

Columbia, Maryland - Centennial Park

The planned community of Columbia, Maryland, is situated in-between Washington and Baltimore off Route 29. Affluent and stable in the 1990's, Columbia was started in the 1960's as a place that would be better than the suburban sprawl found elsewhere in the region. An abundance of green public space leads to conjecture about which comes first: do active outdoors people move to cities like Columbia because of the opportunities or do the opportunities to get outside guide to people enjoy the outdoors? With city advertisements boasting over 80 miles of paths, numerous tennis, golf, and athletic clubs, the citizenry of Columbia does produce more than its per-capita share of excellent athletes. The approximately 90,000 person city is a powerhouse of triathletes, cyclists and runners. The city is often compared with Reston, Virginia; another planned community. Both have many similar features.

Columbia was built with a "Village" concept. The villages contain schools, shopping, community and recreation centers thus reducing the need to go far away for many of the daily needs of life. Indeed, The Mall in Columbia, Howard Community College and the nearby Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory are evidence of these. The Rouse Company, the primary builder of Columbia, cites many of these reasons for living in Columbia. Currently 9 geographic areas are referred to "Village of " x, y or z. The paved trails, suitable for walking or light cycling, connect most of the villages via tunnels or bridges under or over the major roadways. Most of the trails in Columbia are privately owned however Howard County ordinance does grant public access.

Centennial Lake is a fully public place and a good place to get started when exploring Columbia. The popular destination can be mobbed even on a summery weekday evening by after-work crowds of walkers, runners and kids on bicycles. The lake is one of the newest, but largest in Columbia. Instead of just a simple trail encircling it, a network of trails cover the grounds. Picnic pavilions, ball courts, fields, and boating opportunities are some of the park facilities.

Getting There

From the Capital Beltway (I-495), take I-95 north. After approximately 14 miles from the beltway, take Little Patuxent Pkwy. Rte. 175 west. After approximately 4.5 miles, take Columbia Pike, Rte. 29, north for a mile to Clarksville Pike, Rte 108. Head west on Rte. 108. After a little over half a mile, turn right onto Woodland Rd at the bottom of the hill. Turn left almost immediately and proceed into the park driving to the end of the road at pavilion H parking.

Area Routes

Centennial Lake (3.05 or 4.15 miles, II or III)

There are many places to start a loop around Centennial Lake. This one is one of the less crowded ones and starts below the dam. Once you've climbed to the level of the dam, the basic loop 2.55 mile loop around is less than level but not difficult. Drinking water is available in some places. The busiest areas near paddle boat rentals, the amphitheater and picnic areas are on the south side; nearest Clarksville Pike and Columbia's town center. On the north side, an option to extend with a lollipop route through the park is more hilly.

Wilde Lake (5.6 or 5.95 miles, V)

The Village of Wilde Lake is one mixed with single family homes on large lots, as well as townhouses. To get there, follow along Centennial Lake to the paddle boat rental road. Follow the road up and right, around the parking lot to pick-up a trail on the far left at the end of the lot. This descends a little then climbs back to Clarksville Pike. Cross Clarksville Pike and pass through the quiet neighborhoods more on roads. Eventually, use the partially wooded, partially open, Bryant Woods/Faulkner Ridge trail system. The paved trail follows along a creek that feeds into Wilde Lake. One very short steep hill is encountered just before reaching the lake. Wilde Lake can be circumnavigated, however doing so requires you to leave the shores part of the way around. On the south side, houses are often close to the water and you must use street sidewalks to go around them. The trail loop around Wilde Lake alone is 1.86 miles. Climb out of the village and lake on sidewalks to Clarksville Pike again, then take Centennial Lake trails back to pavilion H.

Nearby and Connecting Zones

Columbia Maryland, Village of Owen Brown
BWI Airport Trail - Thomas A. Dixon Jr. Aircraft Observation Area

What to do Afterward

Food and Drink

That's Amore Restaurant (410) 772-5900
Sushi Sono - Sushi Sono - (410) 997-6131
The Tomato Palace - (410) 715-0211

Entertainment and Edification

Merriweather Post Pavilion - concerts - 301 982-1800
African Art Museum of Maryland - 410 730-7105

