

Buzzard Point Park
National Capital Parks- East
Washington, D.C.

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Environmental Assessment Buzzard Point Park Improvements



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U.S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Capital Parks-East

Buzzard Point Park Improvements
Environmental Assessment

July 2019

PROJECT SUMMARY

Buzzard Point Park (Project 78364) is located in the Buzzard Point neighborhood of Southwest DC, and is bordered on the south and east by the Anacostia River. The Park is administered by the National Park Service (NPS) and managed by National Capital Parks - East. The Park is comprised of a collection of parcels administered by the NPS collectively totaling 7.75 acres. Of that acreage, only 3.33 acres are on land; the remainder of the site includes parcels that lie within the Anacostia River. The site includes approximately 1,500 linear feet of shoreline along the Anacostia River.

The Park is currently closed to visitors, with the exception of the Matthew Henson Center (MHC) at the northern extent of the property. The MHC is a former Potomac Electric Power Company (PEPCO) facility that is currently being used by the Earth Conservation Corps (ECC) through a three-party agreement with PEPCO and the NPS. A majority of the infrastructure onsite is related to the Park's previous use as a marina and includes a variety of paved, bituminous, and gravel walkways; a concrete retaining wall adjacent to the location of the old dock facilities and concrete boat ramp; a former marina office building; and a restroom facility. Both the office building and restroom facilities are also closed.

As the neighborhood around the Park transforms from an industrialized peninsula to a residential and mixed-use waterfront community, the NPS proposes to transform the Park into an accessible community waterfront amenity that continues the Anacostia Riverwalk Trail (ART).

This Environmental Assessment (EA) evaluates two project alternatives: a No-Action Alternative (Alternative A) and the Proposed Action (Alternative B), which is the NPS preferred Alternative. Alternative B would redesign the park to provide residents and visitors with more open space, recreational opportunities, and ways to connect with the Anacostia River while enhancing visitor experience of Buzzard Point Park. Alternative B is divided into two options that work to bring park visitors closer to the waterfront. The Proposed Action would have potentially adverse but short-term impacts to submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV), wetlands, and the floodplain. There would also be permanent impacts to wetlands and floodplains. Overall, however, a redesigned park would enhance

visitor experience and better control stormwater runoff.

NOTE TO REVIEWERS AND RESPONDENTS

If you wish to comment on this EA, you may mail comments within 30-days of the publication of this document to the name and address listed below, or you may submit your comments electronically at the NPS Planning, Environment and Public Comment (PEPC) Website (<https://parkplanning.nps.gov/projectHome.cfm?projectID=78364>).

Before including personally identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personally identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you may ask us in your comment to withhold your personally identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Tammy Stidham
Attn: Buzzard Point EA Comments
National Capital Region
National Park Service
1100 Ohio Drive SW
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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
AoE	Assessment of Effects
APE	Area of Potential Effect
ART	Anacostia Riverwalk Trail
BMP	Best Management Practice
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CPTED	Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design
CWA	Clean Water Act
DC Inventory	District of Columbia Inventory of Historic Places
DCP	Development Concept Plan
DC SHPO	District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Office
DDOT	District Department of Transportation
DoD	Department of Defense
DOEE	District Department of Energy and Environment
DOI	Department of the Interior
EA	Environmental Assessment
ECC	Earth Conservation Corps
EFH	Essential Fish Habitat
EO	Executive Order
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ESA	Endangered Species Act
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FIRM	Flood Insurance Rate Map
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
IPaC	Information for Planning and Consultation
MHC	Matthew Henson Center
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
NCR	National Capital Region

NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act of 1969
NFIP	National Flood Insurance Program
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NOAA	National Ocean and Atmospheric Administration
NMFS	National Marine Fisheries Service
NPS	National Park Service
PEPC	Planning, Environment and Public Comment
PEPCO	Potomac Electric Power Company
ROW	Right-of-way
SAV	Submerged Aquatic Vegetation
SoF	Statement of Findings
SF	Square Feet
USC	United States Code
USCG	United States Coast Guard
USACE	United States Army Corps of Engineers
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
VIMS	Virginia Institute of Marine Sciences

CHAPTER 1 - PURPOSE AND NEED

INTRODUCTION

The National Park Service (NPS) is proposing improvements to Buzzard Point Park (the Park) in the Buzzard Point Neighborhood near the Anacostia River, in Southwest DC.

This Environmental Assessment (EA) describes two alternatives for the proposed park improvements including one action Alternative and the No-Action Alternative. This EA has been prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended (42 United States Code [USC] 4332(2)(c)); the Council on Environmental Quality's *Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act* (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508); NPS Director's Order #12: *Conservation Planning, Environmental Impact Analysis, and Decision-Making* (DO #12); the NPS NEPA Handbook (NPS 2015); and DO #28 Cultural Resource Management.

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR ACTION

The purpose of the Buzzard Point Park Improvements project is to transform the Park into an accessible community waterfront amenity that continues the Anacostia Riverwalk Trail (ART). The Park would provide residents and visitors with more open space, recreational opportunities, and ways to connect with the Anacostia River while enhancing visitor experience of Buzzard Point Park.

This project is needed because historically the industrial nature of the Park's site and location amidst a variety of large utility buildings in Southwest DC greatly limited its ability to serve as more than a marina for the surrounding community. Currently, the ART ends abruptly on both ends of the Park. By continuing the ART through the Park, the NPS can enhance the experience for the trail user. In addition, the existing community in Buzzard Point greatly needs more accessible green, open space for recreation and reflection. Lastly, with the rapid private development and increase in local population occurring around the Park, special effort is needed to ensure that the Park identifies as a public park available to all and complements the neighborhood's character.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

A third-party concessioner (the Buzzard Point Boatyard Corporation) operated an NPS-owned marina at Buzzard Point Park for over 50 years. The aging infrastructure of the marina would have required extensive renovations in order to continue safe operation of the marina. In March 2016, the marina was closed after the decision was made that the investment for needed upgrades to the facility would not allow for a financially viable business while providing safe and effective visitor services. The marina docks were removed and the Park was fenced until renovations could be completed.

With the closure of the marina, the opportunity to envision alternative uses of the Park and redesign the Park to better serve the public at large was realized. Buzzard Point Park is located on an industrialized peninsula along the Anacostia River in Southwest DC. Much of

the area near Buzzard Point Park is under construction or proposed for redevelopment. The location of the Park on the shores of the Anacostia River offers the potential to connect the public with the Anacostia River.

The NPS initiated a Development Concept Plan (DCP) study to identify a conceptual vision for the redevelopment of Buzzard Point Park. The NPS conducted a series of public meetings and outreach with key stakeholders to gather input and assist with answering questions regarding the future park use. An open-house style public meeting was held in July 2016 to solicit public feedback regarding the programming and uses for the Park. A stakeholder meeting was held in September 2016 to inform key stakeholders of the results from the first public meeting and to present early concepts for discussion. In December 2016, a second public meeting presented preliminary concepts for the design of the Park.

PROJECT LOCATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

Buzzard Point Park is administered by the NPS and managed by National Capital Parks - East (NACE). It is located in the Buzzard Point neighborhood of Southwest DC, and is bordered on the south and east by the Anacostia River (**Figure 1, page 9**). The Park is comprised of a collection of parcels administered by the NPS collectively totaling 7.75 acres. Of that acreage, only 3.33 acres are on land; the remainder of the site includes parcels owned by the NPS within the Anacostia River. A boundary survey showing parcel ownership is appended to the Wetlands and Floodplains Statement of Finding (SoF) in **Appendix B** (JMT 2019a). However, the NPS has jurisdiction of the river bed extending to the pierhead line throughout the 1,500 linear feet of shoreline along the Anacostia River.

The Park is currently improved with the former marina office building, a restroom facility, and the Matthew Henson Center (MHC). The MHC is a former Potomac Electric Power Company (PEPCO) facility that is currently being used by the ECC through a three-party agreement with PEPCO and the NPS. The Park is served by public water and sewer, and power is supplied to the site through overhead lines on First and Half Street, SW. The power lines presently serve the MHC. Power has been disconnected from the former marina office building and restroom facility.

A majority of the infrastructure onsite is related to the Park's previous use as a marina. A variety of paved surfaces are found throughout the old marina portion of the site including concrete walkways, some bituminous walkways, and gravel. There is a concrete retaining wall adjacent to the location of the old dock facilities and concrete boat ramp. The concrete boat ramp is very steep and does not meet current standards for boat ramps. Much of the existing concrete surfaces at the site are in a state of disrepair.

