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WASHINGTON SUBURBAN SANITARY COMMISSION
MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

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Patuxent Reservoirs Watershed :
Protection Study :
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A public meeting in the above-entitled matter was held on June 19, 2012, commencing at 7:01 a.m., at the Izaak Walton League of America Wildlife Achievement Chapter, 26430 Mullinix Mill Road, Mt. Airy, Maryland 21771.

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P R O C E E D I N G S

1
2 MR. DESCHAMPS: Good evening, I'd like to welcome
3 you all to the Wildlife Achievement Chapter. My name is
4 Jeff Deschamps, I'm the current chapter president. For
5 those of you who don't know who the League is, this is our
6 90th anniversary. The League was founded in 1922 by a group
7 of hunters and fishermen. This chapter is also celebrating
8 its 75th anniversary. So, both the League and this chapter
9 have a long history. And, if you have an interest in
10 watershed and open space, this chapter has formed
11 partnerships to protect the reservoir and the tributaries.

12 Along those lines, we conduct tree plantings. We
13 have regular trash pick ups and watershed cleanups. And we
14 do work in basin management. In fact, our watershed
15 cleanup, by our calculation, predates the Potomac cleanup
16 that everybody is so familiar with, by at least two years.
17 And early on the amount of trash that we pulled out of the
18 river was, well, scary. It was measured in tens of tons
19 every year. Now it's much less, which is gratifying, but
20 there's still trash out there.

21 The primary goal of the League is to educate the
22 next generation and encourage them to develop personal
23 interests in the land, so it can continue to be maintained
24 for recreational use. This is why the League was founded.
25 And, to do this, we need large areas of open space in their

1 natural state in conditions such as that found on the WSSC
2 property, so we're very interested in the plans moving
3 forward and what comes down the road. And I'd like to
4 introduce Jody Smet, from EA Engineering Science and
5 Technology.

6 MS. SMET: Good evening everyone, my name is Jody
7 Smet. I'm with EA Engineering Science and Technology, and
8 my role here tonight is meeting manager, kind of work us
9 through the agenda. Have our speakers come up and provide
10 their input. We are here tonight to talk about the Patuxent
11 Watershed Protection Study that EA has been asked to
12 conduct.

13 A few logistics. We are not using a microphone
14 tonight, so I'm hoping that everybody in the back can hear
15 me okay and just -- can you? Yes? -- just ask that when
16 speakers come up you kind of project a little bit. There
17 are bathrooms located in the front foyer where you came in,
18 men and women. We will not be taking a break during our two
19 hour meeting, so please just excuse yourself as you have to.
20 And, Izaak Walton League has provided some water for us in
21 the back, so if anybody gets thirsty, please help yourself.

22 So, with that, I'm going to start just by
23 introducing EA a little bit, talking about the meeting
24 agenda and format, and then I'll turn it over to Mike
25 Powell, who will discuss a little bit more about the scope

1 of the study we're conducting.

2 All right, EA Engineering Science and Technology,
3 we are a Maryland based environmental consulting firm that
4 was founded in 1973. We're headquartered in Hunt Valley,
5 Maryland. We have 21 offices in 13 states, and about 450
6 employees, four of which are here tonight. I've introduced
7 myself, I'm Jody Smet. We also have Bill Rue. We have Mike
8 Powell, and Wendy Bley. Everybody will have a role tonight.

9 EA is also working with a subcontractor on the
10 study, Chesapeake Environmental Management, and we have Nick
11 Walls and Nate Conway. Nick's at the back and Nate's over
12 here on the side. They're helping us out with the study.
13 Now, just a few words to introduce the study, and, as I
14 said, Mike will talk about it a little bit more detail. But
15 the study really is a study of WSSC owned lands around the
16 Triadelphia and the Rocky Gorge Reservoirs to see if and how
17 uses and activities on those lands are impacting water
18 quality and the storage capacity of the reservoir. As I
19 said, Mike's going to talk about that in a little more
20 detail here shortly.

21 As far as what, how we're going to do tonight and
22 how and why, first on the agenda, EA is going to describe
23 the work plan, that is the study that we've been asked to
24 conduct, what that entails. How we're going to do it, when,
25 and those sorts of things. Then after we do that, which

1 shouldn't take more than 20 minutes or so, we'll answer some
2 of your questions, and then we're going to turn the meeting
3 over to you pretty much. We want your input. We want to
4 hear your interests in these lands, what kind of activities,
5 how you've used the land in the past, how you want to use
6 them in the future, really want to understand that. So we
7 hope to hear from many of you tonight.

8 We have scheduled this to be a two hour meeting.
9 We're starting on time here at 7:00. We'd like to conclude
10 by 9:00. Last night we did run long. We had almost 35
11 speakers speak last night, and at 3 minutes, we ran over our
12 time, but we thought it was really important to give
13 everybody an opportunity that wanted to speak, to speak. So
14 we're going to do our best to end by 9:00, but right now we
15 have upwards of 20 speakers who want to talk. So we're
16 going to hear everybody. We have limited the speaking time
17 to five minutes here tonight per speaker. We said five
18 minutes when we thought there might be 10 to 12 speakers.
19 We're nearly double that now, so we'll just ask that you
20 give consideration and limit it to five minutes or less.

21 Bill Rue is going to be doing the timing for us,
22 and he'll give you a warning minute and 30 seconds when
23 you're approaching three minutes. So you know that's three
24 minutes and if you feel like you need to take the other two,
25 please do. We want to hear what you have to say. The

1 meeting is being audio recorded through these nice speakers
2 right here, and will be transcribed. And in addition to
3 that, my colleague, Wendy Bley, is also going to be up here
4 at the flip charts taking notes. We just want to do that to
5 make sure that we're accurately recording your comments.
6 So, if you see us write something that you don't feel was
7 how you intended it to be said, please just correct us. We
8 want to make sure we're capturing your comments correctly.

9 From those flip chart notes, the transcription and
10 notes we're taking ourselves, we're going to prepare a
11 meeting summary and the meeting summary, a copy of the
12 presentation, and last night we had a request for a copy of
13 the sign-in sheet from the meetings, those materials are
14 going to be made available on WSSC's website.

15 In addition to these two meetings that we've
16 hosted here Monday and Tuesday nights, we are accepting any
17 written comments that folks want to provide. So, if people
18 were unable to attend the meetings and they want to submit
19 written comments, we're asking that they do. Many of you
20 who have presented your comments here orally have also
21 provided us the written comments, the drafts, and that's
22 very helpful to have those for the records as well. We're
23 just asking that any additional written comments be
24 submitted by July 19th, and at the end of the slide show
25 we'll have an e-mail address for you and mailing address

1 where you can send those comments.

2 Meeting purpose. As I said many times now, we
3 really want to hear from you, how you're using these lands.
4 To do that we wanted to make sure we, you know, put the word
5 out that we were having these meetings. So we sent out
6 3,500 meeting invitations to a WSSC mailing list. We also
7 sent out an additional 300 emails. We advertised in three
8 newspapers, and we put out news releases and got on
9 community calendars.

10 Another thing that helped was you all. You shared
11 the meeting dates and location information with your
12 colleagues and that's helped to get more people out too. We
13 certainly appreciate that. Now that we have you here, what
14 are we going to do with you. We want to listen to your
15 input. We want to get your comments and suggestions. As I
16 said, we want to understand how these watershed lands, the
17 WSSC owned lands around the two reservoirs are being used by
18 you all, how you think they should be used, and above all,
19 you know, WSSC's interest in managing these lands is to
20 protect the water quality in the reservoirs and the storage
21 capacity. So, as we consider the uses and activities on the
22 buffer area, we need to make sure that they're compatible
23 with those interests as well.

24 We hope to hear from a broad group of users, and
25 last night we did. We heard from the equestrian community,

1 but we also heard from boaters and fishermen. We heard from
2 the deer management folks, those that were interested in the
3 control hunts, and others. And that was great. And I think
4 we're set up tonight to hear from a bunch of you again.

5 Meeting goals and ground rules. Meeting goals.
6 Again, we're looking for full participation from the
7 stakeholder groups around these reservoirs and we want equal
8 representation. I'm not sure it will be an issue tonight,
9 but last night we had a lot of folks that wanted to speak on
10 behalf of one group or one organization. So we just ask
11 that before we took, you know, repetitive representatives,
12 that we got through all the groups first so that everybody
13 was represented. I'm not sure that that's going to be an
14 issue tonight but, that's how we're going to do it. We want
15 to hear from anybody and then we'll go back to others
16 speaking on behalf of the same group.

17 Another meeting goal is really the expression and
18 understanding of everyone's interests. As an example, it's
19 my understanding that WSSC's interest here in the reservoirs
20 and how they manage these buffers around the reservoirs, is
21 to protect the water quality and the storage capacity of the
22 reservoirs. That's their interest. We want to hear your
23 interest. And then you kind of look to see where they fit
24 together and not, and go from there. So really, you know,
25 want to hear each other. And I heard already tonight that

1 it was beneficial last night to hear, you know, how the
2 boaters and fishermen use these lands as well. So we're
3 making connections and we're starting to understand each
4 other a little bit better.

5 To make sure the meeting goes as smoothly as
6 possible, we've put some ground rules up here. Pretty
7 straightforward. We're asking one speaker at a time.
8 Again, I'll call speakers up. We ask that you be concise on
9 your time limits which we're saying between three and five
10 minutes. Keep to your task and topic, listen to others and
11 be respectful. Anybody wish to add any ground rules to the
12 meeting? Everybody feel like that covers it generally? Not
13 missing anything?

14 Our key project staff, introduce them generally,
15 but just to give you a sense for their background and where
16 they're coming from as they work on this project, Mike
17 Powell focuses on water quality and modeling. He is the
18 project manager. Mike, stand up or raise your hand so
19 people can see you. He is managing the study on behalf of
20 EA. Bill Rue is a water quality scientist with EA. Wendy
21 Bley specializes in water quality, but Wendy is also a 40
22 year equestrian, and is an excellent resource for the study
23 as we move forward understanding, you know, equestrians
24 needs, horse's needs, access, those types of issues. So
25 we're happy to have her on the team. Myself, my history and

1 background and experience is really in recreation, land use
2 and shoreline management. And then we have Nick Walls, with
3 CEM, he does urban affairs public policy, and does a lot of
4 the digital mapping. So some of the maps we might use. So,
5 without further ado, I'd like to turn it over to Mike Powell
6 who's going to walk us through an overview of the study.

7 MR. POWELL: Good evening everyone. Again, my
8 name is Mike Powell, I'm a scientist with EA and the project
9 manager for this study. A quick overview of the Patuxent
10 Watersheds, the reason for the study and then a brief
11 overview of our study plan and we'll take some questions and
12 answers before we turn it over to your comments.

13 MS. SMET: Can everybody hear Mike? Maybe speak
14 up a little bit.

15 MR. POWELL: Within the 85,000 acres of the
16 Patuxent Watershed, WSSC owns and operates two water supply
17 reservoirs, the Triadelphia Reservoir, established in 1943
18 and the Rocky Gorge Reservoir, established in 1952. Both
19 these reservoirs combined contribute about one-third of
20 WSSC's water supply for its 1.8 million customers. WSSC is
21 responsible for maintaining the long term water quality and
22 storage capacity of these reservoirs. And this is the
23 reason that WSSC has contracted EA to conduct a Patuxent
24 Watershed protection study.

25 The study that EA is currently contracted to do is

1 focused on the 5,500 acres of buffer property that WSSC owns
2 surrounding the reservoirs. We recognize that this is a
3 small part of the 85,000 acres of the entire watershed.
4 However, WSSC does intend to do a phase two study that will
5 look at broader watershed issues. However, that is not part
6 of EA's current contract and won't be the focus of today's
7 presentation.

