

*Fairfax County Stormwater Planning Division*

**NICHOL RUN AND POND BRANCH WATERSHEDS  
WATERSHED ADVISORY GROUP MEETING  
MARCH 17, 2009**

**Great Falls Library**  
9830 Georgetown Pike  
Great Falls, VA 22066-2634

**I. Welcome and Introductions**

*[Please note that the presentation from the March 17, 2009 Nichol Run and Pond Branch WAG meeting will be available online at*

*[http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/watersheds/nicholrun\\_docs.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/watersheds/nicholrun_docs.htm).]*

Juliana Birkhoff, the meeting facilitator, opened the meeting, welcoming the Watershed Advisory Group (WAG) and members of the public in attendance.<sup>1</sup> She briefly reviewed the meeting goals and the meeting agenda.<sup>2</sup> She noted that this was the first of a series of 4-6 meetings of the WAG. She introduced the members of the public involvement, engineering, and Fairfax County teams, and briefly reviewed the WAG group expectations.

**II. Introduction to the Watershed Planning Process and Presentation of Policy Issues**

Fred Rose, the Chief of the Watershed Planning and Assessment Branch, Fairfax County, reviewed the history of watershed planning in Fairfax County. He recounted that the county had been developing watershed plans since the 1970s. Mr. Rose noted it was necessary to develop new plans to take into account current regulations, new development, and changing understanding of watershed management. He explained how the first set of watershed plans only addressed erosion and flooding. Now, the county wants to also address water quality in this newest series of watershed management plans, and include the community in the watershed planning process. He explained that the Nichol Run and Pond Branch watershed management plan is part of the second round of the current watershed planning process. The first round of plans was started in 2003, encompassed 50 percent of the county's land area, and developed a lot of policy recommendations. The county hopes that the second round can build on the first. The county has set a goal to finish all the watershed management plans by 2010, in order to comply with the deadline set by the 2000 Chesapeake Bay Agreement.

**III. Timeframe of Watershed Plan and WAG Involvement Processes**

Joe Sanchirico, Fairfax County, reviewed the timeline for the watershed planning process for Nichol Run and Pond Branch. He noted that the bulk of the six planned WAG meetings will be

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<sup>1</sup> The list of meeting participants is attached to this meeting summary.

<sup>2</sup> A copy of the meeting agenda is available at [http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/watersheds/nicholrun\\_docs.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/watersheds/nicholrun_docs.htm).

focused on candidate projects and restoration strategies specific to the watersheds. Once the projects are prioritized, with the help of the WAG, the county will draft the watershed management plan, present it to the WAG for review, and present it to the public for comment via a public forum and a public comment period. Once the plan is finalized, the county will submit it to the County Board of Supervisors for adoption, hopefully by January 2010. He explained that for modeling purposes, the watershed was broken down into watershed management areas (WMAs) and further divided into subwatersheds. Most of the information presented to the WAG will be at the subwatershed level.

#### **IV. Introduction and Expectation for WAG Meetings**

Dr. Birkhoff briefly reviewed the Watershed Advisory Group Participation Guidelines that were included in the meeting handouts.<sup>3</sup> She asked WAG members to check in with their constituencies and other organizations outside of the meetings to identify other problem areas, issues, and values not represented on the WAG. She also asked for help to identify other organizations that are not represented in the WAG so they could be invited.

#### **V. Presentation of Watershed Characterization**

Erika Tokarz, F.X. Browne, Inc., reviewed the characteristics of Nichol Run and Pond Branch watersheds, which were used to develop the Watershed Workbook.<sup>4</sup> She noted that almost the entire Nichol Run watershed and the entire Pond Branch watershed lay within Fairfax County (0.04 square miles of Nichol Run lay over the border in Loudon County). Both watersheds drain into the Potomac River.

