

Healthy Watersheds, Healthier Communities

Fairfax County Stormwater Planning Division

Minutes Pohick Creek Watershed Advisory Group (WAG) Meeting #3

Tuesday, May 26, 2009
West Springfield Elementary School

Meeting Attendees	
WAG Members	Fairfax Co. Stormwater Planning Division
Patrick Gloyd, Burke Centre Conservancy	Shannon Curtis
George Jennings, George Mason University	Chad Grupe
Bob Jordan, Potomac Riverways	Darold Burdick
Chris Landgraf, Fort Belvoir DPW	
John Levto, Christopher Consultants	PBS&J (engineering consultant)
Ron Marlow, Burke Presbyterian Church	Trish Hennessy-Webb
Sarah Mayhew, Middleridge Civic Assoc.	Terry Suehr
Kelly Meadows, Lake Braddock Community Association	
Ed Miller, Kings Park West	Waterford Inc. (public involvement consultant)
John Morrissey, Heritage Square (Alternate)	Beth Offenbacher
Duane Murphy, Southport HOA	Paul Coelus
Jim Pomeroy, Hidden Pond Nature Center	

The meeting convened at 7:05 pm with welcome comments by county staff and public involvement consultant/moderator Beth Offenbacher (Waterford Inc.).

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

- Shannon Curtis, Fairfax County, reviewed the timeline for the Watershed Advisory Group process and described the plans for a field trip to visit several sample projects.
- Trish Hennessy-Webb and Terry Suehr, PBS&J, introduced the first group of 102 potential projects in the Pohick Creek watershed and reviewed several illustrative examples in detail.
- Beth Offenbacher, Waterford, led a roundtable discussion of the WAG's next steps.
- Each segment of the presentation included an opportunity for questions and comments by the WAG members.

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm.



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www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/watersheds



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: Will there be any prioritization of projects at this point?

A: No, we're just looking for feedback on each project standing alone. Don't compare the projects relative to each other.

Q: [Regarding the photos in the presentation illustrating project #66, stream restoration] What is the time between the two photos? How long does it take to complete a project like this?

A: The construction component would take about 6 months, but it can take 1-2 years for the plants to become established; longer, of course, for trees.

Q: Was the Kingstowne restoration a count project?

A: Yes, in partnership with the Army Corps of Engineers, the US Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District, Friends of Huntley Meadows and other community organizations.

Q: None of the projects in this first group is near my organization, so I don't know whether my comments would be helpful.

A: In a sense, you speak for the entire watershed, so you can comment on any project about which you have feedback. But you don't need to comment on all 102 projects.

Q: What about areas of the watershed for which there's no representative on the WAG?

A: If there are projects outside your particular area you'd like to comment about, we can provide as much information as you'd like to help you understand the project.

Q: There's no cost analysis attached to any of the proposed projects. That could be a criterion we consider when trying to recommend priorities.

A: That will come later. We'll identify "planning level" cost estimates, which are ballpark figures. For now, we want feedback without regard to cost.

Q: At this level of planning, have you taken into account who owns the land: county, park, commercial, HOA, private, etc.?

A: Not at this stage, but as we narrow down the universe of projects, we'll consider ownership and whether we have or can obtain easements/access.



Q: What do you use for these overhead images—Google Earth, or do you have specific coordinates?

A: Some of the images in this presentation are from Google Earth and are used as illustrative purposes only. The County owns a very rich set of GIS data and some imaging capability, the County mapping and imaging data was used in identifying the projects. As shown on a few of the slides, the County data can “zoom” into specific sites.

Q: My group is asking questions like, “What’s an RPA [resource protection area]? What does restoration mean?”

A: To maintain consistency in language, you might direct them to the County’s website. The County has extensive information like this on our webpage. In addition, we can provide you with a “Watershed 101” primer. The Watershed 101 presentation provides a basic understanding of a watershed and highlights some standard language used throughout the process.

Q: When you start prioritizing projects, will you give specifics, such as “100 yards” of stream restoration at site X? Also will you consider the impact of one project on another. For example, if you slow velocity upstream with one project, it may obviate the need for two downstream projects.

A: Yes, we’ll certainly consider which projects yield the most “bang for the buck.” As to quantifying the specifics of each project, we’ll get more detail (especially for linear and buffer projects) when we get into the field and proof the projects. As part of the field visits the County has developed a form which will capture the details of the site.

Q: There are six flood control dams in this watershed. How you are considering these in the planning process? They provide a lot of volume control.

A: Yes, they provide volume control, but were not designed to provide water quality benefits. So we’re considering some dry pond for specific source control and water quality improvements. The big ponds control a lot of flood volume, but little control over velocity—there’s still erosion occurring between them.

Q: In the presentation you say “continue to identify projects.” Are you still looking for help [from the WAG] with that? For example, Lake Braddock Secondary School is planning a cistern.

A: We have taken the WAG’s comments so far and used them in developing this first group of projects, but we’re still open to additional ideas, especially at parks and schools.

Q: Is reduction of streamwater temperature one of the considerations in improving habitat?

A: This issue has been raised previously and addressed however, as a byproduct of some of the stream restoration and other projects identified, the stream temperatures could be reduced but this is not the primary benefit identified and it is not tracked.



Q: If I want to bring in a nonprofit organization that wants to partner with the County on small projects, how do I do that?

A: Contact our office. It's important to get these groups and projects identified, however we ask that the WAG members focus on the projects and once all the projects are identified then we will work with groups for implementing some of the smaller projects.

Q: In an early slide you showed phosphorus as a pollutant. Where is it coming from (fertilizer?), and can't we convince the source to use less of whatever is causing it?

A: There are many sources of phosphorus, so it's important to realize it's not a simple matter of reducing fertilizer use. Institutional & Industrial land uses in general produce phosphorus. Vehicles and roadways create a lot of it, too. Some large landowners, such as George Mason University, are taking steps to reduce the generation of phosphorus runoff.



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