

Hickory Ridge Watershed Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
11/5/2018

Present: Deborah Wessner, Iris Mars, Etarae Weinstein

The meeting focused on planning activities for Fall 2018 – Summer 2019.

Pull and Plant: too late to do it this year due and the wet weather is making it challenging to plant anything. One will be scheduled in the Spring. Deborah will try to pin John McCoy down on dates and we will hope the weather will cooperate.

Fall Cleanup: this is still doable; it may end up being a WAC team effort or something spontaneously planned on a nice day. We're still doing "20-minute" walks when we have time.

Log Articles: Deborah will send Etarae the set of Log articles on recurrent topics related to the watershed. Etarae will work with them to put together a publication schedule and work with Alex on releasing. If an article is needed on a special topic, one of us can put one together.

Robinson Nature Center Native Plant Palooza table: we decided this would – if it happens – be a project for the Watershed Stewards Academy rather than for the WAC. The University of Maryland Extension Master Gardeners has a table with compost bin giveaways and a composting demonstration; we stewards thought we could have a tent next to them to share information about watersheds and how native plants benefit them.

Cul-de-sac Beautification Awards Competition: the focus of the project would be to get the cul-de-sacs redone to not only be attractive but to benefit the watershed. Native plantings must be used. We need to work out a project plan for this:

- start time
- criteria
- logistics
- money: getting approval from HRV Board to spend the money; Deborah will talk to Alex about the money;
- publicity: drafting announcements of how the program works and distributing the announcement (HRV office will handle the distribution);
- coordination with Master Gardeners: MGs can be consultants on these projects
- before and after photos
- application process
- timeline/deadlines
 - application
 - design
 - build

- judge

Spring Cleanup: we will participate in the CA-wide cleanup. We suggested spending time scouting for places that are in need of a good cleanup; we need to pin down the dates for when they need to know for publicity and then go out beforehand. We might need to do the scouting in February! Deborah informed us that Joan Lancos (HRV staff) and Mary Kay Sigaty (District 4 HoCo Council representative) often go out walking and note issues and that can lead to clean-up site recommendations; we can also share our recommendations. Could be Open Space and/or Stream Cleanup depending on where it's needed. We could bring some info related to the watershed to put on a small info table.

Seedling Tree Planting: to be done in Spring. Two problems need to be resolved: 1) do we have too many trees to begin with? 2) where do we plant them? After that, getting community support is not a problem: scouts, Columbia Families in Nature, community volunteers. Plus, tree donations from HoCo Forestry Board, CA, Arbor Day Foundation, Casey Trees, others? We would need to know how many trees to plant and where. Deborah will ask John McCoy if he can suggest some sites within Hickory Ridge. We can also scout ourselves. Then, we would need to get HRV Board approval, Open Space approval, a date(s) set, plant sources, and get out the publicity.

Rain Barrel Seminar: to be done before or after Greenfest. Workshop on how to build your own rain barrel. Have a raffle for a giveaway?

- Iris has a thought: in the past, we've discussed bringing in rain barrels and giving away a rain barrel to people who sign up. Hold on CA election day? This would be on a Saturday, and the County could drop some off to the Hawthorn Center parking lot?

Hawthorn Center Native Plant Garden: Deborah will talk to Jan Clark about what can be done about the garden and obtaining plants for a community planting. "If you give us the plants, we will plant it...."

Storm Drain Stenciling: Ellen and Iris will continue on their own (they can invite people if they wish) as time and weather permit. Iris will check the test drains and send Ellen a report by the end of this week.

Create a Community Environmental Story: Deborah has an idea about somehow telling a story about our natural resources (woods, streams, ponds, etc.) so that people get a sense of how they fit in and are part of the natural environment. We need to get some ideas together for how to implement this concept.

Education Series: we're suggesting doing four throughout the year. Theme is "Rejuvenating Your Landscape."

- Rejuvenating Your Shrubs: how to prune, when to prune, when to pull out and replace with a suitable native shrub. Request Master Gardener help.

