



November 2, 2021

Friends of Quiet Waters Park
Position on the Parkside Preserve development

Quiet Waters Park opened 30 years ago as a purposely-planned passive use nature park. The Park is now a respite for almost a million people a year. Visitors come to enjoy the peacefulness of the park, walk on the wooded trails, appreciate the abundance of flora and fauna in their natural habitat, and appreciate the views both within the park and out to the surrounding landscapes.

The Friends of Quiet Waters Park (FQWP), originally formed as the Quiet Waters Study Committee to guide the original development of the park, was formalized at the opening of Quiet Waters Park in 1990 in part to continue the citizen input that was so essential to the formation of the park. Ever since, FQWP has been raising and investing funds for the operation, preservation, development, and enrichment of Quiet Waters Park and furthering public education, awareness, research, interest in, and appreciation for, the history, ecology, environment, and recreational aspects of the park.

The Board of Directors of the Friends of Quiet Waters Park, respectfully submit the following comments on the current Parkside Preserve development.

Quiet Waters Park is treasured by visitors for the escape from the urban setting. From the parks beginning 30 years ago, the Master Plan stated the importance of the natural environment and since then Quiet Waters Park has been beautifully preserved by rangers, maintenance staff and large numbers of dedicated volunteers who have a passion and stewardship for all that the park has to offer. They have maintained the ecosystems as well as the trails which provide visitors' access to these environments.

Adjacent uses always affect a site. View sheds, noise, pollution and changes in the landscape are all important to human use. The Parkside Preserve construction is currently creating noise pollution and more importantly, changing the stream flow on to the parkland. This is easily detected while hiking on the Pavilion Trail.

Habitat disturbance is experienced even more acutely by the park's permanent residents, the flora and fauna. The forest clearing for the Parkside Preserve, has already created a loss of habitat. And this loss is now affecting the park and its more permanent residents. The forest edge adjacent to the development site will now be changed by the loss of adjacent forest. More sunlight and introduced species will alter the plants and animals that previously existed in this area of the park.

Quiet Waters Park is part of a watershed that drains to Harness Creek and South River and ultimately to the Chesapeake Bay. Watersheds support a wide variety of plants and wildlife and this is especially true of undeveloped parkland. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, sediment is the most common pollutant in rivers, streams, lakes and reservoirs. Their studies find that natural erosion produces nearly 30 percent of the total sediment in the United States and accelerated erosion from human use of land accounts for the remaining 70 percent. The most concentrated sediment released comes from construction activities. It is therefore required by law that during construction all water and soil be maintained on site and that offsite conditions should not be affected. The current development at Parkside Preserve is breaching these environmental requirements. Runoff from the site is depositing clay particles and silt in the park creek bed and stream flow is being altered with the water retention on site. Siltation in stream beds disrupts the natural food chain by destroying the habitat where the smallest stream organisms live and also prevents animals from seeing food. Additionally, the murky water and silt deposits prevent natural vegetation from growing. This will have an impact on the surrounding ecosystem. During heavier rain events, the silted runoff effects are seen further downstream. These runoff events have an impact on the littoral conditions of the creeks and ultimately the rivers and the bay. If these adverse conditions are not addressed, the permanent effects to the park will have to be mitigated at a later date by the park staff at significant expense. The park's budget has not increased to cover the cost of environmental management. Volunteers and grants are being used to augment the cost of degrading conditions. An additional degraded site will tax a stressed condition.

FQWP understands that adjacent uses are beyond our purview, however, we share many of the same concerns with the park neighbors and think the effect to the parkland should be controlled and mitigated. We strongly encourage additional plantings in the Parkside Preserve setback area to help mitigate the forest edge effect, a strict adherence to the runoff requirements and a return to the pre-development stream flow to maintain the ecosystem and health of the watershed.