Appendix C: Summary of Public Involvement

Watershed Advisory Group (WAG) meeting minutes

- WAG Meeting #1
- WAG Meeting #2
- WAG Meeting #3
- WAG Meeting #4
- WAG Meeting #5

Lower Occoquan Draft Watershed Plan Forum meeting minutes

- Draft Plan Forum

Minutes
Lower Occoquan Watershed Advisory Group (WAG)
Meeting # 1

Wednesday, March 11, 2009
Lorton Station Elementary School

Meeting Attendees	
WAG Members	***Fairfax Co. Stormwater Planning Division***
Joe Chudzik, Mason Neck Lions	Fred Rose
Jinx Fox, Bureau of Land Management	Shannon Curtis
Jim Graham, Swift Run Trails	Chad Grupe
Rick Hutson, Mason Neck Citizens Assoc.	Erin Abrahams
Bob Lerch, Timberlane Homeowners Assoc.	***PBS&J (engineering consultant)***
	Trish Hennessy-Webb
	Karlee Copeland
	Waterford Inc. (public involvement consultant)
	Beth Offenbacker
	Paul Coelus

The meeting convened at 7:15 pm with welcome comments by county staff and public involvement consultant/moderator Beth Offenbacker (Waterford Inc.).

County staff and consultants then gave a presentation following the established agenda:

- Fred Rose and Shannon Curtis, Fairfax County, described the watershed planning process, the policy issues involved, and the expected timeline.
- Beth Offenbacker outlined the role of the Watershed Advisory Group and participation guidelines.
- Trish Hennessy-Webb, PBS&J, presented the watershed management plan goals and objectives, and summarized the contents of the watershed workbook.
- Each segment of the presentation included an opportunity for questions and comments by the WAG members.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.

The following is a summary of the questions asked by members of the WAG and the answers provided by county staff and consultants. The identities of the persons asking and answering the questions are not included. This is not a verbatim transcript.

Q: In the context of WAG membership, what do you mean by "diverse" community interests?
A: We're looking for WAG members who can represent broader interests and are not focused on a single issue. For example, we'd like members who can reflect the interests of homeowners associations, faith based organizations, large landowners, or the business community.

Q: Who knows about best management practices (BMPs)? Homeowners, businesses, government agencies?
A: You raise a good question. For non-structural BMPs, it's important for people to know about them. That's a constant challenge. Programs to educate the public about stormwater management are themselves a BMP.

Q: What does PFM stand for?
A: Public Facilities Manual. This document contains guidelines for many public facilities such as roads and stormwater BMPs.

Q: What area is covered by the SPA [Stream Physical Assessment] study?
A: The entire county. This is different than the SPS [Stream Protection Strategy], which is organized by protection areas. For example, watershed protection areas are about 18% of the total; watershed restoration level I areas, 10%. The largest area comprises watershed restoration level II.

Q: Who issues the MS4 [municipal separate storm sewer system] permit?
A: The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation. Until recently, this program was under the authority of the Department of Environmental Quality. The state regulations are derived from the federal Clean Water Act, which is overseen by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Q: What protocol was used for the Stream Physical Assessment?
A: We used the EPA's rapid bio assessment (RBP), which is primarily a visual assessment of many physical conditions and features, but not a chemical sampling. The results from this watershed are summarized in the workbook.

Q: Are there any second first round watershed plans already completed which we could look at to get an idea where we as a group are headed?
A: One example is the Difficult Run watershed. You can find this on the county website (look for "environment" then "watersheds").

Q: Will the final plan that goes to the Board of Supervisors have to go through the public hearing process (and Planning Commission)?
A: No.

Q: Who is leading the drive for funding?
A: The Board of Supervisors recognizes the need for a stable source of funding. The latest concept of administration is a "tax service district." We'll come up with a prioritized list of projects.

Q: Are the projects you're talking about going to be very specific?
A: Yes, many of them will be site specific, for example, "stabilize this length of this creek." Others will be non-structural, such as an education effort in a particular area.

Q: If one cent of the tax rate is dedicated to stormwater management, does the revenue stay in the particular watershed where it is raised?
A: No.

Q; Is there an identification scheme for subwatersheds?
A: Yes, they are all coded. Refer to Map 2.1 in the workbook.

