



Potomac Bridle and Hiking Trail Association  
Secretary, Christina Micek, on behalf of entire membership  
11611 Glen Road  
Potomac, MD 20854

**Testimony for SB0968**

Howard County – Patuxent River Wildland – Use of Motor Vehicles and  
Motorized Equipment

By: Senator Hester

**FAVORABLE**

**March 07, 2025**

Dear Howard County Delegation ([hoc1@mlis.state.md.us](mailto:hoc1@mlis.state.md.us)),

I am writing as the delegated representative of Potomac Bridle and Hiking Trail Association, on behalf of our entire membership. Potomac Bridle and Hiking Trails Association is a local nonprofit organization that was founded in 1960 to make sure trails and easements were recorded and stayed open for equestrians and hikers as development began to encroach on once open land. Many of these trails today make up part of our county park trail system that everyone can enjoy. Today, our organization educates and advocates for trail access, creation and preservation, as well as provides a volunteer workforce to help build new trails and keep existing trails clear and safe for our members.

We would like to give this **written testimony, position FAVORABLE. Senate Bill 0968 would allow, for very limited purposes and by agreement with designated volunteers only, trails in the Patuxent River Wildland (Wildland) to be cleared by mechanized means. The bill will keep park users safe, allow emergency responders to do their jobs, and keep the park thriving for years to come.**

As you might know, Patuxent River State Park straddles both Montgomery and Howard counties. Our members not only enjoy the use of all the trails at Patuxent, but have also joined forces with the Department of Natural Resources and MORE to create 7 miles of new multi-use natural surface trails at Patuxent River State Park.

Our membership often enjoy hiking, birding, dog walking and horseback riding on the trails in the area designated state **wildlands**. Our equestrian membership especially enjoys this area as it is accessible from one of the rare larger trailer parking areas at Annapolis Rock. Our **members have voiced increasing concerns about the encroachment of the trail tread, which in part has**

**become impassable recently by thick flora and large downed trees. Efforts to clear the trails with hand tools have not been very successful, creating a safety risk for users as emergency personnel will not have the needed clear passage to assist in urgent situations.**

Without further action, the Wildland's multiuse recreational trails will be lost or, in the worst possible outcome, a Wildland visitor will sustain a serious injury deep in the forest, and emergency responders will be unable to reach them.

The volunteer allowance would be limited: only specific volunteers who carry insurance, are appropriately credentialed, (if necessary, such as chainsaw certification), and have entered into an agreement with the Department of Natural Resources would be permitted to utilize motorized equipment on currently existing trails in the Wildland.

**TROT does not support any amendment to SB 0938 that disallows volunteer user agreements.** The Park's resources are already maximized; trail maintenance can only be achieved in partnership with volunteers. This is not a new concept; the Park might look to its sister park, Patapsco Valley State Park, for an example of a successful volunteer trail maintenance model.

Therefore, we believe **this bill's narrowly tailored focus to allow DNR to enter into user agreements with volunteers to use mechanized tools in the service of keeping the existing trails open for first responder access as imperative.** On behalf of our membership, I would like to kindly request the committee to please support– Patuxent River Wildland – Use of Motor Vehicles and Motorized Equipment bill **SB0968** for safety purposes.

Thank you for your time.  
Secretary, Christina Micek  
Potomac Bridle and Hiking Trail Association