

Lewis Creek Watershed Advisory Committee
03 February 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. **Recognition of Staunton employees supportive of LCWAC – *Congratulations!***
 - a. **Willow Hughes** - *promotion to **Environmental Programs Administrator***
 - b. **Jacob Sheets** – *recently achieved his **Waterworks License***
 - c. **Jeff Overholtzer** – *new **City Council Liaison to LCWAC** – Welcome!*
2. **Acknowledgement of and remarks by fellow citizens present, and recent public interactions and/or local press reported by LCWAC members – All.**
 - a. **Disposals** at radiator repair shop on Johnson St. – Pete or Willow?
 - b. **Riparian buffer** at diesel repair shop on Middlebrook Rd. – Pete or Willow?
 - c. **Sewer main break** behind Staunton High School – Randolph or Fred?
 - d. **Stream names** in local social media – Gum Spring vs Peyton Creek vs Buttermilk Spring, etc. – Doug & Willow?
 - e. **Staunton Comprehensive Plan 2045** – public open house on 22Jan2025, plus two more future sessions, and an ongoing online portal at:
<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/730d76b1e87242b1b45f136ab4bd3b2>
3. **Ongoing monthly E. Coli testing of 12 sites throughout the Lewis Creek Watershed, by City of Staunton, Department of Public Works – All**
4. **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 next goal is to achieve a final draft by Spring 2025**, which will 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 and willing

to provide sufficient advance notice to **LCWAC hosting our own public forum, and as a local kickoff to the 30-day public comment period**. If substantial comments are received, then EPA will also conduct their own official public meeting here.

5. **LCWAC + FOMR** – continued partnership and collaboration between **Lewis Creek Watershed Advisory Committee and Friends of the Middle River**
 - a. **Report on the recent FOMR meeting by FOMR representative to LCWAC - Marion Bittinger is now passing this role to Mason Kilbourn, incoming FOMR Vice-Chair & Staunton resident.**
 - b. **Expansion of FOMR's Benthic Monitoring Program within Staunton's Lewis Creek Watershed** – to be managed locally by LCWAC – **Randolph**
 - c. **Nutrient & Environmental Testing** – possible adoption of St. Mary's River Watershed **"BOB" test kits** – **SMRWA** is willing to have a Zoom call with us - **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**
6. **Education & Youth Projects - Fred**
 - a. **Trout Unlimited "Trout in the Classroom" (TIC) in Staunton Public Schools -now permanent to SPS 5th Grade curriculum, 2025 planning as follows:**
 - i. **Ware Elementary – 5th grade teacher Shane Brubaker** – their trout survived the holidays – looking forward to a Spring 2025 release – hopefully into Christians Creek near Barterbrook, or return to GHP?
 - ii. **Bessie Weller Elementary – 5th grade teachers Ashley Cole & Tish Moore.** – their trout survived the holidays – looking forward to a **16 May 2025 release** into Asylum Creek, in Weller Woods, behind Bessie Weller; ongoing awareness needed with Weller Woods Project and Staunton Public Works to ensure health of Asylum Creek for all student activities there
 - iii. **Shelburne Middle School – 6th grade teacher Kirsten Evans** – their trout survived the holidays - hope to bring them back to Middle River watershed for release & with the addition of a FOMR benthic educational program in Spring 2025 – possibly into Christians Creek near Barterbrook?
 - iv. **McSwain Elementary to join TIC Program in Fall 2025 – teacher TBD;** postponed until Fall 2025, due to teacher shortages; possible additional support from SHS science teacher/ environmental leader Nate Lawrence ("EARL" Club) and/or Staunton High School Nature Trail Project); possible future release sites behind Staunton High School or at YMCA Farm
 - b. **TIC @ Stuart Hall - teacher Catherine Badalamenti and their STUwards Club** – - their trout survived the holidays; plan to 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.

7. **Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) – Annual Clean the Bay Day (CBD) – -Saturday, 07 June 2025, 9am-12 Noon** – Fred will be visiting Staunton’s Sister City in Romania that weekend. We need someone to take the **Overall Lead to interface with CBF**, and **three Site Leads to interface at 1) Gum Springs Branch** in Gypsy Hill Park – Skyline Rotary & JMU Valley Scholars, **2) Asylum Creek** at Bessie Weller Elementary – Staunton Rotary, and **3) Lewis Creek** at Columbia Gas – FOMR, and at VSDB – Shenandoah Valley Club for the Deaf

8. **Consideration for Adoption of a Riparian Buffer or Stream Protection Overlay (SPO) District – Randolph** – Should we pursue City Council adoption of a zoning overlay to properties with either frontage or include within the property any of the streams within Staunton city limits, that would require riparian buffer protection of the streams? See a **zoning ordinance** adopted by Rappahannock County here: http://rappahannockco-va.elaws.us/code/coor_ptii_ch170_artv_sec170-45.2 , and see attached for a **model riparian overlay** prepared by Brandywine Conservancy and Pennsylvania Land Trust Association.

9. **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 & future meetings & 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**
 - iv. **Walk the Wharf meeting with JMU Traci Wile & class – Friday, 07Feb2025**
 - b. **Public Engagement / Art Projects in Spring 2025** – Begin publicly highlighting the existence of waterways buried under the Wharf through visual display. Continue collaborating with past & future JMU students; local artists, Staunton Public Works, and a possible collaboration with MBU at the Wharf and/or a possible Sustainable Shenandoah Valley (SSV) Project with both JMU & MBU?

10. **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 cleanups planned for April & June 2025, with increase to 3 cleanups in 2026– **Fred**

Possible additions to the program – Spring 2025 planning:

 - ii. **Peyton’s Creek / Buttermilk Spring along Stuart Street at Jones Garden and/or Lewis Creek at YMCA Farm on New Hope Road - YMCA Youth**

Volunteer Corps – Stephanie Mason (YMCA Youth Volunteer Coordinator & SPS School Board)

- iii. **Asylum Creek from Weller Woods to the Villages – Staunton Rotary Club (the "Noon Club")**
- iv. **Lewis Creek along New Hope Road @ Stuart Hall Ballfields - Stuart Hall STUwards Club**
- v. **Unnamed (Opie?) Creek running behind SHS through their Nature Trail Project - Staunton High School's "EARL Club", led by Nate Lawrence**
- vi. **Lewis Creek east of Bells Lane – Middle River Outfitters**
- vii. **Other local neighborhood interests – *significant 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

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

- a. Peyton's Creek versus Buttermilk Spring?
- b. Peyton's Creek versus Gum Springs Branch?
- c. 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/Summer 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

