

Wednesday, May 19, 2010

Let the land lie fallow

|

In the April 28 front page story ["Leggett steps into the stream with Sligo students"] in the Olney edition of The Gazette, County Executive Isiah Leggett and some young students waded into North Branch.

"From what we saw today, I would say this is a pretty healthy stream," their science teacher said.

It should be. It's substantially protected. One place those protections break down, however, is at the county-owned 32-acre tract on Bowie Mill Road. It is a mistake to consider — as the County Council has — amending the master plan to allow denser development on that property. The runoff and pollution that will result from that development will dramatically alter the character of North Branch. For next year's Earth Day, Leggett will have to find another stream — one unsullied by the County Council.

Why the rush to develop one of the last large county-owned tracts? The laudable goal was to increase the pool of affordable housing. The recession, however, accomplished that goal without the intervention of the County Council. Why squander our limited resources on a problem that no longer exists?

Let the land lie fallow. Save it for a real purpose.

Michael Keating, Olney