

Countywide Stream Protection Ordinance

-Submitted by Tim Goodfellow
Frederick County Planning

On November 1, 2007, the Frederick County Board of Commissioners (BoCC), by unanimous consent, directed Planning Division Staff to proceed with a Countywide Stream Protection Ordinance, modeled after Ordinance #07-24-464, Waterbody Buffer Requirements in the Linganore Watershed Protection Area, adopted in July 2007. The BoCC held several worksessions to discuss and develop a draft Countywide Buffer Ordinance.

Stream buffers are critical components of the landscape and provide a myriad of ecological, economic, and aesthetic benefits. Riparian buffers help to attenuate floodwaters, assimilate and sequester nutrients, stabilize stream banks, and filter sediment. They provide leaf and limb litter to the stream and act as wildlife corridors for movement and migration. Riparian areas are transition areas between uplands portions of the landscape and the aquatic environment and contain high plant and animal species diversity plus unique soil types.

The draft Countywide Stream Buffer Ordinance established 3 tiers of waterbody setback, based on the extent of slope present in the riparian corridor--100 feet, 150 feet or 175 feet. The draft ordinance minimizes encroachment and disturbance of riparian areas by separating land clearing, grading and construction activities from streams, rivers, lakes and ponds. If the ordinance were adopted, the new setbacks would be applied to all subdivision lots or resubdivision lots submitted for approval after ordinance adoption; it would not apply to existing parcels or lots on record.

On Wednesday, June 18, 2008, the Frederick County Planning Commission held the first public hearing on the Ordinance and sent a recommendation of approval to the BoCC, who will hold another public hearing at a later date.

Please contact Tim Goodfellow at 301.600.2508 or tgoodfellow@fredco-md.net of the County's Planning Division for more information