

MEETING NOTES
of the
STORMWATER STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SSAC)
Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government (LFUCG)

Meeting: September 5, 2025
Time of Meeting: 9:00 a.m.
Location of Meeting: Phoenix Building – 3rd Floor Conference Room

Attendees:

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Jason Ainslie – North Elkhorn Watershed At-Large
Doug Burton – LFUCG Division of Engineering
Jennifer Carey – LFUCG Division of Environmental Services
Ken Cooke – Friends of Wolf Run
Steve Garland – East Hickman Watershed At-Large
Jim Griggs – Boone Creek Watershed At-Large
Amy Sohner – Chair, Bluegrass Greensource
Russ Turpin – Wolf Run Watershed At-Large
Traci Wade – LFUCG Division of Planning (for Jim Duncan)
Jerry Weisenfluh – Kentucky River Watershed Watch

LFUCG STAFF AND REPRESENTATIVES

Denice Bullock – LFUCG Division of Water Quality
Chris Chaney – LFUCG Division of Planning
Sarah Donaldson - LFUCG Division of Environmental Services
Brooke Gray - LFUCG Division of Environmental Services
Gabe Hensley – LFUCG Division of Water Quality
Becky Irwin – LFUCG Division of Water Quality
Chase Jones – LFUCG Division of Water Quality
Greg Lubeck – LFUCG Division of Water Quality
Craig Morgan – LFUCG Division of Water Quality
Jennifer Myatt – LFUCG Division of Environmental Services
Mark Sanders – LFUCG Division of Water Quality
Councilman Dave Sevigny - Council District 10
Abby Terry – Tetra Tech, LFUCG MS4 Program Management
Richard Walker – Tetra Tech, LFUCG MS4 Program Management
Bailee Young – LFUCG Division of Water Quality

OTHER ATTENDEES

Ashfaq Ahmad – UK Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering
Chase Azevedo - Georgetown Municipal Water and Sewer Service
Sara Bell - Bluegrass Greensource
Eileen Burk – Kentucky American Water
Jacob Crouch – Stantec
Jerry Davis – Friends of Wolf Run
Andrea Drayer – UK KWRI
Pace Cook Emmons – WaterwaysLex
Adam Garner – Stantec
Don Hill – Fayette County Neighborhood Council
Ben Krebs – Georgetown Municipal Water and Sewer Service
Nathan Krebs – Stantec
Kevin Lewis – UK EQIM
Tom Lowe – Baptist Health
Doug McClaren – McConnell Springs
Richard McClure – UK FM
Rick Mummery – EA Partners
John Pike – Palmer/HCC
Heather Silvanik - Fayette County Conservation District
Rebecca Stay – Strand Associates
Brian Stephens, Ball Homes
Audrey Suit – Beaver Creek Hydrology
Steve Vogel – Strand Associates

Sarah Ward - Fayette County Conservation District

Opening Remarks

Amy Sohner opened the March meeting at 9:00 a.m. and asked those in attendance to introduce themselves and their organization when speaking.

Approval of 03/03/2025 Minutes

Ms. Sohner asked if there were any additions or corrections to the March 3rd minutes. There were none.

A motion was made by Ken Cooke, seconded by Russ Turpin, and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the March 3, 2025, meeting.

Introduction to WaterwaysLex, Inc.

John Pike, Hickman Creek Conservancy presented a presentation to introduce WaterwaysLex, Inc., the newly formed volunteer-based organization for the Fayette County watersheds.

Hickman Creek Conservancy is a watershed volunteer-based organization that works within the East and West Hickman Creek areas. They work alongside other large watershed groups, such as Friends of Wolf Run (FOWR) and Neighbors United for South Elkhorn Creek (NUSEC) who are volunteer-based organizations for the Wolf Run Creek and the South Elkhorn areas. Only half the watersheds in Fayette County are represented by a group. Even though there is a lot of work being done among these groups, there is not much communication or collaboration between them. In speaking with Ken Cooke, FOWR, they realized even though each organization makes great efforts in their prospective watersheds, they are limited to those specific watersheds.

