

Lewis Creek Watershed Advisory Committee
03 November 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.***
- 2. City of Staunton – Environmental Programs Update – Willow &/or Hunter**
 - a. **Sewer main leak/break** behind Staunton High School – Willow
 - b. **Flood Resiliency Plan Process** – recent first community meeting on 14Jul2025 at Staunton Public Library, **and next steps?**
 - c. **Staunton Environmental Programs website** – recent & future updates
 - d. Anything else on the horizon?

3. *Staunton’s new “Adopt-a-Spot” Program – Willow*

New program 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>

Adopt-a-Spot signs are now popping up all over town in great numbers!

Targeted strategic additions to the program – *Fall/Winter 2025 planning:*

- a. **Buttermilk Spring along Stuart Street at Jones Garden** – *Jones Garden Volunteers and YMCA Youth Volunteer Corps – Stephanie Mason (YMCA Youth Volunteer Coordinator & SPS School Board).*
- b. **Maple Street – encompassing both Buttermilk Spring/Peyton’s Creek, on the north side of Maple Street AND Lewis Creek, on the south side of Maple Street** – *Maple Street neighborhood groups?*
- c. **Asylum Creek from Weller Woods to the Villages** – *Staunton Rotary Club – completed their annual cleanup in June, as part of CBF-CTBD.*
- d. **Asylum Creek, through neighborhood upstream from Weller Woods** – *Phillips St and/or Ritchie Blvd neighborhood groups?*
- e. **Unnamed (Opie?) Creek running behind SHS through their Nature Trail Project** - *Staunton High School’s “EARL Club”, led by Nate Lawrence, once E. coli is resolved?*

- f. **Lewis Creek along New Hope Road @ Stuart Hall Ballfields** - *Stuart Hall "Valley STUwards" Club*
 - g. **Lewis Creek along New Hope Road @ YMCA Farm** - *YMCA Youth Volunteer Corps – Stephanie Mason (YMCA Youth Volunteer Coordinator & SPS School Board)- completed one cleanup in 2025*
 - h. **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 – sample results from Buttermilk Spring, along Peck and Stuart Streets appear to be unusually high. This is of specific concern to Jones Garden, and they have been notified. Fred recently spoke with Seth Hoilman and he's investigating any additional insight they can provide. - **All**

Fred has previously requested 9 additional test sites to be added:

"Opie Creek" behind Staunton High School
 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

Staunton Public Works responded favorably to adding 9 additional sites to their testing protocol, with lab processing of all 21 water samples, *however, due to staffing shortages, they request that we LCWAC / "Friends of LCWAC" collect ALL of the water samples, IF we increase sample sites from 12 to 21. LCWAC consensus is that recruitment of enough consistent volunteers who could collect samples at 21 sites, all on the same day, would be too complicated to manage and maintain. LCWAC recommendation is for Staunton Public Works to increase staffing and/or workload to monitor and maintain this essential health testing program of our watershed, and especially since school and community interaction with our local streams is increasing.*

5. **Remediation of PCBs in the Lewis Creek Watershed** – Fred has previously spoken with most stakeholders, including Buckingham Branch, Virginia Passenger Rail Authority (VPRA), DEQ, and EPA, but not with CSX or their consultant.

Amanda Michel, RPM Region III PCB Coordinator, with the EPA’s RCRA Corrective Action Branch (successor to EPA’s Ruth Prince) reported the following on 01 October 2025:

“I got an email from the consultants today with an anticipated submittal date for the RBDAA of Oct 17th. I’ll keep you posted if that does happen.”

And then we most recently received the following autoreply from Amanda’s email account:

“I am out of the office for the duration of the lapse in appropriations. I will not be checking messages but will answer your email upon my return to the office.”

Reminder from before - EPA is still waiting to receive CSX’s full draft of their **“Risk-Based Disposal Approval Application” (RBDAA)**, which was originally planned to be received by EPA in early 2024. CSX’s RBDAA will include details about the soil remedy, methods to safely excavate the PCB-contaminated soils (now planned by truck), 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** – Amanda is amenable and willing to provide sufficient advance notice to LCWAC, 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 in Staunton**.

