

Speaking Testimonies Handed in from June 18th Public Meeting

JUN 18 2012

I support the comments of my fellow stakeholders. Their comments underscore my frustration with the meetings that are being held this week to discuss the Triadelphia and Rocky Gorge Watershed Study. I am frustrated that I am unable to participate in these meetings the way that I would like to because of the lack of information on this study. After the announcement that EA would be conducting a study and was looking for stakeholders, I called EA to let them know I would like to participate as a stakeholder. The person that took my call did not know about the study and did not even know to whom in the organization I could talk ~~with~~ about the study. But I was told that someone would call me back. No one did. Two weeks later, I called a second time and spoke with a gentleman ~~that~~ ~~not by name from EA~~. He told me that he couldn't give me any information about the study and suggested if I wanted any information, I would have to get it from the WSSC. To accomplish that, I made a very limited request for documents specifically related to the study through a Maryland Public Information Act request. WSSC responded that this was such a huge request that they needed an additional 30 days to work on it. When the WSSC wrote to say that they had completed their document review, they indicated that they were charging me for 6.5 hours of time, including other expenses related to their search, for a grand total of \$400 plus, which did not include copying fees. Because this is a great deal of money and I planned to use the documents to share with my fellow equestrians, I requested a waiver of the fee based on the fact that having these documents is necessary to be an informed stakeholder and, therefore, in the public interest. WSSC emailed a response that they were sending my request to ^{the general manager} ~~WSSC Director~~. Rather than next receiving an answer to my request for a waiver, I received a second bill for the WSSC's search time. I thought this was just an error and had sent it out not realizing that I was requesting a waiver. However, the next time I heard from the WSSC, it was to again request payment for their search and inform me that if I didn't pay the fee, they would turn this over to their legal department. What the WSSC's actions in this situation indicate to me is that the WSSC does not want educated stakeholders. They want to keep us in the dark. This leads me to ask "Why?" and, in response to that question, to conclude that the WSSC has a hidden agenda. And it appears that their hidden agenda not only includes equestrians (whose horses supposedly are fouling our drinking water) but also boaters, fishermen, picnickers, and all the folks who treasure and gently use watershed resources. While it's not pleasant but understandable when an ex-spouse has a hidden agenda, or the person trying to sell you something for more

than it's worth has a hidden agenda, it is NOT ok for county, state or federal representatives to have hidden agendas. In fact, it is contrary to good government. The communication of information is critically important in a healthy democracy. This means that our representatives must be as transparent as possible in their interactions with the public. My real fear and the reason I am here today to speak to this assembly is that I believe "something is rotten in Denmark." While we are laying off teachers and curtailing other services in Maryland, we are apparently paying EA \$225,000 to scope out a study that no one outside of the WSSC can see a basis for. And neither EA nor WSSC is forthcoming in helping us to understand the issues at hand. Instead, wild statements are made and published in papers such as the Washington Post which people not familiar with the watershed read and respond to with "Oh my goodness, horses are pooping in our drinking water." The groundless impression that the WSSC is creating is SO wrong on so many levels, one might find it hard to figure out where to start. I am honestly not sure the results of any study the WSSC initiates on this issue will not be skewed to serve the WSSC's own hidden agenda. I believe that when this is all said and done, especially if Phase 1 of the study concludes that there is no basis to proceed to Phase 2 of the study, the ~~Maryland Inspector General~~ should take a serious look at the actions the WSSC has engaged in over the last year and a half.

Office of
Legislative
Audits

JUN 18 2012

Presentation to EA Engineering, Science & Technology, Inc.
Patuxent Reservoir Stakeholders' meeting
Laurel Boys and Girls Club
701 Montgomery St.
Laurel, MD 20707

June 18, 2012

Comments by Priscilla Huffman Representing TROT - Trail Riders of Today (former President)

Thank you for this opportunity to present comments to the Patuxent Reservoir stakeholders meeting.

My name is Priscilla Huffman and I live in Timonium, Maryland, located in north Baltimore County. I am speaking tonight as a representative of Trail Riders of Today, (TROT), a trail preservation equestrian group of more than 600 members located in Maryland and the surrounding areas. TROT is fortunate to have members with extensive training in creating sustainable non-eroding trails, as well as experienced volunteer park rangers for various Maryland park systems and avid environmentalists.

Trail Riders of Today has a long history of working with the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission watershed patrol staff in providing stewardship for the Rocky Gorge Reservoir trail system. Our relationships were always cordial. WSSC designed much of the original trail system and over the years, many work days were scheduled where both equestrians and WSSC watershed patrol staff participated in providing maintenance for various parts of the trail system.

TROT and other equestrians have respected and valued this relationship, and have always been keenly aware of how fortunate we are to have access to these magnificently beautiful trails. We have worked hard over the past 25+ years to ensure that the trail system was sustainable so that we could continue to enjoy, along with other user groups, our "mini-wilderness" just minutes from Interstate 95. WSSC honored the trail maintenance efforts of one of our founding members with a plaque designating one of the trails as the "Terry Ledley trail."

The best testimony to the environmental soundness of the horse trails is to view them first-hand. An on-site inspection of the trail system, guided by someone who is thoroughly familiar with the trails, will demonstrate that there is little erosion on the designated horse trails even though they have been ridden for many years. The major erosion that exists is on the perimeter fire-break road which has always been off-limits to horses.

In the few areas where the trails currently exceed the desired distance limit from the reservoir, TROT has volunteered their assistance to work with WSSC in relocating those trails to higher ground.

Water quality is a concern for everyone, whether or not they are a current user of the watershed area. It's important to note that this is not an area of high or concentrated horse traffic. There are no places on the trail system where horses stand tied for any length of time. Primarily, the equestrian use is from landowners near the watershed area, or small boarding facilities which have provided much support for trail maintenance over the years.

One excellent example of our stewardship of the trails is a TROT member's identification, while riding the trails, of a large sediment deposit from a highway construction project. The Maryland Dept of the Environment was notified, and subsequently estimated that from 10,000 to 50, 000 tons of sediment was averted from entering the reservoir due to having been alerted.

We urge anyone involved with the current on-going study to personally visit the trail areas to observe the lack of erosion, and most importantly, to ensure that current and future users can continue to enjoy this most precious and valued resource.

Priscilla Huffman

JUN 18 2012

Testimony of Fran Koch at 06/18/12 Patuxent Reservoir Stakeholder meeting

Please help me understand how an issue can be brought up (over one year ago) without having any documentation to support the issue as it relates to horses and horse trails on the WSSC property.

It is not rocket science. It is simply common sense. First of all, any evidence of an issue that WSSC is concerned with should have been presented prior to and along with the notice to alter/discontinue the use of the horse trails on WSSC's property. Secondly, the firebreak has not been addressed at all by the WSSC.

Many years ago, the firebreak on the WSSC property had been maintained by WSSC. That has not been the case for at least a decade. It should be of the ^{ut}most importance to the WSSC that the firebreak be maintained at all times for obvious reasons (in case of fire, it provides a "firebreak" to prevent the spread of fire not only to the entire WSSC property, but to houses and properties that exist outside of the WSSC property; allows for fire trucks/equipment and WSSC vehicles to access the WSSC property, etc.). Due to the lack of maintainance, the firebreak has grown over and eroded terribly (and in some areas actually imploded), and as a result, there no longer is a recognizable firebreak.

Please restore dignity, respect and integrity to the WSSC by addressing the real issue at hand. When and why did the WSSC stop maintaining the firebreak; what were the funds for the maintenance of such used for instead; why are horse trails on WSSC's property being the focus of the erosion and water quality issue, and the WSSC has never explained nor brought into focus the condition of the WSSC firebreak, and how that effects the water quality, erosion, etc.

Evidence to support the WSSC's position needs to be presented prior to any decision to close off/alter use of horse trails, instead of the other way around; which has been to close off/alter use of horse trails and then attempt to find evidence to support the closure by WSSC. Something is very wrong with this approach.

PLEASE HELP ME TO UNDERSTAND WHY THE WSSC SHOULD NOT BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR THE CONDITION OF THE FIREBREAK, AND THE EFFECTS IT HAS ON THE WATER QUALITY AND EROSION, AS WELL AS PROVIDING EVIDENCE PRIOR TO TAKING ACTION ON CLAIMS BEING MADE BY THE WSSC.

Thank you.

JUN 18 2012

PATUXENT RESERVOIR WATERSHED STUDY
TESTIMONY OF JAMES F. PUTMAN

June 18, 2012

Thank you for this opportunity to participate in your study. I am a long-term resident of the watershed; my property borders WSSC property. WSSC has a dedicated access road from the east end of Dustin Road to their property, crossing a portion of my lot and the lots of two other neighbors. I am also an officer of the Patuxent Watershed Protective Association, but my comments today are mine alone.

It is vitally important to recognize that the watershed consists of all that acreage which drains to the river; not just the land and water owned by WSSC. The built-on low-density agricultural/residential portion of the surrounding land is pretty well protected from development and environmental degradation. The undeveloped portion contains most of the risk.

Due to time limits, I will confine my comments to the Private Institutional Facilities "PIF" policy as amended in 2005 by Montgomery County. The PIF policy is part of the 2003-2012 Comprehensive Water Supply and Sewerage Systems Plan. Briefly, the PIF policy concerns certain exceptions to environmental regulations for the benefit of institutional developers. It was a well-intentioned policy that had unintended consequences with disastrous environmental potential. Most PIF applications are academic or religious in nature. (See attachment "Fig 5: Extent of impervious surfaces in the Upper and Lower Patuxent subwatersheds of Montgomery County, Maryland") These developers are looking for larger parcels of land, which are difficult to find within the existing sewer envelope. But in the Watershed, there are large, undeveloped parcels which are very, very attractive. It's kind of like Bonnie & Clyde looking for banks. These parcels are generally zoned for 5 acre single house residential/agricultural use, served by well and septic, and have stringent impervious coverage and/or forestation limits. They are zoned that way on purpose to protect the watershed. PIF developers always want high density usages, want to run sewer lines through the Watershed and want high impervious coverage allowances. Any one of these will inevitably pollute the watershed. Perpetuating the PIF defeats the whole purpose of Watershed environmental protection. WSSC needs to go on record against PIF usages in the greater Patuxent Watershed.

