

Jabez Branch Overlay Zone

Protection of the Jabez Branch as a sensitive environmental resource and a major subwatershed of the Severn River is a priority goal for Anne Arundel County. The Jabez Branch is unique among streams in the County in that it supported a naturally reproducing population of brook trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*), the only population known to exist in the Coastal Plain physiographic region of Maryland. The County's current General Development Plan adopted in 2021 (*Plan2040*), includes [Policy NE1.4\(c\)](#) to adopt an environmental overlay zone to protect natural features in the Jabez Branch watershed.



The Jabez Branch subwatershed is located in the critical Severn Run headwaters, which comprise approximately 42 percent of the stream miles and 35 percent of the watershed of the Severn River. Under the SEVERN Whole Watershed Act project, the Center for Ecosystem Recovery will lead a collaborative effort with the County, elected officials, stakeholder groups and the public to develop and adopt an environmental protective overlay zone for the Jabez Branch. Per Plan2040, the Jabez Branch overlay zone would minimize the impacts from stormwater runoff and sediment loading to the stream, maintain or reduce existing impervious surface levels, maintain adequate stream flow and temperature to protect the coldwater temperature and flow regime, and establish and maintain wider forested riparian buffers than currently required under County stormwater management regulations to protect the overall ecosystem quality.

