



MCPB Item #8
October 23, 2025

MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 17, 2025

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Miti Figueredo, Director of Parks *mf*
Darren Flusche, Deputy Director, Administration *DF*
Gary Burnett, Deputy Director, Operations *g.burnett*
Christie Ciabotti, Division Chief, Park Planning and Stewardship Division (PPSD) *Christie Ciabotti*

FROM: Brenda Sandberg, Real Estate Management Supervisor, PPSD *Brenda Sandberg*
Anne Fothergill, Real Estate Specialist, PPSD *af*

SUBJECT: Land Acquisition Recommendation: Parcels 337 and 151, Hoyles Mill Road, Boyds
Addition to Hoyles Mill Conservation Park
Yubin Du and Xuan Liu, Sellers
13.42 acres, more or less, unimproved

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the following action by the Montgomery County Planning Board:

Approve MCPB Resolution No. 2025-110 for the acquisition of Parcel 337 and Parcel 151 in Boyds to expand the Hoyles Mill Conservation Park for a negotiated purchase price of \$330,000 funded from the Legacy Open Space PDF.

A draft of Resolution No. 2025-110 is attached.

SUMMARY

The proposed acquisition will allow the Commission to complete the planned Hoyles Mill Conservation Park in Boyds by adding this 13.42-acre parcel. The Hoyles Mill diabase forest is a global and statewide rare community. This acquisition will maintain an unfragmented forest ecosystem on unique bedrock that is a designated natural resource in the 2001 Legacy Open Space Functional Master Plan. Addition of these final acres to the Hoyles Mill Conservation Park will preserve this important forest resource and expand Montgomery Parks' Best Natural Area within the existing park.

This property also will provide for a new accessible parking area for the Hoyles Mill Trail (formerly a road) that leads to an accessible bridge over Little Seneca Creek. Additionally, purchasing this property that spears over 1800 feet into the park will improve access for managing the park forest with Best Management Practices, potentially including prescribed fire.

The subject property is forested and does not have any improvements. The seller has agreed to a purchase price of \$330,000 with a target settlement before the end of the calendar year.

