

Deliverable Discussion - Product #4 Browne Tract and Additional CELCP Maintenance and Management

MPPDC staff contacted Department of Corrections (DOC)/Middle Peninsula Regional Security Center to arrange for periodic weekend clean up of the Browne Tract and other small scale improvement. Inmates from the Security Center visited the Brown tract at least monthly and removed debris and coordinated trash pick up, rebuilt the walking bridge and built a nature viewing station as well as cleared several miles of walking trails, cleaned up a cemetery and cleared a parking area for use by the general public



MPPDC staff continues to work towards CELCP land acquisition closing for the Haworth, Dragon Bridge and Jackson tract. Closing will happen outside of this grant

award As such, staff contract with  Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. to provide guidance for the development of land management practices. The report has been delivered to the Directors of the Access Authority and Staff to assist with the development of future management and maintenance plans for pending CELCP acquisitions. A copy of the Land Management Memo follows



Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc.

To: Lewis Lawrence, Director
Middle Peninsula Planning District
Commission

Date: September 28, 2006

Project No.:

From: Chris DeWitt

Re: Land Management Practices

This memo lists land management practices to help realize the public access authority's vision of passive recreation on three of its properties within the Dragon Run watershed. The intent to adopt any number of the practices can help the public access authority manage land owned outright and also land acquired under the Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program. It is important to note that the list represents only a preliminary search of land management practices.

LAND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Land management practices were assembled from various plans and program (see References), and are organized under the following topics:

- Conservation Education;
- Ecosystem Management;
- Fish and Wildlife Management;
- Forest Management;
- Natural Resource Management;
- Public Involvement and Regulatory Coordination;
- Recreation Management;
- Stormwater Management; and
- Vegetation Management.

Each topic includes a brief overview of how the practices would help realize the public access authority's vision. Each topic also includes the primary reference(s) for the practices.

Conservation Education

The following practices would help the public access authority educate the general public about the watershed's important natural resources. The practices would also help achieve Goal II of the Dragon Run Special Area Management Plan, which seeks to

"Foster educational partnerships and opportunities to establish the community's connection to and respect for the land and water of the Dragon Run."

Most of the practices are included in Fort Belvoir's natural resources management program.

Practices

- Consider development of a nature awareness program with a public education component that can be utilized as part of the school curriculum
- Develop and establish a comprehensive outdoor education program to include trail signs and interpretive brochures
- Develop and implement weekend interpretive programs and special events for the general public
- Establish research and demonstration projects with research organizations
- Establish research and development projects with local high schools and universities
- Promote and support volunteer projects for natural resource conservation
- Provide guided educational walks

Ecosystem Management

Adopting a comprehensive approach for ecosystem management would help realize the public access authority's vision of passive recreation. Most of the following practices are included in Fort Belvoir's natural resources management program.

Practices

- Employ management/conservation strategies that balance resource allocations among game and non-game species, rather than emphasizing game species management or single species management
- Identify and characterize ecological units
- Promote productive equilibrium between people and our environment by bringing population and consumption into balance with the resource base

Fish and Wildlife Management

Identifying and protecting threatened, endangered, and rare wildlife and wildlife habitat, would help ensure species diversity and would enrich the visitor experience. Regulating hunting would also help ensure species diversity by controlling the deer population. Most of the following practices are included in Fort Belvoir's natural resources management program.

Practices

- Inventory fish and wildlife species and their habitats
- Inventory threatened, endangered, and rare species and their habitats in coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and in cooperation with the Virginia Natural Heritage Program
- Protect critical habitats for threatened and endangered species
- Maintain and enhance habitat and species diversity
- Perform habitat enhancement to benefit both non-game and game species
- Manage streams for self-sustaining fish populations where conditions are favorable
- Permit hunting and fishing, subject to careful regulation, wherever populations of game species are large enough to support controlled harvest
- Perform deer management for population control

Forest Management

Limited timber clearing would serve ecological functions, including habitat restoration, and would provide space for passive recreational activities. The following practices are included in the Dragon Run Special Area Management Plan and in the Wilson Creek Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive River Management Plan.

Practices

- Identify land uses that are incompatible or competitive with traditional resource-based land uses (e.g. forestry, farming, hunting, fishing) and consider limiting them within the watershed
- Recognize the overall value of maintaining the traditional rural character and forested and farmed landscape of the Dragon Run watershed
- Use only prescribed fire that does not kill the shade provided by a forest canopy or expose mineral soil by consuming the duff and humus layers
- Use prescribed burning as necessary to maintain or enhance the unique resource values of the area

Natural Resource Management

Minimizing land disturbance on the properties would help preserve soil and water quality. Additionally, the following practices would help maintain a vibrant ecosystem. Most of the practices are included in the Buzzards Bay National Estuary Program, in the Indian Creek Watershed Project Ltd., and in the Wilson Creek Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive River Management Plan.

