Annual Report on the Environment and Other Environmental Topics

Environmental Quality Advisory Council (EQAC)

February 24, 2026



Agenda

- ARE* identified priorities
- Legislative priorities
- 2026 proposed topics
- Discussions and questions



- *The **Policy Plan review** has prompted **much more coordination** by EQAC with the Planning Commission, Tree Commission, Park Authority and Transportation Advisory Commission.*
- *EQAC sought to **build agreement and promote consistent language** in conveying priorities and recommendations.*
- *The ARE includes **17 recommendations** of which **9 are new** and **4 have been recommendations for four or more years***

*Annual Review of the Environment

Priorities

Climate and Resilience

- **Seek to maintain progress** for the Community-Wide Energy and Climate Action Plan (CECAP) and Resilient Fairfax, *especially given Federal cuts to climate programs*.

Data Centers

- **Develop a plan for data centers** that mitigates impacts to local residents, supports progress towards carbon neutrality, and avoids unacceptable impacts to water resources.

Smart Growth

- **Support "Smart Growth"** to encourage businesses and high-density residential developments, to locate along public and non- motorized transportation corridors (e.g., Metrorail).

Priorities (continued)

Zero Waste

- **Support a** county-wide **zero waste plan and** its **implementation.**

Transportation

- **Support Transit-oriented development** and the use of **public transit** (and other relevant efforts) to reduce the need for single occupancy vehicle trips.

Heat Islands and Trees

- **Enhance the tree canopy in high-density residential and commercial areas,** especially along transit corridors, and where mitigating actions will also offer co-benefits like an improved quality of life, mental health, and community aesthetics.

Legislative priorities

Data Centers

- **Planning** to reduce impacts to residents.

Forever Chemicals

- **Ban the use of Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances** (PFAS) in consumer products.

Organic Waste Composting

- **Support legislation to facilitate** the **composting** of organic waste (e.g., food).

Single use plastic bag ban

- The 5-cent tax on single use plastic bags is insufficient to deter use. A **ban** would be more effective and is important to reducing plastic bags in the environment.

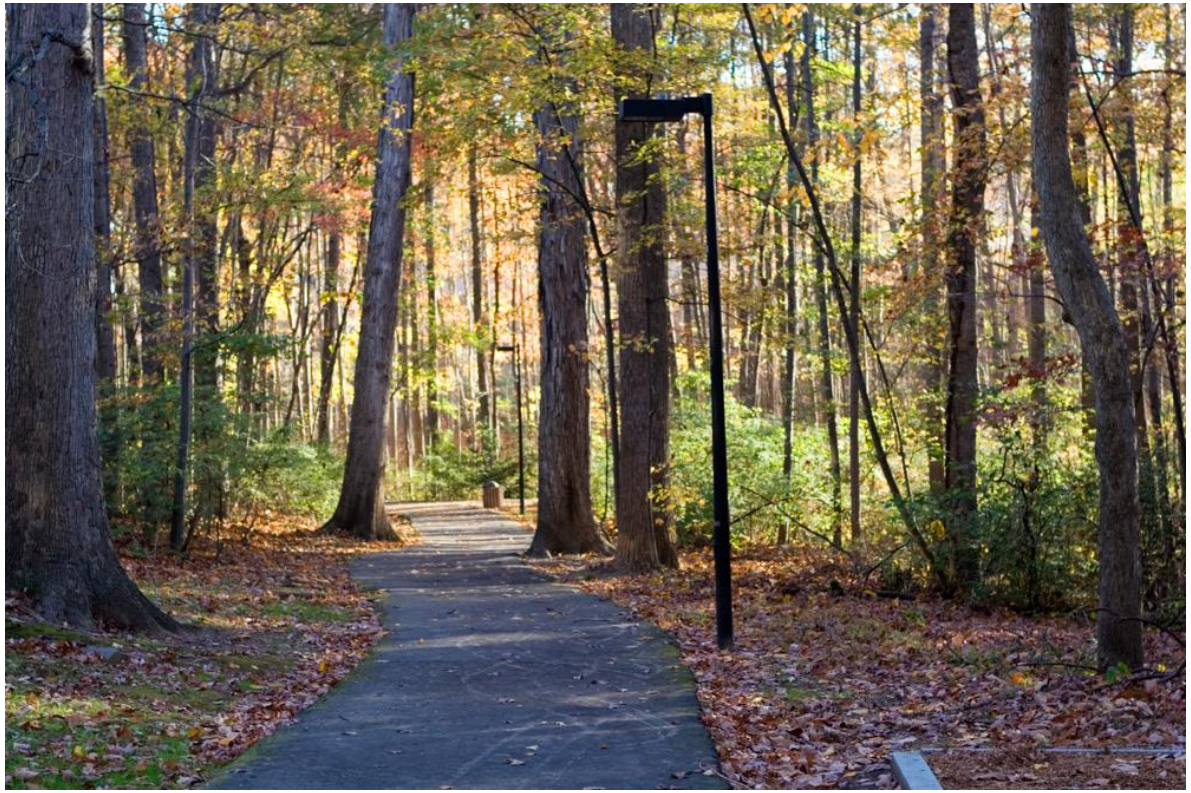
Legislative priorities (continued)

Building energy efficiency

- The Commonwealth should either **adopt stronger energy efficiency standards** or **permit local jurisdictions to do so**.