8 EA's task is to objectively evaluate activities
9 that occur within WSSC's 5,500 acres buffer with the
10 potential to impact water quality and reservoir storage
11 capacity. WSSC has asked EA to conduct an independent and
12 objective study. Our study has five major components, and
13 we'll discuss each of those in a little bit of detail. The
14 first is develop a study work plan. We've been working with
15 WSSC for several months now looking at existing data and
16 collaborating with WSSC officials to develop a study plan.

17 Another study component is to review existing
18 data. Most of this data is GIS or digital mapping data.
19 We're also conducting public outreach. That's what we're
20 doing here today as a major study component. Fourth,
21 conduct a survey of the existing access and recreation
22 trails. These are the shoreline fishing trails, these are
23 the hunting trails, there's the old equestrian trails, and
24 there are the WSSC fire access roads. We're looking at
25 everything. And we are going to map them and then do an

1 evaluation of their condition and potential to impact
2 erosion and water quality.

3 And then finally at the conclusion of our review
4 of existing data and field work, we will generate a report,
5 a draft report for WSSC, that presents our findings and
6 provides recommendations, specific recommendations for how
7 WSSC can better manage its reservoir buffer. So, I'll go
8 through each of those study components in a just a little
9 bit of detail.

10 First, the work plan. Again, EA has been working
11 with WSSC since December in developing this work plan. It's
12 a study plan that outlines what our roles are and how we
13 will conduct the study. We have been looking at various
14 types of reports and digital mapping or GIS data that WSSC
15 has provided. These types of reports are WSSC water quality
16 reports, WSSC's forest conservation plan, source water
17 assessment, and, as I mentioned, all kinds of GIS mapping
18 data.

19 The work plan calls for a couple of key
20 deliverables. One of them is a GIS database that contains
21 all the digital mapping that WSSC has provided, plus the
22 maps that we will generate when we go out into the field.
23 And also has a deliverable as the report that I mentioned
24 that will provide our findings and recommendations, and also
25 a time line for completion. And, the time line for

1 completion for EA's current study is the end of October of
2 this year.

3 A little bit about the mapping and erosion
4 potential analysis. We are conducting a desktop analysis of
5 erosion potential within the reservoir buffer. And the way
6 this analysis is conducted is looking at digital mapping
7 data. This is topographic data and soils data that combined
8 tell us areas that are vulnerable to erosion due to a
9 combination of steep slopes and erodeable soils.

10 In addition to that erosion potential analysis,
11 we're also looking at all different types of other GIS types
12 of data. That includes land cover, canopy cover, WSSC's
13 access road, their maps of their access roads. Maps of
14 existing trails, ecologically sensitive areas and locations
15 of culverts.

16 The next major component of the study is field
17 work. The field work is divided into two components. The
18 first is a survey of the public access areas. These are the
19 shoreline fishing trails and the hunting trails primarily.
20 And our goal here is to walk these trails, document their
21 condition, verify the existing maps and then further
22 document the trails potential for erosion and for water
23 quality impacts. And we're also looking at the recreational
24 areas. These are the access points to the reservoir, and
25 we're evaluating them for public safety and for signage, for

1 adequate parking, that sort of thing.

2 The second component of our field work is
3 primarily concentrated on WSSC's fire access roads. These
4 are the access roads that circle the perimeter of each
5 reservoir. There are about 50 miles of roads total for the
6 Tridelpia and Rocky Gorge Reservoirs combined. And in
7 addition to that we're also looking at the so called
8 interior trails. These are the trails in between the access
9 roads and the shoreline, the fishing trails. They're
10 primarily the old equestrian trails in Rocky Gorge.

11 And again, when we evaluate these trails we're
12 looking at existing conditions. We're measuring slopes.
13 We're looking at the trail width, trail depth. That gives
14 us an indication of how eroded they are as well as their
15 potential for further erosion and for water quality impacts.
16 We're also documenting, where visually obvious, water
17 quality impacts related to property that abuts the
18 reservoirs, for things like excessive trash piles and things
19 of that nature.

20 At the conclusion of our field work we'll be
21 issuing WSSC a draft report. And that draft report will
22 document all of our findings, as well as to provide WSSC
23 with specific recommendations for how they can better manage
24 the buffer, and these kinds of recommendations may be
25 something like these trails should be remediated, they

1 should be repaired. In some instances we might recommend
2 that trails be moved or be closed for certain types of
3 access. And we'll also be describing the different types of
4 water quality impairments that we've seen. These includes
5 both the, not just the trails but also from the recreational
6 areas and also the culvert that bring materials from outside
7 of the reservoir.

8 So that's the conclusion of our study. We'll take
9 some question and hopefully try to answer them before we
10 turn it over to you folks for your comments.

11 MS. SMET: First question.

12 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: I do have a question. It
13 seems like all of this is land based studies. Are you all
14 going to be doing any water depth studies as far as auto
15 profile now and what it might have been 15 years ago to see
16 how much erosion has made it into the reservoir?

17 MS. SMET: Okay, I'm just going to repeat the
18 question for the audio recording and anybody that might not
19 have heard it. But, the comment was that the study seems to
20 be largely land based and the question was, are we looking
21 at the water, specifically, water depth profiles to make a
22 comparison to depth now to in the past.

23 MR. POWELL: You're correct that our field work
24 will be limited to the trails and recreational areas. It is
25 all land based. We do have data for reservoir pool

1 elevation and we'll be using some of that data but, the
2 focus of the study is on the reservoir buffer.

3 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: The question I have is, is the
4 study taking into account any of the vegetation or any of
5 the plant life in the reservoir area?

6 MS. SMET: I feel silly repeating the question but
7 I want to make sure everybody hears it so, he's asking if
8 the study's accounting for any of the vegetation, wildlife,
9 those sorts of things on the buffer area.

10 MR. POWELL: We're mainly looking at the conditions
11 of the trails and the access road. However, where we see
12 things like invasive species, we are documenting that.

13 MS. SMET: Yes ma'am?

14 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Is it anticipated there's
15 going to be a phase two of the study where you look at
16 boating, on water use, use of the water from the reservoir
17 as opposed to the buffers?

18 MS. SMET: The question was for those in the back,
19 is it anticipated that they'll be a phase two of this study
20 that looks at uses on the water, boating and such
21 activities.

22 MR. POWELL: The phase two of the study that I
23 mentioned earlier is focused on looking at the broader
24 watershed issues. This is the 80,000 acres that are outside
25 of WSSC's control. Our current study doesn't look at the

1 kind of issues that you mentioned, and I don't have any
2 knowledge about any further studies that would.

3 MS. SMET: Yes, Barbara?

4 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: How is it determined which
5 3500 residents gets announcements out of the 1.8 million
6 rate payers, hundreds of thousands of other Howard County
7 and Upper Montgomery County people who potentially may be
8 voters, fisherman and care about the environmentally sound
9 use of this land?

10 MS. SMET: Okay. The question was about the
11 mailing list we used to send invitations out to the 3500
12 folks. How did we get to that list? How do we choose those
13 3500 out of the 1.8 million stakeholders we mentioned? Do
14 you know?

15 MR. POWELL: I know a little bit. The mailing
16 list that we -- our mailing list was received from WSSC and
17 it consists of their customers and of stakeholders and their
18 stakeholder database. So our mailing list came from WSSC.

19 MS. SMET: Something that the PR folks, you know,
20 the communication folks put together. So I'm not sure how
21 they maintain that database.

22 MR. POWELL: But it consists of known
23 stakeholders.

24 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Do they at least have all of
25 the boaters and fisherman who have gotten use permits in the

1 last couple of years?

2 MS. SMET: None of you got it, okay.

3 MR. POWELL: Okay, well I guess that answers your
4 question.

5 MS. SMET: Debbie?

6 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Maybe you could make a
7 recommendation that it would be maybe slipped in the bill,
8 you know, when it goes out every month if there's an update
9 or a meeting coming or something, every rate payer
10 especially would be able to get some information.

11 MS. SMET: Okay. Debbie had an idea that if there
12 was an upcoming meeting or an update on the study that there
13 be a slip put in their bill so that it could get to
14 everyone. Yes, ma'am?

15 UNIDENTIFIED: In addition to that, people who pay
16 for permits to use the watershed.

17 MS. SMET: Okay. In addition, all the permit
18 holders should get that information as well. Yes, ma'am?

19 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: How are you going to compare
20 the amount of sedimentation coming from the bordering
21 effectors such as equestrian trails or nature trails with
22 the kind of sedimentation coming from the in flowing rivers
23 and culverts? So what is the standard for comparison? How
24 do you also assess the sedimentation rate in general for the
25 reservoirs compared to other lakes?

1 MS. SMET: The question, how are you going to give
2 considerations and assess not only sedimentation that might
3 be occurring inside the WSSC owned lands from uses and
4 activities to those that might be occurring outside of those
5 lands, tributary inputs and whatnot? So how are you going
6 to compare those? How are they going to be considered?

7 MR. POWELL: Again, what you're describing is more
8 of what the WSSC concedes for the next phase of this study
9 that it may or may not take place. And, EA certainly
10 doesn't know if we would be involved in that. Our current
11 study is focused on looking at contributions including
12 inputs generated from within the reservoir.

13 MS. SMET: Yes, ma'am?

14 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: And my question is a follow
15 up to that suggestion, is that when you post information on
16 the website, could you post the boundaries of the watershed
17 study that would encompass the phase two, that will be
18 outside of the WSSC but encompassing our watershed so we get
19 an idea as to what might be looked at in phase two for land
20 use.

21 MS. SMET: She's asking that if there was a phase
22 two part of the study that WSSC post on its website what the
23 boundaries of that phase two would be, which I assume would
24 be the boundaries of the Patuxent Watershed. But we will
25 certainly pass that suggestion along to WSSC. Yes, sir?

1 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Is the main focus really just
2 on the amount of, for lack of a better word, dirt that's
3 coming into the reservoirs or are you also concerned about
4 other contaminants that come in as part of erosion?

5 MS. SMET: The question is, the focus mainly on
6 the erosion, sedimentation and impacts on water quality or
7 are we giving consideration to other impacts that might be
8 affecting water quality?

9 MR. POWELL: Large focus is on erosion, but we're
10 also looking at water quality impacts and things like
11 excessive trash, neighboring properties that might have
12 something that impacts water quality, or things that we find
13 within the reservoir itself that would impact water quality,
14 we're also looking at that.

15 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I think a part of that is
16 nutrients.

17 MS. SMET: Additional questions for Mike before we
18 start asking you to come up to talk to us? Okay, well I
19 appreciate, oh yes?

20 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I just have one
21 recommendation. I'd advise your study to get out on the
22 water in a boat. And if you need help getting out on the
23 water in a boat, it'll help your study. Look me up or go to
24 the log cabin and look up any of the people in boats. We'd
25 be happy to take you out for a couple of hours. You need to

1 get out on the water. You can't just do this from the
2 beach, is my recommendation.

3 MS. SMET: Okay. The recommendation was that the
4 study should also get out on the water and we've had a
5 generous offer to get us out there if we need the help. So
6 thank you. Yes, sir?

7 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Will you be looking at
8 impervious land and how that contributes to the water
9 quality?

10 MS. SMET: The question was, would the study
11 consider the impervious surfaces and how they may be
12 impacting water quality?

13 MR. POWELL: And that sounds like more of a phase
14 two thing where they're looking at the broader watershed,
15 contributions to the broader watershed. But certainly in
16 phase two that would be something that would be of primary
17 focus.

18 MS. SMET: Barbara?

19 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Back to the previous
20 comment. Does he know you have also all invitation for pony
21 rides.

22 MS. SMET: Yes. Yes, we've been invited out for
23 pony rides too. Yes?

24 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Will you be comparing your
25 result against the results that were done in '04 when the

1 WSSC did this whole forest service study?

2 MR. POWELL: Yeah, we have --

3 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Do you have access to their
4 data?

5 MR. POWELL: We do.

6 MS. SMET: The question was, there was a 2004
7 forest study, and would we be looking at that and giving it
8 consideration in our study report, and the answer is yes.