Previous planning boards and county councils have, with few exceptions, protected the Watershed from intensive development and prohibited the practice of running sewer lines into the Watershed. They have generally restricted impervious areas to less than 10% of the land surface. They have rezoned major portions of the watershed to reduce density. Nonetheless, developers continually seek high-density development requiring sewage service and large impervious areas.

A law passed in 2000 by the US Congress, "The Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act" (RLUIPA) sought to protect against religious discrimination in land use cases. A noble goal, but its authors also specifically stated that generally applicable zoning restrictions were not impacted by the legislation. Nevertheless, opportunistic organizations have used, or attempted to use, RLUIPA to evade legitimate environmental protection needs. In a recent nearby case, a federal judge ruled that a jurisdiction failed to demonstrate the "compelling need" for environmental restrictions on Rocky Gorge watershed land. Note that the judge did not find the environmental concerns invalid -- just that the supporting evidence was not presented in court.

Any watershed protection plan must address the need to update the PIF Policy and must substantiate the "compelling need" for environmental protection of our water supply.

Thank you for this opportunity.

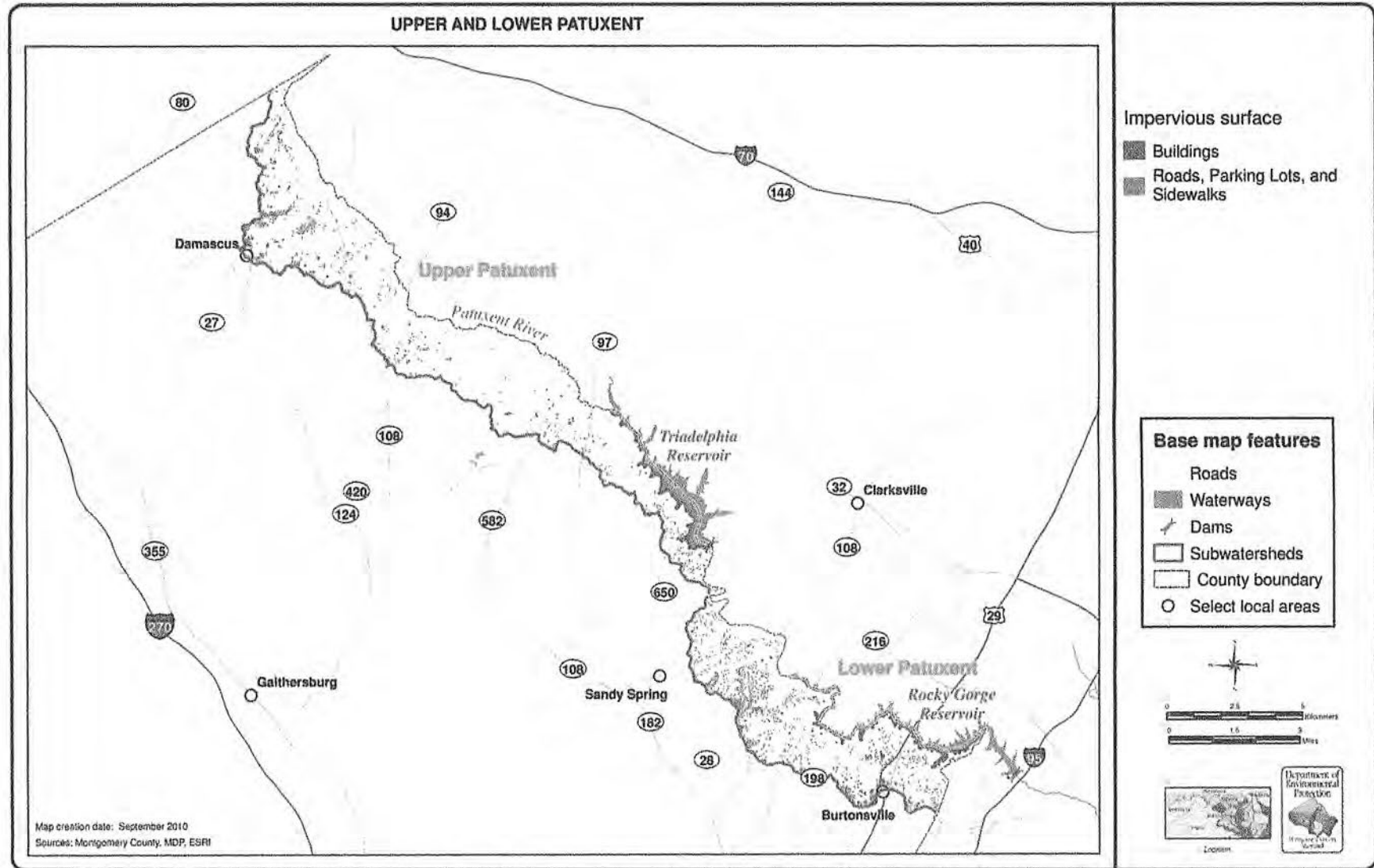


Figure 5: Extent of Impervious surfaces in the Upper and Lower Patuxent subwatersheds of Montgomery County, Maryland.

JUN 18 2012

WSSC Study

I have lived at my address in Howard County now for forty-two years. My house is on a heavily wooded acre adjacent to the Scott's Cove area of the Rocky Gorge reservoir and it was the prime reason I chose this site. My children and their children have fished the lake and boated on it all during that time.

Up to this meeting your lack of transparency on the report discussed tonight is not appreciated. Are you looking for unthinking agreement on its recommendations by an unprepared public? I'm uncertain as to why you want might want to close the reservoir to recreational users. Perhaps water quality improvements are indicated. If so what problems have you found and what degradation can you document? Are recreational usage rates up substantially now? Have your water tests at the filtration plant shown unusually high concentration of bacteria, sediment or other problems?

If the reason is financial, which of your incomes have fallen and what expenditures have increased? Is an increase in user fees necessary?

I hope to live out my life alongside this wonderful lake and woodland buffer at Scott's Cove Recreational Area. I also think that prohibiting use of it for recreational purposes would break faith with the groups that have so instrumental in preserving the watershed. From your own website ---

Scott's Cove Streambank Restoration Project:

WSSC is working in partnership with volunteers to restore streambanks along its watershed. Our Production Team played a big role in the planning, design and labor with these plantings.

One such project is at Scott's Cove Recreation Area. WSSC has created three plantings/gardens along a hillside overlooking a picnic area at Scott's Cove near the boat ramp.

WSSC restored one portion of the bank with the help of future community leaders from **University of MD-College Park and Howard Community College** in 2009-2010. The plants include persimmon, red bud and cherry trees along with blueberry and gray dogwood shrubs. The plants were chosen for their benefits to songbirds and other wildlife.

A second portion of this same bank was restored with WSSC working along with **future community leaders from the University of Maryland-College Park** in 2009. The plants include red osier dogwood, bayberry and sweet pepperbush along with native wildflowers.

The largest planting was created with local **Girl Scout troops, Howard Community College and the University of Maryland** from 2009-2011. The plants include trees such as serviceberry, wild plum, sassafras and pin oak and shrubs such as bayberry, sweet pepperbush and elderberry. White turtlehead

JUN 18 2012

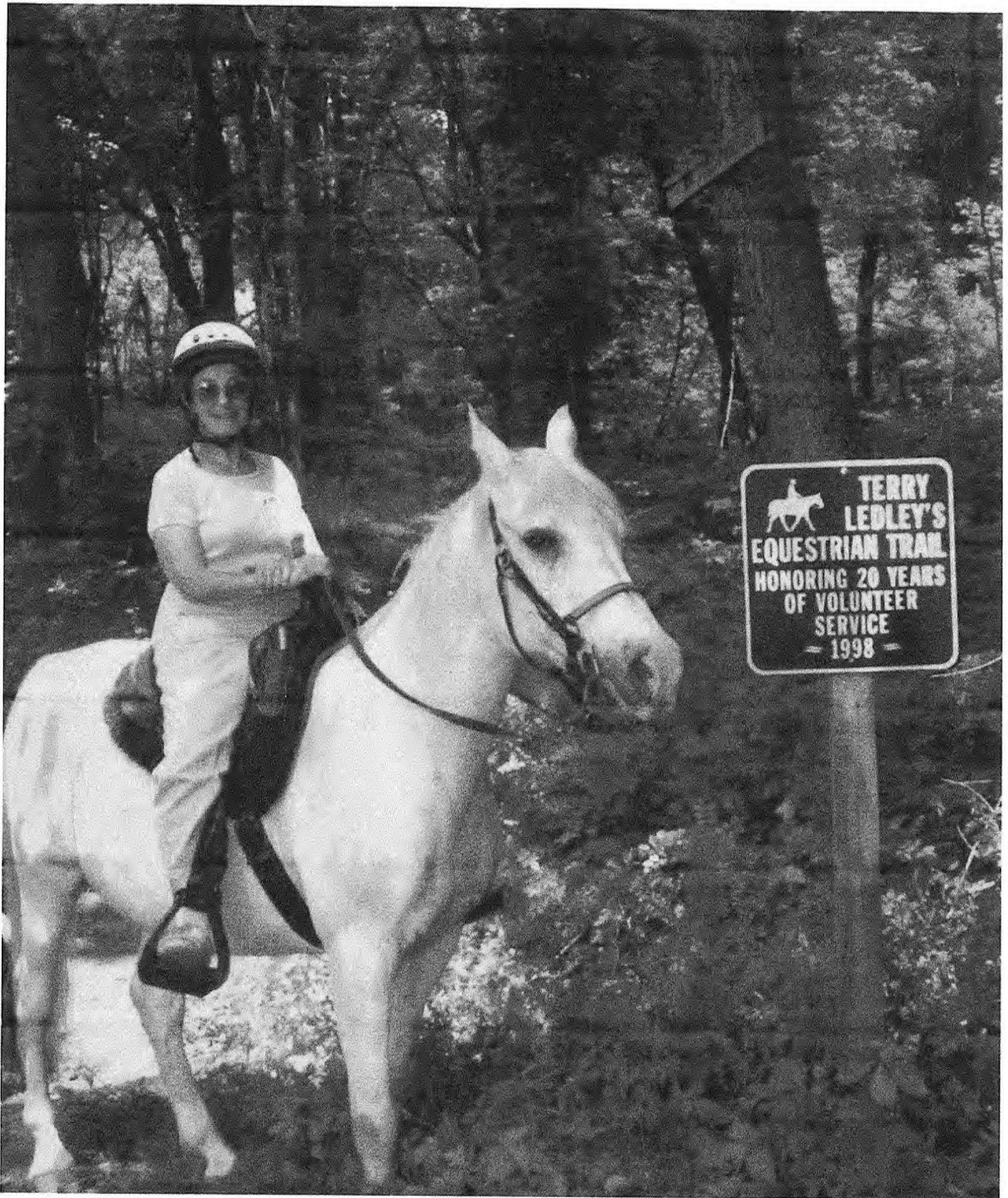
Terry Ledley's Equestrian Trail

Honoring 20 years of Volunteer Service -1998-

This is a sign that greets you from my location of the WSSC property that surrounds Rocky Gorge Reservoir in Laurel, MD. My name is Denise Raynor and I am the caregiver of the horses in our neighborhood barn. This has been my job for the past 6 years. It has no bells or whistles. It has horses and it *had* 40 miles of horseback riding trails. That's what drew me to this barn in 1996, 16 years ago. My business has suffered significant loss since WSSC made a change in our use of the trails. When an interested horseback rider inquires about our barn and learns our trails are those associated with WSSC, they are disappointed and say they are looking for a location with use of trails for horseback riding.

