

-Draft-

Friends of Still Creek Meeting Summary

Monday, January 8, 2007

7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Greenbelt Park

Greenbelt, MD 20770

Meeting attendees:

Shobha Duncan

Bill Duncan

Michele Touchet

Fred Gasper

Harriette Phelps

Alan Turnbull

Alex Culver (National Park Service)

John Galli (Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments)

Kate Levendosky (Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments)

I. Welcome and Introductions

Mr. Bill Duncan welcomed the meeting attendees and asked all present to introduce themselves.

II. Reading and Approval of 11/20/06 Meeting Summary

The meeting minutes from the 11/20/06 meeting were unanimously approved

III. Anacostia Citizens' Summit Update

Mr. John Galli (COG) reported that the Anacostia Watershed Citizens Association is planning a watershed-wide citizens' summit for March 24th, 2007. The summit will be held at the University of Maryland and will be in the format of a facilitated meeting. The aim of the summit is to bring together all of the existing subwatershed groups to talk about their common concerns, the current state of the restoration effort and how to accelerate the restoration of the Anacostia. The Honorable Tom Dernoga will give the opening speech and during lunch time, the chair of the Anacostia Steering Committee will talk to the meeting attendees.

Mr. Galli briefly explained the new Anacostia governance structure, which consists of a Leadership Council (made up of the Mayor of D.C., the governor of Maryland and the two County Executives), a Steering Committee (provides policy and oversight), and a Management Committee (the implementation arm of the partnership). This new governance structure was developed in order to accelerate the restoration effort and support comprehensive restoration planning.

Mr. Galli said that each subwatershed group will have a chance to make a short presentation during the summit. At the end, the facilitator will summarize the meeting outcomes into a report, which will then be distributed. In order to make things run smoothly at the meeting, there will be a pre-meeting for the subwatershed group leaders and representatives on January 24th at Bladensburg Waterfront Park. Each subwatershed group has been asked to come to the pre-meeting prepared to share their top three items in the following categories.

- 1.) Major Concerns
- 2.) Restoration Priorities
- 3.) Greatest Successes
- 4.) Restoration Recommendations

The following is a summary of the ensuing discussion.

- Mr. Bill Duncan suggested that stormwater runoff, trash and pollution are the top three concerns for Still Creek. He noted that educating neighbors about the watershed should be a priority for the group.
- Ms. Michele Touchet said that illegal dumping is a problem in the watershed, and the challenge is getting law enforcement to follow through.
- Ranger Culver commented that the signs that the group worked to get put up along Kenilworth Avenue really did make a difference in those immediate areas.
- Ms. Michele Touchet asked who paid for the signs.
- Mr. Galli replied that the State Highway Administration paid for the signs and put them up. He suggested that if the group likes the stormwater retrofit that the county installed near the highway, they could contact Dr. Cheng at Prince George's County Department of Environmental Resources and advocate for the retrofit to be extended down Kenilworth Avenue to Good Luck Road.
- The group brainstormed the following items.
 - 1.) Major Concerns
 - a. Stormwater runoff
 - b. Trash/Illegal Dumping
 - c. Pollution
 - 2.) Restoration Priorities
 - a. Surveying Streams
 - b. Neighborhood Education
 - c. Stream Restoration
 - 3.) Greatest Successes
 - a. Signs on Kenilworth Avenue
 - b. Greenbrook Lake Cleanup with Maret School Volunteers
 - c. Initial awareness raising events (tours, booths, trash survey training, fish count, etc.)
 - 4.) Recommendations
 - a. Better Law Enforcement
 - b. Green Highways Extended Down Kenilworth Avenue to Good Luck Rd.
 - c. Stream Signage

IV. Reports

Stream Survey and Monitoring

Mr. Bill Duncan reported that he has gotten a GPS unit and waders and is ready to start surveying Still Creek and its tributaries. He said that he aims to get out and survey stream sections every Saturday morning with decent weather, with the goal of surveying the majority of the stream system before spring. Mr. Duncan said that he'll let the group know when he plans to survey, so that interested people can join him.

Initial Clean-up and Stabilization

Ms. Michele Touchet reported that she has put together the following draft calendar of events for the year.

- February 24th – Stream Clean-up at Trinity Assembly of God
- April 21st - Earth Day Clean-up in Greenbelt Park
- June – Bird walk
- August – Bike Ride through Park/Watershed
- Late September – Camping in Greenbelt Park
- October – Greenbrook Lake Cleanup

The following is a summary of the ensuing discussion.