6. **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. FOMR’s Pete Cooper & Randolph recently selected Lewis Creek on the YMCA New Hope Road site as our first official benthic monitoring site. The YMCA Board is currently considering our request to begin ongoing benthic monitoring there. – **Randolph, Tina, Mason (& Gini)**
- b. **Environmental & Nutrient Testing** – St. Mary’s River Watershed Association (SMRWA) has loaned **“BOB” test kits** to LCWAC to study, calibrate, and use – Randolph completed initial programming and deployment of “BOB-LCWAC-01” into

Asylum Creek at the Villages; currently understanding and calibrating readings for dissolved oxygen, impacts by sediment accumulation, and algae growth. – **Randolph**

- c. **Additional updates from FOMR** – Staunton’s Dave Irvin & Seth Hoilman spoke at the recent FOMR meeting on 28 October 2025. They addressed the historical and current impacts of water extraction from the Middle River. Their remarks were very informative and well-received by FOMR. – **Mason (& Fred)**

7. Future Visions of Daylighted Streams & Watershed Projects – Coye, Fred & Randolph

- a. **Storm water drain covers** – artistic designs to heighten community awareness of water runoff flowing to the Chesapeake Bay – **partnering with Staunton Augusta Art Center** – any updates? – **Coye**
- b. **Wharf structural issues in Summer/Fall 2025**
 - i. Coye attended **Staunton Economic Development’s 3rd Wharf Business Meeting** on 24 September 2025.
 - ii. Randolph attended most recent **Staunton City Council Meeting** on 23 Oct 2025
 - iii. Any recent meetings / updates / greater public outreach? – Randolph, Coye, Willow?
- c. **YMCA Expansion on New Hope Road** – Shenandoah Green (501c3) Staunton Tree Stewards, on behalf of and in partnership with the YMCA, is applying for grants from both VDOF (primary) and CSPDC (matching) for Riparian Buffer plantings along Lewis Creek – trees along the south side, and wetland plantings along the north side. Opportunity still exists for partnership with FOMR.

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

Fall 2025 Activities - DWR Trout eggs were released on Tuesday, 07 Oct 2025

Bessie Weller Elementary - 5th Grade – Science teacher Ashley Cole has their tank up and running and their nursery full. Spring 2026 trout release planned for Asylum Creek behind the school.

Ware Elementary - 5th Grade – Science Teacher Shane Brubaker has their tank up and running and their nursery full. Spring 2026 trout release planned for Gum Springs Branch in Gypsy Hill Park.

Shelburne Middle School - 6th Grade – Science teachers Kirsten Evans, Adam Johnson and Jessica Bacola now have 3 tanks up and running, and their nurseries full. Spring 2026 trout releases planned for Shenandoah Boy Scout Camp in Swoope.

McSwain Elementary – 5th Grade - new Principal – hopeful for introduction of TU-TIC Program in 2026. Possible future trout release site could be Lewis Creek at the YMCA site on New Hope Road.

Stuart Hall’s Valley Stu’wards Club – lost last year’s teacher sponsor – some returning students and parents wanted to continue the program - Fred contacted Dean of Students for a new teacher-

sponsor of the Club, but was told they will not continue the program. Fred & Tony Conte of Waynesboro's Trout Unlimited Chapter recently picked up the tank and equipment.

Grace Christian School – new Community Outreach Coordinator – Amanda Glover – hopeful for introduction of TU-TIC Program in 2026, after consolidation of all campuses into the old Beverley Manor Elementary campus.

9. *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?

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

District – Jeff? – Should we / can 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.

Next LCWAC Meeting – Monday, 05 January 2026, 5pm in Staunton City Hall – Let's all enjoy our holiday break!

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

Spring 2026 – 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

Spring 2026 – 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

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