

## **The Stormwater Partners Coalition** **Seeking to Protect and Restore the Waters of Montgomery County**

Anacostia Riverkeeper at Earth Conservation Corps, Anacostia Watershed Citizens Advisory Committee, Anacostia Watershed Society, Audubon Naturalist Society, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Clean Water Action, Eyes of Paint Branch, Friends of Cabin John Creek Watershed, Friends of Hillmead Park, Friends of Rock Creek's Environment, Friends of Sligo Creek, Friends of the Earth, Greater Goshen Civic Association, Montgomery County Civic Federation, Natural Resources Defense Council, Neighbors of Northwest Branch, Northwood-Four Corners Civic Association, Potomac Conservancy, RiverSides, Sierra Club, and the West Montgomery County Citizens Association.

**The core purpose of our campaign for a stronger stormwater permit is to set clear limits on how much pollution gets dumped into Montgomery County's rivers and streams. Why? So that we can protect and restore our Potomac River drinking water supply, the Bay, and the Anacostia.**

**The Problem:** Montgomery County's Clean Water Act ("NPDES") permit, up for renewal in 2006, is supposed to ensure that our streams and rivers are protected from polluted runoff. First issued by the Maryland Department of the Environment in 1996, the existing permit does not define objective goals or specify measurable actions that our government must take to protect our waters. Over a third of our streams have declined in recent years, and fully two-thirds of Montgomery's waters are now wholly or partly impaired. Pollution from development in Watts Branch is responsible for the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission's \$15 million decision to move its intake pipe farther out into the Potomac in search of cleaner drinking water. Upcounty, groundwater sources are threatened.

**The Solution:** Montgomery County must comply with the Clean Water Act and act to stop pollution at its source, and the Maryland Department of the Environment must issue a tougher, more protective NPDES permit; below are five core elements of this tougher permit: (further points are listed on the reverse side of this flyer).

***1) Put our polluted rivers and streams on a "pollution-reducing diet."*** Include pollution caps – and an enforceable action plan -- to restore our streams and protect public health and safety.

***2) Establish a new set of design standards for new development and redevelopment, based on the protections established for Upper Rock Creek.*** Protect high quality streams, and ensure that other Maryland jurisdictions will do the same when their permits are renewed.

***3) Spur the widespread use of "Low Impact Development" (LID) retrofits to restore streams.*** Require that 25 % of the County's degraded streams be restored through wide use of rain gardens, parking lot filters, and green roofs.

***4) Honor the commitment to a Trash-Free Potomac by 2013:*** Require a 15% reduction per year of trash levels in our waters, along with monitoring and recycling, litter control and trash trap implementation and enforcement.

***5) Address the volume and velocity of stormwater through establishment of flow limits;*** and greater use of flow gaging and stream monitoring.

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### **Proposal for a Stronger Stormwater NPDES Permit for Montgomery County**

#### **Attainment of Water Quality Standards and Goals**

- 1) Require enforceable pollution reduction measures through numeric pollution caps, in order to meet standards for bacteria and other pollutants, for the Anacostia and other waters. (These are the “Total Maximum Daily Loads,” or TMDLs.)
- 2) Protect high-quality and good-quality streams, and our drinking water sources including groundwater recharge areas, through zoning and planning changes for Environmentally Sound/ Low Impact Development (ESD/LID).
- 3) Restore degraded streams through measurable, enforceable goals. Apply stormwater LID measures such as rain gardens and green roofs cost-effectively on a whole-watershed and –subwatershed basis, to make progress in attaining water quality standards and protecting our drinking water sources from stormwater pollution..
- 4) Honor the commitment to a Trash-Free Potomac by 2013: Require a 15% reduction per year of trash levels in our waters, along with monitoring and recycling, litter control and trash trap implementation and enforcement
- 5) Establish adequate stream flow gaging networks and numeric limits (maximum flow targets) for stream flows to address volume and velocity and baseflows from already-developed and newly-developing areas.

#### **Pollution Prevention at the Source**

- 6) Apply off-the-shelf source reduction stormwater measures countywide, including pet waste education and enforcement, recycling, street sweeping, and storm drain cleanouts.
- 7) Identify and remediate stormwater “hotspots.”
- 8) Require actions to protect and restore forested stream buffers and other forested areas, through measurable reforestation and forest protection goals.

#### **Accountability and Coordination, Public Involvement, and Program Support**

- 9) Increase the level and frequency of public involvement and notification in the County’s stormwater permit program development decisions, permit renewals, and implementation.
- 10) Require enforceable duties of each of five County agencies who have stormwater responsibilities (DEP; DPS; DPWT; MCPS; and Park and Planning) to reduce fragmentation and increase accountability and transparency.
- 11) Shift stormwater monitoring to more-closely track the County’s watershed protection and restoration goals and stormwater measures, and to cooperate with volunteer groups.
- 12) Increase program funding while sending a “price incentive” for more-protective stormwater measures through broadening use of the County’s Water Quality Protection Charge.