

POTOMAC WATERSHED ROUNDTABLE
Quarterly Meeting – October 5, 2018
The Clubhouse at Aquia Harbour, Stafford

MINUTES

Members and Alternates

Hon. Penny Gross, Chair, Voting Member, Fairfax County
Hon. Woody Hynson, Vice Chair, Voting Member, Westmoreland County
Kirsten Conrad, Advisory Member, Virginia Cooperative Extension
John Flannery, Voting Member, Loudoun SWCD
Laura Grape, Voting Alternate, Northern Virginia SWCD
Jim McGlone, Advisory Member, Virginia Department of Forestry
Daniel Moore, Advisory Member, Virginia DEQ
Greg Prelewicz, Voting Member, Water and Wastewater Utilities
Rebecca Shoemaker, Advisory Member, Virginia DEQ
Michael Trop, Voting Alternate, John Marshall SWCD
Amy Walker, Advisory Member, Virginia DCR
Hon. Elizabeth Ward, Voting Alternate, Prince William SWCD
Hon. Bob Wernsman, Voting Member, Tri-County City SWCD

Interested Parties

Heather Ambrose, Fairfax County
Michael Bennett, Fairview Beach Homeowners Association
Jen Benson, Tri-County City SWCD
Randy Freed, Prince William Conservation Alliance
Juliette Giordano, RES
Mariya Hudick, Tri-County City SWCD
Todd Janeski, Virginia Oyster Shell Recycling Program
Hunt Loftin, Gannett Fleming
Etta Lucas, Tri-County City SWCD
Marta Perry, Tri-County City SWCD
Heather Shackley, Northern Virginia SWCD

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

Introductions.

Approval of Minutes. A motion (Ward-Flannery, abstention: Gross) passed to approve the minutes of the July 13, 2018 meeting at Westmoreland State Park.

Update from the Chair. Ms. Gross shared that the Chesapeake Bay Local Government Advisory Council (LGAC) met with the Chesapeake Bay Commission about local government needs, including focusing resources on getting projects in the ground and reducing administrative burdens. She noted that on September 26 LGAC meeting held in Winchester was well-attended with broad representation from across the Mid-Atlantic States and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's

Region 3 office. Remarks during the meeting acknowledged that a circuit rider could better support unregulated communities by sharing opportunities for technical and financial assistance.

Member Time & Acknowledgements. Ms. Gross invited attendees to share activities, events, and topics of interest. They included:

- Mr. McGlone provided an update on the Emerald Ash Borer and loss of ash trees. He noted that surveys suggest the potential of losing 2.1 percent of Virginia's total tree coverage due to the pest. At a recent meeting of the Reston Association in Fairfax County, it was noted that the civic association has spent over \$100,000 in removing dying ash trees.
- Ms. Gross noted a recent Washington Post article about the Callary Pear and its relationship to the urban forest environment. She shared that they are highly invasive and difficult to control. Mr. McGlone mentioned that they are beginning to succumb to fire blight, which could assist in some extent with their control.
- Ms. Conrad shared that the Northern Virginia Extension Agents are gearing up to educate the public about Spotted Lanternfly. In 2018, this invasive insect was found in the Winchester area. The moth replicates rapidly and is a threat to the grape and apple industry. The egg masses are almost undetectable and can be laid anywhere. It is believed that the Spotted Lanternfly arrived in Virginia through egg masses laid on landscaping rock. If you believe you have seen it, the protocol is to report your finding to the local extension office or collect them and bring it in. New York has placed a quarantine on receiving materials from areas that are currently infected. Ms. Gross shared that the Roundtable may want to weigh-in on this through a legislative letter or position statement. Ms. Conrad also expressed concern about the spread of fire ants, west of Tidewater, as the climate continues to change.
- Mr. Prelewicz noted that Fairfax Water is closely involved in conversations regarding the expansion of the Micron facility in Prince William County. Some concern about water quality issues, including 60% additional discharge into the Occoquan Basin. The Northern Virginia Regional Commission and Occoquan Watershed Monitoring Laboratory are coordinating meetings. Over \$100 million in request for funding is being introduced to support this economic development. Fairfax Water is concerned about point sources sodium and other inorganic salts; DEQ is also concerned about air quality. Mr. Prelewicz recommended putting this topic on the 2019 PWR meeting schedule with presentations from the Technical Review Committee. He shared that this is a case that juxtaposes economic interests and environmental protections. Ms. Gross recognized that this could be a significant issue. Wastewater treatment plants are not set up to remove these materials.
- Ms. Conrad also shared that the Virginia Cooperative Extension – Arlington Unit will host the 4th Urban Agricultural symposium will be held at Alexandria ReNew on Saturday, October 3.

