



PRELIMINARY INFORMATION FORM (PIF) for HISTORIC DISTRICTS

Note: PIFs are prepared by applicants and evaluated by DHR staff and the State Review Board based on information known at the time of preparation. Recommendations concerning PIFs are subject to change if new information becomes available.

DHR No. (to be completed by DHR staff) 053-6565

1. General Information

District name(s): Lost Corner Rural Roads Historic District

Main Streets and/or Routes: Limestone School Road, Hibler Road, Noland’s Ferry Road, Chapel Lane

City or Town: Lucketts (current), Goresville and Noland’s Ferry Post Office (historic)

Name of the Independent City or County where the property is located: Loudoun

2. Physical Aspects

Acreage: _____

Setting (choose only one of the following):

Urban _____ Suburban _____ Town _____ Village _____ Hamlet _____ Rural X

Briefly describe the district’s overall setting, including any notable landscape features:

Loudoun County Virginia is one of the Commonwealth’s two most northern counties. Located northwest of metropolitan Washington D.C., Loudoun shares a boarder with Maryland and the Potomac River. Although the eastern half of the county is suburban, the western half is largely rural. The northeast corner of Loudoun is locally known as ‘Lost Corner,’ and is a triangular-shaped piece that juts into the Potomac. Lost Corner is bounded to the north and east by the Potomac and to the west by the Catoctin Mountains. To the south is the town of Leesburg. It is a particularly fertile area, characterized by open farmland. The rich soil, combined with easy access to the river and cheap transportation to agricultural markets, made this area an attractive place for early land speculators.

Today, some of the Lost Corner area retains its remote feel and new residential development has been discretely folded into the rural landscape. Lucketts remains the one village in the area.

Extant resources in the district include Limestone School Road, Hibler Road, Noland’s Ferry Road and Chapel Lane. All roads remain in use, unpaved, and retain a high degree of physical integrity.

3. Architectural/Physical Description

Architectural Style(s): Vernacular

If any individual properties within the district were designed by an architect, landscape architect, engineer, or other professional, please list here:

N/A

If any builders or developers are known, please list here: N/A

Date(s) of construction (can be approximate): 1735 (Awbrey Ferry and Noland's Ferry) to 1937 (rebuilding of Point of Rocks bridge)

Are there any known threats to this district? development and paving

Narrative Description:

In the space below, briefly describe the general characteristics of the entire historic district, such as building patterns, types, features, and the general architectural quality of the proposed district. Include prominent materials and noteworthy building details within the district, as well as typical updates, additions, remodelings, or other alterations that characterize the district.

Lost Corner developed differently from the rest of the County not only because it was geographically separated but also for its topography and distinct geology. The Lost Corner area is largely flood plain, so flat as opposed to the rolling hills of western Loudoun. As well, natural springs and numerous tributaries feed the Potomac. [Hay] cocks,¹ above ground limestone outcroppings, dot the wooded areas. Today, the area is interspersed with large estates dating to 18th and 19th centuries with some modern housing developments, blended into the rural landscape.

The James Monroe Highway, State Route 15, was historically known as the Carolina Road, and was one of Loudoun's earliest primary thoroughfares. Route 15 cuts north-south through the district parallel to the east side of the Catoctin Mountains. The local road network was not laid out in a particular pattern, but rather with the intention of connecting ferries along the Potomac to the Carolina Road. With relatively flat terrain and few natural obstacles, roads were laid follow a straight alignment to connect two geographical destinations most efficiently.

The rural roads of the Lost Corner region are characterized by flat stretches, crossing the floodplains of the Potomac. Soils differed from other areas of Loudoun County and were mostly limestone. Sunken lanes, evidence of digging to a more stable surface, are not evident in the Lost Corner region, as they are elsewhere in Loudoun.

Discuss the district's general setting and/or streetscapes, including current property uses (and historic uses if different), such as industrial, residential, commercial, religious, etc. For rural historic districts, please include a description of land uses.

Historic uses in the Lost Corner area were farming. The two oldest local roads - Noland's Ferry Road and Limestone School Road / Spinks Ferry Road - transverses the large, agricultural flood plains and connect to the river's edge. Historically, some of the larger farm owners were absentee

¹ Given this name because of their appearance to a haystack. Early travelers referred to them as 'very Grubby and greate [sic] stones standing Above the ground.

owners from Leesburg or the Tidewater area, who took advantage of the rich soils along the flood plains and relatively easy river access.

