

Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy

People and Wildlife Living in Harmony

Environmental Policy

2001

The Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy (LWC) is a non-profit group of volunteers who share a common goal of protecting and perpetuating natural habitats for the benefit of both people and wildlife. The LWC concurs with the stated environmental goals of the draft revised Comprehensive Plan (page 2-2, paragraph 4) and believes that the Green Infrastructure is a big step in the right direction toward achieving those goals. However, we find a number of environmental issues remain inadequately addressed to ensure the sustainability of Loudoun's natural resources and ecosystem health. Therefore, the following is the LWC policy with regard to the Comprehensive Plan. We would very much like to see these items incorporated into the Plan and County ordinances where appropriate.

Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy fully supports:

- Creation of a Department of Natural Resources accountable to the county administrator, having not only a review/oversight function, but also a strong program (i.e., outreach, education, citizen monitoring) responsibility.
- Adoption of the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act to protect the health of our watershed.
- Adoption of the VA Storm water Management Ordinance as the rule in Loudoun County to better control erosion.
- Creation of a tree save ordinance as well as other conservation guidelines to reduce water consumption and air emissions.
- Adoption of an effective Dark Sky Ordinance which will reduce light pollution and trespass in Loudoun County.
- Preservation of more open space (parks, green ways and trails, etc.) by proffer, purchase, or easement. In regional comparison, Loudoun County is very poor in acres of parkland and open space preserved.
- Allowing only passive recreation in flood plains, stream valleys, wetlands and other environmentally sensitive areas (i.e., no golf courses, ball fields or parking lots).
- The concepts of smart growth, factoring into consideration not only existing man built infrastructure but also watershed-based ecosystem structure.
- Requiring development be "designed with nature," i.e., site plans incorporating, not destroying, the natural topography, vegetation and hydrology.
- Initiation of a ground water/drinking water program to monitor the quantity and quality of our source waters.
- Monitoring the quality of our surface waters, using citizen volunteers as well as county staff to collect quality controlled data to be used locally, regionally and nationally.
- Protection of streams, stream corridors and associated flood plains, wetlands and springs with 50 to 100 foot buffers depending on topography, soils and land use. Channelization of buffer areas must be prevented. Buffers may be reduced in commercial areas by use

of filtration systems and other methods to prevent high volume flows and pollutant contaminated runoff from entering the stream. Streams must be defined as any waterway, intermittent or perennial, that drains 70 or more acres (example would be Fairfax County Environmental Quality Corridors). Piping of first and second order streams must be prohibited. (The draft Green Infrastructure does not protect first order streams that have little or no flood plains.)

- Determining the county's "carrying capacity" or number of houses the natural environment can tolerate and remain sustainable. The projected 100,000 houses in the next 20 years (8 percent growth) will make maintaining sustainable ecosystems impossible.

Finally, the plan must require an implementation plan and action agenda for the ordinances and requirements of the new Comprehensive Plan to be achieved. Staff must be directed to use the many new and existing tools (Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act, Va Storm water management ordinance, PDRs or TMDLs, just to name a few) and grant less waivers and exceptions in order to protect our natural heritage. The costs of restoration of the environment will many times exceed the cost of protecting the natural resources we presently enjoy but are losing fast.