

## **Donaldson Run/Potomac Overlook Regional Park**

Potomac Overlook Regional Park, one of the little known parks in Arlington, sits perched over the Potomac River in North Arlington. The hilly natural grounds have a few short trails. They are frequented by people walking dogs as well as by those who've come to watch submarine races. Though the overlook can be a little disappointing, the park is worth coming to. You might come across a deer or wander over to the site of a seasonal Indian camp dating back to 500 AD. There are gardens and a small Nature Center. Trails go under the parkway to the river. In the summer there is also a summer concert series. The Potomac overlook itself is high enough but in summer the view is partly obstructed by leaves; you can't see the river, and the George Washington Parkway's presence underneath is a noisy intrusion to an otherwise peaceful setting.

### **Getting There**

#### From Northern Fairfax County, VA; Montgomery or Northern Prince Georges Counties, MD

Exit the Capital Beltway near the American Legion Memorial Bridge, onto the George Washington Parkway. After 3.75 miles, take Chain Bridge Rd. east toward Washington D.C. (second exit). At the bottom of the hill before the bridge (1.1 miles), turn right at the traffic light onto N. Glebe Rd. Go 0.3 miles up the hill, and bear right onto Old Chain Bridge Rd., following the sign toward Military Rd. Turn left off Old Chain Bridge Rd. after the overpass, onto Military Rd. After 1.4 miles, turn left on Marcey Rd. Follow it to the end, parking at the circle in Potomac Overlook Park. Start at the trail head to the overlook, near the billboard and gate.

#### From Southern Fairfax County, VA or Southern Prince Georges County, MD

At Alexandria, Virginia, exit the Capitol Beltway, I-95, northbound onto Rte. 1. Go through the city and bear right onto Slater Lane after 1.8 miles; just before the Rte. 1 bridge goes over the railroad tracks. After 0.35 miles, turn left onto the George Washington Parkway. After almost 7 miles, bear left onto Spout Run Pkwy. Bear right after 0.65 miles onto Lorcom La. Turn right after 0.85 miles onto Military Rd. Turn right again after 0.4 miles onto Marcey Rd. Follow it to the end, parking at the circle in Potomac Overlook Park. Start at the trail head to the overlook, near the billboard and gate.

## **Area Routes**

### Donaldson Run (3.85 or 4.4 miles, IV)

The Donaldson Run Trail goes through a part of Potomac Overlook Regional Park. It can be followed all the way from Marymount University near N. Glebe Rd. to the Heritage Trail that goes along the shores of the Potomac River. The section from N. Glebe Rd. to Military Rd. is partly paved, and partly surfaced with bluestone. It's wooded and quiet. It drops about 230 vertical feet in less than 1 mile. From Military Rd. to the Potomac River, the trail is more of a natural surface hiking trail and continues to drop. It parallels and crosses its namesake creek several times without bridges as it descends, sometimes steeply toward the river and the Potomac Heritage Trail. This route first climbs from Potomac Overlook Park on roads to the top of the Donaldson Run Trail. It then takes the paved/bluestone trail down to Military Rd. From there, you have options to use the natural trail or return on roads.

### Military Road (5.3 or 6.0 miles, VI)

Military Road was cut through a forest in the 1860's to connect some of the Battery defense forts that were built to protect Washington D.C. during the Civil War. Pricey real estate, now lines the hilly road. On this route, make a counterclockwise loop starting out by going up and down the hills on Military Rd. In addition to the houses, pass a golf course and Glebe Rd. Park. That park has within it the Gulf Branch Trail, and the Gulf Branch Nature Center. On Old Chain Bridge Rd., pass Fort Ethan Allen Park, one of the battery defenses built in 1861. Later pass Glebe Rd. Park again where water is available. Most of N. Glebe Rd. is less interesting until you reach Marymount University. The route on N. Glebe Rd. climbs a bit. Return on the quieter and shady Donaldson Run Trail (see the Donaldson Run Trail above) to return to Potomac Overlook Regional Park, or optionally continue around down Lee Hwy. to Military Rd.

