

Status of the
Rustic Roads Program

July 1, 2006 to June 30, 2008

Rustic Roads Advisory Committee, Montgomery County, Maryland

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The Rustic Roads Advisory Committee oversees the Rustic Roads Program. The Committee meets at least six times per year. Meetings are normally held on the fourth Tuesday of the month at 7:00 p.m., in the 9th Floor Conference Room of the Executive Office Building, 101 Monroe Street, Rockville, Maryland.

Meeting times and locations can be confirmed with the Staff Coordinator or on the website below.

Rustic Roads Advisory Committee Members:

James D. Arnoult
Kevin Foster
Robert Goldberg
Cheryl Imperatore
Fred Lechliden
Michael A. Seebold
Eric Spates
Leslie Saville (non-voting member)

Past members:

Todd Butler (until December 2007)
Laura Van Etten (until December 2006)

Staff Coordinator:

Sarah Navid, Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services

For additional copies of this report or for further information, please contact:

Sarah Navid, RRAC Staff Coordinator
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E-mail: sarah.navid@montgomerycountymd.gov

Information about upcoming meetings and the Rustic Roads Functional Master Plan is available online:

www.mcparkandplanning.org/planning/RusticRoads.shtm

Cover photo: Sugarland Road, Poolesville

STATUS OF THE RUSTIC ROADS PROGRAM

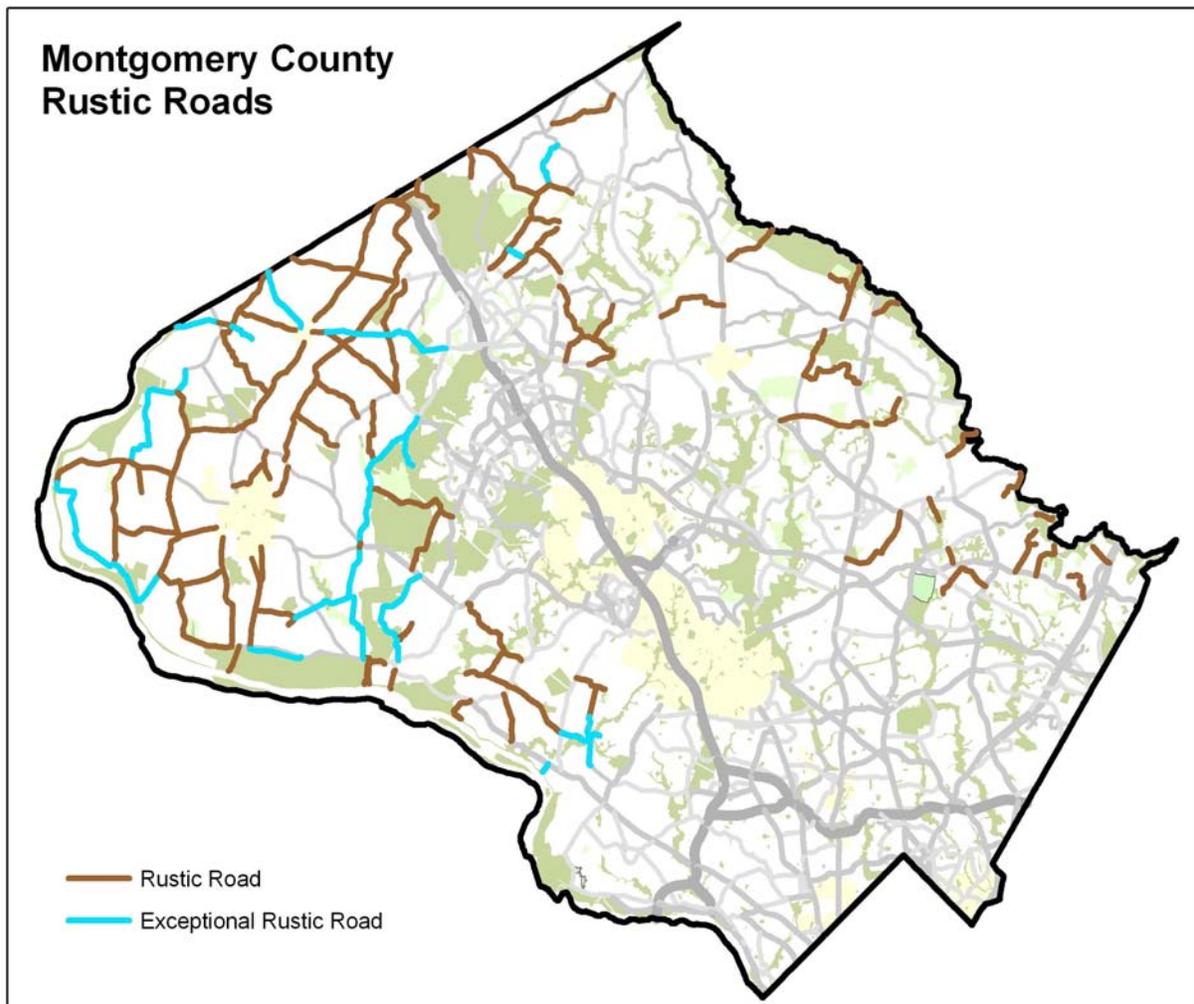
July 1, 2006 to June 30, 2008

Report prepared September 2008

I. INTRODUCTION

In Montgomery County, there are 96 rustic or exceptional rustic roads; these are roads “which exemplify the rural and agricultural landscape of the county.... [and have] special characteristics which contribute significantly to the rural, scenic, or historic features of Montgomery County” (Rustic Roads Functional Master Plan, pp. 3-4). The Rustic Roads Program (Article 8, Chapter 49, Montgomery County Code) establishes the authority for the Rustic Roads Advisory Committee (RRAC) and sets forth duties that the committee must perform. One of those duties is to prepare this report in even numbered years.

Other duties of the RRAC include promoting public awareness of the program, reviewing rustic roadway classification, county regulations or policies which affect rustic roads and advising on the significant features that must be preserved when a rustic road is scheduled for maintenance or improvement.



II ITEMS BEFORE THE RUSTIC ROADS ADVISORY COMMITTEE, 2006-2008

