

Lewis Creek Watershed Advisory Committee
05 January 2026, 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.***

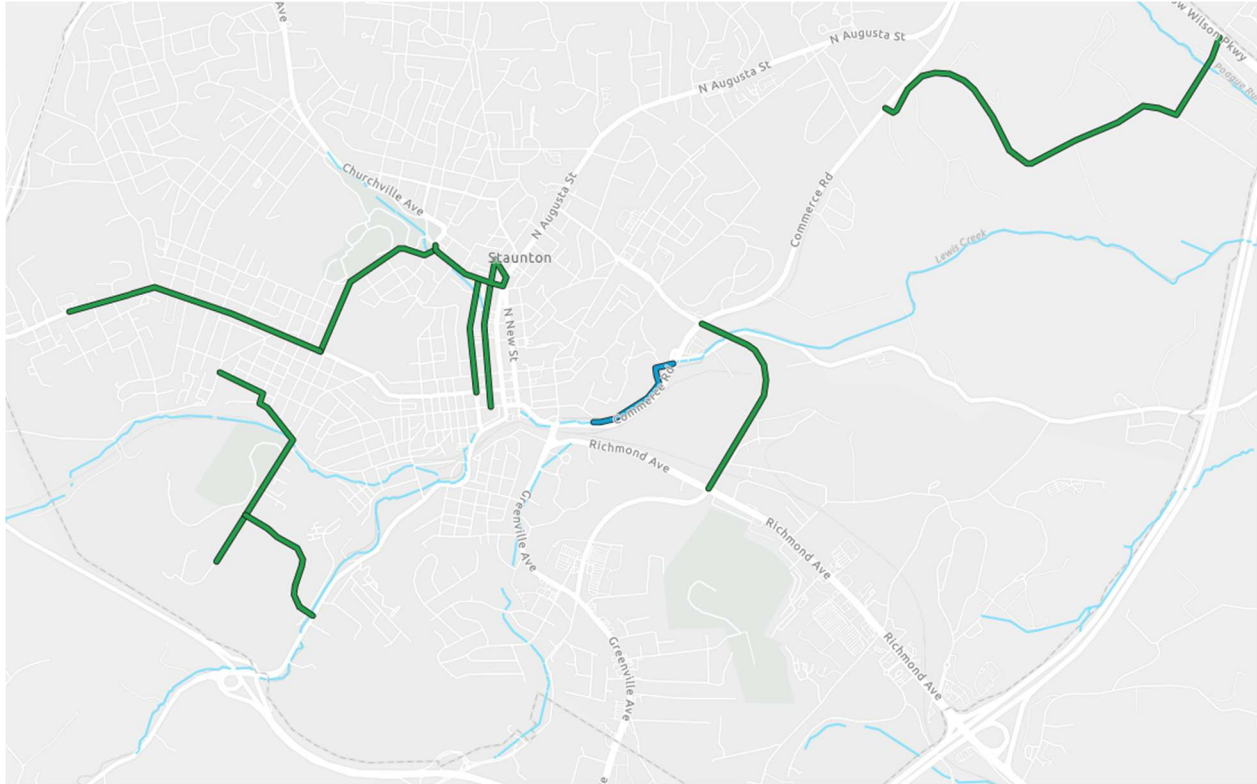
- 2. Proposed Lewis Creek Watershed Advisory Committee meeting schedule for 2026:**
 - Monday, 05 January 2026, 5pm in City Hall
 - Monday, 02 February 2026, 5pm in City Hall
 - Monday, 02 March 2026, 5pm in City Hall
 - Monday, 06 April 2026, 5pm in City Hall
 - Monday, 04 May 2026, 5pm in City Hall
 - Monday, 01 June 2026, 5pm in City Hall
 - July 2026 – vacation break** *(and due to historical lack of quorum)*
 - Monday, 03 August 2026, 5pm in City Hall
 - Monday, 14 September 2026**, 5pm in City Hall – *defer to 2nd week, due to Labor Day holiday*
 - Monday, 05 October 2026, 5pm in City Hall
 - Monday, 02 November 2026, 5pm in City Hall
 - December 2026 – vacation break** *(and due to historical lack of quorum)*

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

- 4. 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 sign-ups are happening - see all current “Adopt-a-Spot” adoptions below:



