

READERS' LETTERS

# VA is being insensitive to environment

With callous disregard to the environment the VA built a parking deck, which has three support columns in the bank of the South Fork of Peachtree Creek. This is done despite numerous petitions, letters and calls by Georgia environmental groups and despite Georgia law that requires 100 feet of undisturbed space on each bank. As a federal property, VA called the deck a "drainage facility" (ha) and did not respect our host state's wishes. Wildlife requires uninterrupted greenbelt space, and now beavers, raccoons, waterfowl and foxes are in jeopardy.

Currently there is construction material again right at the edge of the creek, as the parking deck is being expanded in preparation for moving the VA central offices from Clairmont Road.

As if that weren't enough, the handling system produces loud blower noises right over the creek and adjacent Lullwater Park, a haven for birds, families and joggers. These blowers could be aimed toward the nearby noisy street.

I wonder: Can an institution that is so insensitive to the needs of nature and neighbors truly be a caring environment for its



RENEE HANNANS / Staff

"Callous disregard to the environment," writes a reader, upset about the Veterans Affairs Medical Center's parking deck, which has three support columns in the bank of the South Fork of Peachtree Creek.

patients?

**BRIGITTE B. NAHMIA**  
Decatur

## Trails can often threaten streams

As a member of the DeKalb County Soil and Water Conservation District, which advocates for water quality and for the environment, I support green-space and greenway corridors, but only those that contribute to the sustainability of the natural environment. Multiuse recreational roadways are but one type of greenway that have a place in the

larger scheme of greenway planning, but the placement of those roadways is crucial.

Current science emanating from the University of Georgia states the need for 100-foot stream buffers in order to ensure that water quality is protected. Therefore, DeKalb County, in its desire to be a leader for the state of Georgia in greenway planning, should adopt a policy statement on not allowing impervious surface within the recommended stream buffer of 100 feet described in the document Guidebook for Developing Local Riparian Buffer Ordinances recently published by the Institute of Ecology. DeKalb County should set the example for the state. Any bike roadway proposed to be placed in or near a stream corridor would have to be looked at very carefully on a case-by-case basis.

The Comprehensive Plan of DeKalb calls for the establishment of a task force composed of citizens and staff to plan and implement a plan for greenways, green space and open space. The multiuse trail plan that was recently presented to the DeKalb Board of Commissioners is but one component of such a master greenway plan and should not be evaluated outside the larger context of greenway/green-space

preservation. The public has not had an opportunity to review or comment on this document and it is my understanding that it will be placed in the libraries for such review. All who have concern about quality of life issues in the metro Atlanta region are encouraged to participate in that review process.

Community watershed planning, by private citizens, has already begun in the neighborhoods and communities of DeKalb County. It is time for the county to bring these citizens on board to help promote the goals and objectives of comprehensive watershed/greenway planning so clearly called for in the 1996 Comprehensive Plan. DeKalb County citizens are encouraged to contact their respective commissioner as well as the chief executive officer to request that DeKalb move forward in establishing such a watershed-based committee for the purpose of defining and planning a true comprehensive master greenway plan.

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