

## February Civic Federation Program: How Green is MOCO's Stormwater Management?

Diane Cameron, Coordinator of the Stormwater Partners Network, will fill us in on whether Montgomery's stormwater management is deep forest or merely a paler shade of green. (The Stormwater Partners Network is comprised of 22 grass roots organizations - including the Civic Federation.) We will also hear about a key case study, the Chelsea Court project, from Seven Oaks Evanswood Citizens' Association representative, Jean Cavanaugh. In addition, Diane will explain a proposed new stormwater tree practice. Lastly, a representative from the Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services has also been invited.

Montgomery County's storm sewer permit requires the County to use environmental site design to treat stormwater. Environmental site design (ESD) means using green techniques like rain gardens and pervious pavers to capture and treat stormwater. (This approach is also called low impact development or LID.) ESD is a very cost-effective approach, especially when applied to new development early in the planning and design process. Correctly done, stormwater-friendly landscaping can provide the following additional benefits:

- Aesthetic value
- Wildlife habitat
- Low-input and easy to maintain (e.g. less water, fertilizers, pesticides)
- Ecosystem services (e.g. reduce air pollution)
- Energy savings (providing shade)
- Increased property value
- Oasis of nature in built environment

The new standard in Maryland is to use ESD to the *Maximum Extent Practicable* (MEP). Montgomery County has been charged with improving the County's stormwater management ordinances/regulations and modifying the County's planning and zoning codes as needed to achieve MEP. Come to the February program to learn how far we've come and how far we still need to go.