

**Summary of Stakeholder Outreach Meeting for Patuxent Reservoirs  
Watershed Protection Study – Triadelphia Reservoir  
19 June 2012**

EA Engineering, Science, and Technology (EA) held stakeholder outreach meetings on the Patuxent Reservoirs Watershed Protection Study (Study) on June 18 and 19, 2012.. EA is authorized by the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC) to conduct the Study. This summary describes stakeholder comments at the 19 June 2012 meeting.

**Meeting Date:** June 19, 2012 (7 pm to 9 pm)

**Location:** Izaak Walton League Wildlife Achievement Chapter  
26430 Mullinax Mill Road  
Mt. Airy, Maryland 21771

**Speakers:** See below

**Agenda Items:**

- EA presented overview of study work plan
- EA answered questions about the study
- Listen to stakeholder comments and suggestions for how the reservoir buffer is being used, and how it should be used in the future

**Meeting Format:**

- Stakeholder Speaking time limited to 3-5 minutes
- Meeting was audio-recorded and transcribed
- Written comments accepted through July 19, 2012

**Meeting Summary**

Jody Smet, EA, gave a PowerPoint slide presentation that provided:

- a brief background on the EA firm;
- meeting agenda and format;
- meeting purpose and goals;
- meeting ground rules; and
- key project staff

Mike Powell, EA, gave a PowerPoint slide presentation that provided a brief overview of the Patuxent Reservoirs Watershed Impact Study, which includes:

- a review of existing data and information relating to water quality, forest conservation, watershed boundaries, and various physical characteristics;
- field reconnaissance of WSSC access roads and interior trails for the verification of maps, documentation of erosion potential or contamination, and threats to public safety; and

- recommendations regarding buffer management, public access points, and trail locations in order to improve water quality.

### Questions and Answers about Study

Mike Powell answered questions regarding the study. Questions related to the project included details of the contract with WSSC, details of and the potential for a Phase 2 of the watershed project, communication with stakeholders to increase outreach to all bill payers and permit holders, erosion measurement techniques, and whether additional factors like sedimentation, vegetation, water depth profiles or damage to culverts would be included in the scope of the study.

### Stakeholder Comments

A diverse group of stakeholders provided comments. The following briefly summarizes key stakeholder comments and concerns by recreational use/activity.

#### *Equestrians*

Many speakers stated that the vast majority of the horse trails along the reservoir have no significant erosion and that issues related to sediment and erosion are caused by culverts, steep access roads and nearby development instead of properly constructed switchback trails previously used for horseback riding. Rather than contributing to litter and excessive waste, many riders explained that they are active in cleaning up trash along the trails. Additionally, the equestrian community feels they are important stewards of the watershed and have played a pivotal role as WSSC's eyes and ears for many years. Several stakeholders questioned reports of erosion along the trails and want WSSC to present the scientific rationale that horseback riding in these areas has negative impacts on the reservoir and its water quality.

Another concern frequently expressed was the overall dissatisfaction of and negative impact on the commercial horse stables due to:

- prohibiting use of the old bridle trails (e.g., Terry Ledley trail and Pat Oliva trail);
- the winter closure of all designated equestrian trails; and
- closing private horse entrances to the trails.

Reduced access to equestrian trails was stated to have negatively affected both local businesses associated with the horse industry, and property values near the reservoir because many people chose to live in the area specifically for access to the trails. Many stakeholders shared their frustration with the closure of trails due to a lack of alternative local horseback riding trails.

Further evidence of the value of the horse riding trails was articulated by those who stated that such activities provided valuable outdoor interactive learning experiences for children and other outreach groups.

Overall, the stakeholders commented that the study is not focusing on the right issues related to erosion and sedimentation and water quality. Instead of focusing on recreational activities within the WSSC-owned buffer, they suggest that a more effective approach would include more analysis of tributary inputs, and land uses such as deforestation and overdevelopment in the larger, surrounding watershed.

### *Anglers and Boaters*

Anglers and boaters alike said that they specifically bought their houses because of the close proximity to the reservoir and its associated benefits. Others commented on the currently imposed restrictions on use and asked that the boating season be extended once again. Boaters stressed that they feel their use on the water has had no impact to water quality and the imposed restrictions should be removed. Stakeholders also commented on lack of WSSC policy enforcement at the reservoirs. A stakeholder expressed concern over sedimentation from the Patuxent River. Many of the anglers/boaters stated that WSSC has mishandled the equestrian issue, and are concerned that WSSC will use the Watershed Impact Study to justify closing the reservoir completely.

### *Hunters/Deer Management*

Several stakeholders spoke in support of WSSC's active deer management program and the need to have better deer control in the watershed. Vegetation was stressed as providing a major role in preservation of water quality; and deer were directly impacting the vegetation which results in invasive species and the loss of a natural protection against sedimentation. The importance of deer management was emphasized and it was suggested that there be more WSSC managed deer hunts.

### *Pollution Sources from Outside WSSC Reservoir Buffer*

Additionally, several speakers said that they recognize the importance of maintaining and cleaning the area since the reservoir is a major source of drinking water for many citizens. One speaker insisted that pollutants in the reservoir, erosion and sediment from housing developments are more responsible for contamination within the watershed than are permit holders.

Similar to those interested in preserving horse trails, many of these stakeholders commented that the study was using bad data and focusing on the wrong issues. They would like to see a greater emphasis on other relevant issues such as surrounding development, tributary health, and biodiversity. Many stakeholders shared their desire to have greater public outreach from WSSC to the stakeholders and bill payers. They would like WSSC to provide more information about the study, and release results of the study when it is completed.

## **Stakeholder Speaker List: 19 June 2012**

1. Barbara Miller
2. Rob Gibbs
3. Robert Gunderman
4. John Love
5. Philip Norman
6. Melissa Daston
7. Barbara Sollner-Webb
8. Jane von Maltzhan
9. Nathan Tennies
10. Mike Caruso
11. Denis Webb
12. Maria Schwartz
13. Pat Oliva
14. Chuck McMillian
15. Debby Poole
16. Ann Coles
17. Ron Polniaszek
18. Kim Eubanks
19. Barbara Boyds