

Bluemont Junction Park

Competition takes many forms, shaping our surroundings and ourselves. Not only do runners compete in races but transportation routes compete for travelers and dollars. It can happen over many years or more quickly. For instance, railroads quickly replaced canals and waterways as the primary routes of commerce in the 1800's. George Washington's dream of the C&O Canal required decades of toil to complete but proved not to be needed soon after it was finished. The Baltimore & Ohio Railroad proved to be cheaper and faster. Furthermore, the railroad redirected the trade of Virginia's farm goods to ports at Baltimore instead of Alexandria. Wanting to take advantage of the technology and to continue to compete, the Washington & Old Dominion Railroad (W&OD) was built from 1847–1874. It traversed from Alexandria to the edge of the Blue Ridge Mountains in Purcellville. Being only modestly successful in the wake of other railroads, and then the highway system, W&OD passenger service was stopped in 1951, and in 1968, the railroad was abandoned altogether.

Just as the obsolete C&O Canal came to be a valued recreation route, the W&OD railroad grade and right-of-way was converted into a recreational trail. The paved trail starts in Shirlington and goes 44.64 miles to Purcellville (note that the trail is posted to be over 45 miles but was shortened by the bridge over Rte. 7 and other minor modifications over the years), passing through city, suburb, city, and farm fields; back and forth all the way to Purcellville. It remains the safest way to get out of Washington D.C. when on foot or bike headed west. It's very popular with all sorts of people. Runners, cyclists, in-line skaters, walkers, and horse back riders use it. The paved trail is paralleled most of the way (except in Arlington) by a bluestone surfaced bridal path.

In Arlington, the W&OD trail is mostly used by runners, walkers, and recreational and commuter cyclists. It's a fairly safe, green ribbon cutting through the suburbs. Bicycling police regularly patrol it. Colored numbered posts line the trail in Arlington so that police can identify segments and respond quickly. At the police substation in a caboose near the Bluemont Junction, a detailed Arlington Trail map is available. The Four Mile Run Trail parallels and sometimes shares the W&OD Trail from Shirlington to East Falls Church. Walkers tend to prefer it over the W&OD Trail. Bluemont Junction is the location of a W&OD railroad spur intersection that went to Ballston. The spur has also recently been converted into a paved recreational trail. Various running clubs meet at Bluemont Junction Park to take advantage of these trails and others. Ballfields, tennis courts, water, restrooms, cooking grills and other items are located in the park.

Getting There

From Northern Fairfax County, VA or Montgomery County, MD

Exit the Capital Beltway onto Rte. I-66, headed east. If you're coming from Montgomery County or the northernmost parts of Fairfax County, you will have to use the Washington and Dulles Access Expressway for 2.7 miles to get onto Rte. I-66; it's a left exit off the beltway. After 6.1 or 4 miles on Rte. I-66 respectively, exit onto Fairfax Dr. Turn right soon after the exit ramp onto North Glebe Rd. Turn right at the next traffic light onto Wilson Blvd. After 1.1 miles at the bottom of the hill, turn left on Manchester St. Turn left again into the park and park your vehicle. Start from the 4-way trail intersection near Wilson Boulevard.

From Southern Fairfax County, VA

Exit the Capitol Beltway, I-95, northbound onto Henry G. Shirley Highway (I-395). After approximately 6.4 miles, exit onto S. Glebe Rd., headed north toward Ballston. Follow S. Glebe Rd. approximately 3 miles and turn left on Wilson Blvd. After 1.1 miles at the bottom of the hill, turn left on Manchester St. Turn left again into the park and park your vehicle. Start from the 4-way trail intersection near Wilson Boulevard.

From Prince Georges County, MD

Use the Capital Beltway (I-95), to get to Rte. 50 west or I-295 north. From either, take the westbound Southeast Freeway (I-395) after 11 miles or approximately 6 miles respectively. Follow the Southeast Freeway across the river into Virginia. Do not use the express lanes. Approximately 3 miles after crossing the river, exit northbound onto S. Glebe Rd. Follow S. Glebe Rd. approximately 3 miles and turn left on Wilson Blvd. After 1.1 miles at the bottom of the hill, turn left on Manchester St. Turn left again into the park and park your vehicle. Start from the 4-way trail intersection near Wilson Boulevard.

