Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

Anacostia Watershed Management Committee

Meeting Summary: February 23, 2017

AWMC MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:
Amy Stevens, Montgomery County Department of Environmental Programs (MC DEP)
Katherine Antos, Anacostia Ambassador
Sheila Besse, District of Columbia Department of Energy and the Environment (DOEE)
Jeffrey DeHan, Prince George's Department of the Environment (PG DoE)
Gabe Cohee, Maryland Department of Natural Resources (MDNR)
Dana Jackson, US Department of Agriculture (USDA)
Catherine King, US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
Gretchen Mikeska, DOEE
Steve Reid, University of Maryland – College Park (UMD)
Greg Sandi, Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE)
Charles Walker, US Geological Service (USGS)

ALTERNATE ATTENDEES:
Marian Dombroski, Anacostia Watershed Citizens Advisory Committee (AWCAC)
Jerry Maldonado, PG DoE
Trey Sherard, Anacostia RiverKeeper

GUESTS IN ATTENDANCE:
Curtis Dalpra, Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin (ICPRB)
Jim Foster, Anacostia Watershed Society (AWS)
Emily Franc, Anacostia RiverKeeper
Matt Harper, Maryland National Parks and Planning Commission –Parks & Recreation (MNPPC)
Laura Catell Noll, Alice Ferguson Foundation (AFF)
David Robbins, US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)
Jacqeline Seiple, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)

COG STAFF IN ATTENDANCE:
Steve Bieber, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG)
Matt Gallagher, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG)
Michelle Kokolis, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG)
Lorena Kowalewski, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG)
Noah Lee, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG)
Aubin Maynard, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG)
Phong Trieu, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG)

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1. CALL TO ORDER, INTRODUCTIONS, APPROVAL OF MINUTES
Amy Stevens, Management Committee Chair

Chair Stevens called the meeting to order and requested that everyone present introduce themselves.

2. ANACOSTIA PARTNERSHIP UPDATE
Michelle Kokolis, COG Anacostia Executive Watershed Manager

Ms. Kokolis provided a brief update on recent AWRP activities. The AWRP will host a planning retreat for Steering Committee members on March 14th. The facilitated event will focus on shaping the Partnership's future goals and priorities. The trash reduction workgroup has met several times and will be turning toward street sweeping. Finally, the AWRP pavement removal and reforestation project in Montgomery County will be complete this spring.

Ms. Kokolis announced that she would be leaving the Partnership for a position with the Rock Creek Conservancy. Ms. Kokolis expressed her gratitude to all those working toward a cleaner Anacostia, and encourage members to contact her in her new position.

3. AWCAC REPORT
Aubin Maynard, COG Environmental Planner

Mr. Aubin Maynard provided a brief update on recent AWCAC activities. Members discussed 2017 Maryland state legislative priorities with representatives from Maryland League of Conservation Voters, and shared watershed group priorities from around the watershed. During their next meeting, members will hear presentations about the Anacostia Sediment Project. Finally, planning for the 2017 Festival del Rio Anacostia is underway and all MC members were encouraged to participate.

4. UPDATE ON FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR USACE STREAM RESTORATION IN PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND
Jacqui Seiple, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Geographer

Ms. Seiple gave a PowerPoint presentation on the USACE Feasibility Study, in partnership with the Prince George's County Department of the Environment, which passed a recent internal milestone that allows the study to move from conceptual design to feasibility level design for 6 stream reaches on the Northwest and Northeast Branches of the Anacostia. Building on the 2010 Anacostia Restoration Plan, the USACE intends to contribute to comprehensive watershed restoration through interagency collaboration and integration of actions and investments.

Human alteration of the Anacostia River watershed has resulted in significant degradation of aquatic ecosystems through changes to the hydrologic regime and direct anthropogenic alteration of streams, including by USACE for flood risk management along the Anacostia River in the 1970's. Through the plan formulation process (see PowerPoint for details) six sites were selected including: a) seven miles of stream restoration, b) opening four miles of fish passage, and c) connects 13 miles of previously restored habitat (i.e. enhances prior federal investments). Worth noting is the four of the six sites are restoring damage by USACE work from the 1970's.

The plan has move toward the Feasibility-Level Design Phase, with additional feasibility analysis (advanced HEC-RAS and Sediment transport modeling) and public comment. The overall project is part

of the new Smart Planning process, with the intent to finish in a three-year timeframe. However, the process is new and the final Chief's Report will likely not be until June of 2018.

Discussion:

- USACE calculated preliminary costs to determine project feasibility. The initial cost effectiveness analysis was completed by a USACE model (does not incorporate ecological value) and paired with benefits based on MBSS physical habitat index.

- Local jurisdictions have seen restoration dramatically increase, in some cases triple, over the last few years. The USASCE has also seen increase costs, as indicated in a recent reginal cost comparison.

- Initially, there were similar projects proposed in Montgomery County. As projects were scaled back due to high project cost, benefits also decreased to the point costs outweighed benefits. The study was terminated, and will be transferred to the Continuing Authorities Program (CAP), as it is more cost effective means for smaller scale projects.

