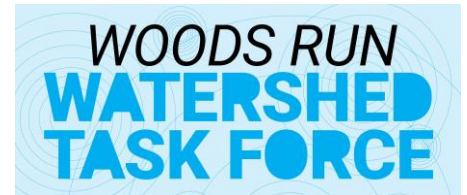


Woods Run Watershed Task Force

Meeting #1

Thursday March 12, 2020



Facilitator:

Erin Copeland - PPC - ecopeland@pittsburghparks.org

Attending:

Stacey Branch – Resident

Denise Colbert – Friends of Riverview Park, Resident of Observatory Hill

Beth Dutton – PWSA (Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority)

Stephanie Joy Everett – City Planning

Brian Jensen – Allegheny Conference on Community Development

Mark Masterson – Chair of Friends of Riverview Park

Tim Nuttle – Civil and Environmental Consultants Inc.

Erin Tobin – PPC

Rebecca Zito – PWSA

Follow-up Actions

- Check in with Brightwood Civic Group about conversations around the Penitentiary site.
- Ask PWSA if community meetings are planned for the St. Johns site?
- Has anyone mapped specific areas where runoff leaves Riverview Park and flows onto people's properties? PWSA / DPW (Department of Public Works) receive calls about these issues. Does it make sense to do this?
- Stephanie Joy will ask City environmental planners what is being discussed about the deer population. Erin C to follow up.
- Erin C or Erin T to check in about preliminary ideas for a bike trail/stream daylighting on McClure Ave.
- Erin C to have follow-up call with Stephanie Joy and Allegheny Land Trust to further discuss what can be done with the tax delinquent properties along Woods Run.

Notes

Erin Copeland asked participants why they like the Negley Run Watershed Task Force (NRWTF) meetings.

- The diversity of people – all kinds of people from all neighborhoods attend.
- The meetings are well attended.
- John Stephen is a steady hand keeping things moving along.
- The stability of having a standing meeting and a consistent group of people who come together and are passionate about this project.
- NRWTF is unique in that it is the first one. It took several years of working very hard to build a sense of involvement/ownership/value and to hear what was important to the neighborhood groups. There has been a lot of shared education, empowering community leaders to become informed and engaged advocates for the watershed.
- The Larimer Consensus Group members were early task force leaders; they drove what happened in Negley Run. Erin C loves that it is led by community members/community experts.
- Brian Jensen said there are many things about Negley Run that are good and unique: it is a watershed with a lot of needs, heavy minority population, and the knowledge that clean water and clean air and

greenspace is for all of us. It is important to keep in mind that ONE WATER IS FOR ALL and this is NRWTF's primary role. Brian is impressed by the turnout of staff and neighborhood members.

Presentation

Erin C gave an overview of the One Water concept, local partners, and priority Pittsburgh watersheds. See attached presentation.

Comments and Discussion

The Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) designation "0-27" stands for the Ohio River and the 27th overflow along the Ohio River. (They are numbered sequentially from the Point.)

PENITENTIARY -- There was a robust discussion about at the future of the vacant state penitentiary site in the Woods Run watershed. It would be great to have a stream or public use instead of another warehouse. The state would like to give the penitentiary site to the URA but the URA does not want to take it because of environmental and historic issues with the building. The Brightwood Civic Group has been involved in conversations about the site.

ST. JOHN'S -- The former health center site is on PWSA's radar. Their project in Brighton Heights will manage 13 impervious acres through a combination of permeable street pavement and rain gardens. It is now in design and PWSA is just coming to a stage where they will have a community meeting. Allegheny Land Trust might become involved in the project.

RIVERVIEW PARK -- Standing Water -- Denise reported that some flat areas are sinking and keep water. Specific areas of standing water include the Woods Run entrance and the Centennial Pavilion area.

UNDERSTORY AND RUNOFF -- A notable thing is the park's lack of understory vegetation; this can be attributed to deer overpopulation. Without the understory, a tremendous amount of stormwater runoff comes from the park. There are specific areas where this occurs and PWSA/DPW receive calls about these issues. Does it make sense to map them?

DEER MANAGEMENT – Once old trees die and fall over there is nothing to replace them. Deer management needs to be addressed. The PA Dept. of Agriculture did a deer survey of the four historic regional parks, finding that there are 55/65 deer per square mile on average. It is best if the deer density is about 8 deer/square mile. A lot of people love the deer and feed them. Most people do not like the deer. Professionals understand this issue has been here for a long time and there is a lack of leadership in taking it on. It will take a lot of effort across many agencies to address the issue. The City's environmental planners have been in meetings to discuss the deer population.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT -- How can the business districts be a part of the watershed taskforce and involved in this conversation? How can this help economic development? It is a great opportunity to have a high-level concept of the watershed that is a wonderful unifying amenity – tying in all these streams through conveyance down Woods Run Avenue where it is piped in some places and daylit in some places. It could connect Riverview Park to the riverfront park and the bike trail along the river. We should be looking at watershed development as community development – what can be done with the tax delinquent properties along Woods Run?

WATER PROBLEMS – The section of Riverview Drive close to the Chapel Shelter is continuing to slide. It is very dangerous to drive there. There are landslides; why isn't something being done? You can hear water running. There used to be a connector that is very popular, but it washed away (down near the Centennial Shelter).

LANDSLIDES – It is nice to connect streams to their flood plains and let them be streams and flood. What if we just let the land slide and rebuilt roads around them? Could we do that, so we are not always fighting the landslides?

100-YEAR FLOODPLAIN – It was pointed out that the 100-year flood plain for this watershed extends up to the Carnegie Library in Woods Run. Hurricane Ivan flooded Woods Run with a couple of feet of water where the Mairdale PWSA Woods Run project is. The Family Dollar is built on stilts because it is in the flood plain. Some businesses may not be able to get financing because they are in the flood plain. The Penitentiary site is 10 feet below the flood plain level. There might be some opportunities to think about that as we are looking at the rest of the stream or where the stream used to run.

WOODS RUN AND McClure -- There is an electric company that does contract work with the City There might be an opportunity to acquire some property for stream daylighting. Check in with Brighton Heights and Brightwood Groups about this area. Was / would Allegheny Land Trust like to be involved?

Stacey Branch could not attend and sent these comments:

- If you drive down Mairdale Street from Perrysville Avenue, you will see a steady stream of water coming off from the hillside. The top of the hillside is my street (Portman). The water sometimes flows very fast like a stream down the street and across from the soccer field.
- My basement is consistently wet when it rains hard even though I have a sump pump on one side of my house. My sump pump pushes out hundreds of gallons of water when it rains and still pushes out water when it is not raining. However, I still get drainage in my basement; sometimes it looks like a creek.
- I have planted many trees, bushes, flowers, etc. but it still does not help. I also have a French drain and my yard is still like a swamp.
- I think in part it is due underground springs in the Observatory Hill area.
- I have three rain barrels which are attached to my downspouts, with self-watering irrigation hoses to water my garden, etc. I also use this water for my indoor plants and flowers.
- All my neighbors on this street have this exact same problem. I have even had PWSA come out and sample the water runoff from hillside and they said it is not their responsibility -- that it is just water runoff.
- I would like someone to do something about this. Can you give me any suggestions?