

**ROCK CREEK PARK
MILKHOUSE RUN AND BINGHAM RUN
REGENERATIVE STORMWATER CONVEYANCES
PRELIMINARY & FINAL SITE DEVELOPMENT PLANS**

Northwest, Washington, DC

Finding of No Significant Impact

JUN 30 2011

Pursuant to Section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act, the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (40 CFR, Parts 1500-1508), and the National Capital Planning Commission's Environmental and Historic Preservation Policies and Procedures, I have evaluated the preliminary and final site development plans for the Milkhouse Run and Bingham Run regenerative stormwater conveyances, located in Rock Creek Park in Northwest Washington, DC, as shown on NCPC Map File No. 3.80(03.40)43312, and the May 2011 Environmental Assessment (EA) prepared by the National Park Service (NPS), and I have determined that the preliminary and final site development plans for the regenerative stormwater conveyances as proposed, will not have a significant impact on the human environment. All public comments submitted during the public review period were taken into consideration prior to making the FONSI determination.

Proposed Action

The proposal will install "regenerative stormwater conveyances" in Milkhouse Run and Bingham Run. A regenerative stormwater conveyance (RSC) is a man-made structure that utilizes a series of shallow aquatic pools, native vegetation, sand, and other natural materials to absorb and control the flow of stormwater. One RSC will be constructed along Milkhouse Run and a second RSC will be constructed along Bingham Run, both degraded headwater tributaries of Rock Creek.

The EA analyzes two alternatives, a no action alternative (Alternative A) and the proposed action (Alternative B), installation of two regenerative stormwater conveyances. The proposed action (Alternative B), which the EA identifies as the "preferred" alternative, responds to the damaged, incised condition of Milkhouse Run and Bingham Run resulting from recurring powerful, high-volume stormwater flows. Without intervention, the health of these Rock Creek tributaries will continue to deteriorate. The proposed action will utilize natural materials (sand, vegetation, rocks) to restore the watercourses to their natural, healthy condition.

Standard for evaluation

Under NEPA, the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations, and NCPC Environmental and Historic Preservation Policies and Procedures, an EA is sufficient and an Environmental Impact Statement need not be prepared if the EA supports the finding that the

federal action will not significantly affect the human environment. The EA for this project was prepared in accordance with these standards.

Potential Impacts

The EA analyzes direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts for both alternatives related to the following topic areas: Cultural Resources (Cultural Landscapes and Historic Structures/Districts); Topography and Soils; Hydrology; Water Quality; Wetlands; Floodplains; Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat; Vegetation; Park Operations and Management; and Visitor Use and Experience. The EA considers and dismisses the following topics from further analysis: Transportation/Traffic; Health and Safety; Air Quality; Cultural Resources (Museum Objects, Ethnographic Resources, and Archeological Resources); Soundscapes; Rare, Threatened, Endangered, Candidate Species and Species of Special Concern; Socioeconomic Resources and Adjacent Lands; and Environmental Justice. The topics dismissed from further analysis are eliminated since all potential resource impacts (direct, indirect, cumulative, short-term, and long-term) from the action alternative (Alternative B) are deemed to be non-existent or negligible.

The following table summarizes projected impacts to each affected resource for both alternatives based on the descriptions and definitions provided in the Environmental Assessment document (Chapter 4: Environmental Consequences).

Topic Area	Alternative A - No Action	Alternative B - Action
Cultural Landscapes	Direct/Indirect: <i>Minor Long-Term Adverse</i> Cumulative: <i>Negligible</i>	Direct/Indirect: <i>Minor Short-Term Adverse</i> Cumulative: <i>Long-Term Beneficial</i>
Historic Structures/ Districts	Direct/Indirect: <i>Long-Term Minor-Moderate Adverse</i> Cumulative: <i>Negligible</i>	Direct/Indirect: <i>Long-Term Beneficial</i> Cumulative: <i>Negligible</i>
Topography And Soils	Direct/Indirect: <i>Long-Term Moderate Adverse</i> Cumulative: <i>Long-Term Minor-Moderate Adverse</i>	Direct/Indirect: <i>Short-Term Minor Adverse; Long-Term Beneficial</i> Cumulative: <i>Short-Term/Long-Term Minor Adverse; Long-Term Beneficial</i>
Hydrology	Direct/Indirect: <i>Long-Term Moderate Adverse</i> Cumulative: <i>Long-Term Moderate Adverse</i>	Direct/Indirect: <i>Negligible</i> Cumulative: <i>Negligible</i>
Water Quality	Direct/Indirect: <i>Long-Term Minor Adverse</i> Cumulative: <i>Beneficial</i>	Direct/Indirect: <i>Negligible</i> Cumulative: <i>Beneficial</i>
Wetlands	Direct/Indirect: <i>Long-Term Moderate Adverse</i> Cumulative: <i>Long-Term Moderate Adverse</i>	Direct/Indirect: <i>Short-Term Minor Adverse</i> Cumulative: <i>Long-Term Beneficial</i>
Floodplains	Direct/Indirect: <i>Long-Term Minor Adverse</i> Cumulative: <i>Negligible</i>	Direct/Indirect: <i>Long-Term Beneficial</i> Cumulative: <i>Negligible</i>
Wildlife And Wildlife Habitat	Direct/Indirect: <i>Long-Term Minor Adverse</i> Cumulative: <i>Negligible</i>	Direct/Indirect: <i>Short-Term Minor Adverse</i> Cumulative: <i>Negligible</i>

Vegetation	Direct/Indirect: <i>Long-Term Minor Adverse</i> Cumulative: <i>Long-Term Negligible-Minor Adverse</i>	Direct/Indirect: <i>Long-Term Minor Adverse</i> Cumulative: <i>Long-Term Negligible-Minor Adverse</i>
Park Operations and Management	Direct/Indirect: <i>Long-Term Minor Adverse</i> Cumulative: <i>Long-Term Minor Adverse</i>	Direct/Indirect: <i>Short-Term Minor Adverse; Long-Term Minor Adverse</i> Cumulative: <i>Long-Term Minor Adverse</i>
Visitor Use And Experience	Direct/Indirect: <i>Long-Term Minor Adverse</i> Cumulative: <i>Long-Term Beneficial</i>	Direct/Indirect: <i>Beneficial</i> Cumulative: <i>Long-Term Beneficial</i>

The table shows that the project (Alternative B) will have no adverse impacts greater than the “minor” threshold. In contrast, the “no action” alternative (Alternative A) is projected to have adverse impacts that meet “moderate” thresholds related to historic structure/districts, topography and soils, hydrology, and wetlands.

To satisfy its responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the National Park Service (NPS) conducted an Environmental Assessment (EA) of the project, resulting in a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) that was signed on June 22, 2011. Because this is a federal project located within the District of Columbia, NCPC has an independent responsibility under NEPA. As such, NCPC staff has reviewed the proposal, its EA, and all comments received during the public review period, in accordance with NCPC’s Environmental and Historic Preservation Policies and Procedures, and drafted this FONSI in reference to the NPS EA study.

Pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), the NPS has determined that the project will have no adverse effect on historic properties and the DC State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) concurred with this determination, with the condition that the DC SHPO would be consulted if any potential adverse effects were identified through the EA process. Staff notes that no additional adverse effects were identified in the EA and as such, the DC SHPO condition has been satisfied. Because this is a federal project located within the District of Columbia, NCPC has an independent responsibility to comply with Section 106 of the NHPA. NCPC staff has reviewed the proposal, and concurs with the NPS and the DC SHPO’s determination.



Marcel C. Acosta
Executive Director