

Langley Fork Park Land Exchange
National Park Service Comment Response

Public Comment #1

We are in receipt of your letter dated October 8, 2021, alerting us of a proposed land exchange between the Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPS) and the National Park Service. While I have no objection to FCPA taking over control of the 52 acres concerning Langley Fork Park, I do have objection to NPS taking over control of Langley Oaks Park. Our property abuts Langley Oaks Park, and thus this is of significant concern to me. 1) We have lived at this property since 2003. One of the reasons why we enjoy this property is that we have known that control of the parkland behind our house has been LOCAL, with local accountability and local interests in mind. If this property were to be transferred to the NPS, even though NPS might "say" that local interests are paramount, the NPS has different goals and serves different masters. If the NPS takes ownership of Langley Oaks Park, for example, that essentially provides NPS with a direct route from Georgetown Pike, through our neighborhood, to the Potomac River. I know that there have been proposals, for example, to extend the George Washington bike trail through this route. It doesn't matter what type of assurances that we get in this regard now; once the land is in federal control, local control is lost.

Park Response:

If the land is transferred to the National Park Service (NPS), it will become part of the George Washington Memorial Parkway (GWMP). The parkway is a national park and scenic roadway honoring the nation's first president, that protects and preserves cultural and natural resources along the Potomac River from Great Falls to Mount Vernon, and is part of a comprehensive system of parks, parkways and recreational areas surrounding the nation's capital.

From the Environmental Assessment: No development is currently proposed for Langley Oaks Park, and NPS would initially manage the exchanged parcel in its natural condition. Under current Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) ownership, there are no plans to develop Langley Oaks Park, and it is FCPA policy to maintain such parks as open space. Under NPS administration the park would be managed consistent with the George Washington Memorial Parkway's purpose and intent. Any future development at Langley Oaks Park would comport with the mission of NPS and the George Washington Memorial Parkway.

From the preferred alternative: NPS would manage Langley Oaks Park in its natural condition, ensuring permanent protection of the Potomac Gorge watershed and site resources, with no initial plans for change or development.

Public Comment #2

For the past several years, Langley Oaks Park has been part of the Fairfax County Suburban Whitetail Population Management Program. This program has enabled safe, ethical reduction of the deer population in Langley Oaks Park, which reduces deer/vehicle collisions on Georgetown Pike and elsewhere, as reduces the property damage and tickborne diseases which accompany any deer population. If Langley Oaks Park becomes NPS property, participation in this program will end.

Park Response:

The George Washington Memorial Parkway, the administrative unit of the NPS does not have a deer management plan. The Park would be required to complete an Environmental Assessment to conduct any deer management prior to action. Currently, there is no funding for such a planning effort. For these reasons, GWMP will not be able to incorporate or continue the state deer management plan as a park practice.

Public Comment #3

I am concerned that your letter was the first that I, as a direct neighbor to Langley Oaks Park, am hearing about this proposed swap; yet, after reading some of the available online information, this has been under consideration for years. I wonder if all of the statutory and regulatory Public Notice requirements were followed? I believe I should have had the opportunity to object to this swap long ago, rather than just hearing about it when it seems to be a "done deal."

Park Response:

The NPS has followed all the statutory public notice requirements. The environmental assessment was a public process to guide park actions. The current public notice is a continuation of that effort. The Notice of Realty Action is required to determine if a proposed land exchange should move forward. The NPS will evaluate all timely comments and may modify or vacate the realty action in response to them. In the absence of any action to modify or vacate this realty action it will become the final determination of the Department of Interior.

Public Comment #4

I attach a photo of two tall, hazardous trees that are in Langley Oaks Park, adjacent our property. These trees are over 100 feet tall, and well within "falling range" of our yard, garage, and house. I believe these trees are tulip poplars which are inherently dangerous, but these trees are unhealthy and have numerous woodpecker holes (visible when the leaves fall). If one or both trees fall (and ALL trees do fall), they could do significant damage to our property as well as risk causing severe injury to death to anyone or anything in their path. I have contacted FCPA several times about the danger that these trees pose to our property and our safety; though they have declined to take any action to mitigate the risk, they are on legal notice of the hazard and have decided to assume the liability associated with this risk. There

was a third tree which fell in our yard in 2017; FCPA was made aware of that issue. Fortunately, in that case there was no injury, and damage was minimal, so I did not pursue the issue with FCPA.

Though I am strongly opposed to the swap that will put Langley Oaks Park under NPS control, the purpose of this e-mail is to put NPS on Legal Notice of the risk that these trees pose; if NPS takes over control of Langley Oaks Park, they will be held liable for any damages caused by these hazardous trees if they should fall on our property.

Park Response:

If the realty action is completed, the NPS will be responsible for Langley Oaks Park. The George Washington Memorial Parkway is staffed with a certified arborist and tree crew that can conduct tree maintenance and removal on a case-by-case basis. For tree work outside the limits of what NPS staff can do, we contract additional support from local landscaping companies. Park neighbors can always contact the George Washington Memorial Parkway via email at gwmp_superintendent@nps.gov or call the park headquarters during normal business hours at 702-289-2500. Work orders are created to address various maintenance needs throughout the park.

