



ANACOSTIA WATERSHED COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (AWCAC)

Date:

Tuesday, March 12, 2019
Networking: 7:00 P.M. to 7:30
Meeting: 7:30 P.M. – 9:30 P.M.

Meeting Location:

Bladensburg Waterfront Park
4601 Annapolis Road
Bladensburg, MD 20710

DRAFT SUMMARY

1. CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

Marian Dombroski, AWCAC Chair

**2. CLEAN WATER ACT 101 : GETTING TO A “SWIMMABLE, FISHABLE”
ANACOSTIA RIVER**

Jim Foster, President/CEO of Anacostia Watershed Society
<https://www.anacostiaws.org/>

Mr. Foster provided an PowerPoint presentation on the Anacostia River, watershed and multiple factors contributing to its degradation. Multiple steps to reach a swimmable and fishable river were outlined, including education efforts, reconnecting people to place, public policy and advocacy, and new restoration techniques. It was announced that 2019 Earth Day cleanup would be held Saturday, April 14th from 9 a.m. to noon.

3. STORMWATER PARTNERS (SWP) - ADVOCACY FOR A STRONG PHASE III WIP

Sylvia Tognetti, Chair Sierra Club Water Team
<https://www.stormwaterpartnersmoco.net/>

Ms. Tognetti introduced the Stormwater Partners (SWP) a coalition that works throughout Montgomery County and at the state level with stakeholders responsible for environmental management to advocate for clean water, restore our watersheds, and connect communities to their backyard creeks and streams. SWP has been working closely with Marc Elrich’s (recently elected county executive of Montgomery County) transition team and developed the Clean water Blueprint to help guide the county’s approach to water protection.

The Blueprint included five key actions that were measurable and could show improvement in quality. The actions included: 1) achieve the goals of the MS4 stormwater permit, 2) protect clean drinking water, 3) increase forest and canopy cover in areas targeted to provide benefits for water, climate, and equity, 4) reduce pollution from road de-icing, and 5) support deeper, broader interagency cooperation to more cost-effectively achieve the goals of the Clean Water Blueprint. Ms. Tognetti stressed that all of the five main strategies have associated key actions that are clearly measurable. The full Blueprint can be viewed at http://www.mocoalliance.org/uploads/4/8/8/6/48867647/letter_and_clean_water_blueprint.pdf.

The upcoming Watershed Implementation Plans (WIPs) will basically be the roadmap to meet the Chesapeake Bay Agreement. Stormwater Partners hope it will bridge the gap to include inputs and from smaller streams and stronger compliance, verification and accountability. Current discussions

Reasonable accommodations are provided upon request, including alternative formats of meeting materials.
Visit www.mwco.org/accommodations or call (202) 962-3300 or (202) 962-3213 (TDD).

indicate it will not account for growth or climate change (although that may be included in future revisions).

4. CHOOSE CLEAN WATER COALITION - WORKING CHESAPEAKE BAY WATERSHED-WIDE

Ben Alexandro, Coalition Lead, Maryland
<https://www.choosecleanwater.org/>

Mr. Alexandro provided background information on Choose Clean Water Coalition. Since 2010 the Choose Clean Water Coalition has been harnessing the collective power of more than 230 groups to advocate for clean rivers and streams in all communities in the Chesapeake Bay region. By coordinating policy, messaging, action, and accountability, the Coalition can speak louder with one voice toward our collective goal - clean water. Mr. Alexandro encourage AWCAC members to look into joining the Coalition as it is free to join.

The Coalition is currently focused on maximizing the effectiveness of the Phase III WIPs, which are basically the final plan of how to clean the Chesapeake Bay. It is important to avoid blindsiding Counties and to work with them to have clear metrics. Through meetings with counties and Maryland Department of Environment (MDE), it was noted that Counties will need funding and technical assistance to meet the WIPs. Issues that still must be addressed include agricultural imputes, increasing nitrogen input storm stormwater and compliance enforcement. It was noted that MDE needs more funding for enforcement and, growth and climate change should be better addressed. Finally, a major issue under discussion is still the nutrient inputs related to the Conowingo Dam.

