

POTOMAC WATERSHED ROUNDTABLE
Quarterly Meeting – October 11, 2019
Ida Lee Recreation Center, Leesburg

MINUTES

Members and Alternates

Hon. Penny Gross, Chair, Voting Member, Fairfax County
Hon. Jeff Adams, Voting Alternate, Tri-County City SWCD
Kirsten Conrad, Advisory Member, Virginia Cooperative Extension
Curtis Dalpra, Voting Alternate, ICPRB
Harry Glasgow, Voting Member, Environment
Laura Grape, Voting Alternate, Northern Virginia SWCD
Hon. John Flannery, Voting Member, Loudoun SWCD
Jim McGlone, Advisory Member, Virginia Department of Forestry
Karen Pallansch, Voting Member, Water and Wastewater
Hon. Robert Pickett, Voting Member, Northern Neck SWCD
Rebecca Shoemaker, Advisory Member, Virginia DEQ
Michael Trop, Voting Alternate, John Marshall SWCD
Hon. Kirsten Umstaad, Voting Member, Loudoun County
Hon. Elizabeth Ward, Voting Alternate, Prince William SWCD

Interested Parties

Nicki Bellezza, Fairfax Water
Suzie Brown, Loudoun SWCD
Barbara Christian
Jim Christian, Loudoun SWCD
Dennis Crumble, Loudoun County
Kris Dennen, Loudoun SWCD
Bill Dickinson, Chesapeake Bay Citizen Advisory Group
Holly Flannery, Loudoun SWCD
Frank Graziano, WSSI
Pete Holden, Loudoun SWCD
Brian Keightley, Fairfax County
Jerry Peters, Northern Virginia SWCD
Heather Shackley, Northern Virginia SWCD
Elaine Tholen, Northern Virginia SWCD
Chris Van Vlack, Loudoun SWCD

Call to Order. Ms. Gross called the meeting to order at 10:09 AM and thanked the Loudoun Soil and Water Conservation District for hosting the meeting.

Introductions. Ms. Gross invited those in attendance to introduce themselves.

Approval of Minutes. A motion (Flannery-Pickett, abstentions: Gross, Umstaad) passed to approve the minutes of the July 12, 2019 meeting at Westmoreland State Park in Montross.

Potomac Council Update. Ms. Gross invited Mr. Flannery to provide an overview of the discussion at the Council meeting, which occurred just prior to the Roundtable meeting. Mr. Flannery noted that the annual meeting of the Potomac Council is scheduled for the evening of December 8 in Norfolk. The meeting coincides with the annual meeting of the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts. In addition, he expressed his appreciation to two Chip Jones and Elizabeth Ward who are stepping down from their respective Soil and Water Conservation District Board and therefore stepping down from the Potomac Council. Ms. Gross expressed her appreciation to them for their service to the Council and Roundtable.

Updates from the Roundtable Chair. Ms. Gross shared that the Chesapeake Bay Policy Committee of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments provided comments on the Phase III WIP, including responses to the Maryland and Virginia actions. In addition, members the Local Government Advisory Council met last week with Secretary Strickler. Ms. Gross was accompanied by other Virginia LGAC representatives, including Jasmine Gore, Mayor of the City of Hopewell, Ruby Brabo, Supervisor with King George County, and Andria McClellan, Council Member of the City of Norfolk. Several topics were discussed including providing adequate funding levels in the Stormwater Local Assistance Funding (SLAF). Mr. Strickler encouraged requesting a particular amount of funding, instead of making a more general request for more. In addition, Ms. Gross noted that there is interest in adding a FEMA representative to the Chesapeake Bay Executive Council to discuss disaster planning and response. Ms. Grape mentioned that the issue raised at the July Roundtable meeting regarding erosion issues along the Northern Neck, may be a topic worth considering as part of the emergency planning conversation. Ms. Gross shared that wastewater upgrades are very expensive, particularly for smaller jurisdictions. She acknowledged that the jurisdictions that are closest to the Chesapeake Bay may not be able to afford the upgrades necessary to meet EPA standards, which makes them vulnerable to fines. Using the example of King George County, which took over four facilities, the indebtedness to fix them is passed to the users, at approximately \$650 per billing cycle. Ms. Pallansch noted that she does not have much information about this, but will take the concern to the Virginia Association of Municipal Wastewater Agencies (VAMWA) and see if she can gain additional insights.

Forest Health Update. Dr. Jim McGlone, Ph.D., Urban Forest Conservationist with the Virginia Department of Forestry provided an update on a variety of issues and pests affecting forests across the Commonwealth. Dr. McGlone noted that he is receiving three to five calls per day from residents concerned about what they perceive to be dying oaks. Dr. McGlone reassured that it was not Sudden Oak Death or Oak Wilt, which are only found in the Midwest and Pacific Northwest sections of the United States, respectively. However, the issue facing Virginia oaks is commonly referred to as Oak Decline/Multiple Stress Syndrome. Since oak trees are valuable as a commercial species, a lot of research has been done to understand impacts to them. Dr. McGlone noted that Oak Decline/Multiple Stress Syndrome is not caused by just one thing (a pathogen or a pest), that it is a result of a series of inciting factors, including drought, defoliation (even from native insect species), polar vortices, flooding, grade changes, and construction damage to root system. Other contributing factors may include fungi, root rot, bacteria, and insect pests. He encouraged waiting