The first Bluegrass Watershed Summit was held on April 5, 2025, as a way to bring together people with expertise in their own fields to build something greater for water quality in Fayette County. The summit featured informative sessions, interactive workshops and networking opportunities, as well as professional network development, shared technology/methodology and creative ideas for watershed stewardship. At the end of the Summit, the groups came together to form WaterwaysLex as a way to represent and give all the watershed organizations and the people of Fayette County a voice.

WaterwaysLex mission statement is to restore and maintain the biological, chemical, and hydrologic integrity of central Kentucky waterways. Where Hickman Creek Conservancy, Friends of Wolf Run and Neighbors United for South Elkhorn Creek are limited to a particular watershed, WaterwaysLex represents all Fayette County watersheds.

WaterwaysLex officers

John Pike, President
Kelly Taylor, Vice President
Heather Silvanik, Treasurer
Pace Emmons, Secretary
Ken Cooke, former President

On July 24, 2025, the Water Quality Fees Board awarded WaterwaysLex, Inc., funding to follow through on the Action Plan items below:

1. Host the 2026 Watershed Summit
2. Provide Educational & Outreach - "table" at local events, including those sponsored by partner agencies, at festivals, neighborhood/homeowner association meetings, etc.
3. Conduct Stream Restoration Walks & Stream Cleanups - evaluations and monitoring of three (3) stream restoration projects.
4. WaterwaysLex Steering Committee - a multidisciplinary group serving as the policy-making arm of WaterwaysLex which will oversee the grant monitoring, reimbursement requests and reporting.

To get updates about the 2026 Watershed Summit; invite a member of the organization to an event; suggest a project for monitoring or learn about the Steering Committee, contact John Pike – jpik@palmernet.com and/or Pace Emmons – pace.waterwayslex@gmail.com.

Questions and comments –Doug McLaren, McConnell Springs, asked what the timeline for this project is to move forward.

Mr. Pike replied that it would depend on when they receive the Notice-to-Proceed. For example, if they receive it at the end of the year, then work would begin in the Spring, 2026. If they receive it in the Spring, 2026, then work would begin in the Fall, 2026.

Mr. Pike added that WaterwaysLex membership would consist of people who care about the quality of their watersheds and advocacy of volunteers, and he hopes to be able to collaborate with others in the future.

Ms. Sohner attended the Bluegrass Watershed Summit and said that the energy in the room was palpable; it was fun to see all of the people who attended the Summit, and it sparked a lot of innovation in the end.

Fayette County Conservation District's Backyard Conservation Program

Heather Silvanik presented a PowerPoint presentation on the Fayette County Conservation District's Backyard Conservation Program.

Soil and Water Conservation Districts were established in response to the Dust Bowl in the early 1930s. Recognizing the importance of promoting and supporting land conservation and management, the federal government took action. In Kentucky, there are 121 Conservation Districts, each operating locally with unique programs and educational initiatives tailored to the specific needs and requests of the county. Each Conservation District has an elected Board of Supervisors, and their collective mission is to offer customized financial and technical assistance to agricultural and silvicultural operations.

Urban Conservation – A crucial function of the conservation district lies in its role as an intermediary, connecting entities to provide both technical and financial assistance, alongside localized initiatives that draw inspiration from our federal and state partners. In 2019, the Fayette County Conservation District sought to expand its services to the urban area of the county, while continuing its growing support to the rural farm community. By 2023, more individual conservation projects were taking place inside the Urban Service Boundary, and the district had developed enough precedent to request a funding increase.

Backyard conservation is a nationally recognized community-based approach to implement various conservation practices that reduce non-point source pollution, conserve water resources, provide food, create wildlife habitat, and help manage stormwater. The Backyard Conservation Program offers a 50/50 reimbursement up to \$200.00 to assist Fayette County homeowners in establishing, enhancing, restoring and/or maintaining a backyard conservation project. Projects are intended to provide vital ecosystem services and enhance biodiversity, but also to improve the quality of life and community. This can create an atmosphere where people are directly involved in the decision-making about their daily lives, and understand what is taking place in their backyard as well as the neighborhoods.

