

Anacostia Watershed Steering Committee (AWSC)
Meeting Summary: DECEMBER 8th, 2016

AWSC Members in Attendance:

- Tommy Wells, District of Columbia DOEE (Chair)
- Katherine Antos, Anacostia Ambassador
- Dan Bierly, USACE – Baltimore District
- Jeff Dehan, Prince George’s Co DoE
- Marian Dombroski, AWCAC Vice-Chair
- Paul Emmart, MD Department of the Environment
- Jim Foster, Anacostia Watershed Society*
- Hamid Karimi, District of Columbia DOEE
- Bill Matuszeski, AWCAC
- Trey Sherard, Anacostia RiverKeeper
- Steven Shofar, Montgomery County DEP
- Eric Siegel, Cohen Siegel investors, LLC
- Matthew Steenhoek, P.N. Hoffman & Assoc

AWSC GUESTS:

- Ed Ambrosio, EPA
- Lori Arguelles, Alice Ferguson Foundation
- Dawn Hawkins-Nixon, Prince George’s DoE
- Gretchen Mikeska, District of Columbia DOEE
- Vernice Miller-Travis, Skeo Solutions
- Jennifer Mummart, National Park Service

COG STAFF IN ATTENDANCE:

- Matt Gallagher, COG Environmental Programs
- Michelle Kokolis, COG Environmental Programs
- Lorena Kowalewski, COG Environmental Programs
- Noah Lee, COG Environmental Programs
- Aubin Maynard, COG Environmental Programs
- Phong Trieu, COG Environmental Programs
- Steve Walz, COG Environmental Programs Director

* Indicates participation by phone

1. CALL TO ORDER, WELCOME, AND INTRODUCTIONS

Introductions from Tommy Wells (Chair)

2. APPROVAL OF 9/29/16 MEETING SUMMARY

Tommy Wells (Chair)

Meeting summary approved with no comments.

3. DC MS4 PERMIT UPDATE

Jeff Seltzer, DOEE Stormwater Management Division Associate Director

Mr. Seltzer provided an update on the status of the District's new Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit. The current permit period ended October 7th, 2016 and EPA issued a draft revised permit on Nov 17th, 2016. DOEE has received relatively few comments and requested a two-week extension to allow ample time for public input. Comments are currently due to EPA on January 3, 2017. The new permit is similar to the current, but builds on the foundation that was established under current permit and incorporates elements of the Consolidated TMDL Implementation Plan. The overall permit is available on DOEE's website. Highlights include (not inclusive of all requirements):

- Increased tracking requirements,
- Retrofit 46 acres of PROW,
- Achieve minimum net annual planting rate of 8,000 trees in MS4 area,
- Sweep no less than 44,000 road miles annually in the MS4 area of the city,
- DC Water Collaboration with DOEE on study of pollutant reductions attributable to catch basin cleaning,
- Retrofit 1,038 acres in the MS4 (over 5 years; both public and private lands),
- Develop list and schedule to revise pollution reduction obligations (TMDLs) and
- Evaluate increasing stormwater fee.

4. ANACOSTIA RIVER PROGRESS REPORT UPDATE

Michelle Kokolis, COG Anacostia Executive Watershed Manager

Ms. Kokolis presented the framework for the Anacostia progress report including an overview of the report's message. The report will be designed to dovetail with Anacostia Watershed Society's report card, and is not designed to replace such documents. It will be similar to past Action Agenda's and it will describe how restoration progress to a general audience.

Discussion:

- Such a report should highlight what members are doing, its impact on water quality, and what needs to be done differently.
- The report must be useful for communicating the issues and progress to both the public and elected officials.
- An important element is showing increased use of the river, which may mean a public survey is needed. Several members suggested they could help fund such a survey.

- Some members felt the report should take a broader look at the restoration to identify holes in polices and restoration efforts.

5. Developing Overarching message for the Anacostia

Vernice Miller-Travis, Skeo Solutions

Ms. Miller-Travis led the group through a discussion of the benefits and process of developing an over-arching message about the Anacostia. She focused on the process of developing messaging that resonates with diverse communities and unifies watershed efforts without compromising locality specific messaging and programs. Ms. Miller-Travis provided an example from West Virginia. In West Virginia crude MCHM polluted the drinking water source for nine counties. There were up to 300,000 residents who had no access to clean water. There were no citizen groups to help organize and create a public movement to ask politicians to clean the water. Environment Justice & Equitable Development helped the community create unified message to educate people about the need for, and right to, clean water. Ms. Miller-Travis proposed the idea that the Steering Committee could create a unified message that speaks to a diverse audience to strengthen and support local efforts to protect and restore the Anacostia River.