We could use more strategic adoptions aligned with Lewis Creek & tributaries. *Possible targeted adoptions to seek for Spring 2026 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

5. **Ongoing monthly E. Coli testing of 12 sites throughout the Lewis Creek Watershed**, conducted by City of Staunton, Department of Public Works – **All**

LCWAC continues to request 9 additional test sites 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 with volunteers.** **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.**

6. **Remediation of PCBs in the Lewis Creek Watershed** – Fred has now spoken with ALL railway and environmental stakeholders, including Buckingham Branch, Virginia Passenger Rail Authority (VPRA), CSX, VA-DEQ, and US-EPA.

As I shared with all of you over our holiday break, I’ve been more recently speaking with **Amanda Michel, RPM Region III PCB Coordinator, with the EPA’s RCRA Corrective Action Branch.** Due to Amanda not hearing back from the CSX consultant **WSP** (<https://www.wsp.com/en-us/>), and after repeated attempts, we concluded that I could and should reach out directly to CSX, and to clearly and directly demonstrate local Staunton community interest in CSX’s progress with their volunteer remediation, and not just in continuing to wait for EPA monitoring results.

As I further shared, I did call CSX and was able to speak directly with **Matthew Adkins, CSX’s new program manager assigned to our case, who is located in the CSX operational offices in Augusta, GA.** We spoke for about 20 minutes, and Matthew shared the following with Fred:

- a. Matthew manages several cases in their Remediation Dept, and relative to those other cases, our case is not nearly as old nor as complex as some of the others he is also working on.
- b. CSX's oldest ongoing remediation project is in Alabama, which they started in 1965.
- c. Matthew has previously visited Staunton to become more familiar with our PCB site.
- d. Matthew acknowledged that possible future daylighting of our Wharf area could benefit from prior remediation of the CSX PCB contamination immediately upstream.
- e. Transportation of the contaminated soil has been a driving factor in all remediation solutions they have considered since their first planning, and that loading contaminated soil into rail cars is more challenging than loading it into trucks.
- f. CSX is currently finalizing a 2-phase workplan, which they will be sharing with EPA soon, and which entails initial remediation efforts in late 2026, with final soil removal concluded in late 2027.

Fred shared with Matthew that our Lewis Creek Watershed Advisory Committee has been actively engaged as follows:

- g. We worked with VA-DEQ relative to their last testing of fish samples, watershed-wide.
- h. We've previously engaged with all tangential rail stakeholders, including both Buckingham Branch and the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority
- i. We maintain a monthly dialogue with EPA, relative to CSX progress; and that their new program manager Amanda Michel had contacted CSX's consultant WSP, but was disappointed to not have heard back from them - hence my call directly to CSX.
- j. LCWAC continues to discuss CSX PCB contamination at every one of our monthly meetings, and that we reflect overall community interest in seeing full remediation.
- k. I concluded our chat with an invitation to Matthew that he contact me before his next visit, and that we'd be happy to host him for coffee at Crucible, across from their contamination site.

Subsequently, Amanda's most recent communication with me is this email message:

"I don't have any CSX updates at this time. I may be presenting at the Virginia Brownfields Conference in June, though it is not yet confirmed. Since it's hosted in Staunton, I'm planning to coordinate a site visit to CSX with VDEQ while I'm there. I'll keep you posted once all of that is finalized."

The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) website contains the following:

Each year, Virginia DEQ's VRP and Brownfields team hosts a conference that includes mobile workshops, project highlights, and technical sessions relevant to Brownfields work in Virginia and beyond. This effort is generally a collaboration with the EPA Region III Brownfields team and the host city where the conference will be held. The 2026 Virginia Brownfields Conference will be held in Staunton, Virginia June 8-10, 2026. Conference planning is underway with additional details to be announced.

