

The Need for Inspections

Following a period of developer self-certification during the 1990's the Howard County Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ) determined it was necessary to inspect forest conservation projects to guarantee compliance. In 2001 DPZ granted the Department of Recreation and Parks (DRP) the responsibility of inspecting easements and enforcing FCA regulations. In 2008 DPZ granted DRP the responsibility of inspecting landscaping projects as well. Now Agreements permit DRP staff to access easement areas to complete forest conservation inspections and to investigate possible violations of the Howard County FCA. DRP staff members are directed by County planners within DPZ when to inspect specific forest conservation projects. The costs of inspections are funded through fees paid by developers to the County. Investigations of possible FCA violations are initiated by reports from concerned citizens, through the use of aerial photography or Geographical Information System (GIS) maps, and as a result of County personnel discovering a possible violation during the completion of their day-to-day activities.