## **Nearby and Connecting Zones**

Iwo Jima Memorial  
Lewinsville Park

Battery Kemble Park

## **What to do Afterward**

### Food and Drink

Pasha - eat like an Egyptian king - 703 528-2126

Queen Bee - Vietnamese - 703 527-3444

Chesapeake Bagel Bakery - 703 506-0536

### Entertainment and Edification

Potomac Overlook Nature Center - look for the summer concert series in Potomac Overlook Park

Gulf Branch Nature Center - off Military Road - 703 228-3403

Turkey Run Recreation Area - off the George Washington Parkway

## Donaldson Run

Distance: 3.85 or 4.4 miles

Rating: IV; hilly paved and unpaved trails; street sidewalks

### 3.85 Mile Route

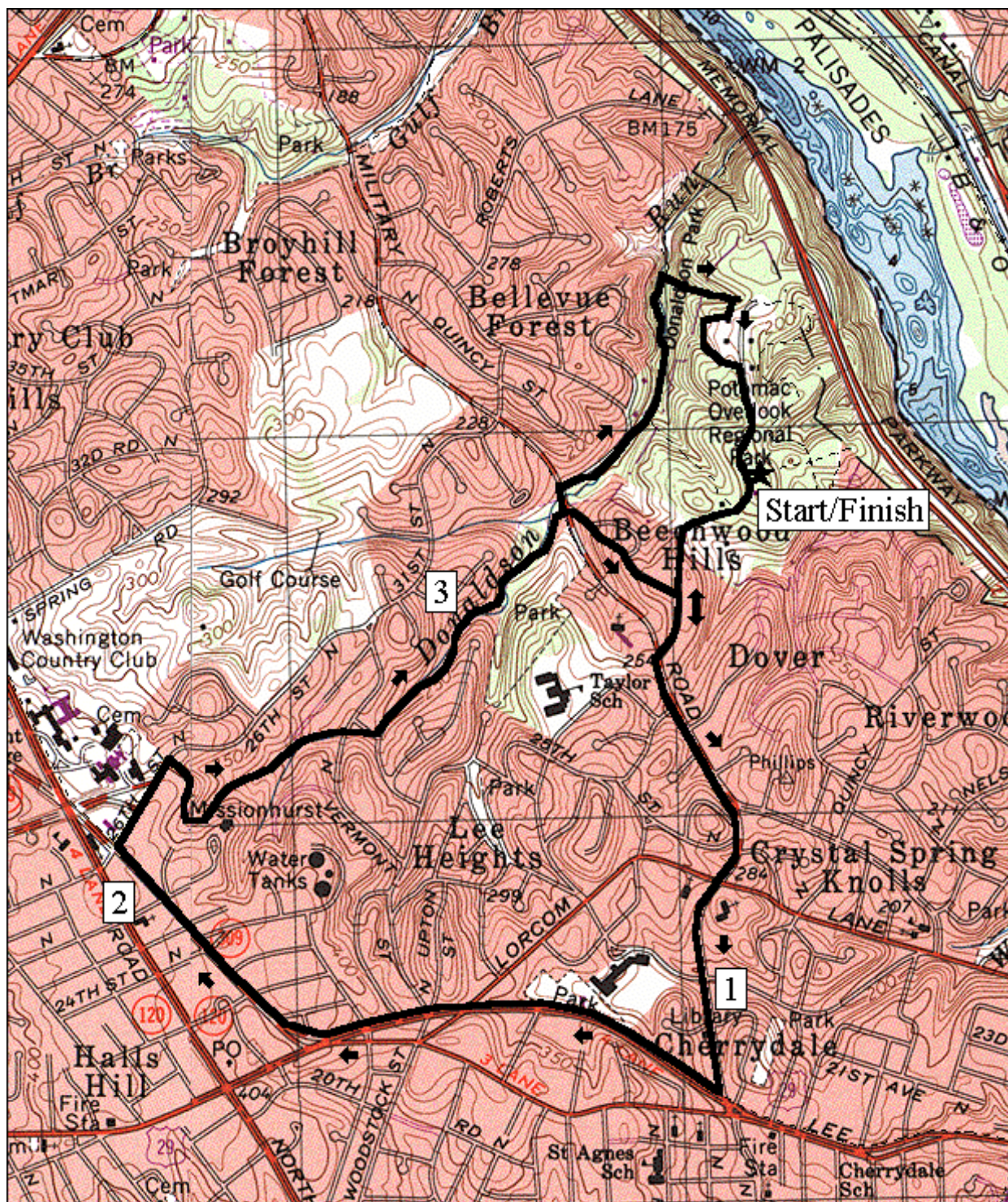
0.0	from the gate on the road at the circle; take the road to leave the park	R 2.4	Donaldson Run Trail (water)(paved)
0.25	Beechwood Pl on R	2.8	cross Vernon St
		2.85	Vermont St
		2.95	pavement ends
		<*	
CL 0.35	Military Rd	S 3.35	cross Military Rd to Beechwood Pl (steep uphill climb on the road)
0.65	Nellie Custis Dr on L		
0.8	Lorcom La	BR 3.4	Beachwood Circle
R 1.1	Dominion Dr/Lee Hwy, Rte 29	BR 3.45	Beachwood Pl
1.55	Lorcom La		
R 1.8	Old Dominion Dr, Rte 309	L 3.6	Marcey Rd
R 2.25	on 31 <sup>st</sup> St; at 26 <sup>th</sup> /31 <sup>st</sup> St	BR 3.8	road splits in the park 3.85 gate in the road/parking

