

**Neighbors of Northwest Branch
Minutes of Board Meeting
September 6, 2022**

1. Welcome

Present on Zoom: Nora Swisher, Anne Ambler, Kem Morawski, Rebecca Henson, Kristin Backert, Matt Boyer, Melissa Schweisguth, Ben Simasek, Michael Evans.

2. Treasurer's report

The treasurer's report from Larry Hush shows a balance of \$8,183.97.

3. Social Media updates.

Nora made a new Twitter account for us. We now have accounts with Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook.

4. Hike updates.

We had three hikes. The weather was hot but the hikes went well and we had a good handful of people for each. There was feedback that people were interested in doing more hikes in the fall when the weather is cooler. Anyone who wants to lead a hike, please do. Let Anne know the date and time so she can get it on our website.

5. Story of Streams.

Eliza Cava of the Audubon Naturalist Society (ANS) launched the "Story of Streams" near Adelphi Mill on the banks of NWB on August 10. Nora, Anne, and Kem attended. The three streams that were studied were Holmes Run, Oxon Run and Northwest Branch. There is a video on Facebook and information on our website about the report. It was also mentioned on NPR. No one has used the "take action" button on the report yet.

Eliza offered to do a presentation at one of our fall meetings, probably November. ANS will have a special zoom webinar later this month.

6. Werrlein's Suffrage Point issue.

NNWB did sign on to a letter for the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) along with Sustainable Hyattsville and the Anacostia Riverkeeper. It was sent to MDE secretary Horacio Tablada.

7. **Next meeting/Miscellaneous**

Ben's clean-up will be Sunday, September 18th.

There will also be a clean-up on Oct. 22

Anne would like to transfer the Zoom account to Nora but apparently that doesn't work and to add her to the account costs money. The subscription runs out the end of January. We could then change the name on the account or start a new account.

The next meeting is October 4th which is the first day of Yom Kippur so it will just be a board meeting and we will most likely have a special program for our meeting on November 1st.

8. **Future hike proposals**

Anne proposed 1. an Olney/Sandy Spring Underground RR hike, 2. Start from Poplar Run wetland, across NWB, north on NWB trail a mile, return to starting point, 3. Kemp Mill trailhead, south to Colesville circuit hike around 6 miles. [This could also start and end at Burnt Mills West.]

Listening Session

For the rest of the meeting we held a listening session to see what members of the NNWB were interested in/had to say.

Nora had us take a poll about **how we engage** with the NWB:

1. Trails and parks (hiking, picnicking, recreation)
2. Volunteer events (stream clean ups, weed warrior)
3. Advocacy (sign petitions, write letters, call representatives)
4. Helping from home (e.g. rain barrels or gardening for wildlife)
5. Education (hands on learning in the stream or our zoom webinars)
6. Citizen Science (water quality monitoring, salt watch, creek critters)

The poll results among the 13 people that took it was:

1st: 1. Trails/parks

2nd: 2. Volunteer events

3rd: 5. Education and 6. Citizen Science

4th: 3. Advocacy and 4. Helping from home

When asked about **availability** for events (weekends morning/afternoon, weekdays morning/afternoon), the poll showed most people were available weekend mornings with a few available weekend afternoons. There were several who were either retired or on different schedules who said they were available any of these times depending on their schedules.

When asked what people would like to **learn more about**, the answers were:

Water quality

Anacostia watershed, pollution and helping with it, and becoming a weed warrior.

The entire Anacostia, native plants/invasives

How the ICC impacted the watershed

A wider/more long term history of the stream (impact of humans, and preservation/conservation attempts.

Whether the Burnt Mills Dam could be used for sediment control by digging out decades of deposited sediment.

What is the ideal/healthiest state for the plant/animal ecosystems? (which species do we want to see in abundance and which not at all?)

Stormwater runoff (people's solutions are to put in hard surfaces/extend pipes to send water to downhill neighbors/streams and cause erosion)

When asked to talk about various **topics of interest** people mentioned:

Bluebird programs/boxes

Clean-up participation

Safety on trails

Hard to find out about NNWB (is it possible to give out pamphlets at clean ups/events? Posts on neighborhood listservs?)

Alert NNWB to problems/trash build up along NWB

Rachel Carson house and possibility of reblazing the trail to it

Creative project involving yard dramas and creation of puppets with recorded voices inside.

Miscellaneous Items:

Advocate reblazing of Rachel Carson trail?

Research listservs to get the word out about NNWB? Make sure pamphlets about NNWB are available for give out at our upcoming clean-ups/hikes?