The shoreline of the Park currently contains at least four distinctly different edge treatments (**Figure 1, page 9** and **Appendix A**). Rocky shores are found at the northernmost and southernmost extent of the Park. At the former marina docks, the edge is a concrete platform/seawall. East of the old boat ramp is a combination of vegetated shoreline and a stone seawall. The seawall is typical of other shoreline areas along the Anacostia. Further east, the shoreline is a combination of concrete revetment wall, stone, and vegetation.



Figure 1. Buzzard Point Park Vicinity and Existing Conditions Showing Four (4) Different Shoreline Treatments

ISSUES AND IMPACT TOPICS RETAINED FOR DETAILED ANALYSIS

The NPS, participating agencies and stakeholders, and members of the public identified specific issues and concerns through the DCP and project scoping efforts. Some of these issues and concerns were considered by the NPS, but were dismissed from detailed analysis because they were not determined to be relevant to the proposal or of critical importance. Other issues and concerns were retained for detailed analysis and are included in the impact topics discussed in the “Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences” section of the EA.

ISSUES

The proposed project would affect visitor experience at Buzzard Point Park. The alternatives presented in this EA will change the visitor use and experience of Buzzard Point Park by allowing the NPS to connect park users with the Anacostia River in safe, updated, user friendly facilities. The alternatives also have the potential to attract more users to the Park by re-opening existing closed portions of the Park back up to the public and connecting the Park to users via multi-modal sources via the ART.

The proposed project could impact existing or future growth of submerged aquatic vegetation in the project area. Several species of submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) exist directly off the shoreline in the project area, as mapped by the Virginia Institute of Marine Sciences (VIMS). The District Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE) also actively manages SAV at this location. The proposed project would include reconstruction of the Park’s armored shoreline, which could positively or adversely affect the adjacent established and future SAV beds. The proposed project involves reconstruction of these existing edge treatments by constructing one consistent edge along the length of the Park. This would involve removing the existing shoreline treatments and building a hardened edge (sea wall) along much of the shoreline and an option to include rip rap (revetment), with the exception of the dock area, which would be reconstructed with a new floating dock. Any alterations to the shoreline due to construction of the proposed project could uproot SAV or change the existing land-water interface in some capacity. Changes in the land-water interface can potentially affect nearshore hydrology where SAV is present or could potentially grow. Under the Proposed Action, hydrologic changes that may positively or adversely impact SAV could include modifications to the river current, water clarity, wave energy, water depth, and nutrient content.

The proposed project could impact wetlands and floodplains within the project area. Construction of the proposed project may impact wetlands within the project area. Additionally, flood risk mapping conducted by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the DOEE indicate that Buzzard Point Park is almost entirely within the 100-year floodplain, with the exception of the northwesternmost portion being in the 500-year floodplain. Modeling predictions provided by DOEE indicate that, at the Park’s current elevation, there is a high risk of increased annual flooding and potential infrastructure damage due to storm surges. Park infrastructure, topography, and landscape should be designed to be resilient to the affects from flooding from storm events, to ensure that the

investment the NPS is making into the Park re-design is sustainable and remains a resource for Park visitors. Impacts associated with wetlands and flood risk are evaluated in the “Wetlands” and “Floodplains” section of the “Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences” chapter of this EA.

ISSUES AND IMPACT TOPICS DISMISSED FROM FURTHER ANALYSIS

Archeological Resources & Historic Structures

Buzzard Point Park has undergone dramatic changes as the result of continuous redevelopment and manmade and natural erosion and sedimentation. Although the project area and its surrounding neighborhood are sensitive for prehistoric and historic archeological resources, the various episodes of dredging, filling, grading, and construction along the shoreline at Buzzard Point that have occurred since the nineteenth century have very likely disturbed any archeological resources, and, therefore archeological sensitivity in the Area of Potential Effects (APE) is considered low to non-existent and no further archeological investigation is warranted (JMT 2018a). If previously unknown archeological resources are discovered during construction, the NPS would halt all work in the immediate vicinity of the discovery until the resources can be identified and documented and a mitigation strategy developed in consultation with the DC state historic preservation office (DC SHPO) and, if appropriate, any associated Native American Tribes.

An investigation of above-ground resources concluded that there are three historic properties within the project APE including Anacostia Park, the Fort McNair Historic District, and the Buzzard Point Power Plant. Anacostia Park is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The Fort McNair Historic District is listed in the DC Inventory of Historic Sites, and is eligible for listing in the NRHP. The Buzzard Point Power Plant, which includes a water intake structure that is now known as the MHC, is currently under consideration by the DC SHPO to be placed on the DC Inventory of Historic Sites. An Assessment of Effects (AoE) was prepared for these properties, which is presently under review by the DC SHPO (JMT 2019a).

Federally-Listed Species

Four federally-listed species could occur in or adjacent to the project area: the threatened northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*), the endangered Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*), the endangered shortnose sturgeon (*Acipenser brevirostrum*), and the endangered Atlantic sturgeon (*Acipenser oxyrinchus oxyrinchus*). The redevelopment of Buzzard Point Park is not expected to affect these species, so they were dismissed from further detailed analysis. The full rationale for each listed species is provided below.

Northern Long-eared and Indiana Bats: It is possible that northern long-eared bats or Indiana bats could occur in or adjacent to Buzzard Point Park. However, no known roost trees for either species are in the project area, and no impacts to northern long-eared bats or Indiana bats are anticipated because tree removal for construction would be limited to late fall or winter after bats return to their hibernacula. There would be minimal tree removal required for the redevelopment of the Park, and several trees would be planted back on the site to offset any potential impacts from habitat reduction.

Shortnose and Atlantic Sturgeon: Two species of federally-listed endangered sturgeon may be present in the Potomac River- the shortnose sturgeon (*Acipenser brevirostrum*) and the Atlantic sturgeon (*Acipenser oxyrinchus oxyrinchus*). Critical habitat for the Atlantic Sturgeon was designated by the NOAA in August 2017 (82 Fed. Reg. 39160 at 39216). Within the Potomac River, critical habitat for the Chesapeake Bay distinct population segment includes the entire main stem of the Potomac River from the Little Falls Dam to the mouth of the river. Although transient sturgeon may enter the Anacostia River, the critical habitat does not include any of the tributaries to the Potomac River. By observing time-of-year restrictions from February 15 to June 15, individual sturgeon of adult, sub-adult, or juveniles are unlikely to be exposed to any direct or indirect impacts resulting from construction activities in the water. To avoid or minimize any potential impacts to the extent possible, the following conservation measures will be implemented:

- Any in-river work will be completed outside of the time of year restriction period from February 15 to June 15 of any year;
- All appropriate best management practices for Sediment & Erosion control and stormwater management will be implemented during construction to minimize impacts to water quality and aquatic habitat.

NPS submitted a determination of “may affect, not likely to adversely affect” the federally endangered shortnose and Atlantic sturgeon to NOAA-NMFS in May 2018, and will continue coordinating with the agency.

Hazardous material releases from adjacent sites may have leached into the Park’s subsurface soils. The Park is in a once industrialized area of Washington DC. Several adjacent properties to the Park have stored hazardous materials in above-ground and underground storage tanks, or manage permits for the temporary collection of hazardous materials. Many sites at a higher elevation than the Park have experienced spills or other accidental/unauthorized releases of such materials over time. Some of the hazardous materials and hazardous waste products may have migrated to the Park. Such substances can pose a human health risk to site workers during construction if workers are exposed to contaminated soils, groundwater, or toxic vapors. Likewise, general fluctuations in subsurface water levels as well as other factors, e.g., heavy rainfall, can also cause contaminants to migrate and result in human exposures.

The NPS strives to ensure the safety of Park visitors, employees, and workers on its lands, and will work diligently to identify and prevent injury or potential contamination threat to human health and the environment. Several Director’s Orders address NPS policies toward protecting human health and safety. These policies include DO #50B *Occupational Safety and Health Program* (NPS 2008) and DO #50C *Public Risk Management Program* (NPS 2010). Therefore, the NPS will work to identify, reduce, or remove hazards, or otherwise apply the appropriate mitigation measures that will safeguard human health and safety, and be protective of environmental resources. Taking action may include coordinating with federal and state regulatory agencies, and the entities responsible for causing any such contamination to ensure those parties bear the responsibility for complying with the laws and regulations that govern mitigation or remediation measures, if required.

CHAPTER 2- ALTERNATIVES

This EA analyzes a No-Action Alternative and one action alternative for the proposed redevelopment of Buzzard Point Park. The elements of these alternatives are described in detail in this section. Impacts of each of the alternatives are outlined in the “Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences” section of this EA.

ALTERNATIVE A: NO-ACTION

Under the No-Action Alternative, the current level of management of the Park would continue into the foreseeable future. The Park is currently not accessible to visitors, and it would remain this way into the foreseeable future, due to safety hazards and other current conditions. The structures and features that are present today would not be removed, restored, or otherwise improved upon.

