



RUSHERN L. BAKER, III  
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

# Public Meeting on Watershed Restoration in Prince George's County



July 24, 2014 • Largo, MD

## Question-and-Answer Summary

An informational public meeting was held Thursday, July 24, 2014 from 6:00pm – 8:00pm at the office of the Prince George's County Department of the Environment at 1801 McCormick Drive (Suite 140) in Largo, Maryland, to inform the public about the County's plans for developing local TMDL restoration plans for impaired waters in the County.

### List of Attendees

Name	Affiliation
Susan Barnett	EarthLink
Leo Bernard	Citizen
Larry Coffman	Prince George's County Department of the Environment
Cary Coppock	Citizen
Melissa DeSantis	Tetra Tech, Inc.
James Fisher	Citizen
Claudia Friedetzky	Sierra Club
Bruce Gilmore	Anacostia Watershed Society
Edwin Green	Citizen
Johnny Grier	Citizen
Liz Hiett	Tetra Tech, Inc.
Dave Kneipp	Citizen
Kim Knox	Citizen
CJ Lammers	Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
Jerry Maldonado	Prince George's County Department of the Environment
Peter May	Biohabitats
Sudhanshu Mishra	Prince George's County Department of the Environment
Adam Ortiz	Prince George's County Department of the Environment
Kova Pennino	Ferguson Foundation
Mark Sievers	Tetra Tech, Inc.
Sam Stribling	Tetra Tech, Inc.
Phong Trieu	Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
Lilantha Tennekoon	Prince George's County Department of the Environment
Bill Walmsley	Citizen
Debbie Weller	Prince George's County Department of the Environment
Marilyn White	Citizen



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### Questions and Answers

**Q: CJ Lammers:** How detailed will the restoration plan will be? Will it focus on specific locations or be a broader perspective?

**A: Jerry Maldonado:** Our approach is by watershed. We will not actually pinpoint certain locations.

**Q: Kim Knox:** You mentioned that inside the beltway there are lower biological integrity numbers. Are you going to prioritize areas? Will you focus restoration efforts first on the areas that need it more than others?

**A: Jerry Maldonado:** Yes. We will prioritize based on the Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs). We need to look at distributions and apply a series of alternatives to address issues.

**A: Larry Coffman:** There will be a lot of emphasis on prioritization. I expect in the initial stage it will be broad. We will have to determine the most cost-effective, most achievable goals. Each plan will have load reduction needs. We will look at their uses and then prioritize. There are a lot of different strategies to determine how to prioritize. This is an important question but difficult to answer directly.

**Q: Unidentified Citizen:** You primarily apply green infrastructure in newer versus older ponds. What is the mix of those?

**A: Larry Coffman:** We have several hundred ponds. Many were designed a long time ago. We will do an assessment and see what we can do. There may be several practices we can use. This will not give us aesthetic values because most of the effort will be to clean up the ponds.

**Q: Audience:** What is the timeline for completion of the plans?

**A: Mark Sievers:** The plans are to be completed by the end of 2014.

**Q: Unidentified Citizen:** When you go into a watershed and see major degradation, how do you plan to work with the municipalities?

**A: Larry Coffman:** We have a good relationship with most of the municipalities. We are required to work with municipalities. We will do the same sort of outreach as we do now. We want to develop a close partnership with all the municipalities.

**Q: Kim Knox:** Once you have created the strategy, will the public and municipalities be able to look at it in a draft form?

**A: Jerry Maldonado:** Yes, that is in the scope of work. There will be a draft available in November 2014.

**Q: Edwin Green:** How can the community can help you?



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**A: Larry Coffman:** As individuals you can become better aware of reducing pollution. You can become better aware of the Raincheck Rebate Program. You can become actively involved in local government and make sure they understand the need for a better quality of life. We will also need volunteers to help with things like volunteer monitoring. We may enlist the public to help determine where to build some of these green infrastructure projects. You can get your church involved in our alternative compliance program. There are a lot of things you can get involved in. That's why these meetings are important—for people to become aware of these things and to educate the public. We also have a website where a lot of this information can be found. We will be reaching out as things evolve.

**A: CJ Lammers:** Things you can do right now include developing pet waste and trash programs in your community. These are two very big problems. You can do this right now and that would make a big difference.

**C: Unidentified Citizen:** Pet waste pick up is a tall order. We have a program in place where there is a penalty, but it has been difficult to enforce.

**C: Mark Sievers:** This is where the education and outreach comes in. There are also other incentives out there.

**C: Larry Coffman:** Where we have TMDLs with bacteria—those are the areas we are going to really look at in terms of pet waste. You will see more interaction with the county as we develop those plans.

**C: Debbie Weller:** Pet waste, trash, and lawn fertilizers are key things you see in MS4s. We have to develop outreach campaigns and hopefully, in the near future, you will see these campaigns in the community.

**C: Kim Knox:** Prince George's County is also in charge of solid waste. They need to determine what to do with the pet waste and how to dispose of it on a municipal level.

**C: Larry Coffman:** That is a good point. We haven't really thought about how we can piggyback with others. This is something we need to consider.

**Q: Unidentified Citizen:** I hear you are going to work with municipalities. Is there a mechanism/incentive to work with homeowners to encourage them to make changes?