Area Routes

Four Mile Run South (7.75, 3.85 or 6.55 miles, VII, III, or V)

Four Mile Run is not four miles long. The stream bearing the name has headwaters in Falls Church. By trail, it's over seven miles long from its mouth on the Potomac River, near National Airport to Falls Church. The Four Mile Run Trail parallels the stream, and for part of the way also parallels the W&OD Trail. As a trail, the Four Mile Run Trail is older, more hilly and more often closer to the stream than the W&OD Trail is. Both are paved and for short segments, share the same stretch of trail. This route goes out on the Four Mile run trail, downhill to Shirlington, then returns on the more graded W&OD Trail. Most the way out is shady and pretty. There are natural rocky stream beds as well as a few man made pools to see. The waters are stocked with trout in the spring for young fishers. The turnaround for the route, at the beginning of the W&OD Trail, is at first not as pleasant as the Four Mile Run Trail. The trail there is in a sunny industrial corridor, and the nearby housing is a little disheveled in appearance. It gets much better soon however. You don't have to go as far as the beginning of the W&OD Trail to turn around since there are two earlier turnaround options listed. The return on the W&OD Trail after crossing back across Columbia Pike, is where it gets much more pleasant. In one area, the rocky Four Mile Run is visible below on the left side of the trail, while a wetland area with Red Winged Blackbirds in it is on the right. Some mile markers are slightly off on the Four Mile Run Trail however they are accurate on this part of the W&OD Trail.

Bluemont Bypass (2.7 or 2.5 miles, II)

The Bluemont Bypass Trail, on an old railroad spur, is "J" shaped. It curves as it climbs away from the W&OD Trail on an easy grade toward Ballston. On either side of the trail are quiet residential streets. There are a few road crossings. An option of the route avoids part of the worst of these, at a traffic light on George Mason Dr.; in order to shorten the route. Going on further up the trail, another intersection and traffic light at Fairfax Dr. will also likely slow you down. The end of the Bluemont Bypass Trail intersects the Custis Trail. The Custis Trail can be followed to the right, 3.3 miles to Rosslyn, or left as on this route, 1.05 miles to the W&OD

Trail. On the route, the Custis Trail closely parallels Interstate 66. It is more pleasant than it may sound however. Protective sound barriers and trees make it comfortable. The return is on the W&OD Trail with a gradual downhill grade.

Lubber Run from Bluemont Junction (3.0 miles, II)

One of the tributary streams of Four Mile Run is Lubber Run. Somewhat hidden away, you must descent into the little wooded park regardless of which end you approach it from. The stream tunnels under Arlington Blvd., Rte. 50, before joining Four Mile Run. Water and restrooms are available in Lubber Run Park also. The route leaves the W&OD Trail near Arlington Blvd. then makes a counterclockwise loop through Lubber Run Park. Return on the easy downhill grade, to Bluemont Junction on the Bluemont Bypass Trail.

Four Mile Run North (4.05 or 2.4 miles, III or II)

As you head north from Bluemont Junction, the W&OD Trail and the Four Mile Run Trail share the same path. Not far past Wilson Blvd. the Four Mile Run Trail separates again. For this elongated figure eight route, continue straight on the W&OD, past the garden on the right in Bon Air Park, and past the intersection of the Custis Trail, also on the right. Ahead, the W&OD trail gradually climbs a long straight and often sunny stretch along Rte. I-66. Sound barriers hide the highway. Before the end of this stretch, the Four Mile Run Trail, also known as the John Marshall Trail joins back with the W&OD Trail. As you near Falls Church the trails leave I-66 and split again. As you pass a soccer field, you must turn right and cross the stream to stay with W&OD Trail. Instead go straight on the Four Mile Run Trail, also known as the City of Falls Church Trail at this point. Doing so avoids a steeper climb on the W&OD Trail. At the end of the City of Falls Church/Four Mile Run Trail, a segment on residential streets returns you to the W&OD Trail and is the turn around point. Turning right, the W&OD is along I-66 for a short stretch, then is on the road as it goes downhill past the East Falls Church metro station. The trail begins at the end of the road and joins the Four Mile Run Trail again to complete the top of the figure eight loop. Heading back down, the trail nears I-66 again. Turn right at the sign for the John Marshall/Four Mile Run Trail. Because it's shadier, further from the highway, nearer to the creek, and because it has curves to it, it's a little nicer than the W&OD Trail which is just parallel to it. When the trail appears to end, you must cross Ohio Dr. and run on Four Mile Run Dr. for a little way. The trail continues at the end of that and eventually joins the W&OD Trail again, before Wilson Blvd.