Public Comment #5

Is there any plan for NPS to develop any part of Langley Oaks Park, such as building additional trails, or adding access points to existing trails?

Park Response:

At this time there is no specific planning document that determines the use or development of this parcel.

From the Environmental Assessment:

Visitor Use and Experience. Visitor use and experience at Turkey Run Park has the potential to improve through the addition of Langley Oaks Park, especially for urban visitors of the Washington, DC, region looking for local outdoor experiences that are easily accessible. Visitor use and experience would be enhanced by increasing the amount of high-quality forest land officially available to visitors to the George Washington Memorial Parkway as well as by the potential for improvements (e.g., trail development) that could be implemented, consistent with the purpose and significance of the George Washington Memorial Parkway. The features of visitor use and experience at Langley Fork Park would improve for sports organizations that currently use the park as a result of the exchange and subsequent development of the park by FCPA under all action alternatives.

Public Comment #6

Ultimately how is this land exchange going to impact Langley Oaks residents, and in particular the residents on Anna Maria Ct.?

Park Response:

The Environmental Assessment describes beginning on page 49 an analysis of environmental consequences, both beneficial and adverse impacts that would result from implementing the preferred alternative. This analysis included neighboring properties (p.76-79) and concludes:

Cumulative Impacts. No past, present, or reasonably foreseeable projects were identified that would have an impact on the neighboring properties of Langley Fork Park or Langley Oaks Park. Therefore, there would be no cumulative impacts under the Alternative 4.

Conclusion. Under Alternative 4, beneficial impacts from improved recreation opportunities are anticipated to be greater than those described under Alternative 2 and less than those described under Alternative 3. There would still be short-term minor adverse impacts during the period of construction and long-term minor adverse impacts from a moderate increase in traffic, noise, and lighting during the operation of parks. There would be no cumulative impacts.

Public Comment #7

Once the property is acquired by NPS, who can we contact, particularly after hours, when they have law enforcement concerns

Park Response:

Park staff work closely with United States Park Police (USPP) for enforcement and educational outreach. The USPP can be contacted 24 hours a day on their dispatch number; 202-610-7500

Public Comment #8

Will NPS continue the County's ongoing deer management program in the park? The County has an ongoing deer management program that entails bow-hunting. They indicated that the hunters are in the park from dawn to dusk and that it has been ongoing for 6 months. They indicated that there is official signage concerning the program, the hunters are uniformed and/or badged, and they sometimes park on the street in front of their house. They indicated that they are in favor of the deer management in general but expressed some concerns about it happening so close to their house for such an extended period. They indicated that they and/or their neighbors had safety concerns about people, kids, dogs, etc., accidentally being hit.

Park Response:

The George Washington Memorial Parkway, the administrative unit of the NPS does not have a deer management plan. The Park would be required to complete an Environmental Assessment to conduct any deer management. Currently, there is no funding for such a planning effort.

Although we looked into it, the park is unable to incorporate or continue the state deer management plan as a park practice.

Public Comment #9

I am interested in seeing the complete Fairfax County, VA land records as Represented/Described in the attached published notice for exchange of the Fairfax County VA land.

Can you provide to me the Fairfax County parcel identifiers in the form of Map Numbers for all the Fairfax County property associated with these properties?

Park Response:

The United States of America will acquire GWMP Tract 114-110, which is a 101.65 acre, more or less, parcel of land currently owned by the FCPA. GWMP Tract 114-110 is also known as Langley Oaks Park. Detailed information about this exchange, including precise legal descriptions, survey plats, and the Finding of No Significant Impact documenting the NPS's compliance with applicable Federal law, including the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, are available at the National Park Service, National Capital Regional Office, or on the [NPS Planning, Environment and Public Comment webpage](#).

Fairfax County Website: [Site Records Viewer \(arcgis.com\)](#)

Parcel: 0223 04 A

Parcel: 0221 02 F

Parcel: 0221 02 J

Parcel: 0223 01 0040 C

Parcel: 0223 01 0040 B

Public Comment #10

I wanted to verify the NPS' proposed use of Langley Oaks Park if the exchange is made with FCPA for Langley Fork Park our neighbor's house and our house back up to Langley Oaks Park.

In 2018, the government proposed no development of Langley Oaks Park, but was going to maintain the park in its entirety to protect the Potomac River. Is that still the plan?

Park Response:

From the Environmental Assessment: No development is currently proposed for Langley Oaks Park, and NPS would initially manage the exchanged parcel in its natural condition. Under

current Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) ownership, there are no plans to develop Langley Oaks Park, and it is FCPA policy to maintain such parks as open space. Under NPS administration the park would be managed consistent with the George Washington Memorial Parkway's purpose and intent. Any future development at Langley Oaks Park would comport with the mission of NPS and the George Washington Memorial Parkway.

From the preferred alternative: NPS would manage Langley Oaks Park in its natural condition, ensuring permanent protection of the Potomac Gorge watershed and site resources, with no initial plans for change or development.