**Potomac Watershed Partners Information Exchange**

Submitted by Heather Montgomery
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The Potomac Watershed Partnership (PWP)—a collaborative effort among federal, state, and local partners to restore the health of the land and waters of the Potomac River Basin—held its fourth biannual Information Exchange & Forum on December 10, 2008 at Pinecliff Park in Frederick, MD. Eighty participants attended the free event to learn more about Community & Urban Tree Canopy programs and Urban Low Impact Development Challenges & Solutions. The diverse audience included representatives from NGOs; local, state, and federal government; school districts; consulting firms; and watershed and forestry groups.

The morning session included brief presentations about tree canopy goal programs in Washington, DC; Fairfax County, Virginia; the City of Baltimore, Maryland; the Town of Leesburg, Virginia; and Frederick County (Maryland) Public Schools. Robert Corletta, Lead Urban Forester with the DC Urban Forestry Administration discussed the District of Columbia's comprehensive street tree inventory and advanced tree-monitoring program. Gary Barkdoll (Frederick County Public Schools) and Hugo Lam (Baltimore City Department of Recreation & Parks) shared the importance of partnerships and outreach in achieving tree canopy goal implementation. Jay Banks, the Town of Leesburg's Urban Forester, highlighted the important role that Home Owner Associations and private citizens can play in the preserving and increasing their community's tree canopy. Finally, Mike Knapp, Director of Fairfax County (VA) Urban Forest Management Division presented on the importance of tree conservation legislation in preserving and increasing Fairfax County's tree canopy. An extensive Q&A session concluded the morning's community & urban tree canopy program panel discussion.

The afternoon panel session was focused on Challenges and Solutions related to Urban Low Impact Development. Jennifer Bitting with the Low Impact Development Center introduced DC's cutting-edge Nannie Hellen Burroughs "Green Street" project. She described how the roadway project has incorporated a variety of Low Impact Development Best Management Practices (including permeable pavers, rain gardens, vegetated filter strips, and more) to treat and manage storm water runoff within the public right-of-way. Greg Hoffman, Senior Engineer with the Center for Watershed Protection, discussed both the challenges of LID retrofits as well as strategies for successfully establishing LID retrofits: set reasonable goals; choose smart locations and practices; create a retrofit inventory; and think creatively when it comes to funding! Participants again had the opportunity to have questions answered following the panel presentations.

One of the most beneficial aspects of the Information Exchange & Forum was the great opportunity for participants to network and gain insight into the numerous restoration, conservation, and policy efforts that are occurring throughout the Potomac watershed. During the PWP Forum, each participant had an opportunity to share recent successes and ongoing project

updates. It was inspiring to hear about all of the work that is going into protecting and improving the health of the Potomac watershed and ultimately the Chesapeake Bay.

All PWP Information Exchange & Forum participants also enjoyed lunch catered by Frederick Coffee Company & Café.

The Potomac Watershed Partnership, coordinated by Potomac Conservancy, continues to be generously supported by the US Forest Service. It is one of the last remaining active, large-scale restoration partnerships created through a US Forest Service Initiative in 1999.

For more information about the Potomac Watershed Partnership, please visit www.potomacwatershed.org or contact PWP Coordinator Heather Montgomery (montgomery@potomac.org).