Nearby and Connecting Zones

Thomas Jefferson Community Center
Iwo Jima Memorial
Aurora Hills
Idylwood Park

What to do Afterward

Food and Drink

Lebanese Taverna - 703 241-8681

Uptown Bakery - 703 527-6262

Halteh's Pizza - 703 979-1109

International House of Pancakes - in Ballston

Entertainment and Edification

Bon Air Park garden - off the W&OD

Long Branch Nature Center - 703 228-6535

Arlington Arts Center - 703 524-1494

Four Mile Run South

Distance: 7.75, 3.85 or 6.55 miles

Rating: VII, III, V; mostly shady, paved, stream valley and railroad grade trails

7.75 Mile Route

			Trail); merge trails
		2.9	Mile Marker 4.5 (outhouse)
R	0.0	from the parking lot go southeast on the W&OD Trail	L 3.35 at T; Walter Reed Dr
	0.2	wooden bridge on L to Bluemont Junction Trail (water)	<***
			R 3.4 at TL for Arlington Mill Dr
			3.9 Randolph Rd on R; Mile Marker 5.5
R	0.4	at parking to stay on W&OD Trail	
	0.65	underpass Carlin Springs Rd	L 4.1 Shirlington Rd; use sidewalk
S	0.75	W&OD Trail goes L	CL 4.15 at Four Mile Run Dr onto the W&OD Trail; start of W&OD Trail
BR	0.85	merge w/W&OD Trail	4.7 Walter Reed Dr
	0.9	trail X on L; underpass Rte 50	>***
			5.3 George Mason Dr South
R	0.95	Four Mile Run Trail past the Rte 50 underpass; uphill	5.75 Columbia Pike
	1.05	trail X on R to 2 nd St & Jefferson St	5.9 trail X on L to Four Mile Run Trail; on R to 9 th St
			>*
BR	1.3	at X w/W&OD Trail; down to the parking lot & the creek	6.05 trail X on R to 7 th St
			6.8 trail X on L; Four Mile Run Trail
			6.85 Rte 50 underpass; trail X on R
			6.85 Four Mile Run Trail on L
			BR 7.0 merge w/Four Mile Run Trail
			7.05 underpass Carlyn Springs Rd
			CR 6.9 at parking, to stay on W&OD Trail (water, restrooms & phone)
BR	2.15	after underpass of Columbia Pike	7.55 wooden bridge on R to Bluemont Junction Trail (water)
	2.5	Mile Mark 4 before bridge	7.75 4-way X; Bluemont Junction Trail merges on R; parking on L
L	2.55	George Mason Dr South (bridge)	
L	2.6	Four Mile Run trail head (marked Barcroft	

