

MONTGOMERY COUNTY ARCHIVES

Guide to the Records of the

**ROCK CREEK WATERSHED
ASSOCIATION
1949-1959**

Record Group 18: Civic Organizations

**July 24, 1997
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Updated 2018**

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ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY

In 1954, representatives from several established community groups met to organize the Rock Creek Watershed Commission. In 1955 the Commission established a steering committee to formulate an effective program to promote local interest in and support for Rock Creek Park and watershed restoration. In 1956, the renamed Rock Creek Watershed Association (RCWA) was incorporated and held its first public meeting. Members of the Association met with local and state government officials and urged the Montgomery County Council to forbid bottomland construction, acquire and conserve land for parks, mandate adequate storm water drainage, require builders to repair damage, ban the discharge of inadequately treated sewage into the Potomac or its tributaries, conduct studies, and take legal action against violators.

The Association, in cooperation with other civic organizations and educational institutions, undertook field studies and surveys and conducted campaigns of public education regarding Rock Creek watershed issues and the Association's goals and activities. RCWA officers gave statements before governing bodies proposing and supporting legislation to restrict real estate development, provide open space areas for recreation and wildlife, and eliminate wasteful construction practices.

The RCWA helped to pass a zoning provision against construction in high-risk bottomland areas. In 1958, the County approved a flood control project which entailed the building of two dams and the relocation of sewer lines.

EXTENT

0.2 cubic feet: 1 (shared) letter-size Hollinger box.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The records of the Rock Creek Watershed Association consist of six folders and oversized newspaper clippings containing material ranging in date from 1949 to 1959, with bulk dates from 1954 to 1959. Materials include correspondence, minutes, newsletters, reports, drafts, reprints of articles, membership and mailing lists, notices, brochures, and statements. Also included is an oversized folder of newspaper clippings from 1954-1958, documenting the environmental challenges of the watershed area and the county's response. Significant topics include Rock Creek and its watershed, agricultural methods and building- and roadway-construction practices, storm water runoff, soil destruction and erosion, flooding and flood control projects, sewage treatment, park conservation and expansion, pollution control, sedimentation, the Soil Conservation Society of America, and the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (MNCPPC).

The records have been arranged in two series:

Series I: Subject Files

Series II: Newspaper Clippings

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

Series I: Subject Files, 1949-1959

(6 folders)

This series contains correspondence, minutes, newsletters, reports, drafts, reprints of articles, membership and mailing lists, brochures, notices and statements. Of special significance is a correspondence file maintained by Bernard Frank, the motivating force of the organization, documenting his growing and urgent concern for the deterioration of Rock Creek and his efforts and those of other RCWA members to arouse public and official attention to its plight and support for its improvement. Also of significance is a list of educational materials relating to conservation, several reports of technical surveys, and a draft of a 1957 master's thesis on the Rock Creek Watershed.

Special note on folder 6: MNCPPC reorganization

This file seems to have been maintained by J. Douglas Bradshaw, a representative from Montgomery County who was the chairman of the Montgomery-Prince George's Counties Joint Delegation in Annapolis. The records document the attempt by Montgomery County officials, civic organizations, and residents to reorganize the MNCPPC by splitting it up into a Bi-County Planning Coordination Authority. Under this plan, the Montgomery County Council would appoint members of a Montgomery County Planning Agency whose functions would be combined with those of the Upper Montgomery County Planning Commission to allow coordinated planning for the whole county and give taxpayers a voice in how their taxes were being spent. The Montgomery County Planning Agency would also be empowered to coordinate planning with all other jurisdictions instead of Prince George's County alone. The file contains letters of support and opposition from citizens and civic organizations, correspondence relating to legislative details, and copies of testimony given before the House of Delegates. The bill was defeated in 1953.

Series II: Newspaper Clippings, 1954-1958

(1 folder)

This series contains an extensive collection of clippings documenting the efforts, activity and general interest of the RCWA in the mid-50s, including articles on parks planning, zoning, park use, community opinion, conservation, pollution, and development.

CONDITIONS GOVERNING ACCESS

This collection is open for research.

LANGUAGE

English.

PROVENANCE

Some material was culled from accession 97-27.

USING THESE RECORDS

To request records listed in this finding aid, the following information should be given to the archivist:

Record Group 18, **Records of the Rock Creek Watershed Association**, Series Number and Name, Box Number and Folder Title(s).

The preferred citation for materials from these records is:

Montgomery County Archives; Gaithersburg, Maryland. Record Group 18: Civic Organizations. Records Title: The Records of the Rock Creek Watershed Association. Series number and series name. Box number and folder title, if appropriate.

PROCESSING PROCEDURES

General processing procedures consisted of discarding duplicates, unnecessary binders, and routine transmittals. If records contained oversized documents and photographs, they were removed from the original location in their assigned series and placed in separate containers. Separation sheets would then be inserted in the original location within the folder to indicate the new location of any records placed elsewhere.

PROCESSING STAFF/FINDING AID AUTHOR

Sarah Hedlund
Former MCA staff

BOX INVENTORY

Series I: Subject Files, 1950-1959

Box 1

Articles of Incorporation, 1955-1957

Correspondence, 1950-1958

General, 1954-1958

Membership, 1956-1959

Minutes, 1955-1959

Reorganization of MNCPPC, 1948-1953

Series II: Newspaper Clippings, 1954-1959

Flat File 31