



# County of Fairfax, Virginia

## MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 19, 2014

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Stella Koch, Chairman  
*Stella M. Koch*  
Environmental Quality Advisory Council

SUBJECT: Funding of Environmental Improvement Program projects

At its meeting on June 11, 2014, the Environmental Quality Advisory Council approved, by a unanimous vote of members present, this memorandum regarding the provision of funding for the environmental initiatives identified in the *FY 2015 Advertised Budget Plan*. This action followed a similar unanimous vote at the May 14, 2014 EQAC meeting supporting the general principles addressed in this memo.

In adopting the FY 2015 budget for the county, the Board of Supervisors chose to not fund \$535,000 for several environmental initiatives that had been proposed for funding in the *FY 2015 Advertised Budget Plan* (see Attachment 1). These projects would support the board's Environmental Agenda and had been identified through a rigorous Environmental Impact Program (EIP) project selection process. EQAC is asking the board to restore funding for these projects through its FY 2014 Carryover budget process, as they are not funded through any other part of the budget.

While some of the EIP projects in question would be stand-alone projects, the proposed funding would also be used to provide support for on-going programs. Some of the EIP projects, if implemented, would show effective cost savings. In one case in particular, the Invasive Management Area Program, the money would be highly leveraged and provide cost savings for the Fairfax County Park Authority—we have attached information about this program that was provided to us, upon our request, by the Fairfax County Park Authority (see Attachment 2). A year of not funding this volunteer program not only slows progress, it creates an opportunity for regrowth of invasive species and subsequently sets the program back more than just this missed year.

We thank the board for its on-going support for our environment in Fairfax County.

Attachments: As Stated

cc: Edward L. Long, Jr., County Executive  
David J. Molchany, Deputy County Executive  
EQAC file, June 2014

Environmental Quality Advisory Council (EQAC)  
c/o Department of Planning and Zoning  
Planning Division  
12055 Government Center Parkway, Suite 730  
Fairfax, Virginia 22035-5509  
Phone 703-324-1380 TTY: 711  
Fax 703-324-3056  
[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/eqac/](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/eqac/)

**Summary of environmental initiatives that had been included in the  
FY 2015 Advertised Budget Plan**

- ◆ An amount of \$150,000 was included to continue the Invasive Plant Removal Program. The Park Authority has managed this volunteer program, as well as other invasive removal initiatives. These programs have restored hundreds of acres of important natural areas, protected tree canopy, and reached thousands of volunteers. More than 7,700 trained volunteer leaders have contributed 26,000 hours of service since the Program's inception in 2005, improving over 1,000 acres of parkland.
  
- ◆ An amount of \$75,000 was included for Energy Education and Outreach initiatives. This program has been intended to increase the awareness of Fairfax County residents and businesses regarding their energy consumption and to encourage them to reduce consumption. Program objectives have included educating residents and businesses about home and workplace energy consumption, explaining the energy assessment (audit) process, and encouraging residents and businesses to undertake energy-savings measures.
  
- ◆ An amount of \$10,000 was included for the Green Purchasing Program. This program was designed to support two interns to assist in clearly specifying environmental attributes during the county's procurement process. Fairfax County has a current inventory of more than 2,400 contracts and emphasizing environmental attributes such as recycling, energy efficiency, durability and reduced toxicity during the procurement process can contribute to the purchase of green products, creating fiscal and environmental savings.
  
- ◆ An amount of \$30,000 was included for a Watershed Protection and Energy Conservation Matching Grant Program. This program was intended to promote community engagement around sustainability and conservation issues. Specifically, the Watershed Protection and Energy Conservation matching grant pilot program would have provided financial incentives to empower homeowners through their associations to implement on-the-ground sustainability projects. The initiative would have built on current programs that provide technical assistance, hands-on support, outreach and education to Fairfax County homeowners and residents. Projects would have improved water quality, reduced greenhouse gas emissions and conserved energy and water. The proposed program funding level would have supported printing and materials, matching grants of \$300 - \$2,500 up to \$10,000 total for all grants and two seasonal paid interns to help run the program and conduct the community survey.
  
- ◆ An amount of \$170,000 was included for lighting retrofits and upgrades at Fairfax County Park Authority facilities for energy efficiency and conservation. Lighting would have been upgraded to LED fixtures and lighting controls would have been installed to manage operating hours more efficiently. These energy saving retrofit replacements would have reduced approximately 80 percent of energy usage, improved lighting, reduced the Greenhouse gas inventory and contributed to the dark skies initiative.
  
- ◆ An amount of \$92,000 was included to install Water Smart web-based irrigation controllers utilizing ET (Evapotranspiration) weather technology at 20 Park facilities that have existing

irrigation systems with the opportunity to reduce energy use, water consumption and reduce environmental impacts.

◆ An amount of \$8,000 was included to install a Weather Station for efficient water usage at Greendale Golf Course. This system would have helped measure air temperature, relative humidity, barometric pressure, rainfall, and other weather indicators in order to modify watering requirements. It was estimated that installing this weather station could save 10 million gallons of water per year. Estimated cost savings of more than \$50,000 per year.

## **Invasive Management Area (IMA) Program Information**

At the request of EQAC, the Fairfax County Park Authority has furnished this information about the IMA program

### Overview

- Over 32,200 volunteer hours have been spent restoring habitat since IMA's inception in 2005. In calendar year 2013, volunteers logged 5,472 hours for a total volunteer value of \$121,150.
- Over 10,000 volunteers have participated. There are over 50 core volunteers that act as site leaders.
- 6,600 bags of invasive plants have been removed, plus numerous roll-off dumpsters. 5,000 native plants have been planted.
- Over 1,700 workdays have occurred.
- Over 2,500 acres of parkland have been treated for invasive species by staff and contractors since 2008.
- Many instances of stewardship/education of citizens on natural resource issues and thousands of annual contacts have occurred.
- The program supports the school curriculum, the Park Authority's Natural Resource Management Plan, county tree canopy goals, the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit and the county's comprehensive plan.
- A large portion of the volunteer base consists of Fairfax County Public School children who are performing their public service hours while being educated on invasive species and environmental issues.

### Funding History:

- \$100,000 from FY 2005 Carryover in support of the Environmental Agenda. \$50,000 matching grant funding provided by National Fish and Wildlife Foundations' Small Watersheds Grant Program. \$500 grant from the Corporate Community Relations Council.
- \$300,000 additional funding from FY 2006 Carryover, in support of the Environmental Agenda.
- \$150,000 funded in FY 2008 budget for environmental projects.

## Invasive Management Area (IMA) Program Information

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- \$150,000 funded in the FY 2009 budget for environmental projects.
- No additional funding in FY 2010 and FY 2011.
- \$70,000 funded in the FY 2012 budget for environmental projects. REI Community Grant for \$10,000.
- \$75,000 funded in the FY 2013 budget for environmental projects. REI Community Grant for \$15,000.
- \$100,000 funded in the FY 2014 budget for environmental projects. REI Community Grant for \$10,000.

Funding supports equipment/materials, operations and maintenance, contracted herbicide treatments and seasonal staffing.