

2.15.18 Patuxent River Commission Meeting

Updates

Patuxent Challenge

Jason Dubow reported that the Patuxent Challenge website was now live and that 150 visitors had visited the website. Some signs have been posted at the Challenge site locations and the brochures are being distributed. Barbara Sollner-Webb noted one correction on the brochure – the Supplee Lane Recreation Area should be identified as being Prince George’s County (instead of Montgomery). Jason will have the change made.

Better Maryland State Development Plan

The March meeting agenda will include a presentation by Chuck Boyd with Maryland Department of Planning on the Better Maryland State Development Plan.

Nutrient Trading Regulations

Jason Dubow noted that the Nutrient Trading Regulations, that the Commission had provided comments on, are currently on hold at the Joint Committee on Administrative, Executive and Legislative Review. Matt Rowe will check on status.

Report from Sewage Overflow Notification Workgroup on MDE’s Draft Notification Guidance

Dan Rosen provided an overview of the workgroups comments, noting that the draft Guidance document is generally an improvement but there was still concern about arbitrary time periods for lifting an advisory versus using sampling data per COMAR. Barbara added that the document was too verbose and recommended a shorter, concise version. Fred Tutman noted that water quality should be the standard and the focus should be on testing instead of length of time.

The Commission directed Barbara Sollner-Webb and Fred Tutman to prepare a shortened guidance document for the March meeting. Jason will check with the Deputy Attorney General for guidance on COMAR and the role of professional discretion in determining the opening of impacted waters.

Proposal to hold TMDL Workshop for Local Governments

Jason Dubow noted that the initial interest letters had been sent to the local jurisdictions and soil conservation districts and responses were already being received. He discussed the opportunity to establish a workgroup to help develop and guide the workshop. The Commission discussed the general concept for the workshop, noting that all water quality goals should be considered.

Volunteers for the workgroup include: Martin Chandler, Matt Rowe (or other MDE staff), Steve Allen (volunteered by Mike Leszcz), Mark Symborski, Barbara Sollner-Webb and Fred Tutman.

Sandy Spencer offered the Patuxent Wildlife Refuge as a potential location for the workshop.

2018 Annual Action Plan

The Commission reviewed the updated Preservation/Restoration and Advocacy sections. The Tourism workgroup is finalizing the eXcitement section and it will be included in the March meeting materials. The Commission anticipates voting on the Plan at the March meeting.

Environmental Bills of Interest to the Commission (2018 Maryland Legislative Session)

Dan Rosen provided a spreadsheet of proposed legislation of interest to the Commission. The Commission voted to send letters of support for the following (with State Agency representatives abstaining from the vote):

HB217 – Prince George’s County – Authority to Impose Fees for Use of Disposable Bags PG 420-18

HB 538/SB651 – Environment – Expanded Polystyrene Food Service Products – Prohibition

Open Floor

Fred Tutman announced that the Annual Patuxent River Cleanup is scheduled for April 14. If you have a location and want to participate, provide the site information to him and it will be added to the Patuxent Riverkeeper website. He also noted the “Taking Nature Black Conference” on February 28 has reached capacity but they are in the process of securing another location so the larger crowd can be accommodated.

Sandy Hertz recommended a presentation by Maryland State Highway Administration on their Salt Management Plan.

Mike Leszcz noted that plans are being developed for expansion of the waterfront park in Laurel and the Gude Mansion was recently purchased by the City. He suggested a presentation by Steve Allen at the March meeting on the status of recent City of Laurel grant applications; and for a future meeting, a presentation by the Patuxent Golf Course project engineer on the extensive regrading project.

Erik Michelsen noted a new trail connection between Prince George’s and Anne Arundel counties – more details will be provided at the March meeting.