

The Fate of the Tallest Post Oak Tree in the US Still in Limbo

Friends of Mountain Creek is an impressive group of people (1,800 strong) dedicated to the conservation of floodplains in Chattanooga, especially the Quarry Golf Course. Through letter writing, meetings, and personal contact, FOMC was able to get the Quarry Club House rezoned to C-1 which prevents high-density development just in that small area. The Post Oak tree is located outside of that area and high-density development is permitted on the rest of the golf course. Developers are allowed to clear-cut areas in advance of the building stage, so the tree is still in danger. So far, the developer has not started this process, but there is nothing in place so far that could protect the tree from being cut down. For now, this magnificent tree still stands and is visible during the winter from Reads Lake Road.

Clear-cutting is a common practice in the development of new housing. Clear-cutting destroys the overstory tree canopy and means the land is no longer able to store water or break the force of the rain as it falls. This practice has a detrimental impact everywhere, but it is extremely devastating to floodplains and steep slopes because the run-off is accelerated causing flooding and silt pollution to watersheds draining into the Tennessee River. As a result, FOMC is lobbying the Chattanooga City Council to develop a city-wide “steep slopes” ordinance. This could regulate clear-cutting and prevent the erosion and pollution that occurred when Amber Ridge in Hixson was developed by the same person who is now trying to build on the Quarry.

Friends of Mountain Creek is urging people to email Chattanooga City Council members to develop a ‘steep slopes’ ordinance that would protect the existing floodplains. **This ordinance could save the tallest Post Oak tree in the US.** Please become involved! You do not have to be a citizen of Chattanooga to influence public policy. We are part of the county and their environmental policies affect all of us. If you want to get involved, please email, FOMCQuarry@gmail.com to get regular updates.