

Preventing Further Damage to the Ecosystems of the Lower Potomac Gorge

Discussion with Arlington County Parks and Recreation Commission

December 10, 2024

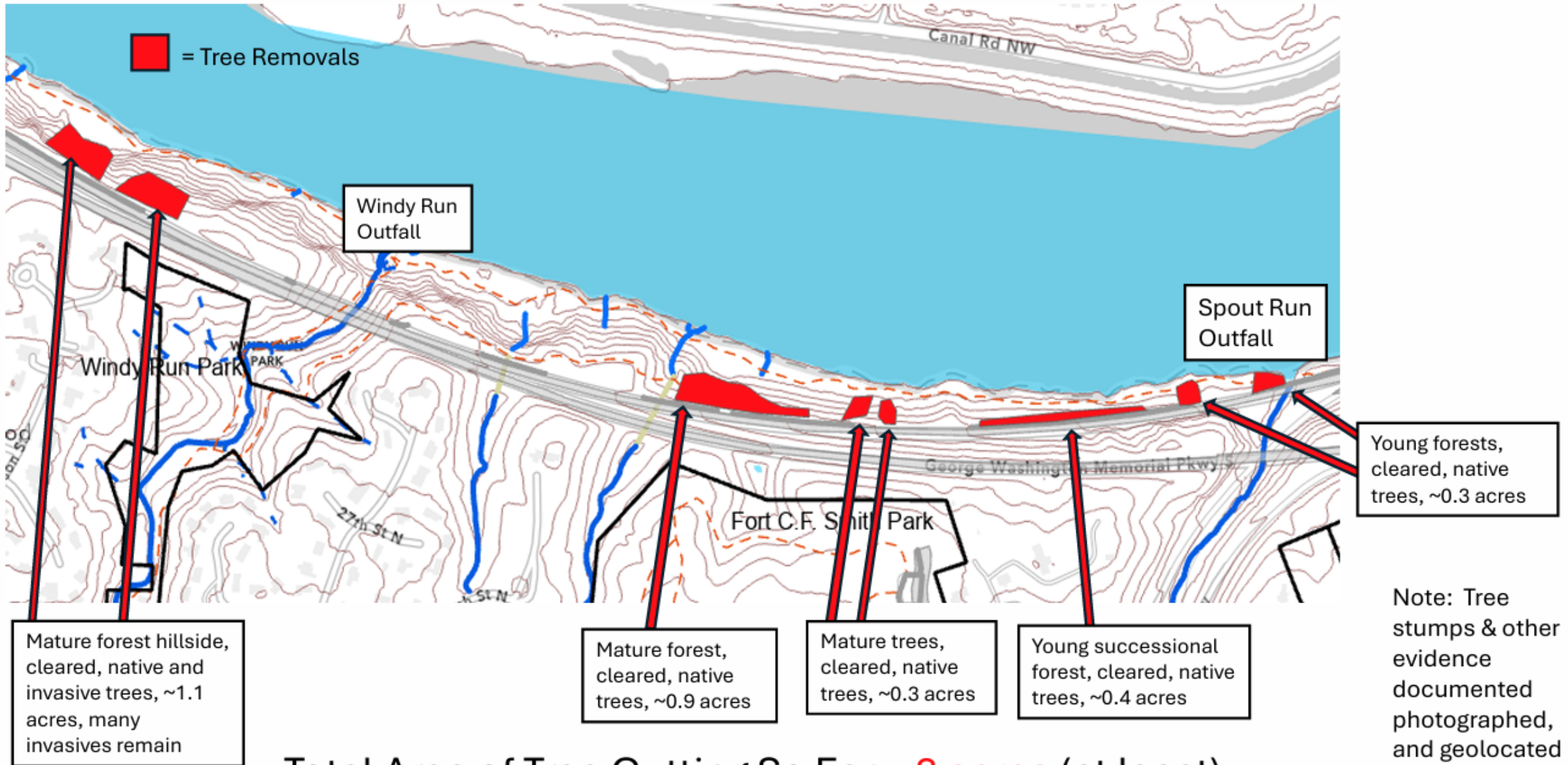
Glenn Tobin, Arlington County resident

December 10, 2024

Current Status of the “Viewsheds” Project in the GW Memorial Parkway

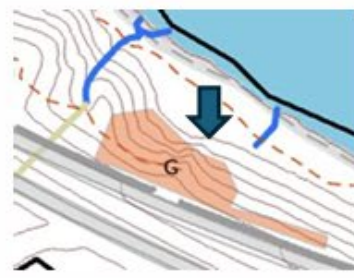
- In early October, the NPS removed over 300 trees, without notice and without proper Environmental Assessments, from the forest between the Potomac River and the roadway of the GWMP, north of Spout Run
- The purpose of the removal was to restore “historic” views of the river from the Parkway
- Once the alarm was raised and input was provided to the Superintendent of the GWMP, the project was halted. 300 additional trees were spared, at least temporarily
- The NPS committed to a process ahead which will involve the opportunity for public feedback; the process has not been defined
- Ongoing public pressure is needed – before, during, and after the hearing. A “coordinating group” of concerned citizens is being formed.
- The purpose of this discussion is to establish next steps that the Commission can consider

Eight Areas of Tree Removal Identified – 3 acres already completed



Total Area of Tree Cutting So Far: **3 acres** (at least)


View 1: Before-After Photos Prove Tree Removal Has NOT Been Selective. Mature, Native Forest Clearcut.



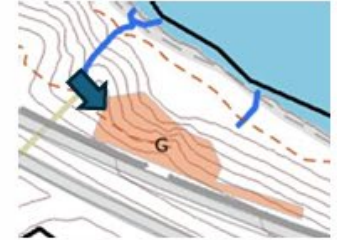
Before: September 8, 2024



After: October 13, 2024

 = same spot in both pictures

Viewing Same Location From Upper Hill Demonstrates the Same: Mature Forest Stand Removed; Not Selective



View looking
**downriver (towards
Spout Run)**
October 13, 2024

Native Trees Have Been Removed Primarily, in Large Numbers

Photos taken Oct. 12-13, 2024



Other trees cut: Pawpaw, elms, hickories, sumacs, maples (partial list)



Oaks



Basswoods



Tulips



American hollies

Many Organizations and People Got involved to Stop the Tree Removal

