

POTOMAC WATERSHED ROUNDTABLE
Quarterly Meeting – January 9, 2015
Stoneridge Events Center, Warrenton

MINUTES

Members and Alternates

Hon. Penny Gross, Chair, Voting Member, Fairfax County
Hon. Woody Hynson, 2nd Vice Chair, Voting Member, Westmoreland County
Jim Christian, Voting Member, Loudoun SWCD
Kristen Conrad-Buhls, Advisory Member, Virginia Cooperative Extension
Debbie Cross, Advisory Member, VA DCR – Division of Soil and Water Conservation
Curtis Dalpra, Voting Alternate, Interstate Commission of the Potomac River Basin
Hon. Michael DeMarco, Voting Member, City of Fairfax
Hon. Jim Gehlsen, Voting Member, Prince William SWCD
Harry Glasgow, Voting Member, Environment
Alan Gray, Voting Member, Agriculture and Forestry (Forestry)
Bruce Holley, Voting Member, Citizen of the Watershed
Hon. Mike Lovitt, Voting Alternate, Tri-County City SWCD
Hon. Paul McCulla, Voting Alternate, Fauquier County
Jim McGlone, Advisory Member, VA Department of Forestry
Stuart McKenzie, Voting Alternate, Planning District Commissions
Conrad Meehan, Voting Member, Waste Management and Recycling
Daniel Moore, Advisory Member, VA DEQ – Chesapeake Bay Local Assistance Division
John Odenkirk, Advisory Member, Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries
Karen Pallansch, Voting Member, Water and Wastewater Utilities
Michael Peny, Voting Alternate, Construction, Development and Real Estate
John Peterson, Voting Member, Northern Virginia SWCD
Greg Prelewicz, Voting Member, Water and Wastewater Utilities
Robert Shoemaker, Voting Member, Agriculture and Forestry (Agriculture)
Michael Trop, Voting Alternate, John Marshall SWCD
Amy Walker, Advisory Member, VA DCR – Division of Soil and Water Conservation
Elizabeth Ward, Voting Alternate, Prince William SWCD
Larry Wilkinson, Advisory Member, USDA-Natural Resource Conservation Service

Interested Parties

Randy Bartlett, Fairfax County
Tom Broderick, Loudoun Water
Michael Cartwright, VA DEQ
Mimi Faha, Stafford County
Laura Grape, Northern Virginia SWCD, Scribe
Steve Hall, Master Gardener
Glenn Harvey, Nutrient Credit Exchange
Maria Harwood, Northern Virginia SWCD

Christine Howard, MWCOG
Dave Jensen, DoodyCalls
Tim Ohlwiler, Virginia Cooperative Extension – Fauquier Office
Asad Rouhi, Northern Virginia SWCD
Pieter Sheehan, Fairfax County Health Department
Mary Sherrill, Fauquier County Water and Sanitation Authority
Rebecca Shoemaker, VA DEQ
Ryan Stewart, Northern Virginia Conservation Trust
Lowrie Tucker, Conservation Services, Inc.
Tim Ware, George Washington Regional Commission
Mark Wastler, Lord Fairfax SWCD
Willie Woode, Northern Virginia SWCD
Jay Yankey, Prince William SWCD
Hannah Zegler, VA DEQ

Call to Order and Welcome. Mrs. Gross called the meeting to order at 10:07 a.m., expressed her appreciation to the John Marshall Soil and Water Conservation District for hosting the meeting, and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

Approval of Minutes. A **motion** (DeMarco-Glasgow) passed unanimously to approve the minutes of the October 3, 2014 meeting in Stafford, VA without modifications.

Updates from the Chair. Mrs. Gross mentioned that there is a feature of Oklahoma Senator Jim Inhofe, the new chairman of the U.S. Senate Committee on the Environment and Public Works in the January 9, 2015 Style section of the Washington Post, which acknowledges his focus on domestic energy production and energy independence and disagreements with climate change reports.

Mrs. Gross shared that she is the new president of the Virginia Association of Counties (VACo) 2014-2015 Executive Committee. She had an opportunity to visit with Jerry Abramson, the newly appointed Director of the White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs (IGA), which serves provides a conduit for local, county, tribal and state governments to participate and inform the work of the President. Mr. Abramson shared that the IGA has partner representatives from each federal agencies. Mrs. Gross encouraged participants to consider working with the Office, if they have issues of national concern.