With relatively little agricultural industry as compared to the rest of western Loudoun, the mill to market road network never developed. Without falling water, there were only two 19th century mills in the Lost Corner region, one located on the eastern slopes of the Catoctin and one along the banks of the Potomac.²

Like the rest of Loudoun, trade and transportation dictated early settlement and road development of the Lost Corner region followed this pattern. The Carolina Road³ crossed the Potomac at Noland's Ferry. As the area developed, other ford and ferry crossings established locations of more roads, but Noland's Ferry remained the primary route until after the Civil War.

The Noland's Ferry and Goresville Post Offices appear on the 1853 Yardley Taylor map, but both had disappeared the early 20th century with waning ferry traffic and promotion of the developing crossroads of Lucketts. Without commercial traffic through the Lost Corner area, some local roads were not paved well into the 20th century and some remain unpaved today.

² Wilson Saunder's grist mill on Clark's run - only operating mill in nearly 50 sq mile area between Catoctin mountain and Potomac Scheel page 69 Yardley Taylor W Saunders G M and AR Saunders M&SM on limestone on banks of Potomac

³ Carolina road and Noland's Ferry Road are the same in the Lost Corner region

4. District's History and Significance

In the space below, briefly describe the history of the district, such as when it was established, how it developed over time, and significant events, persons, and/or families associated with the property. Please list all sources of information used to research the history of the property. (It is not necessary to attach lengthy articles or family genealogies to this form.) Normally, only information contained on this form is forwarded to the State Review Board.

If the district is important for its architecture, engineering, landscape architecture, or other aspects of design, please include a brief explanation of this aspect.

History

The Lost Corner area was some of the most coveted land in Loudoun – particularly rich soil with easy access to river transportation. First grants to be issued were in 1724 in the areas along the riverbank in order to take advantage of river access and cheap transportation even before the overland transportation network developed. The area was largely settled by absentee Tidewater investors, who patented tracts of land, farmed with managers and enslaved later, and later leased or sold the land in smaller acreage parcels for profit. One example is Francis Awbrey⁴, who patented 11,600 acres, but did not live in Loudoun, investing in the area for profit only.

Early ferry crossings likely had origins as a simple ford across the river, many of these fords were traveled by Native Americans before white settlers arrived to the area. As traffic at crossings increased, these fords evolved into private ferry operations, initially operating without licenses. Early ferries were primitive, just a simple cable tied to a tree which served to pull a flat bottom boat across the river. As regulations increased, ferries were licensed. Since crossings were weather dependent, ferries and would also more likely offer lodging and or a tavern.

One of the earliest ferries in the Lost Corner region was Francis Awbrey's⁵ Ferry, located near today's Point of Rocks Bridge. Awbrey's Ferry evolved into a private ferry in operation sometime before 1735 and a licensed commercial operation by 1741. Awbrey was a land speculator and member of the Truro Vestry who owned other ferries, notably one near what is today Roslyn, Virginia, site of the Key Bridge. Francis Awbrey died in 1741 and his ferry retained its importance through the 1750s when it was eclipsed by nearby Noland's Ferry, operated by Awbrey's son-in law. Awbrey's Ferry ceased operation by 1794.

Noland's Ferry was also in operation in by 1735⁶ across from the mouth of the Tuscarora Creek in Maryland and developed into the most direct route between Leesburg, Virginia and Fredrick, Maryland. Noland's Ferry was a heavily traveled overland route, carrying traffic of the Carolina Road between Leesburg Virginia and Fredrick, Maryland. A 1754 Loudoun County road case refers to the "road from Nicholas Minors [Leesburg] to the road which leads to Noland's Ferry,"⁷ which would have been a reference to the early Carolina Road along this stretch.

⁴ Francis Awbrey jr 1710 – 1762; born Westmoreland VA, brother of of Elizabeth Awbrey Noland (1722 - ?) In addition to operating a ferry in Loudoun, Awbrey operated a ferry across the Potomac near where Roslyn is today

⁵ Francis Awbrey 1690-1741

⁶ In 1748, Philip Noland Petitions for ferry license although the license may not have been granted until later

⁷ Newland Fairfax county, page 27; 20 March 1754, page 63

In the early 1700s, the center of local power was Fairfax Courthouse, two days' ride away. The 'Carolina Road,' would have been a well-established Native American path, that was in places, a narrow foot path wide enough for a horse or foot traffic, but certainly not an established 'waggon' road. Overland travel was difficult at best and sometimes only seasonal; early trade in the region moved along rivers, highlighting the importance of fords and ferry crossings.