**A: Jerry Maldonado:** Homeowner associations (HOAs) are very important to us and we want them engaged. We have an agreement with Chesapeake Bay Trust to provide grants to HOAs to figure out their needs and the programs that would be good for them. This information is available online on Chesapeake Bay Trust's website. You can apply for a grant online. We also have the Raincheck Program.

**Q: Unidentified Citizen:** Is the Raincheck Rebate program a one-time cost?

**A: Larry Coffman:** Yes, but a continuous return as long as you maintain it for 3 years.



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**Q: Unidentified Citizen:** How did you decide on Bear Branch and Black Branch as locations to perform detailed water quality monitoring?

**A: Jerry Maldonado:** The two were selected by Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE). We want to track the progress for them. They are serving as representative watersheds.

**Q: Unidentified Citizen:** There are several accepted best management practice (BMP) designs. If there are others that become approved along the way, would those possibly be incorporated into the plan?

**A: Larry Coffman:** The short answer is yes. We have had a number of discussions with EPA about this. The BMPs we are planning to put on the ground are more for green development and new development; they are not suited for urban development. They have agreed that we need to look at innovative practices that are good for urban development.

**C: Unidentified Citizen:** How many nonsmokers are present? What do you do with your cigarette butts? There is no enforcement for people who dump their butts on the ground. All this goes downstream. Let's go after them.

**C: Larry Coffman:** Currently, there is no recycling value with cigarette butts. We have heard of a firm in New Jersey that is figuring out a way to work in recycling. They are working on ways to have receptacles for cigarette butts that can be collected and sent to Marlboro and get some sort of cash back incentive.

**Q: Unidentified Citizen:** You mentioned a watershed treatment model. What is that?

**A: Jerry Maldonado:** A simple calculation model that is an Excel spreadsheet. It is used to calculate pollutant loadings due to different factors. The model gives pollution rates as calculations.

**A: Debbie Weller:** The Center for Watershed Protection has the model uploaded on their website and you can go and download it.

**Q: Cary Coppock:** Is this a model you can move to an open source thing where everyone sees what goes in and what comes out?

**A: Larry Coffman:** I don't see why we can't work something out. It sounds like a good idea.

**Q: Bruce Gilmore:** Referring to the permit itself, one of the things that strikes me (going from permit to planning) as you look at the 2014 roadmap, is that first it says "develop a watershed existing condition report." Then you look at the permit in Section 4c, there is the source identification requirement. Then you go back to under restoration plans and TMDLs in Section 4e and it talks about watershed assessment. It looks like a lot of information that is gathered in one place that can be used in another. Is this a clumsy way to ask for data or can you request a document that provides all the information in one place?



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**A: Jerry Maldonado:** This will require further clarification by MDE.

**C: Larry Coffman:** We are talking about two different things. In one place we are looking at TMDLs and the other is referring to the MS4 municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4) permit. We will do the same for TMDLs and for MS4s. The things we are collecting can be used in both parts. The plan for preparing load reductions for local entities and for permits is different.

**C: Bruce Gilmore:** We are not necessarily talking about two different things.

**C: Jerry Maldonado:** MDE has general permit language for all of Maryland MS4 permits and doesn't necessarily apply it to the local plans. We agree there needs to be more clarification.

**Q: Cary Coppock:** In reference to bond issues, is there an opportunity for groups and people to invest in the county becoming greener? What is this all about?

**A: Larry Coffman:** We are looking at a number of different ways to finance our work. We can get a tax-free bond issued. The county typically does this. Private financing can be done a couple of different ways. Group financing is another way. You could have a stormwater bond where you are invested in the program and you could get money back. The problem is with the administrative part. Setting up, running, and managing the program is very involved. We haven't looked into this much because it is a little challenging to set up. If you are interested, we can discuss this further with you.

**Q: Cary Coppock:** From what I have gathered, are you projecting a life of these early installed BMPs to expire at the return rate of the bond and then have more business at the end of bond term?

**A: Larry Coffman:** There isn't a bond available to the group. The County goes to the bond market for all their needs. The County takes the proceeds and divides them up among the departments. Those bonds are usually 20-year fixed rate. As a group, we are not looking into this at this time because of logistics.

**Q: CJ Lammers:** We are glad Larry Coffman is back and we appreciate the work he has done in the past. Who takes on the maintenance of green infrastructure? How does the maintenance work?

**A: Larry Coffman:** The Clean Water Act fee will go toward long-term maintenance. The fee collected goes toward all of this. We are paying for the program out of this fund.

**Q: Unidentified Citizen:** You have programs that are trying to lower the fees. If so many people get rebates through Rain Check or alternative compliance, will you ever be at the point where the program doesn't have enough money collected to cover the costs?

**A: Larry Coffman:** There is no point at which that will happen. If everyone was to incorporate reduction actions that is great, but we will not be able to get enough people involved to the point where there are no fees generated.



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### Written Comments Submitted

The following comments were submitted via hard copy comment forms at the meeting:

- Great program. Thank you for allowing me to further build on my understanding of what DoE is doing and more importantly what I can do personally and encourage my neighbors to do.
- Great overview. Good to see Prince George's on track and giving opportunity to the residents to become informed.