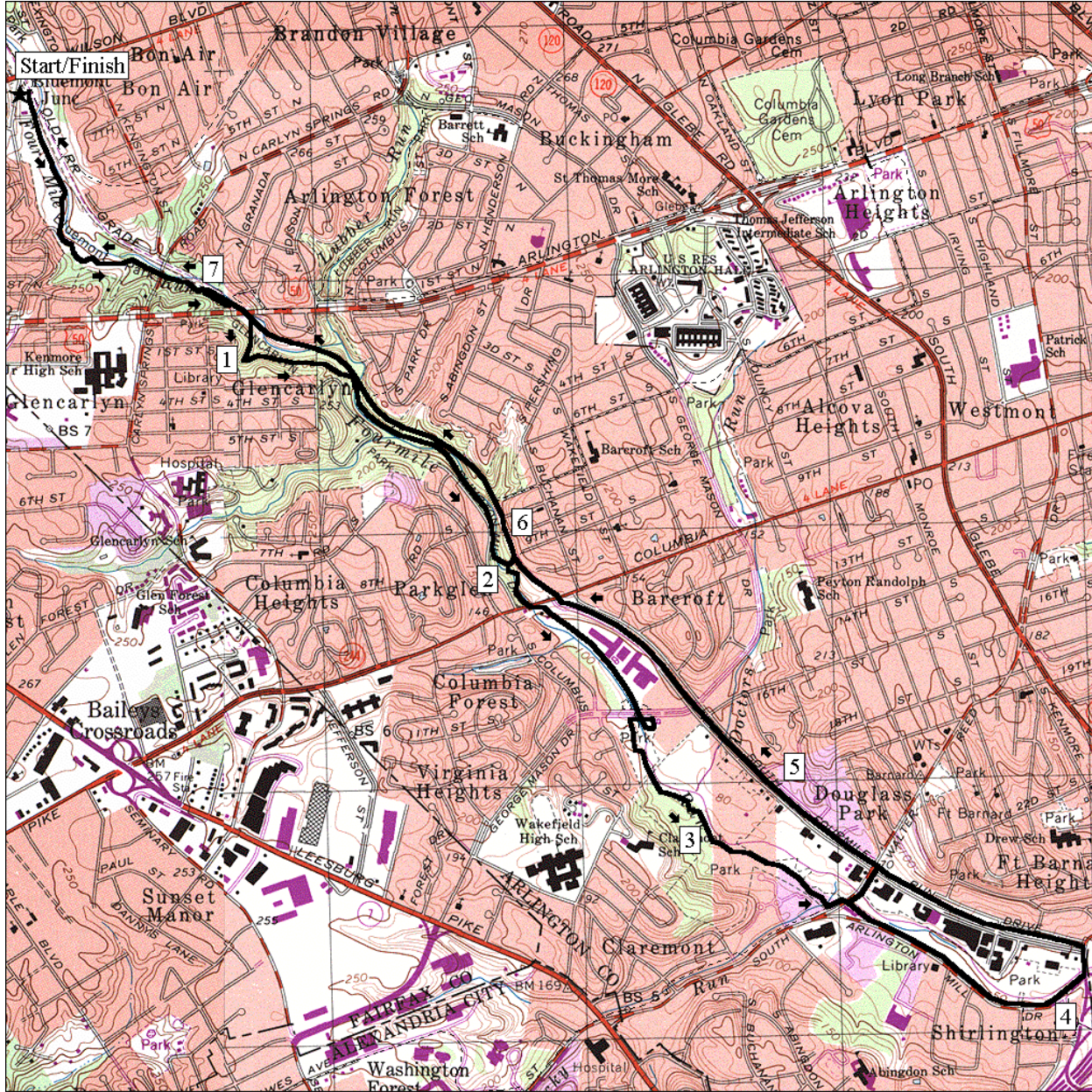
*3.85 Mile Route

		L 2.0	W&OD Trail; S is to 9 th St (pickup cues at mile 6.05 on 7.75 mile route)
L	2.0	trail X on L to W&OD Trail (unmarked)	

**6.55 Mile Route

XS	3.4	at TL for Arlington Mill Dr	
CL	3.5	Four Mile Run Dr onto the W&OD Trail; (pickup cues at mile 5.3 on 7.75 mile route)	

Four Mile Run South



MN TN
10 1/2°

0 1/2 1 MILE
0 1000 FEET 0 500m 1000m

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Bluemont Bypass

Distance: 2.7 or 2.5 miles

Rating: II; paved railroad grade and roadside trails; some sidewalks and road intersections

2.7 Mile Route

- 0.0 from the 4-way trail X near Wilson Blvd; Bluemont Junction Trail; toward the caboose
 - 0.1 caboose on L (police substation)
 - 0.2 wooden bridge on R to W&OD Trail (water)
 - <*
 - CL 0.8 George Mason Dr

 - R 0.85 Bluemont Bypass Trail continues on R

 - R 0.95 Fairfax Dr

 - UL 1.05 cross Fairfax Dr at Wakefield Dr TL
 - 1.1 trail X on R to Washington Blvd; cross over I-66

 - L 1.25 Custis Trail at T
 - 1.35 underpass George Mason Dr
 - 1.4 trail X on R toward George Mason Dr
 - >*
 - 2.0 underpass pedestrian footbridge over I-66