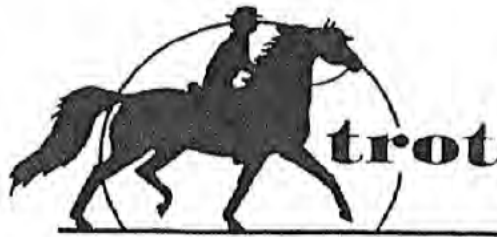
Having the privilege and use of the riding trails means everything to me and my business. Without them...I honestly have nothing. WSSC is not interested in me or my business at this time. But once upon a time, I honestly believe they did. WSSC and Terry Ledley worked in unison to protect and preserve the miles of trails between Supplee Boat ramp and Route 29. She enlisted the help of the equestrian community to work with her in her efforts to comply and respect what she was determined to make as her personal mission. She was the "team leader" for the general riding population, encouraging us to always be vigilant with regards to the trails or reservoir and to report any suspicious activity to the various contacts we had at WSSC. In some cases, it might be an individual riding a dirt bike or someone who had started a fire. We should be a great value and benefit to WSSC in the preservation of the Reservoir and its surroundings by being visible eyes and ears on horseback. One can't help but ask: "What has changed within WSSC since the time Terry Ledley was honored by WSSC?" Nearly 14 additional years have passed and Terry and the riding community has continued to be a great source of aid to the trails and surrounding area of Rocky Gorge Reservoir.

One final note, prior to September 11th, the trails and reservoir were patrolled by WSSC employees on horseback.









EA ENGINEERING
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

JUN 18 2012

Founded 1980

Dedicated to Preserving Bridle Trails

Board of Directors

President
Pat Talbot
Vice President
Pat Merson
Secretary
Judy Thacher
Treasurer
Susan Railey
Directors
Vera Fontanna
Kyle Jossi
Laury Lobel
Roger Nelson
Ronald MacNab
Pat Oliva
Maria Schwartz
Barbara Sollner Webb

Patuxent Watershed Study
c/o EA Engineering, Science and Technology
15 Loveton Circle
Sparks, MD 21152

June 8, 2012

To Whom It May Concern:

As horseback rider and TROT Coordinator for Montgomery County trails, I look forward to getting the equestrian trail issue resolved. It has been over a year since WSSC changed their policy on horseback riding at Rocky Gorge. Fortunately they have put enforcement on stay while EA Technologies studies the matter.

The Rocky Gorge equestrian trail is not heavily used but is a very important asset to adjoining property owners, and those nearby who trailer in their horse. Citizens have built their homes, stables and fences confidently knowing that riding trails were available.

As a customer of WSSC and a consumer of the water, I am very concerned about the quality of drinking water. Now that you have had time to inspect the reservoir, you clearly know that the problem with erosion and sediment is caused by the two thirteen mile access roads on each side of Rocky Gorge. In most areas, they are ten feet wide with a loose rock and barren ground surface going straight up and down long hills.

If there is a fecal matter problem at Rocky Gorge, it is not from horses. The vast majority of the trail exceeds the 35 foot setback recommendations of the Maryland Department of Agriculture's Best Practices recommendations. If there is fecal and nutrient management problem, it is coming from wildlife that relies on the reservoir as a source of drinking water and fertilizer run off from adjacent fields and homes.

Neighbors of Rocky Gorge and members of Trail Riders of Today have offered to reroute offending areas of the equestrian trail with guidance from a certified trail planner. We have also offered help in securing an National Recreational Trails Grant to pay for needed changes.

I appreciate your careful study of the matter and look forward to your conclusions and suggestions.

Ronald MacNab, Trails Coordinator
Trail Riders of Today, TROT

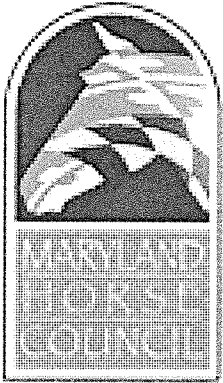
Trail Riders of Today

June 18, 2012

EA ENGINEERING
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

JUN 18 2012

Patuxent Watershed Study
c/o EA Engineering, Science and Technology
15 Loveton Circle
Sparks, MD 21152



MARYLAND HORSE COUNCIL
P.O. BOX 233
LISBON, MD 21765

To: Patuxent Study Team:

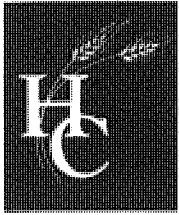
I am the Vice President of the Maryland Horse Council, which is the trade association representing Maryland's equestrian farms, businesses, interest associations and enthusiasts. Together, our membership represents over 30,000 Marylanders, many of whom live, own property and/or ride in the Patuxent Watershed.

We are aware of the recent actions taken by the WSSC to restrict public access to its watershed lands. We are very interested in your study and welcome the opportunity to express our views on its scope and conduct, as well as on the historic importance of the watershed to equestrian users - and, we would argue, on the importance of equestrian users to the watershed.

Horse back riders and other recreational users have had access to these lands for generations. They have in many cases taken on the role of volunteer stewards of the land and water, and it can be said that their routine presence as eyes and ears "on the ground" has contributed vastly to the security of the water, the land and the public at large.

In this time when citizen confidence in government and public institutions is at historic lows, it is imperative that the conduct of this study be transparent, objective and grounded in observable fact and provable data. If adverse impact by recreational users including horseback riders cannot be proven by clear and verifiable facts, the recently imposed restrictions should not continue.

Respectfully,
Jane Seigler



HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION & PARKS

7120 Oakland Mills Road



Columbia, Maryland 21046



410-313-4640

John R. Byrd, Director
jbyrd@howardcountymd.gov

FAX 410-313-1699
TDD 410-313-2323

June 15, 2012

EA ENGINEERING
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

JUN 18 2012

Patuxent Watershed Study
c/o EA Engineering, Science and Technology
15 Loveton Circle
Sparks, MD 21152

Subject: Comments on Watershed Study

Dear Research Team,

Thank you for providing an opportunity for us to comment about the future management of the Patuxent Reservoirs Watershed.

When you look at a map of the Triadelphia and Rocky Gorge Reservoirs, it's apparent that Howard County borders the entire northern side of both reservoirs. In fact, the county line goes right down the middle of the water. About 2,200 acres of the WSSC lands, and another 8,000 acres of water, are in Howard County. We are, indeed, interested stakeholders-- and we like to think we've been good neighbors and good stewards in helping to protect this shared resource.

It's a significant piece of the County, and even more importantly, it comprises almost 10% of our "protected" lands (those areas made up of parkland, open space, state parks and preserved farms). Over the years, the WSSC land has provided many opportunities for outdoor recreation: boating, fishing, hiking, and horseback riding. It has the advantage of being a long corridor that lends itself to linear activities—those that often cannot be done in a smaller park setting. In fact, our planning process always considers opportunities to network county parkland with WSSC properties to expand the overall greenway system.

We urge WSSC to continue providing recreational access to the trails in the watershed. We believe that the system of monitoring users by requiring registration and daily or yearly passes has been successful in regulating and protecting the quality of the water supply. To cut off future access to our natural areas would also diminish our children's and our grandchildren's contact with the natural world. Please consider the valuable recreational component of this watershed in your plans.

Thank you,

John R. Byrd
Director

Testimony of Chuck Selden, President, Gamewell Road Homeowner's Association (GRHA)

EA ENGINEERING
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

6-18-2012

JUN 18 2012

Use of WSSC reservoirs and watershed

The WSSC property is a valuable recreational facility recognized by users as a main source of drinking water locally. The 21 private properties that form the Gamewell Home Owners Association are just South of the Brown's Bridge end of the Duckett Reservoir, with easy access to it via the trails along the stream bed that drains our area. *I am the president of The GRHA.*

We laud WSSC on allowing **equestrian use** in the past and hope this use can be re-instated as soon as possible. We submit a request that access to horse trails be allowed **for individuals on foot, to allow bird watching, jogging, hiking, walking and running, as well as in winter cross country skiing and snow shoeing.** We believe many users would pitch in to help with erosion and silt control measures, such as installing silt fencing, laying down mats of straw, or constructing ecologically compatible hard surface at stream crossings, such as paving stones, to prevent foot-falls from disturbing the stream bed.

We submit that the recent curtailment of the **boating season** is poorly reasoned and the **previous season length should be re-instated** (March 1 through December 15th, and 30 minutes before sunrise to 30 minutes after sunset). Many of us in the Association own canoes or kayaks, and I personally own and use rowing shells on the 2 reservoirs. I have used it every year since 1984. It has become a part of my life. I have taught my children to row there, to paddle a canoe, to fish. I have hosted many guests on those pristine water over the years – they have been thrilled to discover it and appreciate its beauty and calm, clean waters. We take safety precautions such as wearing neoprene wet suits when the water is cold enough to rapidly induce incapacitating hypothermia (early March).

