

Lewis Creek Watershed Advisory Committee
04 March 2024, 5:00pm EST
Agenda

Call to order & roll call

Mission and purpose of the Lewis Creek Watershed Advisory Committee (LCWAC), as resolved September 23, 2004.

Minutes of previous meetings

Proposed Agenda for this meeting:

1. ***Acknowledgement of and remarks by fellow citizens present***, and recent public interactions and/or local press reported by LCWAC members – **All**.
2. ***Ongoing monthly E. Coli testing of 12 sites throughout the Lewis Creek Watershed***, by City of Staunton, Department of Public Works – **All**
3. ***Remediation of PCBs in the Lewis Creek Watershed*** – update & next steps by CSX, Buckingham Branch, EPA, DEQ, Virginia Passenger Rail Authority (VPRA), and the City of Staunton – Fred B. has now spoken with all stakeholders except CSX. ***EPA Project Manager Ruth Prince*** still plans to Zoom with us later this Spring, once she receives the final CSX remediation plan.
4. ***Education & Youth Projects - Fred***
 - a. ***Trout Unlimited “Trout in the Classroom” (TIC) in Staunton Public Schools -now permanent to SPS 5th Grade curriculum, and being planned as follows:***
 - i. ***Ware Elementary – 5th grade teacher Shane Brubaker + 65 students*** continue to maintain tank from Fall 2022 through 2023-24 school year; release site in GHP not available for 2024, so need a new temporary site?
 - ii. ***Bessie Weller Elementary – 5th grade teacher Ashley Cole*** lost all of their trout over the holidays; ongoing awareness needed with Weller Woods Project to ensure health of Asylum Creek for planned trout release in Spring 2024; possibly might still host Shelburne and/or Ware for their release?
 - iii. ***Shelburne Middle School – 6th grade teacher Kirsten Evans + some students from Shane’s prior 5th grade class*** now have a new tank running; need a release site?
 - iv. ***Plan for McSwain Elementary program in Fall 2024 – teacher TBD; plus, support from Staunton High School Nature Trail Project, and new teacher/leader Nate Lawrence*** - possible release site for McSwain trout
 - b. ***TIC @ Stuart Hall - teacher Catherine Badalamenti + 10 students in their Environmental Club*** – have last year’s tank up and running again, and haven’t lost any trout since November; recently visited last year’s release site at Middle River headwaters in Summerdean with FOMR rep Paul Bugas; planned benthic field day there in March or April, and then trout release there in May 2024

5. **LCWAC + FOMR** – continued partnership and collaboration between **Lewis Creek Watershed Advisory Committee and Friends of the Middle River**
 - a. Report from most recent FOMR meeting by **FOMR representative to LCWAC - Marion Bittinger (or Fred, who also attended).**
 - b. **Probable expansion of FOMR's Benthic Monitoring Program within Staunton's Lewis Creek Watershed** - to be managed by LCWAC? - any interest? – **ALL FOMR Members who have volunteered to date: Paul Bugas, Whit Morris, Lonnie Neavear, Howard & Jan Kator, Don Kain, Marion Bittinger, and Antonio Martinez**
6. **Staunton's Adopt-a-Stream Program – Fred, Pete & Willow**
 - i. **Shenandoah Valley Club of the Deaf (SVCD) @ VSDB / Lewis Creek** – application submitted and have already completed several clean-ups; new signs designed and produced – to be installed soon – **Pete and/or Willow**

Possible additions to the program:

 - ii. **Buttermilk Spring along Stuart Street at Jones Garden AND possibly Lewis Creek at YMCA Farm - YMCA Youth Corps** – *Stephanie Mason (YMCA Student Programming Coordinator & SPS School Board)*
 - iii. **Buttermilk Spring west of Jones Garden** – *Middle River Outfitters*
 - iv. **Asylum Creek @ Weller Woods** – *Staunton Rotary Club (the Noon Club)*
 - v. **Lewis Creek along New Hope Road @ Stuart Hall Ballfields - Stuart Hall** – *Stuart Hall Environmental Stewards Club*
 - vi. **Unnamed creek running behind SHS and through their proposed Nature Trail Project** - *Staunton High School's "EARL Club"*
 - vii. **Other local neighborhood interests – possible additional stretches:**
 1. **Asylum Creek, upstream from Weller Woods**
 2. **Buttermilk Spring, downstream from Jones Garden**
7. **Stream Naming Project**, for consistency across Lewis Creek Watershed – **Doug**
 - a. **Peyton's Creek**
 - b. **Creek running behind Staunton High School** – no known name
8. **Future Visions of Daylighted Streams – Coye & Randolph**
 - a. **Public Art Project** to highlight existence of waterways buried underground, esp. in the Wharf – working with **Staunton Outside Arts** / *Drea Howenstein*
 - b. **Transformation of existing Wharf parking lot** – working with **JMU Architecture class** and their Prof. *Traci Wile* on 6 different student designs

Consideration of future agendas & possible guest speakers for upcoming meetings:

Spring 2024 – Ruth Prince, EPA Project Manager, about CSX's PCB Remediation progress.

Spring 2024 – Gabriel Glover, about FOMR's new outreach programs – need LCWAC help.

LCWAC meeting adjournment.

Primary resources for continuing reference by LCWAC:

Decision Rationale of Total Maximum Daily Loads for Aquatic Life Use Impairment on Lewis Creek in Augusta County, Virginia, as published by US EPA, Water Protection Division on 02 August 2006 (9 pages)

Consideration of UVA Green Infrastructure Strategies for Staunton, VA, as published December 11, 2009 (Water Resources Policies & Strategies, pages 91-116)

Consideration of UVA Lewis Creek Subwatershed – Stormwater Management Site Analysis & Masterplan, as published 2011 (46 pages)

City of Staunton, Virginia MS4 Program Plan 2018-2023, as updated 4/29/2020; General Permit No. VAR040132, for the Virginia Stormwater Management Program, General Permit Registration Statement, for Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4).

PCB Total Maximum Daily Load Development for Lewis Creek, Staunton, Virginia, as prepared by Department of Biological Systems Engineering, Virginia Tech & Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, and as submitted by Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, ***Draft Report*** published June 2021 (80 pages, plus Appendices)

Trout Unlimited's "Trout in the Classroom" (TIC) - Trout, Steelhead and Salmon in the Classroom (TIC or SIC) enhances science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics curriculums. Students study and raise trout from eggs to fingerlings (small fish) in a coldwater aquarium during the school year. It is a unique opportunity used to teach the relevance of watersheds. Where permitted, the program culminates with a field trip to a community stream, river, lake, or pond where students release their fish into a state-approved location.

<https://www.troutintheclassroom.org/>

Partnerships are at the Core of the Program's Success - In many areas, Trout Unlimited chapter and council volunteers facilitate the program in partnership with state or federal agencies at public and/or private schools. However, a variety of partnerships exist between other non-profits, agencies, private businesses, and individuals to make the program happen.

Staunton City Schools Proposal for Staunton High School Outdoor Learning Space and Nature Trail