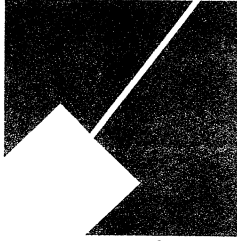


M-NCPPC



MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARK AND PLANNING

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3760
301-495-4500, www.mncppc.org

Item # 16

Agenda date: July 13, 2006

MEMORANDUM

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: John E. Hench, PhD, Supervisor, Park Planning and Resource
Analysis Unit

Gwen Wright, Acting Chief, County-wide Planning

FROM: Doug Redmond, Principal Natural Resources Specialist
Park Planning and Resource Analysis Unit

PROJECT: ICC Compensatory Mitigation Project
Wetland Creation Project NW-128

REVIEW TYPE: Mandatory Referral No. 06903-SHA-1

APPLICANT: Maryland State Highway Administration

APPLYING FOR: Plan Approval

RECOMMENDATION: Approve construction of a wetland on parkland in Northwest Branch Recreational Park as compensatory mitigation for the Inter County Connector.

Background: The project site currently supports two baseball/softball fields with a rectangular athletic field overlay. The site is located in Northwest Branch Recreational Park, north of Bonifant Road, east of Northwest Branch, and west of the National Capital Trolley Museum in Layhill (see attached vicinity map). The athletic facilities were constructed in 1968 by the Wheaton Boys and Girls Club with the concurrence of the Parks Department and the Department of Recreation. The fields were created by filling areas of the floodplain. The NW-128 site was selected as a compensatory mitigation site for the ICC for the following reasons:

- The site is in close proximity to the ICC,
- The existing use of the property is limited by poor drainage and periodic flooding,
- The site is surrounded by existing wetlands, with appropriate hydrology and soils, and
- There is evidence that the site had historically been a wetland.

Design: The proposed wetland mitigation project consists of the following restoration objectives:

- Creating 3.0 acres of palustrine forest and emergent wetlands,
- Providing water quality treatment for adjacent land areas,
- Restoring a portion of the floodplain along Northwest Branch, and
- Restoring wetland functions and values, such as groundwater recharge, nutrient removal through uptake by plants, sediment retention, wildlife habitat, and flood flow amelioration.

The restoration concept for NW-128 includes the following efforts:

- Restoring the area to a floodplain wetland condition by removing fill from the site,
- Excavating to an elevation consistent with the seasonal groundwater table,
- Diverting surface flows from nearby uplands into the site, and
- Grading and planting to create a wetland.

Baseline studies of the site began in April 2005. The baseline studies consisted of obtaining information on soils, surface water, groundwater, and vegetation within the project site and the adjacent wetlands. This was accomplished through the following methods:

- Installation of groundwater monitoring wells and determination of groundwater elevations,
- Analysis of soil borings and determination of existing organic layers, as well as those which existing prior to the construction of the ballfields,
- Sampling of vegetation plots,
- Hydraulic and hydrologic studies of Northwest Branch to determine the frequency of storm discharges and corresponding water surface elevations,
- Delineation of drainage areas to determine surface flow to the site, and
- Delineation of the borders of the existing adjacent wetlands.

Impact to existing users: The Wheaton Boys and Girls Club has been using the site since 1968 for recreational programs. Loss of these playing fields, as well as an additional field in Layhill Local Park, will be mitigated by the construction, by SHA, of permanent replacement fields at the Llewellyn Fields site, which SHA will transfer to M-MCPPC upon completion of field construction. M-MCPPC staff are working to identify alternate sites for the Boys and Girls Club to use pending the availability of the Llewellyn Fields site. SHA has offered to construct a temporary rectangular field at Llewellyn Fields for use by the club during the upcoming autumn sports season.

Maryland Historic Trust: The ballfields were constructed in 1968 by filling an area of floodplain wetlands. The NW-128 mitigation site is adjacent to Corridor 1 of the ICC. The area was included in the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) cultural resources studies evaluating potential historic and archeological resources (ICC Impact Assessment Technical Report, I-270 to US 1 (EHT Tracerics, 2004)).

Archeological Resources: SHA completed a number of previous archeological identification efforts for the ICC, as defined in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). Cultural Resources staff assessed the archeological potential of the project Area of Potential Effects through the use of the Maryland Historic Trust's GIS cultural resources database, aerial photographs, topographic quadrangle maps, historic maps, prior archeological surveys, and field reconnaissance. The potential for prehistoric archeological resources within the project site was deemed extremely low due to the significant disturbance of the soils associated with the construction of the ballfields in 1968.

The completed ICC Cultural Resources Studies have not identified any historic properties in the general vicinity of the NW-128 site. There are no historic properties identified on the Maryland Historic Trust (MHT) Cultural Resources databases or site files.

MHT, on June 5, 2006, concurred with the finding that no historic properties are affected.

Forest Conservation Plan (FCP): The final forest conservation plan was submitted to the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for approval on June 23, 2006. The Forest Stand Delineation was approved by DNR on June 7, 2006. Base on the 90% design, there are no impacts to forested areas.

Montgomery County Noise Ordinance: The proposed wetland mitigation measures for the ICC project will not have any effect on traffic within the adjacent community. Therefore, an environmental traffic noise analysis and assessment was not conducted. However, temporary noise impacts may occur from construction activity. Areas around the construction zone will experience varied periods and degrees of noise that differ from that of the surrounding ambient community noise levels. The noise produced can vary greatly based on the type of construction, the mix of equipment, and the construction procedures being employed. SHA will perform all construction activities in accordance with Montgomery County noise and traffic codes.

