

Anacostia Watershed Citizens Advisory Committee

Meeting Summary

Tuesday, January 10th, 2010

- DRAFT -

Meeting Attendance:

Members and Associates

Brent Bolin (Prince George's County)
Bill Duncan (Prince George's County)
Bill Matuszeski (District of Columbia)
Harriette Phelps (Prince George's County)
Mike Smith (Montgomery County)
Irv Sheffey (District of Columbia)
Ed Murtagh (Montgomery County)

Guests/Interested Parties

Diane Cameron (Audubon Naturalist Society/NRDC)
Anne Ambler (Neighbors of Northwest Branch)
Alex Hirtle (Office of Prince George's County Council Chairman Dernoga)
Alison Gillespie (Friends of Sligo Creek)
Terry Goolsby (Upper Marlboro)
Cynthia Collier (District of Columbia)
Cary Coppock (Prince George's County)
David Dunmire (Montgomery County)
Greg Smith (Montgomery County)

COG Support Staff:

John Galli
Aubin Maynard

Absent Members and Associates

Elizabeth Arnold (Prince George's County)
Mary Barber (District of Columbia)
Jim Fary (Montgomery County)
Elissa Feldman (District of Columbia)
Bob Ferraro (Montgomery County)
Elaine Friehele (Prince George's County)
Mi Ae Kim (Prince George's County)
John Garner (District of Columbia)
Dale Manty (Prince George's County)
Christopher Pohlhaus (Prince George's County)
Lutz Rastaetter (Prince George's County)
Carl Reeverts (District of Columbia)

Larry Silverman (Montgomery County)
Dan Smith (Prince George's County)

I. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Mike Smith (Montgomery County) began the meeting at 7:30 pm following a social hour that began at 7:00 pm. All present were asked to introduce themselves to the group.

II. Approval of 9-8-09, 11-10-09 Meeting Summaries

Action/Outcome: The 9-8-09 and 11-10-09 meeting summaries were approved unanimously with the following change to the 9-8-09 summary. It was Councilwoman Yvette Alexander (Ward 8) who attended the AWS boat tour.

III. AWSC/AWMC Update

Chair Smith provided a brief summary on recent Management and Steering Committee activities. He stated that Mr. Charlie Gougeon (Maryland DNR) gave a PowerPoint presentation to the MC regarding the trout in the Upper Paint Branch, and indicated the trout would likely disappear. Chair Smith said that this was a serious blow to Anacostia restoration efforts.

Mr. John Galli (COG) clarified the details of the presentation given to the MC. Mr. Gougeon (MD DNR) gave the annual update on trout to the MC. Annual monitoring, beginning in 1979, of adult and young-of-year (YOY) trout indicates a steady population decline since 1997. The major contributing factor was habitat loss due to increased water volumes and sedimentation. Even with the SPA, 2009's survey found only one adult and one YOY. Five redds (area where trout lay their eggs) were also seen and an adult was spotted outside the sample area. Mr. Gougeon indicated he was pessimistic about the survival of the population, given ICC construction had not yet started (even with the assurance that no stormwater from the ICC would enter the Good Hope tributary). Finally, he recommended additional stormwater retrofitting in the SPA, and especially in the Good Hope tributary subwatershed to reduce stormwater volumes and stream sedimentation. The take away message from the presentation was that MDR is happy that trout are still there, but trout are at their lowest numbers, ever.

Mr. David Dunmire (Montgomery County) indicated that the degradation of the Good Hope tributary, especially in the middle and upper portions, is causing the problem and from what he has personally seen, it is just getting worse.

IV. Anacostia Restoration Plan Update

Mr. Galli provided an update on the Anacostia Restoration Plan (ARP) and related activities. He indicated all draft Subwatershed Action Plans, Baseline Reports and Project Inventories had been posted on the anacostia.net website along with a transmittal letter, and the USACE is currently

accepting comments on all documents. Subwatershed groups are encouraged to take the time to review and comment on each document.

Mr. Galli explained that SC members discussed the ARP at length and are determining how to get the right message out as they are concerned that the ARP sounds ‘undoable.’ To address this issue the Summit Fund has provided funding for a consultant to develop a messaging plan by March (including tag line, logos, and brochure) and a revised ARP Executive Summary by February. The USACE plans to finalize the report by February and hold a public release event at that time. Mr. Galli added that a separate event put on by the Anacostia BID, would occur in May at the Nationals Stadium. Details would be sent to AWCAC members as they are received. A brief discussion followed.

