

PIPELINE PONDERINGS

The engagement between citizens, supervisors, and staff that brought about the plan to retain Lake Accotink was an admirable example of local civic action at its best.

However, a main motivation for retaining the full lake is its aesthetic value. Now we learn that there is a high aesthetic cost attached in the form of an aboveground, 18 to 24 inch permanent pipeline from Lake Accotink into Wakefield Park, routed along the Cross County Trail and Accotink Creek. A further aesthetic and environmental cost of the sacrifice of several acres of forest is also now attached.

This cost of what is lost is not what the neighbors expected and seems too high for what is being kept.

Issues with the pipeline:

- Industrialization of our parks is not acceptable
- The sacrifice of our dwindling forested habitats is not acceptable
- The pipeline, combined with its pumping stations and with the 5-acre dewatering clearing, will be a hideous eyesore, negating the aesthetic value of retaining the full lake
- No matter how carefully laid, the pipelaying heavy equipment will impair wetlands and habitat.
- The pipeline will impede overland drainage
- The pipeline will impede floodwater flows in the floodplain
- Debris will build up against the pipe during floodwater flows
- Scouring will occur around the pipe during floodwater flows
- The pipeline will block the movement of wildlife, presenting distinct problems for species of different sizes.

Possible alternatives to the pipeline:

- Dewater sediment on barges in the lake
- Draw down the level of the lake, creating space for on-site dewatering
- Mechanical dewatering to eliminate the need for offsite dewatering
- Adapt the methods employed by Lake Barcroft, with lesser infrastructure needs.
- Route the pipeline along the railroad to the same location as the last dredge (vicinity of I-395 and Edsall Road). The quarry that was filled last time is no longer available, but space might be found for aboveground dewatering with sediment then trucked away.
- Route a much shorter pipeline to the industrial park adjacent to the park on Southern Drive, with aboveground dewatering and trucking as above. (Adequate space may be an issue.)
- "Trucks for Trees" put up with trucks on neighborhood streets in lieu of cutting down the forest.
- If this pipeline cannot be avoided, Howery Park (corner of Braddock Road and Glen Park Road) as an already-cleared dewatering site.
- We must reexamine the option of the smaller lake, which would provide all the recreational and most of the aesthetic value of the full lake, at a far lower financial burden, and without imposing the environmental cost of tree canopy loss. Twenty-five acres is still an attractive size.