The southern area of the Park, which is adjacent to V Street, SW and 1st Street, SW, and was associated with the former marina, would remain partially grassy and partially covered with a large concrete pad, which is in disrepair. The former marina office building, restroom facility, and the concrete boat ramp and retaining wall would also remain.

Access to the northern portion of the Park, which is adjacent to the intersection of V Street, SW and Half Street, SW, would remain partially obstructed by trees and overgrown vegetation. The viewshed of the Anacostia River would also remain obstructed in this area.

The northern portion of the Park located along Half Street, SW, would remain improved with the MHC and associated parking. Restroom facilities and the boat dock would continue to be accessed from inside the MHC.

ALTERNATIVE B: PROPOSED ACTION AND NPS PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

Under Alternative B, Buzzard Point Park would be transformed into a linear waterfront amenity settled within the Buzzard Point neighborhood. Alternative B includes clearing the Park of existing overgrown vegetation and remnant concrete or asphalt pads. The existing shoreline treatments would be completely removed and replaced with an eight-foot high concrete seawall reinforced with steel piles, and overlooks in the northern and southern extent of the Park. Infrastructure in the southern portion of the Park, specifically the former marina office building, restroom facility, and remnant concrete boating ramp would be demolished and removed from the site. Much of the Park would be regraded and replanted. Alternative B includes two different options for the shoreline treatments with a similar design for the rest of the Park.

Alternative B, Option 1: Under Option 1, a new stone revetment would be placed along the length of the seawall in the Anacostia River to approximately the mean low water level (14 to 21 feet). The stone revetment would act to reinforce and protect the seawall from erosion and storm surge while improving the visual appearance of the shoreline and providing access to the river. On the landward side of the seawall, a passive walking trail would follow along the edge of the wall in the central section of the Park. A rendering of Alternative B, Option 1 is shown as **Figure 2, page 15**.

Alternative B, Option 2: Under Option 2, a railing would be placed along the edge of the seawall for visitor safety. No stone revetment would be placed. Option 2 includes a passive walking trail along the water's edge with overlook trail/plaza area extended out over the water in some places. The overlook areas would improve visitor experience by providing sweeping views of the Anacostia River. A rendering of Alternative B, Option 2 is shown as **Figure 3, page 16**.

For both Options, the ART would be extended through the Park as a multi-use trail of varying widths (between 10-16 feet) to allow for access to recreational features along the trail without inhibiting circulation. The multi-use trail would be higher in elevation than the passive walking trail and would continue through the central portion of the Park. The trail would then tie into the terminus of the existing ART at the southern end of the Park.

Recreational opportunities in the Park would include walking, running, or cycling along the ART, a play area for children, level and mounded (elevated) lawns for observation of the river and Capitol Building (looking north along V Street, SW), a dock for users who wish to access the Park from the river, and the MHC.

With respect to the MHC, the building will be expanded southward to accommodate restrooms with separate exterior access. The boat dock that is presently only accessible by entering the building would also be rebuilt, with new exterior access provided from a separate walkway and pier from the passive (walking) trail. The MHC itself would continue to offer educational opportunities that enhance visitor experience. Limited parking options would remain outside the building. Parking would be redesigned to be Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible.

Just beyond the MHC, the ART would continue its connection north of the Park. Signage would be posted for park visitors at the northern extent of the Park, also adjacent to V Street, SW (central), and near the round-about adjacent to 1st Street, SW in the southern tip of the Park.

Aside from accessing the Park via the ART, visitors would have ample parking options to select from at the nearby mixed-use development (residential and commercial uses with private and public parking access). Additionally, the Navy Yard Metro Station (Green Line) is located approximately 5,000 feet north of Buzzard Point Park.

With respect to the shaded area along First Street, SW shown on **Figures 2 and 3**, the District of Columbia Department of Transportation (DDOT) controls the right-of-way (ROW) and is considering design options from both NPS and the Riverpoint Development. Future planning in the DDOT ROW should be accomplished in coordination with the NPS, with a design that is sympathetic with the surrounding designed landscape. Off-shore areas outside of DDOT's ROW (but within the pierhead line) are also administered by the NPS, and would also require some level of NEPA and environmental compliance (e.g., Section 106 of the NHPA, other agency coordination) to facilitate design and construction. Any future proposed work within the riverine wetland area would also be subject to a Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 404 permit and coordination with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE).

Table 1, page 17 provides a brief comparison of Alternative B options.

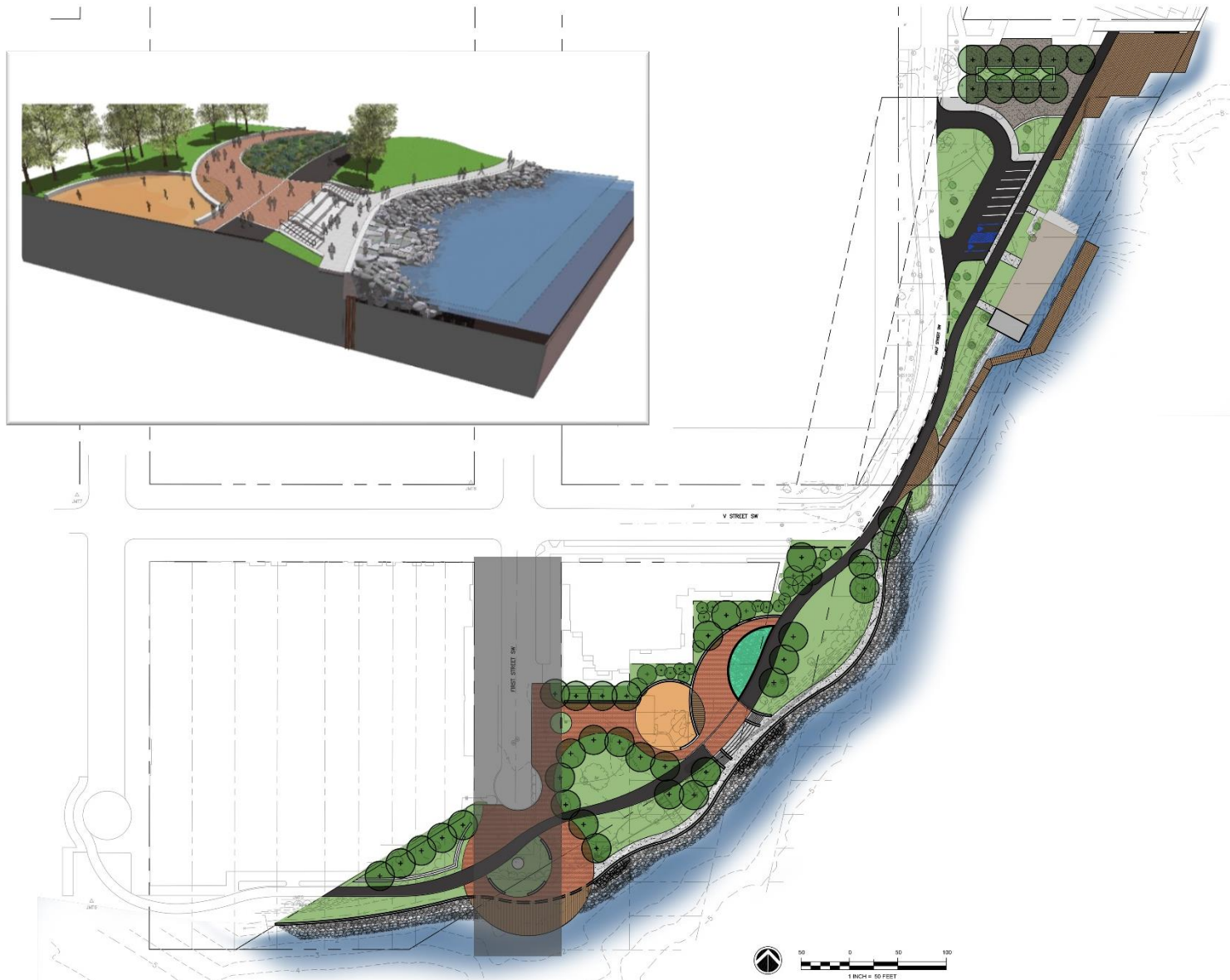


Figure 2. Rendering of Alternative B, Option 1, with Revetment Shoreline Treatment

