

P W R

Report

2008-2009

The Potomac Watershed Roundtable is a regional government-citizen forum whose purpose is to promote collaboration and cooperation on environmental concerns, especially water quality issues, among the various local governments and stakeholder interest groups residing within the Virginia side of the middle and lower Potomac River watershed.

The Roundtable's members include nine Virginia counties, six Virginia towns and cities, six soil and water conservation districts, and nine stakeholder groups.

The Roundtable was launched in the fall of 2000 at the conclusion of Potomac Forum I. Since then, the Roundtable has sponsored four more regional Potomac Forums.

Eleven state and federal agencies assist the Roundtable as non-voting members.

Potomac Watershed Roundtable



Highlights

2008

The January 4 meeting was held at the Lord Fairfax Community College in Warrenton. The John Marshall SWCD was the host district. Continuing the theme of water conservation, the main focus of the meeting was graywater. There were presentations about the building codes that govern installation of **graywater** systems, local and national examples of the sources and uses of graywater, the role and perspective of the Virginia Department of Health, and what the future may hold for graywater uses and regulations. The Roundtable discussed the many aspects of graywater usage, as well as the use of rainwater, which was the theme of the previous meeting in October.

The April 4 meeting was held at the Visitor Center at Frying Pan Park in Herndon. The Northern Virginia SWCD was the host district. The theme of the meeting was **Low Impact Development – Where Should It Go From Here**. Speakers discussed

Members

Soil and Water Conservation Districts

- John Marshall
- Loudoun
- Northern Neck
- Northern Virginia
- Prince William
- Tri-County/City

Counties

- Arlington
- Fairfax
- Loudoun
- Fauquier
- Prince William
- King George
- Northumberland
- Westmoreland
- Stafford

Cities & Towns

- Fairfax
- Falls Church
- Manassas
- Manassas Park
- Colonial Beach
- Alexandria

Other Stakeholders

- General Assembly
- Planning District Commissions
- Water and Wastewater Utilities
- Environmental
- Agriculture and Forestry
- Fishing and Boating
- Development, Construction and Real Estate
- Waste Management and Recycling
- Residents of the Watershed

experiences with implementing LID in two counties in northern Virginia. Other presentations included a briefing on the status of the LID Supplement to the Northern Virginia BMP Handbook, an overview of the Chesapeake Bay Program's Phase III Code Review and requirement for an Annual Implementation Report, and a review of the status of several state initiatives related to stormwater and the new stormwater regulations. Another presentation described the findings of an evaluation of the physical characteristics of 20 Rain Gardens that have been built in Fairfax County, along with recommendations for improving their design, installation and maintenance.

The July 11 meeting was held at the Manassas Park Middle School in Prince William County. The Prince William SWCD was the host district. The theme of the meeting was **Urban Nutrient Management**. Presentations described state-level initiatives as well as local strategies and initiatives to reduce nutrient pollution from urban landscapes. Speakers gave different perspectives on turf grass, conservation landscaping, the use of native plants, regulatory drivers and compliance, as well as the assumptions underpinning the issues and the need for more scientific data. Lunch was served in accordance with sustainable conferencing practices, which include the use of locally grown foods, reduced use of packaging, 'ecotainer' cups, compostable utensils and recycling.

The October 3 meeting was held at the Loudoun Water Complex. The Northern Virginia SWCD and Loudoun Water were the meeting hosts. The theme of the meeting was **Water Re-Use**. Dr. Grizzard gave an interesting presentation on Indirect Potable Reuse from Northern Virginia and Orange County, California

to Singapore. There were presentations about Virginia's new Water Reclamation and Reuse Regulation and Water Reuse at the Broad Run Water Reclamation Facility. Attendees toured the Broad Run Facility, which included the new membrane bioreactor technology.

On October 22, the Roundtable co-sponsored with DCR and Virginia Tech a **Rain-water Harvesting** workshop at the Northern Virginia Center in Falls Church.

