

*Fairfax County Stormwater Planning Division*

**SUGARLAND RUN AND HORSEPEN CREEK WATERSHED WORKSHOP  
DECEMBER 10, 2008**

**Herndon Community Center**  
814 Ferndale Ave  
Herndon, VA 20170

**I. Welcome and Introductions**

*[Please note that the presentation from the December 10, 2008 Sugarland Run and Horsepen Creek WAG meeting will be available online at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/watersheds/sugarlandrun.htm>.]*

Fred Rose, the Chief of the Watershed Planning and Assessment Branch, Fairfax County opened the meeting, welcoming the Watershed Advisory Group (WAG) and members of the public in attendance.<sup>1</sup> Juliana Birkhoff, the facilitator, briefly reviewed the meeting objectives 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 briefly reviewed group expectations.

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

Mr. Rose reviewed the history of watershed planning in Fairfax County. He also reviewed basic watershed planning terms, such as Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL), which is developed for water bodies considered “impaired.” He noted that while Horsepen Creek does not contain any impaired sections, there are a few sections of Sugarland Run that are impaired by *E. coli*. Mr. Rose 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 new development, current regulations, and changes in the understanding of watershed management. He reviewed events since the 1970s for watershed monitoring and planning. He explained that the Sugarland Run and Horsepen Creek watershed management plan is part of the second round of watershed plans. The first round of plans was started in 2003 and encompassed 50 percent of the county’s land area. The second round was streamlined by consolidating the modeling work, scheduling the public involvement piece after most of the modeling was completed, and developing the watershed plans concurrently rather than sequentially.

He explained that stormwater capital improvements had been partially funded with a pro rata share fee paid by developers per acre of impervious surface added and the fee varies per watershed. In addition, the Board of Supervisors had passed a dedication of one-penny real estate tax revenues which provided an average of \$20 million a year for the past four years for stormwater programs. The one-penny dedication gave the Stormwater Planning Division a significant boost in implementing stormwater management capital improvement projects. So far,

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

<sup>2</sup> The meeting agenda is attached to this meeting summary.

over one hundred projects have been put in the ground. Mr. Rose noted that the revenue from the one-penny tax has been used for funding the entire stormwater program including project implementation and infrastructure maintenance. He acknowledged that revenue is projected to be decreased next fiscal year, which will affect the FY10 budget. In response to a member's question, Mr. Rose informed the group that in the last year, the operating budget that had previously been funded by the General Fund was rolled into the one-penny dedication fund which resulted in less money available to implement improvement projects.

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

Joe Sanchirico, Fairfax County, reviewed the timeline for the watershed planning process for Sugarland Run and Horsepen Creek. He noted that the bulk of the six planned WAG meetings will be focused on projects. The county will introduce potential projects to the WAG and the WAG will provide input on which projects to implement. Mr. Sanchirico added that the county was trying to target which projects are right for the watershed, and in what areas. He informed the group that after the Draft Sugarland Run and Horsepen Creek Watershed Plan was developed and reviewed by the WAG, it would be presented at a second public forum. In response to a member's question, he added that each proposed project will include proposed costs. He explained that for modeling purposes, the watershed was broken down into watershed management areas (WMAs) and further divided into sub watersheds of 100-300 acres. Most of the information presented to the WAG will be at the sub watershed level.

### **IV. Role of Watershed Advisory Group and Participation Guidelines**

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 informed the WAG that their role was advisory only. Because there are competing priorities between different watershed plans in the County, the final plan may not include every thing the WAG recommended.

In response to members' questions, Dr. Birkhoff added that even if the county decides not to include a comment form the WAG in the final watershed management plan, the county will provide the reasoning behind that decision at the meeting, and both will be documented in the meeting summaries. Members will be notified by e-mail when the summaries are posted onto the website.

