

Lewis Creek Watershed Advisory Committee
06 January 2025, 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**.
 - a. Radiator repair shop on Johnson St. – Pete or Willow?
 - b. Diesel repair shop on Middlebrook Rd. – Pete or Willow?
 - c. Sewer main break behind Staunton High School – Randolph or Fred?
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 spoken with all stakeholders except CSX or their consultant. ***EPA Project Manager Ruth Prince*** recently reported that she had finally received and is reviewing CSX's ***first draft*** of their "Risk-Based Disposal Approval Application" (RBDAA). Ruth's goal now is to achieve a final draft by Spring 2025, which would include details about the soil remedy, methods to safely excavate the PCB-contaminated soils, and all safeguards necessary to protect both human health and the environment. EPA will then initiate a 30-day public comment period through a notice published in our local News Leader. Ruth is amenable to us hosting our own Lewis Creek public forum, as a local kickoff to the 30-day public comment period. If substantial comments are received, then EPA would conduct their own official public meeting here.
4. ***Staunton Downtown Development Association (SDDA) is applying for a "Science Discovery on Main Street" Grant from Siemens Corp.*** – SDDA would like a simple, non-committal letter of support from LCWAC for their grant request, stating that LCWAC is supportive and will be willing to work with SDDA, if they receive the grant, and if there is any intersection between their work and our LCWAC mission - **Coye**
5. ***Guest Speaker – Alison Denbigh – YMCA New Hope Road Expansion Project***
Project Manager Alison will brief us about the overall project, and then talk about possible effects on Lewis Creek, which runs the length of the back of the property, and what possible enhancements are proposed to the riparian buffer and banks of the creek.

6. **LCWAC + FOMR** – continued partnership and collaboration between **Lewis Creek Watershed Advisory Committee and Friends of the Middle River**
- a. Report on recent FOMR meeting by **FOMR representative to LCWAC - Marion Bittinger (or Gabe Glover or Mason Kilbourn)**
 - b. **Expansion of FOMR's Benthic Monitoring Program within Staunton's Lewis Creek Watershed** – eventually to be managed locally by LCWAC? – **Randolph**
 - c. **Nutrient & Environmental Testing** – possible adoption of St. Mary's River Watershed **"BOB" test kits** - **Fred**
 - d. **FOMR Members continue to volunteer to help LCWAC with both TU-TIC and CBF-CBD** – Spring 2025 planning for trout releases and stream cleanup - **Fred**

7. **Education & Youth Projects** - **Fred**

- a. **Trout Unlimited "Trout in the Classroom" (TIC) in Staunton Public Schools -now permanent to SPS 5th Grade curriculum, 2024-25 planning as follows:**
 - i. **Ware Elementary – 5th grade teacher Shane Brubaker + 65 students**
Continue to maintain tank from Fall 2022 through 2024-25 school year; highly successful Spring 2024 release on Christians Creek near Barterbrook.
 - ii. **Bessie Weller Elementary – 5th grade teachers Ashley Cole & Tish Moore.**
Restart Fall 2023 tank for 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 & with the addition of a FOMR benthic educational program in Spring 2025.
 - iv. **McSwain Elementary to join TIC Program in Fall 2025 – teacher TBD;**
Previously planned for phase-in in Fall 2024, but need to postpone one more year, due to teacher shortages; possible additional support from SHS science teacher/ environmental leader Nate Lawrence (& his "EARL" Club) / Staunton High School Nature Trail Project, and as a possible future release site for McSwain trout
- b. **TIC @ Stuart Hall - teacher Catherine Badalamenti and 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.

8. **Future Visions of Daylighted Streams – Randolph, Coye & Fred**
- a. **JMU Spring 2024 & 2025 Architecture Design Classes - *Reimagining Staunton's Wharf*** – JMU Prof. Traci Wile – past events:
 - i. **Spring 2024 Interim Review** @ Staunton Smith Center – 22Mar2024
 - ii. **Spring 2024 Final Review** @ Staunton Smith Center – 26Apr2024
 - iii. **Listening Session w/ Wharf Owners** @ Ox-Eye Winery – 13Aug2024
 - b. **Public Engagement / Art Projects in Spring 2025** – continue collaborating with past & future JMU students; local artists, Public Works, and maybe a possible collaboration with MBU @ the Wharf, and as a possible Sustainable Shenandoah Valley (SSV) Project; begin publicly highlighting the existence of waterways buried under the Wharf through visual display.

9. **Staunton's Adopt-a-Stream Program – Fred** (can be accessed on City of Staunton website here: <https://www.ci.staunton.va.us/departments/community-development/environmental-programs-division/adopt-a-stream-program>)

- i. **Shenandoah Valley Club of the Deaf (SVCD) @ VSDB / Lewis Creek – *Lead project participant***; two (2) signs installed at VSDB; twice-annual clean-ups already being accomplished since 2023– **Fred**

Possible additions to the program – *Fall 2024 - Spring 2025 planning:*

- 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 (Opie?) 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**, neighborhood upstream from Weller Woods
 - 2. **Peyton's Creek / Buttermilk Spring**, downstream from Jones Garden
 - 3. **Lewis Creek**, behind Maple Street neighborhood

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

- a. Peyton's Creek versus Buttermilk Spring?
- b. Creek running behind Staunton High School – Opie Creek?

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

Spring 2025 – *Darren Smith, Executive Director, Staunton Downtown Development Association (SDDA)*

Spring 2025 – *Ruth Prince, PhD Toxicologist, EPA Project Manager* (via Zoom)

Spring 2025 – *LCWAC Public Forum about PCBs in Lewis Creek* – local kick-off of EPA final draft of CSX's "*Risk-Based Disposal Approval Application*" (RBDAA), and the ensuing 30-day comment period immediately after. **Possible venues** – Rotary Pavilion in Montgomery Hall Park, or Gymnasium in Gypsy Hill Park

Summer 2025 – *EPA Public Forum about PCBs in Lewis Creek* – in response to comments received during the 30-day public comment period to the EPA final draft of CSX's "*Risk-Based Disposal Approval Application*" (RBDAA); **Possible venues** – Rotary Pavilion in Montgomery Hall Park, or Gymnasium in Gypsy Hill Park

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

Both preceding documents can be downloaded from City of Staunton website here:
<https://www.ci.staunton.va.us/departments/community-development/environmental-programs-division/ms4-program>

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

