



# Howard County Government News Release

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## Howard County Executive Calvin Ball Opens New Accessible Trail at Haviland Mill Park in Clarksville

*Quarter-mile Loop Provides Universal Pathway for Visitors to View Patuxent River from Observation Platform*

ELLICOTT CITY, MD – Howard County Executive Calvin Ball, Maryland State Senator Guy Guzzone, and Recreation and Parks Director A. Raul Delerme announced the completion of a 1,250-foot universal access pathway at Haviland Mill Park that allows visitors to view the Patuxent River from an observation deck. Pictures from the event can be found [here](#). Video can be found [here](#).

“We continue to make historic investments for our parks to be more functional and accessible to all,” said Ball. “This pathway, with its boardwalk, bridges, natural surfaces, and dry stack stone walls creates a fully accessible trail loop that will allow visitors of all abilities to better enjoy our treasured wetlands. Today, we celebrate the completion of a project that will be an amenity for residents and visitors of all ages and abilities.”

The proposal was first discussed in 2013 after Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing, Inc. at Fort Meade contacted the county about creating an accessible spot to view the river. Construction of the pathway, which finally began in June 2021, includes the addition of a beautiful boardwalk, bridges, natural surface pathway, and dry stack stone walls to create the trail loop at the previously undeveloped park facility. Several factors presented challenges, including the property being in a sensitive wetland and floodplain area. Most of the land remains preserved as open space.

“Visitors to this new trail will enjoy the careful considerations that went into developing this wonderful pathway,” Delerme said. “Every inch of this trail was created with purpose and with the idea of allowing residents to enjoy these preserved wetlands in a safe and equitable way.”

The wood surface and railings of the bridges and boardwalk are constructed from durable, native Black Locust lumber, minimizing the need for chemical wood preservatives. The stone

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walls are constructed from local rock quarried in Howard County as well as granite salvaged from the Safe and Sound project at Routes 40 and 29 in Ellicott City.

Haviland Mill Park is located at 6971 Haviland Mill Road in Clarksville. The mostly undeveloped property sits on 91 acres (with more than 38 acres of the land purchased in 2009 and 2012 using Program Open Space funding).

“It is exciting to have a partner in County Executive Ball for getting projects done in Howard County,” said Maryland State Senator Guy Guzzone. “The Howard County Delegation believes in the Department of Recreation & Parks and is thrilled to do our part in bringing resources to enhance every space across the county. During the pandemic we realized how critical local parks are to our entire wellbeing, so it is a pleasure to ensure spaces like Haviland Mill Park are accessible in Howard County.”

“When you go out on that boardwalk, and you get down to the corner,” stated Larry Knutson, President of Penn Trails and the construction manager for the Haviland Mill project, “and see the hemlocks that are in that ravine – hemlocks this far south – and you see and hear the river and the birds, you can imagine that no matter what a person’s human condition might be, there is something here for everybody.”

“This new, accessible trail helps people connect with nature,” stated Jay Sheppard, Chair of the Patuxent River committee of the local Trout Unlimited chapter. “When people are in the woods, enjoying its sounds and beauty, they gain a stronger understanding of the need to conserve and protect our natural surroundings.”

Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing, Inc. is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the physical and emotional rehabilitation of disabled active military service personnel and veterans through fly fishing and fly-tying education and outings.

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