

# Healthy Watersheds, Healthier Communities

Fairfax County Stormwater Planning Division

## Minutes

### Pohick Creek Watershed Advisory Group (WAG)

#### Meeting #4

Tuesday, July 21, 2009

Fairfax County Government Center

Meeting Attendees	
<b>WAG Members</b>	<b>Fairfax Co. Stormwater Planning Division</b>
Patrick Gloyd, Burke Centre Conservancy	Shannon Curtis
Bob Jordan, Potomac Riverways	Chad Grupe
Chris Landgraf, Fort Belvoir DPW	Heather Ambrose
John Levto, Christopher Consultants	
Ron Marlow, Burke Presbyterian Church	<b>PBS&amp;J (engineering consultant)</b>
Sarah Mayhew, Middleridge Civic Assoc.	Trish Hennessey-Webb
Kelly Meadows, Lake Braddock Community Association	Terry Suehr
Ed Miller, Kings Park West	
	<b>Waterford Inc. (public involvement consultant)</b>
	Beth Offenbacher
	Paul Coelus

The meeting convened at 7:10 pm with welcome comments by county staff and public involvement consultant/moderator Beth Offenbacher (Waterford Inc.).

Beth Offenbacher summarized the feedback received from the Watershed Advisory Group on the first set of proposed projects (numbers 1-102). *See the meeting handout "Pohick Watershed Advisory Group Responses to Comments, Projects 1-102."*

She then facilitated a discussion with WAG members about the second set (project numbers 103-244) based on appropriateness and knowledge of existing stakeholder concerns. WAG members are requested to submit comments on the second set of candidate projects by Tuesday, August 11, 2009.

Trish Hennessey-Webb (PBS&J) described the project prioritization criteria and categories. Approximately 100 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) and Trish Hennessey-Webb reviewed the timing and content of the next two WAG meetings. County staff would like to get the WAG's feedback on the final project list before it is released to the general public.



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

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 pm.

The following is a summary of the questions asked and 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: Is a bioswale the same as a bioretention area?

A: They're similar. They use the same plantings, but a bioswale does not stop the flow of stormwater but provides some water quality and quantity benefits and can be used along roadways and around schools. With a bioretention area, stormwater remains at that location.

Q: Is there a way to get more precise location information about the proposed projects? It's hard for us to know exactly where a project is based on the information given.

A: Not at this point. The planning hasn't gotten to that level of detail yet. Most of the planning so far has been done with GIS and maps, not individual site visits (although we did conduct a windshield tour). Before identifying specific locations, we'll have to look at issues such as property ownership, access, and easements. However, if there are particular projects you're interested in, we could give you more details, or we can give you WMA-level maps to show the approximate locations on a larger scale.

Q: Is flooding a concern only in the areas where obstructions are noted?

A: No, those are just the areas where we've identified a specific cause of flooding. We'll also look at flooding caused by general conditions, such as increased development.

Q: When green roofs are evaluated, are back-end costs and savings considered, such as building heating and cooling costs, replacement cost cycles of a standard roof, and maintenance costs? Or do you only consider stormwater control?

A: We do look at those factors, but for the watershed management plan, the focus is on stormwater management. In addition, most green roofs add significant weight, and require structural modifications to the building and are not necessarily the best alternative for a particular site.

Q: In the case of green roofs, would money from other departments (e.g., schools) get moved to your department to cover the costs?

A: Our costs are only for planning. The construction costs of a green roof would be borne by the department whose building it is.



Q: Where does outreach and education fit into the proposed projects?

A: The County currently has a strong educational and outreach program. With these proposed projects, we are not at the stage where we can identify a specific project and use it to create a specific educational program. This can be addressed after the watershed plan is approved by the Board of Supervisors, however, we can include a note to specific projects if an educational opportunity arises from the project.

Q: Does the county code prohibit blowing grass clippings into the road—where they will end up in the storm drains? I often see people blowing grass and leaves into the road, and these end up in streams, where they can cause obstructions and also increase nitrogen and phosphorus load.

A: We will verify, the specifics of this issue.

[There followed a discussion of the county's yard waste program, in which homeowners can place yard waste in special brown bags for composting separate from ordinary trash.]

Q: Have you looked at all the privately owned shopping areas for project opportunities?

A: Generally older shopping centers present good opportunities for retrofit projects, however, retrofit opportunities would be completed when redevelopment occurs. The County can not mandate the private owner to build a project on their site; however we can examine upstream and downstream from these properties and evaluate project opportunities. , Newer shopping centers generally meet the current stormwater management requirements.

Q: What is the county's opinion on street sweeping? It seems to be focused on industrial areas.

A: There is a general sense that street sweeping is a valuable tool for stormwater management and should be done more. It has been focused on industrial areas more than residential areas because of the nature and amount of debris found in those areas.

Q: What about excluders and trash traps? They would help keep debris out of the storm sewer system.

A: True, but they present maintenance issues as well. And they're most useful in commercial areas, yet we can't make owners of existing properties install them.

There followed a discussion about the use of pervious pavement (concrete and asphalt). The University of New Hampshire has conducted some long-term studies and published them online; the University of North Carolina has also conducted studies. It was noted that there are design constraints on how pervious pavement can be used, and long-term maintenance questions and costs need to be considered. Pervious pavement is about 25% more expensive than ordinary pavement and requires regular sweeping or vacuuming to prevent siltation (clogging).



Q: I don't see any discussion of trees and reforestation as a stormwater management tool.

A: We are looking at resource protection areas (RPAs), most of which are well forested. The county has had a contract for buffer restoration and is reprocurring those services later this year. These kinds of projects are good opportunities for the use of volunteer labor (organizations such as the Boy Scouts, Fairfax ReLeaf, etc.)

Q: I don't see many on-stream projects (restoration, obstruction removal) in the lower part of the county.

A: In that part of the watershed, the streams tend to be larger (main stems) and flush well. There is less need for such projects there. You can find more information in the stream physical assessment (SPA), which is available on the county website.

Q: I've found that people are supportive of projects to remove obstructions (e.g., fallen trees) and regrade banks.

Q: Yes, but you'll have a big educational issue when you start restoring streams in people's back yards and they see the kind of construction that actually entails.

A: Your point is well taken. We've learned some good lessons from some recent stream restorations in Reston.

Q: Will a project's usefulness as an educational tool be used as a criterion?

A: Not exactly. We'll try to capture that information when we develop the details of a project, but this is a subjective criterion and can not be quantified throughout the County and therefore is not used as one of the criterion. It will be more of a "note" applicable to that project.



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