Since the last Status Report, the Rustic Roads Advisory Committee met sixteen times, reviewing the preservation and maintenance of the rustic roads in the program, advising on bridges and proposed developments along the roads, and considering requests for roads to be added to the program. RRAC members and staff have also conducted site visits to review existing conditions, subdivision plans and to begin assessments of roads proposed for inclusion in the rustic roads program.



Martinsburg Road, a politicians road and the only road designated in the Master Plan for Historic Preservation, shows extensive damage and patching.

No roads were added or removed from the program since the last Status Report, but nominations have been received by the Committee and evaluations have been requested on four roads. Following are examples of some of the reviews that have been before the RRAC during the last two years.

Roadway Maintenance and Preservation

Of increasing concern to the committee has been the worsening condition of some rustic roads to the point where routine maintenance is ineffective. In particular, it appears that the condition of the last two remaining concrete “ribbon” roads in the county (**Martinsburg Road** and **Sugarland Road**) has deteriorated beyond available maintenance resources.

Martinsburg Road has a section of original “politicians road” – a narrow concrete pavement now flanked by asphalt and gravel shoulders on either side. In addition to being classified as Exceptional Rustic, this section is also designated as an Historic Road on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation. Over the years, **Martinsburg Road**, as



Sugarland Road, also a politicians road, has been damaged and patched much like Martinsburg Road

well as **Sugarland Road**, another 1930s politicians road, have been extensively patched with asphalt rather than having concrete repairs performed. The gravel shoulders on both roads are constantly eroding and in need of repair. Randy Paugh, an engineer with Montgomery County Department of Transportation (DOT) Division of Highway Maintenance, evaluated and met with the committee to discuss the various options available for reconstruction of these roads, including new methods such as “white topping,” a concrete resurfacing technique.

The RRAC recommended that DOT pursue a Rustic Roads Rehabilitation CIP in the FY 09 budget to provide for restoration of the concrete pavement. Unfortunately, due to budgetary constraints, this project did not go forward. The Committee is hopeful that in future years as the economic situation improves, this project will be re-considered.