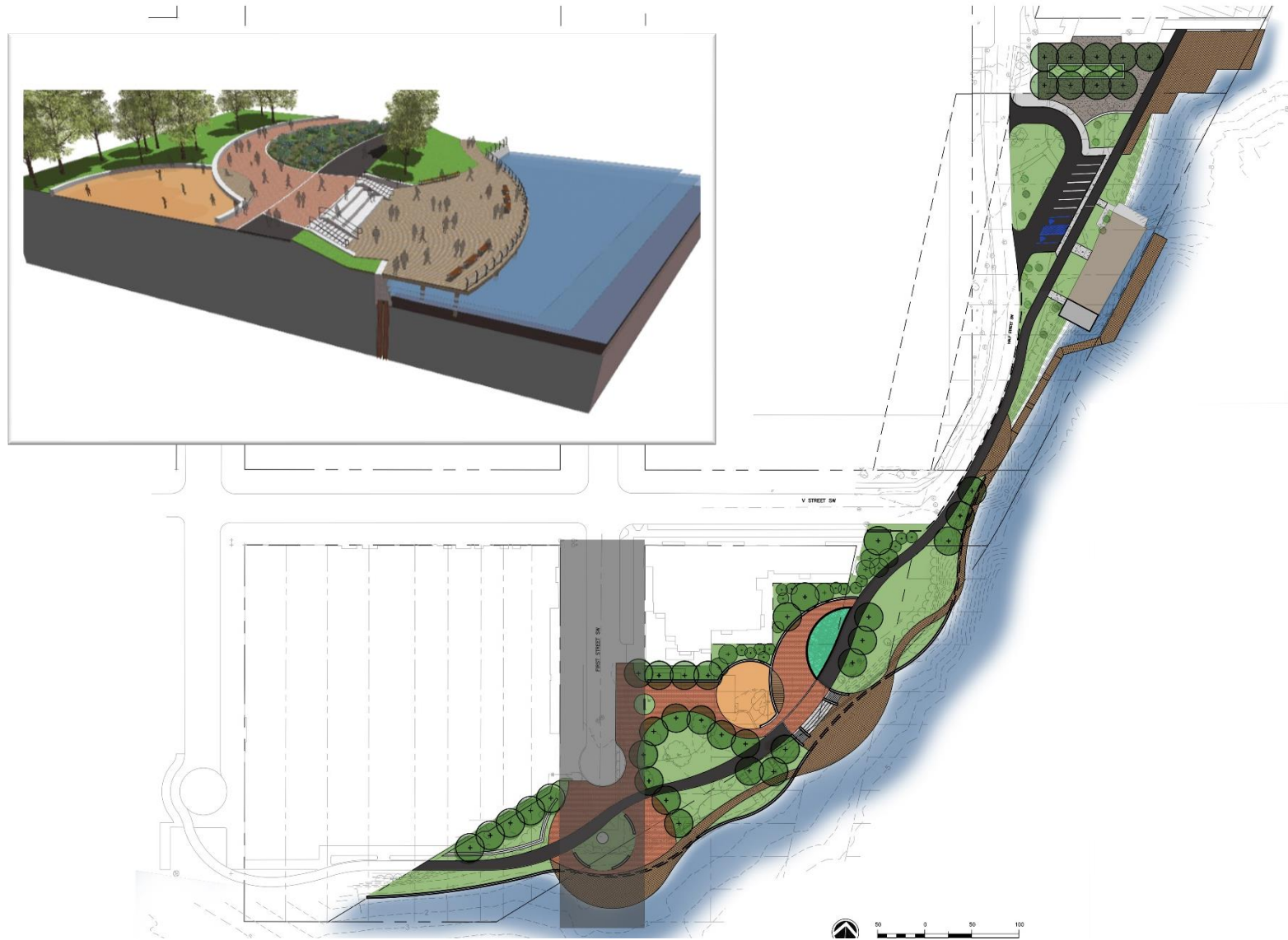


Figure 3. Rendering of Alternative B, Option 2, with Boardwalk/Observation Area and No Revetment

Table 1. Comparison of Alternative B Options

Key Feature	Alternative B: Proposed Action
Existing Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The former marina office and restroom facilities would be removed • The concrete pad would be removed, the area regraded • The boat ramp would be removed
Seawall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The existing seawall treatments would be removed and rebuilt with one consistent treatment for the whole park • Under Option 1, a stone revetment would be placed along the length of the seawall • Under Option 2, a railing would be placed along the edge of the seawall for visitor safety. Overlook trail/plaza areas extended out over the water in some places to provide sweeping waterfront views.
ART	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ART would run through the Park as both a multi-use trail and also a passive (walking) trail that is seated close to the seawall and river's edge
Recreational Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A playground, observation areas, and viewing opportunities would be built
Matthew Henson Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The MHC would be available for multiple, community-centered purposes • The building would be expanded southward for restrooms accessible from outside the building • The dock would be rebuilt and would be accessible to the ART

Alternatives Dismissed From Further Analysis

The NPS began the process to redesign Buzzard Point Park in the summer of 2016, to create a vision for new recreational opportunities and improvements to the Park, amidst the transformation of the entire Buzzard Point peninsula. Following a public planning and information session (held on July 14, 2016), a 30-day public comment period ending on August 15, 2016, as well as a stakeholder meeting (held on September 26, 2016), the NPS introduced two preliminary concepts for the Buzzard Point Park improvements at a public scoping meeting held on December 13, 2016. From December 2016 through January 2017, the NPS received comments and suggestions during a 45-day comment period that helped to finalize Park design concepts.

In May 2017, the NPS published the Buzzard Point Park Development Concept Plan (DCP), which presented two concept designs for the Park that included access and use of the ART (NPS 2017). Concept 1, as presented in the DCP, is carried forward for further design as Alternative B in this EA (the Action Alternative). Concept 2, as presented in the DCP, retained all the same park design features as Concept 1 (i.e., continuation of the ART, a separate pedestrian-only promenade, grass dunes, etc.), but placed a portion of the ART on an elevated structure out in the river.

The NPS received public feedback raising concern over visitor safety along the elevated pedestrian structure. Some additional feedback included the potential for trash to be improperly discarded from the elevated pedestrian structure into the river; and concern that the structure could obstruct the river's viewshed from shore. Additionally, Concept 2 would have resulted in noise and vibration impacts to fish and other aquatic species from piledriving piers into the riverbed and would have resulted in numerous additional permits and regulatory requirements for the NPS to comply with pre- and post-construction. Finally, such a structure would have substantially increased the cost of the Park's redesign and construction.

Therefore, based on public feedback, a number of unreasonable environmental impacts, and costs associated with the elevated pedestrian structure, the NPS eliminated Concept 2 from further analysis.¹

RATIONALE FOR THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The preferred alternative is the alternative that "would best accomplish the purpose and need of the proposed action while fulfilling [the NPS] statutory mission and responsibilities, giving consideration to economic, environmental, technical, and other factors" (46.420(d)). The preferred alternative may not ultimately be selected. The selection of the NPS preferred alternative is not a final agency decision.

The NPS identifies Alternative B, Option 2 as the preferred alternative. Alternative B is preferred because this alternative would improve the entire park and offer recreational opportunities amid a rapidly transforming and urbanized community. Option 2 would offer an additional trail/plaza overlook at the water's edge, but would not include placing stone revetment within the Anacostia River. A railing would be constructed along the water's edge to protect visitor safety along the sea wall. Option 2 is preferred because there would be fewer permanent impacts to wetlands, floodplains, and SAV. In addition, the "cleaner" edge (no rip rap) would mean less maintenance is required at the park, and fewer opportunities for trash to collect among the stone revetment.

The environmental impacts associated with each of the alternatives and options are evaluated in the following chapter of this EA.

¹ A copy of the DCP, which includes comment reports on public meetings held by the NPS, and other related documents, can be found on-line at http://parkplanning.nps.gov/BuzzardPointPark_ea

CHAPTER 3 - AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

This chapter describes current environmental conditions in and surrounding the project area. The discussion is focused on resources that could potentially be affected by the implementation of the proposed project and provides a baseline for understanding the current condition of the resources. The section also includes an analysis of the environmental consequences, or “impacts,” of the no action and action alternative.

The affected environment description is followed by the environmental consequences analysis for each resource topic. The resource topics analyzed here correspond to the planning issues and concerns described in the “Purpose and Need” section of this EA.

In accordance with the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations, the environmental consequences analysis includes the direct, indirect, and Cumulative Impacts potentially resulting from the proposed alternatives (40 CFR 1502.16). The intensity of the impacts is assessed in the context of the park’s purpose and significance, and any resource-specific context that may be applicable (40 CFR 1508.27). Where appropriate, mitigating measures for adverse impacts are described and their effect on the severity of the impact is noted. The methods used to assess impacts vary depending on the resource being considered, but are generally based on a review of pertinent literature and park studies, information provided by on-site experts and other agencies, professional judgment, and park staff knowledge and insight.