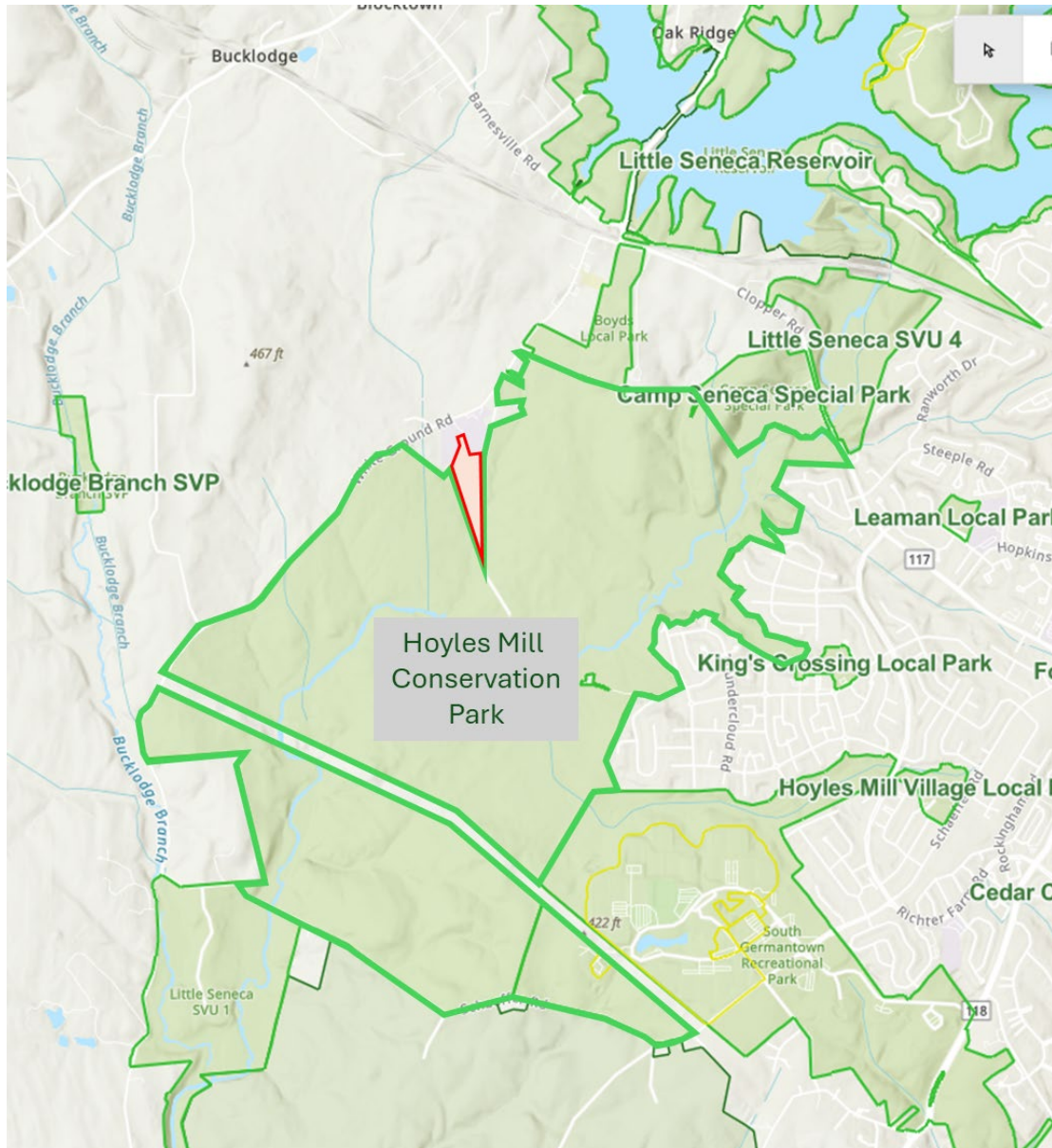


Figure 1: Vicinity map, Hoyles Mill Conservation Park and subject property

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

The subject property consists of two adjoining parcels totaling 13.42 acres located on Hoyles Mill Road south of White Ground Road in Boyds. The triangular-shaped property is surrounded on the east and west sides by Hoyles Mill Conservation Park. The northern side is bounded by the Edward U. Taylor School owned by the Board of Education and two residential properties. The property is forested except for a small area on the north side next to Hoyles Mill Road and has no improvements. Hoyles Mill Road, which is a designated Montgomery County Exceptional Rustic Road, runs along the east side of the property and is used as an accessible trail in the park system.



Figure 2: Aerial Photo of Property and Adjacent Properties with Hoyles Mill Road Trail Entrance

POLICY RATIONALE AND PARK BENEFITS

Acquisition of this property will allow Montgomery Parks the opportunity to incorporate the 13.42-acre parcel into Hoyles Mill Conservation Park for expanded conservation of this unique diabase area and optimal management of the natural resource using Best Management Practices such as prescribed fire.

Background of Hoyles Mill Conservation Park

Hoyles Mill Conservation Park is one of Montgomery Parks' Best Natural Areas, as defined in the Legacy Open Space Functional Master Plan. The parkland includes 1,500 acres of quality forest on rare diabase bedrock resulting in a highly diverse ecosystem. 722 acres of land for this park were initially acquired in 2002 with funding from Maryland GreenPrint, a state program designed to preserve the most significant state natural resources including this rare diabase forest. Additional parkland has been conveyed to the Commission as mitigation for the ICC and other development projects, along with a few small additional purchases, resulting in the current Hoyles Mill Conservation Park. The park has many miles of trails that connect to nearby parks including Southern Germantown Recreational Park, Black Hill Regional Park, and Little Seneca SVP, and includes natural and cultural resource interpretation.

The Hoyles Mill Trail follows Hoyles Mill Road, a Montgomery County designated Exceptional Rustic Road, to provide access to Little Seneca Creek and beyond. While the old prescriptive road right-of-way still exists through the park, Planning Board and County Council actions – to close the road and to designate it as an Exceptional Rustic Road – preserve the unique character of this rural route through a conservation park on the edge of the Agricultural Reserve. Portions of Hoyles Mill Road through the conservation park have been closed to public vehicle use since a Planning Board request and County Council action in the late

1990's. Montgomery County DPWT (now DOT) installed concrete barriers around the ford when the parkland was initially purchased in 2002, replaced by Parks' gates at the northwest and southeast edges of the park in the mid-2000's. As an Exceptional Rustic Road under the updated 2023 Rustic Roads Functional Master Plan, County Code regulations apply that aim to preserve the rural character and significant features of rustic roads by limiting alterations. Current use of the roadbed as a natural surface trail and the scenic views from the new trail bridge provide an important accessible recreational opportunity for park users.