 - R 2.15 at T after passing under I-66

 - L 2.3 W&OD Trail
 - 2.4 trail X on R; Four Mile Run Trail
 - 2.7 underpass Wilson Blvd
 - 2.7 4-way trail X; Bluemont Bypass Trail & W&OD Trail
-

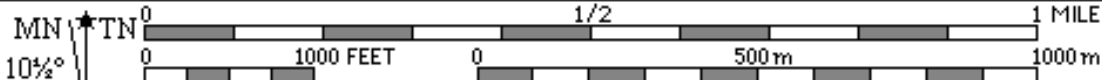
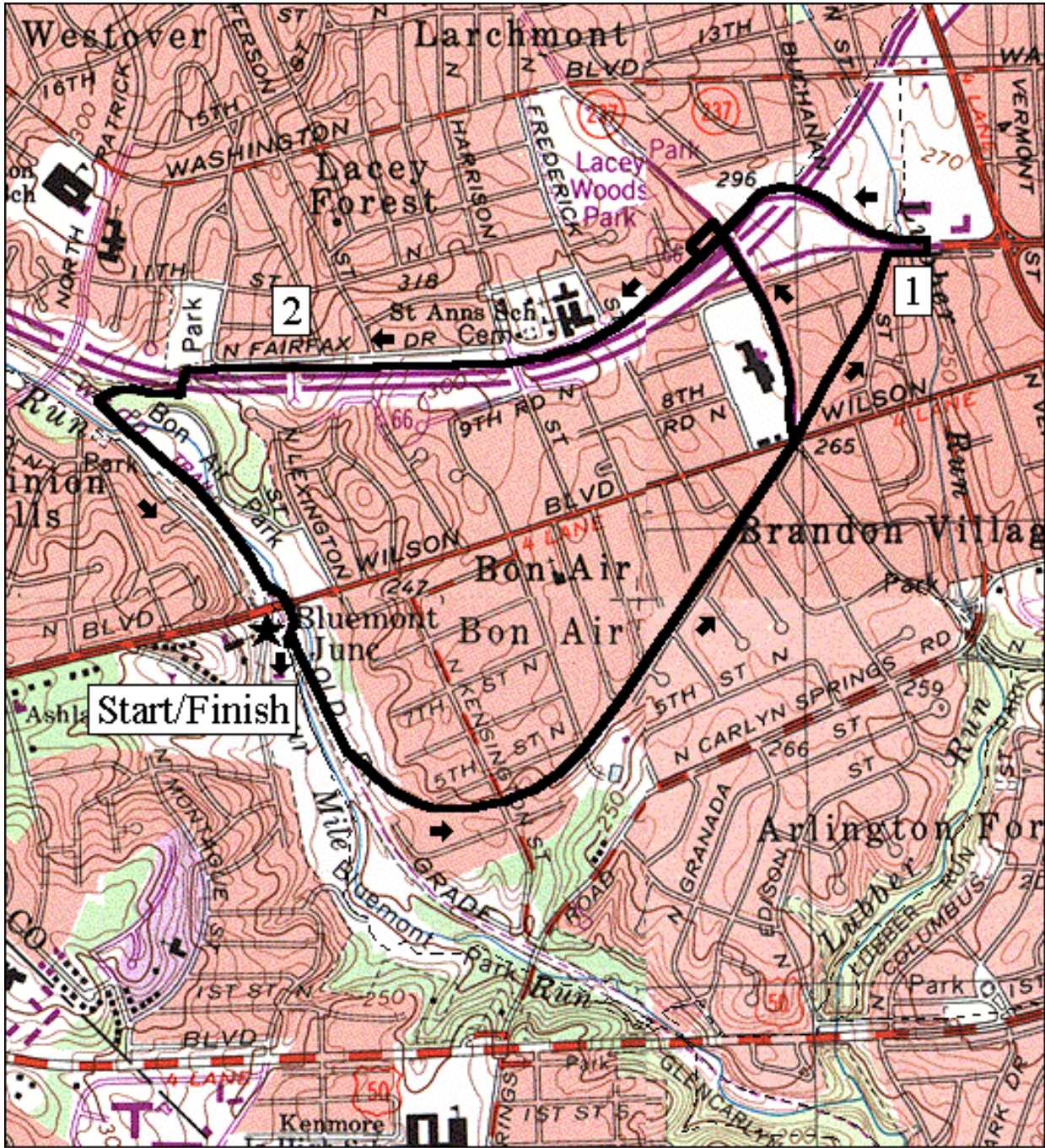
***2.5 Mile Route**