Traffic Impact Statement: SHA will coordinate with appropriate officials in the Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation.

Public Meetings: A public meeting was held on June 19, 2006 to provide adjacent residents an opportunity to review and comment on plans for the project. Representatives of two local Homeowners Associations attended the meeting.

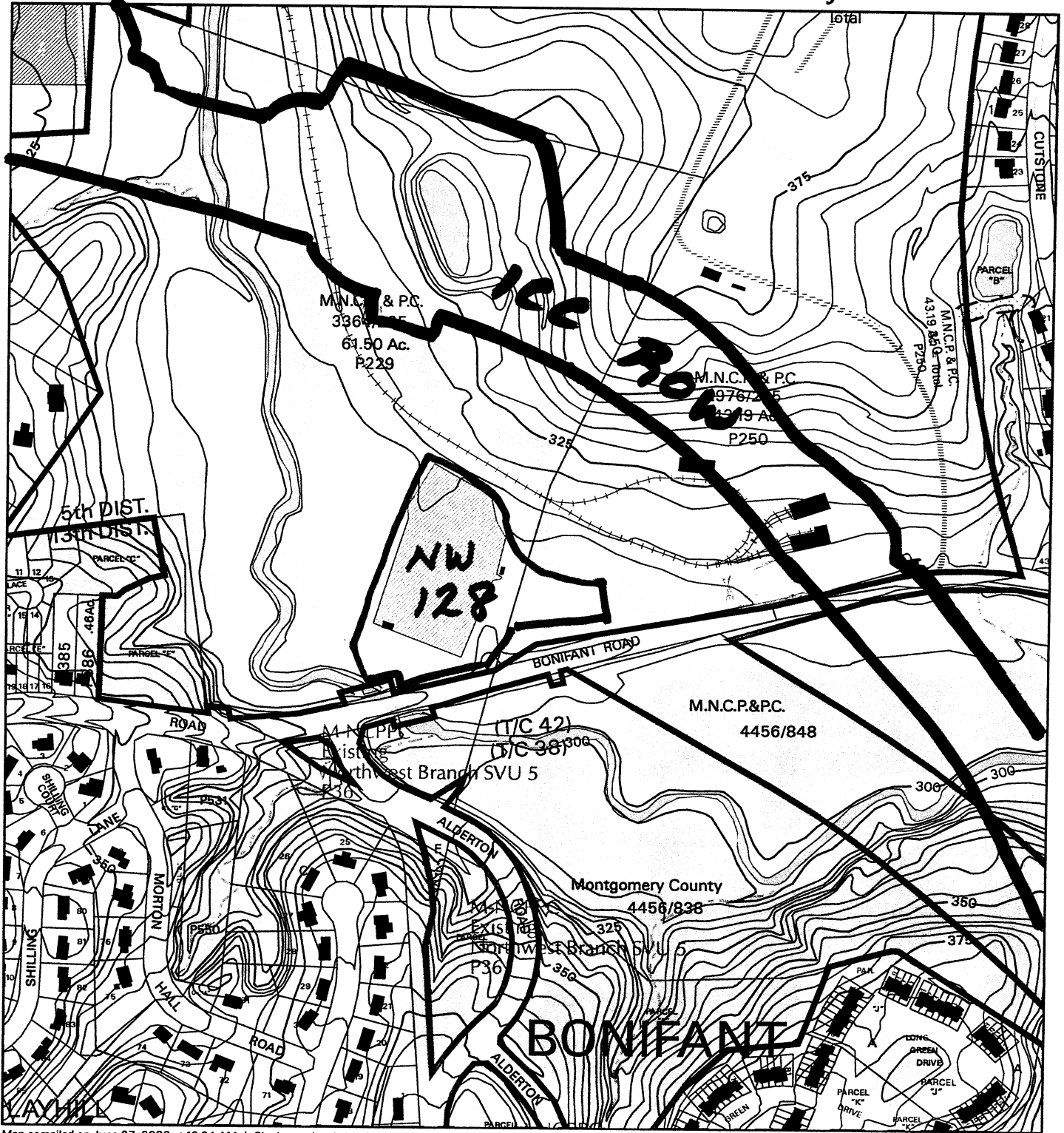
Funding: The proposed wetland creation project is being funded by the Maryland State Highway Administration.

Implementation: Construction is expected to begin in August 2006 and be completed in approximately three months. As soon as construction is complete, SHA will stabilize the site with a seed mix that contains the seeds of appropriate wetland trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants. After the site has stabilized, and SHA determines that the desired hydrologic conditions have been achieved (possibly one to two years after completion of construction), the site will be planted with larger trees and shrubs.

Maintenance: Maintenance and monitoring of the wetland mitigation sites will be conducted by SHA for 5 years, or until the site is deemed successful by the regulatory agencies. Beyond that period, long-term maintenance will be conducted by M-NCPPC.

Cc: Mary Bradford
Gordon Rosenthal
Mike Little
Mike Riley
Khalid Afzal

ICC NW-128 COMPENSATORY MITIGATION PROJECT



Map compiled on June 27, 2006 at 10:34 AM | Site located on base sheet no - 219NW02

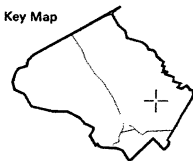
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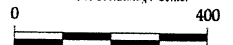
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Key Map



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ICC NW-128 COMPENSATORY MITIGATION PROJECT



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