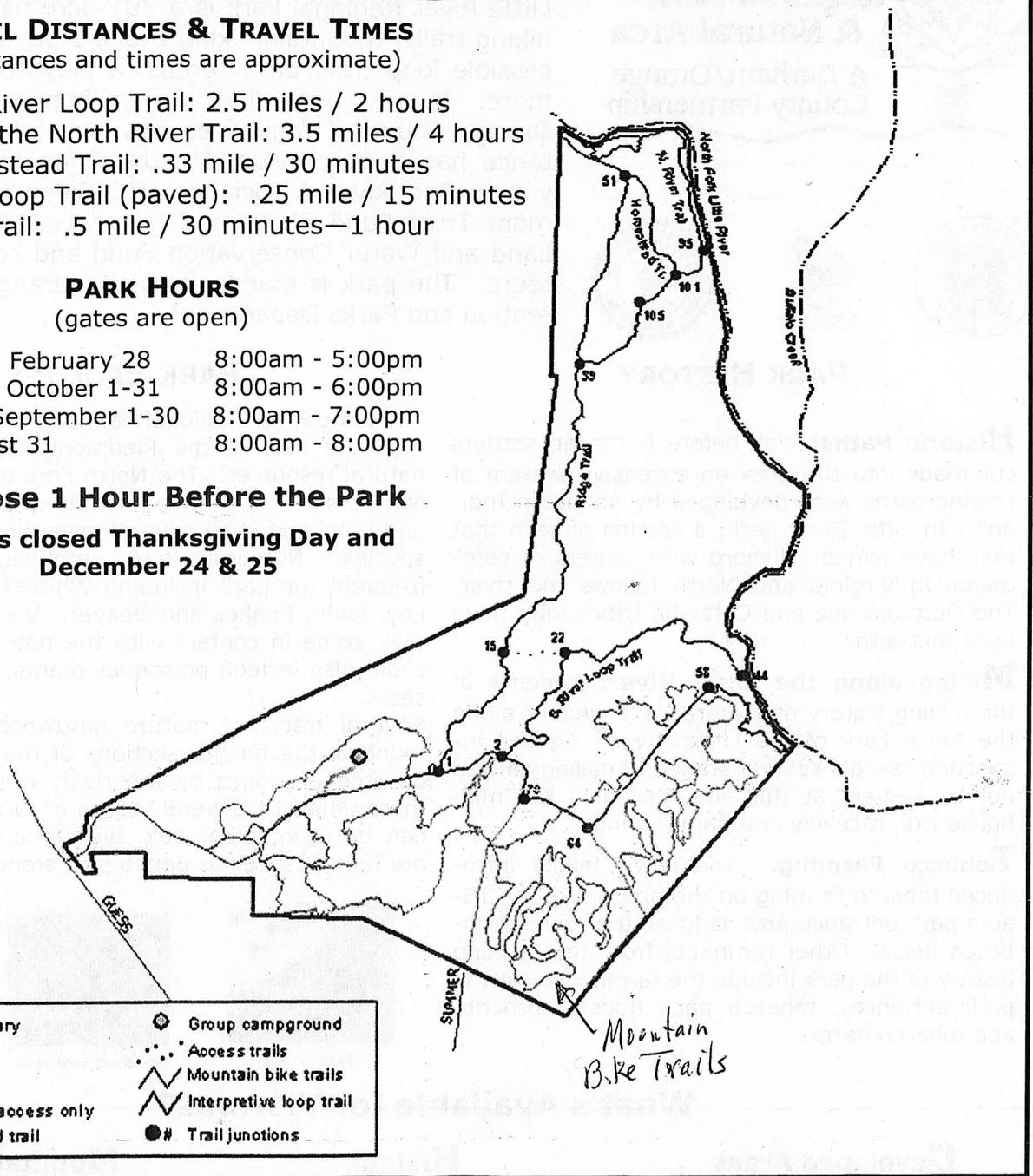
## PARK HOURS

(gates are open)

- November 1 - February 28      8:00am - 5:00pm
- March 1-31 & October 1-31    8:00am - 6:00pm
- April 1-30 & September 1-30   8:00am - 7:00pm
- May 1 - August 31              8:00am - 8:00pm

**Trails Close 1 Hour Before the Park**

**The Park is closed Thanksgiving Day and  
December 24 & 25**



## PICNIC SHELTERS

The large shelter, small shelter and individual picnic tables are available on a first come, first served basis. The large and small shelters can be reserved by calling (919) 245-2660 or by visiting the Orange County Recreation and Parks Department Administrative offices in Hillsborough. Two weeks notice is required to reserve the shelters.

## GROUP CAMPGROUND

The group campground is available from February 1—November 15 for approved organized groups. Reservations can be made by calling (919) 245-2660, or by visiting the Orange County Recreation and Parks Department Administrative offices in Hillsborough. 30 days notice is required to reserve the group campground.

## PARK RULES

Observing the following rules will make your visit a safe and rewarding experience; and help to preserve our park.