In 1757, Clapham's Ferry⁸ was awarded a license, three miles down river from Noland's Ferry, and across the Potomac from the Monocacy River, which was also the terminus of the road leading to Georgetown along the Maryland side of the Potomac. From these ferries, the Lost Corner rural road network developed. Road Order books indicate the main leading north from Leesburg forked above Limestone Branch; the one road led to Noland's Ferry and the other lead to Clapham's (later Spinks) Ferry [VDHR 053-0071; NPS 97001076.] Obviously, the better road would have driven increased ferry traffic. Competition between the two men may have led to nefarious behavior; in 1747 Josias Clapham is found guilty "for not keeping a Post at the fork of the Roads between Claphams and Philip Nolands."⁹

The men who owned the ferries were also appointed road Surveyors, so had additional power to ensure a court order was approved for a new road or road improvement. These men also controlled the industry that would have benefitted from an improved transportation network. For example, Josiah Clapham represented Loudoun in the General Assembly, was also trustee of three Loudoun towns, owned a mill, and the ironworks in the Catoctin Mountains. These positions of power allowed Clapham to keep roads in good repair, which lead to his ferry and industries thriving.

A reading of road cases illustrates the unique road development patterns in the Lost Corner area. Most of the road cases in the Lost Corner area before the Civil War pertain to Noland's Ferry, leading to the conclusion of the outsized importance of Noland's Ferry before the War. As well, there were relatively few mills in the area – the topography of the Lost Corner area is flat; without falls, waterpower was not possible. With only two mills, the mill to market network never developed. Many roads are not mentioned, leading to the conclusion that possibly other roads were private, following boundary lines between land grants.

Early road orders highlight the importance of connecting nearby merchant mills outside of the Lost Corner area to river travel. The 1770 road order of "Williams Kirks Mill (today's Taylorstown) to Thomas Awbrey's¹⁰ Ferry" (today's Point of Rocks Bridge) is worth reading:

*"... it [direction of the new road] would answer best from the said Awbrey's Landing on the River by his House then up a small run nearly as a path now goes, continuing on a ridge near the Path by Enoch William's thence with the said Path to Kirks Mill."*¹¹

The road case demonstrates the evolution from a private path to a public road, answering the need for a road wide enough to carry a wagon loaded with flour. The road case also refers to both Awbrey's landing and ferry, indicating possibly the 'landing' accommodated a warehouse to store agricultural goods for shipping and the ferry accommodated river crossings.

⁸ In 1816, the ferry was taken over by Hawling

⁹ Ann Miller 1757 – 1783; [9 November 1757, Loudoun Order Book A, p. 52](#)

¹⁰ Thomas Awbrey (1723 - ?) inherited land from father Francis Awbrey. Granted ferry license in 1769. By 1837, the land is owned by Rebecca Johnson and Margaret Graham (also co-owners of furnace?)

¹¹ Ann Miller, 1757-1783; page 75 15 August 1770, Loudoun order Book E page 22.

In addition to the ‘big three’ – Awbrey, Noland and Clapham¹²– there were other lesser-travelled crossings,¹³ but the importance of Noland’s Ferry, the last stretch of the Carolina Road in Virginia, prior to 1800 cannot be over emphasized. Between 1757 and 1800, Noland’s Ferry is mentioned almost 50 times; Awbrey’s ferry only 2 and not at all after 1783. In addition, the mill to ferry connection was a primary driver, creating roads through Lost Corner. The primary regional merchant mills prior to 1800 were Kirk’s Mill and Mahlon Janney’s Mill and connecting these two mills to river access was paramount. The critical connection between Taylorstown and Waterford and the river is mentioned multiple times in early road orders.

In 1852, the Point of Rocks Bridge was completed, which heralded a decline in ferry traffic and an almost end to Noland’s Ferry. The bridge was destroyed during the Civil War, re-igniting ferry traffic for a limited time. Often during the War, the river crossings were manned with soldiers. Warring armies were too large to use rudimentary ferry services. Confederate Generals including Lee and Stuart crossed the Potomac by ford.¹⁴

After the Civil War, river traffic moved to the rebuilt Point of Rock Bridge.¹⁵ With the rebuilding of the bridge, ferry traffic decreased as well as traffic along the roads that supported the ferries. The two post offices in the area, Noland’s Ferry and Goresville, consolidated to centrally located Luckett’s crossroads. Whites Ferry thrived, taking advantage of increased traffic from Leesburg. Ferry traffic through Noland’s and Spink’s Ferries dwindled resulting in stalled growth in the Lost Corner region. Population in the Lost Corner area dwindled also.