- L 0.8 George Mason Dr

- L 1.1 10th St; after I-66 overpass

- L/R 1.15 spur trail on L to Custis Trail; R on Custis Trail (pickup cues at mile 2.0 on 2.7 mile route)

Bluemont Bypass



Lubber Run From Bluemont Junction

Distance: 3.0 miles

Rating: II; paved stream valley and railroad grade trails; some sidewalks

- R 0.0 from the 4-way trail X go southeast on the W&OD Trail
- 0.2 wooden bridge on L to Bluemont Junction Trail (water on R)

- R 0.4 at parking lot to stay on W&OD
- 0.65 underpass Carlin Springs Rd

- L 0.75 W&OD Trail goes L; Four Mile Run Trail goes S
- 0.85 Four Mile Run Trail merges from the R

- L 0.9 trail X on L at the Rte 50 underpass (unmarked); goes to N Greenbriar St

- R 0.95 Granada St

- L 1.05 Arlington Blvd, Rte 50 (use sidewalk)

- L/R 1.15 Edison St

- L 1.2 Lubber Run Trail
- 1.4 trail X on R

- BL 1.45 to go behind the amphitheater (water & restrooms)
- 1.1 wooden bridge on L
- 1.55 concrete bridge crosses Lubber Run

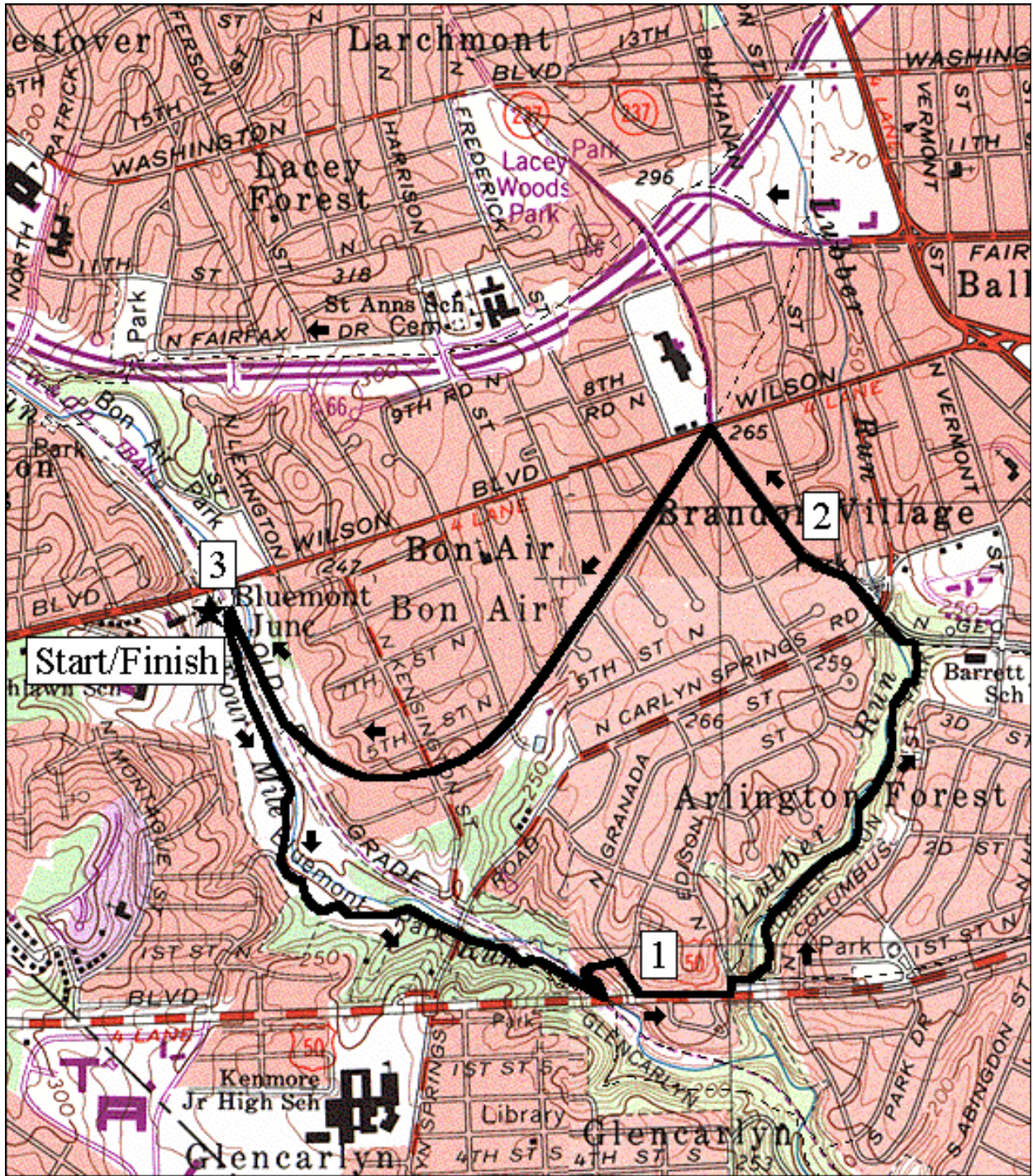
- BL 1.6 away from trail X on R that crosses Lubber Run