Cumulative Impacts Analysis Methodology

Cumulative Impacts are defined as “the impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, or reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (federal or nonfederal) or person undertakes such other actions” (40 CFR 1508.7). As stated in the CEQ handbook, *Considering Cumulative Effects under the National Environmental Policy Act* (CEQ 1997), Cumulative Impacts need to be analyzed in the context of the specific resource, ecosystem, and/or human community being affected and should focus on impacts that are truly meaningful. Cumulative Impacts are considered for each of the alternatives, including the No-Action alternative.

Cumulative Impacts are determined for each resource topic by combining the impacts of the alternative being analyzed with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions that would also result in beneficial or adverse impacts. Past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions to be included in the analysis were identified through internal and external scoping processes and are described below. Because some of these actions are in the early planning stages, the evaluation of Cumulative Impacts is based on a general description of the projects.

PAST, PRESENT, AND REASONABLY FORESEEABLE ACTIONS

River Point, 2100 2nd Street SW, Washington, DC - River Point is a redevelopment of the

former Coast Guard building on the western boundary of Buzzard Point Park. The building will be redeveloped as a mixed-use residential and commercial development with over 60,000 SF of ground floor retail space and 485 residential units. Plans for this project include construction of a floating dock and gangway directly adjacent to the James Creek Marina, and a large water taxi pier within DDOT ROW directly off First Street, SW. Construction is currently underway and is scheduled to be completed by 2020.

1900 Half Street SW, Washington, DC - 1900 Half Street is a redevelopment of a vacant office building on the northeastern boundary of Buzzard Point Park. The building will be redeveloped as a mixed-use residential and commercial development with over 15,000 SF of ground floor retail space, 419 residential units, and associated parking, and is scheduled to be completed by 2020.

Peninsula 88, 88 V Street SW, Washington, DC - Peninsula 88 is a new 110-unit condominium development on the northern boundary of Buzzard Point Park. Construction is currently underway and is scheduled to be completed in late 2019.

Audi Field, D.C United Soccer Stadium, 100 Potomac Avenue SW, Washington, DC - Audi Field is a new stadium and cultural venue for events, community activities, and concerts located less than a quarter of a mile northwest of Buzzard Point Park. The facility has a capacity of 20,000 fans and has 500,000 SF of mixed-use retail and residential space on site. The venue opened to the public in July of 2018.

Anacostia Riverwalk Trail, along Anacostia Riverfront - The ART is a continuous 20 mile 10-12 foot wide multi-use trail along the Anacostia River waterfront in Southwest DC. The trail is a recreational waterfront amenity and a transportation alternative. Currently, 12 out of the 20 miles are complete.

Yards Park, 355 Water Street SE, Washington, DC 20003 - Yards Park is an award-winning 5.4 acre open-space park located in the Navy Yards neighborhood. The Park has become a waterfront destination that provides greenspace, water features, and event space.

WETLANDS AND FLOODPLAINS

Affected Environment

WETLANDS

Per Director's Order 77-1: *Wetland Protection* (NPS 2002), NPS considers water up to 2.5 meters deep (about 8 feet) at low water to be riverine wetlands. One riverine wetland (WET-1, the Anacostia River) was identified and delineated in the project area during a field investigation on December 13, 2017 (**Figure 4, page 22**). No palustrine wetlands were observed, as all vegetated areas adjacent to the Anacostia River were dominated by vegetation lacking hydric indicators. WET-1 consists of the west bank of the Anacostia River running alongside the eastern edge of the project area. The riverward side of the WET-1 boundary (2.5 meters below low water elevation) was mapped using bathymetric data collected by the DOEE in 2013. The area of WET-1 mapped for the proposed project consisted of approximately 5.69 acres and was delineated as open-ended, continuing further to the northeast and southwest away from the project area. The deeper portions of

the Anacostia River beyond the 2.5-meter depth are considered deepwater habitat. As stated in Procedural Manual 77-1, deepwater habitats are not considered wetlands and are not regulated by the NPS per EO 11990; however, the USACE regulates deepwater habitats as either riverine or open water habitat. The substrate observed along the banks of the river included silt, cobbles, and boulders. Steep banks with heights of 6-8 feet or greater were observed throughout the project area.

Within the project area, WET-1 primarily functions to provide freshwater fish, shellfish, and other wildlife habitat, as well as recreational opportunities through boating. Many riverine wetland functions are highly limited due to the existing modification of the shoreline (e.g., stone seawall and concrete revetment walls) and overall urbanized landscape in the project vicinity.



Figure 4. Environmental Features

According to data from the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, the presence of SAV has been recorded in the Anacostia River in the immediate vicinity of Buzzard Point Park from 2015-2017. The 2017 map depicts an SAV bed with moderate cover running from the southern side of the MHC to the southwestern end of the project area and continuing further west. Species noted included grassleaf mudplantain (*Heteranthera dubia*), coon's tail (*Ceratophyllum demersum*), American eelgrass (*Vallisneria Americana*), and the non-native invasive waterthyme (*Hydrilla verticillata*). SAV serves as important habitat for aquatic life and can also improve water quality and stabilize sediments. SAV beds can benefit both juvenile and adult fish, and are suitable for refuge, feeding, and reproduction.

The SAVs in the Anacostia River can serve as a nursery and forage area for a variety of anadromous fish species, including alewife (*Alosa pseudoharengus*), blueback herring (*Alosa aestivalis*), American shad (*Alosa sapidissima*), hickory shad (*Alosa mediocris*), and Atlantic herring (*Clupea harengus*).

FLOODPLAINS

NPS Floodplain Management Guidelines define floodplains as the “lowland and relatively flat areas adjoining inland and coastal waters including flood-prone areas of offshore islands, and including, at a minimum, that area subject to temporary inundation by a regulatory flood” (NPS 2003). The regulatory boundaries of 100-year floodplains are delineated on FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM), and management of floodplains on NPS property in the District of Columbia is regulated by both federal and District legislation.

The entire project area is located within the FEMA Flood Hazard Zone AE of the 100-year floodplain, with the exception of a small portion that is within the 500-year floodplain (**Figure 4, page 22**). Natural floodplain functions and values such as flood storage, flood conveyance, groundwater recharge, habitat, and trapping of sediments within the project area are limited because the project area has already been developed; exemplified by the following existing conditions within the 100-year floodplain:

- Presence of several existing structures and other impervious surfaces; and,
- Vegetated portions of park consist primarily of maintained lawn and a narrow riparian fringe.

FEDERAL

Executive Order (EO) 11988, Floodplain Management, requires federal agencies to both maximize avoidance of long and short term impacts to floodplains and avoid direct or indirect support of development in the floodplain wherever there is a practicable alternative. Moreover, EO 11988 directs each agency to “reduce the risk of flood loss, to minimize the impact of floods on human safety, health, and welfare, and to restore and preserve the natural and beneficial values served by floodplains.”

The National Park Service, Director's Order #77-2 (NPS DO 77-2) applies to all NPS Proposed Actions that have the potential to adversely affect the natural resources and functions of floodplains or increase flood risks. As stated in DO 77-2, it is NPS' policy to:

- Protect and preserve natural resources and functions of floodplains;
- Avoid long and short term adverse effects due to occupancy or modification of floodplains;
- Avoid direct and indirect support of floodplain development and actions that have the potential to adversely affect the natural resources and functions of floodplains, or increase flood risks; and,
- Restore natural floodplain values previously affected by land use activities within floodplains whenever practicable.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

The District of Columbia participates in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and has enacted floodplain regulations for all new developments and substantial improvements to a structure located partially or entirely within Special Flood Hazard Areas (100-year floodplain), as outlined in Title 20, Chapter 31 Flood Hazard Rules of the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations. The purpose of the Flood Hazard Rules is to promote public health, safety, and general welfare, and minimize losses due to flooding by:

- “Regulating uses, activities, and development which, acting alone or in combination with other existing or future uses, activities, and development, will cause unacceptable increases in flood heights, velocities, and frequencies;
- Restricting or prohibiting certain uses, activities, and development from locating within areas subject to flooding;
- Requiring all those uses, activities, and developments that do occur in flood-prone areas to be protected in order to prevent flood damage; and,
- Protecting individuals from buying lands and structures which are unsuited for intended purposes because of flood hazards.”

The District Department of Energy and Environment coordinates participation in the NFIP and provides assistance to property owners and others on the NFIP, floodplain management, flood insurance, floodplain mapping and development requirements, and flood mitigation.

Methodology

WETLANDS

To analyze potential impacts of both alternatives to wetlands and waters of the U.S., field investigations were completed to delineate the boundaries of the riverine wetland and deepwater habitat, including a functions and values assessment. The conceptual design plans showing the potential improvements and grading plan aided in the analysis, with the determination of impacts being based on best professional judgment considering the level of detail available at conceptual design.