9 MR. POWELL: Yes, we have that report.

10 MS. SMET: Okay. All right, thank you so much,
11 Mike. Let's see, for those of you new to this and that
12 weren't with us last night, what I'd like to do is kind of
13 tee you up, so I'll announce the next three speakers so that
14 you can be prepared to come and give your comments. So
15 unfortunately, my first speaker doesn't get any advance
16 warning at all and I apologize in advance. And that lucky
17 lady is Susan Gray.

18 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: She is not here tonight.

19 MS. SMET: Susan's not here. Okay. So, Barbara
20 Miller. As I said before, we are accepting written
21 comments, so even if you speak tonight and want to provide
22 additional comments in writing or if there are others that
23 couldn't attend, we are accepting those through July 19th
24 and we're going to leave this up to get the comments into
25 the email address here, Tracy Eberhard or this mailing

1 address. Okay, now it's your turn.

2 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: You said you were going to
3 mention three people.

4 MS. SMET: Yes. I was going down my list and got
5 all distracted because she wasn't here. Ron Gibbs will be
6 number three. Is Rob here? Okay. And then number four I
7 had Robert Gunderman.

8 MR. GUNDERMAN: Right here.

9 MS. SMET: Okay, so those are our next three.

10 MS. MILLER: Hi, I'm Barbara Miller and since my
11 time is very limited, I'll speak quickly and hopefully loud
12 enough. Some of my comments might go to this potential
13 phase two of the study, and that's because my husband and I
14 are boaters. Specifically, we are canoeists and longtime
15 users of Tridelphia Reservoir and occasionally users of
16 Rocky Gorge. We regularly canoe on Tridelphia many weekends
17 and occasionally in the evening after work. And, we're
18 among a score of small boaters, particularly kayakers, who
19 enjoy the reservoirs and who would be, I would say,
20 devastated if the public use of the reservoirs were
21 curtailed.

22 We treasure the opportunity to get out on the
23 water and enjoy a great natural resource while getting some
24 exercise in the process, and regularly see the great blue
25 herons and the osprey and the occasional bald eagle, as I'm

1 sure many of you others do. After giving this a lot of
2 thought, we don't think that our use of the reservoirs or
3 the use by other canoeists and kayakers has an adverse
4 impact on water quality. During a typical outing we arrive
5 at the reservoir, park in the parking lot, carry our boat
6 down to the water, get in and paddle away.

7 And we'll paddle the length of the reservoir and
8 then do the process in reverse. We don't use our canoe as a
9 platform for swimming and we've never seen any other
10 kayakers or canoeists abusing their privileges by swimming,
11 even on hot summer days. We don't think, looking at what we
12 do, that we're contributing to any erosion problem. In
13 fact, I'm sure we're not.

14 If water quality in the reservoirs is declining,
15 and apparently it is, we don't think that small boaters are
16 to blame. There's obviously been a tremendous amount of
17 development in the Patuxent Watershed and it's interesting
18 in that regard to look at the aerial of Rocky Gorge
19 Reservoir in particular and to see the amount of houses and
20 subdivisions and you think of the loss of tree cover that's
21 occurred since the reservoirs were constructed. The
22 replacement of permeable surfaces with asphalt and cement,
23 and the increase in the number of homeowners who are
24 applying lawn fertilizer and so on and so forth.

25 In our view, there are steps that could probably

1 be taken to mitigate these problems, but banning boating on
2 the reservoirs is not the answer. The reservoirs and the
3 acreage surrounding the reservoirs are used by fishermen,
4 picnickers, hikers, and equestrians, in addition to paddlers
5 and the occasional sailor or rower, and we hope that in EA's
6 study, each use will be considered separately on its own
7 merits, and that public use of the reservoirs won't in the
8 end be banned because one use is found to have an adverse
9 impact.

10 We have some further thoughts and comments, but in
11 view of the time limit on oral presentation, we'll submit
12 these further comments in writing. We hope you will further
13 publicize the fact that you're doing this study because we
14 don't think that most users had any knowledge of this
15 evening's meeting or last night's meeting, and as some of
16 the commenters have suggested, there are ways to reach out
17 to the hundreds if not thousands of people who have used the
18 reservoirs in the last couple of years.

19 In closing, my hope and I suspect the hope of many
20 others, is that the public meetings, last night and tonight
21 aren't a hollow exercise and that serious consideration will
22 be given to maintaining public access to the reservoirs.

23 Thanks.

24 MS. SMET: Thank you, Barbara. All right, Rob
25 Gibbs.

1 MR. GIBBS: To be as brief as possible, I'll just
2 read mine. My name is Rob Gibbs. I work for Maryland
3 National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Montgomery
4 County Department of Parks. One of my responsibilities is
5 to manage Montgomery County's Deer Management Program. I
6 chair the county's Deer Management Workgroup, which has
7 representation from WSSC. I want to express two things
8 related to the long term use and management of WSSC lands
9 within the Patuxent Watershed. Specifically, Montgomery
10 County, as it relates to deer management.

11 First is the importance of protecting and
12 maintaining high quality natural vegetation along the river
13 and along the reservoirs. This buffer of natural vegetation
14 serves and provides valuable ecological functions that are
15 crucial to maintaining water quality, trees and other native
16 vegetation, reduce water run off and storms, reduce erosion,
17 help filter pollutants in ground water from the air and the
18 water or pollution from ground water and the air. Natural
19 vegetation, especially forested land, also provide shade to
20 keep waters cooler, thereby increasing oxygen.

21 One of the biggest threats to a healthy natural
22 ecosystem is an over population of whitetail deer. High
23 numbers of deer can remove the forest under story and ground
24 cover greatly reducing the ecological functions that I just
25 described. Seedlings no longer survive to grow and replace

1 trees, and as those trees age and die, the forest goes into
2 decline. WSSC has for many years conducted an exemplary
3 deer management program around its reservoirs to ensure the
4 long term viability of this natural ecosystem and the many
5 ecological benefits it provides. This management is
6 essential I feel to the long term viability of the watershed
7 and the continued protection of the water quality.

8 Secondly, I want to recognize the importance of
9 WSSC's role as an integral partner in our county wide deer
10 management program. WSSC was represented on the original
11 citizen task force established by Montgomery County Council
12 in 1993, and has been an active member in that process ever
13 since. The goal of the county's deer program is to reduce
14 deer vehicle collisions, damage to agricultural crops,
15 damage to home landscaping and gardens and degradation of
16 the natural community. WSSC's deer management program has
17 been an important part of our county wide effort to reduce
18 deer impacts. I want to thank them for their efforts over
19 the past 17 years or so, and encourage them to continue this
20 important part of their overall management. Thanks.

21 MS. SMET: Robert Gunderman. After Robert we'll
22 have John Love, Philip Norman and Melissa Daston.

23 MR. GUNDERMAN: Hello, my name is Rob Gunderman
24 and I'm a Montgomery County resident the past 25 years. I'm
25 a boater and a fisherman. As I heard last night, I have a

1 second generation going on that use the lakes. It seems to
2 me that this whole study is to be used to shut down the
3 lakes. There hasn't been taking into consideration that
4 every old reservoir has sediment problems. There's actually
5 reservoirs that have been closed from sedimentation. I've
6 also been on the lake where after a rainfall where the water
7 level rises three feet and turns to the color of coffee, and
8 I haven't heard that addressed as far as going out after a
9 hurricane like last year, where you know, the Patuxent River
10 that's coming into it is actually creating huge amounts of
11 sediment just from the banks. I've been from probably two
12 miles above Tridelphia all the way down through the Patuxent
13 in Ann Arundel County, Calvert County. Lived, fished from
14 the top of the lake to probably the bay.

15 I haven't heard anybody address that the water
16 belongs to Maryland residents, not to WSSC, and they are
17 trying to control things and change things, and I've heard
18 that WSSC employees are basically saying these studies are
19 used to be able to shut down all of the properties for all
20 the people that use it. Like I said, in my experience on
21 the lake, I've pulled people out. They brought up safety,
22 as far as shortening the seasons. Had an article written in
23 it and they brought up basically safety. The people that
24 drown there every year happen in the middle of the summer
25 time. WSSC is not responsible for boater safety. Everybody

1 that boats there is in charge of their own safety, and the
2 people that don't know how to swim shouldn't be there. Like
3 I said, I've pulled people out of it before.

4 I go there from March 1st when I could to December
5 15th. I've been there breaking through ice. There's been
6 years that they closed it early in the season because two
7 weeks you had to wait for ice. They let it before where I
8 was breaking through ice wanting to go fishing after the
9 winter goes through, but it just seems to me this whole
10 study is combining horse trails and erosion into being able
11 to shut down all the properties. And WSSC won't admit that,
12 but privately, the employees are saying that that's exactly
13 what the case is.

14 Like I said, I have a second generation. I was
15 actually with my wife fishing five days before she delivered
16 my son, the first child. If it would have happened during
17 the weekend we might have had him actually born at the lake.
18 So, that's how often I go. I've actually called two weeks
19 ago because the whole thing with shortening the season and
20 security, called several times. Two weeks ago I called
21 because there was a boat heading down towards the dam,
22 probably a mile past where they were allowed to go.
23 Luckily, it was fisherman. You know, you never know what
24 the intentions are when you see a boat heading out all
25 blatantly, going past all the no trespassing signs.

1 In the past two years the only time I see WSSC
2 officers there is to close the gate. They bring in over
3 \$100,000 a year from our annual permits, which is more than
4 enough to spend for officers spending three hours a night
5 closing it. I mean, that's all that I see them. They're
6 not there checking permits, not checking on the security.
7 If they were to close the lake, every time I see somebody
8 there with a bonfire going on the bank, I report them. Now
9 they've made it even harder. You used to be able to call
10 the dam office. Now you have to actually know the security
11 office number. And, like I said, nobody brings up the fact
12 that we own the water, not WSSC. So, thank you very much.

13 MS. SMET: John Love. And, as you guys, I think
14 you're doing it, but please state your name and your
15 affiliations for the record.

16 MR. LOVE: My name is John Love and I'm a resident
17 of Montgomery County for the last 22 years. The first thing
18 I'd like to say is I'm a boater. I'm a small boater. I row
19 a shell, a canoe or a kayak, and I do easily over a hundred
20 outings a year. So I'm doing it every other day, if not
21 every day. I went this morning. I would have gone tonight
22 before I came here, but it's hot as Hades out there, so I
23 hope no one's out there.

24 I'd like to first second your remarks, the first
25 person who spoke, because I think she said very concisely

1 what I believe as well, and Mr. Gunderson as well, I second
2 your remarks. The deer hunting thing, I'm sorry, I can't,
3 don't relate to that entirely, so. I'm here about small
4 boats. My boat, my rowing shell it's long, it's skinny, it
5 doesn't create any wake. When I come down, I park in
6 designated areas and I use designated ramps. In my
7 estimation, as you pointed out, I don't think that small
8 boaters contribute to soil erosion, silt build up, pollution
9 in the water. So why am I here? Why are all the boaters
10 here? Talk about surrounding buffer zones.

11 Okay, I believe the following. The results of
12 this study could be used to further limit access to the two
13 reservoirs. Already access has been limited in 2012 by a
14 whopping 20 percent. You just do the number of days it's
15 available, subtract out the number that you just lost, it's
16 over 20 percent, depending on whether you go to sunset and
17 beyond. I've heard people say that now they're very strict
18 on sunset and it really should be dawn to dusk, because
19 there's still light out there, okay.

20 There was even talk last year that the staff at
21 WSSC is considering closing the reservoirs entirely to
22 boaters like me, Mr. Gunderson, and all the other people who
23 are here. So that talk is out there. I believe WSSC
24 handled the whole horseback issue horribly, and that's what
25 has gotten this whole ball rolling, and that has brought us

1 into it and we are being regulated because of mishandling
2 that issue, losing over 20 percent of our access to the
3 reservoir. That's a real cut. So, I don't see them
4 necessarily stopping with the 20 percent. That's one of the
5 points I'm making here. It's a ridiculous position for us
6 to be in. Why are we up here talking about this when we're
7 not contributing to the problem?