In 1904, the Carolina Road was improved with ‘rock’¹⁶ as far as Limestone Run, the southernmost edge of Lost Corner, leaving points farther north separated from improved transportation routes. Without ferries and improvements in transportation, Noland’s Ferry and the Goresville Post Offices were consolidated to the village of Luckett’s in the late 1880s and by the early 20th century, the villages surrounding these post offices also had disappeared. The local Limestone School closed 1929 and children bussed to Lucketts. By the end of the 1930s, Loudoun boasts 35 miles of ‘paved’ roads.¹⁷ Only the Carolina Road, then identified as State Route 15, was paved in the Lost Corner region.

Primary resources within the Rural Road Network

Settled as the ‘gateway’ to Loudoun from points north, the Lost Corner Rural Roads Historic District is composed of extant unpaved and paved 18th and 19th century rural roads. Only two roads appear on the Yardley Taylor Map, demonstrating the importance of the Noland’s and Clapham ferry crossings. The other rural roads possibly existed prior to the Civil War as private lanes between farms. Remarkably, these roads remain in use today and retain a high degree of physical integrity. Many miles remain unpaved, retaining their original alignment and width.

¹² An 1861 military map created for General McClellan shows three main roads crossing Lost Corner – each going to Point of Rocks Bridge, Noland’s Ferry, and Spinks Ferry. None are identified as ‘turnpikes’

¹³ These ferries have been mentioned in Anne Miller’s transcription of early road cases but need more research: Hallings mouth of Monocasy; Johnson furnace mill and ferry; Luckets ferry; Bettz Ferry on Potomac nove 1793, order book 0, 302-303; Payne’s ferry; Coonrod’s [sic] F (north of Harrison island)

¹⁴ Confederate troops crossed at Whites ford

¹⁵ (current structure 1937)

¹⁶ Find refence to macada surace

¹⁷ “Map of Loudoun County Showing Primary and Secondary Highways,” Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Highways, 1937

According to the Catoctin Rural Historic District nomination, the unpaved roads in the Lost Corner area represent a “a circulation network that has changed little since the preceding century.”

Associated Property Types. Settled by Tidewater investors who were ‘granted’ property from the Fairfax family, the Lost Corner region is composed of a high number of **boundary roads**. Many of the 18th and 19th century roads were laid out along patent boundary lines, originally serving as private lanes between farms. These extant and in use boundary roads include Lost Corner Road, Spink’s Ferry Road, Limestone School Road, Lucketts Road and St Clair’s Lane.¹⁸ The district also boasts a remaining unpaved segment of the original Carolina Road, a predecessor to the Turnpike Road, that retained dominance once the Point of Rocks Bridge was completed.

Associated secondary resources within the Rural Road Network

Luten bridge: Historically, there were numerous Luten bridges along Loudoun’s roads. Today, those that remain can be found along Loudoun’s rural roads or along an abandoned turnpike. Daniel Luten, one of the nation’s most influential bridge builders, patented several designs for his poured concrete bridge design, which made this design particularly applicable to rural uses. The Lost Corner area boasts one representative example [VDOT NO 6045] along Limestone School Road which dates to 1917. (See Photo 2, Limestone School Road)

Low-water bridges sit below the level of the roadway, allowing water to flow over the ‘bridge’ during periods of flooding. Low-water bridges are a vernacular design. They are typically large steel culverts assembled with fieldstone that can be completed with unskilled farm labor.

Culverts vary from a single pipe to multiples laid side by side. Culverts typically are corrugated steel although there are a few remaining in cast concrete from the early 1900s and the introduction of the automobile.

Significance

The Lost Corner rural road network is significant under Criteria A for its association with transportation in an area that was valued for its access to river travel and river crossings. Lost Corner functioned as the early ‘gateway’ into this part of Virginia from points north across the Potomac River. Following Native American migratory paths, settlers crossed from Maryland into Virginia, fording the Potomac at points known for their favorable conditions. Well-traveled fords developed into private ferries, then formalized into publicly licensed ferries. Established fords and ferries –Awbrey’s, Noland’s, Spinks, and White’s Ford – dictated the development of the road network. These main roads, Carolina Road, Noland’s Ferry and Spink’s Ferry, crossed north-south connecting to Maryland to the north to Leesburg, Virginia to the south. Local roads, initially developed as private lanes connecting farms along boundary lines, filled in to accommodate local traffic between these two main roads. Because the area was so remote, these