Update on the Fairview Beach Shoreline Stabilization and Bacteria Loads. Mr. Michael Bennett, President of the Fairview Beach Residents Association Board of Directors, provided an update on the efforts of the community to relieve the shoreline erosion taking place along their Potomac River waterfront and to better understand the source of high levels of bacteria. He shared that thanks, in part, to the awareness and education that Potomac Watershed Roundtable provided in 2016, the community, King George County government, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency have entered into an agreement for a Hazard Mitigation Grant to try and fix problems

before it becomes a big problem. The community is particularly concerned about potential damage from hurricanes and Nor'easters, which could cause raw sewage to directly enter the river and the integrity of at least 33 homes that are adjacent to the shoreline. In addition, roughly 1,200 feet of shoreline and road are at stake. An engineering study proposes adding a seawall and rip rap revetments. The total grant is \$2.3 million, with \$300,000 available for design (phase I), and \$2 million available for construction (phase II). The federal share will cover 75 percent of the total, the Commonwealth of Virginia will cover 20 percent, and King George County has committed to cover the remaining five percent, which can be met, at least in part, with in-kind services. They anticipate receiving a final design in November 2018. Mr. Bennett noted that while the source of bacterial contamination continues to allude the community. Four samples are collected every Monday throughout the summer, which runs from Memorial Day through Labor Day. If the average of all four test sites is a most probable number (MPN) of over 104, a swimming advisory is issued and beaches close. In 2016, six advisories were issued, closing the beach for a third of the summer (35 days). In 2015, eight advisories were issued, closing Fairview Beach for half of the summer. In 2018, six advisories closed the beaches for 30 days. Mr. Bennett noted that the closures have economic considerations on the water-dependent community. In 2017, the community reached out to the existing trailer park and some cooperation was achieved to pump out two septic tanks and to conduct dye and smoke testing. No leaks were found. However, the sampling across the four sites are inconclusive that the trailer park is the sole source of contamination. The community is working with the Tri-County City Soil and Water Conservation District and King George County to conduct genetic marker testing, using a model performed by the Hampton Road Sanitary District. They are planning for preliminary tests to be conducted over the next year.

Don't Chuck the Shuck – Virginia's Oyster Shell Recycling Program. Mr. Todd Janeski, Director of the Virginia Oyster Shell Recycling Program and the Rice Rivers Center of the Virginia Commonwealth University, introduced the program that takes oyster shells destined for the trash and returns them to the Chesapeake Bay to restore wild oyster populations, improve water quality and provide new fish habitat. He noted the variety of ecosystem services that oysters provide, including being sources of de-nitrification, providing habitat for various species of finfish and other crustaceans, attenuating waves and breaking down erosive energy from storm surge or boat wakes, and releasing free calcium through shell decomposition, which neutralizes the pH in local areas. Most of the stressors on the oyster population is primarily due to changing land use, particularly increased levels of silt and sediment. Heavy rains and reduced salinity also cause significant losses. Overharvesting has also led to a loss of sustainable wild populations. Recognizing these challenges, in 2013, a Virginia Oyster Shell Recycling Pilot study sought to reduce the amount of usable shell from going to landfills. The pilot focused on working with four restaurants in Richmond to collect shell, which could then be bagged, inoculated with spat, and returned to the tributaries of the Bay to grow. The pilot was very successful resulting in 200 baskets of inoculated shells being returned to the Piankatank River. Mr. Janeski noted that the program is in strong partnership with the Virginia Master Naturalists and that their contribution through volunteer work is one of the main reasons for the program's success. Between 2014 and 2016, 73,000 pounds of shell were recycled. The program continues to recycle approximately 125,000 pounds annually, or approximately 12,000,000 oysters returned to the ecosystem, through partnerships in Charlottesville, Richmond, Williamsburg, Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, Virginia Beach, Suffolk, Lancaster County, Fredericksburg, Tappahannock, Woodbridge, and Lorton.

Roundtable Interests for 2019. Ms. Gross facilitated a dialogue to capture the interests of the Roundtable membership. They included:

- WIP III Roll-Out – it was noted that a small amount of funding is available to support public meetings and further reach out to stakeholders from non-MS4 regulated communities.
- Value of Virginia’s Cooperative Extension Agents – turnover is heavy among Extension agents.
- For 2019, several ideas arose to leverage the Roundtable including sharing more information through the website, preparing white papers on best practices to increase the body of knowledge, and share stories of what is going on throughout the watershed. Reach out to more counties and jurisdictions to encourage their participation.
- Potentially create a Potomac River Partnership for Education to develop common messages that can be multiplied throughout various organizations.
- Solar Arrays – concern about the loss of ecosystem services, if they are placed in forested areas. The Virginia Association of Counties (VACo) is coordinating a study to understand how solar farms relate to siting, zoning, water, and stormwater issues. The goal is to provide materials for local governments to assist with making informed decisions about questions to ask these facilities and long-term considerations. Want to make sure that local governments understand what they are in form and the potential unintended consequences. Mr. Hynson shared that the Farm Bureau held a day-long seminar on the topic and noted that because they are utilities, localities cannot tax or charge against infrastructure.

Adjournment. Mr. Gross thanked everyone for their attendance and engagement in the meeting dialogue. He expressed appreciation to the Tri-County City SWCD for their hospitality. She noted that she and Ms. Grape will work on the 2019 schedule. The meeting adjourned at 2:02 PM.