The Roundtable meetings also included updates on local, state and national pro-



Quarterly Roundtable Meetings

grams and initiatives. All jurisdictional and SWCD members began the second year of their three-year terms on January 1. The Membership Committee was active throughout the year, and members and alternates were appointed as vacancies occurred. The Legislative Committee recommended three items to convey to the 40 senators and delegates who represent the lower Potomac watershed in the General Assembly. The web site was updated throughout the year to include the minutes and presentations made at quarterly meetings, meeting announcements, revised member lists, and announcements and links to other meetings, events and information.

2009

On January 1, all jurisdictional members began the third year of their three-year terms, and all stakeholder members began the second year of their three-year terms.

The January 9 meeting was held at the Lord Fairfax Community College in Warrenton. The John Marshall SWCD was the host district. **Climate Change and the Potomac River** were the featured topics. There was a presentation on the stringent goals for reducing the region's green house gas emissions, which were adopted by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments. MWCOG's *Climate Change Report* provides research and statistics about climate change and the Best Practices and Policies to Reduce Greenhouse Gases lists a broad array of 49 practices and policies, including energy, land-use, transportation, green infrastructure, financing, and education. The Chair reported on the Governor's Commission on Climate Change, which issued its report in December 2008. The Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin made a presentation on a study it is doing in the Potomac, in a cooperative effort with The Nature Conservancy, to determine the ideal (environmental) flow to sustain aquatic ecosystems and provide goods and services to people. The ICPRB also gave an update on the Potomac Basin Drinking Source Water Protection Partnership. All of the presentations are posted in the meeting archives on the Roundtable's website. The Roundtable's Chair led a discussion of the outlook for 2009 and beyond, given the recent local and national elections and changes and the talk of new hope to address environmental challenges.

The April 3 meeting was held at the Reston Community Center in Reston. The Northern Virginia SWCD was the host district. The theme of the meeting was **Urban Stream Restoration**. There was a presentation on the Little Pimmit Run Stream Restoration Project. The Northern Virginia SWCD facilitated a seven member public-private partnership to restore 750 feet of a severely degraded large urban stream. The project was located on both public and private land. Natural channel design and several innovative measures were used to implement the project.

Officers

Hon. Penny Gross Chair
(Fairfax County Board of Supervisors)

Hon. Marty Nohe
1st Vice Chair
(Prince William County Board of Supervisors)

Hon. Harry Atherton
2nd Vice Chair
(Agriculture and Forestry Stakeholder Member)

Topics

- Potomac Tributary Strategies
- nonpoint source pollution
- water quantity and quality
- nutrients
- stormwater management
- land-use planning
- best management practices and innovative techniques
- green buildings and energy
- agricultural best management practices
- stream restoration
- water conservation
- rainwater harvesting
- graywater
- water reuse

Non-Voting Members

- Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation – Division of Soil and Water
- Chesapeake Bay Local Assistance Division, DCR
- Virginia Department of Environmental Quality
- VA Department of Forestry
- Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries
- Virginia Cooperative Extension
- Virginia Department of Transportation
- Virginia Department of Health
- USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service
- U.S. Department of Interior
- Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin

Private homeowners paid half of the design cost and 62% of the construction cost. A second presentation was on the Northern Virginia Stream Restoration Project, which is providing both financial and environmental benefits to the Reston community. Wetland Studies and Solutions, Inc., in cooperation with Reston Association, established a stream mitigation bank as the instrument for receiving and dispensing mitigation funds for the stream restoration projects. In the afternoon, Roundtable participants toured the restored segments of Snakeden Branch, the first projects in the \$70million Phase I stream restoration project. Updates from the Chair included: the Chesapeake Bay Executive Council meeting at Mt. Vernon in May; briefings received by the Bay Program's Local Government Advisory Committee on the health of the Bay, and information on a DC plastic bag bill; and briefings received by the EPA's Local Government Advisory Committee on the status of America's infrastructure and the Gulf of Mexico Alliance. Also, the Roundtable received an update on state legislative action that supported the Roundtable's recommendation for legislation to address pollution problems associated with septic systems