¹⁸ Early roads follow patent boundaries include **Lost Corner Road** [Josiah Clapham 1793, E-143 ‘adj Francis Awbrey’ and John Sinclair 1776 I-277 ‘adj Richard Wood’]; **Road** [William Hawlin 1742, A-118 ‘branch of Potomac’ and Richard Wood, 1731, D-27 ‘adj Wm Hawlin’]; **Spinks Ferry Road**¹⁸ [Richard Wood, 1731, D-27 ‘adj Wm Hawlin’ and Amos Sinclair 1741 E-366, ‘adj Richard Wood’]; **Limestone School Road** [Francis Awbrey 1728, B-167 and Francis Awbrey, 1739, E-109 ‘ad Awbrey’s Cool Spring’]; and **Lucketts Road** [Patrick Lynch, 1730 C-103 ‘Limestone Run’ and George Sleator, 1730 C-127 ‘Limestone Run’]; and **St Clair Lane** [Francis Awbrey, 1739 E-139 ‘Clarks Run’ and Amos Sinclair, 1742, F-82 ‘Clarks Run’]. These roads do not appear on the Yardley Taylor map. Possibly they were private roads or boundary roads between farms **Hibler**

main roads, arguably once the most travelled in Loudoun, remained as county roads, never evolving as paved turnpikes.

The Period of Significance begins in 1735, the date by which both Noland and Aubrey's Ferries were in operation and settlement of the area, and the needs for roads, began in earnest. The Period of Significance ends in 1937 with the rebuilding of Point of Rock Bridge and the decline of ferries in the Lost Corner Region and the network of roads that supported the ferry traffic.

List of Photographs

Photographer- Jane Covington

Photo 1. Haycock, facing west along Limestone School Road

A haycock, an above ground limestone formation, sits alongside a gravel road. These geological formations are unique to this area within Loudoun.

Photo 2 Luten Bridge; VDOT No. 6045 Limestone School road facing north

Photo 3 Hibler Road leading from Whites Ford facing south

Photo 4 Spink's ferry, facing north

Original farm house, dating to mid 1700s, stands near rivers edge where ferry used to operate. Gravel road follows original route. The ferry operated as Clapham's Ferry (1757-1816), Hawling's Ferry (1816-1830), and Spinks Ferry (1830-1850). The opening of the Point of Rock Bridge ended ferry service.

Photo 05 Materials

Limestone inclusions in the local field stone make the materials in this area unique to Loudoun.

06 Low Water bridge facing east

07 Noland's Ferry Road facing west

Gravel road descends along river banks of Potomac

5. Property Ownership (Check as many categories as apply):

Private: _____ Public\Local _____ Public\State X Public\Federal _____

6. Applicant/Sponsor (Individual and/or organization sponsoring preparation of the PIF, with contact information. For more than one sponsor, please list each below or on an additional sheet.)

name/title: Emily Houston, Board member
organization: America's Routes
street & number: PO 163
city or town: Paeonian Springs state: VA zip code: 20129
e-mail: emilyzs@yahoo.com telephone: _____

Applicant's Signature: _____

Date: July 14, 2024

•• Signature required for processing all applications. ••

In the event of organization sponsorship, you must provide the name and title of the appropriate contact person.

Contact person: Emily Houston
Daytime Telephone: _____

Applicant Information (Individual completing form if other than applicant/sponsor listed above)

name/title: Jane Covington
organization: _____
street & number: PO 741
city or town: Middleburg state: VA zip code: 20118
e-mail: jaen@janecovington.com telephone: 434-960-4678
Date: May 20, 2024

7. Notification

In some circumstances, it may be necessary for DHR to confer with or notify local officials of proposed listings of properties within their jurisdiction. In the following space, please provide the contact information for the local County Administrator, City Manager, and/or Town Manager.

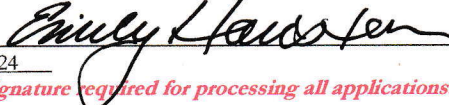
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locality: _____
street & number: _____
city or town: _____ state: _____ zip code: _____
telephone: _____

5. Property Ownership (Check as many categories as apply):

Private: _____ Public\Local _____ Public\State x Public\Federal _____

6. Applicant/Sponsor (Individual and/or organization sponsoring preparation of the PIF, with contact information. For more than one sponsor, please list each below or on an additional sheet.)

name/title: Emily Houston, Board member
organization: America's Routes
street & number: PO 163
city or town: Paeonian Springs state: VA zip code: 20129
e-mail: emilyzs@yahoo.com telephone: _____

Applicant's Signature: 
Date: May 20, 2024

•• Signature required for processing all applications. ••

In the event of organization sponsorship, you must provide the name and title of the appropriate contact person.