Practices

- Characterize soil and water quality by determining pollutant loads and identifying erosion and sedimentation concerns
- Determine depth to groundwater and site drainage patterns
- Continue to cooperate with and encourage enforcement of State water quality standards and environmental protection regulations on private lands within the watershed
- Establish conservation easements to preserve natural land and maintain greenway corridors
- Maintain natural buffers along streams
- Maintain soils in a natural undisturbed state except for trail construction and maintenance, watershed restoration projects, wildlife improvement measures, wildfire suppression measures, and recreation and site rehabilitation projects
- Preserve wetlands and wetland buffers
- Protect floodplains and floodways
- Protect representative examples of the full range of natural ecosystems to preserve genetic and ecological diversity

Public Involvement and Regulatory Coordination

Maintaining open communication with the public would help ensure that public concerns and interests are addressed. Most of the following practices are included in Fort Belvoir's natural resources management program.

Practices

- Ensure that long-range growth implications of program and budgetary choices are considered centrally during public decision-making
- Establish partnerships with federal, state, local, and private organizations
- Increase public awareness of natural resources through publication of information in local newspapers

- Team with natural resource conservation organizations

Recreation Management

Adopting any number of the following practices would help realize the public access authority's vision of passive recreation. Additionally, carefully managing the properties' recreational activities and facilities would help protect its natural resources. Most of the practices are included in the Comprehensive Community Plan of Tiverton, RI and in the Wilson Creek Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive River Management Plan.

Practices

- Allow primitive camping at designated areas only
- Assess recreational carrying capacity/access to determine an appropriate recreational "load"
- Design new development to minimize disturbance of wildlife and move use away from sensitive riparian areas to the extent possible while still providing access to the river at designated locations
- Develop a long range plan to provide year round activities for older teens as part of a comprehensive recreation plan for all ages and population groups
- Emphasize river oriented non-motorized recreation opportunities that favor boating, fishing, hiking, and viewing wildlife and scenery
- Maintain and construct trails consistent with river classification
- Manage and construct trails for a variety of difficulty levels dependent on the desired recreation experience
- Preserve public rights-of-way for future recreational use, including pedestrian and bicycle use and waterfront access
- Provide facilities as needed for public safety, resource protection, and enhancement of the recreational experience
- Provide land-based access as an alternative to boat-based access
- Provide no opportunities for Off-Highway Vehicles apart from those allowed on system roads
- Provide recreational opportunities consistent with conservation requirements
- Publish a map showing recreational and open space resources, picnic areas, trails and waterfront rights-of-way

Stormwater Management

Constructing a visitor's center and/or restroom facilities on the properties would benefit from low impact development techniques. The techniques would reduce the need for stormwater management facilities. The following practices are based on professional judgment and the Western Branch Watershed Restoration Action Strategy.

Practices

- Implement low impact development strategies that use amended soils, bioretention facilities (rain gardens), green roofs, rain barrels, and rooftop storage
- Use pervious pavement materials to allow infiltration, and minimize sheet flow and the need for stormwater infrastructure

Vegetation Management

Managing the properties' vegetation is essential to promoting wildlife habitat health and ensuring an adequate food supply for wildlife. Most of the following practices are included in Fort Belvoir's natural resources management program.

Practices

- Generally allow natural processes to determine the composition and distribution of plant species
- Inventory vegetation communities and allow for vegetation management in order to treat noxious weeds, insects and disease, infested trees, and/or for salvage operations
- Use native plant species where possible when restoring impacted sites and control invasive and exotic species

References

Buzzards Bay National Estuary Program - How to Protect Open Space

<http://www.buzzardsbay.org/openspac.htm>

Dragon Run Watershed Special Area Management Plan

http://www.mppdc.com/projects/Dragon_WMP_part1.pdf

Fort Belvoir Natural Resources Management program

http://www.denix.osd.mil/denix/Public/News/Earthday99/Awards99/ARBelvoir/Belvoir_Final.html

Indian Creek Watershed Project Ltd. - Best Management Practices

<http://www.indiancreekwp.org/bestmanagement.htm>

Tiverton, RI Comprehensive Community Plan - Open Space, Coastal Resources and Recreation

<http://www.tiverton.ri.gov/government/forms%20and%20notices/Ch9.HearingDraft.pdf#search=%22nature%20conservancy%2C%20watershed%20protection%2C%20passive%20recreation%20policies%22>

Walter J. Breckenridge Chapter - Izaak Walton League of America

http://www.breckenridgeikes.org/league_policies.html

Western Branch Watershed Restoration Action Strategy

http://dnrweb.dnr.state.md.us/download/bays/westbr_strategy_pg.pdf

Wilson Creek Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive River Management Plan

http://www.cs.unca.edu/nfsnc/nepa/grandfather/wilson_creek_dn.pdf