

Carol DeSoto

From: Alex Winter <alexbillwinter@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 30, 2021 4:53 PM
To: Carol DeSoto
Subject: Comments for record of Sept. 22 hearing re: Amendment to 2016 Comp Plan-Airport.
Attachments: Airport expansion - high biodiversity (1) (3).png; Biodiversity Hotspot - Inappropriate for Industrial Zoning.png; Mattawoman RLA Eligible (2) (1) (6).pdf; Mallows brochure 14 after scoping B4 DEIS (1) (2).pptx

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----- Forwarded message -----

From: Bonnie Bick <bonniebick@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, Sep 30, 2021 at 4:01 PM
Subject: Fwd: VERSION THREE Draft letter RE: Dean EDITED BY BILL
To: Bill Winter <alexbillwinter@gmail.com>

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Alex Winter <alexbillwinter@gmail.com>
Date: Wed, Jan 20, 2021 at 1:33 PM
Subject: VERSION THREE Draft letter RE: Dean EDITED BY BILL
To: Bonnie Bick <bonniebick@gmail.com>, Bill Winter <alexbillwinter@gmail.com>

There are so many environmental problems that sometimes it is hard to know how to prioritize them, I'm writing to bring one pivotal issue to your attention. Recently Dean Naujoks brought a shot of new energy for the critically important Mattawoman Creek and its renowned fishery. He was able to do this with vision, skill, clarity, and persuasiveness.

Background: Charles County's 2016 Comprehensive Plan includes the Watershed Conservation District (WCD), an innovative approach to saving fish habitat. This creative conservation land-use tool is unique in the state of Maryland. Loss of forest and polluted runoff is the chief threat to Mattawoman Creek's health. The WCD places limits on impervious surfaces in the still-undeveloped areas of the watershed, making it a critical and essential tool in the effort to save this beautiful creek that is at its tipping point. The high value of Mattawoman has long been recognized by Maryland DNR, US Fish, and Wildlife Service, and other state and federal agencies as a critical tributary and fishery that should be conserved for the health of the Potomac River and the Chesapeake Bay. Here is a link to the Slide Show that introduces the Interagency Study: Case for the protection of Mattawoman Creek.

The powerful development industry reacted to the WCD with determination and action. Now, the latest group of county decision-makers are in the process of presently working to weaken the WCD and remove other smart growth protections.

The Potomac Riverkeeper helped greatly with the Mattawoman-Nanjemoy Rural Legacy Area that is included in the 2016 Comprehensive Plan. There is so much development pressure in the Mattawoman basin, any county delay of the inclusion of sensitive areas in the RLA program could mean their complete loss to development. In response to the delay approach, **Dean made two points, the important role that Mattawoman clean water plays in the health of the Potomac, and that Mattawoman Creek and Nanjemoy Creek are anchors to the Mallowes - Potomac River National Marine Sanctuary (NMS) and their viability and health are critically important for the economic success of the first Chesapeake Bay NMS.**

Dean's clarity helped intensify our efforts to secure inclusion of all Mattawoman eligible land into the RLA. At the first county hearing Dean's testimony, along with that of many others, persuaded enough members of the Planning Commission that Mattawoman should be included. In response, the staff scheduled a second hearing and came back with a new map, that included 14 thousand acres of Mattawoman land. At the second hearing on the improved map, testimony from Dean and others pointed to the high biodiversity hotspots that were not included, but clearly should be included in the RLA. Then the Charles County staff drew up yet another map with an additional 10.9 thousand Mattawoman acres and forwarded to have a hearing before the County Commissioners. At that hearing, Dean and other environmental group representatives and citizens again stressed the importance of including all the eligible biodiverse Mattawoman hotspots. The County Commissioner discussion had awareness that some eligible areas of Mattawoman were excluded, but the decision was made that further Mattawoman acreage could be nominated at a future time. We wanted the county to include all the eligible RLA Mattawoman lands. We were keenly aware that some of the most important biodiversity hotspots would be excluded because their further protection conflicts with Charles County's present goal of removing 600 acres of forested Mattawoman stream valley from the WCD. This forested area is recognized as one of the high value biodiversity hotspots in the state. The WCD restrictions stand in the way of the expansion of a small historic private airport to the degree that it could support corporate jets. Negating the WCD, in whole or in part, means lifting restrictions on the amount of allowable impervious surface. Substituting industrial zoning, which allows maxim impervious surface development, would be short-sighted, and wasteful of resources, public and private, invested in protection and restoration. If somehow Charles County could be sufficiently educated to take into consideration the climate crisis, local water quality, the Potomac and the Bay, and sustainable economics and the value of the ecological services, they could be steered onto a better path. (link to DNR ecological economics)

Dean has already contributed to that challenge, by making clearer that the good health of the Mattawoman and the economic success of the NMS are interdependent. This calls activities to champion the broader, more inclusive vision for the NMS. The larger vision was the most popular alternative during the NOAA hearing process, but the smallest size alternative was chosen by government decision makers. Some value natural undeveloped land only for its economic development potential, not understanding the ecological or economic value of protecting environmental resources for the ecological services they produce now and for future generations. The larger vision of the NMS is what is called for by ecological and economic and criteria.

(attached: NMS Brochure supporting the larger vision, that while not officially dedicated, still of critical ecological importance...not only for the well-being of Mallowes Bay but as additional ecologically authentic destinations for visitors and part of the success of the NMS in Charles County.