Contact person: Emily Houston
Daytime Telephone: _____

Applicant Information (Individual completing form if other than applicant/sponsor listed above)

name/title: Jane Covington
organization: _____
street & number: PO 741
city or town: Middleburg state: VA zip code: 20118
e-mail: janecovington.com telephone: 434-960-4678
Date: May 20, 2024

7. Notification

In some circumstances, it may be necessary for DHR to confer with or notify local officials of proposed listings of properties within their jurisdiction. In the following space, please provide the contact information for the local County Administrator, City Manager, and/or Town Manager.

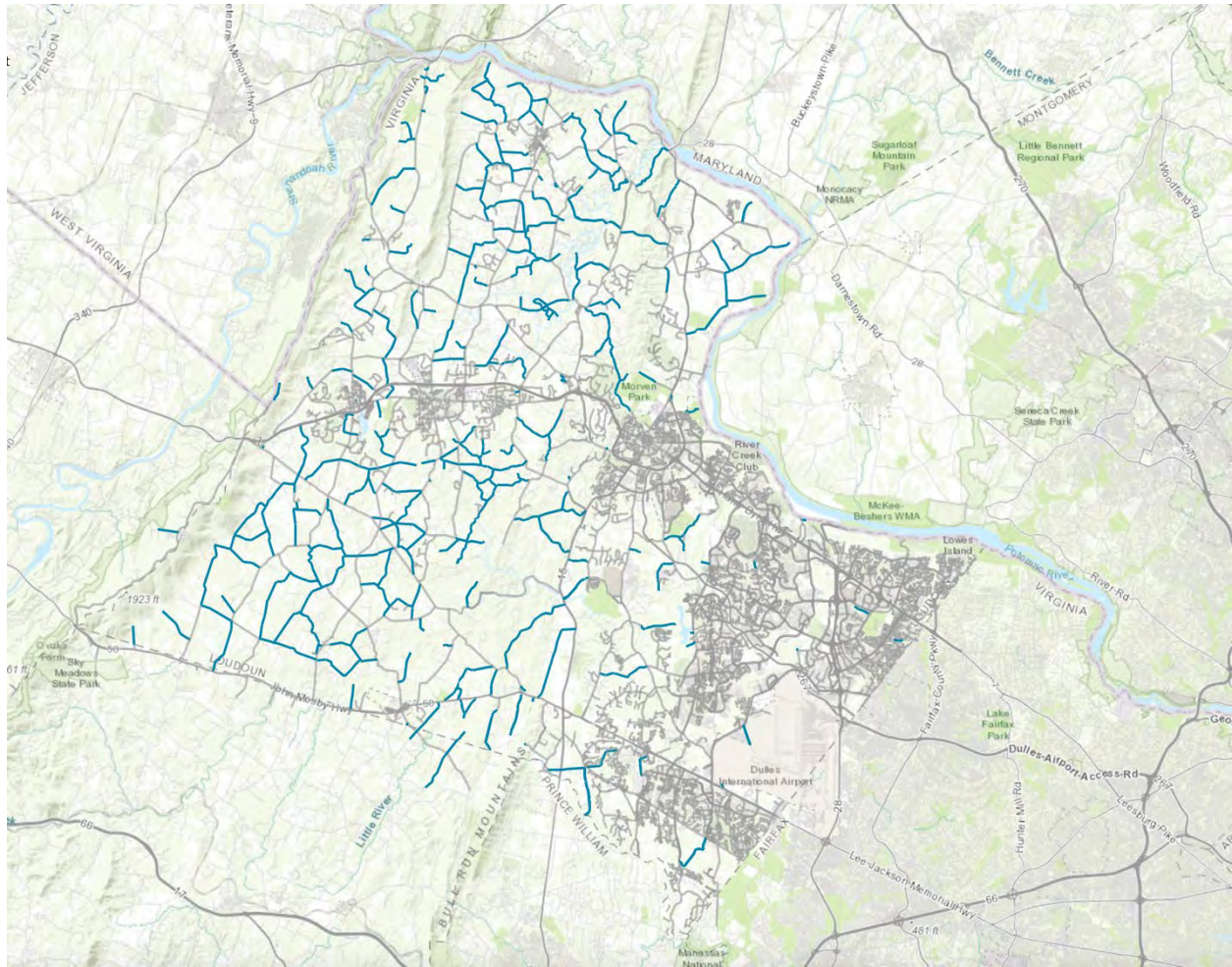
name/title: _____
locality: _____
street & number: _____
city or town: _____ state: _____ zip code: _____
telephone: _____

