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G'ville man protests plans to close down road in battlefield

By ROSE MURPHY *
Observer, staff

A retired Gainesville resident says he disagrees with a National Park Service plan to close an asphalt road at Hazel Ridge in the Manassas National Battlefield Park. But the Park Service believes the closure is necessary for public safety reasons and to return the area to its natural state.

William L. Tyler claims "the road is used by hundreds of people each week to walk, walk their dogs, jog, etc. This is one of the few places that is level and not hampered by a lot of cars, noise and exhaust fumes. To close the road would mean that people who want to see the Webster Monument

would have to walk at least half a mile round trip from the parking area at Hazel Plains."

Tyler explains Daniel Webster's son was killed at the monument's location.

But Karen Cucurullo, assistant park superintendent, contends arrests have been made in that area because "of single males being approached" by other males.

"We've stepped up law enforcement in that area, and arrests have been made. Some people aren't there to learn history," she explained this week.

The park service also wants to return the road to its natural state.

"We plan to take the asphalt surface up, but for now, we're just going to gate the road," Ms

Cucurullo notes. She says there is no asphalt road access to many of the park's monuments.

The assistant superintendent adds that "the purpose of the roadway, to access a picnic area, ended 30 years ago."

Tyler reports, "This portion of the road allows people to drive through and get a panoramic view of the park. Closing the road will not allow the hundreds of tour buses that come each year to come into that part of the park (because) they cannot turn around safely because of the limited space."

He adds that buses can "now stop at Hazel Plains, stop at Webster's Monument and proceed around the circle in a safe manner...To dig up more than a half

mile of road and replace it with sod seems like a total waste of park resources."

Tyler says the park service should "take a survey of the people who use the park." He has written to Bruce Babbitt, secretary of the US Department of the Interior, with his views.

The retiree suggests the park service "wants everyone to see the park only from its perimeter," and that "this is the only roadway—besides the one into the visitors' center—that actually goes into the park."

Ms. Cucurullo reports the park service is "not preventing anyone from walking through the area. We had a 30-day review period, which is concluded, and an environmental assessment of the road was done."

City ironing out the details for public access to Lake Manassas

By ROSE MURPHY *
Observer staff

The City of Manassas and the Ryan family of Lake Manassas this week are trying to work out details of the marina operation at the lake. The Ryans operated the marina for 25 years.

Larry Hughes, Manassas city manager, reports the Ryans plan to present the city with a new proposal for the operation.

A plan for the city to operate a marina at the lake was turned down by Prince William County's Planning Commission at its May 17 meeting. The proposal, scheduled to be heard by the Prince William Board of County Supervisors on, June 6 was postponed.

The city had sought to build a boating and fishing facility at

the lake on a 14-acre site. A county permit was needed because the 800-acre lake is surrounded by county land.

The city's plan included two boat ramps, a dock and a gravel parking lot for 50 cars on the north side of Glenkirk Road and to the West of T. Nelson Elliott Dam, about a half mile from Linton Hall Road.

Hughes observes that fishermen have used the lake for 15 to 20 years, but that only "seven percent of those using the lake are city residents, 23 percent are county residents and the rest are from outside the area."

This (marina project has been hanging fire for six months. We need closure on it," Hughes said last week. "It has to make good business sense for all involved."