

ABSTRACT

Title Guidelines for Environmental Management of Development in Montgomery County

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The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

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Abstract This document provides guidance to staff, applicants, and residents regarding appropriate techniques to protect natural resources during the development process. Staff use of these guidelines was approved by the Montgomery County Planning Board on February 13, 1997. The first *Staff Guidelines for the Protection of Steep Slopes and Stream Valleys* were originally approved in 1983.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING BOARD, M-NCPPC

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The Commission has three major functions:

- (1) The preparation, adoption, and, from time to time, amendment or extension of The General Plan (On Wedges and Corridors) for the Physical Development of the Maryland-Washington Regional District in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties;
- (2) The acquisition, development, operation, and maintenance of a public park system; and
- (3) In Prince George's County only, the operation of the entire County public recreation program.

The Commission operates in each county through a Planning Board appointed by and responsible to the county government. All local plans, recommendations on zoning amendments, administration of subdivision regulations, and general administration of parks are responsibilities of the Planning Boards.

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BACKGROUND

These guidelines are the latest version of a document that was first approved in 1983 as the *Staff Guidelines for the Protection of Steep Slopes and Stream Valleys*. The first comprehensive revision was completed eight years later, when the renamed *Guidelines for Environmental Management of Development in Montgomery County* were approved in March, 1991. At that time, it was anticipated that these guidelines would be a dynamic product, changing as the available data and science of natural resource protection improved. This version of the Environmental Guidelines, approved in February, 1997, is the result of the second comprehensive revision and is the third edition of the document.

This document is a compilation of existing policies and guidelines that affect the protection of sensitive natural resources during the development process. Maryland's Economic Growth, Resource Protection and Planning Act of 1992 established the requirement that all local governments provide for protection of sensitive areas during the planning and development process. The Environmental Guidelines are the keystone of M-NCPPC's efforts to protect sensitive areas in Montgomery County.

The Environmental Guidelines also aids in the implementation of other State and County programs and laws by providing one streamlined document that includes guidance to meet many different regulations and goals. These guidelines work in concert with the forest conservation legislation to support the goal of the Maryland Stream ReLeaf program to restore and conserve riparian forest buffers throughout the state. Protection of sensitive environmental resources is a key element of the State's Smart Growth strategy. The Chesapeake Bay Tributary Teams are implementing strategies for non-point source pollution reduction, relying on appropriate land use design, stream buffer protection and Best Management Practices (BMPs) such as implemented through the Guidelines.

In addition, federal requirements for lower concentrations of contaminants in waterways can also be partially achieved through the concepts found in the guidelines. The *Countywide Stream Protection Strategy* (CSPS), developed jointly by the County Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and M-NCPPC, provides assessments of the quality of county watersheds and assigns them to watershed management categories. This document is a key element in implementing the watershed protection tools that are recommended for each CSPS watershed management category.

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* No longer with M-NCPPC