### **V. Review Current Information on Watershed Characteristics**

Melissa Taibi, F.X. Browne, reviewed the characteristics of the Sugarland Run and Horsepen Creek watersheds, which were used to develop the Watershed Workbook.<sup>4</sup> She noted that both Sugarland Run and Horsepen Creek have watersheds that straddle Loudoun and Fairfax Counties. While the workbook mainly focuses on the Fairfax County portions of the watersheds,

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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/sugarlandrun.htm>.

there is an understanding that all the land in the watershed contributes to the overall health of the watershed, and that there are downstream effects of water quality upstream. Ms. Taibi stated that with the exception of one portion in Lower Middle Sugarland Run, most of the watersheds drain into Loudoun County.

Ms. Taibi then 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 the preliminary findings, the most degraded portions of the watersheds were urban areas.

Ms. Taibi briefly listed problems in the watershed that had already been identified in previous studies. These included:

- Stream channel erosion;
- Insufficient stormwater controls;
- Flooding; and
- Damaged stormwater facilities.

She listed potential project types, noting that generally, non-structural stream restoration projects are favored over structural stream restoration projects because of additional ecological benefits.

The WAG members asked questions. They discussed the following points:

- Percent impervious surface allowed would depend on zoning. Commercial zoning would allow more impervious surface than residential. Any new development must have no more flowing from the site than before, and must reduce phosphorous and nitrogen runoff by 40%.
- The county has a goal to provide stormwater management in redevelopment areas beyond what is currently required.
- Nitrogen runoff is correlated with urbanization. Impervious surfaces trap nutrients from the air and from motor vehicle exhaust.
- Floodplains depicted in the Workbook are the initial modeled 100yr floodplains. The Workbook looks at 100-year floodplains as well as smaller increment floodplains. The modeled floodplains are important for determining the subwatershed ranking and evaluating potential projects.
- FEMA just recently updated its 100-year floodplains for the area, which is important because zoning is based on the FEMA maps, and there are insurance consequences of FEMA's floodplain definitions.
- Some indicators have better data than others; some indicators are using surrogates. Currently, the county is evaluating which indicators make sense. Eventually, the county will develop a matrix to show how to adjust the numbers to help prioritize projects. While the county has not officially gone through a weighting exercise, there is an unofficial prioritization being used (e.g., structures with currently flooding are a priority, as are pristine areas that should be preserved).
- There are partial records on permanent structures in the watershed. Due to budget constraints, there are no additional monitoring sites planned.

- The county will bring potential projects to the WAG for discussion and prioritization. However, members should bring up problems too.
- During the first round of watershed management plans, there were a good mix of different types of projects, including public outreach and education. However, to prevent redundancy, the county wants the second round of plans to focus mainly on projects—not policies. The county agreed to share with WAG members the policy recommendations developed during the first round, as well as a consolidated list with characterizations.
- While the County Board of Supervisors had indicated flooding was a priority area, because much of the flooding involved road crossings, 90% of which are the responsibility of VDOT, the Board had indicated that not a lot of the funding will be allocated towards road projects.

## VI. Watershed Planning Next Steps

The next WAG meeting will probably be around February or March. The Public Involvement Team and the Fairfax County staff will contact members to schedule this meeting. 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.

Dr. Birkhoff noted that in case of inclement weather, WAG meetings will be cancelled if Fairfax County Public Schools are closed. She requested that members provide her with names of any other people who might be interested in serving on the WAG or participate in the next public forum.

After the meeting, members reviewed comments collected during the Public Issues Forum on October 30, 2008 and suggested other possible problem areas.<sup>5</sup> If members think of more issues, they can e-mail them to Mr. Sanchirico and Ms. Taibi.

The Sugarland Run and Horsepen Creek watershed is severely degraded, 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. 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.”

<sup>5</sup> These additional comments collected at the WAG meeting are attached to the end of this summary.

# Healthy Watersheds, Healthier Communities

Fairfax County Stormwater Planning Division

## Sugarland Run & Horsepen Creek Watersheds Plan Watersheds Advisory Group (WAG) Meeting #1

December 10, 2008

Herndon Community Center, Room #2  
814 Ferndale Ave, Herndon, VA 20170

### *Agenda*

Purpose: Set the stage and begin involving the WAG in the watersheds planning process for Sugarland Run and Horsepen Creek, including having the WAG:

- Become aware of the big picture of the watersheds planning process;
- Understand their role in the process;
- Develop a common understanding of the current watersheds characteristics;
- Identify and discuss problems in the Sugarland Run and Horsepen Creek watersheds.