8 So, I second your remarks about hoping that this
9 study will distinguish where the sources of the problem are
10 and regulate the problems according to their contribution,
11 and recognizing that there are other folks, like Mr.
12 Gunderson and others, who are like the eyes and ears for
13 WSSC when it comes to the reservoir. We're there. We're
14 seeing things that are happening. We're helping people that
15 are in trouble down there. We're reporting problems as we
16 see them, and their police staff is not really contributing.
17 We're doing it for them. And that's fine, let us do it.

18 Okay, I hope for the following. Number one, that
19 the results of this study can be used to justify returning
20 to a longer season for boaters like me and others. If other
21 activities on the buffer areas need to be restricted to
22 prevent erosion in late winter and late fall, boating could
23 still be allowed. For example, I just would point out that
24 the study team should look at other similar reservoirs,
25 Seneca Lake at Black Hill, March 1. Liberty Pretty Boy

1 Reservoir is near Baltimore, March 1. So, I don't
2 understand why it is that we are the ones who lose a month
3 on the front and a month on the back.

4 I hope WSSC will see from the process that we're
5 engaged in tonight, that consulting the user community on
6 decisions about reservoir access and activities is helpful
7 outreach. There are a lot of people who think WSSC is
8 somewhat arrogant in the way they make their decisions. Not
9 really relating to the user community in a way that makes us
10 feel good about them.

11 Finally, I hope WSSC will continue to allow
12 boaters access to these beautiful reservoirs to the maximum
13 extent possible, finding that all of us are good stewards of
14 the lake and careful not to denigrate the natural
15 surroundings that we enjoy. Thank you.

16 MR. NORMAN: Good evening, I'm Philip Norman. I'm
17 the Deer Project Manager for the Howard County Department of
18 Recreation and Parks, Natural Resources Division. And I
19 want to thank WSSC for this opportunity. I believe that all
20 of the recreational uses of the watershed all have one thing
21 in common, and that is that we appreciate a healthy forest
22 ecosystem in the watershed lands. That watershed forest and
23 its health is my prime concern as a natural resources
24 manager, and specifically as the deer project manager for
25 Howard County.

1 WSSC has been running managed deer hunts and has
2 allowed regular bow hunting on certain parts of the
3 watershed for many years, and that management has been a
4 vital component of overall efforts to balance deer density
5 with other natural resources in the area, as well
6 agricultural and residential interests in the area.

7 WSSC's managed hunts and the areas opened for
8 regulated bow hunting result in several hundred deer being
9 removed from the population annually. I'm sure WSSC could
10 provide specific numbers. Forest ecologists recommend a
11 deer density of 15 deer per square mile for forest health.
12 Surveys we've done in Howard County on average over the last
13 12 years have shown 57 deer per square mile. Nearly four
14 times as many as recommended by forest ecologists.

15 The WSSC managed hunts have an excellent safety
16 record. There's never been an injury to non-hunters in the
17 history of bow hunting in the State of Maryland. This safe,
18 well regulated hunting is an important component of overall
19 management in the county and it needs to continue. Just for
20 reference, conveniently, the average white tail deer
21 consumes approximately one ton of vegetation annually. With
22 several hundred deer being removed from the watershed
23 annually by the managed hunts, we're seeing tremendous
24 amounts of vegetation allowed to continue in the watershed,
25 which contributes to both water quality and to the

1 recreational qualities that we all enjoy. Thank you very
2 much.

3 MS. SMET: Next we have Melissa Daston. After
4 Melissa we're going to have Barbara Sollner-Webb, Jane von
5 Maltzhan, and Nathan Tennies.

6 MS. DASTON: Good evening. As our colleague
7 noted, I'm Melissa Daston. I am President of the West
8 Laurel Civic Association. West Laurel is a community
9 bridging both Montgomery and Prince George's County. Has
10 about 1700 homes which abut the watershed within a mile to
11 literally in the watershed. Many of the things that have
12 been said tonight were, we're in agreement with, and some
13 not.

14 I'll be honest up front. I am not a rider,
15 kayaker, boater, fisher or hiker. And so you might wonder,
16 why would I be here speaking passionately about the value of
17 the watershed, maintaining the watershed. And the answer is
18 because I think it is good for the watershed to have
19 stewards such as those who are represented here and those
20 who were there last night. Because WSSC needs partners like
21 this.

22 I will point out that there are unintended
23 consequences to every action. Many of us work as managers
24 in the federal government and I will tell you, every action
25 has many things that you never intended to happen. And a

1 good example has been brought up several times tonight,
2 which is curtailing trail riding has resulted in a number of
3 unintended consequences in the West Laurel Area. We have
4 residents calling me and other members of the board talking
5 about fires in the watershed, coming across hikers saying
6 well, since the horses aren't here we thought we were free
7 to be here. Swimmers, motor bikes in particular, and lots
8 and lots of people with dogs befouling the pathways.

9 So I want to point out that WSSC and in this study
10 needs to assess in addition to the erosion and the soil
11 conservation issues, some of the unintended consequences of
12 illegal usage which occurs when you remove the existing
13 stewards of the watershed who not only pay for that
14 privilege but have actively engaged with the partnership of
15 WSSC.

16 I also want to mention two other things. A second
17 indirect but very costly impact has been to those small
18 businesses who make their livelihood from the watershed. It
19 is not a large group. In West Laurel we have four
20 commercial stables ranging up to 14 horses. So these are
21 not large businesses. Since the abrupt curtailment of trail
22 riding, they're basically saying they're seeing about a 25
23 percent drop off in their business. When you go from 14
24 horses down to seven horses, that does no longer makes the
25 business viable, and people are in danger of losing their

1 jobs. I don't think that's what WSSC intended, because
2 these are not large scale organizations riding.

3 Last, but not least, I wish to talk about -- well,
4 two other things -- one, the other unintended consequence
5 impacts all of us here. If you live anywhere near the
6 watershed, frankly your property values will decrease. I
7 just came from unfortunately a funeral viewing of one of the
8 senior realtors in the Laurel area. He lives in, or lived
9 abutting the watershed and in the past six months we've had
10 long discussions on what has been the impact of closing the
11 watershed to recreational use on property values. Now, WSSC
12 is not concerned about this, but many of their own employees
13 live in these communities, so I would think that there's a
14 vested interest from employees.

15 Finally, our opening comments from our colleagues
16 at EA who are commissioned to do the study, I'd like to
17 point out a few methodology issues, which I don't believe
18 have been taken into account from what I've read, heard and
19 listened to. One, the methodology is extremely
20 inconsistent. If you're studying erosion, you have a mixed
21 message. You have boaters, anglers, and other official
22 users on the trails, on the watershed, but you no longer
23 have the horseback riders. So, how do you compare the
24 impact of riding? That's one example of where you have
25 users and non-users.

1 You don't have a baseline study. It's not
2 consistent. Everybody's using. I measure it. I then stop
3 and measure again during the winter when no one is using to
4 look at the difference in soil erosion, run off, etcetera.
5 The other part of it is, you are not being able to capture
6 some unofficial as well as semi-official uses that WSSC
7 sanctions. For example, the group of army employees who are
8 given permission to have a paintball fight in the West
9 Laurel Rocky Gorge watershed adjoining a large soccer game.
10 We had over a thousand children on the fields less than an
11 eighth of a mile away, and when I questioned them, when I
12 was down checking the watershed, which I do every weekend,
13 they said they'd been given permission and they gave me the
14 name of an employee at WSSC.

15 Now, we were able to stop that by calling
16 security. Iron Man competitions which have been held by
17 WSSC is a semi-sanctioned event. I would imagine that the
18 impact of a hundred, 200, 300 people on the trails is more
19 significant than the one or two people who are doing that.
20 Finally, as been mentioned, the deer hunters perform a
21 service but they also leave an impact on the environment.
22 So I would request that you look at the methodology and look
23 at the consistency of how you measure it, otherwise, the
24 data will be valueless. Thank you very much for your time
25 tonight. I want to leave you with a statement that says we

1 appreciate WSSC. I don't believe that we are in a war with
2 them. I would like to think that we can reach resolution
3 and once again restore our partnership where we all value
4 the watershed, the quality of the water and the recreational
5 uses. Thank you very much for your time.

6 MS. SMET: Barbara.

7 MS. SOLLNER-WEBB: Thank you. Hi, I'm Barbara
8 Sollner-Webb, Vice President of the civic association that
9 Melissa's president of. John Hopkins University Professor,
10 and a true environmentalist, including a long time member of
11 the state's Patuxent River Commission, and for many years
12 WSSC's environmental advisory committee, now abolished.

13 Like most everyone who came last evening, we would
14 not want to be out using the WSSC lands and water if it
15 damaged the reservoir as WSSC alleges. But the equestrian
16 trail is in excellent shape as determined by certified trail
17 masters. The vast majority shows no hint of erosion from
18 its countless decades of use because it's carefully used and
19 contoured diagonally. Most everyone who sees the trail
20 including a WSSC commissioner, state delegate, two state
21 delegates, a state senator and county council member, who
22 I've taken out on the trail, have commented on its lack of
23 erosion.

24 WSSC's environmental advisory committee members
25 determined that far less than one ten thousands of the

1 reservoirs sediment is from the horse trail, and less than
2 one, one hundred thousands of the reservoirs phosphate comes
3 from the horse use. Last year WSSC closed their trail, the
4 equestrian trail based on unsupported claims that its use
5 makes quote, the reservoir water hard to treat, is quote,
6 the biggest factor in generating the reservoir settlement,
7 and is generating quote, pollution.

8 Questioning these assertions are over 1100
9 signatures on petitions, as well as countless letters to
10 WSSC and eventually 43 Maryland public information act
11 requests filed on behalf of over 3500 citizens asking for
12 the data. Although extremely unforthcoming, WSSC has made
13 some data available including their own data showing that
14 the water quality actually improves as it runs along the
15 length of the equestrian trail, not gets worse as you might
16 think.

17 Maryland's multi-million dollar TMDL analysis and
18 a lot of discussions with the folks who have prepared it,
19 also confirm that the equestrian trail use contributes less
20 than one, one hundred thousands of the phosphate to the
21 reservoir. WSSC moved riding to their access road claiming
22 it is very flat and very negotiable, yet topo maps such as
23 from the USGS show it very steep and most of that is
24 seriously eroding and channel directly into the reservoir.

25 WSSC also banned all winter riding claiming those

1 are quote, the wettest months of the year. Completely
2 opposite even to WSSC's own data obtained through the MPIA
3 process. Thus, WSSC's claimed reasons for stopping
4 equestrian use just don't hold water. In fact, equestrians
5 markedly help the reservoir. WSSC's previous watershed
6 patrol previously called equestrians their eyes and ears.
7 For instance, we discovered an enormous sediment flow,
8 traced it to an uncontrolled highway project, and sheparded
9 it through its correction along with Maryland Department of
10 Environment who estimated we saved the reservoir between
11 15,000 and 50,000 tons of sediment.

12 And we initiated the effort at correcting WSSC's
13 severely neglected culverts. Several of which have blown
14 out the access road, since WSSC's decision to stop culvert
15 maintenance and caused a lot of sediment into the reservoir.
16 Equestrians are not damaging, but helping the reservoir and
17 their use of the sound trail should be reinstated. The
18 amount of effort in rate payer funds WSSC is expending on
19 reducing recreational use and on a study designed to not
20 address the true serious water impairments, is mind
21 boggling.

22 And if WSSC has repeatedly made disingenuous
23 statements about equestrian use, is there an issue that
24 citizens might not believe their assertions about water
25 quality?

