




MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION


MCPB
Item # 7
4/23/09

MEMORANDUM

Date: April 10, 2009

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Mary Dolan, Acting Chief, Environmental Planning 

FROM: Marco Fuster, Senior Planner, Environmental Planning 

REVIEW TYPE: Forest Conservation Plan Review

APPLYING FOR: Preliminary Forest Conservation Plan (FCP) – Proposal for stream restoration project along Northwest Branch

PLAN NAME: Bachelors' Run

PLAN NUMBER: Mandatory Referral #2009001 MCDEP-1

REVIEW BASIS: This property is subject to the Chapter 22A Montgomery County Forest Conservation Law

LOCATION: Located within Red Door Store Historical/Cultural Park, northwest of the intersection of Layhill Road and Norbeck Road

APPLICANT: Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

ENGINEER: Charles P. Johnson and Associates

HEARING DATE: April 23, 2009

RECOMMENDATION: Approval of the Preliminary Forest Conservation Plan

SITE DESCRIPTION

The subject property, Red Door Store Historical/Cultural Park shown below, is an approximately 79-acre property located northwest of the intersection of Layhill Road and Norbeck Road. The project is bordered by residential homes to the west, and is adjacent to a 25 acre lot to the North. The park surrounds three sides of a trucking facility which stores bulk materials, including stone, soil and mulch. The entire Park is within the watershed of the Northwest Branch, which is a tributary to the Anacostia River. There are no wetlands or associated wetland buffers within the subject boundary, however more than one third of the property is within the stream buffer.



March 2008 Air photo of Red Door Store Historical/Cultural Park and vicinity. Red outline indicates park property where restoration will occur.

BACKGROUND

The Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is proposing a stream restoration project within M-NCPPC parkland along the Northwest Branch. The proposed project, originally identified as priority restoration projects in the *Anacostia River and Tributaries, District of Columbia and Maryland, Northwest Branch Watershed, Montgomery County, Final Ecosystem Restoration Report and Integrated Environmental Assessment* (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 2000) and was also conceptually presented to the Planning Board on May 18, 2000, is designed to enhance aquatic and terrestrial habitat in the upper Northwest Branch watershed.

The stream was impacted by historical agricultural practices, which included the clearing of forest and the grazing of cattle, until approximately the year 2000, when the property was acquired by M-NCPPC as part of the Red Door Store Historical/Cultural Park. The 2,300 foot stream reach is characterized by unstable stream banks which contribute excessive sediment and limit floodplain access along the stream reach. The restoration plan proposes to re-grade stream banks to enhance stability and restore floodplain access. Grade control structures will help to stabilize the streambed and prevent future stream incision. Native trees and shrubs proposed for the site will re-establish a viable riparian buffer, which will help to stabilize the stream banks, shade the stream, and provide wildlife habitat.

ENVIRONMENTAL GUIDELINES

The applicant submitted a Natural Resources Inventory/ Forest Stand Delineation (NRI/FSD) number 420052380 and received approval on March 14, 2006. Subsequently, the NRI/FSD was revised and ultimately approved on March 6, 2007. There is a perennial stream with a partially forested buffer occurring on the property. Most of the stream is located within open meadow with occurrences of individual trees and tree clusters (not meeting the forest definition). There are some areas of steep slopes, although there are no highly erodible soils. These slopes are generally outside of the proposed limits of disturbance (except for instances of stream banks to be re-graded). The project is not within a Special Protection Area or a Primary Management Area.

FOREST CONSERVATION

This property is subject to the Chapter 22A Montgomery County Forest Conservation Law and a Forest Conservation Plan has been submitted for approval. The work is considered to be a linear project, and therefore the net tract area is based on the project's Limits of Disturbance (unrelated to the size of the underlying property). The net tract area for the project is 4.98 acres which does not contain or disturb any areas of existing forest. However there is an afforestation requirement of 0.75 acres. The project proposes 8.00 acres of onsite forest plantings within the stream buffer for environmental enhancement and restoration of forested stream buffer.

TREE SAVE

There are approximately 8 large or specimen trees identified within the entire site. The project does not propose the removal of any trees 24" in diameter or greater. However 3 of the large trees (measuring 27", 31" and 34" diameter) will have portions of their critical root zones impacted by the proposed work. The plans require that an appropriately qualified arborist supervises the work near these trees to ensure that any adverse affects to the trees are minimized. Individual trees and tree stands are further protected by utilizing existing, open access routes and providing root protection matting when access routes must occur over the roots of trees to be preserved.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of the preliminary forest conservation plan # MR 2009001 MCDEP-1.