

Resident's speak out July 27th 2023

Brian England representing the HCCA New Town Committee

Now that the WSSI project is behind us I would encourage the board to fund an update to the CWMP as recommended in the 2017 Open Space Assessment as soon as possible using emergency funding.

This is also a good time to put a moratorium on ALL county and CA watershed projects in Columbia until the CWMP update is completed.

At this time the county is not interested in caring for the environment when planning watershed projects.

Here is the most recent example where acres of woodland and shrubs were removed.

This area was successfully soaking up Stormwater from 4 outfalls for 40 plus years! Now it's a lake because they hit groundwater while construction was taking place!

Millions dollars literally washed away and they have made matters worse!

The county's track record is dismal, a while ago John McCoy gave me a tour of the washed out Red Hill Branch project in Ellicott City, newly planted trees were washed away because the county failed to mitigate the stormwater from one outfall.

In Columbia the Great Oaks Way project was washed out after the first storm!

New Country Lane project removed acres of trees and caused more erosion.

This goes on and on and it's hard to find a project that the county has done that improved the situation

Now the county is planning a project off Bright Passage, it will remove 21 trees! And will not address the root cause of the erosion, the volume of Stormwater from the street.

I will now review the Timeline from when the CA was first presented with the watershed plan by Versar in April 2009

April 21st 2009

June 2nd 2009 "Watershed Protection Framework", this guided the implementation of the CWMP, it also outlines the responsibilities and roles of Staff, Watershed Advisory Committee (WAC) and the CA Board.

December 22nd 2009, The "WAC Charter" presented, this guided what WAC's responsibilities were. It was approved by the External Relations Committee in 3-0 vote. Subsequently it was approved by the board.

WAC discussed and recommended various watershed policies over several meetings. Then on

March 1st 2011, WAC approves and sends Sean Harbaugh and John McCoy the “Stream Restoration Guidelines and Recommendations” to execute the First Phase of the CWMP.

The original 2009 committee recommended that Phase I of the CWMP concentrates on the Lake Elkhorn Subwatershed. The area was nicknamed “The Pork Chop” by the committee that first reviewed the plan presented by Versar.

Phase 1 was 18 restoration projects and early action projects like tree planting and rain gardens.

Over 5 years ago in April 2017 the Open Space Assessment Report was released.

By this time about 15 of the 18 projects were completed and the staff Open Space Assessment report recommended in the Implementation Matrix page 31 item 7 that CA update the CWMP. (a team of CA staff under Jane took 6 months to complete this 34 page review.

So again I urge to update the CWMP and put freeze on ALL HC Stormwater projects in Columbia.