1 MS. SMET: Jane, Jane von Maltzhan. After Jane we
2 have Nathan Tennies.

3 MS. VON MALTZHAN: I'm Jane von Maltzhan. I'm a
4 resident of Montgomery County and Silver Spring. Member of
5 Chesapeake Paddlers Association, and a retired humanities
6 professor from the University of Texas at Arlington. My
7 connection to water quality is that I served for five years
8 in the German city of Essen as a translator on documents on
9 the water quality of the Ruhr River, which is a model for
10 any country. But as a stakeholder and a consumer here, I
11 welcome efforts to guarantee the safety and the purity of
12 our water, including scientific studies. After all, because
13 of mismanagement and skewed priorities in the world, more
14 than a billion people in the world lack decent water
15 supplies, and twice as many lack access to sanitation.

16 By the year 2025, four billion people will not
17 have access to clean water. We count ourselves lucky here
18 in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, and we wish to cooperate
19 fully with you in guaranteeing the safety and purity of our
20 supply. However, the problems which can affect reservoirs
21 are many and varied and extremely complex. The problem with
22 the phase one study is that it reduces itself to a few very
23 minor variables.

24 For instance, just for starters, the time that
25 water is retained behind a dam is very important. The

1 longer the retention the more lethal the problems. Levels
2 of dissolved oxygen, water temperature. Water temperature
3 stratifies the layers of water. Why is that important?
4 Some temperatures cause metals such as iron and manganese to
5 be soluble in anaerobic low oxygen conditions, whereas they
6 will precipitate anaerobic conditions. Dams are not clean
7 sources of electricity in the world. Studies reveal that
8 dam reservoirs are actually significant sources of
9 greenhouse gases, particularly in the tropics. Worse than
10 even the dirtiest fossil fuel power plants.

11 In short, myriad and multiple factors contribute
12 to water quality in reservoirs. Any good scientific study
13 will study as many of the variables as possible, be fact
14 based and give a complete picture. So, the problem here is
15 the data we're looking at, three data, for rec. users,
16 kayak, canoe users and picnickers are insufficient,
17 insignificant and irrelevant data to the larger problems.

18 For instance, to determine the amount of
19 sedimentation, we need to know the possible sources, the
20 amount of sediment entering, the relative quantities to each
21 other from the different sources. We need to know the
22 yearly sedimentation rate of other water bodies including
23 seasonal variances. Channels entering the reservoir must be
24 evaluated for erosion, resistance, as well as capacity. So
25 tonight I'm here to make a plea to both WSSC and to EA to

1 conduct a study which is both ethical and scientific.

2 The study as presented to us last night in Laurel
3 seems to be neither because of the very tight restriction on
4 the number of variables they're going to consider.

5 Eventually the mythical phase two might be broadened.

6 However, very far reaching decisions will be made with
7 lasting consequences on the basis of a too limited study.

8 So, to EA I would say protect the reputation of your company
9 by counseling WSSC to include more variables.

10 To WSSC I would say, resist the temptation to
11 justify possible funding cuts for patrolling the watershed
12 by participating in the study. And, I do want to honor the
13 fact that a WSSC employee died at the reservoir not to long
14 ago, a year and a half perhaps ago, while patrolling, while
15 picking up trash, an apparent drowning, and it's always
16 regrettable when something like this happens.

17 Therefore, you need more than the eyes and ears of
18 your own staff. So, if the real reason is to justify staff
19 cutting, then save the \$220,000 the study is going to cost
20 and use people to patrol the area so that we can tell you if
21 illegal dumping and illegal usage on a much larger scale is
22 taking place.

23 So, my personal plea is for us to work together.
24 Work together with us, your greatest supporters. We are the
25 environmentally friendly groups currently using the

1 reservoir for environmentally friendly activities. Policing
2 us is like establishing a police barricade on I-95 to stop
3 every Prius owner to check them for emission controls.
4 Employ us as your eyes and ears. Connect with us as your
5 scout so that we can report to you regularly as we already
6 do, and have for many decades, on environmental problems and
7 disturbances.

8 You will find in us what you have always found, a
9 loyal, dedicated and responsible group of environmental
10 supporters who wish for nothing less than to protect our
11 water supply for generations to come. Thank you.

12 MR. TENNIES: Hi, I'm Nathan Tennies, I'm here
13 representing my wife and myself. We've been residents of
14 Montgomery County for, I think, 11 years, and I'm going to
15 focus mostly on how we use the watershed, the reservoirs,
16 because it sounds like that's what EA is mostly interested
17 in, and WSSC.

18 We're paddlers, so we're not hunters or fishermen
19 or equestrian people. And we're avid hikers, but we've
20 never ever hiked here. We really, our usage of this is, are
21 the boat ramps and that's all we've ever used. We put our
22 boats in there, we take them out. And we really just use a
23 couple of them. We typically put in at, I guess it's
24 Greenfield, down here, Greenbury, thank you, or the
25 Triadelphia one, and over here on Rocky Gorge we put in at

1 Brown's or over at Scott Cove. So that's really, I mean,
2 that's what we use the land for.

3 What I did want to mention though was that, and we
4 go paddling all up and down the East Coast, but 80 percent
5 of the time we paddle within about an hour and a half of our
6 house. So we're doing things, you know, in this general
7 area. And, within that, 80 percent of the time we're on
8 those two reservoirs. Really, from our perspective, there's
9 really nothing else like them in the area for a couple of
10 different reasons.

11 And, we're out there pretty much every weekend and
12 we're somewhere, but usually here, and we have a canoe. So
13 usually we go out together. And I also have a kayak, and
14 so, as other people have mentioned, often after work in the
15 evenings or early in the morning, I'll be out there paddling
16 as well. So anywhere from like one to three times a week
17 we're out on these.

18 I wanted to talk a little bit too about why we
19 spend 80 percent of the time on these two of the stuff we do
20 in this area. One of the reasons is accessibility. So, we
21 live in North Chevy Chase so we're actually inside the
22 Beltway kind of halfway between downtown Bethesda and
23 downtown Silver Spring, and it's half an hour to get there,
24 you know, excepting traffic. So the, you know, we come up
25 New Hampshire, we come up 29 and we're at either of these,

1 you know, put in on either of these reservoirs really very
2 quickly. And, if you look at a map of Maryland, there's
3 really nothing else, you know, bodies of water like this
4 that are that accessible to people in the Silver
5 Spring/Bethesda/Chevy Chase area. Anywhere near that close.

6 Seneca Lake is probably the only other place
7 that's anywhere near that. But to go any place else it's
8 about, you know, an hour, hour and a half to get there. But
9 the other reason besides accessibility is really that these
10 are just incredibly beautiful and unique. You know, there
11 are all the places we paddle in the area, out on the
12 Chesapeake and on parts of the Potomac, places like that out
13 on the Eastern Shore, they're all beautiful, but these are
14 unique in that you have these, you know, beautiful forested
15 shorelines with no houses. You have incredible diversity of
16 wildlife and so, you really can't go any place else in the
17 area anywhere nearby and see something like this. We've
18 brought people in from out of town and they're really amazed
19 that we have, you know, recreational resources like these
20 available to us. So, that's really what I wanted to focus
21 on.

22 I agree with other people. I would like to see
23 the season really be year round for paddlers and other
24 people too but, certainly for paddlers. I'm not sure
25 fisherman want to fish in the middle of the winter. And, I

1 think I'd also like to see the days be a little bit longer.
2 For those of us who paddle out on the, you know, like to
3 paddle out at sunset, you know, the boat ramps officially
4 close right at sunset. It really would be nice to see those
5 be a little bit longer.

6 But like other people have mentioned, I would like
7 to have a way if I do see people violating, you know, the
8 rules or I see things that I think are going to impact water
9 quality, to have a way to be able to report that to WSSC and
10 know that that's actually making a difference. You know,
11 find out that they've actually heard that and that something
12 is being done about that report. And I don't really feel
13 like I have a way to do that today. Thank you.

14 MS. SMET: I'd asked Mike Caruso to come to speak.
15 After Mike then Denis Webb, and then Maria Schwartz.

16 MR. CARUSO: Hi, good evening, I'm Mike Caruso.
17 I'm a Howard County resident, I'm an equestrian and I do
18 ride the Rock Gorge equestrian trails. I want to kind of
19 change the focus a little bit and follow up on a testimony
20 by James, an excellent presentation by Jane Sputman last
21 night, on another issue we need to keep an eye on.

22 I am here to acknowledge by all the facts as I
23 understand them, I have contributed to the poor water
24 quality at Rocky Gorge and the Tridelphia Reservoir in
25 present time and for generations to come. This is solved on

1 clean water, it comes not from my riding a horse on the
2 trails according to WSSC's own data, my assault comes
3 indirectly from the local government that is supposed to
4 represent me.

5 Howard County has allowed the building of Grace
6 Church close the banks of Rocky Gorge Reservoir with many
7 acres of impervious surface along with the run off and oil
8 and other toxic surfaces with thousands --

9 MS. SMET: Sorry to interrupt. Can you just speak
10 up a little bit?

11 MR. TENNIES: Howard County has allowed the
12 building of Grace Church close to the banks of Rocky Gorge
13 Reservoir with many acres of impervious space, along with
14 run off from oil and other toxic substances from thousands
15 of cars that visit there regularly. That surely has an
16 effect on water quality with years to come. Howard County
17 allowed the building of Villas of Cattail Creek with a
18 shared septic system with close proximity to the Tridelphia
19 Reservoir. This project was known to have only 30 percent
20 of the perkable land required by state law. Eight years and
21 court battles by concerned citizens with solid evidence was
22 not enough to stop the building of this project.

23 Residents moved in 2005 to their \$800,000 dream
24 homes only to find the sewage was backing up and their homes
25 were for a time worthless. One million dollars later and

1 rebuilding septic processing center, which is now working,
2 but who know for how long this risky fix will hold up on a
3 very undersized septic system. It should be mentioned that
4 prior WSSC management put their focus there and made a
5 strong statement against that project only to be run over by
6 the local government and the courts.

7 The short term financial interests of some
8 developers over shadows the concerns of citizens and future
9 generations and are currently able to push past the courts.
10 Google perkable land and the first hit last night was Howard
11 County issues. Follow the evidence for the evidence in that
12 case. It is nationally recognized that Howard County is a
13 big problem in the way they handle land. The courts seem to
14 have gone astray again against the interests of residents
15 and future generations. Prince George's County is now
16 forced by court order to approve the building of Reaching
17 Hearts Church on a 17 acre parcel of land adjacent to Rocky
18 Gorge with 33 percent of it impervious surface.

19 Horses are a value to the community and should be
20 supported. I am a physical therapist, and I've seen what
21 happens when you couple a disabled person with a horse. I
22 have talked to therapeutic riding therapists who have put an
23 out of control autistic child on a horse and they magically
24 become calm and settled. The Wounded Warriors Program puts
25 disabled Iraq Vets on horses and in no time the effects of

1 post-traumatic stress syndrome is lifted for a time as they
2 become joyfully focused in the present. The contribution of
3 horses in our community is immeasurable.

4 It is sadly ironic that across the street from the
5 prior mentioned Grace Church is the Cedar Lane School, which
6 is dedicated to the training of severely disabled children.
7 It is an excellent facility and dedicated staff that are
8 very concerned about the study rise of autism in our
9 community. Creative forward thinking Howard County
10 leadership might have better approved the building of a
11 stable for therapeutic riding in place of Grace Church and
12 had many times less impact on water quality for generations
13 to come.

14 I'll wrap up by saying that we seem to be living
15 in a time where the balance between the interest of
16 concerned citizens and those who stand to make money from
17 how land is used and developed is way out of balance. And
18 for this WSSC management to say they represent the interest
19 of the public by closing this land to horses and using
20 misstatements and fear tactics is a gross dishonoring of the
21 WSSC management of the past which did establish themselves
22 as a credible public service institution worthy of the
23 public trust.

24 It seems clear to me that the only real recourse
25 is a public outcry that reaches every citizen in our entire

1 region. Thank you.

