

Shenandoah Flood Plain / Richards Farm - the Gateway, Front Royal

Situated on the flood plain of the south fork of the Shenandoah River, these 121 acres of pristine land are the first impression that individuals have as they enter into the Shenandoah Valley. The site, located in the village of Riverton, which is within the town of Front Royal, has been deemed an historic site by the Commonwealth of Virginia. The area is constantly changing but forever remains a part of the local heritage. The Gateway is a mapped wetlands area.

In the summer, the trees that line the river banks provide refuge for wildlife and birds. In the fall, the changing colors of the leaves give a breathtaking view of the area, with tall picturesque mountains in the background. Winter provides a frosty landscape with ice crystals on every tree.

There is a battle to preserve the site from commercial development. The threat of increased noise pollution and traffic, and safety issues for an elementary school concern citizens, as does the loss of this increasingly rare natural environment.

Recently, the area has been rezoned for commercial use by the former members of the town council at the request of Wal-Mart, in order to build an 184,000-foot retail center. Since this rezoning, Wal-Mart now has the power to complete the purchase transaction for the property. Save our Gateways has filed a suit on this issue and the current town council sides for the protection of this beautiful site. Several groups are in support as well, realizing that the aesthetic value of this viewshed is priceless and irreplaceable.



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