Why Meadow Restoration is needed: a History of the Washington Grove Meadow Conservation Park

13 October 2025

2001-2002 View of the Meadow

2005 July 11 Planning Board held a public hearing for the Casey at Mill Creek preliminary plan of subdivision

- **The Town consensus was for preservation of the Meadow as open space.**
  - The Mayor, the Town's legal counsel, and the Chairman of the Historic Preservation Commission all testified.
  - A very strong case was made for the critical need to protect the historic integrity of the Town and to do it during phase I of the preliminary plan process.
  - Individual residents of the Town, and of the Shady Grove and of Derwood also supported this in their public testimony.

The Casey at Mill Creek **preliminary plan** conditions

- The Casey at Millcreek Preliminary Plan 1-02022 (granted to Oxbridge Development on July 11 2005, vote 5-0) added dedication of “approximately 12 acres as the Legacy Open Space resource, **including approximately 10.5 acres of the designated open field** and approximately 1.5 acres of a forested hedgerow adjacent to the field.”
- The preliminary plan specifies the rationale for preservation of “the meadow” on page 9 of the 0711 2005 document

“The meadow was determined to be significant according to several Legacy Open Space criteria:

- The property has countywide and national significance in terms of its association with the Town of Washington Grove, a heritage resource of national import with exceptional architectural character and rural viewscapes.
- Because of its association with Washington Grove, the site contributes to the Legacy program's heritage theme of the Rail Community Cluster, of which the Town is a part.
- If preserved as open space, the site would serve as a protective buffer of the significant heritage resource that is Washington Grove. Over 57% of the Town is preserved as forest today, and the preservation of this open field would preserve a rural viewscape on the last remaining unprotected side of the Town.”

2013-2018

- Mowing did not begin in 2012 but two years later around March of 2014. The mowers left MANY cedars which by then were over 4-5 feet tall, plus MANY which were smaller than 4 feet tall.
- Subsequent efforts to get Parks to remove more of the cedars were unsuccessful. I talked to Parks both as Mayor and subsequently as Meadow Liaison. Their answer was always, “we’re understaffed and can’t do anything now.”
- The impediment to cedar removal was their budget and not our indifference.

2025 Current Plan considerations

- Rejection of the Meadow Restoration plan from the Parks Department could damage our engaged and cooperative relationship with Parks.
- **More importantly, if the open, rural vista is no longer valued by the Town, the rationale which makes our LOS easement different from the usual MC LOS is eliminated.**
- **Rejecting the meadow restoration proposal puts Washington Grove in a seriously vulnerable position.**
- **There are many good reasons to proceed with the proposed meadow restoration proposal, but long-term protection of the Town's eastern border is the most important.**