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***NEIGHBORHOODS COLLABORATE TO ADDRESS FLOODING PROBLEMS***

FAIRFAX County, VA (May 17, 2007) – Nearly four years after controversy erupted over a proposal to cut down 4.5 acres of trees to build a stormwater retention pond system on the site of the Poplar Heights Recreation Association’s community pool property, the Fairfax County neighborhoods of Falls Hills and Poplar Heights have reached consensus on a plan designed to address house, road, and yard flooding as well as erosion and water quality issues in the two communities.

The consensus, presented to Providence District Supervisor Linda Smyth on May 3, includes site-specific project recommendations, such as re-routing an existing storm sewer and installing permeable paving material on a school parking lot, as well as lot-level stormwater management techniques, such as rain gardens, cisterns, tree- and native vegetation-plantings, that will require the participation of private property owners throughout the sub-watershed.

When Supervisor Smyth took office in January 2004, the original stormwater retention pond proposal had pitted the upstream neighborhood of Falls Hills against the downstream neighborhood of Poplar Heights, and – like the stormwater – emotions were running high. Smyth and Board of Supervisors Chair Gerry Connolly worked with the Fairfax County Department of Public Works and Environmental Services and with RESOLVE, a non-profit environmental dispute resolution organization based in Washington, DC, to convene a group of homeowners, civic associations, the Providence District Supervisor’s office, the City of

Falls Church, and local, regional, County and State conservation, stormwater, and transportation agencies to explore the full menu of stormwater management options.

The Falls Hills-Poplar Heights Stormwater Action Committee (SAC) began meeting in September 2005. “RESOLVE was able to provide a citizen-oriented as opposed to government-oriented structure,” explains Smyth, “in which fair, civil, and informed discussions could take place.”

“Hundreds of hours [were] invested in task force meetings, education sessions, analyses of complex data, neighborhood walk-throughs, public meetings, and conference calls,” say SAC participant Victor Klingelhofer and Stormwater Steering Committee member Pat Tiller. “Make no mistake about it, a true collaboration is time-consuming... but in this instance, we believe it has worked to our neighborhoods’ advantage.”

Smyth hopes that implementing the SAC’s recommendations will not only resolve local flooding problems, but will help the County identify retrofits and low-impact design (LID) technologies that can be used effectively in other parts of the county as well. County staff are looking for ways to incorporate SAC recommendations into the county’s FY 2008 stormwater work plan. “It fits in with some of the things we’re trying to do county-wide,” says Fairfax County Stormwater Management Director Randy Bartlett, who notes that the County is currently monitoring the effectiveness of a recently-installed permeable pavement at the Providence District office site.

**About RESOLVE, Inc.**

Founded in 1977, RESOLVE, Inc. is a national leader and innovator in building consensus and collaborative capacity to address public policy disputes. RESOLVE’s results-oriented Rivers and Watersheds Team is committed to helping design and support collaborative approaches to address issues related to watershed planning and restoration, water quality, and water supply, quantity and storage. For more information, visit [www.resolv.org](http://www.resolv.org).