

May 16, 2025

Erica Mutschler  
Landscape Architect, Planning & Capital Projects Team  
Department of Parks and Recreation  
14420 Bristow Road  
Manassas, VA 20112

Dear Ms. Mutschler:

You asked NVCT for feedback on the “Doves Landing Park Kayak Launch Study” (“Study”) which compares three kayak launch site options. We have reviewed the Study and offer the following comments as it relates to the conservation easement that NVCT holds over the property. The purposes of the conservation easement are to preserve and protect the property in perpetuity, pursuant to the Doves Landing Natural/Cultural Resources Park Master Plan, October 2022 (“Master Plan”). The easement specifically permits park improvements as shown on the Master Plan Maps (Appendix C) and permits changes to the number, character, or location of park improvements with NVCT’s written approval (section III, paragraph 2 (c)(i)). Changes would be considered subject to the Master Plan’s development considerations. The easement also imposes impervious surface limits and additional restrictions in riparian and wetland buffers, discussed below.

Master Plan considerations

The Master Plan specifically recommends adding a second parking area and river access on the east side of the park utilizing the power line corridor, similar to launch site 2 of the study. It also specifies that “all design/development should be low impact and protect the natural/cultural resources of the property.” The river access should be provided “in a manner that does not degrade the riverbank or cultural resources.” The Master Plan also recommends avoiding development in sensitive areas, areas within drainage ways, and areas with larger trees and denser tree canopy. The Study addresses a number of useful metrics that help measure the impact of the design options according to Master Plan guidance.

Maximum Impervious Surface

Section III, paragraph 2 of the conservation easement establishes a maximum impervious surface limit of 66,000 square feet (approx. 1.5 acres), not including roads. It does not appear that any of the designs approaches this limit, but depending on the surface materials, ADA accessible paths and other aspects of installing parking lots and the kayak launch may contribute to meeting this limit. Consideration should be given to the totality of impervious surface area of all future park improvements.

Riparian and Wetland Buffers

Section III, paragraph 4 of the conservation easement establishes 100-ft buffers around all streams and wetlands. Exhibit C of the easement is a map of the “protected waters and buffers.”

*Note that the “protected waters” shown on Exhibit C include NWI riparian wetlands, while the “potential wetlands” shown on p. 4 of the Study do not. This difference may affect the impact of the different launch site options on wetlands as calculated in the Study.*

Permitted park improvements as shown on the Master Plan Maps are allowed in the protected waters and buffers shown on Exhibit C. Changes to the number, character, or location of park improvements are possible, subject to the Master Plan’s development considerations, but impact to buffers should be minimized to the extent possible.

According to the Study, launch site 2 has the greatest impact to wetlands, however, this does not include the impact to all of the protected waters and buffers required by the easement and shown on Exhibit C.

#### Summary

Regarding general design considerations from the Master Plan and specifically protecting natural and cultural resources, we consider launch sites 2 and 3 preferable over launch site 1.

Regarding the conservation easement’s impervious surface limit, the options are similar.

According to the Study, regarding impact to wetlands, we consider launch sites 1 and 3 preferable (however calculations do not reflect all restrictions imposed by the conservation easement).

Given the over-arching fact that an entrance and parking area are planned for the east side of the park, regardless of whether the launch is located in the west, means that overall ecological impact, and specifically impacts to trees, tree canopy, and wetlands would be minimized significantly with launch sites 2 or 3.

**For these reasons, NVCT strongly recommends advancing launch sites 2 or 3.**

Thank you for inviting NVCT’s feedback on these design options.

Best regards,

Rentz Hilyer  
Land Conservation Specialist