

The Capital

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South county dredge spoils site proposed

Tracys Landing lot eyed for landfill from marina dredging

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Part of a 457-acre residential development near Tracys Landing could become a dump site for dredging spoils if the county approves the plan.

The Vineyard, at routes 2 and 258, was subdivided five years ago for a cluster of luxury homes. Now the developers, Land Preserve LLC, controlled by Hamilton Chaney, son of developer and marina owner Steuart Chaney, have proposed turning part of the southernmost lot of the project into a dredge spoils site.

"The long and the short of it is we are planning for the future," the senior Chaney said. "A major part of the cost of dredging is the cost of placing the material. It's getting more expensive to find a place to put it."

He said the general plan is to use the site for future dredging in and around the family's two large south county marinas, Herrington Harbour North and South.

"But in the long run there could be another need for it. We are looking long term," he said.

The county currently leases a dredge spoils site from the Chaney family across Route 256 from Herrington Harbour North in Tracys Landing, about three miles from the proposed site.

The 65-acre lot proposed to accept spoils sits within roughly 300 yards of Route 2 and straddles the 100-year flood plain abutting Lyons Creek. The spoils area would not cross the creek, but would sit north of the steep slopes leading down to the creek, which winds its way westward to the Patuxent River.

Access to the site would be via a deeded right of way directly off Route 2. Hamilton Chaney, speaking without having the plans in front of him, thought the actual dredge spoil site would occupy only about nine acres of the 65-acre parcel.

When the Chaney family first acquired the property, he had hoped to put it into preservation, protected under county or state easements. But when they approached the county five years ago, funding for the preservation program was slashed.

So they established a 20-lot subdivision, with most of the homes in smaller lots clustered closer to the north end of the property by Bay Front Road/Route 258. Nearly 250 acres of the property, all forested, were set aside to be preserved.

Twelve lots were sold to Vineyard Partners LLC, owned by the Baldwin family of Reliable Contracting and Baldwin Homes fame. But only four homes have been built so far.

County officials said they are not involved in any plans to open a dredge spoils site at the proposed location, though the county has been seeking suitable sites for its waterway dredging program.

Creeks and other waterways are dredged to remove silt that impedes boating traffic, both for pleasure craft and commercial operations. Finding suitable places to put the material is becoming tougher and more expensive.

"There have been no discussions we are aware of for development of a dredge spoils site in that location," said Matt Diehl, spokesman for the Department of Public Works. "They may have something in their plans for the future, but as of now, we know nothing."

Permits from both the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Maryland Department of the Environment could be required on top of county grading permits, Diehl said.

"We'll get any and all permits that are required," Stuart Chaney said.

But MDE spokesman Robert Ballinger said the agency had not received an application yet. If the plan does not disturb any wetlands or affect the local watertable, an MDE permit might not be required.

Stuart Chaney said the topography of the land "would not be changed much."