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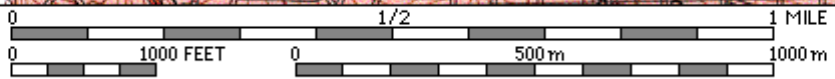
### \*4.4 Mile Route

L/R 3.35	L on Military Rd; R on 30 <sup>th</sup> St		blazes; miss the turn an you end-up at the Potomac River on the Heritage Trail)
R 3.4	Donaldson Run Trail (on the grass at the end of the sidewalk; before the fence); cross the steam on stones as necessary; trail is blazed yellow	R 3.95	Heritage Loop Trail at top of hill (unmarked; garden and Indian camp site are S; occasional green blazes)
3.5	trail X on R	BL 4.2	trail X; bear L to the road
R 3.85	Brown Creeper Connector Trail (unmarked; after the 5 <sup>th</sup> creek crossing; a small plank bridge on the trail identifies it; follow brown	R 4.2	Marcey Rd at the Nature Center
		4.3	trail X on R
		4.4	parking circle at the gate

# Donaldson Run



MN  $\uparrow$  TN  
10 1/2°



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## Military Road

Distance: 5.3 or 6.0 miles

Rating: VI; sidewalks through residential neighborhoods and an improved surface trail

### 5.3 Mile Route

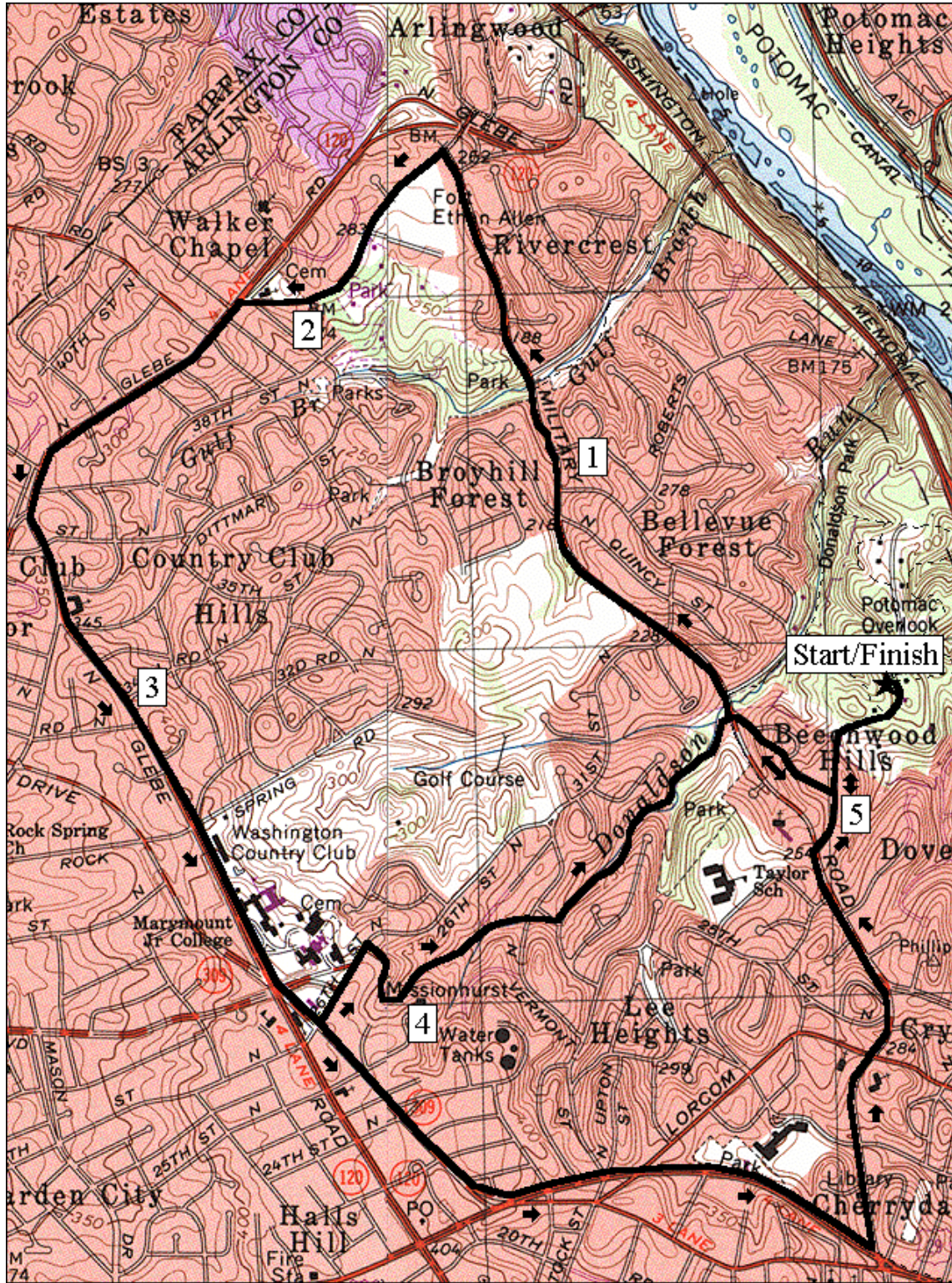
	BL 3.55 Old Dominion Rd; Marymount University
