

Fairfax County Stormwater Planning Division

**SUGARLAND RUN AND HORSEPEN CREEK WATERSHEDS
WATERSHED ADVISORY GROUP MEETING
MARCH 3, 2009**

Herndon Fortnightly Public Library
768 Center St
Herndon, VA 20170

I. Welcome and Introductions

[Please note that the presentation from the March 3, 2009 Sugarland Run and Horsepen Creek WAG meeting will be available online at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/watersheds/sugarlandrun.htm>.]

Juliana Birkhoff, the meeting facilitator, welcomed Watershed Advisory Group (WAG) members and the public to the second meeting of the Sugarland Run and Horsepen Creek WAG.¹ She briefly reviewed the meeting agenda, meeting objectives, and group expectations.

II. Presentation of Fairfax County Goals and Objectives

Joe Sanchirico, Fairfax County, told the group that this would be the last WAG meeting focused on background information. Future meetings will focus on projects. He reviewed the county's goals and objectives and defined "goals", "objectives", and "indicators." Indicators are used in the watershed ranking process and apply to goals and objectives, creating a direct relationship between what the county is attempting to accomplish and the data. Mr. Sanchirico pointed WAG members to the list of Fairfax County goals and objectives included in their meeting materials.²

Mr. Sanchirico briefly reviewed the WAG process expectations, highlighting that WAG time will be primarily devoted to project identification and selection. He encouraged WAG members to generate support in the community for the Sugarland Run and Horsepen Creek Watershed Management Plan when it is developed.

WAG members asked Mr. Sanchirico questions and discussed his presentation. During the discussion, members noted:

- Data used in the watershed characterization was collected from a variety of sources, including field reconnaissance, modeling data, surrogates, and data from the 2001 Stream Physical Assessment and other past surveys.
- Available data can be used to establish a baseline of the watershed's current health. There should be a way to measure the success of the projects implemented with future data and indicator trends.

¹ A list of the meeting attendees are attached to this meeting summary. A copy of the meeting agenda is available online at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/watersheds/sugarlandrun.htm>.

² For a copy of the Fairfax County's goals and objectives, please contact dlee@resolv.org.

III. Problem Areas Identified by Subwatershed Characterization

Melissa Taibi, F.X. Browne, Inc., informed the WAG how they identified problem areas using subwatershed characterization. She noted that the county can use predictive indicators to characterize future scenarios to identify areas that need preservation and evaluate the benefit of proposed projects.

Ms. Taibi reviewed the three groups of indicators used to determine the subwatershed rankings:

1. Watershed Impact Indicators, which provide information on the overall watershed condition;
2. Source Indicators, which provide data on the location of watershed stressors; and
3. Programmatic Indicators, which provide information on existing watershed management programs.

Ms. Taibi explained in more detail the watershed impact indicators, which are comprised of objective composite scores related to stormwater runoff, flooding hazards, habitat health, habitat diversity, stream water quality, drinking water quality, and storage capacity. The individual objective composite scores are summed into an overall watershed impact objective composite score, which provides an overall look at the subwatershed condition.

Ms. Taibi reviewed each of the objective composite scores. During the presentation, WAG members asked questions about the indicators used to develop the composite scores and discussed the data presented. Individuals made the following points during the discussion:

- A benthic community is comprised of the macroinvertebrates that inhabit the stream.
- The county has data on nutrient runoff for nitrogen and phosphorous. That data is grouped into one of the stormwater runoff indicators.
- At this point in the process, all the indicators are weighted equally. This might change in the future.
- Herndon has a low rank for health habitat because it is urbanized and there is little habitat.
- Fairfax County may want to look into developing an indicator for tree cover.
- When surrogates are used to develop indicators, this should be indicated on the maps – perhaps with hashing.
- The county is considering weighting areas that rely heavily on surrogates lower.
- The county has not looked into a threshold for the veracity of the data, but may take that into consideration in the future.
- In Sugarland Run and Horsepen Creek watersheds, very few if any households are using the streams as water sources, so the composite score for drinking water quality may not be as applicable as it is elsewhere in the county.

