



GARI MELCHERS' HOME AND STUDIO AT BELMONT

Early trail hikers: Gari and Corinne Melchers and one of their dogs head down the hill from Belmont toward Falmouth. At right, Mitch Dolby pauses on the woodland path at Belmont.

>> BELMONT-FERRY FARM TRAIL INTRODUCES LATEST SECTION!

ON THE TRAIL: HIKE THROUGH HISTORY

BY COLLETTE CAPRARA
FOR THE FREE LANCE-STAR

This Saturday, Stafford County's Department of Parks and Recreation is inviting area families to join it for a ribbon-cutting at Brooks Park to celebrate the grand opening of Phase 3 of the Belmont-Ferry Farm Trail.

Throughout the morning, participants are invited to walk, bike or run on any or all of the three sections of the trail that have been completed to date, spanning the 2.2 miles from the Historic Port of Falmouth park to Brooks Park to Pratt Park.

Participants can register and receive a goody bag at any of those three sites.

When all phases of the Belmont-Ferry Farm Trail are completed, it will pass numerous natural and historical sites along the Rappahannock River as it connects the two landmarks.

WANT TO GO?

What: Walk It! Bike It! Run It! Belmont-Ferry Farm Trail Day

When: Saturday, June 23, 9 a.m. to noon. Ribbon-cutting for Phase 3 of the trail is at 9 a.m. at Brooks Park, 80 Butler Road, Stafford

Where: Entry points to the trail are at Historic Port of Falmouth, Pratt Park and Brooks Park.

Cost: Free

Info: 540/658-5116; staffordparks.com

envisioned more than 10 years ago, and construction of the third phase included laying a 10-foot-wide paved pathway, building bridges over a number of ravines and creating switchback sections in areas where the incline is steep to limit erosion.

A number of area nature-oriented organizations will present displays along the route throughout the morning. Among these, the Friends of the Rappahannock will have an exhibit explaining erosion and its effect on the environment; Revolution Cycles will offer information on bike safety; and the Mid-Potomac Power Squadron will provide a presentation on bike safety. Parks and Recreation staff members will also have an information booth with a craft or nature activity related to the trail.

"This will be a great day for families to come out and hike this trail," said recreation manager Sheila Newton. "It's a good introduction to the trails and their usage for children and it's a wonderful opportunity for parents to spend one-on-one time outdoors with their children."

Collette Caprara is a local writer and artist.