

About Parkland Encroachments



MontgomeryParks.org

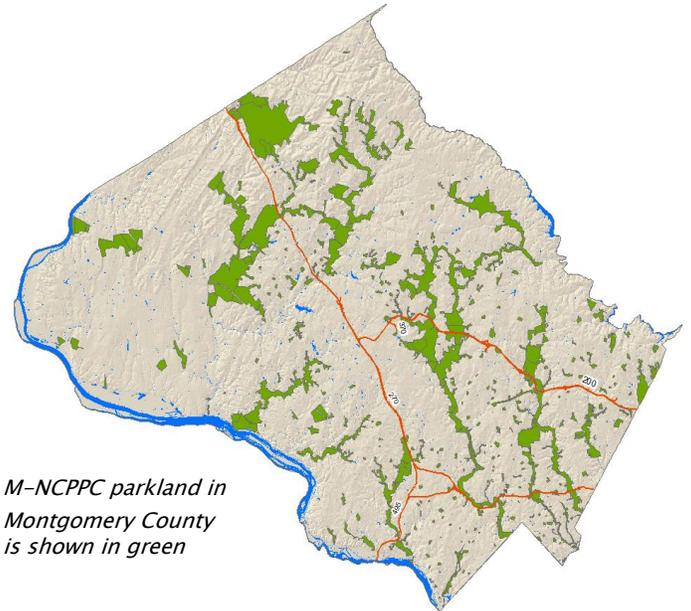
MARYLAND - NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION (M-NCPPC)

Protecting Park Resources

Since 1927, the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) has worked to acquire, develop, steward and maintain a park system for residents and visitors of Montgomery County, Maryland.

Today, the M-NCPPC park system in Montgomery County (Montgomery Parks) is comprised of over 400 parks across more than 36,000 acres of land.

Park staff work diligently to protect valuable natural and cultural resources on parkland. Our organization strives to strike a balance between the demand for recreational opportunities and the need for stewardship and conservation.



M-NCPPC parkland in Montgomery County is shown in green

What is a Parkland Encroachment?

Put simply, parkland encroachments are the **illegal use of public parkland for private use.**

It is important for landowners living adjacent to parkland to understand that parkland encroachments can negatively impact and/or damage natural resources, environmental stewardship goals, and recreational activities.

Any illegal use of public parkland for private use is considered an encroachment. Some common examples include:

- Dumping of yard waste, trash or other debris
- Extension of yards (via mowing, fencing, etc.)
- Unauthorized mowing or clearing land of trees or other vegetation
- Removal of flora, fauna, geologic, and/or historic materials
- Storage of equipment or materials such as RVs, boats, firewood, gardening tools, etc.
- Installation of structures such as fences, play equipment, tree houses, sheds, garages or other structures
- Unintentional impacts of landscape plantings that spread onto parkland



Examples of parkland encroachment include dumping trash and debris (pictured left) and installing any kind of structure, including lighting (pictured above)

Impacts of Encroachments

Parkland encroachments can affect water quality, forest health, recreational experiences, or can complicate intended plans for park uses.

A single encroachment may seem inconsequential, but due to the great volume of residential and commercial areas adjacent to parkland, the impacts can be significant and for this reason cannot be overlooked.

For example, dumping yard waste on to parkland can invite the spread of non-native invasive plants, become a potential a fire hazard, or may attract rodent pests.

Erecting structures on parkland limits availability for public use of the areas and can negatively impact the environmental stewardship and natural resource protection goals.

Dumping yard waste on parkland is considered an encroachment



Erecting any kind of structure on parkland without approval is an encroachment

Stream Buffers and Water Quality

A stream buffer is a vegetated area adjacent to a stream which helps to keep a stream healthy.

Stream buffers of native trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants provide shade to the stream, prevent erosion from stormwater runoff, stabilize stream banks and soak up excess nutrients and other pollutants from the surrounding land before they can reach a stream. Stream buffers also provide valuable habitat and important travel corridors for a variety of wildlife.

A significant number of encroachments on parkland are in stream valleys and impact the stream buffer. Since Montgomery Parks is largely a stream valley park system, we are especially concerned with impacts of encroachments affecting streams and water quality.



Stream buffers help to keep streams healthy



These "green and white" poles are oftentimes used to denote park boundaries

Respecting Park Boundaries

M-NCPPC, Montgomery Parks, has the authority to enforce against parkland encroachments under the M-NCPPC Park Rules and Regulations and Sections 17-201 and 17-207 of the Maryland Land-Use Article in the Annotated Code of Maryland.

If you own property adjacent to parkland, it is important to not encroach on the park. Take preventative measures to minimize impacts by properly disposing of yard waste and other materials and preventing spread of personal activities on to parkland.

If you have been notified that you have encroached onto parkland, it is your responsibility to take action to clean up, remove, or cease all activities identified as illegal encroachment on parkland.

Failure to comply with the encroachment process may result in fines or other legal action.