Q: How do you evaluate projects on private land?
A: We won't do projects that benefit only a single person or landowner. Some projects might be located on private land, but for the county to fund them they must benefit a broader area.

Q: So you're not looking at only the worst problem areas—you'll also consider smaller projects?
A: Yes. We could spend a lot of money trying to deal with just the worst areas. So we'll also look for smaller projects with significant impact, especially those which can prevent a problem area from getting worse.

Minutes
Lower Occoquan Watershed Advisory Group (WAG)
Meeting #2

Tuesday, May 12, 2009
Lorton Station Elementary School

Meeting Attendees	
WAG Members (Primary)	***Fairfax Co. Stormwater Planning Division***
Jinx Fox, Bureau of Land Management	Fred Rose
Jim Graham, Swift Run Trails	Shannon Curtis
Rick Hutson, Mason Neck Citizens Assoc.	Chad Grupe
George Jennings, George Mason Univ.	
Dick Kennedy, Mason Neck Lions Club	***PBS&J (engineering consultant)***
Bob Lerch, Timberlane Homeowners Assoc.	Trish Hennessy-Webb
Jim McGaughey, English Hills Homes	Karlee Copeland
Emile Monette, South County Fairfax Chamber of Commerce	
	Waterford Inc. (public inv consultant)
WAG Members (Alternate)	Beth Offenbacker
Bryant Duretz, English Hills Homes	Paul Coelus

The meeting convened at 7:10 pm with welcome comments by public involvement consultant/moderator Beth Offenbacker, Waterford Inc.

County staff and consultants then gave a presentation following the established agenda:

- Shannon Curtis, Fairfax County, presented the goals and objectives of the watershed planning process and discussed the role of the WAG.
- Trish Hennessy-Webb, PBS&J, introduced the concept of subwatershed characterization and ranking and explained the methods used to develop the watershed plan, including the upcoming project selection process.
- Each segment of the presentation included an opportunity for questions and comments by the WAG members.

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 pm.

The following is a summary of the questions asked by members of the WAG and the answers provided by county staff and consultants. The identities of the persons asking and answering the questions are not included. This is not a verbatim transcript.

Q: I've looked back through the source material available on the internet, but I still don't see how you "know" what needs to be done in the watershed, and how you arrived at your goals and objectives.
A: The identification of the problem areas is based on data accumulated over many years. For example, we have 10 years worth of biological sampling done throughout the county, and we conducted a physical stream assessment in which we physically inspected all 800 miles of streams in the watershed. This background material is contained in a very large report, a copy of which we can give you in digital form. We don't have it posted on the county website because the file is simply too large. We can provide it on CD to anybody requesting one.

Q: How do you arrive at the composite rankings shown on the maps? Do you actually "crunch numbers" or is it more subjective? Is it a manual process or done by computer?
A: It is done by computer modeling using industry standards for impervious surface areas, fish health, erosion, and a variety of other objective, measurable criteria. Also note that the composite rankings are done for the county as a whole, not just within each watershed. That's why on the composite ranking maps, most of the Lower Occoquan watershed appears green (good)—because compared to other parts of the county, this watershed is generally in good condition.

Q: Is there any coordination with other agencies who may "own" the problem; for example, a VDOT-owned culvert?
A: Yes. And in the current watershed planning process we will *identify* problem areas with facilities owned and maintained by other agencies, such as VDOT, and to forward these to the agencies.

Q: But VDOT is not going to fix the problems you identify. They don't have enough funds for road projects, their main priority.
A: Fairfax County's current position is that we're not going to fund repairs of VDOT assets. Perhaps that could change in the future. Also, the goal of watershed plans is not to fix isolated problems on private property (we generally don't use public funds to benefit individual landowners), but if the problem has a significant downstream impacts on other landowners, we may try to obtain an easement or make other arrangements with the landowner to provide relief/benefit to multiple residents/landowners downstream.

Q: Does Lower Occoquan compete with other watersheds in the county for project funding?
A: Yes, but that doesn't mean all funds will go to the single worst part of the county. Our objective is not just to repair bad areas, but also to preserve areas that are in good condition. Many times it is more cost effective to stablilize or protect less impacted areas than to completely restore very degraded areas. We are currently developing a countywide project prioritization methodology to balance different needs in different areas of the county.