Deferred tree maintenance along rustic roads has been an ongoing concern with the RRAC. The County Council provided extra funding in FY 07 for emergency tree pruning and tree and stump removal, which the committee strongly supported. The Montgomery County Farmers Club provided a list of rustic roads needing pruning, which the committee endorsed. The RRAC continues to support tree maintenance along the rustic roads; a draft set of guidelines for foliage pruning and maintenance has been discussed by the committee.



This section of River Road is designated as an exceptional rustic road; the unpaved surface is a significant feature of the road.

In September 2007, the RRAC met with residents who live and work along the Exceptional Rustic, gravel section of **River Road** between White Ferry Road and Elmer School Road. The unpaved surface of the road, one of the last remaining sections in the County, is specifically designated as a significant feature of the road. The residents had written to the committee and DOT requesting improvements such as a tar and chip surface treatment to alleviate problems with dust, uneven road surface, and sometimes impassable conditions due to mud and poor drainage. The residents discussed how the road conditions impacted negatively on their health, safety and running their

farm business. Randy Paugh, representing DOT – Highway Maintenance, also attended the meeting and answered questions regarding gravel road construction.

Subsequent to the meeting, the RRAC requested that DOT – Highway Maintenance initiate a study to determine what actions or improvements are appropriate and consistent with the Rustic Roads program, environmental factors and traffic characteristics. A new gravel road treatment is being tested on one road in Frederick County, which may be appropriate for **River Road**; the RRAC has requested information about the process and results of the treatment.

Coordination with Department of Transportation - Bridges

Staff from the Division of Transportation Engineering met with the Committee to advise them of design modifications to two bridges undergoing or about to undergo replacement: **Mouth of Monocacy Road** bridge, where a galvanized truss replaced the originally planned weathering steel, and **White Ground Road** bridge where a realignment of the south approach to provide a longer tangent section will provide better sight distance for large vehicles such as school buses and fire trucks. DOT also advised the Committee that they will be initiating a facility planning study to evaluate citizen requests to realign (raise) **Berryville Road** in the vicinity of Seneca Creek where roadway flooding occurs.



The new bridge on Mouth of Monocacy Road

Coordination with the M-NCPPC
Department of Parks

Planners from the M-NCPPC presented the Little Bennett Regional Park Master Plan to the RRAC. The Master Plan recommends closing two rustic roads within the park—**Hyattstown Mill Road** and **Prescott Road**—to vehicular traffic and placing all parking on the periphery of the park. Given the continued unique driving experience of the roads and the ongoing need to have park vehicles use them, the RRAC did not support their closure or removal from the rustic roads program. However, the Committee was open to special event or after park hour closures.



Prescott and Hyattstown Mill Roads, in Little Bennett Regional Park, provide a unique driving experience.

As recommended in the Rustic Roads Functional Master Plan, **Hoyles Mill Road** has been closed on both sides of



Little Seneca Stream within the Hoyles Mill Conservation Park. The M-NCPPC Park Development Division provided information to the Committee on a project for the construction of a pedestrian and emergency access bridge over the creek which would include stream restoration. As part of the project, the existing roadway ford across Little Seneca Creek will be removed. The Committee supports providing interpretive signs describing the old ford and documentation of it prior to construction.

On Hoyles Mill Road in Hoyles Mill Conservation Park, a pedestrian bridge will cross Seneca Creek. The RRAC supports interpretive signage describing the old ford.

Master Plan Re-Classifications and Updates

As a result of proposed development on **Allnutt Lane** off of Westerly Road in Poolesville and on **Bentley Road** in Sandy Spring across from the Sandy Spring Museum, the RRAC received nominations from residents to have those roads designated as rustic. The residents seek to protect the roads from widening or other modifications such as sidewalks and streetlights that would change the rural character of the roads, and which are otherwise required during subdivision. The Committee's preliminary investigation indicates that these roads appear to



Allnutt Lane residents submitted a petition to have their road included in the Rustic Roads Program.

meet the criteria for designation as rustic. Additionally, two other roads had come to the attention of the Committee that might also meet the criteria – **Mt. Carmel Cemetery Road** and **Game Preserve Road**. The RRAC requested that the M-NCPPC evaluate all of these roads for possible rustic or exceptional rustic designation and add them to the program by master plan amendment, if applicable.