- Please do not litter. Place trash and recyclables in their proper containers.
- ALL PETS must be leashed AT ALL TIMES.
- The removal of any objects from the park (plant, animal, rock or artifact) is not allowed.
- County parks are wildlife preserves. Hunting, trapping and gathering are not allowed.
- Catch-and-release fishing is allowed in designated areas only. No live bait is allowed.
- Fires are allowed only in designated areas.
- Firearms and fireworks are strictly prohibited.



# Little River Regional Park & Natural Area

A Durham/Orange  
County Partnership



## PARK HISTORY

**Historic Paths:** Well before European settlers cut roads into the area an extensive system of trading paths were developed by American Indians. In Little River Park, a section of path that may have joined Hillsboro with centers of commerce in Virginia and North follows the river. The Occaneechee and Catawba tribes may have used this path.

**Milling along the Little River:** Evidence of the milling history of the area is abundant along the North Fork of the Little River. Careful inspection reveals several stages of milling carried out by settlers at this site, including the mill-house site, raceway and dam footings.

**Tobacco Farming:** The Law's family introduced tobacco farming on the property. The 15-acre park entrance area is located on former tobacco fields. Other remnants from the farming history of the park include the farmhouse (at the park entrance), tobacco pack house, corncrib, and tobacco barns.

## WELCOME

Little River Regional Park is a 391-acre natural area with hiking trails, mountain biking trails, a paved handicap accessible loop trail, picnic areas, a playground and much more. It is a cooperative project between Durham and Orange Counties, funded equally by both. Major assistance has been provided by the Triangle Land Conservancy, Eno River Association, NC Clean Water Management Trust Fund, Parks and Recreation Trust Fund, the Land and Water Conservation Fund and countless volunteers. The park is managed by the Orange County Recreation and Parks Department.

## PARK ECOLOGY

The Little River Regional Park brings visitors up close with the best of the Piedmont's environment and natural resources. The North Fork of the Little River carries some of the Piedmont's most pristine waters and is inhabited by several endemic fish and mussel species. Numerous birds, reptiles, and mammals frequent the park including White-Tailed Deer, Turkey, Mink, Snakes and Beaver. Visitors to the park may come in contact with the native wildlife which could also include poisonous plants, animals and insects.

Several tracts of mature hardwood forest can be found in the farther sections of the park, generally on steeper slopes by the river, where logging was more difficult. Several stages of forest regeneration can be seen; older oak, hickory and beech stands are found as well as dense pine stands.



Eastern Newt



Spicebush Swallowtail



Trout Lilly

## What's Available for VISITORS?

### Developed Areas

The park offers an office and information center where visitors can make use of reading materials and environmental education tools. Picnic tables, grills, and waste bins are located at the two large shelters. Individual picnic areas can be found around the handicap accessible loop trail. The open play meadow provides a place to relax or throw a Frisbee, while the playground offers active recreation for kids. Restroom facilities are located within close proximity.

### Hiking

Over seven miles of hiking trails are available in the park. **Hikers should follow the green trail makers.** Marker numbers indicate location within the trail system, with intersections referenced on the map. Odd numbers mark the Ridge and N. River Trails, while even numbers mark the S. River Loop Trail. Hikers are also permitted to hike on the mountain bike trails, but must yield to bikers.

### Mountain Biking

**Blue markers indicate mountain bike trails.** Over seven miles of single-track trails are newly designed, built and ready for use. The level of technical difficulty on trails increases with distance from the trail-head. Biking on the gravel logging roads should be limited to emergency situations only. Bikers must be aware that hikers, while not encouraged, are allowed to explore the bike trail system.

**Questions, concerns, or suggestions** should be voiced to park staff at the Little River Park office, (919) 732-5505, or the Orange County Recreation and Parks Department at (919) 245-2660.

*This brochure is printed on recycled paper*

Larry Staub  
Monroe County Parks Director  
171 Reservoir Ave.  
Rochester, NY 14609

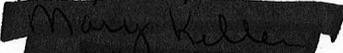
Dear Mr. Staub,

I have been a Monroe County resident for most of my 62 years and have valued our county parks more than I can say. I hike the trails of the parks about 4 or 5 times a week and have done this year round for over 20 years. It is with dismay that I contemplate sharing trails with mountain bikers and I ask you to reconsider granting permission for bikes to be ridden in any county park.

I have had just 2 or 3 encounters with mountain bikers when hiking on the Finger Lakes Trail in Ontario County Park. Each time I was forced to move to the side of the trail as groups of bikers drove by me or toward me. The experience of hiking with even more bikers raises my shackles. The trails do not safely accommodate both activities and I am sure that bikers trump hikers just by their speed and power. Instead of fearing a biker coming up behind me or appearing without warning on the next hill, I will avoid parks that allow mountain biking. It reduces a peaceful, joyous experience to one that lacks serenity.

I am a member of ADK but do not agree with their stance of "trying out" Tryon Park. After attending the Penfield Town Hall meeting, I am well aware that the mountain biker community has much grander plans. Already leash laws are ignored in many parks. Who will enforce safety with mountain bikers? We don't have the staff now to maintain the parks and yet, you are considering a relaxation of current laws.

Thank you for your consideration of my thoughts.

  
Mary Keller

  
165 Birch Hills Drive

Rochester, NY  14622