Q: Do other counties have WAGs, or are we working in a "bubble"? We can make choices to improve things in Fairfax County, but we're impacted by what happens in Loudoun County, Prince William, etc.
A: Each county has its own approach, but there is some coordination within the state, and there are EPA guidelines to be followed.

Q: Whose budget does it come out of if private property (*e.g.*, a single house) is at risk from flooding?
A: It depends on the cause of the problem. If it's the private property itself that's causing the flooding, then it's the landowner's responsibility to pay for it. If the flooding is the county's responsibility, then we may fund the project. On rare occasions the county may fund a project where private property is in imminent danger. The focus of the current planning effort is not to identify problems involving individual properties.

Q: Do you measure the amount of potable water each stream can produce for the Occoquan?
A: No.

Q: You mention efforts to control pet waste. I understand the county is also looking at the issue of horse manure and runoff. There are more horses in the county now than there used to be.
A: Yes, and that is a good example of a possible non-structural project.

Q: What is the acreage within each subwatershed?
A: Between 100-300 acres. You'll find this information in Chapter 2 of the workbook.

Q: When will the Lower Occoquan plan be completed?
A: We intend to give the county board a draft plan around February 2010.

Q: How detailed with the information you give us be? If you give us only summary information, are we supposed to use that to prioritize projects?
A: Prioritization will come later. The county staff and consultants will develop a prioritized list of projects. Final prioritization will be a collaborative process between the WAG and the County and consultants; based on the WAG feedback: Do the projects look worthwhile? Is there any reason to believe a project is not suitable? Will they be supported by the community, or is there something about a project that will be opposed?

Q: I have a question about the "legalities" of site surveys. If, for example, we want to do a cleanup on a perennial stream, do we need each landowner's permission?
A: This is not an appropriate forum to discuss legal questions, but as a general rule the county would certainly recommend that you ask permission before entering privately owned property. It's hard to imagine, though, that anyone would object to a cleanup effort.

Q: There are only 10-12 of us on the WAG, so that means there are a lot of unrepresented communities in the watershed.
A: Yes, we recognize that and this is why we continue to encourage the WAG to interact with their watershed communities and carry the information the County is providing back to those groups. In a sense, you are representing more than just your own neighborhood or homeowners' association. The county will continue to publicize the progress of the planning effort. In addition, the Board of Supervisors has directed that before any project is done, all adjacent landowners must be notified by mail.

Minutes
Lower Occoquan Watershed Advisory Group (WAG)
Meeting #3

Tuesday, July 28, 2009
Lorton Station Elementary School

Meeting Attendees	
WAG Members (Primary)	***Fairfax Co. Stormwater Planning Division***
Joe Chudzik, Mason Neck Lions Club	Fred Rose
Jim Graham, Swift Run Trails	Shannon Curtis
Bob Lerch, Timberlane Homeowners Assoc..	Chad Grupe
Jim McGaughey, English Hills Homes	
Emile Monette, South County Fairfax Chamber of Commerce	***PBS&J (engineering consultant)***
Blythe Russian, N. Va. Parks Authority	Trish Hennessy-Webb
	Terry Suehr
WAG Members (Alternate)	Corey Gray
Bryant Dunetz, English Hills Homes	
Fawn Freeman, Occoquan Watershed Coalition	***Waterford Inc. (public inv consultant)***
Dick Kennedy, Mason Neck Citizens Assoc.	Beth Offenbacker
	Paul Coelus

The meeting convened at 7:10 pm with welcome comments by public involvement consultant/moderator Beth Offenbacker, Waterford Inc.

County staff and consultants then gave a presentation following the established agenda:

- Shannon Curtis, Fairfax County, gave an overview of the County's planning process and Watershed Advisory Group activities to date, plus the next series of steps to the conclusion of the planning process. These include receiving feedback on proposed projects, creation of a draft plan, additional feedback from the WAG, presentation of the draft plan to the general public at another public forum, additional review by various agencies, and finalization of the draft plan before presentation to the Board of Supervisors for approval.

- Trish Hennessy-Webb, PBS&J, described the process used to develop candidate projects and the level of detail (limited) to which possible projects have been identified at this point.

- Terry Suehr, PBS&J, walked through the process of candidate project identification and further development with several examples.

- Beth Offenbacker explained the feedback/comment process that has been established for use by the WAG and the anticipated timeline for review of the first set of 86 candidate projects.