Sincerely,

Chuck Selden

P.S. WSSC has said Equestrian Trails were closed in winter because of heavier rain fall in winter. Washington Post monthly rainfall records 1971-2011 show 4.3 inches/month in Dec. Jan. Feb and more than 3 1/2" in May, June, July and September. See Attachment

Friday

1-storm possible



93°
70°

Wind north-northwest 6-12 mph

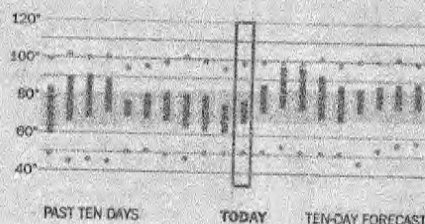
News, traffic,
weather. Now.

POSTLOCAL
postlocal.com

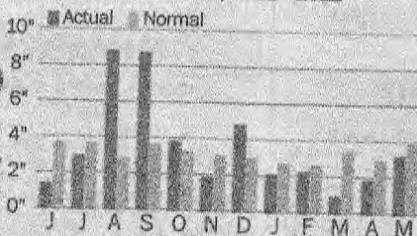
Official weather data THROUGH 5 P.M. YESTERDAY

Temperature	Reagan	Dulles	BWI
High	77° at 1:32 p.m.	77° at 4:00 p.m.	75° at 3:55 p.m.
Low	62° at 4:57 a.m.	52° at 6:00 a.m.	53° at 4:15 a.m.
Normal	85°/67°	85°/62°	84°/63°
Record high	95° in 1991	92° in 1994	96° in 1939
Record low	50° in 1926	46° in 1980	47° in 1964
Precipitation			
Past 24 hours	None	None	None
Total this month	1.51"	1.21"	1.98"
Normal month to date	2.15"	2.33"	2.03"
Total this year	12.25"	14.02"	12.68"
Normal to date	18.20"	19.24"	19.16"
Relative humidity			
Max.	72% at 7 a.m.	92% at 5 a.m.	86% at 7 a.m.
Min.	51% at 3 p.m.	44% at 4 p.m.	51% at 5 p.m.
Barometric pressure			
High	30.23"	30.22"	30.23"
Low	30.10"	30.08"	30.09"

Temperature trend Actual and forecast Normal Record



Precipitation almanac, 2011 - 2012



Apparent Temperature:

76°
(Comfort index combines temperature and humidity.)

Cooling degree days

An index of fuel consumption indicating how many degrees the average temperature rose above 65° for the day. If a day's average temperature were 75, there would be 10 'degree days' for the date.
 Sunday 5
 This month 134
 This season 393
 Normal to yesterday 277
 Last season 431

Today's tides High tides are in bold face

Washington	2:18 a.m.	8:01 a.m.	3:17 p.m.	8:36 p.m.
Annapolis	5:15 a.m.	12:23 p.m.	5:22 p.m.	10:41 p.m.
Ocean City	1:33 a.m.	7:18 a.m.	1:18 p.m.	7:44 p.m.
Norfolk	3:29 a.m.	9:25 a.m.	3:17 p.m.	9:44 p.m.
Point Lookout	1:19 a.m.	8:31 a.m.	1:26 p.m.	6:49 p.m.

Moon phases

New June 15	First Quarter June 26	Full July 3	Last Quarter July 10
----------------	--------------------------	----------------	-------------------------

Solar system

	Sun	Moon	Mercury	Venus	Mars	Jupiter	Saturn	Uranus
Rise	5:42 a.m.	4:55 a.m.	7:19 a.m.	4:41 a.m.	12:37 p.m.	4:07 a.m.	3:09 p.m.	1:40 a.m.
Set	8:36 p.m.	7:54 p.m.	10:13 p.m.	6:59 p.m.	1:06 a.m.	6:28 p.m.	2:32 a.m.	2:03 p.m.

Monthly average
rainfall -
data 1871
through 2011
wettest = May
June July + Sept.
Almost 4" each
driest = Dec, Jan
Feb. less than
3" each.

JUN 18 2012

WSSC-EA 18 JUNE 2012 TESTIMONY

*Donald E. Chamberlin**for the**Patuxent Watershed Protective Association (PWPA)*

Good evening. My name is Donald Chamberlin. I'm speaking on behalf of the Patuxent Watershed Protective Association, which was formed in 1997 to protect the Montgomery County portion of the Patuxent Watershed. I'm also a long-time resident of Burtonsville and my property abuts the Rocky Gorge WSSC land.

It is important to recognize that protecting the Patuxent Watershed affects not only the WSSC-owned property, but must include all the watershed drainage lands – and in particular tributary streams, which have a significant effect on water quality. The aquifer supplying Rocky Gorge – and 650,000 WSSC customers – also supplies the wells of 90+ homes within the immediate area of PWPA concern. Montgomery County has long protected these lands in several ways. M-NCPPC staff has recently recommended decreasing the impervious allowance of affected Burtonsville-area lands from 10% to 8% to prevent runoff-induced pollutants and erosive siltation. RULE #1 is PROTECT THE WATERSHED.

That said, as to tonight's topic – best public uses of the watershed – the watershed should be open to any and all non-polluting activities, to wit:

- Boating/canoeing/kayaking with manual or electric propulsion – no gas-powered motors.
- Fishing from designated shore areas and/or watercraft
- Picnicking in established areas with trash and sanitary facilities. Adjacent kids' play areas are nice too.
- Horseback riding on trails far enough from the water's edge to minimize the risk of equine pollution.

Three personal observations:

1. 40+ years ago before building our house in Burtonsville, we lived in an apartment in Laurel. On Friday nights, my wife and I would pack a picnic supper and head to Scott's Cove. It was a welcome decompression from a hectic week in the office and urban density. Later on, our kids greatly enjoyed the playground and lakeside wildlife there too. People need that sort of thing. It's a pressure relief valve.
2. Horseback riders maintain their own trails. They also provide useful information regarding firebreak maintenance issues. They're also quieter than dirt bike and ATV users – which, although rare, do contribute to trail erosion problems.

3. Any development in greater watershed drainage areas must be restricted to very-low-density usages, and commercial sewage lines prohibited. The 2011 WSSC Water Quality Report says that WSSC has about 1700 pipe breaks a year. The risk of broken sewer lines is flatly not acceptable in a critical water supply area. I have some relevant environmental research which I can make available.

In my 40+ years of experience, public users of the Patuxent Watershed's recreational opportunities are good environmental custodians. They appreciate the psychological bounty, and they pose negligible environmental risk. They adhere to the rule of "DON'T DO ANYTHING IN THE WATER YOU DON'T WANT TO DRINK LATER."

Thank You.

June 18, 2012

My name is Lucy Ertter. I am a horseback rider and one of the barn managers at West Laurel Stable, which abuts the WSSC property.

I'm not going to spend a lot of time talking about how much equestrians love riding on the WSSC watershed; it is evident that we would not be devoting so much time and effort to this issue if it were not such an important part of our lives. But I would like to make one key point about the volume of riders on the watershed, to put the issue in perspective. There is actually only a modest number of horses on the watershed each week, especially compared to the number of deer who live there, so it seems doubtful that these few horses could be causing the extensive troubles for which they are being blamed.

In 2011, WSSC changed its policies to make riders use the access road instead of the equestrian trails we had used for decades. Their changes were based on claims that horseback riding is (1) making the water harder to treat, and (2) the biggest factor in causing sediment to accumulate in the reservoir. They also stopped riding from November 15 to April 1, claiming that these months are the wettest months of the year.

It is hard to address the first claim because WSSC has yet to specify exactly how horseback riding is making the water harder to treat or to produce any data backing this assertion.

Regarding the second claim, even a casual observer can see the striking difference in the condition of the access road and the equestrian trails. The access road was constructed to follow the WSSC property line, which consists of steep hills along most of its length. So it is quite susceptible to serious erosion whenever it rains – resulting in a rocky and badly rutted surface. And where does all the runoff go? Into the creeks at the bottom of the hills, and from there into the reservoir. In contrast, the equestrian trails are well-constructed trails that are built (properly) across slopes and with switchbacks, and show little if any signs of erosion. Indeed, the vast majority of these trails are covered with leaf debris year-round, indicating they are not being eroded by either the horses or the rain. Because these trails tend to run laterally to the hillsides, rainfall flows across their width (generally no more than 12-18 inches) down the slopes, with little or no impact on integrity of the trails themselves. In the 10 years or so that I have been riding there, I have observed no change to either the depth or width of the trails. For the most part, they are only an inch or two deep, which is due to compaction and lateral movement of the soil, not erosion.

Regarding the closing of the trails during the winter months, WSSC's own data and that from NOAA refute this claim and indicate instead that these four months are actually the driest of the year. And since WSSC already forbids riding when the trails are wet, a rule we strictly enforce at our barn, there seems to be no good reason for shutting down the trails for a third of year.

Finally, from my observations, the biggest source of erosion on the watershed is rainfall – on the access roads and other places on this very hilly terrain, which runs into the many creeks that empty into the reservoir. A few of these creeks are plagued by extensive scour, with large sections of their banks obviously washed away, sending many cubic feet of dirt downstream and into the reservoir. Clogged culverts running under the access road are another problem. One culvert blockage has already resulted in the entire access road being washed away, and another appears to be on the verge of the same disaster. It seems to me that WSSC would be far better off spending their time, energy, and money addressing the real sources of erosion and sediment in the reservoir. The equestrians have already volunteered many hours of their time working on these problems, and we are eager to continue as partners in this effort.

Lucy Ertter

July 13, 2011

Dear WSSC Commissioners,

I am writing in response to WSSC's recent decision to close the equestrian trails on the watershed. I am a West Laurel resident and staff at West Laurel Stable, which adjoins the WSSC property. My daughter and I have been riding on the trails for nearly 10 years now, and the activity has been an important and cherished part of our lives. As with many equestrians, horseback riding is not just a hobby for us, it is our passion - an avocation that brings great meaning to our lives and provides immeasurable joy. Indeed, much of my life centers around the horses, the barn, and the trails. We have developed real bonds with our horses, and riding is a large part of that relationship. For my daughter and me, spending time with our horses and each other on the beautiful and serene bridle trails has been an especially rewarding experience, one that we miss terribly now. Riding on the dangerously sloped, rutted, and rocky access road provides little joy.

Just so you know, most of the riders who use those trails are middle-aged or older women who are, for the most part, well-educated, employed, and responsible citizens who are quite protective of our ecosystems. At home and at the barn, we tend to engage in "green" practices such as avoiding the use of hazardous chemicals (notably lawn fertilizers), carefully disposing of waste, recycling and composting whenever possible, and cleaning up after others who are not so respectful of the environment. A number of us have participated in organized cleanups on the watershed and elsewhere, and we routinely go out on our own to pick up trash in the woods and along the water's edge.

