



Anne Arundel County Trails – Snow Removal Statement

In general, clearing snow from our parks is a lower priority for the County during cleanup after a major storm. School and emergency routes, main roads, and residential roads are the County's focus. During a major snow event, park staff can be taken "out of the parks" and supplement the Department of Public Works to give these priority areas focus. Additionally, park staff can also be assigned to the County's Emergency Operations Center. Depending on conditions, it may take several days after a storm before we can refocus our efforts on complete snow removal at general park facilities.

Our biggest consideration in limiting plowing on trails specifically is actually to protect them. Park trails are typically lightly constructed with two inches of asphalt on a four-inch subsurface base. This is very different from how normal paved roads and highways are built. If we were to attempt to clear heavy snow on an unfrozen subsurface with a large truck, we risk significant damage. This has occurred in the past and does not include simple damage done by plow blades themselves. Allowing natural melting to occur can help mitigate these issues. With new trails or trail refurbishments costing over \$ 1 million per linear mile, we are very cautious about aggressive/frequent plowing vs. waiting.

In closing, if a trail remains snow-covered for more than 7 consecutive days after a large snow event, we will attempt to plow with lighter equipment to reopen it for general use.

It is definitely a balancing act of allowing natural melting to limit trail damage and providing reasonable public use.

We hope this provides context on how we conduct snow-related operations on our County park trail system.