

Lewis Creek Watershed Advisory Committee

06 May 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. ***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*** – eventually to be managed locally by LCWAC?
Upcoming FOMR Benthic Demo on Sunday, 19 May 2024 – ALL
 - c. ***FOMR Members continue to volunteer to help LCWAC with both TU-TIC and CBF-CBD***
5. ***Education & Youth Projects - Fred***
 - a. Trout Unlimited “Trout in the Classroom” (TIC) in Staunton Public Schools -now permanent to ***SPS 5th Grade curriculum***, with ongoing plan as follows:
 - i. ***Ware Elementary – 5th grade teacher Shane Brubaker + 65 students***
Continued to maintain tank from Fall 2022 through 2023-24 school year; release site in GHP not available for 2024; alternate release site was into ***Christians Creek on FOMR's Nancy Stevenson's farm***, on McComb Mill Rd, in Stuarts Draft area, on ***Monday, 29 April 2024***; FOMR provided outstanding benthic education program on-site. ***ACTION: LCWAC support needed to sponsor Porta Potties for this event.***
 - ii. ***Bessie Weller Elementary – 5th grade teacher Ashley Cole***. Lost all trout over the 2023 holidays; ongoing awareness needed with Weller Woods Project to ensure health of Asylum Creek for planned trout release in 2025

- iii. **Shelburne Middle School – 6th grade teacher Kirsten Evans + 160 students.**
New tank running 2023-24; released into **South River along Waynesboro's Constitution Park**, on **Thursday, 25 April 2024**; TU-Waynesboro provided educational talk on-site. Hope to bring them back to Middle River watershed for release & FOMR benthic educational program in 2025.
 - iv. **McSwain Elementary to join TIC Program in Fall 2024 – teacher TBD;**
possible additional, support from SHS science teacher/ environmental leader Nate Lawrence (& his "EARL" Club) / Staunton High School Nature Trail Project, as possible 2025 release site for McSwain trout
 - b. **TIC @ Stuart Hall - teacher Catherine Badalamenti + 15 students in their STUwards Club** – Continued to maintain tank from Fall 2022 through 2023-24 school year; continued release site into **Middle River headwaters at Summerdean on FOMR's Carol Anderson's farm**; FOMR reps Paul Bugas & Whit Morris provided combination benthic demo and trout release field day on **Tuesday, 09 April 2024**, as enhancement to ongoing FOMR benthic field testing
- 6. Chesapeake Bay Foundation – Clean the Bay Day 2024 – Saturday, 01 June 2024, 10am – Noon**, followed by **Pizza Picnic Lunch in GHP, provided by Skyline Rotary**
- a. **Asylum Creek** - from Weller Woods, behind Bessie Weller Elementary, downstream through the Villages - **Staunton Rotary Club (Zone Captain Georgi Tomisato)**
 - b. **Peyton Creek / Buttermilk Spring** - along Stuart/Peck streets, and adjacent to Jones Garden - **YMCA Youth Corp (Zone Captain Stephanie Mason)**
 - c. **Staunton West End** - along W. Beverley Street - **Staunton West End Business Association (Zone Captain Vickie Parkinson)**
 - d. **Gum Springs** - throughout Gypsy Hill Park - **JMU Valley Scholars (Zone Captain Mary Evans Lott) + Skyline Rotary Club (Zone Captains Dan Kuusisto & Jennifer Kiser)**
 - e. **Lewis Creek** - along Commerce Road, from Columbia Gas to New Hope Road - **Friends of the Middle River (Zone Captain Shaun Mooney)**
 - f. **Lewis Creek** - along VSDB property, from the end of Kalorama Street to New Hope Road - **Shenandoah Valley Club for the Deaf (Zone Captain Ben Bottoms)**
 - g. **Cleanup Data Collection** - all sites - **Shenandoah Green (Zone Captains Caroline Sheridan, Georgi Tomisato, & Fred Blanton)**

7. 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, produced, and recently installed– **Pete and/or Willow**

Possible additions to the program:

- ii. **Peyton's Creek / 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. **Peyton's Creek / 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 STUwards 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 sections:**
 - 1. **Asylum Creek, upstream from Weller Woods**
 - 2. **Peyton's Creek / Buttermilk Spring, downstream from Jones Garden**

8. Future Visions of Daylighted Streams – Coye, Randolph & Fred

- a. **JMU Spring 2024 Architecture Design Class - Reimagining Staunton's Wharf** – JMU Prof. Traci Wile presented 5 different student groups' designs at **Staunton Augusta Art Center**, at an **Interim Design Review on Friday, 22 March 2024**, and a **Final Design Review on Friday, 26 April 2024**. Great turnout and support by City of Staunton, Staunton City Council, VA-DEQ, FOMR, & good public attendance. Hope to continue public displays of the students' work through collaboration with MBU @ the Wharf, and as a possible Sustainable Shenandoah Valley (SSV) Project
- b. **Possible Public Art Projects in 2024-25** - to highlight existence of waterways buried underground, esp. in the Wharf – hope to work with **Staunton Outside Arts / Drea Howenstein**

9. Stream Naming Project, for consistency across Lewis Creek Watershed – Doug

- a. **Peyton's Creek versus Buttermilk Spring**
- b. **Creek running behind Staunton High School – no known name**

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, FOMR, about FOMR's new outreach for BMP programs.

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).

City of Staunton, Virginia MS4 Annual Report, dated 9/27/2023, for Permit Cycle 2, Year 5, -01 July 2022 through 30 June 2023; General Permit No. VAR040132

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