United States Department of the Interior

National Capital Parks-East
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Interior Region 1- National Capital Area
1900 Anacostia Drive, S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20020

IN REPLY REFER TO:
1.A.1 (NCR-NACE)

January 13, 2023

RE: Public scoping announcement for Fort Dupont Creek – Stream and Wetland Restoration Project

Dear Sir or Madam:

The National Park Service (NPS), in partnership with the District of Columbia Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE), is proposing watershed restoration activities along Fort Dupont Creek located in Fort Dupont Park in southeast Washington, DC. The project is located on parkland administered by NPS. The project is bound by Ely Place and Ridge Road to the north, Alabama Avenue to the east and southeast, Massachusetts Avenue to the south, and the CSX Benning Yard to the west. The Fort Dupont watershed stream network has been divided into 9 project areas (PA-01 to PA-09) with stream and/or wetland restoration proposed in each (Attachment A – Overview Map). PA-01 through PA-09 is proposed to be primarily stream design projects along approximately 18,600-ft of stream combined with outfall stabilization and infrastructure project work. PA-01 through PA-08 are located in Fort Dupont Park proper, while PA-09 is in a ribbon park outside the main unit of the Fort Dupont Park.

The purpose of the restoration is to improve stream, floodplain, and wetland conditions in the Fort Dupont Creek Watershed by:

- reconnecting the existing eroded channels to the historic wetland/floodplain elevations;
- stabilizing stormwater outfalls and streambanks to prevent export of sediment and associated nutrients;
- improving instream water quality and aquatic habitat conditions;
- removing fish barriers;
- preserving the existing riparian forest and minimizing impacts to the maximum extent practicable; and
- enhancing riparian conditions through establishment of native vegetative communities and invasive species control.

The restoration is needed to restore the degraded stream channel that exhibits high rates of bank erosion and channel incision (downcutting) and degraded habitats caused by past and current factors such as excessive, concentrated stormwater flow from outside the park boundaries and past alterations of the stream network and valley associated with land development within the

Fort Dupont Park. In addition to improving downstream water quality in support of the ongoing effort to achieve District of Columbia water quality standards for the Anacostia River watershed.

General Study Area Description

The project areas are generally forested with steep valley slopes. Fort Dupont Creek that follows through the project areas is primarily perennial along the main stream network with some upper reaches appearing to be intermittent or ephemeral. The following describes the existing conditions throughout the project areas:

- Active, extreme stream bank erosion and stream channel incision;
- Down cutting stream channels draining wetlands and degrading instream habitat;
- Headcuts forming along tributaries and drainage channels from unmanaged stormwater flows;
- Aging infrastructure within the stream valley being impacted by stream channel instabilities (e.g., exposed sewer lines);
- Trees along the stream falling due to channel widening; and
- Several highly invasive plant species overtaking portions of the project area.

Proposed Action

The NPS and DOEE, have proposed several restorations approaches within the nine project areas to ensure channel stability, while creating and maintaining aquatic and terrestrial habitat features and enhancement of the riparian forest structure. A concept diagram of the proposed stream and wetland restoration design is attached (Attachment B – Proposed Restoration Approaches Maps). The following are the proposed restoration approaches with a brief description:

- Baseflow Channel/Regenerative Stream Design – A restoration approach that involves filling a poor quality, unstable, deep stream gully with sand and mulch and building a series of rock structures at a higher elevation that mimic natural stream riffle and pool sequences, while minimizing impacts to adjacent riparian and wetland resources within the stream valley.
- Regenerative Stormwater Conveyance (RSC) – An approach that involves filling the existing enlarged outfall channel with sand and mulch and building a series of rock structures to form a series of aquatic pools to help maintain the channel bed at a higher elevation.
- Stage 0/Wetland Complex – A restoration approach that involves either filling-in the incised channel to reconnect to the existing floodplain or lowering the existing floodplain to re-activate the historical floodplain; installing valley wide, wood grade controls (e.g., floodplain log sills); rough floodplain grading to provide low spots for water to collect; and planting the restored floodplain with native riparian and wetland species.
- Low-tech Process-Based Restoration Approach – This approach is a cost-effective, hand-built solution that helps repair degraded streams through the addition of wooden structures across the stream channel called Post-Assisted Log Structures (PALS) simulating a natural log jam.
- Storm Drain Daylighting – This approach involves removal of a closed system pipe and exposing the storm flow to the surface rather than keeping these flows within the existing storm drain infrastructure.

- Channel Realignment/Oxbow Wetland Depressions – An approach that involves modifying stream dimensions and flow paths to provide a more stable and complex shape.
- Culvert Replacement – This approach involves addressing degraded pipe and concrete box culvert conditions and integrating them with the stream restoration in the project areas.

After construction is completed, DOEE would stabilize disturbed areas with native vegetation and would replace any trees removed during construction with species and quantities negotiated with NPS. DOEE would also implement an invasive species management program to suppress reestablishment of nonnative invasive plant species allowing natives to establish following construction. It is anticipated that special conditions of permits to be obtained for the project will require NPS and DOEE to conduct post-construction monitoring to assess success of the restoration project and to perform any necessary remedial actions.

Virtual Public Meeting

The DOEE and NPS will be preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) to evaluate the environmental impacts proposed stream restoration project in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Public participation is vital to the planning process. There are several ways to get involved. The NEPA process will start with a 30-day public scoping period where the NPS and DOEE seek public input regarding issues or concerns associated with implementing the project. Feedback received during scoping will be used to inform refinements to the stream and wetland restoration design.

To provide information about the project, the DOEE and NPS will be hosting a virtual public meeting on January 31, 2023 from 6:00-8:00pm online. If you like to participate in the meeting, please go to https://dcnet.webex.com/weblink/register/r78594397aab0d9bfa0fad6f2e908c733 and register. WebEx meeting. Pre-registration is not required, attendees will be able to register even after the meeting has started.

The meeting will be recorded and will be posted at https://parkplanning.nps.gov/projectHome.cfm?projectID=68832 for review at your convenience if you are not able to attend the live meeting. If you do not have access to the internet and would like to listen to the presentation over the phone, please use the following phone number and meeting code:

Call in Number: 1-202-860-2110
Access # : 782542

How to Comment

To provide comments online or get additional information on the proposed project, please visit the NPS planning website at https://parkplanning.nps.gov/projectHome.cfm?projectID=68832. The public is invited to review the proposed strategy and provide comments through March 2, 2023. If you prefer to mail your comments, make sure they are postmarked by March 2, 2023 to receive consideration. Mail comments to the following address:

Superintendent
ATTN: Fort Dupont Creek Stream and Wetland Restoration Project
National Capital Parks – East
1900 Anacostia Drive, SE
Washington, DC 20020

Thank you for your interest and participation in this planning process. We look forward to your comments and appreciate your feedback on the proposed project, which we believe will benefit the Anacostia River watershed. If you have questions or need additional information, please contact Mike Commisso, Chief of Resource Management, at michael_commisso@nps.gov at 202-494-6905.

Sincerely,

Tara Morrison
Superintendent

Enclosures: Overview Map
Stream and Wetland Restoration Project – Proposed Restoration Approaches Maps (Upstream, Middle, and Downstream Sections)