Similar to West Virginia where residents initially lacked a connection to source water protection planning, residents in the DC metro area may lack a connection and appreciation for the river and an understanding of their role in protecting the river. Messaging should be a component of broader stakeholder engagement and building new partners.

Discussion:

- Members identified reasons why all partners involved want to work together to help restore the river and communities around the river, including allowing future generations to engage with the river and showing people how the river can add value to their life.
- Members discussed the public perceptions of the Anacostia River. The Anacostia has a negative connotation, which could discourage people from investing time into restoring the river. People are also disinterested because they do not see an achievable solution. Some members suggested that people are unaware how to engage with the river and do not know if it is safe to interact with.
- Gentrification has a stigma and alienates communities from engaging in development along the river. The conversation focused on how to help communities understand they have a right to a clean environment.
- Members discussed if it would be possible to engage lawmakers with the communities who live near the river in order to connect policymakers with constituents. It was suggested that the Anacostia River should be introduced into the curricula of DC public schools and to work more with teachers on a broad scale. Members agreed educating children would be an effective way to spread a message. It would be difficult to engage adults who have not had a connection to the river in the past. However, the target audience is every person in the metropolitan area.
- Members agreed to create a unified message, but a single message would be difficult to create due to the diversity of the region's population. Everybody has an individual experience with the river and differing perceptions, and it would be important to brand any message to highlight these differences synergistically. Demographic shifts happening in the communities around the river and in DC are important to consider.

- Members identified needed message elements and criteria, including a) the message should address health topics and the economy, b) the need to highlight the idea of healing and celebrate the diversity of the river, c) rebrand restoration work rather than rebrand the river and d) any message created should account for the whole watershed community, and be inclusive to all communities and jurisdictions.
- Ms. Miller-Travis further clarified for the group that her role is to create a unified message and she does not suggest creating uniform programming. The message can include the diversity between the upstream and downstream sections, in addition to unifying and connecting communities upstream and downstream.
- Members agreed that all political jurisdictions needed to plan a meeting and agree before creating a message. It was suggested to meet with Ms. Miller-Travis during the Steering Committee retreat. Ms. Kokolis agreed to set up more time for this conversation to move forward.

6. ANACOSTIA PARTNERSHIP STRATEGIC PLANNING RETREAT

Michelle Kokolis, COG Anacostia Executive Watershed Manager

Ms. Kokolis briefly describe the March 14 SC retreat. SC members will meet at the Forest City offices at the Capitol Riverfront BID to discuss long term planning and future focus of the partnership through a series of facilitated sessions. Prior to the meeting, members will be asked to complete a survey/self-assessment regarding the Partnership. Space will be limited, so it is an invitation only event.

7. Steering Committee Business

a. Management Committee (MC) Update

- Ms. Kokolis reviewed the November 3rd MC meeting. The meeting was focused on litter/trash reduction effort from around the region, including DC's Dump Busters program, Montgomery County Parks volunteer stream and park cleanup program, updates from the Trash Workgroup and finally local business trash reduction efforts and the Smart City Collaboration Project.

b. Partnership Update

- Ms. Kokolis provided an update on recent Partnership efforts.
- Two proposals were submitted to CBT: 1) Restarting the Paint Branch Watershed group and 2) a small Pavement Removal and Reforestation projects.
- Trash Reduction Workgroup met in November and will meeting again with the regulatory agencies and advocates.
- Ms. Kokolis has been meeting Katherine Antos and the jurisdictions to discuss how they use the ARP and what tools they have developed for project tracking.

c. Anacostia Watershed Citizen Advisory Committee (AWCAC) Update

Mr. Aubin Maynard (COG) provided a brief update on AWCAC's October 15th meeting. Members approved their FY17 goals, heard presentations about the Capital Trails Coalition and discussed identifying a member to attend Coalition meetings. The Festival Del Rio Anacostia was successfully

held at Bladensburg Waterfront Park on October 15th. With a very small budget, a collaboration of groups hosted about three hundred participants. There were a variety of activities and informational tables, much in Spanish (e.g. boat trips, urging demonstration, fishing, COG hosted fish tank, and tables hosted by all the Anacostia Jurisdictions). Volunteers from several local high schools volunteered and acted as translators. Next year's festival is anticipated to be much larger.

8. Adjourn

2017 Meeting Schedule

Month	Steering Committee**	Management Committee**	AWCAC***
March			14
April	13 th (proposed)		
May			9
June	22	1	
July			11
August		31	
September	28		12
November		30	14
December	14		

* Dates and times subject to change.

**Meetings held at MWCOG (777 North Capitol St, NE. Washington DC, 20002)

*** Meetings will move around the watershed