¹ https://www.loudountimes.com/0local-or-not/1local/county-announces-signatures-of-loudoun-design-winners/article_80bc94a0-2f45-11ef-b228-cfe8586407a8.html

² The rural road network, or the secondary roads system, was largely 'unimproved, graded, or gravel' through the mid 1960s. (Source: Loudoun County, Primary and Secondary Highways, Department of Highways, Richmond Virginia, 1967)

³ In Loudoun, gravel is sourced from neighboring Clarke County, Stewart Perry quarries, Berryville Virginia

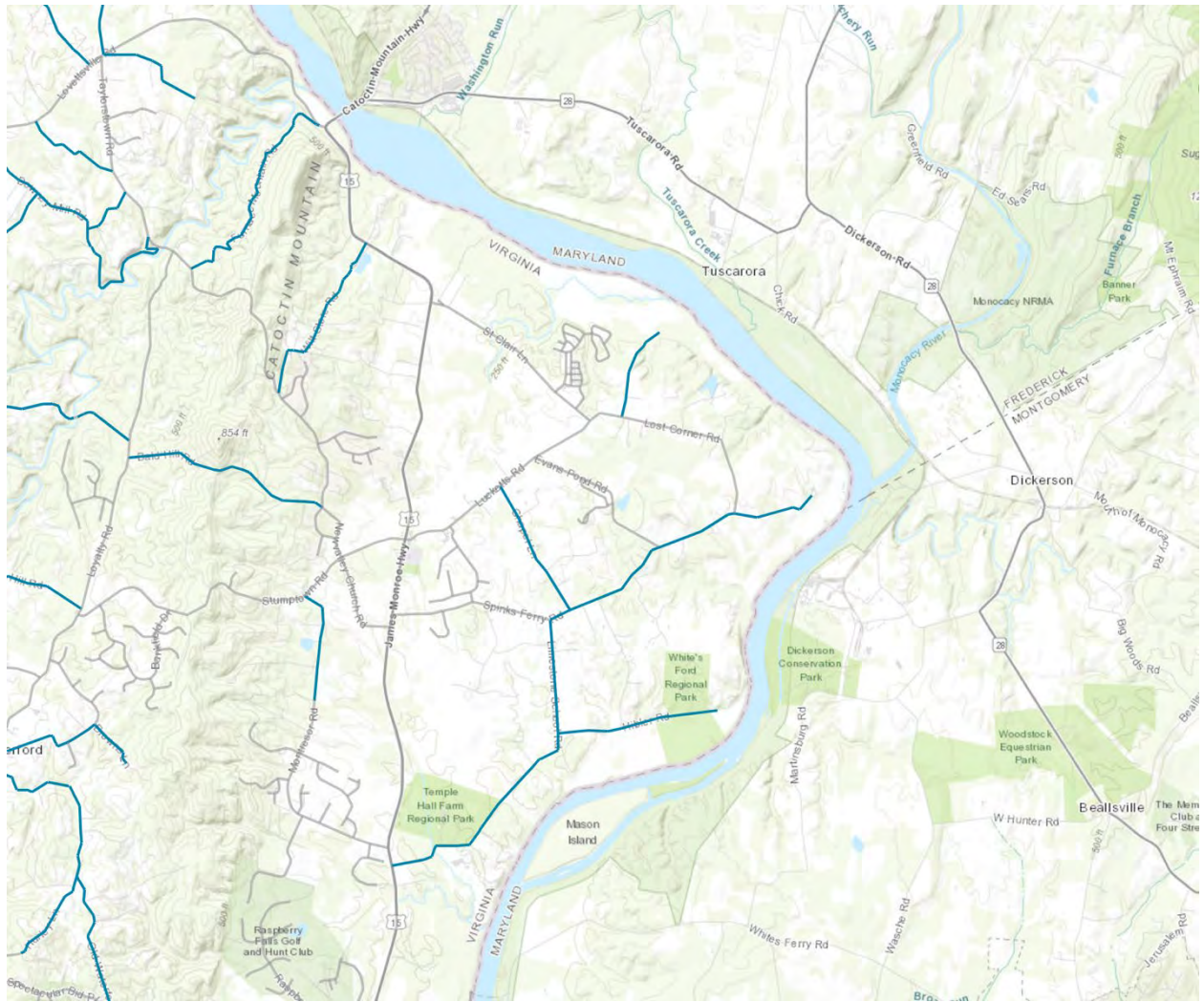
⁴ VDOT specifications for gravel are the same for paved roads as for gravel roads although the performance needs of the gravel is drastically different between paved and gravel roads.