- Trish Hennessy-Webb described the process the county will use to evaluate and prioritize projects following receipt of comments from the WAG, and the additional levels of planning that will take place at that point.

- Each segment of the presentation included an opportunity for questions and comments by the WAG members.

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 pm.

The following is a summary of the questions asked by members of the WAG and the answers provided by county staff and consultants. The identities of the persons asking and answering the questions are not included. This is not a verbatim transcript.

Q: Is there still a possibility of conducting a field trip with the WAG?
A: Possibly, depending on the level of interest of the group. To conduct a field trip ideally we would need the majority of the WAG to participate and would need to determine which sites to visit. . In the absence of a group field trip, we can still suggest selected sites you could visit on your own to get a good first-hand look at the types of problems and projects we're dealing with in this planning process.

Q: Regarding the materials you've posted for us on the County's website, is there a sufficient level of detail available for us to assess projects based on what particular property they're on, which section of which stream would be affected, etc.?
A: At this point, we've identified problems that we'd like to address and we've come up with some solutions we think would be appropriate (i.e., the type of project to be done), but we haven't done site visits to verify the precise location of each potential project. That will happen at a later stage. However, if there are particular projects you're interested in, in most cases we can give you some additional details (compared with what's on tonight's map handout) that will help you get pretty close to the probable site.

Q: We can't comment on <u>all</u> the projects; maybe just a few that interest each of us?
A: While you're welcome to comment on all of them if you'd like, the WAG members are not required to submit comments on each project. If the WAG member would like to focus on areas of concern in their specific area, this is acceptable.

Q: In the past, we've seen some ponds that are fenced in (particularly VDOT ponds) and some that aren't. Is the County planning to fence any new ponds?
A:The fenced ponds you might see are VDOT ponds. The County considered it, but concluded it is not necessary. And there are some down sides to fencing ponds, including aesthetics and the tendency of the fences to accumulate trash.

Q: Please explain channel morphology, and what it means on the list of candidate projects you've given us to review?
A: Channel morphology, which basically means the shape of a cross-section of a stream,. In other words, it tells us how quickly the stream is eroding and allows us to project what will happen to the stream if the current conditions continue. On this project list, we show it as an "indicator," meaning that the existence of a certain channel morphology tells us there's a problem. We then have to decide what an appropriate solution would be—stabilization perhaps, all the way up to complete stream restoration.

Q: What if we want to go look at a project that's on private property?
A: You would need to ask permission, before entering private property. But we don't think any of these candidate projects are likely to be on an individual homeowner's lot. Most would be on property owned by the County, such as schools or parks, and for most streams the County has an easement. And if any are on private property, it's more likely to be on communal property, such as a common area owned by a homeowners' association.

Q: How does water velocity relate to water quality?
A: Higher velocity increases streambank erosion, so it increases downstream siltation and also nutrient load.

Minutes
Lower Occoquan Watershed Advisory Group (WAG)
Meeting #4

Tuesday, November 17, 2009
Lorton Station Elementary School

Meeting Attendees	
WAG Members (Primary)	***Fairfax Co. Stormwater Planning Division***
Joe Chudzik, Mason Neck Lions Club	Shannon Curtis
Rick Hutson, Mason Neck Citizens Assoc.	Heather Ambrose
George Jennings, George Mason Univ.	Darold Burdick
Bob Lerch, Timberlane Homeowners Assoc.	
Jim McGaughey, English Hills Homes	***PBS&J (engineering consultant)***
Blythe Russian, No. Va. Reg. Park Authority	Trish Hennessy-Webb
	Terry Suehr
WAG Members (Alternate)	Laura Chap
Bryant Dunetz, English Hills Homes	
Dick Kennedy, Mason Neck Citizens Assoc.	***Waterford Inc. (public inv consultant)***
	Beth Offenbacker
	Paul Coelus

The meeting convened at 7:10 pm with welcome comments by public involvement consultant/moderator Beth Offenbacker, Waterford Inc.

Beth Offenbacker summarized the feedback received from the Watershed Advisory Group on both sets of proposed projects. (See the meeting handouts "Lower Occoquan Watershed WAG Comments on Projects 1-86" and "Lower Occoquan Candidate Projects Response to Comments Projects 87-201.") She then facilitated a discussion with WAG members about the candidate projects based on appropriateness, cost, location and neighborhood concerns raised by WAG members.

