

Healthy Watersheds, Healthier Communities

Fairfax County Stormwater Planning Division

Meeting Summary for Johnny Moore Creek and Little Rocky Run Watershed Advisory Committee Meeting Little Rocky Run HOA Recreation Center, March 16, 2009

Purpose: The purpose of the meeting was to provide an overview of the problem areas identified in the subwatershed characterization and to introduce examples of solutions that may be recommended to address stormwater problems. The group also discussed additional specific focus areas for the watershed plan. Copies of the presentations are appended to this summary.

Countywide Goals and Objectives:

Eric Forbes provided a presentation of Countywide Goals and Objectives for the watershed plan (see attached presentation). He explained that since the planning effort has been underway across the county for several years, many of the goals and objectives created during the initial watershed planning projects were very similar. In order to reduce duplication and make the planning process more efficient, the county has created three overarching goals for all of the current plans under development which are:

1. Improve and maintain watershed functions in Fairfax County, including water quality, habitat and hydrology.
2. Protect human health, safety and property by reducing stormwater impacts.
3. Involve stakeholders in the protection, maintenance and restoration of county watersheds.

The county also has created standard categories for objectives:

1. Hydrology
2. Habitat
3. Stream Water Quality
4. Drinking Water Quality
5. Stewardship

He then explained that the county uses specific indicators to monitor these objectives. Indicators include watershed impact indicators such as sediment loading or phosphorus, and source indicators such as channelized streams, urban land cover or habitat quality.

Karen Firehock asked the committee if there were other concerns or objectives under the above categories specific to Little Rocky Run and Johnny Moore's Creeks that should be considered. Committee members noted that trash and debris seemed to be particularly problematic for Little Rocky Run and Johnny Moore Creeks.

Problem Areas identified by Subwatershed Characterization:

Matt Breen presented problem areas that were identified by the Subwatershed Characterization (see attached presentation). It was explained that the subwatershed ranking is used to identify currently impacted subwatersheds, those in danger of becoming impacted in the future and the potential stressors that may cause watershed impairment. He noted that the ranking system does not replace "common sense." A problem that is observed by a staff member or a resident will be investigated even if it is not on any existing list. He described the "overall watershed composite score map" as being comprised of rankings for hydrology, habitat, stream water quality and drinking water quality (related to the Occoquan Reservoir). He explained that lower ranked areas will require more attention in order to improve their scores. He explained that the source composite ranking is a combination of multiple stressors such as impervious cover, buffer deficiencies and concentrations of nutrients.



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Discussion:

One participant asked if current data were used to create the evaluations. Mr. Breen explained that data sources included past studies such as the Stream Protection Study, the Stream Physical Assessment conducted in 2002 and 2003, and randomized in-stream sampling conducted by the county since 2004. Other sources of data include county maintenance records, citizen complaints and field observations by the team. He noted that while the maps show areas where we should focus, further field reconnaissance will still be needed. Once these maps are finalized and potential projects determined, a cost benefit analysis will be undertaken to help determine the priority for the project. He noted that projects may be suggested for HOA property or other private property, such as a church parking lot. He emphasized the importance of the committee in helping to suggest appropriate locations, once the engineering team has determined the focus areas in the subwatersheds.

He also explained that in some areas lacking stormwater management, it may be the case that a large pond was rejected or never built. Several members noted that there are existing ponds that also need to be retrofitted. On one example slide, members commented that the pond in question was the “watershed’s worst” and was often filled with debris, including dumped furniture. Mr. Breen noted that there was a regional pond proposed for the Green Trails HOA that was never built. He explained that the team would be determining other measures that could be taken instead of the pond to achieve better results.

Another member asked what measures would be installed in floodplain areas. The staff responded that those projects would likely consist of either buffer or channel restoration. They clarified that most of the low impact development (LID) measures would be located outside of the floodplain to prevent encroachment and to prevent damage to the technology. For example, during a flood event, a raingarden can be clogged with sediment and rendered inoperable. It was also noted that trails in the floodplain could be improved to ensure that they are not contributing to excess runoff or erosion. Ms. Mowery added that in some more remote areas where streams are eroding, the best approach may be to leave the stream alone in order to avoid damaging the buffer in trying to access the stream. She explained that if the sources of the problem are addressed, the stream may eventually repair itself but it may not be a high priority to fix now, if property and lives are not at risk. Several members suggested specific issues for consideration in the watershed plan (in addition to those suggested at the last meeting).

- The bridge widening at Rt. 29 may impact some “swamp mallow” (*Hibiscus sp.*) habitat. Should make sure that VDOT replaces any plants that are disturbed.
- There is an area zoned C-8 (commercial) along Little Rocky Run that would be a great place for LID measures to be incorporated as part of any development.
- The Green Trails HOA has a multi-purpose court that needs renovation and this may be a good place to consider a low impact development approach, since it is located in the floodplain.
- The Union Mills HOA has applied for a FEMA grant on the west side of the Union Mills HOA property to address flooding of backyards. The watershed planning team should be aware of the project (if funded) and possibly collaborate on the solution and final design.
- Existing dry ponds should be restored and planted to improve water quality wherever possible. A participant noted that the Union Mills neighborhood has two good candidate ponds for this approach.

