

Lewis Creek Watershed Advisory Committee
04 August 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. **Sewer main leak/break** behind Staunton High School – Randolph or Fred?
 - b. **Any others? - All**
- 2. City of Staunton – Environmental Programs Update – Willow & Hunter**
 - a. Flood Resiliency Plan Process – initial planning, recent first community meeting on 14Jul2025 at Staunton Public Library, and next steps
 - b. Staunton Environmental Programs website – recent & future updates
 - c. Anything else on the horizon?
- 3. *Staunton’s “Adopt-a-Spot” Program – Willow & Fred*** - Can be accessed on City of Staunton website here: <https://www.ci.staunton.va.us/departments/community-development/environmental-programs-division/adopt-a-spot-program>
 - a. **Lewis Creek along VSDB** – Shenandoah Valley Club of the Deaf (SVCD) - original *lead project participant* – Fred
 - b. **Second new member & location?** – Willow
 - c. **Third new member & location?** – Willow

Possible additions to the program – Summer/Fall 2025 planning:

- d. **West Beverley Street** – Staunton West End Business Association (SWEBA)
- e. **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)
- f. **Buttermilk Spring/Peyton’s Creek, north side of Maple Street**- Maple Street neighborhood?
- g. **Lewis Creek, south side of Maple Street** – Maple Street neighborhood?
- h. **Asylum Creek from Weller Woods to the Villages** – Staunton Rotary Club
- i. **Asylum Creek, through neighborhood upstream from Weller Woods** – Phillips St and/or Ritchie Blvd neighborhood?

- j. **Lewis Creek along New Hope Road @ Stuart Hall Ballfields - Stuart Hall STUwards Club**
 - k. **Unnamed (Opie?) Creek running behind SHS through their Nature Trail Project - Staunton High School's "EARL Club", led by Nate Lawrence**
 - l. **Lewis Creek east of Bells Lane – Middle River Outfitters**
- 4. Ongoing monthly E. Coli testing of 12 sites throughout the Lewis Creek Watershed,** conducted by City of Staunton, Department of Public Works – **All**
Fred has previously requested 9 additional test sites to be added:
- Lewis Creek at Bridge Street
 - Lewis Creek at Church Street
 - Lewis Creek at New Hope Road and Commerce Road
 - Lewis Creek at New Hope Road and Statler Blvd
 - Buttermilk Spring at the intersection of Montgomery, Stuart, and Peck streets
 - Gum Spring Branch in GHP between the Gypsy Hill Express & the Duckpond
 - Asylum Creek at Ritchie Blvd
 - Asylum Creek's secondary tributary at Bessie Weller & Charles streets
 - Opie Creek behind Staunton High School
- Staunton Public Works** has responded favorably to adding all of these sites to their testing protocol, with lab processing of all water samples, *however they would now prefer that we LCWAC / "Friends of LCWAC" collect ALL of the water samples, IF we increase sample sites over the current 12 sites.* – **continued discussion by All.**
- 5. Remediation of PCBs in the Lewis Creek Watershed** – Fred has previously spoken with most stakeholders, including Buckingham Branch, Virginia Passenger Rail Authority (VPRRA), DEQ, and EPA, but not with CSX or their consultant.

EPA Project Manager Ruth Prince recently took an early retirement, and her last day was June 13, 2025. Before Ruth departed, she provided one final comment: *"I do need to reiterate, there is no regulatory provision for EPA to have meetings with interested parties regarding a partial TSCA application. As I have told you before, you and your watershed committee will have 30 days to review and comment upon the final Risk-Based Disposal Approval Application for the CSXT site once it is available for public comment, and Amanda will notify you when that occurs. Since we do not even have a full draft yet and our staff is quite limited at this point, we cannot provide a timeframe for that."*

Ruth also connected us with her successor -**Amanda Michel, RPM Region III PCB Coordinator, with the EPA's RCRA Corrective Action Branch**, who subsequently reported: *"I unfortunately have no updates since last month. CSX informed me that they intend to have the full draft submitted to EPA before the end of August, so hopefully I have an update next month. Though I don't have much information to provide at this time, I'm happy to have a call. Also, for awareness,*

EPA has the option of participating in a public meeting to gather comments during the public comment period if there is enough community interest. We are likely a ways away from that milestone, but once we open the public comment period we can coordinate.”

Willow, Hunter and I intend to take Amanda up on her offer for a conference call, if for nothing else, just for all of us to meet and get acquainted with each other. We are already trying to schedule this call for some time over the next 2 weeks.