The Virginia DEQ website contains a Brownfields project database, which includes these four (4) entries:

VRP Number	Site Name	Primary Status Name	Secondary Status Name	Site Type	Geographic City	Geographic Valley	Site Address	Contaminant Type	Contaminants	Contaminants
VRP00462	CSX-Former Staunton Metal Recyclers	Enrolled in Program	Awaiting Participant Action	Industry	Staunton	Valley	2.94	Metals	petroleum products, PCBs	Lead
VRP00462	CSX-Former Staunton Metal Recyclers	Enrolled in Program	Awaiting Participant Action	Industry	Staunton	Valley	2.94	Other Contaminants	petroleum products, PCBs	Lead
VRP00462	CSX-Former Staunton Metal Recyclers	Enrolled in Program	Awaiting Participant Action	Industry	Staunton	Valley	2.94	Petroleum Products	petroleum products, PCBs	Lead
VRP00462	CSX-Former Staunton Metal Recyclers	Enrolled in Program	Awaiting Participant Action	Industry	Staunton	Valley	2.94	Solvents / Degreasers	petroleum products, PCBs	Lead

Discussion for Lewis Creek Watershed Committee – Should, and if so, how can we be involved in DEQ’s upcoming Brownfields Conference in Staunton, 8-10 June 2026?

Reminder - 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:

- EPA will initiate a 30-day public comment period** through a notice published in our local News Leader.
- 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**.
- If substantial comments are received from the public, then **EPA will also conduct their own official public meeting in Staunton**.

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, and Nutrient

- 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, and Gini**
- 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; with help from FOMR’s Howard Kator, Randolph is currently understanding and calibrating readings for dissolved oxygen, impacts by sediment accumulation, and algae growth. – **Randolph**

8. ***Future Visions of Daylighted Streams & Watershed Projects – Coye, Randolph & Fred***
- 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 – Coye?***
 - b. **Wharf structural issues in 2025 and 2026**
 - i. Coye has been attending **Staunton Economic Development’s** monthly **Wharf Business Meetings**. Now meeting on the first Wednesday of each month, the most recent meeting was on Wednesday, 03 December 2025 – **Coye?**
 - ii. Randolph has been attending most **Staunton City Council Meetings**, when the Wharf is being discussed; the most recent Council discussions were at their meeting on 11 December 2025 – **Randolph? Others?**
 - iii. Any other recent meetings / updates / greater public outreach? – **Randolph, Coye, Willow? Others?**
 - 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 a grant from CSPDC for Riparian Buffer plantings along Lewis Creek** – 45 trees to be planted along the south side of Lewis Creek, and 90 wetland plantings along the north side. Volunteers will be needed for several planting dates in March – planning to reach out to volunteer bases of Shenandoah Green, FOMR, YMCA Youth Corps, Shenandoah Valley Club of the Deaf. Any other suggestions? - **All**
9. ***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*

Spring 2026 Activities – *Staunton Public Schools plan to release their trout, as follows:*

Bessie Weller Elementary - 5th Grade – Science teacher Ashley Cole maintains their tank. Spring 2026 trout release planned for Asylum Creek behind the school. Ashley recently stated: ***“Thanks for the check-in, Fred! Happy New Year everyone! Our trout at Bessie are doing fabulous. I just checked on them yesterday and they are very large and active. Ashley”***

Ware Elementary - 5th Grade – Science Teacher Shane Brubaker maintains their tank. 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 maintain their 3 tanks. 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.

10. 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?

11. Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) – Annual Clean the Bay Day (CBD) - -Saturday, 02 May 2026, 9am-12 Noon – Willow has completed Staunton's 2026 registration paperwork – thank you Willow! Note that the CBF scheduled their watershed-wide clean-up date **one month prior to past years**, with the intent to capture more student involvement before the school year ends, as well as to avoid volunteer loss due to summer vacations.

12. Consideration for Adoption of a Riparian Buffer or Stream Protection Overlay (SPO) District – Jeff? Rodney? – 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 also available is 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 / Summer 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 / Summer 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

June 8-10, 2026 (Monday-Tuesday) – VA DEQ's annual Brownfields Summit – to be held in Staunton – possible LCWAC involvement?

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 2023-2028, as updated 9/16/2024; General Permit No. VAR040133, 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 9/30/2025, for Permit Cycle 3, Year 2, -01 July 2024 through 30 June 2025; General Permit No. VAR040133

City of Staunton, Virginia Chesapeake Bay Action Plan, 2023-2028, revised 18 Dec 2024

The three 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 & Nature Trail

Brandywine Conservancy and Pennsylvania Land Trust Association - Model Riparian Overlay