until next spring to cut them down or de-compact the soil, in case they leaf out again. Dr. McGlone also reviewed other forest pests and programs that exist to support their eradication, including Emerald Ash Borer, Hemlock Woolly Adelgid, and Asian Long-Horned Beetle. While these insects are fairly tree-specific, two new invasive pests are being tracked, since they have potential to affect a number of productive and important agricultural trees and plants, including the Spotted Lanternfly and Laurel Wilt. Spotted Lanternfly was first identified in Bucks County, PA in 2014 and appeared in Fredrick and Clarke Counties, VA more recently. It is believed that eggs were on a load of landscaping stones. A tremendous amount of effort is being invested in trying to keep the Spotted Lanternfly isolated in the two Virginia counties, where quarantines are in place. The Virginia Cooperative Extension has prepared a list of 24 different types of surfaces, where Spotted Lanternfly egg masses have been found, including common native and invasive plant species, metal drums and shipping containers, and concrete. While it is a minor nuisance for forestry, it will be more of an issue for agriculture as it could affect harvest amounts and fruit quality. He warned that since this insect naturally aggregates, it can have implications on other species when humans treat for them. Laurel Wilt is another pathogen that is not currently in Virginia, but is being tracked closely. It attacks and quickly kills Laurel trees, including sassafras, spice bush, red bay, and avocados.

Dr. McGlone also provided an overview of the final forestry-related best management practices (BMPs) provided for in the Virginia Phase III Watershed Improvement Plan, including 56 state initiatives. Five of these initiatives are forestry related and include the implementation of DOF's Health Watershed Initiative; improve technical assistance, collaboration and oversight of stream protection projects and increase riparian forest buffers and urban tree canopy; establish a tracking platform for both communities and private citizens to report new tree plantings; recognize the benefits of existing trees and their continuous growth using a "maturity measurement"; explore the possibility of broadening existing local government authorities in state code to enhance the conservation of trees. He noted that the WIP III is ambitious and in the Potomac River watershed along, we will need to find room for 8,080 acres of new features and 3,993,900 trees.

A Case-Study on Implementing the Virginia Conservation Assistance Program. Ms. Laura Grape, Executive Director with the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District (NVSWCD) shared efforts and lessons-learned of the District's experience in implementing the Virginia Conservation Assistance Program in Fairfax County. She introduced the role soil and water conservation districts play as non-regulatory and advisory government organizations. She shared that since NVSWCD was established in 1945, the District has adapted its programs to support the evolving land use changes in Fairfax County, with a common theme of providing technical assistance to individual property owners, regardless of how they manage their lands. Ms. Grape shared that establishing an urban cost-share program for small-scale stormwater BMPs began in the mid-2000s with the rise in awareness of Low Impact Development strategies. With financial support from Fairfax County, NVSWCD was able to establish a local Conservation Assistance Program in July 2014 to provide technical and financial assistance to homeowner and civic associations and places of worship. The Virginia Conservation Assistance Program began in FY2016, giving an opportunity to expand the program onto private individual properties. Interest in the program has grown exponentially, overwhelming resources. To accommodate the demand

and ensure that public funds are being targeted for the most benefit, Ms. Grape shared that NVSWCD prioritizes projects in areas of the county with poor water quality. Thereby supporting local and regional interests. NVSWCD also works with local partners and hosts an annual workshop for the landscaping community on the program. Since both programs began, 122 projects (81 individual, 41 HOA/Places of Worship) that resolve drainage and erosion concerns while also providing a water quality benefit have been installed on common and private lands.

Roundtable Discussion. Ms. Gross noted that the upcoming election may cause changes in Roundtable membership and requested that a letter be composed expressing her appreciation to any outgoing members. In addition, she noted that there is an opportunity for new Roundtable membership. Ms. Grape shared that she will contact the localities in the New Year, requesting a review and affirmation of appointments to the Roundtable. Once membership is affirmed, there is an opportunity to establish a subcommittee to review the Roundtable's bylaws, which was last updated in 2008. There was general agreement that the Roundtable is of great value to those who attend and that it has an opportunity to educate new General Assembly members on important issues. It was suggested that the Roundtable provide a letter with an overview of the organization and timely issues in the New Year.

Future Meeting Dates and Hosts. Ms. Gross shared that she would like the meetings to continue on a quarterly basis, so momentum is not lost. The following dates were selected for calendar year 2020:

- January 10, 2020
- April 3, 2020
- July 10, 2020
- October 9, 2020

Ms. Grape shared that she will follow up with the following Soil and Water Conservation Districts who are scheduled to host:

- John Marshall SWCD
- Loudoun SWCD
- Prince William SWCD
- Tri-County City SWCD

A more complete schedule will be provided at a later date.

Member Time & Acknowledgements. Ms. Gross invited attendees to share activities, events, and topics of interest. Ms. Grape shared that a forum for homeowner associations and condo associations will be hosted by Plant NOVA Natives on November 2 at the Annandale Campus of the Northern Virginia Community College. The forum will feature presentations on sustainable solutions to common landscaping issues.

Adjournment. Ms. Gross thanked everyone for their attendance and engagement in the meeting dialogue. She expressed appreciation to the Loudoun SWCD for their hospitality and noted that the next meeting will be on January 10, 2020 in Warrenton. The meeting adjourned at 1:37 PM.