Laura Chap (PBS&J) described the project prioritization criteria and categories. Approximately 65 of the projects will fall into the 10-year category; the remainder will be in the 25-year category. (See the meeting handout "Overview of Project Prioritization.")

Shannon Curtis (Fairfax County) reviewed the timing and content of the next two WAG meetings. County staff will request the WAG's feedback on the final project prioritization ranking at WAG Meeting #5. At WAG Meeting #6, the draft watershed management plan will be presented and discussed with WAG members. The draft plan will be released to the general public at the second Public Forum.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm.

The following is a summary of the questions asked/comments made by members of the WAG and the answers provided by county staff and consultants. The identities of the persons asking and answering the questions are not included. This is not a verbatim transcript.

C: Sandy Run backs up badly at the point where it crosses Henderson, and it's been getting worse over the past 20 years. The sediment accumulates and spreads out over a flat area.
Response: We're aware of that. The particular area is a natural floodplain.

Q: What role do the landowners play in the planning process for projects on their property?
A: When a project goes to the design phase, the landowner will be the primary contact for the county to help ensure we're aware of all relevant information about that property. We're not at the implementation stage yet. The planning process you're involved in will not include project implementation. Even when all projects have been prioritized, those in the 10-year plan will have only about 10% of the design done.

Q: How was this list of projects created?
A: One of the main sources of potential projects was the stream physical assessment (SPA), which identified problem areas. The whole watershed was modeled for pollutants, impervious areas, flooding etc. Projects and project types were targeted to address these areas of concern.

Q: I noticed one project, for example, for stream improvement in a particular area, but then a downstream stretch known to have bad erosion wasn't on the list.
A: Both areas may indeed be in the project. On the exhibit maps/project lists we've provided at this stage, the project location (dot) just indicates an area and depending on the project type the location could encompass more than the exact location identified on the exhibit maps. The precise length of the stream to be improved will be determined in the design phase, and might well include the downstream section you're referring to.

Q: How will the projects be prioritized—cost, greatest need, or some other factors? And will there be a monitoring process to see whether the projects actually affect the degree of degradation or development after they're implemented?
A: The prioritization process will consider the factors you mentioned—cost and need—as well as others such as implementability and location within the watershed. For this process, projects will be prioritized within each watershed, then countywide. However, there is no predetermined number of projects or amount to be spent in each watershed. And yes, specific projects could have monitoring to evaluate results. This could change the relative priority of projects over time.

Q: Will these projects result in TMDLs at specific locations?
A: No, but that issue may factor into the equation for project prioritization. [Ed. Note: TMDL means Total Maximum Daily Load.]

C: My homeowners association just had its annual meeting, and we discussed the watershed planning process. There was not much feedback from the group except the consensus that Sandy Run is a problem and some concern that very small streams (some of which do have problems) don't appear on the maps or in the list of projects.

Q: Can we involve volunteer groups (*e.g.*, schools, youth groups, Lions Club) in getting out information about the process and improving awareness?
A: Yes, the project lists include both structural and non-structural projects. Education and outreach can be included in that, and volunteer groups can be part of the implementation.

Q: There are lots of falling or downed trees along Sandy Run. Does it help to remove them, and is there a county effort to do so? Who owns the stream?
A: The landowner owns the ground; the State owns the water as well as the flora and fauna in the stream. The county does not have the resources to remove all damaged trees. There are simply too many, and the cost would be prohibitive and the benefits limited. Removal of a tree is most advantageous when it falls directly into the stream and diverts the flow of water, increasing erosion or presenting a risk of damage to public structures (bridges, culverts) or upstream flooding. In terms of entering on private land, the county has an elaborate process to obtain permission, and in appropriate cases, easements.

Q: You say you're doing modeling, but how good is the model?
A: We use several models: a water quality model, a hydrology model, a hydraulic model (to model flood plains). For the 10-year plan, water quality is the primary model. The modeling software is used industry-wide, including by the Army Corps of Engineers.

Q: I notice there are some projects on parkland. Why are those a priority? Shouldn't we concentrate on more developed areas?
A: In some instances our modeling showed degradation in creeks located in parkland which could cause increased sediment pollution to downstream areas.