- Mr. Jim Collier (District of Columbia) questioned whether the comments being requested were comments on the draft or official public comment, and when AWCAC should take an official stance on the ARP. Mr. Galli replied that subwatershed member comments were a combination, and reiterated the importance of comments to make the ARP what members want it to be. Mr. Galli suggested AWCAC should withhold final judgment until final revisions had been made to the Plan.
- Mr. Irv Sheffey (District of Columbia) questioned what mechanism was being used to get the word out about the comment period and what type of advertising would help bring in additional comments. He also suggested it was a good time for another AWCAC advocacy workshop to promote the plan and address District MS4 issues.
- Chair Smith felt AWCAC should recommend that the USACE add the preservation of trout as a goal in its Paint Branch Subwatershed Action Plan, and highlight the importance of the projects on the Paint Branch's Good Hope Tributary in an effort to save this resource.

ACTION/OUTCOME: AWCAC will make a recommendation to the Army Corps of Engineers to add the preservation of trout as a goal in its Paint Branch Subwatershed Action Plan, and to highlight the importance of the projects on the Paint Branch's Good Hope Tributary in an effort to save this resource.

V. Neighbors of the Northwest Branch Update

Ms. Anne Ambler (Montgomery County) updated AWCAC members on the status of the Neighbors of the Northwest Branch. Ms. Ambler indicated that while the NNWB was founded in 2004, the group is now reflecting on capabilities and needs, and looking to expand. Several members recently attended the Chesapeake Watershed Network Forum and came away encouraged to reinvigorate NNWB. The NNWB have a new action plan that includes yearly activities, increasing dues, and gaining grants by demonstrating successes. The group has setup automated dues solicitation and newsletter distribution software, and have tied specific members to specific jobs (e.g. education, fundraising, water quality, etc) to increase accountability.

Subwatershed groups need to make members accountable and set 'doable' goals to be successful. Ms. Ambler ended her presentation by requesting assistance from AWCAC with writing articles for their newsletter, identifying useful contacts in the lower Northwest Branch, and co-sponsoring events.

ACTION/OUTCOME: Ms. Anne Ambler requested that AWCAC members contribute authoritative articles to NNWB's newsletter.

VI. AWCAC Letter to the Mayor of the District of Columbia

Chair Smith led a discussion on the failure of Maryland to meet the 2010 forestry targets set forth in the 2001 Anacostia Restoration Agreement. Chair Smith felt a letter should be sent to Mayor Fenty of the District of Columbia requesting action, possibly legal action, be taken against the State of Maryland. Key questions and suggestions are summarized below.

- Mr. Greg Smith (Montgomery County) thanked Chair Smith for all his letter writing and efforts. Suggested AWCAC demand information used to show how ICC meets the water quality act and the Restoration Agreement.
- Mr. Galli suggested that rather than sending a letter requesting legal action, a letter from all subwatershed groups could demand a meeting of the Partnership's Leadership Council.
- Mr. Bill Matazeski (District of Columbia) suggested a meeting with Councilmember Tommy Wells (District of Columbia) be set up and Chair Smith could ask Councilmember Wells to approach the Mayor. Vice-Chair Brent Bolin (Prince George's County) indicated AWS might be able to setup such a meeting. Mr. Matazeski will talk to Frank Dawson of MDDNR to try to get him to get Governor O'Malley interested.

The discussion then returned to the ARP and the Special Protection Area of the Paint Branch. Mr. Smith suggested that AWCAC should focus on the SPA as the highest priority for ARP restoration efforts.

Mr. Dunmire indicated there are four main areas AWCAC should work on if the SPA would become the committee's focus: 1) additional public information on the SPA stewardship meetings, 2) a clear schedule and details on ICC-related stewardship and mitigation projects (actual numbers), 3) the state and Montgomery County not following the SPA requirements, and 4) detail on the Paint Branch underground storage facility. Chair Smith suggested the SPA issue be revisited at the next meeting.

ACTION/OUTCOME:

- **Vice-Chair Bolin will work with Chair Smith to setup a meeting with Councilmember Wells.**
- **Mr. Matazeski will talk to Frank Dawson of MDDNR to try to get him to get Governor O'Malley interested.**
- **AWCAC will ask the Restoration Partnership to ask the State Highway Administration to provide a listing of ICC mitigation projects with their schedules and statuses.**
- **AWCAC will focus on issues relating to the SPA at the March meeting.**