5. OVERVIEW OF THE CHESAPEAKE BAY COMPREHENSIVE WATER RESOURCES AND RESTORATION PLAN

Dave Robbins, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Acting Chief, Civil Project Development Branch

The USACE is developing a comprehensive and integrated master plan that will assist with the implementation of the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Agreement. The Chesapeake Bay Comprehensive Plan (CBCP) will seek to engage Bay stakeholders to identify problems and improve communication, determine ways in which USACE mission areas could be better utilized to support the 2014 Bay Agreement, and identify actions by federal, state, and local government agencies and NGOs in the watershed to address problems outside of USACE mission areas.

CBCP will result in a single, integrated restoration plan to:

- guide implementation of actions that protect, restore, and preserve the Bay
- Adopt and align actions with that others are doing
- Avoid duplication of ongoing or planned actions by others
- Make maximum use of existing information
- Identify ecological problems, needs and opportunities
- Identify projects for further study and implementation including at least one for each Bay state and the District of Columbia

Stakeholder collaboration is critical element of the Plan. Collaboration and effective communication among CBCP stakeholders through webpage, email updates, study initiation notices, federal agency coordination letters, interagency watershed planning collaboration workshop, and strategic Engagements involving Cross GIT, SAGE, FWS, and the DoD Chesapeake Bay Action team are key elements. Additional upcoming topical webinars, and public review of the Draft Report are also important.

Plan analysis includes three main topic areas: flooding and storm damages, ecosystem degradation, and economic and social vulnerability. These topics will be defined and categorized, and then assessed

through an inventory of existing conditions and constraints. Through this assessment future forecasts can be made that lead to a composite analysis and identified priorities and actions by stakeholders. The composite analysis leads to findings, needs and opportunities that is then needed to develop strategies, benefits, and cost ranges to fund and implement projects and state plans.

There is an ongoing need for a collaborative effort to collect geospatial data across stakeholders and organizations. GIS data is used by the USACE GIS team to track progress and conduct accurate geospatial analysis for the restoration plan. It is anticipated that the analysis will require over 150 different GIS datasets. USACE is still in the technical analysis phase and plans to complete a draft by September 2017 for stakeholder review. It is anticipated the project will be submitted to congress in July of 2018.

Discussion:

- While the CBCP will use a similar strategy to the Anacostia Restoration Plan (ARP), which identified over 3,000 projects, CBCP will likely treat each state as "a project", with specific short, medium, and long term planning strategies.

- The CBCP will be closely aligned with Chesapeake Bay Program and WIPs. While the CB Model will be used as a data source, it is important to remember that USACE focus is habitat and not water quality.

- Local flooding issues and MS4 permits, will not be specifically addressed in the plan, as they are too granular for the analysis. However, overarching best practices and programmatic improvements may be incorporated.

- Forestry and forest canopy will be included in the analysis.

- Stakeholders involved in advising the Plan include (but are not limited to): federal agencies, state governments, NGOs, Academia, CBP, and a spectrum of stakeholders closely involved at the state level.

6. MIDDLE POTOMAC – WASHINGTON DC AND METROPOLITAN AREA COASTAL FLOODING, DC, MD, AND VA (ME)

Dave Robbins, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Acting Chief, Civil Project Development Branch

After Hurricane Sandy, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) conducted a flooding vulnerability study of Mid-Atlantic coastal populations. The 2015 North Atlantic Coast Comprehensive Study (NACCS) identified the Washington DC metro area as one of nine areas that warranted further flooding analysis studies. Therefore, USACE is starting an investigation of the Middle Potomac – Washington DC and Metropolitan Area in DC, Maryland, and Virginia. The investigation is intended to evaluate flooding problems in the National Capitol Region with an emphasis on coastal flooding. The program is an opportunity for USACE to use existing authority to investigate flooding problems in the District of Columbia metro area (limited to the extent of coastal inundation to retain link to NACCS). The project will be focused on entire Potomac watershed, due to its complex costal and riverine nature. The project area will include the southern reach of Prince William County to the Northwest border of DC and Montgomery County, Maryland. The investigation will include detailed hydrodynamic modeling and

consideration of possible impacts from climate change, vulnerability assessment of critical infrastructure, an evaluation of existing flood risk management and resilience initiatives, and an evaluation of an opportunity potentially leading to a recommendation for USACE design and construction in partnership with a non-federal sponsor.

The investigation has a three-year timeline. The project is in the initial, smart planning scoping phase. There is no longer a reconnaissance phase in any USACE project due to the new project timeline requirements. The current scope includes: coastal storm surge modeling and total water levels, overall regional vulnerability assessment, comprehensive assessment of ongoing actions, overarching vision and characterization of flood risk management and resilience within the region, identify the gaps in evaluations and actions, recommendations form USACE. After the design and cost analysis, USACE will go forward with the resulting recommended option.