At the national level there has been a push to remove streams from the Waters of the United States (WOTUS) rule, otherwise know as the Clean Water Rule. Mr. Alexandro indicated it was critical for members to provide comments (with local examples whenever possible). Visit <https://www.epa.gov/wotus-rule/supplemental-notice-definition-waters-united-states-recodification-preexisting-rule> by August 13, 2019 to comment.

5. ENGAGEMENT, ADVOCACY AND ACCOUNTABILITY.

Trey Sherard, Anacostia Riverkeeper, Outreach Coordinator and Staff Biologist
<https://www.anacostiariverkeeper.org/>

Mr. Sherard provided a very brief overview of the “alphabet soup” of water law.

- The Clean Water Act (CWA) is the primary Federal statute regulating the protection of the nation’s water.
- The CWA sets up MS4s. MS4 is short for, “Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System”, where the word “Municipal” refers to a unit of local government like a borough or a township, but may also refer to an organization responsible for the administration of a developed area. And the number 4 refers to the four words that start with the letter “S”; “Separate,” “Storm,” “Sewer,” “System.”
- The authorization that MS4 communities must get to legally discharge stormwater into local stream and rivers is called an “NPDES” permit which stands for National Pollution Discharge Elimination System. The word “National” references the connection with the Federal Clean Water Act, and the word “Discharge” refers to the fact that separate storm sewer systems

eventually release stormwater into local creeks, rivers, and lakes, untreated. These particular NPDES permits are also commonly called, “MS4 Permits” or “Stormwater Permits.” requires the MS4 communities (i.e. Counties and the District of Columbia) to restore poor quality streams and meet water quality protection goals. Runoff must be captured, slowed and treated by stormwater best management practices.

- A Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) is a regulatory term in the CWA, describing a plan for restoring impaired waters that identifies the maximum amount of a pollutant that a body of water can receive while still meeting water quality standards. In our case the CB has been identified as impaired for nutrients (too many nutrients), so the CWA requires us to clean it up.
- The Watershed Implementation Plans (WIPs) are the roadmap for how the Bay jurisdictions, in partnership with federal and local governments, will achieve the Chesapeake Bay TMDL allocations.
- There are three phases of WIPs developed by the Bay jurisdictions. Phase III WIPs will provide information on actions the Bay jurisdictions intend to implement between 2018 and 2025 to meet the Bay restoration goals.

6. ENGAGEMENT OF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY AND AGENCIES IN ANACOSTIA RESTORATION ACTIVITIES.

*Erin Garnass-Holmes, Anacostia Ambassador - Urban Waters Partnership
<https://www.anacostiatruster.org/>*

Mr. Garnass-Holmes discussed the Urban Waters Partnership (UWP) and its background. Simply put, UWP and the Anacostia Ambassador position was created to get more work (i.e. better coordinate) federal agencies working in and around the Anacostia River. A key example is the Year of the Anacostia campaign. Agencies took the opportunity for message amplification and were able to bring together over 70 organizations, through 200+ events, and reach over 50,000 people. Mr. Holmes and the UWP have also been participating in Resilient DC, a initiative to prepare the District for stress and shocks of major disasters. A key focus has been how to accelerate the restoration of the River.

To promote better coordination, Mr. Garnass-Holmes has been tracking the many river-related plans throughout the district. He has created an interactive map and timelines highlighting plans in the district and hope it can be expanded to include the entire watershed. Overall, there needs to be a new focus on the watershed that includes elements of river crossings, protecting the character of the river, better education facilities that do not compete for resources, address major land uses, better programming and events, and includes equitable development

7. AWCAC BUSINESS

Members

- Chair Dombroski announced the May 14th AWCAC meeting would be at the National Arboretum and focus on Anacostia WIP III and MS4s, and promote interjurisdictional coordination. AWCAC will also give an award.
- The Partnership website will be revamped soon.

8. MEMBER UPDATES

- Mr. Reiner has established a green team.
- Friends of Quincy Run have been conducting tree maintenance along the stream.
- Ms. Dolly Davis indicated
 - the Pope Branch Community Alliance is working with AWS and Riverkeeper on the Earth Day cleanup.
 - A Native person has conducted a blessing of the park.
 - The group is still working to connect the train tracks with the Shepard Trail. AWCAC provided a letter of support.
- M-NCPPC can help groups advertise their events.
- The Bluegrass festival will be held on Kingman Island on May 4th.

9. ADJOURN