

Decision Summary

Prettyboy Reservoir Watershed Implementation Meeting

October 8, 2003

Creation of a citizen-led watershed coalition is critical for improving private stewardship, building public-private partnerships and advocating on watershed protection and restoration.

Meeting participants discussed many of the water resource protection issues that had been identified in the Stewardship Exchange Team Report, such as forest sustainability, growth management, private land stewardship and public education. In general, participants agreed that in order to address many of these complex issues, there is a need for a citizen-led watershed coalition that would serve as an umbrella organization for the various private sector land trusts, preservation groups, citizen associations and watershed associations, coordinating and focusing efforts on the Prettyboy Watershed.

Challenges and Opportunities:

- There are multiple private nonprofits successfully working on land protection, historic and community preservation and water resource protection, but these efforts are not all coordinated and do not have a watershed-wide focus. There is a need for an umbrella organization to facilitate the development of shared goals and objectives and joint efforts.
- Private land stewardship is, and will continue to be, critical for the long-term protection of water resources. There is a need to educate landowners on best management practices and to provide them with the information and resources they need to be better stewards of their land, particularly agricultural landowners, who manage 47% of the land.
- Growth management is most problematic in Carroll County, where zoning is less restrictive than in northern Baltimore County and where there are fewer organized citizen-led efforts to protect land and water resources. There is a need to conduct outreach in Carroll County and provide leadership and coordination for nascent protection efforts.
- Deer overpopulation on the City-owned forest reservation and on private woodlots throughout the watershed is a threat to the sustainability and health of the forests. Both watershed residents and city residents need to be educated about deer management and its role in creating healthy forests.
- Educating the public on threats to water resources from changing land use and land management is critical to building support for long-term watershed protection efforts. Water consumers need to understand threats to their drinking water to build support for financing protection efforts, and watershed residents need to understand threats to their environment and their quality of life, in order to build support for land protection and stewardship. In particular, public education has to start in the schools where the future stewards are learning about their role in environmental protection.

Next Steps:

- An initial meeting will be held to discuss in more detail the purpose and structure of a watershed coalition. A core organizing committee will be formed at this meeting. All participants from the implementation meeting will be notified of the date, time and location.
- On November 8, 2003, there is a State of Our Waters conference at Goucher College. The core organizing committee will attend this conference, using it as an opportunity to learn from successful watershed coalitions in the area, to identify resources and build partnerships.

- A potential first activity is to coordinate a Prettyboy Watershed Awareness Day next Spring as a way to celebrate successful efforts and build citizen awareness and involvement in watershed protection.
- On October 14, 2003 there is a tour of Hannover Watershed, a forest that has been managed for watershed protection. Sustainable forest stewardship practices will be discussed. Participants will meet at Hunt Valley Mall at 9 am and will return at 3 pm. Citizen participation is encouraged.