As part of that request, the Committee re-iterated an earlier request to have official descriptions and significant features identified for the rustic roads designated in the 2002 Potomac

Subregion Master Plan, and requested descriptions for the roads in that master plan and any other roads that are not fully documented. Together with the tree maintenance guidelines that have been drafted, the RRAC would like to develop a set of design guidelines for use when maintaining or making safety improvements to the roads, and for use in reviewing proposed developments along the roads. And last, if any road description changes are found, the Committee requested minor updates to the Rustic Roads Functional Master Plan.



Mt Carmel Cemetery Road appears to meet the requirements for a rustic or exceptional rustic road designation.

Public Awareness

The most significant effort towards public awareness of the program since the last reporting period has been the creation of a web page for the Rustic Roads Program under the Planning Department's website. This page was created and is managed by Leslie Saville, Committee member designated by the Planning Board Director, and can be viewed at <http://mcparkandplanning.org/planning/RusticRoads.shtm>. Information on the program, upcoming committee meetings, committee members, contact information and links to the applicable master plans, previous biennial reports and a map of the rustic roads is provided.

Development Review

The Committee reviewed and forwarded comments on the following subdivisions or other developments:

- Brightwell Crossing (Town of Poolesville) – Jerusalem Road
- Justement Woods – Glen Mill Road
- Burton Woods – Davis Mill Road
- Zelkova LLC Special Exception for Landscaping Contractor – Wasche Road



The RRAC received a nomination to add Bentley Road to the Rustic Roads Program



West Old Baltimore Road (Hilltop Farm proposal, left)

- Windolph Property – White Ground Road at Darnestown Road
- Hilltop Farm – Slidell Road, West Old Baltimore Road

III. COMMITTEE ACTIVITY AND COMPOSITION

Meetings:

Since the last report on July 1, 2006, the Rustic Roads Advisory Committee held meetings on the following dates:

September 14, 2006	March 8, 2007	November 18, 2007	March 4, 2008
November 9, 2006	May 10, 2007	December 11, 2007	April 1, 2008
December 18, 2006	June 14, 2007	January 15, 2008	May 27, 2008
January 11, 2007	September 13, 2007	February 19, 2008	June 24, 2008

Members:

The current members of the Rustic Roads Advisory Committee are as follows:

- James D. Arnoult
 - second term until December 2009
 - member with knowledge of roadway engineering
- Kevin Foster
 - second term until December 2010
 - owner-operator of commercial farmland
- Robert Goldberg
 - first term until December 2009

- representative of civic associations in the Agricultural Reserve
- Cheryl Imperatore
 - second term until December 2008
 - representative of civic associations outside the Agricultural Reserve
- Fred Lechliden
 - first term until December 2008
 - owner-operator of commercial farmland
- Michael A. Seebold
 - first term until December 2008
 - representative with knowledge of rural preservation techniques
- Eric Spates
 - first term until December 2010
 - owner-operator of commercial farmland and representative to the Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC)
- Leslie Saville
 - M-NCPPC designated member, non-voting



This section of Hoyles Mill Road is closed to traffic, and forms part of the trail network. The RRAC and their staff coordinator were invited to join Department of Parks staff to inspect the ford.

Staff Coordinator - Sarah Navid, Department of Permitting Services

The Committee wishes to recognize the dedicated service of members who left the RRAC since the last report:

- Todd Butler, farmer and AAC representative, and
- Laura Van Etten, representing Civic Associations within the Agricultural Reserve representative.

IV. STATUS OF PROGRAM

The Rustic Roads Program continues to be an important tool in retaining the agricultural, rural and historic character of parts of Montgomery County. The RRAC is looking forward to adding roads to the program that will enhance the program and the County, and developing road descriptions and guidelines that will provide predictability for the local residents and developers. Ongoing development in the Agricultural Reserve and in other areas where rustic roads are located, together with continued deferred maintenance, will be a continuing challenge for this program.

