



# Executive Director's Recommendation

Commission Meeting: July 9, 2020

<b>PROJECT</b> <b>Fletchers Field Park Stream Restoration and Floodplain Enhancement</b> Northeast Branch Stream Valley Park 5200 Kenilworth Avenue Riverdale, Maryland	<b>NCPC FILE NUMBER</b> 8177
<b>SUBMITTED BY</b> Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission	<b>NCPC MAP FILE NUMBER</b> 76.41.02(38.00)45131
<b>REVIEW AUTHORITY</b> Approval of Master Plans for use by the Commission and Capper Cramton Act Review per 40 U.S.C. § 8722(a) and (b)(1) and 46 Stat. 482	<b>APPLICANT'S REQUEST</b> Approval of preliminary and final site development plans
	<b>PROPOSED ACTION</b> Approve preliminary and final site development plans
	<b>ACTION ITEM TYPE</b> Consent Calendar

## PROJECT SUMMARY

The Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC), Prince George's County Department of Parks and Recreation, has submitted preliminary and final site development plans for stream restoration and floodplain improvements at Fletchers Field Park located in Riverdale, Maryland. The 46-acre Fletchers Field Park is situated within the Northeast Branch Stream Valley Park (Unit No. 2). The Northeast Branch is part of the larger Anacostia River watershed, which encompasses a total of 176 miles within Maryland and the District of Columbia. Fletchers Field Park is owned by the State of Maryland, under the jurisdiction of the M-NCPPC and managed by the Prince George's County Department of Parks and Recreation. The existing park currently includes surface parking, a playground area, two baseball diamonds, a football field, and a mix of open and forested land. Since the park property was acquired with federal funding appropriated under the 1930 Capper-Cramton Act (CCA), NCPC has approval authority over improvements on this site.

The project site measures approximately 40,000 square feet, is located completely within the 100-year floodplain and includes an unnamed tributary, open space, and intermittent trees. The proposal includes removing approximately 30 trees within the project area; constructing a new, 760-foot long meandering stream channel with a stepped pool system and floodplain bench; establishing approximately 31,000 square feet of forested wetlands; and establishing approximately 8,500 square feet of new emergent wetlands. In addition, the project proposes a new 100-foot long concrete sidewalk extension from an existing playground area terminating at an overlook with educational signage. M-NCPPC proposes to replant the project site with a net increase of approximately 200 trees and an acre of understory wetland vegetation.

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Overall, the project will assist Prince George's County in meeting its MS-4 permit obligations<sup>1</sup> and improve water quality in the region.

### KEY INFORMATION

- NCPC has approval authority for this project because the improvements are located on property acquired with federal funding appropriated under the 1930 Capper-Cramton Act (CCA). The CCA provided for the acquisition of lands in Maryland and Virginia to develop a comprehensive park, parkway, and playground system in the National Capital.
- All Capper-Cramton parkland in Maryland is titled to the State, and under the jurisdiction to the Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission (M-NCPPC). The Prince George's County Department of Parks and Recreation, which is part of the M-NCPPC, manages the parkland.
- The project is an undertaking of the Prince George's County Clean Water Partnership (CWP) which is a public-private partnership committed to upgrading stormwater infrastructure in the County and improving water quality throughout the region.

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### RECOMMENDATION

The Commission:

**Approves** the preliminary and final site development plans for the stream restoration and floodplain enhancement project in Fletcher's Field Park consisting of a new meandering stream channel and floodplain bench, 31,000 square feet of new forested wetlands, 8,500 square feet of emergent wetlands, and a 100-foot sidewalk extension with educational signage.

**Adopts** the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the project based on its assessment of potential future project impacts to the natural and manmade environment and proposed mitigation pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act.

### PROJECT REVIEW TIMELINE

<b>Previous actions</b>	None.
<b>Remaining actions (anticipated)</b>	None.

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<sup>1</sup> Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) refers to a collection of structures designed to gather stormwater and discharge it into local streams and rivers. MS4 Permits are a requirement of the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) for urban areas

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## PROJECT ANALYSIS

### Executive Summary

NCPC staff analyzed the proposed project in accordance with the 1930 Capper-Cramton Act and the subsequent 1931 agreement between NCPC and the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC), which grants NCPC approval over development plans for improvements on land purchased with Capper-Crampton funds. Along with allocating funds for a comprehensive park, parkway, and playground system in the nation's capital, the CCA allocated funds for the acquisition of certain enumerated stream valleys in order to preserve land and to protect the water quality of the region's waterways. In addition to funding for acquisition, the CCA authorized the National Capital Park and Planning Commission (now NCPC), to approve any development projects in parks acquired under the CCA to ensure protection and preservation of the region's valuable watersheds and parklands in perpetuity.

