



## New Trails Improve Safety, Enhance Water Quality in Virginia

About 20 miles south of Washington D.C. in one of the most densely populated counties in the nation, northern Virginia's historic Mason Neck peninsula offers refuge to wildlife and people alike. The 8,000-acre peninsula in southern Fairfax County is the site of George Mason IV's historic estate, Gunston Hall. It also contains 6,000 acres of protected land, 800-acres of which comprise the BLM-managed Meadowood Special Recreation Management Area. Before the BLM took management responsibility for



The original poorly-drained trail on the right is being relocated to the left.

Meadowood, the area was a working farm containing a number of old trails in varying condition. These trails were steep and severely eroding, and had many muddy sections, causing safety and water quality problems. The BLM has been working to improve the trail system to control erosion, protect water quality, improve safety and enhance visitor experiences.

The BLM is using \$300,000 in ARRA funds to support this work. Specifically, the funds are being used to rebuild three miles of existing trails, construct one mile of new trail, rebuild a stream crossing washed out by heavy rains, and construct a new trailhead. BLM hired two experienced term employees to do much of the heavy trail work, while volunteers help with cleanups, native plantings, and other restoration activities where old trails have been removed. The BLM also has awarded contracts for construction materials and equipment rentals; in addition, a contract for the design-build of the washed out stream crossing is underway.

When the project is completed in September 2010, equestrians, walkers, runners, and bicyclists will enjoy a trail system that not only traverses Meadowood's forests and meadows, but also connects Meadowood to the nearby popular 1,000-acre Pohick Bay Regional Park along the Potomac River.



BLM trail builder David Lyster, hired with ARRA funds, on a relocated section of a trail. The old trail, at right, will be removed and landscaped.