- Ranger Culver noted that the group will need to have a permit (~\$10) in order to have a bike ride in the park.
- Mr. Fred Gasper commented that having a clean-up event once per month would be advisable, given the amount of trash and the potential to use cleanup events to recruit new members.
- Mr. Alan Turnbull noted that trash accumulates at different rates in different areas.
- Mr. John Galli suggested that surveying is a good strategy to use in order to prioritize areas that need to be cleaned up. He also suggested that the group should try to quantify the amount of trash that is collected at cleanup events. COG could provide a scale for the group to weigh the trash bags collected. Mr. Galli mentioned that there are alternative ways to address the trash problem, saying that the Friends of Sligo Creek worked with Debbie Veliz from the Issak Walton League to make trash booms using plastic bottles and plastic fencing.
- Mr. Fred Gasper said that the group could apply for a mini-grant from the Anacostia Trails Heritage Area for funds to set up a trash boom in the watershed.
- Ms. Harriette Phelps noted that if the group installs trash booms, then it would be possible to collect good data on where the trash is coming from and how fast it accumulates.
- Mr. Galli reported that FoSCr (along with BCWWG and CCRIC) is welcome to participate in a herring transplantation event that COG, BARC and M-NCPPC are planning for this spring.
- Ranger Culver suggested that the group participate in the Potomac Watershed Cleanup organized by the Alice Ferguson Foundation in the spring. He said that the first meeting of site leaders will be held on January 20th.

- Ms. Phelps recommended coordinating the events calendar with BCWWG and CCRIC.

Outreach/Communication

Mr. Fred Gasper reported that he has been working to get a story about the Friends of Still Creek and the other Anacostia subwatershed groups written by one of the papers in the area. He said that he sent the story idea to the Washington Post and got no response, so he has moved on to the Washington Times and is waiting to see whether they are interested in the story.

Mr. Gasper passed out the story idea that he sent the Washington Times along with the letter that he drafted to the Trinity Assembly of God. The letter to the Trinity Assembly of God provides some background about FoSCr and the watershed and includes an offer to help the church with the cleanup of the pond on their property.

The following is a summary of the discussion about outreach.

- Mr. Alan Turnbull said that if the church agrees to the cleanup, the group should ask whether there is a chance to speak with the congregation or a group of parishioners before the event.
- Ms. Shobha Duncan suggested that the group should try to get the event in the church's Sunday bulletin.
- Ms. Michele Touchet reported that the church does have a youth group, and said that it would be a good idea to contact the youth minister.
- Mr. Bill Duncan said that if members of the youth group come to the cleanup, it would be a good idea to incorporate a short lesson about stream ecology into the event.
- Mr. Alan Turnbull passed out an outline of next steps in developing the group's work in advocacy, outreach and public relations. He suggested that an easy and effective way to spread the word about Friends of Still Creek would be to have members of FoSCr go to meetings of other local groups to talk about the group and the Still Creek watershed.
- Mr. Duncan suggested devoting more time at the next meeting to discuss how to increase the group's volunteer base.

Organization

Mr. Bill Duncan said that the group needs to apply to become an official 501(c)3 non-profit organization. He volunteered to work on the next steps in that process.

V. Planning for Quarterly Meeting

Mr. Bill Duncan said that for a larger quarterly meeting, the group would need to find a speaker, decide on a place to hold the meeting, and work to effectively advertise the event. He suggested that an attendance of 30 people would be a great goal. The meeting should include an update on what Friends of Still Creek has been doing and what the group has planned for the future.

The following is a summary of the ensuing discussion.

- Mr. Alan Turnbull said that the meeting should provide people with an opportunity to learn about something new. He suggested that the meeting could be one hour long, with a 30 minute talk and 30 minutes for people to mingle.
- Mr. Galli said that having a larger meeting is a great idea, as it is a good draw for new members.
- Mr. Alan Turnbull raised the question of whether the group can handle a full schedule of events, along with organizing these larger, quarterly meetings.
- Ms. Harriette Phelps commented that BCWWG is planning a program meeting about stormwater.
- Mr. Alan Turnbull said that he is interested in working with BCWWG on holding a joint stormwater meeting.
- Mr. Duncan said that a FoSCr quarterly meeting would be for a slightly different audience, and have a different goal than the BCWWG stormwater meeting. He said that the group should have the meeting fairly soon, and suggested May might be a good time period to aim for.

VI. Greenbelt Park Bridge Replacement Update

Ranger Alex Culver reported that all of the bridges have been replaced. The official opening of the bridges will be in the spring. Ranger Culver said that he would let the group know when the date of the opening is determined.

VII. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m. The next meeting will be held from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. at the Greenbelt Park Ranger Station on February 5th.