- BL 1.7 after wooden bridge that crosses Lubber Run

- L 1.75 George Mason Dr

- L 2.2 Bluemont Bypass Trail at the intersection w/Wilson Blvd
- 2.4 trail X on L to Greenbriar St
- 2.8 trail X on L over wooden bridge to W&OD Trail (water on L)
- 2.9 caboose on R (police substation)
- 3.0 4-way trail X; W&OD Trail; parking lot on L(water, restrooms, phone)

Lubber Run from Bluemont Junction



MN TN 0 1/2 1 MILE
0 1000 FEET 0 500m 1000m
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Four Mile Run North

Distance: 4.05 or 2.4 miles

Rating: III or II; mostly paved trails with some residential streets

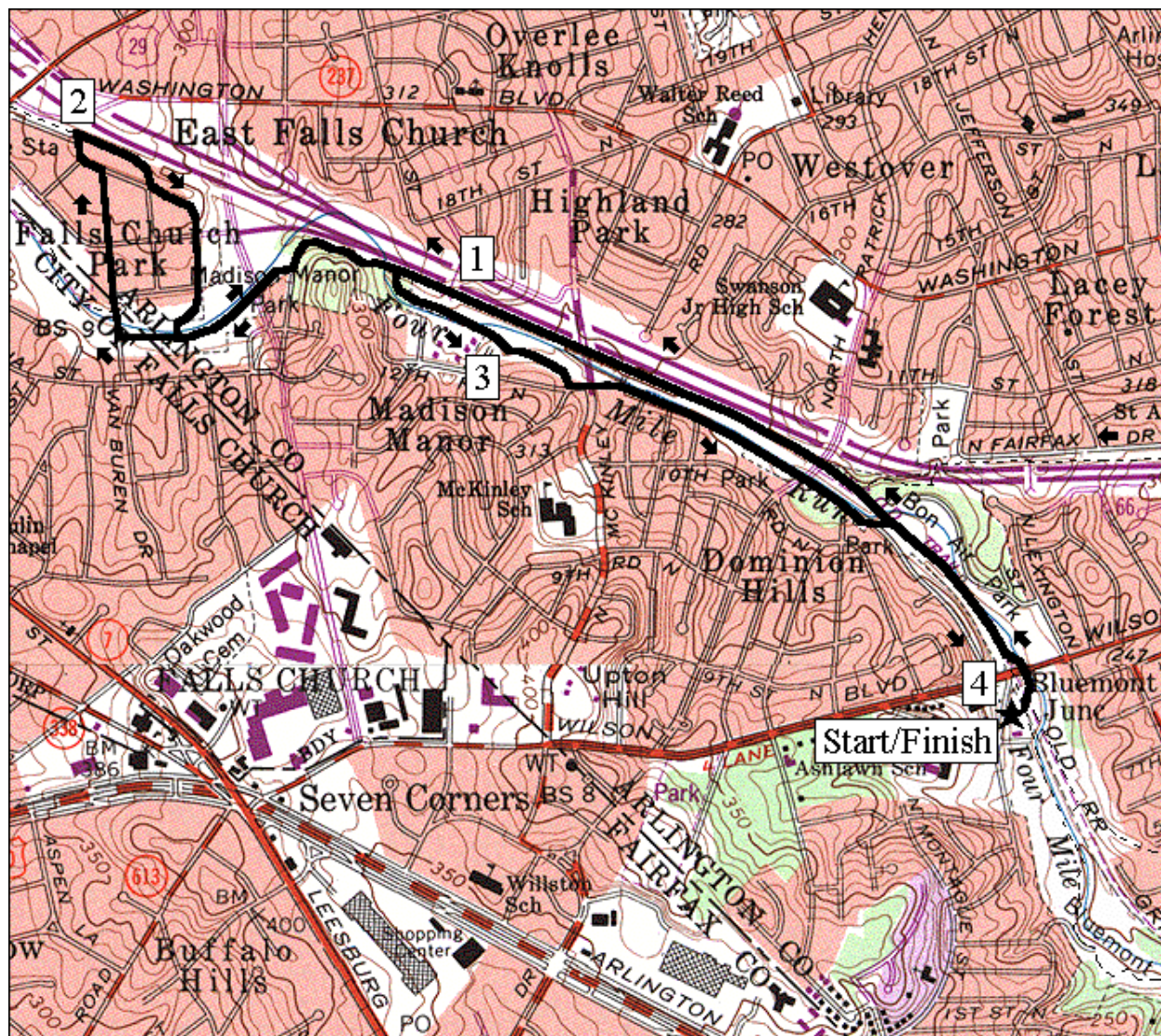
4.05 Mile Route

		L/R 1.95 L on 19 th Rd; R on Vanderpool St			
L	0.0	at 4-way trail X; go west on the W&OD Trail under Wilson Blvd	R	2.0	W&OD Trail (at the end of Vanderpool St)
	0.05	Wilson Blvd underpass			
	0.35	Four Mile Run Trail on L (return route)	L	2.2	Tuckahoe St; East Falls Church Metro Station ahead
	0.45	Custis Trail on R (water)		2.35	paved W&OD Trail continues
	0.8	trail X on L to Four Mile Run Trail (phone)	L	2.4	at T to continue on W&OD Trail/Four Mile Run Trail
	1.05	trail X on L to John Marshall Trail			