Impacts of Alternative A: No-Action

Under the No-Action Alternative, the riverine wetland (WET-1), including SAV, and deepwater habitat associated with the Anacostia River would not be disturbed, therefore there would be no new impacts to wetlands within or adjacent to the site.

Cumulative Impacts

Because the No-Action Alternative would not cause any new impacts to wetlands, there would not be any Cumulative Impacts to wetlands.

Conclusion

There would be no impacts to wetland functions and values under the No-Action Alternative; and, because there would be no impacts, there would not be any cumulative impacts to wetlands.

Impacts of Alternative B

Shoreline treatments would differ between Options 1 and 2. Under Option 1, a new stone revetment would be placed along the length of the seawall in the Anacostia River to approximately the mean low water level (14 to 21 feet) with a passive walking trail following the edge of the seawall in the central section of the Park. Under Option 2, a railing would be placed along the edge of the seawall for visitor safety, and a passive walking trail would follow along the water's edge with an overlook trail/plaza area extending out over the water in select places. No stone revetment would be placed along the seawall under Option 2.

Impacts to the riverine wetland portion of the Anacostia River under Alternative B, Option 1 would result from the removal of the concrete boat ramp and replacement of the stone seawall, as well as the placement of revetment between the seawall and the mean low water level.

Under Alternative B Option 2, impacts to the riverine wetland portion would only result from the installation of the proposed overlook trail and plaza areas that extend out over the river, which is expected to permanently impact and prohibit the establishment of SAV underneath these areas (due to shading). **Table 2** provides a comparison of wetland impacts under both Alternative B options.

Table 2. Alternative B impacts to the riverine wetland portion of the Anacostia River

Impact	Alternative B, Option 1	Alternative B, Option 2
Temporary Disturbance	29,310 square feet	41,461 square feet
Permanent Disturbance from proposed stone revetment between seawall and mean low water level	17,500 square feet	0 square feet
Permanent Disturbance from proposed overlook trail, plaza, and dock areas over the river	7,292 square feet	11,896 square feet
Permanent Disturbance from proposed overlook at First Street, SW to DDOT wetlands	1,898 square feet	2,643 square feet

Under both Alternative B options, permanent impacts to the functions and values of the riverine wetland such as habitat for freshwater fish, shellfish, and other wildlife would be direct and adverse primarily due to the loss of this habitat either by the placement of stone (Option 1) or the loss of SAV by shading (Option 2).

As discussed in the Wetlands and Floodplains SoF (Appendix B), it is anticipated that mitigation would occur at a 10:1 ratio and likely involve invasive plant management. Because wetland impacts are expected to exceed 0.1 acres, a more detailed wetland mitigation plan satisfying the requirements in NPS Procedural Manual 77-1 will need to be developed (JMT 2019a).

With regard to temporary impacts, construction activities may have a short-term, direct, adverse impact to portions of the riverine wetland (WET-1) that would be temporarily disturbed by a temporal loss in habitat and/or disturbance to vegetation. During construction, strict adherence to an approved Erosion and Sediment Control Plan would be enforced to ensure the risk of sediment-laden runoff entering adjacent wetlands and waterways is minimized. Moreover, in-stream work would be restricted from April 15 to October 15, of any year, to avoid impacts to SAV during the growing season, and February 15 to June 15, of any year, to avoid disturbance to both the shortnose and Atlantic sturgeon. Recreational opportunities associated with the riverine wetland would not be temporarily impacted during construction because access does not currently exist.

When considering the relative magnitude of the Anacostia River shoreline and area of SAV mapped to the south and west of the project area, as well as the planned mitigation measures, both options under Alternative B would have negligible direct and indirect impacts to functions of the wetlands.

Cumulative Impacts

Past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions have the potential to affect wetlands. The most likely adverse impact to the riverine wetland would be increased sedimentation and/or discharges due to current and future development in the contributing watershed. Assuming current and future development projects comply with stormwater management and erosion and sediment control regulations, cumulative adverse impacts to the riverine wetland would be minimized.

FLOODPLAINS

To analyze potential impacts of both alternatives on the floodplain, the corresponding FEMA FIRM was used to delineate the 100- and 500-year floodplains, and field investigations were used to determine existing functions of the floodplain in the project area. The conceptual design plans showing the potential improvements and grading plan aided in the analysis, with the determination of impacts being based on best professional judgment.

Impacts of Alternative A: No-Action

Under the No-Action Alternative, the floodplain would not be disturbed, therefore there

would be no beneficial or adverse impacts to the floodplain within or adjacent to the site.

Cumulative Impacts

Because the No-Action Alternative would not cause any beneficial or adverse impacts to the floodplain, there would not be any Cumulative Impacts to the floodplain.

Conclusion

There would be no impacts to floodplain functions and values or flood risks under the No-Action Alternative; and, because there would be no impacts, there would not be any **Cumulative Impacts** to the floodplain.

Impacts of Alternative B

Construction would require the Park to be regraded and redesigned to include a mixture of pervious and impervious surfaces, which would result in temporary and permanent impacts to the 100-year and 500-year floodplain. Impacts to the floodplain under Alternative B are identified in **Table 3**.

Table 3. Alternative B floodplain impacts

Impact	Alternative B, Option 1	Alternative B, Option 2
Temporary Disturbance within 100-year floodplain	156,900 SF	157,900 SF
Change in impervious surfaces within 100-year floodplain compared to existing conditions	Increase from 52,350 SF to 70,455 SF	Increase from 52,350 SF to 69,030 SF
Change in impervious surfaces within 500-year floodplain compared to existing conditions	Increase from 5,365 SF to 8,590 square feet	Increase from 5,365 SF to 8,590 SF

Impervious surfaces under Alternative B include the passive and multi-use trails, public plaza, parking, and the MHC. Because some of the proposed infrastructure associated with Alternative B is water-dependent, such as the seawall, shoreline stone revetment (Option 1), overlook trail/plaza (Option 2), and boat dock, placing these structures within the 100-year floodplain is congruent with DO 77-2. Proposed infrastructure would be designed to be resistant to flood flows and velocities; however, the exact measures would be determined during final design based on site-specific studies. Grading activities would raise and lower the elevations up to three feet in various locations in the 100-year floodplain; however, the final grading plan would be determined during final design, and site-specific studies would be utilized to adjust the final design and ensure there are no increases to the 100-year water surface elevation on adjacent properties.

Under both Alternative B options, impacts to natural functions of the floodplain such as flood storage, flood conveyance, groundwater recharge, and trapping of sediments would be direct and slightly adverse primarily due to the increase in impervious surfaces,

although these functions are already limited under existing conditions. However, impacts to other natural functions of the floodplain such as reducing excessive erosion and removing pollutants from waters are expected to be direct and beneficial due to new features including a reinforced seawall, stone revetment (Option 1), and stormwater management. Additionally, impacts to habitat would likely be unchanged because both Alternative B options would include landscape and stormwater management plantings. With regard to flood risk, impacts from Alternative B would be negligible because an increase to the 100-year water surface is not expected and all infrastructure would be designed to resist flood flows and velocities.

When considering the relative magnitude of the Anacostia River floodplain, both options under Alternative B would have negligible direct and indirect impacts to functions of the floodplain and flood risk.

Cumulative Impacts

Past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions have the potential to affect floodplains. The construction of the waterfront park, boat dock, and improvements to the MHC would result in some long-term, adverse impacts on the floodplain functions and values at Buzzard Point Park due to the increase in impervious surfaces, however, there would also be some long-term, beneficial impacts on the floodplain functions and values from the new seawall, shoreline stone revetment, and stormwater management. Construction activities may have a short-term, direct, adverse impact to flood risk due to temporary grading, however long-term impacts to flood risk would be negligible. Alternative B would contribute long-term, adverse impacts from past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects for some floodplain functions; however, it would also contribute long-term, beneficial impacts from past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects for other floodplain functions. Therefore, Alternative B would result in overall negligible Cumulative Impacts.

VISITOR USE AND EXPERIENCE

Affected Environment

Buzzard Point is a highly industrialized peninsula located south of the popular Wharf area, the Nationals Park (a Major League baseball stadium), and the rapidly growing Navy Yard neighborhood. These neighborhoods are highly populated and have many amenities that draw in visitors to the peninsula. Currently the Park has few opportunities for meaningful visitor use and experience. With the planned redevelopment of the Buzzard Point peninsula, urban green space and related visitor experiences will become more essential, especially those that highlight waterfront views and provide numerous recreational and educational opportunities.