I am also concerned about the current requirement to stay on the access road, for several reasons. First, most of the road consists of steep hills which are badly eroded, and I worry that riding on these areas will only exacerbate the erosion problem, causing more sediment to flow into the reservoir. Also, these areas are quite rocky and badly rutted, making it dangerous for both the horses and riders. Some stretches are so dangerous as to be unusable. In fact, the stretch leading west from the Burton's Lane entrance has had a large sign stating that the road is closed for several years now. Another section is completely washed out. Apparently, WSSC staff has built a trail that is intended to be a detour around the washout. But other riders tell me that it, too, is dangerous and leads only into a stream, where it abruptly ends. In stark contrast to the access road, the bridle trail is an environmentally sound riding venue that shows little if any signs of erosion.

Also, by relegating us to the access road, we are limited in our ability to be the "eyes and ears" of the watershed who, over the years, have reported such hazards as unauthorized motor vehicles, people camping, kids swimming, and even people starting fires. In addition, I have asked a number of hikers and fishermen to put out cigarettes, tracked down the parents of boys riding motorcycles and ATVs on the trails, and informed many hikers and bikers about WSSC rules forbidding such activities on the watershed. Another rider discovered and reported a huge sediment problem associated with a SHA project, an action the MDE credited with keeping 10,000 cubic yards or more of sediment from flowing into the reservoir. Thus, it seems that the horseback riders and WSSC already have a rather informal, 'de facto' partnership in stewardship of the watershed. In addition to reporting dangerous and illicit activities, we have spent innumerable hours maintaining the trails and keeping the access road clear for WSSC vehicles. For example, during the heavy snows of the winter of 2009-2010, three large pine trees on WSSC property came down behind our

fields, totally blocking the access road and crushing our fences. The barn manager, a boarder, and I spent the better part of a day clearing those trees using chainsaws and our farm tractor. Over the years, other horse people and I have cleared a number of trees that were blocking other areas of the access road, ensuring that WSSC and other emergency vehicles would be able to travel the road when necessary. We have also done all the maintenance on the bridle trails, keeping them clear for riding and monitoring for erosion. If you were to walk those trails yourself, you would see little if any signs of erosion or runoff problems. If you walk the access trail, you would find a completely different scenario.

I also want you to know that our facility takes the WSSC rules regarding the watershed very seriously. Our boarding and leasing contracts stipulate that riders purchase an annual pass and follow all rules, especially the one prohibiting riding when the trails are wet. In fact, violation of those clauses is considered a breach of contract that would result in eviction from the facility. Our boarders and riders regularly check with staff if they have any doubt about whether the trails are sufficiently dry for riding. In the winter, our riders do not use the trails if there is any snow on the ground. In fact, riders whose horses have horseshoes would not ride in the snow anyway because the snow tends to ball up under the hooves, creating a dangerous situation for the horse. Also, we really don't get much precipitation in the winter months (according to NOAA, it is actually the driest part of the year), and so it seems arbitrary to close the trails during those months. Because it is already a rule that the trails are closed when they are wet, and we respect that rule, I urge you to overturn that new policy as well.

I encourage you to visit the trails and see for yourself that horses are not damaging to the watershed. I estimate that there are perhaps about 20 riders between Supplee and Route 29 who even use the trails, and some of these folks may ride only once or twice a month due to work and family commitments. Plus, there are typically one or two organized TROT rides each year, and a few other riders trailer to the Supplee parking lot. I can't believe that this very light horse traffic could be a real threat to the watershed ecology. But please understand that even though some of these riders may not ride often, they still love the times that they do ride and it is very important to them to have continued access to the trails. As my daughter and I do, these riders love their horses and cherish the time they spend on the trails, however limited that may be. If you are concerned that a few of these trails are too close to the water, we would be happy to re-route them to your satisfaction. But please be aware that a number of trails at the water's edge are for the fishermen and not part of the bridle paths. In addition, there may be a few parts of the trail that are closer to the water than usual, simply because the water level is higher than it has been in a very long time.

I appreciate you taking the time to consider my input. Please try to understand how much it means to us to have access to the equestrian trails on the watershed, and how much those trails are a part of our lives. I sincerely hope we can work together to reopen those trails, address any remaining concerns, and perhaps even create a more formal partnership to preserve the land and water that we all treasure.

Sincerely,

Lucy A. Ertter

WSSC Rocky Gorge Trails Testimony -
Dr. Denis Webb
June 18, 2012

My name is Denis Webb and I am a resident of West Laurel, Maryland and a member of the West Laurel Civic Association (WLCA). WLCA filed an MPIA request to WSSC asking to "review all data, studies and other technical materials underlying changes in WSSC's regulations to 1) ban riding on the equestrian trail and move equestrian use to the access road and 2) prohibit use of the Patuxent Reservoir's watershed by equestrians and other users between November 15 and April 1 each year." To minimize the effort required to find relevant documents, WSSC asked that WLCA search through documents provided to an individual on a previous broad MPIA request and identify documents relevant to the narrower WLCA request. I was one of two individuals selected to review the documents provided, and identify those that were most relevant to the WLCA request.

The other reviewer, Patty Sobel, and I found that most documents provided little or no information pertaining to WSSC's decision to implement the changes in equestrian usage, but there was one we felt was highly relevant. This document presented calculations made by the now defunct Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) to the WSSC as to damage to the Reservoir caused by the equestrians, as well as a WSSC critique of these calculations.

Using simple geometrical arguments and numbers for total sediment provided by WSSC, the EAC calculation concludes that less than .01 % of the sediment in the reservoir is caused by erosion from the equestrian trails and the trails would have to be eroded by over 10 feet along its entire length to produce even 1 % of the reservoir's sediment. The WSSC response indicated that several of the assumptions in this calculation were erroneous but my recollection of their corrections (in the end WSSC refused to copy these documents for us because of a dispute over a previous MPIA request) was that even if all WSSC's revised assumptions were correct, the overall conclusion would remain unchanged, with still much less than 0.1% of the sediment resulting from equestrian use of the trail. The EAC also calculated that the horses contribution to phosphorus levels in the reservoir was inconsequential, contributing less than 1/100,000 of the total phosphorus in the Reservoir. Furthermore, deer residing in the Reservoir buffer zone contribute several thousand times more animal waste than the horses; There are also significant other sources of waste from geese, dogs, leaky septic, etc.... Again WSSC disputed some of the EAC assumptions but even if correct this did not change EAC's basic conclusion, namely horses on the equestrian trail result in a negligible degradation of the Reservoir compared to other sources.

The other part of the WLCA request relates to the closing of the trails in the winter months because they are the wettest months of the year. In fact WSSC's own data suggests that on average these are the driest months of the year. Furthermore, this point is somewhat irrelevant, since riders are told never to ride on the trails when the trails are wet. In my experience the vast majority of riders comply with this request.

Bottom line: we found nothing in the WSSC documents we reviewed to justify the WSSC changes in equestrian use of the trails.

Remarks by David W. Armstrong, III, PhD

18 June 2012

Good evening. Thank you for this opportunity to address the Study Group about public use of the Triadelphia and Rocky Gorge Watershed.

My name is David Armstrong and I am originally from Montana. Montana is the land of the “Big Sky”, a vast expanse of varied geography with less than 1-million people living in a land area 12 times larger than Maryland; a State where recreational opportunities abound. A State where Public lands comprise the majority of ownership and the interplay between the Public interest, commercial use and recreational use is ruled by the principals of multiple-use stewardship of the resources.

I relocated from the wilds of Montana to the DC Metro area in 1986 to pursue a doctorate at the University of Maryland. 25 years later I am still living and working here. Living in such a congested area with the press of so many people is stressful. An avid canoeist, I am able to seek out a measure of solitude by being out-of-doors on the water and the peace and quiet that comes with being in a natural environment.

Just 20 minutes from my home in Wheaton, Rocky Gorge Reservoir provides a needed – nearly daily – after-work respite from the press of business, the internet, my phone and the trappings of civilization. It’s just me, the water, a canoe and my paddle. In the 25 years I have lived in Maryland, I have paddled on Rocky Gorge reservoir at least 100 days per year for 2-3 hours per day from March to December. That’s some 2500 visits and more than 5000 hours spent on the waters of Rocky Gorge paddling my canoe. Just this year alone, I have paddled 39 days

and logged more than 80 hours on the reservoir despite the newly truncated season and the requirement to be off the water by sunset.

In these 25 years on Rocky Gorge I have never witnessed an act of vandalism, never experienced a crime of any kind, come upon another paddler that needed assistance and I find there is little evidence of littering: in the water, along the shore or at the put-ins. In fact, I am unaware of any paddler or boater requiring Search and Rescue assistance in the 25 years I have paddled on the Gorge. In my opinion there is no imminent safety issue that is cause for concern by WSSC for paddlers, fishermen or others using the watershed.

What I have witnessed is the indescribable natural beauty of the Gorge in all seasons and conditions.

In my opinion, current use of the reservoirs by the public under the existing WSSC regulations is not an issue; any threats to the watershed lie outside the watershed. As a matter of fact, recreational users of the Gorge are likely more aware of where our drinking water comes from, the threats to the integrity of the watershed and are just as concerned about water quality as is the WSSC.

I have no training in water quality management, but it is my subjective assessment that the quality of the water in Rocky Gorge reservoir has actually improved over the last 25 years despite the growing threat that comes from more roads, higher traffic volumes and the increased land development for housing and commercial use surrounding the watershed.

What nature provides is scale and context; a means to self-reflection and discovery. It provides silence and solitude – an exceedingly rare commodity in this metropolitan area. The Patuxent Watershed is an “urban wilderness” in the midst of a teeming mass of people. It is a

natural “gem” that is the “crown jewel” of a local wild setting for folks like me – canoeists, kayakers, fishermen, equestrians, boaters, nature enthusiasts, and families - who just want to spend some quiet time enjoying nature at its best.

As the famous naturalist John Muir once said; “Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and pray in, where nature may heal and give strength to body and soul.”