Staff finds that the proposed project will not alter the use or character of the park or watershed and will ensure the continued use of the land for park purposes as well as stormwater conveyance and water quality improvement. In addition, the project is consistent with a number of policies in the Environment and Parks and Open Space Elements of the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital. Therefore, recommends that the Commission **approves the preliminary and final site development plans for the stream restoration and floodplain enhancement project in Fletcher's Field Park consisting of a new meandering stream channel and floodplain bench, 31,000 square feet of new forested wetlands, 8,500 square feet of emergent wetlands, and a 100-foot sidewalk extension with educational signage.**

### Analysis

Pursuant to the 1930 Capper-Cramton Act, the NCPC's review focuses on protecting the character and setting of stream valley parklands, ensuring that potential improvement is for public park-related purposes. As previously noted, with the project intent to improve the health of the park environment as well as the larger Anacostia River watershed, staff finds the project to be an appropriate use consistent with the Capper-Cramton Act. Although the project would remove some existing trees, M-NCPPC would replant the area with a net increase of trees and understory vegetation to mitigate the removal of existing vegetation necessary to perform this work.

## CONFORMANCE TO EXISTING PLANS, POLICIES AND RELATED GUIDANCE

### Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital

As the central planning agency for the federal government in the National Capital Region, NCPC is charged with planning for the appropriate and orderly development of the Region and the conservation of its important natural and historical features. Staff finds that the project is generally consistent with several policies from the Environment and Parks and Open Space Elements of the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital.

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### **National Historic Preservation Act**

Under the Capper Crampton Act, NCPC has an approval authority and therefore, an individual compliance responsibility for Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). As such, NCPC concurs with a finding by the Maryland Historic Trust that there are no historic properties in the area of potential effect, therefore the project does not have the potential to result in any adverse effects to historic resources. Thus, NCPC has completed the Commission's review responsibility for the project under the NHPA.

### **National Environmental Policy Act**

NCPC has an independent review obligation for the project under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) based on its approval authority under the 1930 Capper-Cramton Act. As such, staff reviewed the proposal in accordance with Commission NEPA regulations and prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) to evaluate the impacts of the proposed project on the natural and built environment and proposed mitigation strategies compared with a "no action" alternative. The EA was issued for public comment on June 12, 2020 through June 26, 2020. No comments were received. As such, staff recommends the Commission **adopts the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the project based on its assessment of potential future project impacts to the natural and manmade environment and proposed mitigation pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act.**

### **CONSULTATION**

Prior to the project submission to NCPC, M-NCPPC consulted with State and County agencies during project design and development including the Maryland Historic Trust and the Maryland Department of the Environment. M-NCPPC also hosted a public outreach session on June 11, 2020 to inform the local citizens of the stream restoration project.

### **ONLINE REFERENCE**

The following supporting documents for this project are available online at [www.ncpc.gov](http://www.ncpc.gov):

- Submission Package
- Environmental Assessment (EA)
- Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

Prepared by Stephanie Free  
06/11/2020

### **POWERPOINT (ATTACHED)**

# Fletchers Field Park Stream Restoration and Floodplain Enhancement

Northeast Branch Stream Valley Park  
5200 Kenilworth Avenue, Riverdale, MD

## Preliminary and Final Site Development Plans

M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation, Prince George's County

# Project Summary



**Commission Meeting Date:** July 9, 2020

**NCPC Review Authority:** Capper Cramton Act Review per 40 U.S.C. § 8722(a) and (b)(1) and 46 Stat. 482

**Applicant Request:** Approval of preliminary and final site development plans

**Session:** Consent Calendar

**NCPC Review Officer:** Stephanie Free

**NCPC File Number:** 8177

## Project Summary:

The Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission (Department of Parks and Recreation, Prince George's County) has submitted preliminary and final site development plans for a stream restoration and floodplain enhancement project. The goal of this project is to relocate an existing stream channel to the center of the existing floodplain and restore the stream channel using natural channel design.

The project site is located within Fletchers Field Park, which is owned by the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission, encompassing mostly open grass with scattered trees and understory vegetation. The project would establish a new 760 linear foot meandering stream channel, with a stabilized stream bank, intermittent pools and riprap to create a healthy stream environment. The project would also establish 31,000 square feet of new forested wetland area and 8,500 square feet of emergent wetlands adjacent to the new stream channel. Lastly, the project would construct a new 100-foot long sidewalk extension that terminates at an educational station consisting of signage that explains the benefits of wetlands, aligned to the west from an existing sidewalk and playground area near the project site.

# Site Location







# Proposed Site - Closeup