- Congressman Don Beyer/Noah Simon
- Susan Cunningham/Libby Garvey/County Board
- Letter to the GWMP
 - Northern Virginia Bird Alliance
 - Chesapeake Bay Foundation
 - Faith Alliance for Climate Change
 - Friends of Dyke Marsh
 - Friends of Hunting Creed
 - Sierra Club– Great Falls
 - Potomac Conservancy
 - Sierra Club—Potomac River Group
 - Virginia Native Plant Society

Media:

- NBC4
- ArlNow
- Politico E&E
- Arlington Connection
- Fairfax Connection
- Mt. Vernon Gazette

Next Steps

- Coordinating group being formed
- Inquiries have been made as to the process
- Arlington County can play an important role – keep the drumbeat going
 - Letter to GWMP from County Board: Clarity on process; need to stop further cutting; need to rehabilitate the areas destroyed
 - Commissions – keep discussing; create ongoing visibility to the project– at some stage, we are going to need people to show up at a hearing
 - Other?

Tentative Dates for 2025 PRC Meetings

PRC Meeting Date	Meeting Location
Tuesday, January 21, 2025	Microsoft Teams Virtual-Only Meeting
Tuesday, February 18, 2025*	Venue (Room TBD) if joint SC/PRC Meeting is in February; Otherwise, Cherry Conference Room (Bozman Government Center, 2 nd Floor, Room 216)
Tuesday, March 25, 2025*	Venue (Room TBD) if joint SC/PRC Meeting is in March; Otherwise, Cherry Conference Room
Tuesday, April 22, 2025	Microsoft Teams Virtual-Only Meeting
Tuesday, May 13, 2025 [^]	Cherry Conference Room
Tuesday, June 24, 2025	
Tuesday, July 15, 2025	Microsoft Teams Virtual-Only Meeting
Tuesday, August 19 or August 26, 2025	PRC Field Trip (Location TBD)
Tuesday, September 23, 2025	Cherry Conference Room
Tuesday, October 28, 2025	
Tuesday, November 18, 2025 [^]	Microsoft Teams Virtual-Only Meeting
Tuesday, December 9, 2025	Cherry Conference Room

**Potential joint meeting with the Sports Commission (Meeting Date/Location TBD).*

[^]Potential conflict with County Board recessed meeting; 5/13 PRC Meeting will be coordinated with presentation of the 2024 Bill Thomas Park Volunteer Award.