- Rejuvenating Your Lawn: Spring fertilizing and lawn care; types of seed, lawn weeds (e.g., Japanese Stilt Grass), common lawn problems (e.g., too much shade, drainage), alternatives to lawns (plant ground covers, mulch, mulch designs, stone designs). Concern that some ideas may require RAC approval; ask the Covenant Advisor Kristina Strakna to consult and be available for Q&A. Iris to ask Georgia Eacker (MG program coordinator) if she can recommend people for this topic other than the previous person.
- Rejuvenating Your Rain Garden: how to do general maintenance, how to mulch properly, replacing plants, common rain garden problems and how to solve them.
- Rejuvenating Your Garden Design (Art and Design in the Garden): thought to be a fun and thought-provoking program. Deborah suggested involving Mary Kay Sigaty in this project (she would have to agree to it, though). To be a slide-show and talk about creatively solving problems, and how to use design in the garden:
 - Creative solutions for erosion spots (spirals, Zen ripples, stone patterns);
 - Hardscaping elements, edging, paths;
 - Plant selection: what to use and why, for design purposes, e.g., grasses;
 - Using plants for color, or to make a “painting”;
 - Statuary, birdbaths, lanterns, gazing balls;
 - Art in the Gardens of Columbia, e.g., Wandering Way glass artist;
 - Other Art in the Garden ideas.

Concern about suggesting things that the RAC would not approve; we could invite the Covenant Advisor for consultation and Q&A on this.

- Rejuvenating Our Streams: a presentation by John McCoy to talk about projects within the village, e.g., White Cord improvements. What is being done and why. How this relates to the “rain tax”.

We did not discuss a couple of other events: Rain Garden Tours and Native Plant Swap. We most likely will not have the Rain Garden Tours in person, but we can still work on the project. Etarae has photos – we need to find a way to put this together into some kind of presentation or publication. Iris will look into doing a native plant swap in late summer depending on when she’s available and the Hawthorn Center is available.

We have plenty to do....

Owen Brown Road horse pasture: no ground cover on dirt – heavy rains washing soil away adding sedimentation to creek.

The below was not discussed in full at the meeting, but I'm trying to put together a general schedule of what we would be doing when.

November

- 20-minute cleanups continue (on own)
- Stenciling continues (Ellen and Iris)
- Plan beautification program
- Plan education series program: get available dates and start looking for speakers to commit to dates
- Plan community environmental story program

December

- 20-minute cleanups continue (on own)
- Plan beautification program
- Plan education series program
- Plan community environmental story program

January

- 20-minute cleanups continue (on own)
- First education program?

February

- 20-minute cleanups continue (on own)
- Scouting for clean-up sites
- Second education program?

March

- CA-wide Spring Cleanup event
- Pull & Plant (1)?
- Seedling Tree Planting?
- Rain Barrel Workshop?
- Third education program? (in addition to Rain Barrel Workshop)
- 20-minute cleanups continue (on own)
- Stenciling continues (Ellen and Iris)

April

- Rain Barrel Workshop?
- Fourth education program? (in addition to Rain Barrel Workshop)

- Pull & Plant (2)?
- Seedling Tree Planting?
- HoCo Greenfest
- CA elections
- 20-minute cleanups continue (on own)
- Stenciling continues (Ellen and Iris)

May

- Pull & Plant (3)?
- Seedling Tree Planting?
- Plant Natives Hawthorn Center?
- 20-minute cleanups continue (on own)
- Stenciling continues (Ellen and Iris)
- Native Plant Palooza (WSA)
- Fifth education program?

June

- 20-minute cleanups continue (on own)
- Stenciling continues (Ellen and Iris)

July

- 20-minute cleanups continue (on own)

August

- Native Plant Swap?
- 20-minute cleanups continue (on own)

September

- Native Plant Swap?
- 20-minute cleanups continue (on own)

October

- Village-wide Fall Clean-up (with scouts?)
- 20-minute cleanups continue (on own)

Note: no dates/timeline for Cul-de-sac program.