Centennial Lake

Distance: 3.05 or 4.15 miles

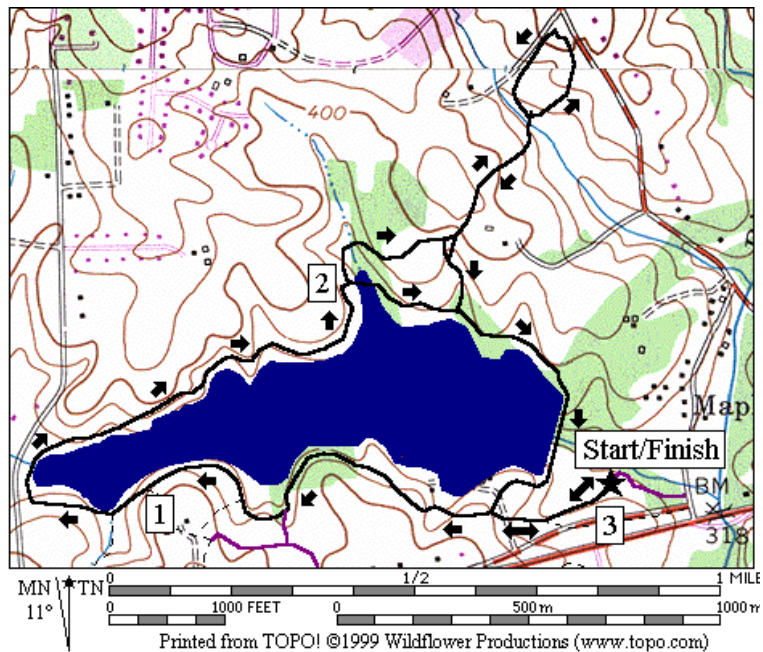
Rating: II or III; paved lakeside trails with some hills-unpaved parts on the extension

3.05 Mile Route

		1.1 trail X on L toward Clarksville Pke
		1.25 end concrete bridge over creek
L	0.0	pass the pavilion and playground leaving from the parking lot
		<*
		BR 2.15 trail X on L from Old Annapolis Rd
		>*
BR	0.1	trail X on L merges
	0.25	trail X on R from dam; lake loop
	0.55	boat ramp launch
		L 2.8 at triangle X
R	0.75	after paddle boat rental and Rd X
	1.0	trail from hill merges on L
		BL 2.9 trail X on L to pavilion H
		3.05 pavilion H parking

*4.15 Mile Route

- L 2.0 unpaved trail X on L before wooden bridge over lake finger
- BR 2.05 after wooden bridge at benches & pond
- 2.15 gate for maintenance area
- 2.2 gate and paved trail X on R
- 2.25 trail on R merges
- CR 2.5 at parking
- L 2.7 at trail X triangle
- 2.85 basketball court on L
- R 2.9 trail X on R at parking completes loop
- BL 3.1 trail splits
- L 3.2 lake loop at triangle
- L 3.3 trail X triangle at lake loop (pickup cues at mile 2.4 on 3.05 mile route)