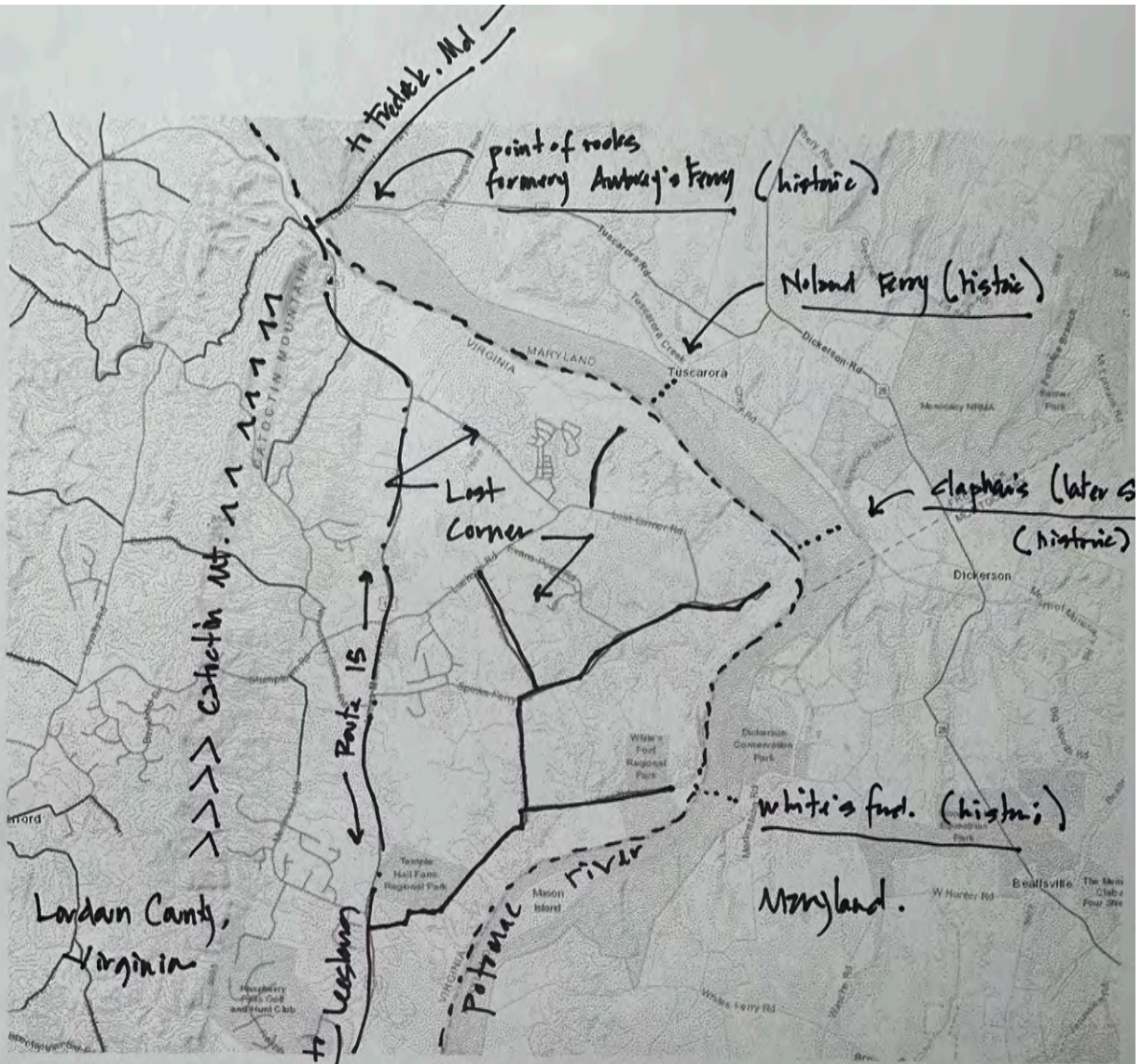
Location Map
 Lost Corner, Loudoun
 Loudoun County, Virginia
 Lost Corner Loudoun Gravel Road Network Historic District

Key:





- Mountains
- County line
- County courthouse
- Airport
- Paved turnpike



Site Map
Lost Corner region of Loudoun County



Site Map
 Lost Corner region of Loudoun County

-  . mountains
-  . state line .
-  gravel road .
-  paved turnpike









END STATE
MAINTENANCE

PRIVATE
PROPERTY







