

BALLSTON BEAVER POND MEETING #1 – FEBRUARY 24, 2011

Notes From Break-Out Group Discussions

1. *What do you currently value about the pond?*
 - That it is there, and is nice green space to enjoy
 - Stormwater mitigation
 - Wildlife viewing
 - Enjoy the openness
 - A good lunch time destination
 - It is a good stopover for migratory birds

2. *How do you currently use the pond and its surrounding area, and how do you see other people using it?*
 - Walk the perimeter
 - Jogging and biking
 - Dog walkers
 - Walk there during lunch or in the evening (no other uses were described)
 - Some people misuse as a hangout with drinking
 - Occasional use by homeless

3. *What would you like to see improved about the pond/its surroundings?*
 - Visitor- friendly parking
 - Making more accessible and pedestrian-friendly for access from Ballston and other parts of the area
 - Improve the limited access
 - Create marshy area, like Huntley Meadows, with boardwalk observation
 - Turn green “lawn” area along Washington Blvd. into parking
 - Remove trash from the pond or install something to collect it
 - Nothing to see/no reason to go there, no incentive to go there in winter
 - Needs a landmark to identify location of pond or better signage
 - Want to see pond from bike trail, but screen from Rt. 66
 - Zoning – not designated as a park but it’s being managed as a park
 - What about the name?
 - Historically called Beaver Pond but few beavers there
 - “Ballston Pond” may be more appropriate
 - How about calling it a “wetland”?
 - Incorporate its function to improve water quality

- Would like to go deeper into pond area – more immersive experience like boardwalk at Roosevelt Island
- Sound of water/shielded from sound of Route 66
- What are costs? Maintenance must be included in budget
 - Approach owners of adjacent buildings – possible funding source
- Could there be some agreement with adjacent property owners for limited short term parking?
- Want bike racks, encourage casual bike riders (slower)
- Diminish the gnats and mosquitoes during the summer
- Introduce bats to control insect populations
- Better access to pond from the North Side Trail (Bluemont)
- Provide places to see the pond from the North Side Trail (Bluemont)
- Apply some Low Impact Development techniques in the area (small demonstration projects)

4. *What would you not want to see changed in this area?*

- Keep/enhance wildlife
- Keep it natural, limit active recreation
- Make sure that we do not hurt the wildlife during construction. Relocate if necessary
 - Volunteers can help collect wildlife to relocate before construction
- One stated goal should be: No flood impacts downstream
- Will boardwalks scare away wildlife?

5. *What interpretive opportunities might we consider here, including any good ideas that you have seen used elsewhere?*

- General signage in area that points out pond
- Look at Huntley Meadows for access and interpretation
- Look at interpretive signage at Sparrow Pond on W&OD trail
- Explain the basics – Whys and wherefores
- Old photos and history of the area and the creation of the pond
- Signage showing resident animal species
- Signage from Custis bike trail
- Like idea of connecting to Lubber Run signage to show how its connected to stream systems

- Incorporate educational elements
 - Video (promotional)
 - Field trips
 - Website – community forum
 - Bulletin Board
- Interpretation Opportunities
 - What is a wetland?
 - History – development of site
 - What is a watershed? – consequences/effects
 - Riser/level control and litter removal – should be seen and interpreted
 - Solar power interpretive element – speaker box
- Add drainage stickers to the inlets in the watershed that drain to the pond to educate people about where the water goes
- Would like an information/fact sheet about the history of the pond and wildlife; something similar existed several years ago
- Show history of the Run for the Wetlands that was a fund raiser for 10 years. Show US Fish and Wildlife Office in Ballston involvement from a few years ago.
- Add a flood gauge near the riser to show depth of water in the pond during different storm events, or different times of the year.