Ms. Taibi also briefly reviewed source indicators, individual indicators, and programmatic indicators. The WAG will delve more deeply into the programmatic indicators when it discusses candidate projects. She reviewed the problems identified in the watershed based on data collected from field reconnaissance, past surveys, public comment on the watershed workbook, and input collected from the public watershed forum.

IV. Preliminary Strategies for Watershed Improvements and Preservation

Ms. Taibi summarized three restoration strategies and gave examples of each. The three restoration strategies were:

- Reduce Flooding;
- Improve Water Quality; and
- Improve Habitat or Reduce Streambank Erosion.

One WAG member suggested that the county prepare a list of local places where restoration strategies were implemented, so that the group can visit some.

The group discussed the various restoration strategies. Individuals made the following points:

- Education can be considered a non-structural measure to improve water quality.
- There are constructed wetlands just east of Dranesville Road near Route 7. They are on the west side of Sugarland Run, close to the shopping center.
- The Chesapeake Bay Foundation used to have a matching grants program for homeowners to implement restoration projects, but it is halted now.
- As of two to three years ago, Fairfax County did not have tax breaks for businesses that implemented restoration strategies on their premises. That may have changed. The county will check to see if that was on their list of policy issues from the first round of watershed management plans.
- The Reston Association had received funds from the Northern Virginia Stream Restoration Bank to restore the Snakeden Watershed using natural stream channel design. Included was funding for ten years of survey longitudinal profiles. So far the restored stream channel has withstood Hurricane Hanna.

Ms. Taibi reviewed three subwatersheds as examples of how the County could apply the strategies given each subwatershed's descriptions and problem areas.

WAG members made the following suggestions for other strategies:

- In areas with lots of federal government buildings, such as subwatershed SU-SU-0048, the county may want to consider community partnerships.
- In lower-income areas, such as subwatershed SU-SU-0051, families do not have a lot of money to improve their property. In such areas, the county may want to look at opportunities on publicly owned land, such as Dogwood Elementary School.
- The county may want to collaborate with Volunteers with Change; an organization that helps busy adults find volunteer opportunities. This would be a way for the county to find volunteers to help conduct surveys.
- Implement tax benefits to implementing restoration strategies, or tax penalties for not.
- Offer a credit for homeowners to implement restoration strategies on their property.
- Convert some HOA property into conservation easements and no-mow areas.

V. Watershed Planning Next Steps

Before the next WAG meeting, currently planned for mid-April, the county will distribute a list of proposed projects to the members to review. In the meantime, the county will send out a list of

local restoration projects, a draft list of policy issues compiled from the previous round of watershed management plans, and an updated WAG member roster. The county will also attempt to give a general idea of cost per project type, and plan a field trip to look at sites with implemented restoration projects. Dr. Birkhoff requested that any members who preferred to keep their email addresses on the BCC line of emails notify her.

The Sugarland Run and Horsepen Creek watershed is 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, Inc. 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> 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

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

Meeting Participants

Juliana Birkhoff, Consensus Building Institute
Darold Burdick, Fairfax County Stormwater Planning Division
Takisha Cannon, Fairfax County Stormwater Planning Division
Zoran Dragacevac, Town of Herndon, Department of Public Works*
Craig Dubishar, St. Timothy's Episcopal Church*
Alan Ford, Virginia Native Plant Society*
Nicki Foremsky, Reston Association*
Gary Gepford, Herndon High School*
Richard A. Gollhofer
Konrad Huppi, Shaker Woods Homeowners*
Debbie Lee, RESOLVE
Charlie Marts, Reflection Homes Association*
Greg Noe*
Norbert Pink, Sierra Club*
Cecily Powell, Town of Herndon, Neighborhood Resources
Joe Sanchirico, Fairfax County Stormwater Planning Division
Deborah Slawson, F.X. Browne, Inc.
Alison Smith
Melissa Taibi, F.X. Browne, Inc.
Robert Soltess, Friends of Sugarland Run*
Bobby Winterbottom, Sugarland Run Homeowners Association*

***WAG Member**