Ms. Tokarz gave the group an overview of the different chapters of the Watershed Workbook, and how the data was gathered. She summarized major components of watershed characterization, sub watershed ranking, and the indicators that were used to determine the rankings. She noted that all the rankings were rolled into one composite score. She observed that based on future scenarios modeling, the watersheds would experience an increase in impervious surface area from an increase in estate and low density residential development.

Ms. Tokarz informed the group that three subwatershed ranking indicators are rolled into a single subwatershed ranking. These three indicators are:

- Watershed Impact Indicators;
- Source Indicator; and
- Programmatic Indicators.

The three indicators are compared to the county's goals and objectives, and help the county prioritize which subwatersheds to focus on.

Ms. Tokarz gave examples of types of candidate projects, both structural and non-structural.

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<sup>3</sup> For a copy of the Participation Guidelines, please contact Debbie Lee at [dlee@resolv.org](mailto:dlee@resolv.org).

<sup>4</sup> The Watershed Workbook is available online at [http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/watersheds/nicholrun\\_docs.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/watersheds/nicholrun_docs.htm).

The group asked questions and discussed the presentation. During the discussion, individuals made the following comments:

- In comparison with the rest of Fairfax County, the Nichol Run and Pond Branch watersheds are in pretty good condition.
- In areas that are green (good condition), the county will focus on preservation. The lower ranked a subwatershed, the more the county will focus on restoration.
- Compositing can mask severe points. These were factored into the composite scores using best professional judgment.
- The majority of the county's streams were walked as part of the 2005 Stream Physical Assessment. The county performed a supplemental Stream Physical Assessment this past spring and walked across three miles of streams. The county also looked at streams without performing a formal "stream walk." In the Nichol Run and Pond Branch watersheds, the county started at the Potomac River and walked the streams to the point where the drainage was 50 acres.
- Some of the indicators used to determine rankings were based on historical data, such as fish samples and benthic community surveys.
- The locations of where the surveyors stopped are documented, but are not included in the workbook.
- The subwatershed rankings are not cumulative, and do not take into account degraded subwatersheds upstream.
- The county collected water quality samples for surface water. Well water would be groundwater, and is not measured directly. There is some connectivity between surface water and ground water, but they are different systems.
- The country is trying to get to 80 concept projects in the watershed. Projects may be carried out by the county and citizens, depending on the project.
- The county's requirements for development, as laid out in the Public Facilities Manual, may not be as applicable to the Nichol Run and Pond Branch watersheds as they are in the rest of Fairfax County (e.g., requirements for sidewalks, curbs, gutters, and lighting). The Stormwater Planning Division has been working to get low impact development (LID) practices adopted by the county, but it is a gradual process.

## **VI. Watershed Planning Next Steps**

The next WAG meeting will probably be in mid- to late-April. In the meantime, Dr. Birkhoff requested that members look through the Watershed Workbook and continue to provide the Team with information on specific problems and issues in the watershed.

The county will look into planning a field trip or a list of local stormwater management projects so that WAG members can see different project sites.

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. F.X. Browne serves as the technical team lead, prepares watershed plan drafts and engineering studies, and facilitates WAG and public meetings for the county. For more information, please contact <[Joseph.Sanchirico@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:Joseph.Sanchirico@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.”

*Fairfax County Stormwater Planning Division*

**NICHOL RUN/POND BRANCH WATERSHEDS  
WATERSHED ADVISORY GROUP  
MARCH 17, 2009**

**Meeting Participants**

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Ed Behrens\*  
Dena Bergstrom\*  
Wes Calendar  
Bev Geserick\*  
Chuck Langrad, Jr.\*  
Aaron Larocca\*  
Jackie Taylor\*  
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**Fairfax County Government Staff:**

Takisha Cannon  
Fred Rose  
Joe Sanchirico

**F.X. Browne, Inc. Staff:**

Erika Tokarz

**Public Involvement Team:**

Juliana Birkhoff, Consensus Building  
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Debbie Lee, RESOLVE

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