The July 10 meeting was held at Straford Hall, near Montross on the Northern Neck. The Northern Neck and Northern Virginia SWCDs were the host districts. The theme of the meeting was **Sustainability on Northern Neck**. Presentations included an overview of present-day agriculture on the Northern Neck and innovative LID practices planned for the Northern Neck Farm Museum. Stratford Hall's executive director described the resources, organic farming and sustainable agriculture activities on the property. The education staff described the environmental interests and broad array of education programs for all ages. There was a presentation on Longwood University's 637 acre Hull Springs Farm, a property with diverse habitat, farmland, forest, shoreline and wetlands. The goal is to make the farm a model of conservation and sustainability and to use it as a vehicle for educating adults and the greater community about strategies they can adopt and repeat. Recent efforts include a created wetland and a living shoreline. Plans are underway to establish a wetland mitigation bank, composed primarily of forested wetlands. A presentation on Shellfish TMDLs for creeks throughout the Northern Neck included a discussion of the issues and implementation challenges, including evaluation methods and funding. A grassroots citizens' group has recommended several practical ways to begin to address the causes of the impairment. The Northern Neck Land Conservancy gave an update on its activities, including working with the Northern Neck Planning District Commission to develop of a new land evaluation tool that uses GIS and weighted criteria to help guide decisions on land conservation. Updates from the Chair included the Chesapeake Bay Executive Meeting at Mt. Vernon in May where new two-year milestones were set for the Bay. Also, the Roundtable received a briefing on a study of the emerging technology of pyrolysis, which converts sewage

sludge, wood waste and poultry litter into a fuel. After the meeting, there was an opportunity to tour the estate, which included the mill, mill pond, beach and cliffs.

The October 2 meeting was held at the Park Operations Building in Arlington County. The Northern Virginia SWCD and Arlington County were the meeting hosts. The theme of the meeting was **Green Buildings and Energy Conserva-**

tion, with presentations on Arlington County green building programs and building energy retrofit programs. This included an overview of green building in Arlington, which uses the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating system for green buildings, and the County's green building incentive program for com-

mercial developers. Arlington County strives to build all new County facilities to the silver LEED level. The Arlington County Green Home Choice program provides a structure and support system to help builders and homeowners build green. It is based on the Earthcraft program from Atlanta, Georgia and offers points for various environmentally friendly elements and techniques in the project. Participants in the program get expedited permit review as in incentive, Green Home Choice signs for their yard, and recognition at an annual County Board ceremony. In order to try to reduce emissions from County activities, Arlington County started the Arlington Initiative to Reduce Emissions (Fresh AIRE), with a goal of 10% reduction by 2012. Arlington has also recently published building energy report cards, summarizing energy use in all County facilities and noting any energy saving retrofits that have been completed in the buildings. The Legislative Committee recommended several items to convey to the 40 senators and delegates who represent the lower Potomac watershed in the General Assembly. The chair led a discussion on the follow up to the Chesapeake Bay Executive Order 13508. A draft report was released on September 10, followed by a 30 day public comment period. The discussion included local government interests and roles in achieving a healthy Bay watershed, and concerns relative to the Executive Order and the Chesapeake Bay TMDL.

The Web site was updated throughout the year to include the minutes and presentations made at quarterly meetings, meeting announcements, revised member lists, and announcements and links to other meetings, events and information.

Web site

Visit the Roundtable's Web site, www.potomacroundtable.org, for:

- Meeting schedule
- Announcements about upcoming meetings
- Past meeting presentations, handouts and minutes
- Presentations at the latest Potomac Forum
- Contact information for members and alternates
- Legislative recommendations
- Links to member sites and other related sites
- The PWR Report—2003–2005 highlights
- Potomac Council pages
- Related announcements
- Hear the "Sewer Guy"

Funding/ Support

The Roundtable received funding from the Environmental Protection Agency's Chesapeake Bay Program through the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), via grant number BAY-2008-06-PT. The member jurisdictions also contributed financial support. The Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District provided administrative support.

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Potomac Watershed Roundtable
c/o Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District
12055 Government Center Parkway, Suite 905
Fairfax, Virginia 22035-5512

Phone: 703-324-1460, TTY 711

E-mail: conservationdistrict@fairfaxcounty.gov

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 1015
Fairfax VA 22030

www.potomacroundtable.org