Map Review: Participants reviewed watershed maps and discussed possible issues and projects with the team.

Issues and Questions discussed during the map review included:

- The residents of the Cedar Knolls subdivision are averse to granting the county easements for stormwater management projects
- There is an area of stream erosion and flooding on Compton Road, approximately 1/8 mile west of Ivakota Road



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- Existing facilities in the Union Mills subdivision could be enhanced by improving/expanding their water quality benefit. It was also noted that they are located in our lowest ranked subwatersheds (Overall Composite), which will be a targeted area for restoration

Problem Areas and Possible Solutions:

Lynne Mowery provided an overview of options for stormwater management and common areas that can be “retrofitted.” For example, a parking lot can be redesigned to provide curb cuts to infiltrate water into a rain garden, or manufactured best management practices can be installed to detain and filter water to reduce stormwater volumes, velocities and contaminants. These are examples of a low impact development (LID) approach that seeks to duplicate the original hydrology of the watershed that allowed rainwater to slowly infiltrate and filter through the ground before reaching streams. Ms. Mowery explained that LID is based on five principles; conservation and minimization, storage, conveyance, landscaping and infiltration.

In some areas, simply removing practices that we now know don’t work well is a simple solution. She provided the example of a “trickle ditch” consisting of a low-flow concrete channel across the stormwater pond. She said that these ditches do not slow velocities and they tend to accumulate sediment which is transported to surface waters during higher flows. Instead, she suggested that ditches be removed and ponds be planted to better slow stormwater and trap sediment.

She noted that AMEC staff would evaluate the watershed to determine where new approaches are needed and which measures to employ. Eric Forbes reminded everyone that a key role of the committee is to help make suggestions concerning the most appropriate areas to consider for these mitigation measures. Ms. Mowery explained that this would be part of the “homework” that the team will send to them in mid-April.

Next Steps:

- AMEC will begin identification of specific project areas and provide homework to WAG members regarding possible projects (likely by mid-April).
- Next meeting to be held in late April to discuss proposed solutions.

The Little Rocky Run and Johnny Moore Creek Watersheds Management Plan:

The Little Rocky Run and Johnny Moore Creek Watersheds have experienced environmental degradation, mostly due to urbanization. A planning process initiated by Fairfax County is underway to improve the quality of the waterways and their watersheds. The Watershed Advisory Group (WAG) provides input to Fairfax County. The WAG members serve as liaisons between their respective communities and the project team. AMEC Inc. serves as the technical team lead and prepares watershed plan drafts and engineering studies and facilitates WAG and public meetings for the county. For more information please contact <Eric.Forbes@fairfaxcounty.gov> or visit <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/watersheds/>

“The opinions represented herein do not necessarily represent those of Fairfax County or its agents.”



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Fairfax County Watershed Website: <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/watersheds/>

Use this site for meeting dates, workshops and to read meeting summaries and reports.

Watershed Plans Comment Email Address: watersheds@fairfaxcounty.gov

Little Rocky Run and Johnny Moore Creek Watershed Advisory Committee					
March 16, 2009 Meeting					
LRR	JMC	Attended	Group	Name	Title
x		no	Westfields Golf Club	Tom Farris	Manager
x		yes	Friends of Little Rocky Run	Ned Foster	President
x	x	no	Occoquan Watershed Coalition	Jim Bonhivert	President
x	x	no	Springfield Supervisor Pat Herrity	Marlae Schnare	Staff
x		yes	Sully Supervisor Michael L. Frey	Meghan Kiefer	Staff
x	x	alternate	Clifton Horse Society	Jean Voss	President
x		yes	Little Rocky Run HOA	Jeff Hummel	President
x		no	Compton Village HOA	Joseph F. Cottone	President
x		yes	Green Trails HOA	Jay Hurst	President
x		yes	North Hart Run HOA	Sara Dyer	
	x	yes	Cedar Knolls of Clifton HOA	Laurie Anderson	HOA rep
	x	alternate	Union Mills HOA	Gene Griffe	President
x		no	Compton Heights HOA	William Ballou	Vice President

Staff and Guests Attending

Fairfax County Stormwater Management	Darold Burdick	Engineer
Fairfax County Stormwater Management	LeAnne Astin	Ecologist
Fairfax County Stormwater Management	Eric Forbes	County Project Manager
AMEC Inc.	Lynne Mowery	Project Manager
AMEC Inc.	Matt Breen	Project Engineer
AMEC Inc.	Karen Firehock	Public Involvement
Union Mills HOA	Mike Shipley	
Sue	Clifton Horse Society	

Alternate

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