In early-December, the Local Government Advisory Council met in Easton, MD. Mrs. Gross shared that there is almost an entirely new delegation from Virginia, as the Governor appointed several new members. Janine Burns from Mathews County, VA serves as the chair. With the new administration in Maryland, she anticipates additional changes to their representatives.

Potomac Council Update. Mr. Peterson expressed his appreciation to Mrs. Grape and Ms. Shoemaker for their efforts in securing grant funding to support the Potomac Council and Potomac Watershed Roundtable in 2015. Additionally, he shared the sad news of the passing of Jean

Packard. Both Mr. Peterson and Mrs. Gross expressed the value Mrs. Packard brought to the environmental community.

DEQ Funding Update. Mrs. Grape provided an overview of the funding source from DEQ and their interests in project oriented efforts. Mrs. Gross elaborated on the importance of the construction and function of the Roundtable and recognized the challenges with finding fairness and equitability for specific projects when the Roundtable covers a significant region.

Member Time and Announcements. Mrs. Gross invited participants to share any news or announcements, recognizing that many may need to leave before the end of the program.

- Alan Gray shared that the U.S. Forest Service is soliciting input/comments on the
- Michael DeMarco asked if there is anything that the Roundtable may need to consider during the upcoming General Assembly session. Mrs. Gross shared that the most of the focus will likely be on ethics, women's reproductive rights and other fringe rights. She was not aware of any pre-filed bills related to the environment. Virginia is now contributing to the ICPRB and there is no threat to a lapse in contribution in the future.
- Mr. Hynson encouraged the audience to express their appreciation for the services of legislators and other political representatives, regardless of their political status. He recognized the need for working together on issues in order to move policies forward in a meaningful way. Mrs. Gross shared the need for data to support decisions. Ms. Pallansch shared that having the data supports the development of strong policies. She mentioned that the Potomac Watershed Roundtable provides an educational forum and opportunity for meaningful dialogue.

Doody-Free Water Project. Mr. Dave Jensen, Director of Business Development with DoodyCalls provided an overview of the nationwide pet waste collection company that got started in Northern Virginia and shared their perspective on ways government agencies and this emerging industry can work collaboratively toward the mutual goal of clean water. DoodyCalls is implementing the Doody-Free Water Project as an effort to raise awareness nationwide about the importance of picking up pet waste by giving neighborhoods, parks, and greenways free pet waste bags, with a goal of distributing 250,000 bags. DoodyCalls is targeting communities that are particularly close to waterways, have areas that are accessible and used regularly by the residents and have pet waste problems. To date, DoodyCalls has distributed roughly 30,000 bags in Colorado and North Carolina. He encouraged participants to visit <http://doodyfreewater.org> to nominate a location in their jurisdiction. Mr. Jensen shared DoodyCalls' efforts in leading the pet waste industry in expressing the environmental impact of pet waste in local communities. By partnering with various agencies, such as the Northern Virginia Clean Water Partners, the Anne Arundel Watershed Stewardship Academy, and the Community Association Institute DoodyCalls is able to provide an industry perspective and share their lessons-learned to local governments, volunteer watershed stewards, and community managers. They encourage communities to develop pet waste management plans and to utilize the tools available. A Pet Waste Management Handbook has been developed to support homeowner and civic association boards to understand the aesthetic, public health, and environmental issues related to pet waste and the variety of services available to support educated

decision-making for their communities. Mr. Jensen identified several opportunities for the industry and government to collaborate, including:

- Establishing a recognition program for communities that are doing the right thing, especially if they are implementing a Pet Waste Management Plan, which might instill friendly competition among communities and community management groups.
- Collecting data on the amount of pet waste removed from communities, may support water quality improvement goals. He acknowledged that the industry needs to know what kind of data local or state governments would like to know.
- Providing credit for pet waste management. The pet waste industry is removing a significant amount of nutrients and bacteria from potentially entering waterways. However it is not yet acknowledged for credit.
- Developing best management practices and certifications for emerging pet waste companies, in partnership with DEQ, Health Departments, and Solid Waste Management programs.

