

***Benefits Of
Forest & Trees***

MAINTAINING AND PROVIDING TREES AND FOREST IN OUR increasingly urban landscape is a vital part of protecting our natural resources and instilling community character. Forest areas in the natural landscape filter ground water, reduce surface runoff, help alleviate flooding, lower stream temperature, and supply necessary habitat for wildlife. Within our cities, they contribute to the cooling and cleansing of our air, intercept airborne particulates, and take up gaseous pollutants. Trees improve the quality of life in communities by providing for recreation, aesthetics, climate control and beautification. They also reduce energy needs and the cost of cooling and heating. As development pressure is exerted on the remaining forests and trees within the County, measures must be taken to ensure that existing trees are incorporated into the development design, and that new trees are planted in place of those which must be removed.

***Provisions Of
The County Forest
Conservation Law***

THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY FOREST CONSERVATION LAW was developed in accordance with the Maryland Forest Conservation Act of 1991 and the recommendations of the Montgomery County *Tree Report* (1990). It establishes a program for forest conservation which applies to both public and private tracts of land which are undergoing development. As of July 1, 1992, development applications must be accompanied by a forest stand delineation and a forest conservation plan. The forest conservation plan must be approved along with the development application before land clearing or disturbance can begin.

Forest conservation begins with preservation of existing trees wherever possible, and ends with planting additional trees to compensate for unavoidable loss. Certain trees and forested areas are targeted as priorities for retention, protection, or reestablishment. To ensure the survival of designated forest retention areas, the forest conservation plan must include both short- and long-term protection. Noncompliance fees and other methods of enforcement will be applied when violation of the approved forest and tree save plans occur. The requirements for reforestation apply when any forest on a tract is cleared, and become more stringent when clearing falls below a specified percentage of the site. Tracts having less than a specified percentage of existing forest must be afforested up to the required percentage.

A preferred sequence for reforestation and afforestation is also established in the law. First priority is planting on-site, then off-site in the same watershed, and finally off-site anywhere within the county. If it can be shown that no acceptable sites are available, the law allows for and requires payment into the county Forest Conservation Fund. This fund will be used to accomplish the required planting within two years after receipt of the money. Any portion of the money designated for reforestation which is not spent within this period will be returned to the person who provided it.