I urge the WSSC to embrace multiple-use stewardship of the Triadelphia and Rocky Gorge Watershed because it is consistent with the maintenance of water quality and, at-the-same-time, providing the public an opportunity to enjoy a natural setting now and for future generations.

I'm Annette Ashby-Knox, My family has lived in scaggsville dating back to 1867, I'm 5th generation and my grandchildren are 7th generation living by the Gorge.

Living near the Gorge I see yard waste and other junk dumped on the road side and in the parking lots. Closing the Gorge would cause this area to be even more isolated and encourage more dumping and illegal activities.

My observations when kayaking, are litter at scotts cove from on shore fishing, even in areas that were once undesignated areas to fish from. Do these people hold fishing permits. Are they ever checked? Years past the rangers were always checking permits and enforcing rules.

Other pollutants are brought in from the Little Patuxent and streams feeding into the Gorge, after hard rains, lots of litter and debris wash into the gorge, finding its way into the coves and shore lines.

I've seen 50 gallon metal and plastic drums--metal buckets --a plastic pool liner--card board business sign--car tires with metal rim--a baby doll and a soccer ball, not to mention things we can't see, yard fertilizers and other chemicals.

I also have seen in the past and present, erosion and sediment destroying streams and coves from housing developments in the scaggsville area. Who monitors the runoff! Are the streams ever checked that enter the Gorge. I know the area, walking and kayaking gives opportunity to observe these pollutants.

Responsible permit holders do not pollute--We enjoy the wildlife and solitude Rocky Gorge has to offer, a true gift I'm sure all fellow kayakers and boaters respect.

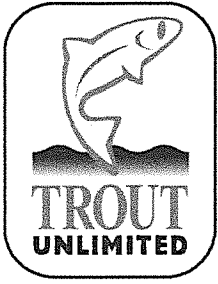
Being on the water is the last place that holds magic and beauty in Scaggsville, Rocky Gorge is the heart beat of Scaggsville, it is all I have ever

known and hope my grandchildren can enjoy it as well. Land that borders the gorge on harding road was once my Grandfathers land, the old maps show this as Coon's Hollow. It is now WSSC property.

Please WSSC keep the Gorge open---Let us all work together and keep the heart beat of Scaggsville alive for more generations to enjoy.

To clean up the Gorge

Thank You



POTOMAC-PATUXENT CHAPTER

ENGINEERING
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

P.O. Box 2865
WHEATON, MD 20915
WWW.PPTU.ORG

JUN 18 2012

Thank you for the opportunity to speak at this meeting. I am James Robinson, VicePresident of the Potomac-Patuxent Chapter of Trout Unlimited. We want to thank WSSC for providing our membership, as well as many other recreational fishermen & women, with access to the Triadelphia & Rocky Gorge Reservoirs. In addition to the lake fishing opportunities, we want to bring to your attention some of the other activities that we are involved within the Patuxent River watershed:

- 1) To increase fishing opportunities, we assist Maryland Department of Natural Resources to stock trout in the upper Patuxent River between Route 27 & Route 97 and below Brighton Dam;
- 2) Use the reservoirs & watershed to create fishing opportunities for soldiers in the recovery battalion who participate in Project Healing Waters at Fort Meade and we have started discussions with PHW National leaders to create accessible fishing areas for soldiers with mobility impairments;
- 3) Release Rainbow Trout into the Patuxent River that grown by elementary, middle and high school students who participate in the Trout in the Classroom program. We receive permits to do this from DNR and several releases have occurred at the Brighton Dam Recreational Area.
- 4) Work singly and with other conservation minded organizations to improve the habitat for Trout in the watershed.

We want to continue to work cooperatively with WSSC, in particular to improve the water temperatures below Brighton Dam for the trout population in this DNR Special Regulation Area for fly fishing only, catch & release only. Based on preliminary estimates, we have begun to seek ways to fund repairs to the lower gates (I'm not sure that this is the proper term) that will allow cooler water to be discharged year around to keep the water temperature below the temperatures necessary survival of the trout in the tail water below Triadelphia reservoir.

James N Robinson
240-396-3922

jrobinson@fm.umd.edu

Conserving the Coldwater Resources of the Patuxent and Anacostia Watersheds of Maryland

Additional Testimonies Handed in from June 18th Public Meeting

JUN 18 2012

Subject: WSSC TRAILS Usage

I am Beverly Fox, Retired Art Director of the Social Security Administration Headquarters in Woodlawn, MD; former Board Member/current member of TROT-Trail Riders of Today; former member of the Iron Bridge Hunt.

I have live on Aitcheson Lane on the property where Whitney Aitcheson had his riding stable and where the Iron Bridge Hunt Foxhounds where originally kenneled years ago near the Patuxent reservoir. Mr. Aitcheson used to foxhunt where the reservoir currently is; the name Iron Bridge came from the old bridge that used to cross the river at Route 29 before the dam flooded the area.

Mr. Aitcheson was asked by WSSC to start the trail system. The system works like this. There is a loop around the perimeter of the WSSC property "the Jeep trail"; and second loop within sight of the lake;. These two loops are connected with spokes or links, which are named so in case of an accident or need of repair the location would be easier to find.

The spokes or connecting trails and the inner loop are in excellent shape; the outer perimeter loop the jeep trail has a huge wash out behind the old Dr. Smith or the new church property. This wash out was not caused by horses and has been there for at least 15 years unrepaired. The Jeep trails have not been used by the jeeps in years. These perimeter roads are anything but "very flat and very negotiable", in fact most of the trails are for very slow riding. Over near the dam there are a few short distances that you can trot or canter your horse; one on the perimeter road is near the washout.

Equestrians don't want to mess up their trails or horses; they don't ride on wet trails. They want to ride another day. The equestrians have work groups on foot that walk on the trails and police the trash left by others. We love the reservoir and want it clean as we also drink and bathe in its water.

These are just wonderfully beautiful trails with NO HOUSES or BUILDINGS that you can ride your horse within an hour from Washington, DC or Baltimore MD and in the spring see natural Laurel in bloom in "Laurel, MD". Some of the neatest hours of my life have been spent riding those trails. Please let us continue using them and riding.

Thank you.
Beverly Fox

My name is Terry Ledley;

Fortunately I am on vacation with my grandchildren. Unfortunately, I am missing this meeting. But my involvement with the Watershed and the equestrian trails runs very deep.

When I first boarded my horse 35 years ago at Water's Gift, on Dustin Road West, I fell in love with the scenery, beauty and pristine wilderness of the watershed, reservoir and horse trails. Working to clear and maintain them became my constant activity. For 35 years rarely a day has gone by that I was not out on trails moving branches, picking up trash and pruning. I have worked with Chief Patrol Officers Paul Hancock and Larry Iager, and Patrol Officers Butch Abbott, Tony Frye, Ray Hohl, Bart Pitt and Terry Perrell. Butch, Tony and Ray would, once or twice a year, take me out in their 4-wheel-drive to chain saw the trail obstacles that were beyond my capacity. About once a year I went out with a Patrol Officer in the Patrol boat to pick up the overflowing bags of trash I had collected at bad wash-up spots. In 1983 Pat Oliva and I succeeded in getting an underpass built along the river under Rt. 29 to connect the east and west trail sections. When the WSSC leased the use of a trail horse from Debby Poole for Watershed patrols, and the Patrol Officers were novice riders, I was always asked to accompany them on their riding patrols. I do believe I added to their safety. Once a year when the WSSC had their picnic at the Brighton Dam picnic area, the riders from TROT always brought 4-5 gentle horses for the kids' pony rides. It was great fun and they loved it. About 15 years ago when Water's Gift closed, I moved my horse near Supplee Lane, and have been working on those sections of trail. Twelve years ago my husband and I bought the house and property next to my horse, so we are now WSSC neighbors.

Thirteen years ago, it was a total surprise and a tremendous thrill to have the WSSC commissioners have a formal naming ceremony, naming the trail the Terry Ledley Equestrian Trail. I have been very, very proud of that honor.

In recent years, since there is no longer a Watershed Patrol, and since I am older and weaker, I have spent several hundred dollars for help in maintaining the trails and even the Fire Access road.

We equestrians have always been the eyes and ears of the watershed. I personally, have alerted the Officers to a tree hit by lightning and smoldering, before spreading to a forest fire. Right below my house I caught several teenagers with a fire going, and trash and graffiti all over the place. Ironically, they had started the fire with school test papers, and on one the name was still readable. The WSSC had them pick up all their trash and scrub the graffiti off a large boulder. Once I discovered a homeless guy living in a tent, another time I discovered a stolen canoe hidden in the woods. Just recently on a point jutting out into the water, I noticed a crudely formed circle made of bamboo poles tied together and tied to trees and removed it.

In these times of shrinking budgets many parks and reservoirs are forming Volunteer Mounted Patrols to be an observing presence. I was for many years a mounted volunteer for Greenbelt National Park and for the MNCPPC Montgomery County Volunteer Mounted Patrol. The WSSC has always had this benefit unofficially from its equestrian riders.

Consider your new regulations: #1: Moving the trail to the Fire Break Access Road. For years we have been forbidden to ride the Fire Break. This road was built to mark the periphery of the Watershed property. It naturally had no regard for terrain. It is really un-ridable. There are extremely steep hills, and impassable washouts. #2: As for closing the trails all winter due to presumably wet conditions, we have always been forbidden to ride when the ground is wet. #3: And as to limiting access to 8 designated entrance points, if you drive in you will see that five of them have no parking and no room to turn a trailer around. Only three are usable. And does it make any sense for adjacent property owners and stable owners who have long had WSSC approved gates, to now have to hitch a trailer, load a horse and drive for quite a distance for access. And riders or boarders with paid yearly permits who do not own a horse trailer could not ride at all. That's discrimination. These new regulations are not thought out, and are unreasonable.

I can't possibly express how important these trails have been in my life, and how they have enriched it. This is really a little paradise between the dense metropolises. The horse trails are picture postcard beautiful with vistas of the water at every turn. The WSSC, TROT, and the equestrians have always had a wonderful and mutually beneficial relationship. I hope this will always continue. Thank you.

Terry Ledley

June 16, 2012

Patuxent Watershed Study
c/o EA Engineering, Science and Technology
15 Loveton Circle
Sparks, MD 21152

Re: WSSC Watershed Use

This letter is in response to your request for comments about how the watershed should be used.