Currently, there is limited visitor use within the MHC at the northern portion of the Park. The MHC is a PEPCO facility located on NPS land that the ECC presently occupies through an agreement between PEPCO and the NPS. The ECC is a DC-based, non-profit organization that engages unemployed youth from troubled neighborhoods surrounding the Anacostia River in educational programs and volunteer efforts to help restore the Anacostia River.

In the southern portion of the Park, there is no visitor use due to its temporary closure. There is no signage directing public use or access, and fencing has been erected around the Park perimeter to limit access. In addition, the site is not ADA accessible in its current design, therefore further limiting access. There are no recreational or interpretative opportunities for visitors.

The ART, which is a nearly continuous 20-mile multi-use trail on both sides of the Anacostia River, is designed to provide numerous recreational opportunities including walking, jogging, biking, and sightseeing. The ART in its current configuration ends on either end of Buzzard Point Park.

Methodology

To determine impacts to the current use of the Park, the potential effects of the construction and implementation of the proposed Alternatives, as well as the potential effects of other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects, were analyzed.

Impacts of Alternative A: No-Action

Because there would be no changes to the current management of the Park there would be no new impacts, and given the general lack of visitor access, the visitor experience would remain the same.

The desire for parkland and access to the waterfront would continue to increase with the redevelopment of the Buzzard Point peninsula. Users of the ART would continue to be impacted as the continuation of the mixed-use trail would cease on the Park property due to its closure.

The visitor use provided by the MHC would remain the same, with their educational opportunities focused primarily on underserved local youth. The conditions of the building, the restroom facilities, and the dock would remain the same. The northern portion of the park is accessible to visitation; however, the MHC would remain locked when not staffed, and the dock behind the MHC would remain inaccessible.

Cumulative Impacts

Residential and mixed-use development such as River Point, 1900 Half Street, and Peninsula 88 are under construction in the immediate vicinity of the Park. Audi Field, which is less than a 5-minute walking distance from Buzzard Point Park, offers residents and visitors to the peninsula access to sporting and cultural events, concerts, and other community-oriented activities. Taking all these new amenities it is feasible to assume that more visitors will be drawn to the Buzzard Point peninsula. However, given that there are no changes to the current visitor access and experience under the No-Action alternative, then there are no cumulative impacts expected.

Conclusion

Under the No-Action Alternative, visitors would continue to have limited access to the MHC, and no other educational and recreational opportunities would be offered at the Park. There will continue to be limited access to restrooms and other amenities only when the MHC is open. The viewshed of the Anacostia River in this part of the peninsula would

continue to be obstructed and remain in disrepair. In its current state, Buzzard Point Park would have a long-term adverse impact to visitor experience within the Buzzard Point peninsula.

Impacts of Alternative B:

The Alternative B options, as depicted in **Figures 2 and 3** (pages 15 and 16), present a dramatic improvement to the visitor use and experience over the current conditions. The proposed park would be designed to open access to the Anacostia Waterfront, while offering a pleasant respite for the visitor from the residential and commercial mixed-use urbanized area surrounding the Park. The new Park design is intended to offer passive and active recreational opportunities, with specific programmed areas delineated both visually and topographically to take advantage of views of the Anacostia Riverfront.

There are two design options to consider under Alternative B, which are substantially similar, but offer some differences along the shoreline of the Park.

As can be seen under Alternative B, Option 1 (**Figure 2, page 15**), Gateway treatments would be located along First Street, V street, and along both entrance points of the ART, which would be continued through the Park as a multi-use trail. Gateway treatments would function to welcome visitors and identify the Park as a NPS property. Visitors arriving by the ART will access the Park through public plaza areas within the Riverpoint and 1900 Half Street developments. The trail would be divided through the site to provide one wider trail for cyclists that proceeds more directly through the Park, and one narrower trail system along the water's edge for pedestrians.

Visitors approaching the First Street entrance to the Park would be guided by a vertical element in the central plaza. This element is designed to be visible and attract visitors from several blocks away, and would provide a signature element to the Park that speaks to the history of the site. The Central Plaza area would provide a flexible gathering space that can be programmed for a wide variety of uses and functions.

The V Street entrance to the Park includes a small trail overlook that would allow visitors to take in views of the Anacostia River and capture a view of the U.S. Capitol to the North. The overlook deck also has a gangway connection to the floating dock running behind the MHC.

The MHC would be expanded to include restroom facilities that are accessible from the Park and ART. The existing dock, which is only accessible from inside the MHC currently, would be replaced with a new floating dock that would allow visitor access to the waterfront from outside of the MHC. Educational opportunities would continue to be offered within the MHC, further enhancing the visitor use and experience of the Park.

In addition, vehicle access would be improved along Half Street, SW via an ADA accessible parking lot adjacent to the MHC. Parking at the Park would continue to be limited. There would be adequate parking opportunities nearby within the Peninsula 88 and Riverpoint parking garages. Street parking may also be available in the vicinity of the Park. The Park is designed to be fully ADA accessible with all trails and facilities designed to meet ADA guidance and access to the lower level via access at both ends of the grand

stairs.

The linear spaces within the Park are carefully designed to maximize visitor experience through a variety of recreational “pods.” These pods allow for both active and passive recreation in both hardscape and vegetated surfaces. A special emphasis is placed on maximizing the tree canopy coverage of the Park to enhance the overall visitor experience.

Other improvements to visitor experience include a raised platform playground area, terraced viewing areas, grand stairs overlooking the Anacostia River, an open lawn, and a mounded lawn trail rest area. In addition, interpretative and educational resources would be provided in areas throughout the Park. Along the trail there would also be an overlook deck with an interpretative station and signage.

The Park design would also contribute to visitor experience through safety enhancements. The Park layout was designed under Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles to ensure visibility and multiple access points to its visitors. A trail safety barrier will be placed along V Street, SW and Half Street, SW where the road meets the trail. Emergency response personnel will be able to access the Park through all entry points including an access control point via the entrance on First Street, SW and the plaza that will allow for emergency response vehicles to enter the Park.

Under both Alternative B options, the existing seawall would be entirely rebuilt resulting in shoreline protection and safety improvements for visitors. As previously discussed, there are two different options for the shoreline treatments with a similar design for the rest of the Park.

Alternative B, Option 1 (Figure 2, page 15)

A stone revetment would be placed along the length of the seawall. The stone revetment would act to reinforce and protect the seawall from erosion and storm surge and extending the operational life of the seawall, while also improving the visual appearance of the shoreline and providing access close to the river.

Potentially adverse impacts may include the undesirable growth of vegetation within the revetment, which may increase maintenance requirements. Some visitors may attempt to climb onto unsafe areas of the revetment, which could present as a safety hazard for slips or falls onto the rock or into the river.

Alternative B, Option 2 (Figure 3, page 16)

No stone revetment would be placed. A railing would be placed along the edge of the seawall to facilitate visitor safety. This option would instead offer an additional overlook trail/plaza in front of the grand stairs to provide visitors even more sweeping views of the Anacostia.

Overall, Park improvements are considered to have a long-term beneficial impact to the visitors and residents of the Buzzard Point peninsula.

Cumulative Impacts

Depending upon timing of construction for surrounding mixed-use developments, the Peninsula 88 and River Point projects may result in short-term adverse impacts from construction, which may continue to limit access to the Park and have visual and noise

impacts until construction is complete. However, the short-term impacts would result in long-term beneficial impacts in terms of increasing visitation. Redevelopment would result in a significant increase on the number of visitors to the Park and the demand for waterfront recreation opportunities. The redevelopment would also result in benefits to visitors as there would be many other attractions in a close proximity for visitors to experience in addition to the Park.

The increase in residents and visitors to Buzzard Point would likely result in increased pedestrian, bicycle, and car traffic. This may create a strain on parking availability both in and around the Park, as well as have potentially adverse impacts on carrying capacity. If the carrying capacity of the Park is consistently exceeded, there may be adverse impacts to Park facilities, grassy areas, and overall maintenance may become unsustainable.

During Park construction, short-term impacts to visitor use would result from further closure of the area as well as temporary visual and noise impacts. Active construction areas would be barred from visitors for safety reasons and pedestrian, bicyclist, and other traffic may be required to take detours around First Street SW, V Street SW, and Half Street SW. These short-term impacts will not have an adverse effect as there are presently no Park patrons to be affected and little traffic on the streets surrounding the Park.

Conclusion

Alternative B, Options 1 and 2 would result in long-term, beneficial impact on visitor use and experience. This will be a result of an increase in the number of visitors, increased public access to the Anacostia Waterfront, increased opportunity for recreation, and enhanced visitor facilities.

SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

Table 4 provides a summary of the anticipated environmental consequences of Alternative B, Options 1 and 2.

