



Forest Conservation Program Annual Report for FY 2016



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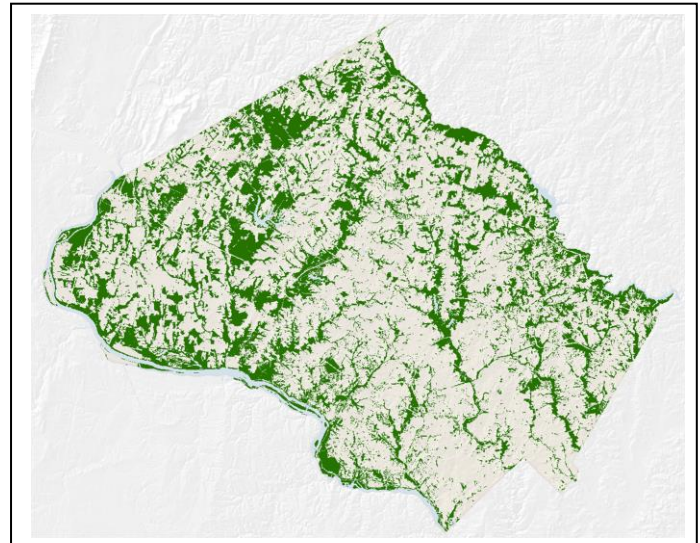
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Description

FY 16 Forest Conservation Program Annual Report

Review the performance of the forest conservation program

Staff Recommendation: Transmit Data to Maryland Department of Natural Resources



SUMMARY

The State Forest Conservation Law requires all jurisdictions to report to the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) each year regarding their efforts to implement and enforce the law. This report includes tables and other data depicting Montgomery County's ongoing implementation of the law, as well as other aspects of the forest conservation program and forest related issues.

Forest Conservation in Montgomery County

The Forest Conservation Program in Montgomery County has been in effect for twenty-six years. During that time, the County has experienced an average loss of 161 acres of forest each year due to development. Despite the intent of the Program, forest loss continues to decline with fewer green field developments in the County. Forest planting averages approximately 88 acres per year. Protection of existing forest averages approximately 414 acres per year.

In fiscal year 2016, forest conservation plans accounted for 81.2 acres of forest clearance, 29.9 acres of forest planting and 223.4 acres of forest protection. For example, Preliminary plan 120090110, Barnesville Oaks, was the largest single contributor to these numbers, with approximately 36 acres of forest clearing and approximately 100 acres of forest protection.

Forest Conservation Easements

One hundred and ninety-five acres of forest were placed in permanent conservation easements on private land in FY 2016. The total easement areas under the jurisdiction of the Planning Department is approximately 11,573 acres. These figures do not include other easement types such as scenic easements or those held by other jurisdictions such as the City of Rockville, or privately held easements.

Forest Banks

Forest mitigation banks are necessary since many development projects are unable to meet their planting requirements onsite. Banks provide the opportunity to meet requirements using an off-site location within the County. The Planning Department administers this program by approving bank locations and approving transactions between developers and forest conservation bank owners. Total bank transactions in FY2016 totaled approximately 51 acres. This is slightly more than the average annual transaction rate of approximately 50 acres.

Two new forest banks were created in FY 2016: 1) Dayspring, with 25 acres of forest and 2) Damascus/Snow Property with 134 acres of forest. The latter was created for the Montgomery County Department of Transportation in partnership with the Department of Parks. In exchange for the right to use part of the property as a forest bank, the Department of Transportation contributed significant funds to the purchase of this property, which has become the Bennett Creek Conservation Park.

Reforestation Program

The forest conservation fund (fee in lieu) is subsidized by developers, who contribute in order to meet forest mitigation requirements when on-site planting is impractical or mitigation requirements are fractional. The Planning Department continues to work with the Parks Department's, Emerald Ash Borer Management Plan. In our Parks, where weakened or dying ash trees have been systematically removed, the Planning Department will use the fee-in-lieu funds to hire contractors to purchase, plant and maintain young trees in areas where significant forest gaps have been created.

Volunteer Efforts

Although replanting is focused on Ash tree replacements this year, the Department continues to maintain 32 acres of newly planted forest in five different Park locations. The Wildlife Achievement Chapter of the Izaak Walton League organizes four different volunteer events each year to maintain these newly planted forest areas in Reddy Branch and the Rachel Carson Conservation Parks. The Marriott Corporation provides a team of volunteers to help maintain the planting site located along Rock Creek Park in Chevy Chase. Last year 92 volunteers contributed 260 hours of invasive vine removal, deer protection construction and maintenance, and tree planting.

