



# PATUXENT RIVER COMMISSION

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**Councilman Michael Leszcz, Co-Chairman**  
**Christopher Perry, Vice Chairman**

*We, the Patuxent River Commission, envision a Patuxent River ecosystem as vital and productive in 2050 as it was in the 1950s. We therefore commit to be stewards and advocates for the Patuxent River and to lead and inspire actions to protect, enhance, and restore living resources and the natural, cultural, economic, and recreational values of the Patuxent River and its watershed.*

☀ Please call Daniel Rosen at MDP 410-767-4577 if you have any questions or comments.

## MEETING SUMMARY

**January 8, 2020**

**Maryland Department of Agriculture**

**Annapolis, MD**

**4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.**

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**Members:** Michael Leszcz, Chair; Christopher Perry, Vice-Chair; Erik Michelsen; John Swartz; Jim Caldwell; Steve Shofar; Joanna Smith; Martin Chandler; Mark Symborski; Katina Shoulars; John Hartline; Albert Tucker; Andrew Der; Barbara Sollner-Webb; John McCoy; Scott Knoche; Luis Dieguez; Byron Petrauskas; Alison Santoro; Jason Dubow; John Denniston

**Attendees:** Paul Cucuzzella; Jeanine Nutter (for Steve Darcey); Kim Finch; La Verne Gray; Tommy Baden

**Staff:** Dan Rosen, Debbie Herr Cornwell, Jason Dubow

### **Introductions and Approval of minutes**

Minutes from the November 13, 2019 were approved.

### **Updates**

Patuxent TMDL Implementation – Staff will send the local TMDL summary of interviews conducted in 2016 and 2018 to the local County, WSSC and MDE representatives to determine if the activities and obstacles identified are still accurate and/or current. A subcommittee meeting will be scheduled within the next two months to review feedback and process for moving forward.

### **2019 Patuxent River Challenge Update**

Representing the eXcitement workgroup, Tommy Baden provided an update on the 2019 Challenge. He noted there are 16 sites included in the challenge and they are located along the length of the river. In both 2018 and 2019, five completed challenges were submitted via email. In addition to the official email submissions, there were many additional postings on social media. Overall, positive feedback was received. Some hurdles the committee has faced in implementing the program include limited resources of funds and time. Marketing of the program is difficult; a funding budget would be helpful. One

consideration to help with marketing would be identifying a centralized social media manager; this could possibly be an intern.

In 2020, the same sites and activities will be included in the challenge; the committee is also looking into developing a geocaching feature and improving the marketing outreach.

### **Patuxent River Projects**

Steve Allen, Emergency Manager with the City of Laurel, provided an overview of the Water Resources Study for the Patuxent River; covering the riverine portion of the Patuxent River from just upstream of Western Branch to downstream of Brighton Dam – approximately 37.7 miles. The study area includes portions of the City of Laurel, Prince George’s County, City of Bowie, Anne Arundel County and Howard County. The US Army Corps of Engineers will provide assistance in completing a flood evaluation for the study area; the anticipated completion date is by late 2020 or early 2021. Maryland Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) is a partner as well and once the technical study is complete will take the lead in assisting with the implementation of the identified projects.

At the next partner’s meeting, the potential for including an analysis of the sediment TMDL for the 37-mile study area will be discussed. Additional funding is needed for the analysis.

### **Draft Bylaws – Discussion and Vote**

Paul Cucuzzella provided an overview and summarized the changes provided by the Bylaws workgroup. Barbara Sollner-Webb was unable to attend the Bylaws workgroup meeting and asked that “commissioners’ duties” be included in the bylaws. The commission discussed including the duties and it was suggested the “statutory duties” be included to make commissioners aware of their responsibilities. The Commission voted to approve the bylaws as presented with the following revisions: 1) inclusion of the statutory duties; and 2) a quorum consists of 16 members.

### **Blue-green algae**

Martin Chandler presented on blue-green algae which he noted was identified as a Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB). The WSSC has a reservoir monitoring program that has been monitoring the Tridelphia and Rocky Gorge reservoirs since the 1990’s. In 2017, the monitoring program also began an analysis by a taxonomist to identify and provide quantification of the specific algal species. In 2015, the WSSC developed a response plan to develop the advisory and notification process. From 2015-2017 no detections were found in the finished drinking water; a minute trace of microcystins was occasionally found in the raw water. In addition to drinking water monitoring, the WSSC also monitors for concerns with recreational contact with the reservoir waters. In 2019, advisory levels were detected for recreational contact resulting in an advisory being issued. After two rounds of samples were below the threshold level, the advisory was lifted. Monitoring will continue and the WSSC will continue to update their response plans.

### **Information Exchange: Commissioner Actions Affecting the Patuxent River**

Jason Dubow noted that Sandy Spencer had provided him (by email) an update on the Patuxent River Wildlife Refuge stormwater management project; it will be the mitigation site for the Tipton Airport.

Jason Dubow noted that in advance of the February meeting, an email request will be sent to Commissioner members to remind them of the information exchange and invite them to provide a written update if they would like it included in the meeting materials as well as the opportunity to provide a verbal update at the meeting.