	1.15	trail X on L to pedestrian footbridge over I-66	BL	2.65	at Roosevelt St (unmarked)
<*			R	2.8	John Marshall Trail/Four Mile Run Trail on R after concrete bridge
	1.2	John Marshall Trail/Four Mile Run Trail on L before the concrete bridge (return route)	>*		
			L	3.15	11 th Rd N
BR	1.4	at Roosevelt St (unmarked) to follow Four Mile Run Trail/W&OD Trail	S	3.2	cross Ohio St; use walkway to go down to Four Mile Run Dr
	1.5	trail X on L to outhouse & parking for soccer field		3.25	trail X on L to W&OD Trail (phone)
				3.35	paved Four Mile Run Trail continues
S	1.6	W&OD Trail goes R (return route); S is City of Falls Church Trail/Four Mile Run Trail		3.65	paved trail ends; go S onto N Arlington Dr
			L/R	3.7	at paved trail to join W&OD Trail
R	1.7	Van Buren (unmarked)		4.0	underpass Wilson Blvd
	1.7	Four Mile Run Demonstration Trail on L		4.05	4-way trail X; parking on R

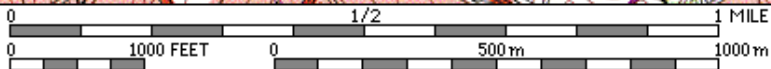
*2.4 Mile Route

- L 1.2 John Marshall Trail/Four Mile Run Trail on L before concrete bridge (pickup cues at mile 3.15 on 4.05 mile route)

Four Mile Run North



MN ↗ TN
10 1/2°



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