Leaves for Neighborhoods Program

Leaves for Neighborhoods is a coupon program established in 2010 and funded by in-lieu fees. The coupon discount allows the purchase of trees at a forty-dollar (\$40.00) discount when a qualifying tree is purchased from participating private nurseries in Montgomery County. Seven Montgomery County nurseries participate in the program. In 2016, 496 coupons were issued.

GIS Forest Layer Update

The County's GIS forest layer is vital in tracking trends in forest gains, losses, and quality. The forest layer is also used in the development of Natural Resource Inventories and Forest Stand Delineations (NRI/FSDs), master plans, and parks-related plans. Other County and State programs regularly use this layer. The last comprehensive update to this layer was done in 2008.

The 2015 Montgomery County forest layer, an update of the 2008 layer, has been completed and is now available on the Department network and online. Preliminary analysis reveals a slight increase in forest cover since 2008. This is remarkable when considering the significant forest losses since 2008 to the development of large-scale projects such as Clarksburg and the Inter County Connector.

Increases in forest cover appear to be due to the increasing maturity of the many hundreds of acres that have been planted as forest mitigation. Many of those acres have reached a maturity level that can qualify as forest. Although these young forests cannot yet replace the ecological and system services value of the mature forests that were removed, the potential to become a thriving community is beginning to be realized.

Forest increases were not uniform throughout the County. Predictably, the urban ring has seen a decrease in forest cover since 2008. Much of the 185 acres of forest loss appears to be due to the already fragmented nature of the existing forest there. Individual development on private lots, home additions and development in back yards can remove enough forest on a single lot to disqualify the adjacent remaining trees from meeting the minimum area and functional requirements to be defined as forest. These surrounding canopy areas have even more value because of their increasing scarcity, but not as part of a forest community. This type of individual home development is not always subject to the forest conservation law.

Forest increases were the greatest in the Agriculture Reserve. Areas on public land and within Conservation Parks have been planted or allowed to naturally regenerate. Much of the offsite forest mitigation required by the forest conservation program takes place in the Agriculture Reserve both on public and private land and within forest banks.

CONCLUSION

The Forest Conservation Program Annual Report summarizes the impact of development on the forested lands within Montgomery County. Staff recommends transmitting the report to the Maryland Department of Natural Resources.

KN:rb

Attachment



Composite Montgomery County Forest Conservation Annual Report

All area figures are in acres

Fiscal Year	Total Review <i>Project Reviews</i>	Exemptions <i>Total Exemptions and NRIs</i>	Forest Conservation <i>FCPs reviewed</i>	Net Tract Area <i>Net tract area under review</i>	Existing Forest <i>Forest in net tract area minus floodplain</i>	Cleared Forest <i>All forest cleared including floodplain</i>	Retained Forest <i>Retained forest</i>			Planted Forest <i>All forest planted for all projects</i>		
							onsite	offsite	total	onsite	offsite	total
1994	586	457	129	2,242.4	676.0	201.6	467.0	20.9	487.8	105.7	26.7	132.4
1995	361	272	89	1,404.6	429.7	197.2	231.7	23.0	254.7	103.0	20.0	123.0
1996	345	267	78	1,870.8	503.0	184.3	318.5	75.1	393.6	133.0	13.9	146.9
1997	314	241	73	2,823.2	827.6	263.7	563.8	84.2	647.9	131.5	13.5	145.0
1998	384	313	71	2,053.8	700.0	284.3	415.7	14.2	429.9	120.4	19.6	140.0
1999	398	336	62	1,077.4	375.3	142.2	234.7	23.3	258.1	50.4	19.1	69.5
2000	416	328	88	1,433.2	537.1	214.5	323.3	58.6	381.9	56.1	22.8	78.8
2001	432	376	56	2,408.6	857.4	287.0	575.3	14.9	590.1	92.8	9.6	102.4
2002	517	426	91	2,756.2	1,008.5	316.0	690.6	64.9	755.5	79.8	46.5	126.3
2003	449	364	85	4,380.1	1,938.3	269.8	1,623.0	22.2	1645.2	126.9	30.5	157.4
2004	472	393	79	1,284.3	419.7	131.2	288.8	44.0	332.8	77.5	1.5	79.0
2005	437	374	63	1,868.8	722.8	266.6	462.7	9.7	472.5	107.6	19.8	127.3
2006	439	367	72	1,063.5	352.4	141.4	211.7	27.0	238.7	51.3	30.9	82.2
2007	393	323	70	1,417.4	499.1	172.5	324.1	29.0	353.2	69.2	19.5	88.6
2008	325	235	90	2,635.8	779.3	139.6	706.8	42.0	748.8	135.9	7.3	143.2
2009	307	232	75	1,459.9	345.1	111.9	236.8	35.5	272.4	82.6	14.8	97.4
2010	307	237	70	1,556.8	877.3	153.6	728.0	43.7	771.6	25.0	14.7	39.7
2011	311	229	82	1,000.1	289.3	99.8	186.7	39.7	226.4	48.5	6.8	55.3
2012	268	196	72	1,198.6	387.6	155.8	230.9	62.5	293.5	68.8	46.2	115.0
2013	309	213	96	1,500.7	538.1	220.9	331.4	102.3	433.7	73.6	45.0	118.7
2014	289	202	87	942.4	236.0	106.5	129.6	25.3	154.9	44.5	35.4	79.8
2015	315	229	86	816.9	387.6	46.8	347.6	36.1	383.6	15.3	2.1	17.5
2016	312	215	97	457.5	175.5	81.2	81.2	142.3	223.4	26.2	3.8	29.9



