

Lewis Creek Watershed Advisory Committee

03 June 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 (VPRRA), 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 once she receives the final CSX remediation plan, and is amenable to us hosting a local public forum about this whole PCB remediation project before the CSX remediation plan is finalized.
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**
 - b. **Probable expansion of FOMR's Benthic Monitoring Program within Staunton's Lewis Creek Watershed** – eventually to be managed locally by LCWAC? Recently scheduled **FOMR Benthic Demo on Sunday, 19 May 2024** was postponed due to weather and stream conditions– **Fred**
 - 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**
Continue to maintain tank from Fall 2022 through 2024-25 school year; hope to resume original trout release site in GHP in Spring 2025
 - ii. **Bessie Weller Elementary – 5th grade teacher Ashley Cole.** Continue to maintain tank from Fall 2023 through 2024-25 school year; ongoing

awareness needed with Weller Woods Project and Staunton Public Works to ensure health of Asylum Creek for planned trout release in Spring 2025

- iii. **Shelburne Middle School – 6th grade teacher Kirsten Evans + 160 students.**
Continue to maintain tank from Fall 2023 through 2024-25 school year; hope to bring them back to Middle River watershed for release & FOMR benthic educational program in Spring 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, and as possible Spring 2025/26 release site for McSwain trout
- b. **TIC @ Stuart Hall - teacher Catherine Badalamenti + 15 students in their STUwards Club** – Continue to maintain tank from Fall 2022 through 2024-25 school year; continue combination benthic demo and trout release field day, led by FOMR reps Paul Bugas & Whit Morris at FOMR Benthic test site at Middle River headwaters at Summerdean on FOMR’s Carol Anderson’s farm.

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 (Captains 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 – Lead project participant;** new signs installed at VSDB; several clean-ups already accomplished– **Fred**

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", led by Nate Lawrence
- 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
 - 3. **Lewis Creek**, behind Maple Street neighborhood

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

- a. **JMU Spring 2024 Architecture Design Class - Reimagining Staunton's Wharf** – JMU Prof. Traci Wile, together with LCWAC; 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 – historical references?

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

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

Summer 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