Backyard Conservation Program eligible practices include:

- Food Production - raised bed and container gardens; plants and seeds; compost bins and greenhouses
- Soil Amendments – mulch; compost; vermiculture; fertilizer and conservation cover
- Small Animal – poultry; chicken coops; bees and beekeeping; and apiary supplies
- Lawn Diversification - native trees/shrubs; native pollinators; native grasses and rain gardens
- Wildlife Habitat - insect hotels; bat houses; nesting boxes and bird baths
- Low Impact Development - rainwater harvesting; rain barrels; permeable pavement and streambank stabilization

As it relates to water quality, Low Impact Development uses techniques to manage stormwater and improve water quality by mimicking natural processes. They reduce runoffs, recharge groundwater, and mitigate flooding. Lawn Diversification can boost water quality and ecosystem health. Mixing grasses, wildflowers, and native plants reduces the need for water and chemicals, supports wildlife, and improves soil. Soil Amendments can enhance water quality by improving soil health. They boost water retention and reduce runoff, enrich soil nutrients, and filter pollutants.

Applicants can apply in the spring and fall and may be approved within days of applying. The staff will send the applicant an approval letter outlining the program parameters that entail a 60-day deadline and a 60-day retroactivity period. The applicant must submit legible receipts and photos of completed projects within the set parameters. The Fayette County Conservation District's board and staff review individual projects and approve reimbursement by check. The next applications deadline is September 22, 2025. With priority given to those applicants, who pledge to plant native trees/shrubs, Fayette County Conservation District is offering a fall installment of the Backyard Conservation Program.

Since 2019, there has been an 82% project completion rate. The program has helped over 1,147 individuals with their projects, and has paid out \$188K in cost-share payments. This has resulted in an economic investment of \$412k. Past projects have included 802 food production and composting; 789 pollinator and wildlife support and 362 water harvesting and quality enhancement.

Backyard Conservation Program costs are around \$1,000 to contract a local graphic artist to create a recognizable image for program promotion. This includes print elements of the design on giveaway materials; enhances its visibility and appeal, drawing more interest and engagement and communicates the programs' values and themes. By investing in professional design, the promotional materials gain a polished and cohesive look, which can significantly boost the program's credibility and attract a wider audience.

Kentucky Conservation Districts have adopted their own version of a Backyard Conservation Program, aimed at encouraging residents to engage in sustainable practices right at home. These programs often include resources and workshops on topics such as native plant gardening, rainwater harvesting, and composting. The initiative not only enhances local biodiversity but also fosters a sense of community stewardship and environmental responsibility among participants.

Other Cost-Share Programs include:

- County Agricultural Investment Program (CAIP)
25%-75% Reimbursement up to \$4,000.00 to invest in Ag Diversification, Farm Infrastructure, Large Animal, Forage & Grain Improvement, Fencing, and more!*
- Soil Sample Voucher
Vouchers to fully fund up to 10 soil samples taken from Fayette County then submitted to the lab at the Fayette County Cooperative Extension office.
- Cover Crop
Reimbursement of \$22.00 an acre up to \$2,200.00 to provide incentive for planting a cover crop containing wheat, barley, and/or rye.*
- Dead Animals Removal
Reimbursement up to \$150.00 for properly disposing of dead livestock at a state-certified facility.
- Conservation Grant
\$2,000 award for projects that are a conservation, agricultural, or environmental education benefit to the county.
- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
Federal Cost Assistance to implement voluntary conservation practices with cropland, pastureland, and forestland.*
- Heavy Use Area
50% Reimbursement up to \$1,000.00 to repair gateways and other farm heavy use areas to control soil erosion by using non-woven geotextile and rock. *
- KY State Cost Share
75% Reimbursement up to \$20,00.00 for rotational grazing establishment, soil management, heavy use area protection, and more!*
- Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)
Federal Cost Assistance to maintain voluntary conservation practices with cropland, pastureland, and forestland.*

Items marked with an asterisk (*) require registration with the Farm Services Agency to participate in the program.

