

Responses of Jeff McKay, Chairman Candidate mckayforchairman.com

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Watershed Questions to Fairfax County Supervisor Candidates – 2019 – Jeff McKay

1. Resource Protection Areas and floodplains delineated along our streams and rivers are designed to limit erosion and protect our citizens from flooding. Yet these undeveloped protected zones offer a tempting target for developers hungry for low-cost alternatives to redeveloping in built-up locations. What can Fairfax County do to maintain protections along our waterways intact?

RPA policy is a key tool in ensuring that development is kept at a safe distance from our streams and waterways. If development was suggested in any given RPA, the developer would have to request a waiver. A waiver to build in an RPA should only be granted in very rare and extremely unusual circumstances.

2. Conservation corridors permit genetic flow of flora and fauna species between habitat areas, helping to prevent localized extinctions. What can Fairfax County do to preserve and enhance conservation corridors on county property, in county projects, and on private property?

Resource Protection Areas and Conservation Corridors are extremely important in preserving our local environment. As stewards of public land, I believe it is the government's responsibility to be a leader in environmental protection. One specific and important example of RPA preservation is the necessity for the highest standard of erosion and sediment control design and implementation. If elected Chair, I commit to increasing our tree canopy through preservation and planting.

3. Fairfax County recently adopted the Fairfax Green Initiatives to address climate change. Yet every day, trees, Nature's simplest carbon sequestration device, are sacrificed in favor of asphalt which increases heat island effect. This is often done in the name of other environmental goals, such as bicycle paths or stormwater ponds. What can Fairfax County do to reverse the trend of tree cover loss?

There are several ways by which I would like to preserve our tree canopy and native habitats. One way is to work closely with our Tree Commission. As a citizen board, it is comprised of advocates and passionate expert volunteers. They have been tasked by the Board of Supervisors to advise them on the preservation and planting of (native) vegetation and to provide leadership in educating County residents and elected officials about the objectives and methods of tree conservation. I would also like to see the implementation of more policies that would help eliminate nonnative and intrusive species.

Land use and development also play a critical in tree preservation. They also are key in restoring and increasing our canopy. For example, the Route One Corridor was mostly developed prior to any ecological, tree preservation practices even before BMP stormwater quality and retention requirements were in place. With the Embark revitalization process, there is a great amount of anticipation for modern redevelopment. If elected as Chair, I will work hard to make sure that areas such as Route One that were once covered by asphalt will now be brought up to today's standards that better protect our environment.

Here in Lee District, we recently decided to remove a planned asphalt bicycle trail through Huntley Meadows Park that would have had substantial impacts to the tree canopy and

environment as a whole. Alternative, less intrusive routes are now being explored. Additionally, the County is taking a more holistic approach to stormwater management as it relates to the Embark planning process. I am leading an effort for the County to go above and beyond the standards proposed by VDOT for stormwater management, as Fairfax County must be a leader in the region for environmental best-practices. Lastly, the Board of Supervisors codified a 30-year Tree Action Plan in 2007. The goal is to increase Fairfax County's tree cover to 45% by the year 2037. I applaud this goal and played part in setting that goal during my very first year serving on the Board. I will say however, that I would also like to see more short-term goals and bench marks in order to track our progress.

4. In 2012 Fairfax County successfully sued the EPA to prevent implementation of a proposed TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load) plan to reduce sediment and erosion in Accotink Creek. A revised TMDL plan for Accotink Creek was approved in 2017. How can Fairfax County avoid further delay and move forward with meaningful actions to return Accotink Creek and similar impaired streams to health?

I would strongly support fixing Lake Accotink and ensuring the lake is a treasure for the next generation. Lake Accotink Park is a County jewel and needs to be preserved and maintained not only for its visitors and patrons, but for the fragile and precious flora and fauna that call the park home.

As far as reducing sediment and erosion, I was a proud supporter of the stormwater tax that has been used for many improvements. That being said, we must be tougher on VDOT in the future and also educate residents on our global impact to these issues. For the longer term, Lake Accotink needs not only repair, but serious upgrades upstream to reduce runoff and sedimentation.

5. Fairfax County is pursuing a program of stream restoration projects to reduce stream erosion. Yet the cause of the erosion lies not in the streams, but in upland built-up areas. How can Fairfax County directly address the excessive runoff from paved surfaces that is the prime cause of stream erosion?

Similar to the last question, this is a problem from decades of unchecked development without the benefit of modern stormwater management and policies. So many streams in our County have erosion problems due to stormwater runoff. That is why I supported making the hard decision of allocating an additional penny on our tax bills to stormwater projects. We are gaining ground but there is still so much work to do. Both the private and public sector need to work together to solve this problem.

6. The future of Lake Accotink is being decided now. Sediment buildup from excessive erosion is accumulating in Lake Accotink at a rate that will require either costly dredging projects every 15 years or the removal of the dam, allowing the sediment to pass downstream. What is your position on the future of Lake Accotink?

Again, I would like to see Lake Accotink repaired now and a longer-range plan to dredge and prevent the lake from experiencing the same problem. It's also important that we take a hard look at sediment sources upstream and aggressively plan ways to prevent accumulation in the lake in the future.

7. Streams in Fairfax County are plagued by accumulations of immortal plastic trash that originates on paved surfaces and flows down storm drains. Can Fairfax County lead by example by

