

Friends of Still Creek Meeting Summary

Monday, September 19, 2006

7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Greenbelt Park

Greenbelt, MD 20770

Meeting attendees:

Shobha Duncan

Bill Duncan

Fred Gasper

Michele Touchet

Harriette Phelps

Alex Culver (National Park Service)

Alan Turnbull (National Park Service)

John Galli (Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments)

Kate Levendosky (Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments)

I. Welcome and Introductions

Mr. Bill Duncan welcomed the meeting attendees and asked all present to introduce themselves.

II. Greenbelt Labor Day Festival Report

Ms. Shobha Duncan reported that the Greenbelt subwatershed groups (FoSCr, CCRIC and BCWWG) won first place for their information booth at the Greenbelt Labor Day Festival. Mr. Alan Turnbull commented that he believes that the judges were impressed by the way the three groups cooperated on the booth. Mr. Bill Duncan passed around the sign-in sheet from the festival. Ms. Kate Levendosky reported that she has already added the new members to the listserve.

Mr. Bill Duncan said that at the planning meeting before the festival, the three groups (FoSCr, CCRIC and BCWWG) recognized that it would be a good idea for the groups to continue to communicate and coordinate in the future.

III. Still Creek Discovery Walk Report

Ranger Alex Culver reported that ten people attended the Still Creek Discovery Walk that was led by Ranger Kevin Barry on Sunday, September 16th. All of the attendees (three adults and seven children) found out about the event from a notice in the Penny Saver. Ranger Barry recommends that the group include the Penny Saver in all future press releases. Also, Ranger Barry has volunteered to lead a Still Creek Walk before Friends of Still Creek meetings in the future.

IV. Incorporation Update

Mr. Bill Duncan reported that effective 8/18/06, the Friends of Still Creek is officially incorporated. Mr. Duncan is the resident agent for the organization. Mr. Duncan commented that the next step is to figure out how to become a 501(c)3. Mr. Fred Gasper volunteered to check into the process of applying for 501(c)3 status with the IRS.

V. Schrom Hills Park Cleanup Update

Ms. Michelle Touchet reported that everything is ready for the cleanup of Greenbrook Pond in Schrom Hills Park on October 7, 2006. She said that she will have bags and some gloves, but recommended that volunteers bring their own heavy-duty gloves. Ms. Touchet asked the group whether it would be advisable to include a cleanup of the pond at Trinity Church on the same day. Mr. Duncan suggested limiting the October 7th event to the area surrounding Greenbrook Pond. Ms. Touchet suggested that the group could provide pizza and drinks for volunteers after the cleanup. Ms. Shobha Duncan suggested that the group could also offer FoSCr stickers to volunteers.

VI. Long-term Strategic Planning

Mr. Duncan reviewed the following components of strategic planning.

- Review mission statement
- Develop vision statement (what the world would look like if the group succeeded)
- Focus on the present reality by identifying the following
 - The organization's strengths
 - The organization's weaknesses
 - Opportunities in the outside world
 - Threats to the group from the outside world
- Identify critical issues for the group, using the issues raised in the previous step
- Develop goals and objectives that address the critical issues

Mr. Duncan began the process by reading the mission statement to the group.

The mission of the Friends of Still Creek is to care for and protect the stream that flows through the heart of Greenbelt National Park. Still Creek, fed by waters beginning outside the park on the lands where we live and work, is affected by our every action. With this in mind, we seek to understand how people treat these lands and in turn, create ways to involve the broader community in restoring the ecological health of the watershed. We envision a stream system that is clean, attractive and teeming with life and we are committed to making this a reality.

Mr. Duncan suggested that since the mission statement was recently composed, it may be too early for the group to re-visit it. Also, he said that the mission statement includes enough of a vision statement for the group to skip to the SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis.

Mr. Fred Gasper asked when a timeline would be included in the planning process. Mr. Duncan replied that developing a timeline is the next step. After the goals and objectives are developed, the group should look at its resources and consider how long it will take to

implement the strategic plan. Mr. John Galli agreed that a timeline is a critical component of planning. He suggested the group should think both short term and long term and identify certain milestones. Mr. Duncan agreed that both long term goals and short term objectives are important.

The group brainstormed following lists.

Strengths

- ♦ Greenbelt National Park – landowner of watershed, natural resource
- ♦ “Reference” stream at Upper Beaverdam Creek for comparison
- ♦ Municipalities/county
- ♦ Core group of people
- ♦ Kate, John – COG
- ♦ Newness, unhampered by expectation
- ♦ Geographic diversity – New Carrollton
- ♦ Connection to other watershed groups
- ♦ Knowledgeable caring volunteers; eyes and ears
- ♦ Incorporation
- ♦ Proximity to two high schools – involvement of students
- ♦ Proximity to UMD
- ♦ Local population supportive of our objectives
- ♦ Local press
- ♦ Expertise – scientists, etc.
- ♦ Staff assistance – Alan T.

Weaknesses

- ♦ Stream appears OK to many
- ♦ Low membership base
- ♦ No money; No long-term budget
- ♦ Limited time available (over-committed volunteers)
- ♦ Limited outreach
- ♦ No plan (yet)
- ♦ No clear track record/success
- ♦ Low visibility
- ♦ Least established of the local groups
- ♦ Not enough info about the creek itself

Opportunities

- ♦ Virgin County Council rep.
- ♦ Spread word/educate community
- ♦ Opportunity to involve neighborhood, HOA, church, etc. organizations
- ♦ Garnering resources for the part for efforts
- ♦ Use of rangers alongside us
- ♦ Can tap federal resources – NPS
- ♦ Generate volunteers
- ♦ Collaborate with other stream groups

- ◆ Briefings for elected officials
- ◆ Proximity to ERHS and other HS (Duval, Parkdale),
- ◆ Proximity UMCP
- ◆ R.E.I.
- ◆ Redevelopment
- ◆ Outreach to Lanham, New Carrollton, Riverdale

Threats

- ◆ Failure to reach critical mass of active members
- ◆ Shrinking budget and staffing at Greenbelt Park
- ◆ Redevelopment plans
- ◆ Sanitary sewer failures; other infrastructure failures
- ◆ “Unregistered campers” causing enviro. Damage
- ◆ Diseases/invasives damaging forest integrity
- ◆ Drought
- ◆ Flood

Critical Issues

- ◆ Outreach
 - ◆ Communities
 - ◆ Potential Volunteers
 - ◆ Media Outlets
 - ◆ Elected Officials
 - ◆ Local Schools
- ◆ Nurture Membership – Ability to rapidly assign roles/goals to members; deployment
- ◆ Need to know more about S.C. (water quality, sewer conditions, fishes)
- ◆ Drought/Flood
- ◆ How to gain NPS acceptance/approval of more interventionist solutions

“BIN”

- ◆ “Rosie” Column in Paper – “Stream Notes,” Polls
- ◆ HOA could do some water quality analyses (Fred)

Likes & Interests

Mr. Fred Gasper – Outreach with eastern watershed communities and groups

Mr. Bill Duncan – Understanding the Creek and the ‘state of the art’ for watershed groups

Ms. Harriette Phelps – Paint Branch by Route 1

VII. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m. The next meeting will be held from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. at the Greenbelt Park Ranger Station on October 16th.