Contact information

Heather Silvanik
Director, Fayette County Conservation District
www.kyfccd.org
heather@kyfccd.com

Questions and comments – Jerry Weisenfluh, Kentucky River Watershed Watch, referenced Doug Tallamy, who is co-founder of the Backyard National Park concept or Homegrown National Park, and their goal to band communities together to support wildlife population and rebuild the ecosystem. He asked if the Fayette County Conservation District could encourage the applicants to list their projects on the Backyard National Park registry to show that their project is part of something larger.

Ms. Silvanik replied that it would be a great idea. One of the best parts of the project is the ownership that people will take on their individual spaces and the realization that their efforts can make an impact on something that is larger.

John Pike, Hickman Creek Conservancy, asked for examples of successful projects.

Ms. Silvanik said repeat applicants who are creating their own utopia in their backyards. This year over 30 rain gardens were created.

Ken Cooke, Friends of Wolf Run, asked, in terms of amending soil quality, what expertise the staff have either through Natural Resources Conservation Service or in-house soil scientists.

Ms. Silvanik said that the program relies heavily on their partners who consist of the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Division of Conservation, the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service and the most utilities in the urban service area are the Soil Sample Voucher Program. There has been an uptake in people who are interested in soil quality before they decide to grow anything in an area.

Mr. Cooke asked about nutrient management and what is done for Nitrogen and Phosphorus.

Ms. Silvanik indicated that the Cover Crop Program is an initiative that offers financial incentives and support to registered farms to participate in planting a cover crop containing wheat, barley, and/or rye. The Division of Conservation Management provides financial assistance to landowners for soil and water conservation programs. The Kentucky State Cost Share Program helps registered farms address existing soil erosion; water quality and other environmental problems associated with their farming.

Mr. Cooke asked if there is any opportunity to discuss nutrient management.

Ms. Silvanik replied that there will be an opportunity in October at the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Office. Paulette Akers will be speaking on nutrient management. This event will be RSVP only.

Russ Turpin asked how much of the past awards were funded by the county, federal and state governments.

Ms. Silvanik replied it is 100% millage tax.

Mr. Turpin then asked if those numbers are annual.

Ms. Silvanik replied since 2019. The next annual report will include 2025 figures.

Bailee Young asked if the soil sample data is open to the public.

Ms. Silvanik replied that the results are not public information due to personal information being listed.

Councilman Dave Sevigny asked since the millage tax was changed has that helped the program.

Ms. Silvanik replied it has doubled their operating budget, so they are allowed to have another full-time employee. On September 16th, they will be presenting to the Urban County Council about what is being done with their budget.

Ms. Sohner indicated that she had participated in the conservation program in the past. She added that Bluegrass Greensource sells rain barrels year-round. <https://bggreensource.org/what-you-can-do/water-quality-and-conservation/rain-barrels/>

Royal Springs Aquifer Introduction and Overview

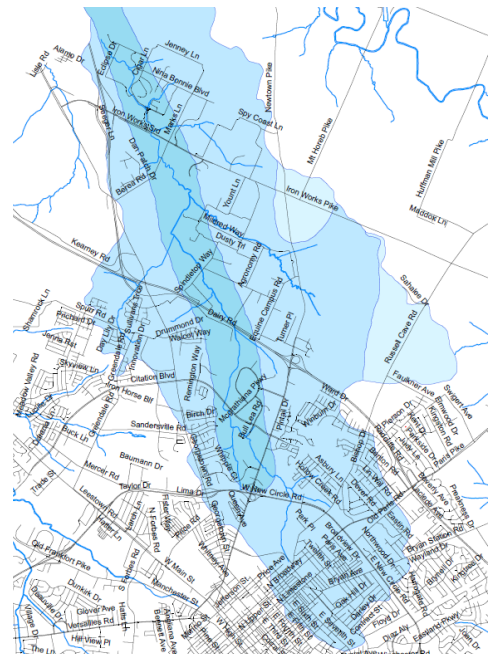
Ben Krebs and Chase Azevedo, Georgetown Municipal Water and Sewer Service presented an overview of the Royal Springs Wellhead Protection Program.