Wilde Lake

Distance: 5.6 or 5.95 miles

Rating: V; paved trails, residential roads and sidewalks; some hills

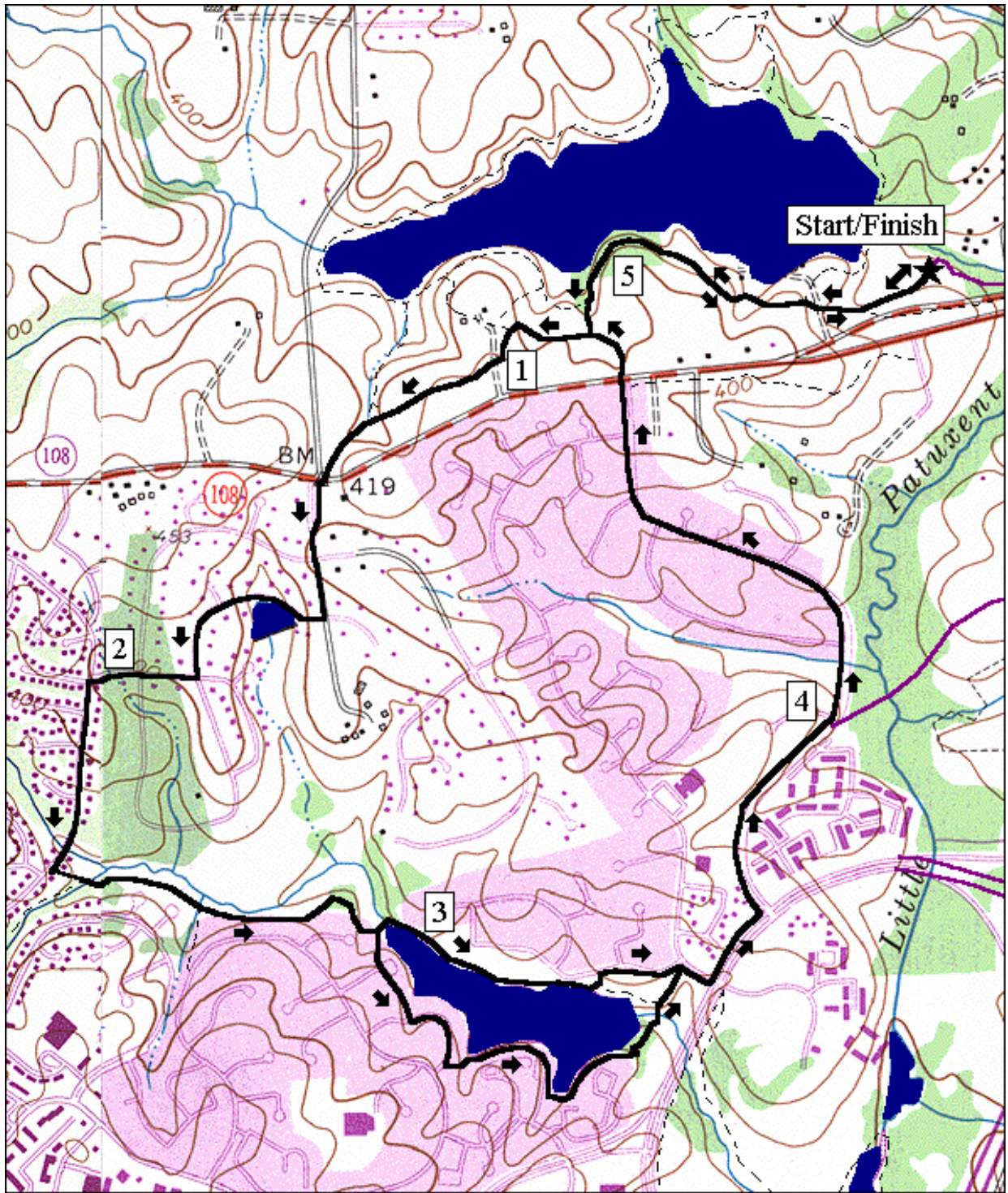
5.6 Mile Route

- keep to L following the creek
- <*
- L 0.0 pass the pavilion and playground leaving from the parking lot
- BR 0.1 trail X on L merges
0.25 trail X on R from dam; lake loop
- S 0.75 leave lake trail after paddle boat rental & trail X on R; trail goes beside road trail then bears R to end of the parking lot (water)
- BL 0.95 follow trail to L past the parking lot
- BL 1.3 trail X triangle
- S 1.35 cross Clarksville Pike onto Beaverbrook Rd
- R 1.6 Lake Circle W (pond on L after turn)
- CR 1.85 Castle Moore Dr
- L 2.05 Hesperus Dr
- L 2.35 trail head on L (unmarked, paved) before Iron Pen Place on R; Bryant Woods Faulkner Ridge trail system;
- L 2.9 trail X, L to bridge; Wilde Lake, map
- L/R 3.3 at dock/boathouse leave lake through parking; turn R on Hyla Brook Rd
- R 3.45 onto W Runningbrook Rd; trail X on R to Wild Lake
- >*
- L 3.5 Little Patuxent Pkwy
- L 3.65 Columbia Rd
- BL 4.0 sidewalk on L just before Ten Mills Rd; follow Ten Mills Rd
4.7 cross Clarksville Pike into park
- R 4.8 Rd X on R in Centennial Park
- L 4.85 Rd X on L to paddle boat rental
- R 4.9 trail X on R near paddle boat rental is lake loop (water)
5.35 trail X on L to dam
- BL 5.5 trail X on L to pavilion H parking
5.6 pavilion H parking

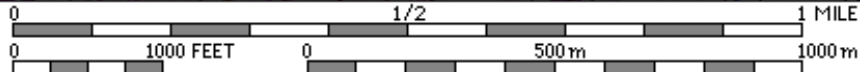
*5.95 Mile Route

- L 3.25 at T; follow shoreline over wood chip trail & through trellis
3.65 dam on L; steep winding hill (!)
- R 2.9 trail X at map & lake; L is bridge
- L 2.95 at trail X to stay on lake loop
3.0 Rivulet Row
- S 3.7 trail X triangle on L for lake loop
- L 3.1 Waterfowl Terr
- R onto W. Runningbrook Rd (pickup cues at mile 3.5 on 5.6 mile route)
- L 3.2 trail X on L before Green Mtn Cir

Wilde Lake



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