Reminder from before - EPA is still waiting to receive CSX’s full draft of their “**Risk-Based Disposal Approval Application**” (RBDAA), which was originally and previously planned to be received by EPA last year. CSX’s RBDAA 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.

Next steps will include:

- a. **EPA will initiate a 30-day public comment period** through a notice published in our local News Leader.
- b. **LCWAC will host our own local public forum** - Ruth was amenable and willing to provide sufficient advance notice to LCWAC, and we will seek the same assurance from Amanda, so that we can time our public forum to **serve as a local kickoff to the EPA 30-day public comment period**.
- c. If substantial comments are received from the public, then **EPA will also conduct their own official public meeting here**.

6. Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) – Annual Clean the Bay Day (CBD)

- a. **Saturday, 07 June 2025** – outstanding reports all around – thank you all!
- b. **Saturday 02 May 2026** – CBF has officially moved their annual CBD up one month going forward, to better capture student volunteers before graduations and end of Spring semester, and to beat the heat of Summer.

7. LCWAC + FOMR – continued partnership and collaboration between **Lewis Creek Watershed Advisory Committee and Friends of the Middle River**, including expanded water quality testing programs - Benthic, E. coli, Environmental, Nutrient

- a. **Expansion of FOMR’s Benthic Monitoring Program within Staunton’s Lewis Creek Watershed** – to be managed locally by LCWAC – **Randolph, Tina & Mason**
- b. **Environmental & Nutrient Testing** – St. Mary’s River Watershed Association (SMRWA) has loaned “**BOB**” **test kits** to LCWAC to study, calibrate, and use – Randolph now has one at his home, which he’s studying for application in our local watershed – **Randolph**
- c. **Additional updates from FOMR – Mason**

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

- a. **JMU Spring 2024 & 2025 Architecture Design Classes - *Reimagining Staunton's Wharf*** – Thank you JMU Prof. Traci Wile & JMU Design Students! – any updates?
- b. **Storm water drain covers** – artistic designs to heighten community awareness – any updates?
- c. **Wharf structural issues in Spring 2025**
 - i. Randolph spoke on behalf of LCWAC to Staunton City Council on 13Mar25
 - ii. Randolph, Coye & Traci attended **Staunton Economic Development's 1st Wharf Business Meeting** on 30 April 2025.
 - iii. Randolph attended **Staunton Economic Development's 2nd Wharf Business Meeting** on 08 July 2025.
 - iv. **Staunton Augusta Art Center's "Picnic Tables at the Wharf Project"** – can be viewed here, with community voting through Thursday, 31 July 2025:
https://www.saartcenter.org/picnic-table-voting?utm_campaign=78011065-bbe0-49d1-b700-780fc918df4e&utm_source=so&utm_medium=mail&cid=aad501c1-8d71-4738-b0f1-70e0759fca74
 - v. **City of Staunton updates about the Wharf? – Willow**

9. Consideration for Adoption of a Riparian Buffer or Stream Protection Overlay (SPO)

District – Randolph and/or Jeff – 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.

10. Education & Youth Projects – Trout Unlimited (TU) Trout in the Classroom (TIC) Project in Staunton area schools– Fred

Fall 2025 Planning:

McSwain Elementary - still hoping for introduction of TU-TIC Program

Bessie Weller Elementary - 5th Grade – Science teacher Ashley Cole is on board

Ware Elementary - 5th Grade – Science Teacher Shane Brubaker is on board

Shelburne Middle School - 6th Grade – Science teacher Kirsten Evans is on board; they also hired two more Science teachers – Adam Johnson and Jessica Bacola, and they BOTH want trout tanks in their classroom, for a total of 3 tanks at Shelburne.

Stuart Hall's Valley Stu'wards Club – possible new teacher-sponsor of the Club – still trying to make contact

Grace Christian School – new Community Outreach Coordinator – Amanda Glover – if not Fall 2025, then maybe Fall 2026, and after consolidation of all campuses into old Beverley Manor Elementary campus

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

- a. Peyton’s Creek versus Buttermilk Spring?
- b. Gum Springs Branch versus Peyton’s Creek?
- c. Creek running behind Staunton High School – Opie Creek?

12. Next LCWAC Meeting – *Monday, 08 September 2025, 5pm in Staunton City Hall*

Note 1 - The first Monday in September is Labor Day, a federal holiday.

Note 2 - Fred will be on vacation for all of September in Japan, so we need a volunteer to chair the September meeting.

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

Summer/Fall 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/Fall 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

Any additional ideas for speakers at future meetings? - All

13. 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 in the Classroom (TIC) 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. **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. See the TU-TIC website here:

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

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

Brandywine Conservancy and Pennsylvania Land Trust Association - Model Riparian Overlay