Royal Springs has been a major water source in Kentucky. It was utilized by early settlers in 1775 (John McClelland's party). It is one of Kentucky's largest natural springs. Royal Springs is in vulnerable karst geology. It allows rapid groundwater contamination, and it is the primary source of raw water for Georgetown Municipal Water and Sewer Service.

The Georgetown Municipal Water and Sewer Service treatment capacity is 4 million gallons per day, and it serves over 16,000 customers in the region.

The Royal Spring Wellhead Protection Plan was prepared by the Royal Spring Water Supply Protection Committee. It was adopted by the Planning Commissions in Fayette & Scott Counties; it was approved by KY Division of Water in August 2003; and is locally administered by the Royal Spring Water Supply Protection Committee.

The maps below show the boundary of the Royal Spring Aquifer Recharge Area. All development within this critical zone requires the Royal Spring Wellhead Protection Committee review.



Georgetown, KY Members

Lexington, KY Members

The Royal Spring Wellhead Protection Committee reviews all new developments and projects proposed within the Royal Spring Aquifer Recharge Area. In Lexington, the applicant will submit their proposal to the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government, Division of Planning, and in Georgetown, the applicant will submit their proposal to the Georgetown-Scott County Planning & Zoning. Those plans will then be forwarded or directly submitted to the Georgetown Municipal Water and Sewer Service.

The Royal Spring Wellhead Protection Committee will evaluate potential groundwater impacts then recommend findings that are then sent to appropriate planning agencies. Developers must implement that recommendation to address the Committee's concerns before those proposals are approved. Under 401 KAR 4:220 (KY Division of Water) the Committee can only make a recommendation; they cannot enforce that recommendation.

Types of plans that are reviewed include:

- Development Plans
- Subdivision Plats
- Construction Documents
- Stormwater Management Plans
- Groundwater Protection Plans
- Environmental Assessments

The Royal Spring Wellhead Protection Committee actions:

1. The committee carefully evaluates proposals for specific high-risk factors that could threaten Royal Spring water quality.
2. Each threat category has specific mitigation requirements based on the best scientific practices and regulatory standards.
3. Recommendations are made to the respective Planning and Zoning agencies.

The Royal Spring Wellhead Protection Committee primary threats:

1. Underground Fuel Storage - double containment, leak detection, and monitoring requirements.
2. Pervious Pavement Limitations - restrictions in high-risk areas to prevent direct infiltration.
3. Chemical Storage & Handling - containment systems, inventory reporting, spill prevention plans.
4. I-64 Corridor Spill Risk - enhanced emergency response protocols for transportation incidents.
5. Sanitary Sewer Overflows - infrastructure integrity assessments and overflow prevention.

Coordination with the Royal Spring Wellhead Protection Committee

- Section 1.5.13 of the LFUCG Stormwater Manual outlines the requirements for new developments within the Royal Spring Wellhead Protection Area. These requirements are designed to address groundwater protection concerns and protect the Royal Spring aquifer from contamination.

Notification and Presentation

- Notify the Committee and Division of Planning that the site is in the WPA.
- Present the stormwater management plan to the Committee if requested

Stormwater Design Requirements

- Include controls to treat runoff for contaminants like chemicals and fuels
- Design spill containment for high-risk areas
- File a Groundwater Protection Plan if contaminated thresholds are met

The future Actions of the Royal Spring Wellhead Protection Committee:

- Project Review
 - Develop a written policy
 - Develop a pre-submission checklist
- Committee Support Services
 - Retain consultant that specializes in groundwater protection
 - Consultant services are billed to developer

Questions and comments – Eileen Burk, Kentucky American Water, asked if there has been protection for phosphorus and is that a concern for the upcoming regulations.

Mr. Azevedo replied they have received funding to help bring Georgetown in compliance by the regulatory deadline.

Pace Cook Emmons, WaterwaysLex, asked if Georgetown had jurisdiction over state road projects.