Figure 3: Hoyles Mill and Diabase Trails that Connect Multiple Parks

Natural Resource Value

The Hoyles Mill diabase forest is a globally rare and statewide imperiled community, designated in the Maryland Natural Heritage Program and by NatureServe, the preeminent source for biodiversity conservation data in the United States. This diabase forest includes species more common west of Maryland in savanna type habitats. NatureServe found that the “drier character of the sites and the distinctive soil conditions interact with one another and with fire to prevent woody succession and to promote more open, diverse ground layer with scattered trees.”

The 2001 *Legacy Open Space Functional Master Plan* designated the Hoyles Mill diabase bedrock ecosystem as a “best of the best” natural resource needing conservation through parkland acquisition, including the subject property. This forest has the greatest biodiversity in Montgomery County outside of areas adjacent to the Potomac River. More than 25 species of rare, threatened, endangered and watchlist plants make its preservation of statewide importance. The park includes significant remnant vegetation that provides a baseline for ecological restoration efforts.

Potential Development Impact on Hoyles Mill CP

If this land is not acquired for conservation purposes, there is potential impact from future development including fragmentation of a large block of contiguous forest and creation of more edge impacts, including significant reduction in forest interior on existing parkland. A portion of the Exceptional Rustic Hoyles Mill Road, which is now used as a gravel park trail, could be returned to regular vehicle use if development occurs, impacting trail users.

Residential development on this parcel could also impact how Parks manages the existing forest resources in the park. Setback restrictions from occupied dwellings would limit the Best Management Practices (BMPs) that could be used on a significant portion of existing parkland. If new houses are constructed on this property, prescribed fire – a BMP often used for ecological restoration of diabase forest ecosystems – would be disallowed on many acres of existing parkland.



Figure 4: Typical Diabase Forest Conditions with Small Stream at Hoyles Mill

CONCEPT PLAN FOR SITE IMPROVEMENT

Future site improvements will include a parking area and trailhead to provide accessible parking closer to existing park resources including an accessible trail and bridge over Little Seneca Creek (see Figure 3). The land is forested and additional trail loops or connections may be built in the future within the expanded park.

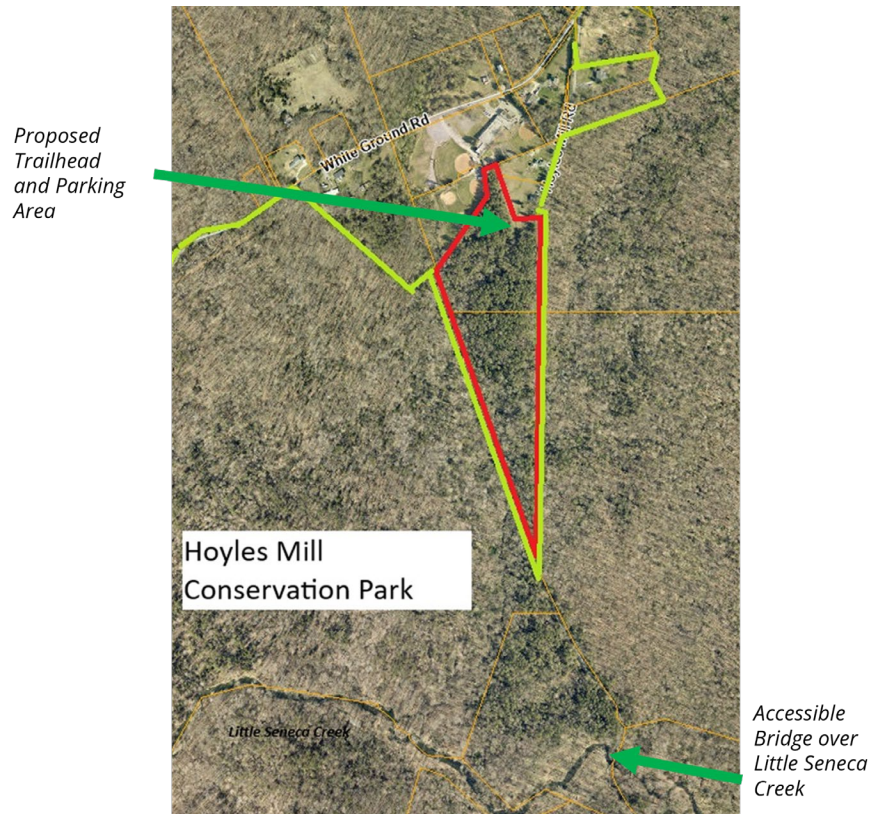


Figure 5: Concept for Incorporating Subject Property into Hoyles Mill Conservation Park