Q: How are our comments going to be used in the prioritization process?
A: The group's comments were very helpful in giving us information we didn't have about certain areas and will factor into the qualitative portion of project evaluation/prioritization.

Minutes
Lower Occoquan Watershed Advisory Group (WAG)
Meeting #5

Wednesday, May 5, 2010
Lorton Station Elementary School

Meeting Attendees	
WAG Members (Primary)	***Fairfax Co. Stormwater Planning Division***
Joe Chudzik, Mason Neck Lions Club	Shannon Curtis
Jim Graham, Swift Run Trails	Chad Grupe
Rick Hutson, Mason Neck Citizens Assoc.	
Jim McGaughey, English Hills Homes	***PBS&J (engineering consultant)***
Blythe Russian, No. Va. Reg. Park Authority	Laura Chap
	Terry Suehr
WAG Members (Alternate)	
Dick Kennedy, Mason Neck Citizens Assoc.	***Waterford Inc. (public inv consultant)***
	Beth Offenbacker
	Paul Coelus

The meeting convened at 7:05 pm with welcome comments by public involvement consultant/moderator Beth Offenbacker, Waterford Inc.

Shannon Curtis (Fairfax County) thanked the WAG members for their support of the planning process and discussed the Board of Supervisors' recent decision to raise the stormwater tax rate from 1 cent (per $100 of property value) to 1.5 cents.

Laura Chap (PBS&J) reviewed the project prioritization process in general and showed the details of one sample project (a stormwater pond retrofit). She noted that each project may not be scored on all criteria, since some criteria may be considered not relevant to a particular project. She described the use of "best professional judgment" as a final element in the evaluation process after the quantitative scoring is completed.

In the ranking process for the Lower Occoquan watersheds, the project team identified 135 potential structural projects, but recommended only the top 22 for the 10-year plan. The next 64 are recommended for the 25-year plan, and the last 49 are eliminated. Compared to the rest of the county, the LO watersheds are generally in better condition, so it was felt that less resources should be devoted here and more should be devoted to watersheds in comparatively poorer condition.

Beth Offenbacker facilitated a discussion of the project rankings.

Laura Chap reviewed the next steps in the planning process: finalize project rankings; finish incorporating WAG comments; conduct additional modeling (hydrologic); prepare preliminary cost estimates; and draft the watershed management plan. A community forum will be held in June or July to present the draft plan to the community and receive additional feedback on the proposed projects.

The top group of projects (those in the 10-year plan) will each have a fact sheet with more details, including the specific location of the project. Information about projects in the 25-year plan will be shown in tabular format. The final plan will have a reader-friendly first volume, plus a detailed second volume with all the technical data.

Shannon Curtis stressed that after projects are ranked within each watershed, they will have to be evaluated county-wide for priority. Preliminary estimates are that to complete all the projects in the 10-year plans and replace all stormwater pipes on a 100-year cycle (their useful life), the county would need funding equivalent to a tax rate of 4.5 cents per $100. Since the new rate will be only 1.5 cents, clearly there will not be enough to fund all proposed projects.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.

The following is a summary of the questions asked/comments made by members of the WAG and the answers provided by county staff and consultants. The identities of the persons asking and answering the questions are not included. This is not a verbatim transcript.

Q: Are the nonstructural projects eliminated?
A: No. They're just not ranked with the structural projects, primarily because they're not amenable to the same kind of quantitative evaluation.

Q: Where is the county in the overall watershed planning program, and with Lower Occoquan specifically? Are you still conducting project rankings?
A: There are 31 watersheds in the county, for which we will produce 13 watershed plans. Because some watersheds are much smaller than others, we grouped some of them together into a single plan. Lower Occoquan is an example of that—there are actually 8 small watersheds in what we've called the Lower Occoquan Watershed. The planning process was conducted in two rounds. We completed 7 plans in the first round and are now preparing the last 6 plans, including Lower Occoquan, in the second round. For the Lower Occoquan, we're essentially done with the ranking exercise. We expect to have the last 6 plans completed for submission to the Board of Supervisors by the end of calendar year 2010.

Q: Are our [the WAG's] previous comments still available?
A: Yes, in the form of the handout we provided at an earlier meeting. This and other handouts from the WAG meetings are posted on the project website. Also, we sent the WAG members a link to the technical memorandum, which has more background information, procedures, and planning-level cost estimates.