Table 4. Summary of the anticipated environmental consequences

Impact Topic	Alternative B: Option 1	Alternative B: Option 2
Wetlands and Floodplains	29,310 temporary impacts to wetlands during construction	41,461 SF temporary impacts to wetlands during construction
	17,500 SF permanent impacts to wetlands from stone revetment	0 SF Permanent impacts to wetlands from stone revetment
	7,292 SF permanent impacts from trail overlooks, dock, and plaza areas	11,896 SF permanent impacts from trail overlooks, dock, and plaza areas
	1,898 SF permanent impacts from trail overlook at First Street, SW to DDOT wetlands	2,643 SF permanent impacts from trail overlook at First Street, SW to DDOT wetlands

Impact Topic	Alternative B: Option 1	Alternative B: Option 2
	<p>156,900 SF of temporary impacts to the 100-year floodplain</p> <p>70,455 SF permanent impacts in the 100-year floodplain</p> <p>8,590 SF permanent impacts in the 500-year floodplain</p>	<p>157,900 SF of temporary impacts to the 100-year floodplain</p> <p>69,030 SF permanent impacts in the 100-year floodplain</p> <p>8,590 SF permanent impacts in the 500-year floodplain</p>
Visitor Use and Experience	<p>Alternative B, Option 1 would result in long-term direct beneficial recreational and educational opportunities for Park visitors. Option 1 would extend the life of the seawall. Conversely, there may be adverse impacts to visitor safety if park visitors climb onto unsafe areas of the revetment, or come into contact with the river</p>	<p>Alternative B, Option 2 would result in similar beneficial impacts as Option 1. Option 2 may offer slightly better views of the Anacostia River due to the trail overlook deck</p>

CHAPTER 4 - CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

The NPS has offered multiple public outreach opportunities, as well as conducted coordination with federal, state, and local agencies, including public stakeholders.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Prior to development of this EA, in the Summer of 2016 the NPS began engaging public and stakeholder groups to create a vision for the recreational opportunities and improvements to Buzzard Point Park. To this end, the NPS hosted a public planning and information session held on July 14, 2016, a 30-day public comment period ending on August 15, 2016, and a stakeholder meeting on September 26, 2016. The NPS subsequently held a public meeting on December 13, 2016 where it introduced two preliminary concepts for the Park, and offered a 45-day public comment period that ended on January 27, 2017. Based on feedback from the public, the NPS prepared and published the Buzzard Point Park DCP in May 2017.²

PUBLIC AND AGENCY COORDINATION

On February 15, 2018, the NPS re-engaged public and agency stakeholders through an email update. Several letters were also mailed during this timeframe to public agencies and Native American Indian Tribes, informing these stakeholders on the initiation of the NEPA and Section 106 process, and soliciting their comments. Copies of this coordination are found in **Appendix D. Table 5** on page 36 provides a list of agencies the NPS consulted with during the preparation of this EA.

SECTION 7 CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

In addition to NEPA scoping coordination addressed above, the NPS initiated coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in accordance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA), on November 30, 2017 through the agency's Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) database. The IPaC database provides information on known or expected protected species, candidate species, and critical habitat within the identified project area. The NPS subsequently conducted online coordination with the USFWS Chesapeake Bay Field Office on February 5, 2018. The USFWS responded on May 8, 2018 indicating that no threatened, endangered, or candidate species, or critical habitat for such species, was found within the vicinity of the project area.

The NPS initiated consultation with the NOAA-NMFS Protected Resources Division and Habitat Conservation Division on May 29, 2018. The NPS recognized that individual (transient) sturgeon may enter the Anacostia River near the project area; however, with adoption of certain conservation measures, construction activities are not likely to adversely affect federally endangered shortnose and Atlantic sturgeon. On June 18, 2018 the NOAA-NMFS Protected Resources Division responded that no federally-listed species

² Also discussed in Chapter 2, Alternatives Dismissed from Further Analysis.

were known to exist in the project area and concurred that with the adoption of certain best management practices and mitigation measures, any transient protected fish species would not be adversely affected by in-water construction activities.

The NPS initiated consultation with the NOAA-NMFS Habitat Conservation Division on May 29, 2018. The NPS recognized the presence of SAV in the project area, and committed to time-of-year restrictions for in-water work as well as best management practices (BMPs) for sediment and erosion control, should the project commence. There are no Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) in the vicinity of the project area. Therefore, the NPS determined that Park improvements are not likely to adversely affect migratory fish or their habitat. On August 5, 2018 the NOAA-NMFS Habitat Conservation Division responded that further coordination is needed as the project continues and recommended time-of-year restrictions for in-water work to protect SAV.

SECTION 106 COORDINATION

In accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), the NPS initiated coordination with the DC SHPO on May 22, 2018. The DC SHPO responded on May 14, 2018 requesting additional information on three potentially historic properties in the APE of the project area including Anacostia Park, the Fort McNair Historic District, and the PEPCO Power Plant. However, through continued coordination, the DC SHPO found that a prior historic property nomination had been submitted on Anacostia Park; and if further found that the other two properties would not be affected by the proposed project. Therefore, no further eligibility determination for historic resources was required. The NPS reconsulted the DC SHPO in June 2019 by providing a Section 106 Assessment of Effects, or AoE, for Buzzard Point Park Improvements. The AoE addressed the three historic properties and included a former water intake structure and contributing feature to the PEPCO Power Plant, which is currently the MHC. The NPS determined that the proposed project would have No Adverse Effect on the historic resources within the project APE. Upon review of the AoE, the DC SHPO requested additional information on the Anacostia sea wall, to determine if any portion of the sea wall lies within the Buzzard Point Park project area. Coordination with the DC SHPO is ongoing.

With respect to archeological resources, the DC SHPO requested that a Phase IA Archeological Sensitivity Assessment be conducted for the Park in 2018. A Phase 1A archeological investigation was completed in October 2018 to determine the existence of any archeological resources, which found that given the various episodes of dredging, filling, grading, and construction along the shoreline at Buzzard Point since the nineteenth century, any archeological resources would have been disturbed, and, therefore archeological sensitivity in the APE is considered low to non-existent. The study found that no further archeological investigation is warranted (JMT 2018a).

The NPS conducted coordination regarding the Proposed Action with the Delaware Nation, the Pamunkey Indian Tribe, and the Catawba Indian Nation on April 9, 2018.

On April 19, 2018 the Delaware Nation responded with concurrence on the Proposed Action and requested continued coordination if there are any new “discoveries” as the project moves forward.

On April 27, 2018 the Catawba Indian Nation responded with no immediate concerns with regard to traditional cultural properties, sacred sites, or Native American archaeological sites within the boundaries of the proposed project area.

To date, no response has been furnished by the Pamunkey Indian Tribe.

Table 5. Agencies consulted

Law, Statute, or Regulatory Authority	Agency Consulted	Premise of Consultation	Results
Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act 16 U.S.C. § 1531 et seq.	USFWS NMFS	Section 7 of the ESA requires that federal agencies consult with USFWS and/or the NMFS if it has reason to believe that an endangered or threatened species (or critical habitat) may be present in the area affected by the project, and that implementation of the Proposed Action may affect such species.	The NPS initiated consultation with the USFWS on November 30, 2017. The USFWS indicated on May 8, 2018 that no threatened, endangered, or candidate species, or critical habitat for such species, was found within the vicinity of the project area. The NPS initiated consultation with the NMFS on May 29, 2018. The NMFS Protected Resources Division responded on June 18, 2018 that no federally-listed fish species were known to exist in the project area, and encouraged adoption of BMPs to safeguard any transient protected fish species from in-water construction activities. The NMFS Habitat Conservation Division responded on August 5, 2018 that further coordination is needed as the project continues, and recommended time-of-year restrictions for in-water work to protect SAV.
Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act 16 U.S.C. §470	DC SHPO	The NHPA directs the Federal government to consider the effects of its actions or Undertakings on historic and archeological resources under Section 106. Tribal coordination is required by Section 106 if a “federal agency undertaking may affect historic properties that are either (1) located on tribal lands, or (2) when any Indian tribe or Native Hawaiian organization attaches religious or cultural significance to the	The NPS initiated consultation with the Delaware Nation, Pamunkey Indian Tribe, and the Catawba Indian Nation on April 9, 2018. There are presently no concerns related to Native American Indian resources. The NPS initiated consultation with the DC SHPO on May 22, 2018. A Phase IA Archeological Sensitivity Assessment was conducted in 2018. Based on the highly disturbed nature of the area and past industrialization, the study found that no further archeological investigation is warranted. NPS further provided a Section 106 AoE on June 9, 2019 anticipating the

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		historic property, regardless of the property's location."	proposed project would have No Adverse Effect on historic properties. The DC SHPO is currently reviewing the AoE.
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CHAPTER 6 - REFERENCES

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