

POTOMAC WATERSHED ROUNDTABLE

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January 14, 2008

ROUNDTABLE OFFICERS

*Penelope Gross, Chair
Fairfax County
Board of Supervisors*

*Martin Nohe, 1st Vice Chair
Prince William County
Board of Supervisors*

*Harry Atherton, 2nd Vice Chair
Agricultural & Forestry
Stakeholder Member*

Hon.
Address
Address
Address

ROUNDTABLE MEMBERS

Local Governments

*Arlington County
Fairfax County
Fauquier County
King George County
Loudoun County
Northumberland County
Prince William County
Stafford County
Westmoreland County
City of Alexandria
City of Fairfax
City of Falls Church
City of Manassas
City of Manassas Park
Town of Colonial Beach*

Soil & Water Conservation Districts

*John Marshall
Loudoun
Northern Neck
Northern Virginia
Prince William
Tri-County/ City*

Planning District Commissions

General Assembly

*Two members each from the
following stakeholder groups:*

*Agriculture and Forestry
Development, Construction
and Real Estate
Environmental
Fishing and Boating
Waste Management and
Recycling
Water & Wastewater Utilities
Citizens of the Watershed*

Dear Delegate/Senator:

The Potomac Watershed Roundtable (PWR) is a regional government-citizen forum whose purpose is to promote collaboration and cooperation on environmental concerns, especially water quality issues, among the various local governments and stakeholder interest groups residing on the Virginia side of the middle and lower Potomac River watershed. For the past several years, the PWR has submitted a legislative program to the General Assembly, and this letter will transmit some areas of general concern, as well as a request for immediate assistance in the preservation of the Crow's Nest Peninsula in Stafford County.

As in previous years, the Roundtable strongly supports the effort to increase and dedicate funding of the Water Quality Improvement Fund (WQIF), so that it is a reliable source for projects that support the clean-up and restoration of the Chesapeake Bay, both directly and indirectly. Also, given the growing interest in water conservation and alternative sources of water, the PWR is concerned that the Virginia Department of Health has not followed up on a 1999 request by the General Assembly to prepare a Code Section for using gray water and rainwater. This directive by the General Assembly must be pursued.

At its quarterly meeting on January 4, 2008, Roundtable members discussed the status of the purchase of the Crow's Nest Peninsula by Stafford County for preservation and eventual transition to the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) as a State Natural Area Preserve. Although at risk for development for several years, Crow's Nest ownership now is in transition from private hands to the Stafford County Board of Supervisors, which will turn over the property to the Commonwealth.

The private owners of Crow's Nest maintained staff to ensure the protection and preservation of the property from trespassers. Every discussion about the permanent protection of the peninsula has included employment of staff, and emergency funding from the General Assembly is needed for (DCR) to maintain that protection during the transition period (\$350,000 general funds and two FTE). PWR continues to support the development of Crow's Nest for natural area purposes:

- for the development, management, advancement, conservation, and protection of native plant, plant community, fish and wildlife resources;

- for use as an inviolate sanctuary, or for any other management purpose, for migratory birds;
- for passive recreational development, including hiking, bird watching, nature study, research, protection of natural resources, and conservation of endangered or threatened species.

Preservation of Crow's Nest would immediately add 1,700 acres to the inventory of lands targeted for preservation towards the regional Chesapeake Bay land protection goal and to Governor Kaine's initiative to save 400,000 additional acres of forest and agricultural lands from development by 2010. PWR continues its support of both of these goals.

The members of the Potomac Watershed Roundtable look forward to working with you and other members of the General Assembly to advance our legislative agenda for the benefit of all Virginians. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Penelope A. Gross, Chair
Member, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors
703-256-7717