

COUNTY OF ALBEMARLE



DEPARTMENT OF ENGINEERING & PUBLIC WORKS

MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Susan Thomas, Senior Planner  
**FROM:** David Hirschman, Water Resources Manager *Dave*  
**DATE:** February 13, 1998  
**RE:** Approval of Ragged Mountain Trails

As you know, I accompanied the Ivy Creek Foundation's Ragged Mountain trail team on September 19 and October 17 of 1997. My role was to satisfy the Planning Commission and Board's condition that the trails be designed so as to ensure the protection of water quality.

Based on the rough trail lay-out established, I believe that water quality will be protected. Of course, the impact of a trail on water is probably one-part design and two-parts maintenance. The Board's condition #4 outlines an annual review -- to include the Ivy Creek Foundation, City, County, and RWSA -- of use of the natural area. These opportunities should be used to inspect for erosion and design any trail relocations that may be needed.

These annual reviews will also be essential to reevaluate the parking situation once the natural area becomes accessible to visitors. At present, I concur with the Ivy Creek Foundation's report that RWSA's current permit parking system be kept in place, to be revisited during the annual reviews. In the long-run, there must be some kind of "parking equity" between fishermen and hikers. As you may be aware, the Comprehensive Plan update calls for reservoir-specific management plans, and this will also be a tool to address parking in the future.

On the topic of the habitat survey, this was a very useful and instructive exercise, and one that I hope the County will make use of for future projects. It has been my empirical experience as Albemarle's Water Resources Manager that we have tools in place to protect wetlands, streams, and reservoirs, backed by a broad-based public understanding of the importance of these areas. However, there are other ecosystems, such as the "uneven-aged poplar-oak woodland" described in the Ivy Creek Foundation report, for which we have little collective understanding. The uplands, particularly those in various types of woodland, are critical to ensuring the long-term integrity of the wetlands, streams, and reservoirs that we are so keen on protecting. In most cases, we do not even have commonly-understood names for these various types of ecosystems (if we cannot name them, we cannot protect them).

Please let me know if you have any comments or questions.

DJH/ctj

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