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

Fiscal Year	Long Term Protection <i>Forest Protected with Easement or Park Dedication</i>	Bond Amount Posted <i>Total amount of bond posted for all projects</i>	In-Lieu Fees		Implementation <i>Annual dollar cost of the program</i>	Labor Spent <i>Hours devoted to implementation</i>	Forest Mitigation Banks			
			Collected <i>for fiscal year</i>	Expended <i>for fiscal year</i>			Existing forest		Newly planted forest	
						Newly Created	Debited	Newly Created	Debited	
1994	448.5	\$125,937.82			NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	
1995	442.4	\$688,712.00			\$108,410.00	3,326.5	NR	NR	NR	
1996	397.2	\$775,751.00			\$134,113.00	2,760.0	NR	NR	NR	
1997	397.5	\$727,991.00			\$184,182.00	3,680.0	NR	NR	NR	
1998	688.8	\$794,623.70			\$190,700.00	3,680.0	NR	NR	NR	
1999	618.2	\$811,832.16			\$198,400.00	3,680.0	NR	NR	NR	
2000	606.6	\$1,107,570.78			\$212,094.00	NR	NR	NR	NR	
2001	674.7	\$1,497,141.60			\$222,698.00	NR	NR	NR	NR	
2002	903.0	\$1,249,410.70			\$267,411.00	NR	NR	NR	NR	
2003	760.5	\$1,374,934.68			NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	
2004	500.2	\$2,849,630.81	\$98,446.00		\$341,191.75	NR	NR	NR	NR	
2005	527.4	\$1,399,578.00	\$139,385.28		\$250,318.90	7,039.0	NR	NR	NR	
2006	557.0	\$2,649,434.58	\$40,068.18		\$333,197.00	8,945.0	NR	NR	NR	
2007	645.3	\$1,694,998.18	\$88,470.36		\$620,330.00	15,344.0	NR	NR	NR	
2008	1209.1	\$2,229,260.28	\$134,078.00	\$33,447.26	NR	19,002.0	160.50	24.00	0.00	17.90
2009	166.3	\$1,483,633.45	\$40,839.30	\$59,949.60	\$979,703.75	22,363.0	70.90	45.44	0.00	0.08
2010	210.4	\$1,964,316.62	\$30,056.40	\$98,000.00	\$1,130,710.59	22,813.5	0.00	39.70	0.00	0.00
2011	244.5	\$2,514,258.76	\$107,651.00	\$96,972.00	\$944,769.78	19,032.8	3.90	39.00	7.30	2.40
2012	358.3	\$4,491,638.62	\$140,757.00	\$9,820.00	\$872,476.38	18,162.3	7.80	27.10	2.13	0.00
2013	247.1	\$994,414.72	\$32,647.00	\$144,583.00	\$881,566.90	18,403.5	6.60	50.06	0.85	0.00
2014	403.9	\$453,152.61	\$125,568.00	\$127,124.00	\$917,125.66	18,979.5	0.00	22.81	0.00	17.02
2015	699.7	\$2,552,929.71	\$368,775.00	\$136,385.00	NR	NR	253.43	108.28	0.00	1.96
2016	195.3	\$848,025.00	\$165,831.00	\$48,217.00	NR	NR	221.88	39.41	0.00	12.36