2 MS. SMET: All right. Denis.

3 MR. WEBB: My name is Denis Webb. My wife and I
4 own a small private horse farm which abuts the buffer zone
5 of the Rocky Gorge Reservoir. Last night at the hearing in
6 Laurel on the same topic, there was considerable discussion
7 of the rationale or lack thereof for moving the interior
8 equestrian trail, quotes interior, to the access road and
9 reducing the period where WSSC recreational facilities are
10 open to all users, boaters, fishermen, as well as
11 equestrians, and you've heard a little bit about this
12 schedule reduction this evening also.

13 Another change implemented in the recent WSSC
14 watershed access regulations did not, in my opinion, receive
15 adequate attention last night. And that is, the closure of
16 all private entrances to the horse trails and limiting
17 access to only official WSSC entrances. And I would like to
18 briefly address this issue now.

19 When we moved into our farm about 20 years ago, we
20 approached WSSC Watershed Patrol and asked for their help
21 and blessing to lay out an access route from our farm to the
22 equestrian trails, and they readily complied and this
23 basically enabled us to ride out the back gate of our
24 property and immediately be on the WSSC trails. They
25 subsequently even sent us a document saying, giving us this,

1 officially giving us this right, and I have a copy of this
2 I'm going to enclose in the testimony actually.

3 Under the new rules we cannot use this access, but
4 must trailer our horses to one of the eight official WSSC
5 entrances. Even this is misleading and you mentioned as
6 part of the study you're going to look at some of the
7 suitability of the access to various people and so I'd like
8 to bring this to your attention. If you look at all of
9 these accesses, there is only, let's see, two entrances
10 require parking on private property, therefore, really
11 aren't useful entrances. One requires parking along a
12 dangerous road. You wouldn't think of unloading a horse at
13 that point. There is only one suitable parking lot east to
14 Route 29 which is, and admittedly that's a very good parking
15 place and you can fit a lot of trailers and we've had rides
16 out of there with a number of people. That's a very good
17 access point.

18 There are three marginally suitable parking lots
19 west of Route 29 at Edna or Batson and Brogdon, but they
20 have very limited space. If you want to take a couple of
21 friends you're in trouble. There's anywhere for maybe two
22 to four, so and you have to contend with the fishermen and
23 also the buses uses those as turnaround, and I don't know if
24 you officially can't use it when the buses have access to it
25 or not, but anyway, that's an issue that you have to

1 consider.

2 In practice no trail rider would buy a property or
3 board their horses at a facility abutting the buffer zone
4 and then trailer to an official trail site. Much of the
5 attraction of these properties is being able to quickly and
6 easily hop on your horse after a tough day at work, in that
7 little bit of spare time you might have or just on an
8 impulse to go out and commune with nature. None of this of
9 course would be possible if you had to first trailer
10 somewhere and you just don't do it, there's too much of a
11 barrier.

12 Even more insidious is the effect the rule has
13 upon commercial boarding facilities. Many boarders do not
14 have trailers due to the expense and the effort of
15 purchasing and maintaining one and those individuals would
16 obviously seek barns elsewhere on other trails or other
17 barns that do have access to the trail. Even those with
18 trailers are boarding at the facilities because of their
19 ready access to the road, the trail riders.

20 Implementation of this regulation requiring using
21 only the official WSSC entrances thus would inflict a severe
22 financial penalty on the commercial barns and would likely
23 jeopardize their very existence. This regulation makes
24 absolutely no sense to me. And I have yet to hear a
25 reasonable justification for its existence. I would ask EA

1 engineering to consider the environmental aspects of this
2 regulation, if there are any, and unless a cogent
3 explanation for its existing existence is forthcoming, I
4 urge WSSC to rescind it. Thank you.

5 MS. SMET: After Maria I've got Pat Oliva, Debby
6 Poole speaking for herself as well as Ainslee Sadler, and
7 then Chuck McMillian.

8 MS. SCHWARTZ: Good evening. My name is Maria
9 Schwartz, I'm a member of Trail Riders of Today, TROT. it's
10 an organization of approximately 700 plus members. I am a
11 horse owner and a trail rider. I keep my horses at a farm
12 that abuts the 5500 acres of the WSSC land that is the
13 subject of EA's study. I also live right off the watershed,
14 but I don't have enough land to support two horses.
15 However, for several years I kept my single horse in my
16 backyard. I moved to my home in 1986 specifically because I
17 could ride from my home to the trails without having to rely
18 on a trailer, which I did not have for many years. I moved
19 my horses to their current location for the same reason.

20 I support the concerns of my fellow stakeholders
21 that have raised at this meeting and at the meeting last
22 night in Laurel. The first concern I wanted to raise which
23 is on that Denis just spoke about, is that by virtue of the
24 WSSC's current regulations, anyone without a trailer that is
25 without a trailer that is not next to a designated access

1 point is not able to ride on the watershed.

2 Additionally, I don't understand how the WSSC can
3 institute a regulation that has such a negative impact on
4 the environment generally. Since this regulation requires a
5 trail rider to get into a large car or truck and use gas
6 that adds nasty things to our air quality in order to pull a
7 trailer to an access point rather than as was previously the
8 case allowing riders to access the watershed trails by
9 horseback.

10 The second concern I have focuses on the lack of
11 information that I have had access to in order to prepare
12 for these meetings. Let me give you some details. After
13 the announcement that EA would be conducting a study that
14 was looking for stakeholders, I called EA to let them know I
15 would like to participate as a stakeholder. The person that
16 took my call did not know about the study and did not even
17 know where to direct my call in the organization. But I was
18 told that someone would call me back. No one did.

19 Two weeks later I called a second time and spoke
20 with a gentleman. He told me that he couldn't give me any
21 information about the study and suggested that if I wanted
22 information, I would have to get it from WSSC. To
23 accomplish that I made a very limited request for documents
24 specifically related to the EA study through the Maryland
25 Public Information Act. WSSC responded that this was such a

1 huge request that they needed an additional 30 days to work
2 on it. When the WSSC wrote to say that they had completed
3 the document review, it indicated that they were charging me
4 for six and a half hours of time including other expenses
5 related to their search for a grand total of \$491.69, which
6 does not include copying fees.

7 Because this is big deal of money for me to pay
8 and I planned to use the document to share with my fellow
9 equestrians, I requested a waiver of the fee based on the
10 fact that the only way I could get this information was
11 through an MPIA request and that having these documents is
12 necessary to be an informed stakeholder, and therefore in
13 the public interest. WSSC emailed a response they were
14 sending my request to their general manager for review and
15 consideration.

16 Rather than next receiving an answer to my request
17 for a waiver, I received a second bill for the WSSC's search
18 time. I thought this was just in error and that the WSSC
19 had sent this bill out not realizing that I was requesting a
20 waiver. However, the next time I heard from the WSSC was
21 again to request payment for their search and informed me
22 that if I didn't pay the fee, they would turn my bill over
23 to their legal department. I am still waiting for a
24 response to my request for a waiver.

25 What the WSSC's actions in this situation indicate

1 to me is that WSSC does not want educated stakeholders.
2 They want to keep us in the dark and this behavior leads me
3 to ask why. And in response to that question to conclude
4 that the WSSC has a hidden agenda. And appears to me that
5 their hidden agenda not only includes equestrians, whose
6 horses are supposedly fouling our drinking water, but also
7 boaters, fishermen, picnickers and all the folks who
8 treasure and gently use watershed resources.

9 While it's not pleasant but understandable when an
10 ex-spouse has a hidden agenda, or the person trying to sell
11 you something for more than its worth has a hidden agenda,
12 it is not okay for county, state or federal representatives
13 to have hidden agendas. In fact, it is contrary to good
14 government. The communication of information is critically
15 important in a healthy democracy. This means that our
16 representatives must be as transparent as possible in their
17 interactions with the public. My real fear and the reason I
18 am here today and was here yesterday is to speak to you all,
19 is that I believe that something is rotten in Denmark.

20 While we are laying off teachers and curtailing
21 other services in Maryland, we -- and as a rate payer, I do
22 mean we -- are apparently paying EA \$225,000 to scope out a
23 study that no one outside the WSSC can see a basis for. And
24 neither EA nor WSSC is forthcoming in helping us to
25 understand the issue at hand. Instead, the WSSC is

1 publishing wild statements in papers such as the Washington
2 Post, which people not familiar with the watershed read and
3 respond to with oh my goodness, horses are pooping in our
4 drinking water.

5 The groundless impression that the WSSC is
6 creating is so wrong on so many levels one might find it
7 hard to figure out where to start. I am honestly not sure
8 of the results of any study that WSSC initiates on this
9 issue will not be skewed to serve the WSSC's own hidden
10 agenda. And this gets to my third concern. If EA is only
11 looking at 5,500 acres that buffer the water directly, what
12 about run off from storm drains from areas where individuals
13 have dumped trash, from fertilized lawns, from road
14 construction that abut WSSC land, outside of the 5,500
15 acres. EA's study is already skewed.

16 And on a less than minor note, as EA does its
17 study of the horse trails, they should not identify the fire
18 break as the horse trail. The fire break and its horrible
19 erosion is completely of WSSC's own making and has nothing
20 to do with equestrian use which began for the first time in
21 March of this year when trail riders were forced to use it
22 per revised WSSC regulations. The so called interior trails
23 which show no sign of erosion and run off should be labeled
24 as the horse trails, not as the interior trails as has been
25 described here tonight by EA.

1 Finally, when this is all said and done,
2 especially if phase one of EA's study provides information
3 that indicates that there is no basis to proceed to phase
4 two of the study, the Office of Legislative Audits should
5 take a serious look at the waste and abuse that WSSC has
6 engaged in over the last year and a half. Thank you very
7 much.

8 MS. SMET: Pat.

9 MS. OLIVA: Hello, I'm Pat Oliva, I'm the TROT
10 Coordinator for Howard County, and I just want to emphasize
11 that right now, as it stands, Howard County has no trails in
12 the watershed. Tridelphia Reservoir, if you do your study
13 in the Triadelphia Reservoir, there are no trails. Horses
14 are not allowed in there, and basically we would like to
15 have them in there. If your study shows that the trails
16 that we have, and we have made them. I walked with Paul
17 Hancock with a group of TROT members. He told us where to
18 lay the trails. We laid them down. He called his engineers
19 for the big logs that had fallen across, otherwise TROT did
20 all the work on those trails. But we put the trails where
21 we were told to put them.

22 I am now a trail master. I have taken all the
23 courses, I've got all the certification. Some places I
24 would not put the trails, especially over by -- I would move
25 them a little bit further, they're not, within the

1 acceptable 10 degrees, but most trail masters like their
2 trails. But, they could be changed, you know, if WSSC wants
3 them. If the WSSC says don't change the trails, we can't
4 change them. But they were laid there by WSSC personnel who
5 told us to put them where we did.

6 Also, I would like to say I wrote in '04 to the
7 WSSC to request not more than a 50 foot access under 97 when
8 the highway department put the new higher bridge up there to
9 access the Patuxent State Park that's on the east side of
10 97. I got a letter from them October 18th, '04 saying that
11 oh, we can't do anything or let you do anything now because
12 we are doing a forest study and a modeling effort thing.
13 That you have said that you've got the results of. I have
14 never gotten the result back. The zoning department, the
15 parks department or myself have never been able to access
16 this. I have called them and it's, they might have done it,
17 but that was eight years ago, and we still have not heard
18 from them if we can put a 50 foot right of way underneath 97
19 so the horses don't have to cross a highway.

20 Also, a lot of the land in Howard County is on the
21 Tridelphia Reservoir, is very suitable for trails. I would
22 like to put in an emphasis when you're doing the study, you
23 can't study what we've done because we haven't been there,
24 but I would like to put that, if everything is working out
25 for Rocky Gorge, I would like to work with WSSC or with EA

1 to figure out where we could best put some trails into the
2 Howard County side. It's very important. Also, there's a
3 huge large parking lot that's suitable for anything right
4 off of 97 going into the Patapsco State Park and going up,
5 you know, because the trails go up river from there. So
6 it'd be a wonderful connection. There's just a small
7 section of state park, but it is large enough to make some
8 trails in there for the people who are coming, who have
9 horses on the east side of 97. I think it's a very
10 important thing. But again, there's no communication.