The initial scope in 2016 identifies funding in the Presidential FY16 Workplan ($200k) and the President's FY17 budget ($300k). The investigation has a budget of three million dollars. USACE will find partners, start the scope and project simultaneously. USACE wants to coordinate and utilize existing forums of collaborative actions, including COG, National Capitol Planning Commission (NCPC), District of Columbia Silver Jackets Team, DOEE Climate Change Assessment, NVRC Resilience Imitative, DC 100Cities, CEEP, and AWRP. COG submitted a letter of intent dated June 12, 2015 to serve as the non-federal sponsor for the subject investigation, as required by federal budgetary actions. NCPC also offered a letter of support dated June 11, 2015.

The project's goal is to coordinate an outline of the project's scope with possible cost-sharing stakeholders and then execute the agreement with COG. USACE is working with COG to find non-federal funding. Federal and non-federal organizations will have a 50-50 percent cost share; however, non-federal organization contributions can include in-kind services, which would mean another entity would have to fund additional money.

USACE is considering several key issues. The National Capitol Region lacks a comprehensive flood risk assessment as a whole; however DOEE does have a Flood Emergency Study (UDC, 2015). Additionally, the project requires multiple stakeholders and cost-sharing sponsors. USACE is currently deliberating how to encourage cost sharing partners to participate in the study. COG can work with partners to identify opportunities for them to contribute to the study. COG will act as a middle man between USACE and potential partners. USACE will work with federal stake holders and specific jurisdictions. There could be potential issues if funding partners are not the organizations the investigation targets as potential partners.

Discussion:

- USACE will use existing data sets from local and state jurisdictions, as well as Bay Program data.

- The modeling will utilize all land cover data and Lidar data in order to establish depths for potential floods in relation to infrastructure.

- The project is hoping to provide future solutions to extreme water levels and evaluate the possible future solutions against current practices.

7. OVERVIEW OF THE ANACOSTIA RIVERKEEPER'S 2017 PROJECTS AND PRIORITIES
Emily Franc, Anacostia Riverkeeper

Ms. Emily Franc, Anacostia RiverKeeper, provided an overview of the Anacostia Riverkeeper's current initiatives and priorities, including recently funded projects. The RiverKeeper alliance is composed of over 300 waterkeepers in 36 countries, and six continents. The organization is dedicated to preserving and protecting waterbodies from pollution with an unwavering commitment to their communities and the rule of law. The Anacostia RiverKeeper is focused on Action, Advocacy and Access. Current initiative include:

- Anacostia River Explorers
- Volunteer Cleanups
- Restoration Projects And Education Activities (English And Spanish)
  - St. Mark The Evangelist Church – Cistern (Northeast Branch)
  - Silver Spring United Methodist Church – Bioretention Garden (Sligo Creek)
  - St. Ambrose Catholic Church –Bioretention Garden (Lower Beaverdam Creek)
  - Progressive National Baptist Church (With AWT) – Education (Watts Branch)
- Installation, and management, of Bandalong Litter Traps
- Starting a New Paint Branch Subwatershed Group
- Recycling Pilot in SW Waterfront – "Making The Case For Public Space Recycling." This pilot will include collecting recycling rates in collaboration with DPW/BID.

8. OVERVIEW OF THE ANACOSTIA WATERSHED SOCIETY'S 2017 PROJECTS AND PRIORITIES
Jim Foster, Anacostia Watershed Society President

Mr. Foster provided an overview of the Anacostia Watershed Society's (AWS) current initiatives and priorities, including recently funded projects. He highlighted the types of projects AWS is currently focusing on as well as priority sub-watersheds that they are targeting. AWS has been working closely with 15 Prince George's County school. AWS will be working with both teachers and students to create stormwater projects and educate them about stormwater issues.

AWS has focused projects in Brier's Mill Run and Wells Run, as part of MDDNR grants. Approximately 2.5 acres of impervious surface were treated at the First United Methodist Church, and there are restoration projects at University Park and Riverdale Elementary School. There is a stream restoration in Wells Run that AWS is hoping will improve the water quality throughout the whole subwatershed.

Additionally, AWS is still offering boat trips on the Anacostia River. Policy wise, AWS helped promote DC's Wildlife Bill. This bill creates critical environmental protection areas in DC, identifies invasive species and plants, and shifts environmental focus to living shorelines. AWS worked with Julie Lawson

to help promote the Styrofoam ban. AWS is also working with Corvias on Prince George's County's P3 program.

9. MEMBER UPDATES

- NPS has recently released a new management plan, and is looking to increase local collaboration.

- In conjunction with various NGOs, there is a push to determine how to make it easier to identify and get LID projects in the ground. Small organizations do not have the time or money to identify sites and a public process/database would be beneficial. MC members are encouraged to participate in future meetings.

- DOEE was restructured on February 6th, 2017. All permitting will be under single branch now, with the intention of increasing efficiency. The divisions are now: Regulatory Review, Inspection & Enforcement, Water Quality, Fisheries and Wildlife, and Watershed Protection.

- The USGS gauging station on Lower Beaverdam Creek is now online. USGS is currently collecting flow and water samples to calibrate the models for the station. USGS staff will be in the creek with Tyvek suits collecting mercury samples. It was suggested that USGS avoid raising alarm in the community by reaching outing prior to the work.

- Chair Stevens closed the meeting by thanking Ms. Kokolis and Mr. Gallagher for their hard work with the Partnership and wished them luck at their new positions.