Mr. Krebs indicated those projects do not come through the Georgetown-Scott County Planning & Zoning Offices.

Ken Cooke, Friend of Wolf Run, asked what efforts are being made about the permanent discharges from Spindletop-Ponderosa Mobile Home Park in Georgetown.

Mr. Azevedo said over the past 6 years the staff has worked to connect the mobile home parks to the sanitary sewer system.

Mr. Cooke asked if the connection to the sanitary sewer system has promoted development.

Mr. Azevedo said that the City of Georgetown wants to retain the greenbelt between Lexington and Georgetown. If that area is opened to sewer infrastructure the concern for uncontrolled growth for that area exists. As an engineer, the area would be constructed for ultimate capacity for the future, but city officials will control the growth of an area based on limiting the infrastructure size.

Regarding the rejection of the previous pavement in the watershed, Mr. Cooke asked if the City of Georgetown has any record of the science or data that was used to make those decisions published or if any examples are available to the public for review.

Mr. Azevedo said that the recommendation came from specific events where the contamination was traced back to its origin. He does not believe there would be any specific data for those events.

Mr. Krebs gave an example of an accidental spill in a large pervious parking lot.

James Griggs asked if the Bluegrass Stockyard is monitored.

Mr. Krebs said that the Bluegrass Stockyard and the Georgetown staff worked together on the design at the beginning, but the facility is not monitored by the Georgetown staff. They are assuming that Lexington staff are monitoring the facility.

Gabe Hensley, DWQ, Compliance and Monitoring (C&M), explained that the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government, Division of Water Quality has a program for industrial and high-risk commercial stormwater runoff, which is part of the MS4 Permit. The Bluegrass Stockyard is listed on the city's inventory and reviewed by the state. The facility does have an agriculture exemption and is not eligible for the Kentucky Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit. When comparing the older property to the newer property, the Bluegrass Stockyard has installed more BMPs on their current property versus to what they had when they were on Town Branch. The C&M section monitors and inspects the Bluegrass Stockyard on a regular basis.

Mr. Azevedo said that the Georgetown Program that is mandated and approved by the Kentucky Division of Water, was drafted as such to only give Georgetown the reviewing authority, to make any recommendations as needed, not a regulatory authority for compliance and monitoring.

Proposed Manual Updates Workgroup Overview

Bailee Young, MS4 Section Manager, gave a brief overview of the Manual Updates Workgroup that was held on August 30th. There will be another workgroup with green infrastructure emphasis. There will continue to be discussions which will be reported back to the Stormwater Stakeholder Advisory Committee in the future.

Approval of Meeting Dates for 2026:

March 6th
June 5th
Sept 4th
Dec 4th

A motion was made by Ms. Carey; seconded by Councilman Seigny, and carried unanimously to accept the 2026 meeting dates.

Potential Topics for the Next Meeting

Ken Cooke, Friends of Wolf Run, suggested a presentation on the implementation of the Green Infrastructure Plan and the lessons learned from it. He also suggested hearing from the inspectors who are inspecting the facilities, and the development community inspectors who are implementing the plan for the facilities.

Ms. Young said that the staff has been discussing a green infrastructure focus at the December Workshop with the Engineering, Development and Construction Industry.

Announcements

September 6th - Kentucky River Watershed Walk

September 22nd - Wolf Run Watershed Council Meeting

Sept 22-26th - Stormwater Awareness Week

October 9th - Water Quality Fees Board meeting

October 10-19th – Tree Week

Oct 17th - Art by Nature: Rooted in time opening reception (open through Dec 13 at the Living Arts and Science Center)

October 18th – TreeVangelist Training

October 18th - Household Hazardous Waste Collection – 1631 Old Frankfort Pike

Nov 28th - Gobble Grease Toss

December 5th – Next SSAC Meeting

December 19th – Workshop with the Engineering, Development, and Construction Industry

March 21-27th – Seventh Annual Water Week.

Stormwater Stakeholder Advisory Committee meetings can be viewed on LexTV.

Adjournment

The meeting concluded at 10:03 a.m.