11 I have got an easement through a development from
12 Schooley Mill to the watershed on the Howard County side
13 which would open up a beautiful array of trails, but it's
14 like we don't exist. My letters and my phone calls go
15 totally unanswered, you know. Also, when you're looking at
16 that trail, horses have been banned from that trail, so it's
17 going to be very hard. How are you checking for the horse
18 erosion if the horses have not been allowed on that trail
19 since last fall?

20 You know, don't just look for the one thing the
21 WSSC wants you to find. It would be very important for you
22 to make a total evaluation of the watershed, not looking to
23 keep horses off the trail, which is WSSC wants. I'm just
24 asking you to be fair and I think you are, but what we've
25 heard about you, Howard County has a great deal of respect

1 for your organization. But, you know, be honest. That's
2 all I'm asking. Thank you.

3 MS. SMET: We had Debby next, but we'll let Chuck
4 since he's up here.

5 MR. MCMILLIAN: I'm here. I'll do it. Sorry,
6 Debby. Hi, my name is Chuck McMillian. I directly
7 represent a group of almost 400 kayakers called Chesapeake
8 Kayak Adventures. But I also speak with permission from
9 numerous other paddling groups in the metropolitan area
10 whose members number in the thousands. And yet in a larger
11 sense, I speak for all recreational users that enjoy the
12 natural beauty of Tridelphia and Rocky Gorge Reservoirs
13 whether they're paddlers, fishermen, hunters, equestrians,
14 or they just like to take the dog for the walk around these
15 gorgeous bodies of water.

16 There is no getting around the fact that
17 Tridelphia and Rocky Gorge are drinking water reservoirs and
18 WSSC as well as all recreational users need to be committed
19 to protecting them. They are very special places with lots
20 of restrictions and both sides need to work together to live
21 around those restrictions. In recent years, however, WSSC
22 has done a number of things that have upset recreational
23 users of the watershed. I think they've kind of gone out of
24 their way to tick us off. Most notably, these include
25 shortening of the season by an astounding two months.

1 Reducing the length of the day that people can use the
2 reservoirs, and restricting access to equestrian trails that
3 have been used for years.

4 These actions and others have created an agitated
5 and antagonistic relationship with the very people whose
6 best interest is to help WSSC protect the watershed. The
7 seasonal closings and time changes obviously have nothing to
8 do with water quality, and are probably an attempt to reduce
9 payroll budgets rather than improve water quality. A little
10 extra time in the evening doesn't sound like much unless
11 you're rushing to get to the boat ramp and paddle a little
12 bit before the sun sets.

13 If WSSC doesn't have the resources to oversee
14 recreational use of the reservoirs on a year round basis,
15 perhaps that responsibility needs to be turned over to some
16 other authority who can more adeptly manage the situation.
17 Even the way these meetings were presented to the public
18 demonstrated WSSC's total lack of willingness to be open,
19 honest and forthcoming with the recreational user community.

20 They asked to come and speak at a meeting but
21 numerous calls and letters by several individuals including
22 myself to EA and WSSC couldn't uncover the nature of the
23 study or of what we should consider addressing when we
24 spoke. Why have the meeting. I heard the lady's story
25 about her bill that she got from WSSC when trying to get

1 information about the study. It's just wrong. If I
2 understand it all correctly, EA Engineering has contracted
3 with WSSC to provide a study of the 5,500 acres of buffer
4 land immediately surrounding the reservoirs related to how
5 erosion and other factors on those lands affect the water
6 quality in the reservoirs.

7 EA is also holding these public meetings to
8 fulfill their contract, but the meetings are more of an
9 albatross around EA's neck than any real part of the study.
10 Nothing said here tonight or last night will have any real
11 serious impact of the findings of the scientific findings
12 that EA does in their study. Don't misunderstand. I think
13 the EA people are very nice and they are here listening to
14 us. Quite simply, WSSC is extremely deficient in the way
15 they deal with and treat recreational users of the
16 reservoirs. These meetings which have no impact on the
17 findings of the study are just more proof of that.

18 I personally believe that WSSC sees them as a way
19 to placate recreational users and rationalize any kind of
20 new restriction they chose to put in place whether it has
21 any effect on water quality or not. Preserving and
22 improving water quality in the reservoirs is a goal that can
23 be peacefully and successfully coexist with recreational
24 use. It happens every day with fewer restrictions than WSSC
25 imposes at hundreds of other reservoirs across the country.

1 Recreational users want to work with WSSC to make it happen
2 here, but we need someone on the other end who is listening.

3 WSSC can't, if they can't say their way clear to
4 listen to the needs and work with recreational users, if
5 they continue to be less than open, honest and forthcoming
6 with the recreational use community, then kayakers,
7 fishermen, hunters, equestrians, hikers and dog walkers
8 alike need to unite and take this discussion to the
9 authorities that WSSC is accountable to. Fortunately, a
10 simple internet search yields several models of how that can
11 be successfully accomplished. It certainly would be a lot
12 easier and more cost effective for both sides to work
13 together. You know, come up with a plan that works for
14 everybody, WSSC and the recreational users.

15 Certainly we need to protect the water quality,
16 but it can be done in ways that encourage even more
17 recreational use by the surrounding communities than WSSC
18 currently allows. Maintaining and improving water quality
19 is not contingent upon imposing more restrictions. Water
20 quality and recreational use are not mutually exclusive
21 goals. Thank you.

22 MS. SMET: All right. Debby Poole, as I mentioned
23 earlier is speaking on her own behalf, but also is reading
24 comments from Ainslee Sadler who was unable to attend
25 tonight. So Bill will give her due time for both speakers.

1 MS. POOLE: And I'm not going to rush as much
2 tonight. Everybody said, I couldn't understand. First of
3 all, I just want to thank the league for having us. It's a
4 great building, really enjoyed it. The building here is
5 really nice. I appreciate them having us here. I also want
6 to say in both meetings WSSC has been here. I think you had
7 five or six here last night, and there are several here
8 tonight. So WSSC is here and they're listening.

9 And, I also am so excited that we have the boaters
10 and kayakers and everything, because let me tell you, the
11 equestrians last year, we went to so many commissioner
12 meetings. We were on TV. We sent letters, letters,
13 letters. I mean, we really tried to get the word out to you
14 guys, and I'm so thankful that you finally got it. You
15 know, I don't know why we couldn't connect with you guys
16 last year, but I'm really thankful that you understand, you
17 know, what's happening and you're with us.

18 A couple of things I want to say before I actually
19 get on my notes was one, when Mr. Webb was talking about the
20 access areas, I've been to his place and literally the gate
21 to his, back of his farm, you open it and you reach the
22 bridle trails. And he had a written deed or easement or
23 whatever from WSSC that he was allowed to do that. They had
24 it for all those years, and from what I understand, they
25 never got a letter that said you had to stop using it. So

1 that's the kind of thing that's been a little hurtful with
2 the communication of all this.

3 So, if you want to know what the actual trail
4 entrances look like or the whatever, yeah, trail entrances,
5 the little pamphlets that were given out by EA and WSSC on
6 the back table lists those. So you drive around and see
7 where you think you would want to take your truck and
8 trailer to park it to get to the bridle trails. You can't
9 do it on almost all of them. And I buffer the trail, so I'm
10 lucky I don't have to trailer anywhere to get on mine.

11 I wanted to mention one thing too before I start
12 is that it's kind of confusing. If you go on a lot of the
13 entrances you will see that the big old wood signs that say
14 it is absolutely illegal to ride on the fire break are right
15 next to the brand new blue signs that say, you can ride on
16 them now. And they're calling them the access road. So, it
17 is still confusing. The pamphlets are still a little
18 confusing.

19 The deer population. Riders are not against
20 hunting and managed deer hunts. They go on all over the
21 place. The days are put on a calendar. You understand that
22 there's going to be deer hunts. You don't go riding those
23 days. We agree. The deer, they impact the trails, the
24 erosion, and the cars. I mean, we just, all get that deer,
25 you know, is a problem. All that. So, anyway, the managed

1 deer hunts we're good with that.

2 The one lady, I don't think she's here anymore,
3 that mentioned about the WSSC man that drowned. I think
4 actually he was picking up a deer during the deer hunt. I
5 don't think it was trash. But, I just wanted to correct
6 that. And as far as shortening the season, we're with you
7 boaters. Having to stop early November in the most
8 beautiful time of the year with the fall colors is just,
9 it's a killer.

10 Okay, so I'm going to start. Hello, my name is
11 Debby Poole, owner and operator of BelCo Horse Farm since
12 1968. I've been asked to speak to you today on behalf of
13 the well over one thousand equestrians, business people and
14 land owners who have expressed their concern about WSSC (1)
15 closing their equestrian trails, moving riding to unsuitable
16 access road, banning winter riding and closing previously
17 approved individual barn entrances, as well as changes to
18 other recreational activities, fishing, boating, picnicking,
19 etcetera. We are very interested in progress in resolving
20 any problem areas. We would like to reinforce our desire to
21 work with WSSC and make the equestrian trail and other areas
22 environmentally sound.

23 I want to say too that, we were talking about how
24 much the EA study is, and we equestrians last year took to
25 the commissioners at WSSC this offer, during the interim of

1 broader watershed study or perhaps to work along with EA
2 Engineering Science and Technology Group, we would like to
3 again offer free and expert trail assessment and plans for
4 rerouting if necessary, by Prince George's County
5 environmental experts from the Soil Conservation District
6 Office. These individuals, Steve Darcy and Eileen Beard,
7 are certified trail masters. They're very committed to
8 environmental land use, environmental assessments of horse
9 farms. They do the nutrient plans that every farm, horse
10 farm has to have. You have to turn in, you know, your soil
11 samples and that kind of stuff.

12 They have offered to come out to assess WSSC's
13 equestrian trails and access roads in both Prince George's
14 and Montgomery Counties, determining where riding is or is
15 not environmentally harmful, and how the preferred route can
16 be improved. And so this was free. This was offered for
17 free to kind of do what I think you guys are going to be
18 doing, because if you're not doing the outer stuff, then
19 you're basically, they would be doing what you're doing, the
20 maps and the, you know, that kind of thing.

21 Just so you know, for me personally, my children
22 are the fifth generation Pooles to ride these trails which
23 have changed very little in all these years. Great Grandpa
24 Poole sold his land at the end of Crumb Road to the WSSC.
25 So, I would say we would certainly be aware of the original

1 bridle trails and the changes that might have occurred over
2 the last, you know, he was 1905, so a long time before WSSC
3 ever was there. And they, you know, in fact, remain pretty
4 much the same. Where as the deer population and the impact
5 they have is a serious ever changing problem.

6 Okay. Mrs. Sadler moved from Bethesda to, she
7 also kind of buffers the property, in 1969. My name is
8 Ainslee Sadler and I live in Burtonsville, Maryland. I have
9 lived in closed proximity to the Rocky Gorge Reservoir for a
10 number of years. Over the years my family have both used
11 the riding trails and assisted with maintaining those
12 trails. Approximately 10 years ago I began to see a
13 decrease in patrols and/or maintenance of the entire
14 watershed to include recreation areas, horse trails and
15 fishing areas. I have discovered many cross drainage
16 culverts which are washed out and impassable due to lack of
17 maintaining.

18 These culverts are located throughout the
19 watershed and allow streams to move from one side of the
20 fire break to the other without crossing the surface. For
21 many years these culverts were being properly maintained and
22 allowed watershed operations to continue and no erosion was
23 taking place. However, once maintenance of these culverts
24 stopped, erosion took place and debris built up causing
25 collapse of the fire break roadways. For reasons unknown,

1 the WSSC then moved the horseback riding from the well
2 established and maintained horse trails to these dangerous
3 eroded and washed out fire breaks.

