

**Planning Board Minority Report  
McLean and Cooper tracts (two separate actions)**

*Submitted October 9, 2006*  
Chris Walker and Sally Kost

McLean Family LTD Partnership to rezone 470 acres located off Big Hole Road, Williams Township from RA5 to RA90  
Contentnea Creek Development Company to rezone approximately 130 acres location off Hatley Road, New Hope Township from RA5 to Conditional Use RA 90

October 3, 2006 Planning Board Actions  
(both rezoning requests):

Voted to Recommend Approval 7 FOR; 2 AGAINST  
(one absent)

This minority report is submitted to the Board of Commissioners because both rezoning requests are clearly in **VIOLATION** of the Land Conservation and Development Plan.

On page two of the County's Land Conservation and Development Plan (the Land Use Plan) **Resource Protection Areas** are defined and include among other things, the **Big Woods** area. On page three, under major recommendations, the Land Use Plan states:

Retain the current 5-acre average lot size in the areas designated in the county's watershed protection ordinance and **shown as resource protection areas on the community plan map.**

The majority of the McLean tract and over half of the Cooper tract are included in the Natural Heritage Program as part of the Big Woods Wilderness Significant Natural Heritage Area.

When preparing their recommendation, Planning staff was incorrectly told these two parcels had been removed from the Natural Heritage program. The day prior to the Planning Board meeting, county staff was alerted that there had been an error, and that lands within these two parcels had not been deleted from the area to be protected. Planning Staff did not revise their recommendation, based on this new information, even though it clearly **VIOLATES** the Land Conservation and Development Plan.

The North Carolina Natural Heritage Program within the NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources inventories, catalogues, and supports conservation of the rarest and the most outstanding elements of the natural diversity of our state. These elements include those very rare plants and animals, or significant natural communities that merit special consideration as land-use decisions are made.

The State of North Carolina has reconfirmed that the Big Woods Wilderness Significant Natural Heritage Area remains an important resource protection area. Rezoning of these tracts would have a significant negative impact on wildlife habitat. As stated in the 1992 Inventory of the Natural Areas and Wildlife Habitats of Chatham County (Hall and Boyer, page 202):

Its (the Big Woods SNHA) importance to the wildlife of the entire region is unquestionable.

We ask that the Board of County Commissioners respect the Natural Heritage Program and adhere to its own Land Conservation and Development Plan and **deny** both the McLean and Cooper rezoning requests