6:30 pm ***Check-in and Light Refreshments***

7:00-7:10 **Welcome and Introductions**

*Juliana Birkhoff, CBI*

- Participant and team introductions
- Review meeting purpose
- Review agenda
- Review group expectations and participation

7:10-7:30 **Introduction to the Watershed Planning Process and Presentation of Policy Issue**

*Fred Rose, Fairfax County*

- Purpose and History

7:30-7:40 **Timeframe of Watershed Plan and WAG involvement processes**

*Joe Sanchirico, Fairfax County*

- Milestones, timing and activities

7:40-8:00 **Introduction and expectation for WAG meetings**

*Juliana Birkhoff, CBI*

- Role of Watershed Advisory Group
- WAG Participation Guidelines
- Clarifications and Questions about WAG Role and Participation

8:00-8:30 **Presentation of WMP Goals and Objectives**

*Melissa Taibi, F.X. Browne*

- Watershed Workbook Wrap-up and Review
- Additional Problems, Comments and Issues Identified
- What Types of Projects Can Be Found in a Watershed Plan?

8:30-8:35 **Next Steps**

*Juliana Birkhoff, CBI*

- Next WAG Meeting – timing and focus

8:35-8:50 **Questions and Answers/Discussion**

*Juliana Birkhoff, CBI*

9:00 **Adjourn**

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/watersheds/sugarlandrun.htm>



Fairfax County Stormwater Planning Division

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[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/watersheds](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/watersheds)



*Fairfax County Stormwater Planning Division*

**SUGARLAND RUN / HORSEPEN CREEK WATERSHEDS  
WATERSHED ADVISORY GROUP  
DECEMBER 10, 2008**

**Meeting Participants**

Jennifer Boysko\*  
Zoran Dragacevac\*  
Beverly Elgin\*  
Alan Ford\*  
Nicki Foremsky\*  
Richard A. Gollhofer  
Konrad Huppi\*  
Charlie Marts\*  
Greg Noe\*  
James Palmer\*  
Norbert Pink\*  
Glen Rubis\*  
Robert Soltess\*  
Dave Swan  
Bobby Winterbottom\*

**Fairfax County Government Staff:**

Takisha Cannon  
Fred Rose  
Joe Sanchirico

**F.X. Browne Staff:**

Melissa Taibi

**Public Involvement Team:**

Juliana Birkhoff, Consensus Building  
Institute  
Debbie Lee, RESOLVE

**\*WAG Member**

**Sugarland Run and Horsepen Creek Watersheds  
December 10, 2008  
WAG Meeting Issue Additions**

<u>Item</u>	<u>Issue Description</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Contact</u>
A	Stormwater from Lake Newports soccer fields at Reston Parkway must drain through neighborhoods to reach stormwater dry detention pond – ideally there should be a stormwater facility closer to Reston Parkway	Origin of drainage problem behind Autumn Ridge Circle	Nicki Foremsky, Reston Association
B	Wehr structure overflowed during Tropical Storm Hannah flooding. Weir may be undersized – functioned as predicted, backed up the floodwater (6ft) as intended, but overtopped/weir not tall enough for storm	Upstream of crossing at Quincy Adams	Greg Noe, USGS
C	Undersized culvert observed during worst flash flood recalled in past 20 yrs. Approx 17 years ago, may have been addressed since then	Off of Queens Row Street	Richard G.
D	Suspected water quality issue, probably coming from much farther upstream (hasn't noticed any association with the nearby stormwater outfalls). Last few weeks, significant foaming in stream, also noticed a little farther upstream. Foam backs up at partial log obstruction. Also in spring, significant algal blooms – very little riparian buffer below golf course, suspected nutrient overload	Folly Lick Park	Jim Palmer
E	Farm pond is being modified for a new development – supposed to be a wet pond. The common/open space area with pond is supposed to be given to Fairfax County Parks Assoc. and added to adjacent park	Off of Young Ave & Hiddenbrook Dr	Jim Palmer