4 To date I have not seen any documented evidence of
5 damage to the watershed, water quality, or habitat caused by
6 horses who trail ride alone on the original designated
7 bridle trail. In closing, we need to make every effort to
8 control erosion to our watershed but moving the horse trails
9 to an area already in desperate need of repair was not the
10 solution. I am asking for the trails to be reopened and
11 corrective action to be taken to update the watershed
12 regulations. Thank you. Mrs. Ainslee Sadler and Family.

13 MS. SMET: We're about 10 minutes 9. I have three
14 remaining speakers on my list, so we're going to ask those
15 folks to speak and then I'll follow up to see if there are
16 additional folks that I may have missed who would like to
17 speak. So my next three are Ann Coles, Ron Polniaszek and
18 Linda Mishler. Ann? Oh yes, you were giving riding
19 lessons.

20 MS. COLES: Yeah, that's right. Hi, my name is
21 Ann Coles, and I'm the owner/operator of Greystone Farm in
22 Brookeville. I've been in the horse riding stables business
23 for over 40 years in Montgomery County. I've been a
24 longstanding part of the horse community and I've watched
25 and been personally impacted by development in our area.

1 And, as I've listened to everyone else tonight, I was
2 thinking, well, I could just say a little bit more. I don't
3 have a lot here but, my personal feeling about the
4 development and the lake, in the 1990's I worked with the
5 Maryland National Park and Planning Commission when they
6 developed my side which is the Tridelphia, and they had put
7 in this, you know, huge plan to develop, you know, 300
8 homes. I mean, they were just going to stuff them in and
9 you know, the people that lived in the area came and said,
10 you know, you can't do this. This is, you know, you're
11 going to have septic right on the lake and at least in
12 Howard County, that county seemed to have been a little
13 better about that, so we actually by our input did have less
14 development and did not have, you know, the septic right up
15 against the lake.

16 But they did ask me at the time, you know, while
17 I've been riding there, you know, for decades and you know
18 to go ahead and map out the trails and so forth. So I did
19 that. But, to be honest with you, you know, the trail ended
20 up being running alongside two yards and, you know, people
21 would have their dogs run out and you know, it just changed
22 for us. It really did. We don't feel very safe to cross
23 the road and ride. And I did notice tonight that they
24 didn't have the equestrian trails on the little map that
25 they gave us. But they should have been there because I was

1 the one that designated those trails and I did work with
2 Naomi Mandress in the 1990's. She was in charge of the
3 equestrian trails and, in fact, did a lot of trying to link
4 the trails together. And it isn't very forthcoming, not
5 really. And, it is a shame.

6 The horse community is a vital part of our society
7 here in Maryland. Without exercise for our horses, we
8 really just can't continue. Horses are large animals, they
9 need a lot of exercise. Horses help people in many ways. A
10 lot of the stuff is, you know, has been said before now,
11 physically and therapeutically. It's proven by many
12 programs that are offered to the public. So it really would
13 be a great loss if we cannot, you know, continue.

14 So, please be aware of this important move. To
15 keep all trails open year round to riders who are generally
16 very good stewards of the land that they are permitted to
17 ride on. Also, it is a well known fact to most equestrians
18 that ATV and other motorized vehicles are the major source
19 of erosion problems, not the horses. Horses have been used
20 for centuries for logging, as did Grandpa Poole and so
21 forth, and farming in sensitive areas because they did not
22 cause soil problems or pollution. Thank you very much.

23 MR. POLNIASZEK: Hi, my name is Ron Polniaszek.
24 I'm here I guess in two aspects. One, I'm a property owner.
25 I have a lot between Nicholas Cove and Pigtail. And mostly

1 here on behalf of the Howard Bird Club, and also the Audubon
2 Society of Central Maryland. The Audubon Society of Central
3 Maryland uses the property once a year thanks to WSSC allows
4 us access. We do a survey, Christmas bird survey. We walk
5 the fire road from one end of the reservoir to the other.
6 The Howard Bird Club does a three times a year bird survey,
7 as part of their breeding bird survey census. They do it in
8 the Spring, in Fall and also Winter. The only impact we
9 have is basically to walk the fire road on one day at each
10 survey.

11 As we walked through the property we noticed that
12 the landscape has changed a great deal since we started 20
13 years ago. The lush under story is now gone. It's been
14 replaced primarily with spice bush and ferns. The breeding
15 birds that use the ground cover for nesting, the oven birds,
16 the vieries, the worm eating warblers, birds of that nature,
17 Kentucky Warblers, they're all gone from the reservoir or in
18 very reduced numbers.

19 Living next to the reservoir I've also noticed
20 that when I moved into the lot 25 years ago, every spring
21 there was a big cover of under story. You couldn't see more
22 than 50 feet away the under story was so lush. Now it's
23 totally gone. You can see through the woods. The browse
24 line on all the trees are cut off. The height of the deer.
25 There are times when I've seen as much as 44 deer walk

1 across my property in the morning, in the afternoon. At the
2 very least I see 12 deer a day. I've watched total families
3 of deer grow up. The deer are very smart. Every time
4 there's a managed hunt, they go close to the houses.
5 They're not stupid. They know where the safe zones are.

6 There is a 300 foot exclusion zone where you can't
7 hunt at all, but that's where all the deer are. And they
8 just have to hear the first shot and bango, they're right
9 there against the house. And they don't move, you know, you
10 sort of kind of shag them away. I've had deer tick, Lymes
11 Disease three times, my wife has had it three times. And
12 the deer tick population, we never have to worry about
13 walking any where along the property because the deer are
14 just so out of hand.

15 My suggestion, again, is very brief. I think
16 there has to be more managed hunts. There has to be some
17 way to call the deer. I mean its fine to say a hundred
18 deer, but there's still 600 deer left. And each of these
19 deer, there's no deer being born every year. This morning I
20 just saw a couple of fawns. You need to sort of monitor the
21 amount of deer there are still left and somehow go after
22 them.

23 I think the property owners are all in the same
24 boat. Their landscaping is being eaten. The deer sort of
25 spend the day in the reservoir property. I live next to

1 Tridelphia. In the morning and the afternoon they walk
2 through and go and browse on the lawns during the evenings.
3 Again, I just, the only point I'm trying to make here is the
4 landscape is greatly changing in the reservoir. Some study
5 has to be made of the natural forestation. This area is too
6 valuable for migrating birds. There's a great reduce in
7 population of birds and it's getting worse, and it's not
8 getting any better, and we don't seem to be doing anything
9 to change that. That's all I have to say.

10 MR. GUNDERMAN: Excuse me. Can I make a statement
11 real quick before the next speaker?

12 MS. SMET: Real quick.

13 MR. GUNDERMAN: I have a petition about the season
14 that I started last year, having it reinstated to what it
15 had been forever, about March and December and sunrise and
16 sunset. I would appreciate it if everybody signs it. Thank
17 you.

18 MS. SMET: All right. We had comments by Linda
19 Mishler, who's not here, but you are going to give them on
20 her behalf. And then after these comments I have Barbara
21 Boyds who needs to speak.

22 MS. EUBANKS: Hello, my name is Kim Eubanks and
23 I'm a local teacher and an avid kayaker, and I use the
24 reservoir all the time. But I'm actually speaking on behalf
25 of Linda Mishler who could not be here tonight. And so, I'm

1 reading this letter, you know, as if she wrote it. Or she
2 did write it. It says, thank you for this opportunity to
3 speak. It seems to me that there has been an adequate
4 number of detailed responses addressing the interest and use
5 of the WSSC properties by various recreational groups. I,
6 myself, am an avid kayaker and hiker, but after listening
7 and researching, I'm not sure that the issue at hand is
8 really the impact of recreational users upon the WSSC
9 properties.

10 She is afraid that the WSSC has a specific agenda
11 that includes precluding and/or limiting recreational use of
12 the properties, not because they are causing damage but
13 rather because they are convenient excuse or scapegoat for
14 their plans. I say this for two reasons. First, the study
15 that is being done regarding silt accumulation and damaging
16 run off impacting the areas is not inclusive all reasonable
17 and probable causes. It appears to be solely focused on
18 recreational activities that are in fact the most minimal
19 cause of such ecological damage.

20 In her opinion, this will result in a skewed and
21 incomplete survey. The survey will not answer the question
22 of environmental protection at all. Secondly, the WSSC has
23 not tried to work with the recreational users in a
24 constructive manner. In fact, these recreational users are
25 a tremendous asset to the WSSC in that they embody a large

1 group of ecologically minded people who have been and would
2 be continuing to be advocates to preserve the WSSC
3 properties.

4 There are many hands that make light work. What a
5 waste to disregard such a dedicated populace of who
6 undoubtedly donate many hours of uncompensated time in the
7 effort to preserve the WSSC grounds were they treated as
8 partners rather than as enemies. It seems only logical to
9 her that if you were trying to really solve the problem, you
10 would tap into such an obvious resource not ignore or ignite
11 it.

12 The second point that she would like to make is
13 that by fragmenting the different groups, recreational users
14 and specific interest groups, boaters, fishermen,
15 equestrians, hikers, etcetera, they're weakening our voice.
16 She thinks we need to unite and attempt to discover what the
17 real agenda is here so that we as a group can pull together
18 and make an impact together. All of us have an enormous
19 stake in this and she and I would hate to see our energy
20 spent defending the minimal impact of our recreational use
21 if the powers to be are really not interested in that
22 recreational impact beyond having it as an excuse to further
23 their hidden agenda. So, thank you on Linda Mishler's
24 behalf.

25 MS. SMET: Barbara?

1 MS. BOYDS: Good evening. I think you've had a
2 lot of response from the citizens and the people -- talk a
3 little bit louder -- I am not a speaker at all but, let's
4 work together is what I would like to say.

5 In 1980 was a grand opening of an equestrian trail
6 at the WSSC, the official as long with Paul Hancock, I don't
7 know if you remember him, and TROT designed and cut trails
8 through Burtonsville, through Tucker Land Road and Ashton,
9 and probably further in Maryland. After 30 years, over 30
10 years of the use of the trails, there is very, very limited
11 erosion. The trails are in excellent shape. And I'm sure
12 that you've found that when you went through these trails
13 and walked through there.

14 Equestrians have always maintained these trails
15 from trash and debris, and put them, you know, and kept them
16 open. The WSSC even named a few trails, one trail which
17 goes under 29, that was called the Pat Oliva Trail, and the
18 signs are still there. Another trail, Terry Ledley, over
19 there by Mr. and Mrs. Webb's area. These signs are still
20 posted. Let's work together and please let's continue to
21 work together and keep our precious WSSC trails and the
22 waters and everything else for us to protect them and to use
23 them. That's all I have to say. And thank you.

24 MS. SMET: Are there additional folks in the room
25 who would like an opportunity to speak that haven't had that

1 opportunity yet? All right. Seeing none, I'll just make a
2 few concluding remarks. First, I want to sincerely, we
3 sincerely appreciate everybody's time tonight, all your well
4 thought out comments, your written comments. Again, a
5 reminder that if anyone wants to provide additional comments
6 in writing, we'd like to get those by July 19th at this web
7 address, e-mail address or this mailing address. As we said
8 before, we have audio recorded, a transcription will be
9 available. We have taken notes on the flip charts, and
10 we'll be preparing a meeting summary.

11 Those documents as well as copies of the sign-in
12 sheets from both meetings will be available on WSSC's
13 website. So, I think that's it and we'll just adjourn the
14 meeting.

15 (Whereupon, at 9:07 p.m., the meeting was
16 concluded.)

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√ Digitally signed by Keena Lukacinsky

ELECTRONIC CERTIFICATE

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Patuxent Reservoirs Watershed Protection Study



Keena Lukacinsky

June 27, 2012