Q: Were individual homeowners contacted [in the ranking process]?
A: No, we didn't speak to individual homeowners at this stage. However, when we visited the project sites we noted whether each potential project is located on or adjacent to private property.

C: [Regarding the second project on the list, #9214] The success of a project—that is, the receptiveness of nearby homeowners—will depend on whether they feel they had input and involvement in the process, or at least an opportunity to express any concerns about the project's impact.
Response: That's understood, and it's one of the reasons for the public forum that will be held in June or July. Prior to the public forum we'll mail a postcard to all adjoining landowners. The postcard will identify the specific project and refer the property owner to the website for more details. This will allow them to learn more about the project before the public forum. And, of course, a homeowner who can't attend the public forum could also provide feedback through another means.

Minutes
Lower Occoquan Draft Watershed Plan Forum

Wednesday, August 25, 2010
Lorton Station Elementary School, Lorton VA

Meeting Attendees	
WAG Members	***Fairfax Co. Stormwater Planning Division***
Jim Graham, Swift Run Trails	Fred Rose
	Shannon Curtis
	Darold Burdick
	Chad Grupe
General Public	***PBS&J (engineering consultant)***
Approximately 10 persons, including one representative of Congressman Connolly's office	Laura Chap
	Jeremy Reiderman
	Lindsay Parker
	Jeremy Hassan
	Waterford Inc. (public involvement consultant)
	Beth Offenbacker
	Paul Coelus
	Roger Taylor

The meeting convened at 7:13 pm with welcome comments by public involvement consultant Beth Offenbacker.

Fred Rose (Chief, Watershed Planning & Assessment Branch) offered some introductory comments, then described the background and history of the watershed planning process. The Lower Occoquan is in the second (and final) group of watersheds to undergo the planning process. The draft plans for this group are expected to be presented to the Board of Supervisors for approval in early 2011.

Mr. Rose noted that while proposed projects are "ranked" within each plan, they will not necessarily be done in that order (if at all). Rather, the plan provides a menu of projects to choose from based on funding and the focus of attention in any given year. Moreover, the proposed projects are "concepts"; the precise scope of a project will not be determined until funds become available and a further engineering assessment is performed. Funding for any particular project will be competitive and it is unlikely all the proposed projects will be accomplished.

Shannon Curtis acknowledged the important role that the Watershed Advisory Group has played in the plan development. He provided a watershed planning primer to ensure that everyone in the audience understood the basic principles and terminology of watershed planning.

Laura Chap (PBS&J) described the process of preparing the draft plan from an engineering perspective, including field investigation, water quality and quantity modeling, and the ranking of subwatersheds. She also outlined the organization of the plan document. Jeremy Reiderman (PBS&J) followed with a more detailed explanation of various restoration strategies, and gave an example of one project (renovation of a county library) in which several of those strategies were applied . Laura Chap then described the project prioritization process.

At the conclusion of the presentation, Shannon Curtis reviewed the several ways members of the public can submit comments on the draft plan, including phone, fax, mail, email, and via a form on the County website. The public comment period will run for 30 days following the date of the forum.

Following the presentation, county staff and consultants fielded questions and comments about individual proposed projects at several stations around the room.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.

The following is a summary of the questions asked and comments made by members of the audience and the answers provided by county staff and consultants. The identities of the persons asking and answering the questions are not included. This is not a verbatim transcript.

Q: How do I find a copy of the draft watershed plan?
A. A hard copy is available at the public library (Lorton branch) and at your County Supervisor's office. You can also view the document online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov. In the top half of the County's homepage, find the link for "Watershed Management Plans." Then click on the link for the desired watershed (for example, Lower Occoquan).

The notes below reflect questions and comments made at the breakout stations following the conclusion of the formal presentation:

Q: How were projects nominated for the plan?
A: Some ideas came from public input, but most of the candidate projects were based on existing GIS data (known problems).

Q: In an earlier stage of this planning process, there was a proposed stream restoration project [candidate project #80] along Giles Run just west of I-95. The new map of proposed projects in the draft watershed plan omits this project. (The location would have been just east of Project No. MB9111.) I believe the stream will be impacted by the road widening currently being done on I-95 in that area, so a project to improve the stream would be valuable. Can that project be added back to the plan?
A: We can certainly review our analysis of that candidate project in light of the information you've provided.