I am a horseback rider who uses the bridle trails fairly regularly. My horse is one of the greatest pleasures in my life. He is expensive but worth the sacrifice. Trail riding is our favorite activity.

I am concerned about the environment, and I believe horse farms are a very good use of the land around the reservoir. The pastures help filter runoff from the surrounding areas before it reaches the reservoir. Horses mostly eat grass or hay, so their manure is not a source of pollution like dogs or cats. From the amount of deer I see on the trail and on the farm, I suspect there is more deer poop than horse poop in the area around the reservoir.

I recently learned that West Laurel Stables, where I board my horse, is zoned for a house on every two acres. I expect six humongous houses will eventually be built there. Six houses with homeowners who will fertilize and their lawns and create large areas of impermeable surface around their houses. These changes will be a detriment to the reservoir.

I believe any supposed detriment to the reservoir from bridle trails is far outweighed by the option of a house on every two acres instead. Please be sure to consider this when preparing your study.

Thank you.

Brenda Harrison

June 15, 2012

TO: Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission
Laurel, Maryland

FROM: Jeanie Kemp

Gentlemen:

I am writing to express my frustration with the WSSC for its actions taken against the citizens of Maryland and surrounding areas regarding the use of the WSSC property.

I'd like to start by saying that I understand the importance of clean water for everyone. And I appreciate your apparent concern along that topic. But I don't see the relevance that horses are involved. Horses have been traveling those trails for many decades with no report that I know about of any issues. This is a beautiful and rather "wild" area with abundant wildlife, all of which defecate throughout the woods. I believe in "ashes to ashes" and within a day or two, none the worse. I've been waiting to hear from the WSSC findings, where this has caused a pollution problem. As yet, I've seen no valid documentation to back this up.

I rode these trails in the early 1960's and was instructed to stay off of the fire breaks and stick to the trails. Most of these trails are still intact. The firebreaks are impassable. The thought back then was that the firebreaks were needed to allow vehicles to patrol for fires and/or emergencies. I can guarantee that NO vehicle could travel these breaks now. WSSC dropped the ball on maintaining its own property. I therefore assume that WSSC can no longer patrol for fires/campers/partying. We trail riders have a long history to patrolling and reporting any undesirable activities to the authorities. Why would you want us to stop this practice?

I purchased a pass to ride these trails in 2010. I will not spend another \$60 to attempt to ride these dangerous trails, putting my horse and myself at risk.

Jeanie Kemp

JUN 18 2012

June 15, 2012

Dear Commission studying the WSSC Trails,

I sincerely hope that you will be able to find a way to keep the current access available for horseback riders.

For years the riders in the area have provided trail maintenance and been good stewards of the land.

As a child, I lived on Tucker Lane and spent many hours riding in the beautiful woods along the Patuxent River. Every year, our father would take us to purchase yearly permits at Brighton Dam. We carried them proudly inside our riding helmets. We actually looked forward to the times when they were "checked". It made us feel a part of something greater. We felt a connection and contribution to the community. It was my first license! It is amusing to me as an adult to realize that I probably didn't need one when I was only 14!

I am well aware that things have changed greatly since the 1960's and 70's when I so often rode those trails. If financing is an issue, I know there are many groups and businesses that would gladly contribute monies and time to keep these trails open for future generations. I have been a 4H leader in Maryland for the past 27 years and I own a riding stable in Howard County. I have had the privilege of taking youth on their first "big" trail ride in your beautiful facility. I hope this will continue for a long time.

Please allow the horse community access to the trails for the years to come!

Sincerely,

Joan Bosmans

JUN 18 2012

TO: WSSC Members

FROM: Deborah Rosenfelt

RE: Trails and horses

DATE: June 11, 2012

I'm writing to express my earnest hope that the WSSC will allow riders access to WSSC land for the purposes of trail riding. I began riding in my fifties and have been enjoying it now for almost twenty years. But I have done little trail riding since the trails were put off-limit last year, because access to the best trails depended on using WSSC trails to get to them. For me, trail riding was exercise, pleasure, companionship, and also often a spiritual experience. So the trail closure meant a real loss.

In earlier years, before the trails were closed to horses, I would go out with a group of riders from the barn where my horse is stabled, and we would work to clear the trails, including some trails on WSSC land that were badly overgrown. We carefully trimmed back overgrown vegetation, removed fallen logs, and made sure that areas where there had been erosion were shored up. I don't think that there's a single group who cares more for their environment than riders, and I hope that we can work together with the WSSC to care for the trails and make them an enjoyable as well as useful space for various constituencies.

Thank you for your consideration.

Deborah Rosenfelt
(Professor, University of Maryland)

JUN 18 2012

June 12, 2012

To the WSSC Commissioners:

I have been a horse owner since 2000. I live and ride in the WSSC watershed. The woodland trails around the watershed are a wonderful resource for us riders. And we are a wonderful resource for the watershed! We use the trails responsibly, and while we do so we keep an eye on things. Maybe that is why no meth labs have cropped up in our woods, as they have in other states. Our presence helps diminish misuse of the trails by truly destructive dirt bikes and ATVs. Most of our trails are sited in a way to prevent erosion. After all, no one enjoys riding their horse down the fall line. If there is truly concern about erosion in certain areas, the trails can be restructured and redirected in those places. In summary, horse traffic does not harm the watershed, but in fact helps it.

Besides that, we horse owners pack a big economic punch. Most of us board our horses at local stables and buy feed, tack and other equine supplies at local businesses. Our boarding fees pay the salaries of barn workers, and we also pay vets, farriers, trainers, chiropractors (equine and human!) and other skilled equine workers. The barns employ a variety of workers, and buy farm and fencing equipment locally, not to mention trucks, trailers, and building supplies. Our boarding barns include pastures and open spaces that make our area appealing and ecologically sound. To have all of this within reach of two major metropolitan centers is a unique drawing point for many city dwellers, and improves the quality of living for all, while stimulating the local economy at the same time. Trail riding is an essential part of all disciplines of horseback riding, and our access to trails must be maintained in order for the equine industry to flourish here.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

Leighton Davenport

JUN 18 2012

To: Commissioners at WSSC.

I have ridden my horses through these Inter-County-Connecting Trails and Firebreaks for over 20 years and continue to do so at age 74. I purchased my home and business office condo in Montgomery County so I would be in close proximity to horse boarding, trails and the horse community. Our riding partners have been clearing and cleaning trash and passing the word on trail conditions as usual. Where attention is needed. I have been involved with needed alerts fire on farm and escaped livestock and horses. Several times coming across Paint Ball Sites with fire pit, drinking and trashing...it was enough to let them know that it is illegal and they left And the case of the nude jogger who was apprehended due to the surveillance of trail riders. And also letting deer hunters out of season know this is illegal.

Currently I am using all of these trails off and on weather permitting and sometimes trailer out with my horse and riding partner. I board my two horses in Montgomery County. So when I thought about ALL the money I have spent in 20-some years due to my trail riding interest such as my home, office condo, petro, food, horse feed, tack, hardware etc. I hear say, "This is horse country".

Never did see this article in the Gazette on the WSSC changes on the Equestrian Trails. Hopefully the WSSC with TROT and the trail riding community can come together with smart solutions for the Mother Earth and the preservation of our pursuit of happy trail riding.

Thank you for this opportunity to voice our views.
Sincerely,

Marilyn Pruitt,

JUN 18 2012

June 14, 2012

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a small animal veterinarian practicing in Beltsville, Maryland that has lived in this area since 1975. Originally my practice was mixed and treated horses locally including the Rocky Gorge Watershed barns. I've been riding all my life-first western then some Polo at veterinary school and once I moved up here a year of Fox Hunting as well as riding hunters in local shows. I became interested in competitive trail riding and endurance and did that for many years. Now I am a pleasure trail rider and have ridden in many of the parks in Maryland and horse camped a few places out of state. I help maintain some of the trails in my local riding area of Mount Airy in the Upper Patuxent River Park. I've been riding the Rocky Gorge watershed trail for more than 25 years.

I am writing in support of continued riding on the horse trail around Rocky Gorge Reservoir. I am amazed that horses are considered a threat to the water quality of the reservoir.

Horses have been boarded near and ridden on Rocky Gorge Reservoir for at least the past thirty years. I suspect there are fewer horses that impact the reservoir now than in the past but that is just my feeling from living and working in the area for many years. Why is water quality and erosion from horses an issue now? Horses and the trail really haven't changed much. The surrounding area has changed immensely. Urbanization has led to houses and pavement and more run-off in general. There is more air pollution from increased vehicular traffic. The number of deer and geese are now at nuisance levels. All these things have far more impact on water quality than the horse issue. How much contamination of the reserve is there from increased goose droppings, deer droppings, deer and other carcass decomposition, fish kill, sediment run-off from increased stream water flow due to pavement and housing increases and also, let's not forget, the erosion of the reservoir fire road which is no longer maintained?

It may seem like a small thing to close the reservoir horse trail since riders are a small percentage of the Maryland population, but this is a disservice to the surrounding businesses that do depend on horseback riders not to mention depriving Maryland citizens of a very special experience riding the horse trail. There are few trails, especially in such an urbanized area, that are as beautiful and seemingly remote as the Rocky Gorge horse trail. Riding the fire road, where it is passable, is just not the same. Please do not take this away from a group that appreciates with every ride what they are privy to.

Mary Prowell, DVM

JUN 18 2012

June 16, 2012

Mr. Johnnie R. Hemphill, Jr.
Chief of Staff
Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission
14501 Sweitzer Lane, 12th Floor
Laurel, Maryland 20707

Dear Mr. Hemphill:

I am writing this letter to support the re-opening of the old equestrian trails in the WSSC watershed area. I have personally seen these trails, and I believe that they provide safe, environmentally-friendly trails for horses. I was one of many individuals who worked very hard in the early days to establish these trails. Much thought and care went into the establishment of the trails – always keeping in mind protection of the reservoir. These trails have stood the test of time – remaining sound and minimally eroded even after years of use by horseback riders. The equestrian community has always been supportive of WSSC efforts to protect the water. Equestrians are in general extremely conscious of the environment and diligent in their efforts to limit any environmental effects from the horses. Moreover, the equestrian users of the watershed areas have always prided themselves in partnering with WSSC in its efforts to ensure a pristine reservoir.