0.0 from the gate on the road at the circle; take the road to leave the park	*<
	L 3.7 on 31 <sup>st</sup> St; at 26 <sup>th</sup> /31 <sup>st</sup> St
R 0.25 Beechwood Pl on R	R 3.85 Donaldson Run Trail (water)(paved)
	4.25 cross Vernon St
BL 0.35 Beechwood Circle	4.3 Vermont St
	4.35 pavement ends
BL 0.4 Beechwood Pl	S 4.8 cross Military Rd to Beechwood Pl (steep uphill climb on the road)
CR 0.45 Military Rd; Donaldson Run Tr is S	
1.15 Gulf Branch Trail; Nature Center	BR 4.85 Beachwood Circle
L 1.6 N Old Glebe Rd	BR 4.9 Beachwood Pl
1.7 Fort Ethan Allen Park	
1.95 Glebe Rd Park (water)	L 5.0 Marcey Rd
	>*
L 2.1 N Glebe Rd	BR 5.2 road splits in the park
2.65 Williamsburg Rd on R	5.3 gate in the road/parking

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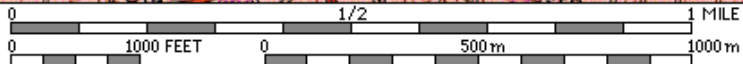
### \*6.0 Mile Route

	L 4.85 Military Rd; Quincy St is to R
	5.2 Lorcom La
S 3.7 26 <sup>th</sup> /31 <sup>st</sup> St on R/L	5.3 Nellie Custis Dr on R
L 4.15 Lee Hwy, Rte 29	R 5.6 Marcey Rd
4.4 Lorcom La	5.7 Beechwood Pl on L (pickup cues at mile 5.2 on 5.3 mile route)

# Military Road



MN | TN  
10 1/2°



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