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Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority

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August 28, 2009

Marchant Schneider
Project Manager
County of Loudoun
Department of Planning
1 Harrison Street, S.E., 3rd Floor
Leesburg, VA 20177-7000



RE: Loudoun Water – Water Storage Facility, SPEX-2009-0020 and CMPT 2009-0006

Dear Mr. Schneider:

We have reviewed the Special Exception and Commission Permit application to use a Luck Stone quarry for water storage and offer the following comments.

Background

As you know, the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority owns and operates the Washington & Old Dominion Railroad Regional Park (W&OD Trail) adjacent to the southwest side of the subject property. This 45-mile long, 100-foot wide, linear park property traverses Northern Virginia between Shirlington in Arlington County and Purcellville in Loudoun County. The park features paved and unpaved multi-use trails, interpretive exhibits, wayside areas, and parking for trail users. The W&OD hosts an estimated two million visitors a year and was designated a National Recreation Trail in 1987 by the U.S. Department of Interior. The W&OD Railroad features make the park eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The Park Authority's 19-acre Two Creeks Trail Area, which is accessed from the W&OD Trail, is bordered by Goose Creek and Sycolin Creek. The park features a mountain biking trail and a hiking and equestrian trail that follows Sycolin Creek.

The Park Authority is also the state appointed administrator of the Goose Creek Scenic River, which borders the subject property. Goose Creek's drains one-third of Loudoun County and is the main source of water for the City of Fairfax and most of Ashburn and Sterling. The corridor contains many historically significant structures and sites.

Impacts

The area of the proposed Special Exception use borders the W&OD Trail for approximately 1,700 feet and is set back 13 feet from the park boundary at its closest point. The use would border Goose Creek for approximately 1,200 feet and encroach into the Scenic Creek Valley Buffer. In 1993, the Park Authority and Luck Stone Corporation entered into a license agreement for the construction of a 60-foot wide tunnel approximately 70 feet underneath the

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W&OD Trail that connects quarries A and B for hauling operations. The Park Authority has concerns regarding potential impacts from seepage of stored water from the quarry that may undermine park property and impact Goose Creek.

Requirements

1. The project sponsor shall not encroach onto park property for any purpose prior to, during, or after construction unless the Park Authority approves a permit for the activity. The raw water main shown on Exhibit 2 crosses the W&OD Trail at two locations and the project sponsor will be required to apply for permission for these encroachments.
2. The project sponsor must demonstrate that water storage will not impact the W&OD Trail property and Goose Creek. Proposed methods to seal the existing tunnel underneath the W&OD Trail should also be provided.
3. Vehicular access to the subject property is shown to Belmont Ridge Road via Jackpit Lane. The plans should also note that access is not permitted via the existing driveway crossings of the W&OD Trail adjacent to the subject site.

Recommendations

1. The plans note that existing buffers will remain. The existing trees and understory vegetation along the park boundary and within the Scenic Creek Valley Buffer should remain and be supplemented where appropriate.
2. Since the quarry is adjacent to the W&OD Trail, Two Creeks Trail Area, and Goose Creek, the County should consider allowing public recreational uses of the water feature as part of this application. The Park Authority successfully provides recreational facilities at its shoreline parks on the Occoquan Reservoir in cooperation with Fairfax Water and is working with the City of Fairfax to provide recreational facilities at Beaver Dam Reservoir in Loudoun County.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments. Please contact me at 703-359-4628 or at dighhaut@nvrpa.org if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Daniel Iglhaut
Land Manager

- c: Su Webb, Chairman, NVRPA
Joan Rokus, Loudoun County Board Member, NVRPA
Kate Rudacille, Deputy Director of Planning and Grants
Chris Pauley, Park Operations Superintendent
Karl Mohle, Manager, W&OD Railroad Regional Park