START UP COSTS & OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (OBI)

Once the property is acquired, Montgomery Parks intends to install a small accessible parking area with a new kiosk and related signage that would cost approximately \$30,000. This improvement will be funded with either the Legacy Open Space PDF Site Improvement funds or through the Natural Surface Trails PDF, as appropriate.

The Operating Budget Impact (OBI) for ongoing park staff resources is expected to be very low due to the minimal new facilities and relatively small acreage. Total estimated OBI will be in the range of \$3,000 to \$4,000 per year to address monthly maintenance around the edges of the parking area and any additional vegetation management for the 13 new acres of forest.

CONCLUSION

Real Estate Management staff are pleased to bring this acquisition to the Planning Board for approval. Acquisition of the subject property on Hoyles Mill Road will provide benefits to the County through its expansion of Hoyles Mill Conservation Park and the protection and conservation of unique natural resources and will offer the opportunity to provide enhanced public access to this park.

CC: Mike Little
Darryl McSwain
Steve Erb
Kristi Williams
Andy Frank
Shuchi Vera
Megan Chung
Kate Bentley

Montgomery County Planning Board

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

MCPB No. 25-110

Acquisition: Parcels 337 and 151, Hoyles Mill Road, Boyds

Seller: Yubin Du and Xuan Liu

Project: Hoyles Mill Conservation Park Acquisition

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (“Commission”) is authorized by Md. Code Ann., Land Use, §17-101 (formerly Article 28, Section 5-101), to acquire, develop, maintain and operate a public park system within the Maryland-Washington Metropolitan District; and

WHEREAS, the Montgomery County Planning Board received and considered a recommendation from staff of the Commission, in closed session on October 16, 2025, that it approve the acquisition of Parcels 337 and 151, Hoyles Mill Road, Boyds (Tax Account Nos. 06-00392924 and 06-00392935) recorded among the Land Records of Montgomery County, Maryland in Book/Page 30828/0326 (“Property”), combined containing approximately 13.42 acres of land, from Yubin Di and Xuan Lui (“Sellers”); and

WHEREAS, the Property is located within the Hoyles Mill diabase forest, a global and statewide rare community, and its acquisition will maintain an unfragmented forest ecosystem on unique bedrock that is a designated natural resource in the 2001 Legacy Open Space Functional Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, addition of the Property to the Hoyles Mill Conservation Park will preserve this important forest resource and expand Montgomery Parks’ Best Natural Area within the existing park and will allow for optimal management of the natural resource using Best Management Practices.

WHEREAS, there is sufficient funding available in the Legacy Open Space PDF using Commission Bonds to pay the \$330,000 negotiated purchase price for the Property; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the acquisition of the Property from the Seller as described above, for a purchase price of \$330,000, in accordance with a proposed Land Purchase Agreement between the Commission and Seller, is hereby approved by the Montgomery County Planning Board on this 16th day of October, 2025 and the Executive Director is authorized to execute said Agreement on behalf of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission.

[AUTHORIZATION APPEARS ON THE NEXT PAGE]

MCPB No. 25-110

Acquisition of Parcels 337 and 151, Hoyles Mill Road, Boyds from Yubin Du and Xuan Liu for the Hoyles Mill Conservation Park

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This is to certify the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a resolution adopted by the Montgomery County Planning Board of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission on motion of _____, seconded by _____, with a vote of __-__; _____ voting in favor of the motion, at its regular meeting held on Thursday, October 16, 2025 in Wheaton, Maryland and via conference.

Artie L. Harris, Chair

APPROVED AS TO LEGAL SUFFICIENCY:

M-NCPPC Legal Department
Date:_____

MCPB OPEN Item 8_10-23-25_Hoyles Mill - Du Property Acquisition_FINAL_10-20-2025

Final Audit Report

2025-10-21

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