He stressed DoodyCalls interest in providing a service that is meaningful for the communities and supports goals for improved water quality. Mrs. Gross asked how the waste is ultimately disposed. Mr. Jensen shared that waste is double-bagged and knotted and is deposited at the operations center. It is then trucked to a local landfill – in Fairfax County, the waste is incinerated. Mr. Bartlett shared that in Fairfax and Arlington Counties, DNA testing revealed that most of the bacteria found in local streams came from domestic animals. James Riverkeeper worked with the Center for Watershed Protection on a study of the most cost-effective measures to removing pollutants and pet waste management rose to the top. However, there is currently no mechanism for getting credit for it through the regulatory process. Mr. Meehan mentioned that many people place their pet waste in flushable bags, which create significant problems for the sewer system. Ms. Pallansch agreed and stated that flushing bags causes significant issues in the sanitary system, including sewer overflows. Mr. Jensen mentioned that some enclosed pet waste station models are able to contain odor and are recommended in areas that may be in close proximity to residences and regularly used areas, where odor may be an issue. In response to Mr. McKenzie question about how the program can be geared to the more rural residents and if there are pet waste composters, Mr. Jensen shared that commercial and individual pet waste composters exist but are difficult to maintain due to the composition of the waste. He believed that education is the best way to reach the rural community. Because of the high protein rate, dog waste attracts rats and other rodents. Mr. Moore asked how DoodyCalls responds to individuals who say dog poop is “natural” and can be left on the ground? Mr. Jensen mentioned it is an opportunity for education on the harmful effects of dog waste on community appearance, public health, and the environment. Mr. Holley asked if the industry is regulated. It is not. Mr. Jensen mentioned that developing best practices on collection and disposal is the best way to support the industry. Mr. Dalpra stressed the value of early education provided to homeowner associations in order to identify problem areas.

Fauquier County’s “Green” Grass Program. Mr. Tim Ohlwiiler, Extension Agent – Horticulture with the Virginia Cooperative Extension – Fauquier County Office shared the development of a program to focus on nutrient management in less agriculturally-based areas. The “Green” Grass

program was developed in 2009, in partnership with the John Marshall Soil and Water Conservation District and modeled after the programs developed by the VCE – Prince William Office. Master Gardener volunteers assess the properties and the needs of the landowners. Mr. Ohlwiler expressed his appreciation to the volunteers who, on average, annually prepare plans for about 100 lawns and distribute information on good lawn care. In 2014, Mr. Ohlwiler became a DCR Certified Urban Nutrient Management Planner, which allows the program to get acquire nutrient credits. Even with the continued growth of the program, Mr. Ohlwiler acknowledged that additional communication and promotion of the program will increase awareness and participation. At the same time, communicating with and managing volunteers will become increasingly important to ensure they do not get overwhelmed. Future goals of the program is to reduce the amount of paperwork but not the quality of the programs. Additionally, Mr. Ohlwiler would like to submit the information to DCR for contribution toward the reduction of pollutants. Steve Hall, a certified Master Gardener who volunteers for the “Green” Grass program stated that the feedback he receives from clients is extremely positive. Often clients are surprised that such a program exists. Mr. Hall shared that the Master Gardener volunteers continue to be a resource to the property owner after the plan is developed. When an application is received, volunteers visit the site, measure the lawn area, and conduct soil tests. Once the results from the soil tests are analyzed and received, a plan is developed that provides the property owners with the nutrient proportion and amount of fertilizer or other material that may need to be applied. The plan may also provide recommendations for alleviating compaction. It is a voluntary program and up to the property owner to implement. The property owner pays \$30 for the service, which covers the cost of the soil sample, plus other minor direct costs. When asked about whether similar programs exist in other parts of Virginia Mr. Ohlwiler and Mr. Hall mentioned that there are several across the state and an effort by the Cooperative Extension to create a statewide program. Mr. Woode asked what they recommend for areas that experience heavy traffic and will not allow turf growth. Mr. Ohlwiler shared that this is a common issue and they typically recommend a substance other than grass and manage the expectations of the property owner. Additionally, aeration contributes to the till of the soil; compost adds organic matter, which has the unique ability to keep moisture in the soil when dry and drain when wet. Mr. Holley asked if the plans include a pest management strategy. The plan recommends best practices that increase the health of the turf. In turn this reduces the number of pests in the areas. The plan includes two-pages that describe their lot and the property owner’s goals and needs. Recommendations are dependent upon the characteristics of the individual properties.

Adjournment. Mrs. Gross thanked the John Marshall Soil and Water Conservation District for their hospitality and the speakers for their time. The meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Laura Grape