

PUBLIC NOTICE
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
Notice of Availability of the Draft Environmental Assessment
Point of Rocks Significant to High Hazard Dam Decommissioning and Stream
Restoration
LPDM-PJ-03-MD-2022-002

Frederick County, Maryland has applied through the Maryland Department of Emergency Management to the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Hazard Mitigation Assistance, Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) grant program for funding for a dam decommissioning project in the Point of Rocks Community Park in Frederick County, Maryland. The PDM funds were made available through Congressionally directed spending in the 2022 Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act (Pub. L. No. 117-103). This Environmental Assessment (EA) is being prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, the Council on Environmental Quality regulations implementing NEPA (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Parts 1500 through 1508), and FEMA procedures for NEPA compliance (FEMA Directive 108-1 and FEMA Instruction 108-1-1). The purpose of the EA is to analyze the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project, and to determine whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

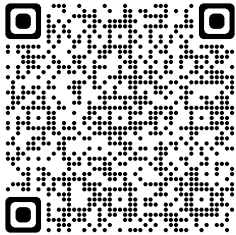
The purpose of the proposed project is to reduce hazards associated with the potential for flooding from a catastrophic failure of the dam and from storm events and protect life and property. The need for this project is because the existing dam embankment is classified by MDE as a significant to high hazard dam. Failure of a high hazard dam would likely result in loss of human life, extensive property damage, or flooding of major state roads or interstates. Soil erosion threatens the integrity of earthen dams and may contribute to dam failure. Because the proposed project and associated dam is within the 100-year flood zone of the Potomac River, backwaters from riverine flooding could cause erosion in the project area. Existing stream banks along the unnamed tributary are already experiencing high rates of erosion. Furthermore, the state of Maryland is experiencing more intense rainfall and severe storms due to climate change, which increases the risk of inland flooding and associated soil erosion, further threatening the existing dam.

Alternatives discussed in this EA include no action and the proposed action. The Proposed Action would decommission the existing significant to high hazard dam, restore over 1,000 feet of stream channel using natural design techniques, install a pedestrian bridge over the restored stream, create pocket wetlands and other environmental site design features, and replant vegetation within the Point of Rocks Community Park (39.276035, -77.535942). Sandbag cofferdams would be installed to dewater the work area and excavators would be used to breach and remove the dam. Stream restoration would include installation of riffle and cascade structures, weir grade control structures, and pools within the existing dam impoundment area. Additionally, banks of the existing stream and a tributary would be graded and realigned followed by installation of riffle and cascade structures, woody debris habitat, and stone toe protection. The approximately 3.35-acre project area, including the former embankment site, would be planted with native upland, riparian, and meadow vegetation and trees based on proximity to the stream

and expected hydrologic regimes. A single-span, steel pedestrian bridge would be installed in the same location as the existing dam embankment to retain access and walkability for the community. The bridge would be 8 feet wide and would span 85 feet across the new stream channel.

The Draft EA has been prepared in accordance with all requirements of NEPA, the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), Executive Order 11988 (“Floodplain Management”), Executive Order 11990 (“Protection of Wetlands”), and the implementing regulations of FEMA, for the purpose of assessing the potential impacts of the Proposed Action on the human and natural environment. The Draft EA summarizes the purpose of and need for the project, alternatives considered, the affected environment, and potential environmental consequences of the project.

It is available for review and comment and can be viewed on and/or downloaded at <https://www.frederickcountymd.gov/7611/Documents-for-Review> or on FEMA’s website at <https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/practitioners/environmental-historic/nepa-repository>, or using



Additionally, a hardcopy of the draft EA is available for review at the Frederick County Government, Division of Energy and Environment, 30 North Market Street, 2nd Floor Frederick, MD 21701.

The comment period will conclude 30 days after the initial publication of this Public Notice on **July 26, 2023**. Written comments on the Draft EA can be mailed or emailed to the contact listed below. If no substantive comments are received, the Draft EA and associated FONSI will become final. Substantive comments received will be addressed as appropriate in the Final EA/FONSI.

Alison Rudenstein

FEMA Region 3

615 Chestnut Street, 6th Floor

Philadelphia, PA 19106

ATTENTION: Point of Rocks Project NEPA Comments

Email: FEMA-R3-EHP-PublicComment@fema.dhs.gov

Select documents are included in the Draft EA appendices. FEMA will provide additional documents upon request; please contact us by email at FEMA-R3-EHP-PublicComment@fema.dhs.gov.