

CLEAN WATER RECOMMENDATIONS

A Proposal for the Board of Supervisors

In a prior letter, members of the Loudoun County Preservation and Conservation Coalition (LCPCC) requested that the Board of Supervisors adopt the objective *Clean Water for All in Loudoun County* as a Board priority and central element in the Strategic Plan for your next three years.

On March 23rd the Transportation-Land Use Committee will hear a presentation from staff on the *Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan*, prepared for the County by CH2M-Hill in September 2008. The report lays the groundwork for a countywide approach to protecting watersheds and helping us reach the “Clean Water for All” objective.

The consultant listed 87 recommendations. We recognize immediate action cannot be taken on all of the recommendations, and that a comprehensive program must be developed in phases, over time. We believe the Board’s initial actions should build on what has already been accomplished and establish the foundation for a successful program that will ensure the future health of Loudoun’s water and the citizens that rely on it. Using the *Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan* as the framework, the undersigned members of LCPCC urge the Board to take the following actions:

First, we thank the Board and County staff for the on-going work that has yielded valuable data about our water resources and mapped critical areas that must be protected to ensure watershed health – areas like wetlands, stream valleys, mountainsides, the limestone Karst area, forest cover, and steep slopes. We applaud the Board and ask that you please continue the good work that is already underway.

Priority: We must understand Loudoun’s watersheds and water resources before we can make responsible decisions about their management.

Recommended Actions:

- Continue to build on the existing surface and groundwater monitoring program by collecting data and expanding the program to fill data gaps; and
- continue to analyze the data so we know what works, what doesn’t, and where to target limited resources for the most effective results.

Priority: Protect watersheds, particularly sensitive areas that have a direct impact on the health of our surface and groundwater.

Recommended Actions:

- Adopt an effective Limestone Overlay District ordinance;
- reinstate the Mountainside Development Overlay District;
- institute an effective ordinance that protects stream buffers and riparian areas;
- provide education and incentives to farmers to restore streamside buffers and fence livestock out of streams; and
- adopt better site design regulations for development to eliminate run-off and protect sensitive environmental features to the maximum extent practical.

Priority: Maintain, or restore, ecosystem health.

Recommended Actions:

- Determine and protect environmental flows for streams; and
- Develop policies for restoring habitat in wetland and upland areas.

Second, we expect the County to meet, or exceed federal and state mandates as they apply to watershed protection and pollution control.

Priority: County policies and action must meet or exceed all federal and state environmental laws.

Recommended Actions:

- Complete and adopt the Water Supply Plan;
- complete and adopt a drought management strategy; and
- make all County regulations consistent with State Stormwater Management requirements once state-level revisions are enacted.

Third, we urge the Board to begin building the infrastructure for a comprehensive approach to watershed management. Here's how:

Priority: Establish a reliable, dedicated funding source for implementation of watershed management actions.

Recommended Actions:

- Earmark a portion of the general fund for financing watershed protection and pollution prevention;
- Continue to pursue grants and other funding opportunities; and
- Consider a stormwater utility to fund watershed protection.

Priority: Establish an effective organizational structure for implementation of water programs.

Recommended Actions:

- Designate a leader with sufficient authority to coordinate water protection programs and an organizational structure capable of successfully implementing the watershed program.

Priority: Leverage outreach and public education to reduce nonpoint pollution at the source.

Recommended Actions:

- Institute a voluntary industrial and commercial pollution prevention inspection program; and
- Support existing citizen monitoring programs.

Using the *Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan* as a blueprint, let us move from planning to action by building on the watershed work already underway and establish the foundation for a program that will serve to protect the County's valuable water resources in coming years. There is no greater objective for all our citizens than to have safe, sufficient potable water in both East and West and that we

ensure our rivers and streams support healthy aquatic ecosystems, and provide safe fishing and recreation opportunities.

The following members of the Loudoun County Preservation and Conservation Coalition support this Clean Water Action for Loudoun County:

Audubon Naturalist Society
Friends of Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve
Friends of the Blue Ridge Mountains
Goose Creek Association
Lincoln Preservation Foundation
Loudoun Watershed Watch
Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy
Mosby Heritage Area Association
Mt. Zion Preservation Association
Piedmont Environmental Council
Sustainable Loudoun
The Waterford Foundation