I can however testify to the great changes that have taken place in those woodland areas over these years – primarily the removal of the understory forestation due to excessive deer foraging. I have ridden horses in this region of Montgomery County for over 30 years. During this time the character of the wooded areas has changed dramatically. Where there were once abundant understory plants, these areas are now bare of the once-common dogwood and hardwood saplings. Invasive grasses, ferns, and vines are much more common than they were years ago. Thirty years ago we virtually never saw deer – or even hoof prints of deer. Now herds of 10 to 20 or more deer are encountered regularly. It seems to me that this explosion of the deer population and the attendant forest damage present a much greater threat to water quality than the limited presence of horses, which remain well away from the water's edge.

It has been a great disappointment to me, as a WSSC customer and rate-payer, that the unilateral action closing the equestrian trails was done without interaction with the equestrian community and without a scientific basis. Not only has WSSC alienated a large number of individuals, it has threatened the livelihood of many small businesses that have grown up as dedicated and committed stakeholders in protecting the watershed areas. I am hopeful that WSSC will objectively consider any scientific data regarding the use of the old equestrian trails, and again permit their use. I am also hopeful that WSSC will deal with the equestrian community in an open and transparent manner.

I would be happy to discuss these matters with you personally, at your convenience.

Sincerely,
Nancy L. Osgood

JUN 18 2012

Dear Ms. Floreen.

I want to thank you for your ongoing support of an issue which is very dear to my heart -the WSSC trails access for equestrians.

There is a meeting tonight 7 - 9 pm in Laurel (moved to the Boys & Girls Club on 7th street) to show that the process is not over. We are gaining momentum with a petition and representation - also tomorrow evening in Mt. Airy, there is another meeting. Please spread the word to your colleagues.

The Rocky Gorge section of the WSSC bridle trails should definitely remain open; we should not be restricted to using the fire access trails, which are prone to erosion.

I ride there quite regularly, enjoying the solitude and beauty; it is nicely underused. There are very few horses on the trails. No need to trailer there, it is close to the barn where I have boarded for about three years.

I truly appreciate this opportunity for quiet and beauty, also knowing that I am also acting as a responsible steward of this beautiful forested watershed area. It is a good tradition and one which should continue.

Thank you for your ongoing support of this important issue,

Sincerely,

Carolyn Clark, Ph.D.

MCPS teacher

Regarding: The T. Howard Duckett and Triadelphia Reservoirs changes.
June 18, 2012 meeting with the EA Engineering, Science & Technology group

Mrs. Debby Poole
Belle Cote Farm

EA ENGINEERING
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

JUN 18 2012

Hello my name is Debby Poole, owner and operator of Belle Cote Farm since 1968. I have been asked to speak to you today on behalf of the well-over 1,000 equestrians, business-people and land owners who have expressed their concern about WSSC: 1- closing their equestrian trail, 2- moving riding to the unsuitable access road, 3- banning winter riding, and 4- closing previously approved individual barn entrances. As well as changes to other recreational activities; fishing, boating, picnicking etc. We are very interested in the progress in resolving any problem areas. We would like to reinforce our desire to work with WSSC and make the equestrian trail and other areas as environmentally sound as possible.

In light of that as previously requested throughout last year. Would it be possible to have regular ongoing meetings while the study is being conducted? As we are very much looking forward to a continuing dialogue might we even today set a date for a Stakeholders/WSSC/ EA Engineering, Science and Technology meeting on the calendar?

I have had an outpouring of E-mails, Letters and phone calls. As time allows I will present some letters, comments and information that I have been asked to present to you. I have printed copies I will also give to you.

Ways we'd like to help:

Possible Grant for WSSC Trail: The Maryland Department of Transportation offers grants up to forty thousand dollars per project each year to build and improve trails in Maryland. The WSSC equestrian trail is most likely eligible for these funds.

The money may be used for contractors, materials and equipment.
Recommendations for qualified natural surface trail contractors can be

obtained from MNCPPC and Maryland DNR. Contractors construct trails and supervise volunteers. It is an 80%/20% grant, where the recipient usually supplies their 20% through staff and volunteer hours. Organizations may apply every year.

Patrols and Rescues: Times are changing. Regularly throughout the US riders are asked to volunteer to be trained for rescue and patrol. It's not unusual to see on the news Riders looking for a lost child or adult. Last year Howard Co. Police Dept. Volunteer Mounted Police Unit advertised Seeking Experienced Riders to train to patrol their parks. Not to confront but to observe and report a problem or help in a rescue. Several of our riders are trained for this and offer their help on the Watershed.

Free Service: During the interim of the broader watershed study. Or perhaps to work along with to EA Engineering, Science & Technology group. We would like to again offer free and expert trail assessment and plans for re-routing, if necessary, by Prince George's County's environmental experts from their Soil Conservations District office. These individuals, Steve Darcey and Eileen Beard, are certified trail masters, very committed to environmental land use, and entrusted by the county to prepare nutrient management plans and perform environmental assessments of horse farms. They have offered to come out to assess WSSC's equestrian trail and access roads in both Prince George's and Montgomery Counties, determining where riding is -- or is not -- environmentally harmful, and how the preferred route can be improved.

Page 2 Regarding: The T. Howard Duckett and Triadelphia Reservoirs changes.

June 18, 2012 meeting with to EA Engineering, Science & Technology group

Some statistics:

My children are 5th generation Poole's to ride these trails which have changed very little in all these years. Great Grandpa Poole sold his land at the end of Kruhm Road to the WSSC. So I would say we would certainly be aware if the original bridle trails were changing, but in fact have remained pretty much the same. Whereas the deer population and the impact they have is a serious ever changing problem.

Petition on-line and hard copies in 2011 we had 500+ total. So far this year we are over 600. As well as so many letters we lost count. Letters that have been sent to WSSC, Delegates, elected officials, and media asking for help resolving this issue that is so dear to our hearts. I mean seriously we all know how hard it is to get someone/anyone to write or sign anything. It truly is amazing.

Why do we care? 2010 Maryland Equine Census *Baltimore, Montgomery Counties Lead Inventory, Value and Acreage*

ANNAPOLIS, MD (Feb. 8, 2011) –

County-level data collected from Maryland's 2010 Equine Census reveals an industry with assets valued at \$5.6 billion and expenditures just under \$513 million. There are approximately 79,100 equine animals in Maryland that are located in over 16,040 locations around the state. The two largest equine counties are Baltimore, Montgomery and Frederick at 8,950, 7,900 and 7,850 head respectively. Equine operations account for a total of 587,000 acres of which 188,000 acres are devoted to equine and 88,000 acres are enrolled in land preservation programs.

"These data show the significant value and size of the equine industry in Maryland and serve as confirmation of the economic importance of this viable industry to the State," said Governor Martin O'Malley. "We are committed to fostering Maryland's equine industry and doing all we can to protect the thousands of jobs that depend on our rich history of horse racing and recreational riding."

"Governor O'Malley has taken a keen interest in Maryland's equine industry and this census validates its vibrant economic and cultural importance," said Jim Steele, chair, Maryland Horse Industry Board and manager of Shamrock Farm in Woodbine. "The numbers reflect what we expected to see based on the current economic climate. The data show the importance of the industry as a whole from race horses to the pleasure-riding segment."

"The results of the 2010 Maryland Equine Census help illustrate growing trends throughout industry, both at the County and State-level

To learn more about the board and its activities including its grant program, visit www.marylandhorseindustry.org. For more information about the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service Maryland Field Office or the Maryland Department of Agriculture, visit www.mda.state.md.us.

In closing; I clearly recognize that it would be perceived that in this matter WSSC, Equestrians, recreational users and the Stakeholders would have very different interests and objectives. I also agree, our obligation and highest priority is the preservation of the watershed in order to protect drinking water today and for the future. But I see no reason why we can't work together to compromise on these issues so we can save and make available this resource for future generations to enjoy. Companies can amend rulings.

I am so grateful for your time, thank you very much, Debby Poole

Companies can amend rulings. Look at the Bank of America I think they just reversed a decision about charging extra on checking because of one lady protesting.

http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-500202_162-20128896/the-woman-behind-the-bank-of-america-fee-protest/

For years the watershed was well maintained and patrolled by jeeps and horses. I believe most of the damage to the water is a direct result of the erosion on the access's roads. I would be happy to take you to show you where I took these pictures. Many of the Access firebreaks look like the first one. But even the second one is so hilly if we start riding on it then it will become like the first picture. the Bridle trails really are mostly in good shape, and those that aren't we are willing to work with WSSC to fix.

They say a picture is worth a thousand words.

I'm standing where they are asking us to ride.



Even the better firebreaks are too hilly to not cause erosion.



This is a pretty typical bridle trail.



Remarks by Virginia Henriksen, PMP

EA ENGINEERING
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

JUN 18 2012

June 18, 2011

Good evening,

Thank you for this opportunity to speak. My name is Virginia Henriksen. I am a resident of the District of Columbia. For almost three years I have been leasing a horse in Burtonsville, MD, primarily for trail riding. Prior to that, I rode at Reddemeade Equestrian Center, which is also located on the watershed.

Many people here tonight have spoken eloquently of the beauty of Rocky Gorge, and the inestimable value of the watershed as a wilderness escape in a densely populated urban area. No one disputes the need to safeguard water quality. I would like to say a few words about the economic benefits of recreation.

I live in DC, but I am in Burtonsville every weekend, primarily to trail ride. As a result, I buy most of my gas in Burtonsville. I do the majority of my grocery shopping at the Burtonsville Giant. I spend money in many local businesses in Laurel. Prince George's and Montgomery Counties get a far larger percentage of my paycheck than the District does. I'm sure many recreational users of the watershed travel a distance to ride or boat or picnic, and spend their money locally as I do. If the watershed is closed to recreation, those dollars go away. As a result, some farms and small businesses would undoubtedly be lost, further eroding the rural character of the area. What will happen to property values if access to the watershed is closed? I urge the WSSC to undertake an economic impact assessment of changes to recreation on the watershed.

I have two questions:

1. How much time do you plan to spend walking the trails and otherwise physically examining the watershed? Could you describe the methodology you will use? I have not observed erosion, trail widening, or vegetation loss on the marked trails – I have only seen this on the access road. This is why WSSC's contention that horses are damaging the watershed has never made sense to me. I will be looking to see if this point is addressed in your report.
2. In 2006, a recreation survey was done – are there plans to do another?

Thank you again for your consideration.