Solar Energy

- **Support legislation** that will allow local governments to **require solar energy** on parking lots and buildings.



2026 Proposed environmental topics

- **Smart growth**
- **Climate**
  - CECAP
  - Resilient Fairfax
  - Clean Air Partners Heat islands/VDOT guidance and FCDOT practices
- **Data centers**
- Budget recommendations
- Comprehensive Plan update
- Legislative recommendations
- Park Authority coordination

Smart growth *and the impact of infill include the following:*

- *Occoquan water quality*
- *Water availability*
- *Salt, PFAS and other contaminants*
- *Development in the RPA*
- *Transportation and housing*
- *Environmental justice*
- *Watershed Plans*
- *Road congestion and quality of life*
- *Pollutant emissions (air, land and water)*

2026 Proposed role focus

Act as independent advisor

- Fairfax County EQAC provides informed, independent environmental advice to the Board of Supervisors to promote sound decision-making
- Analogous to external auditor

Promote coordination of environmental touchpoints

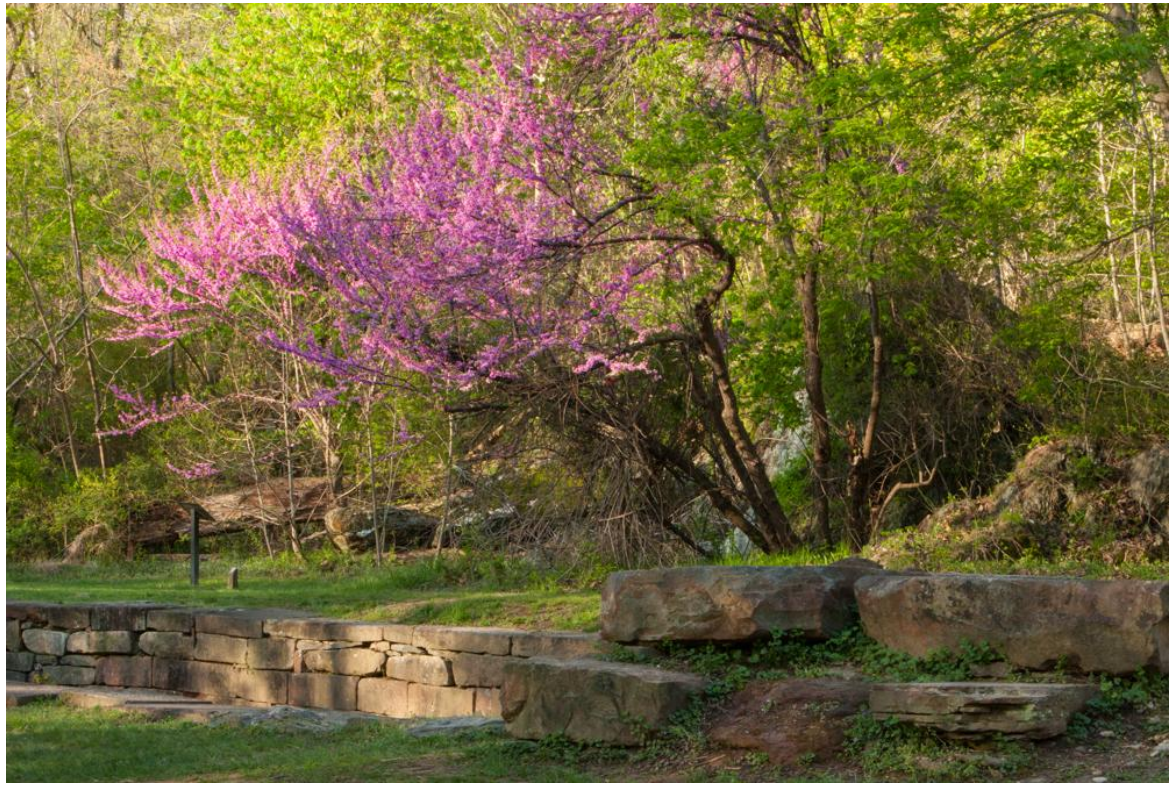
- Catalogue where/what/who touches on environmental matters and decision making withing the county
- Partner with other BACs to promote consistency and maximize voice and impact

Support community involvement on environmental matters

- Identify environmental areas where community involvement can best be used to advance priorities
- Provide simplified language and top priorities for broader community action
- Identify ways to expand community understanding and involvement

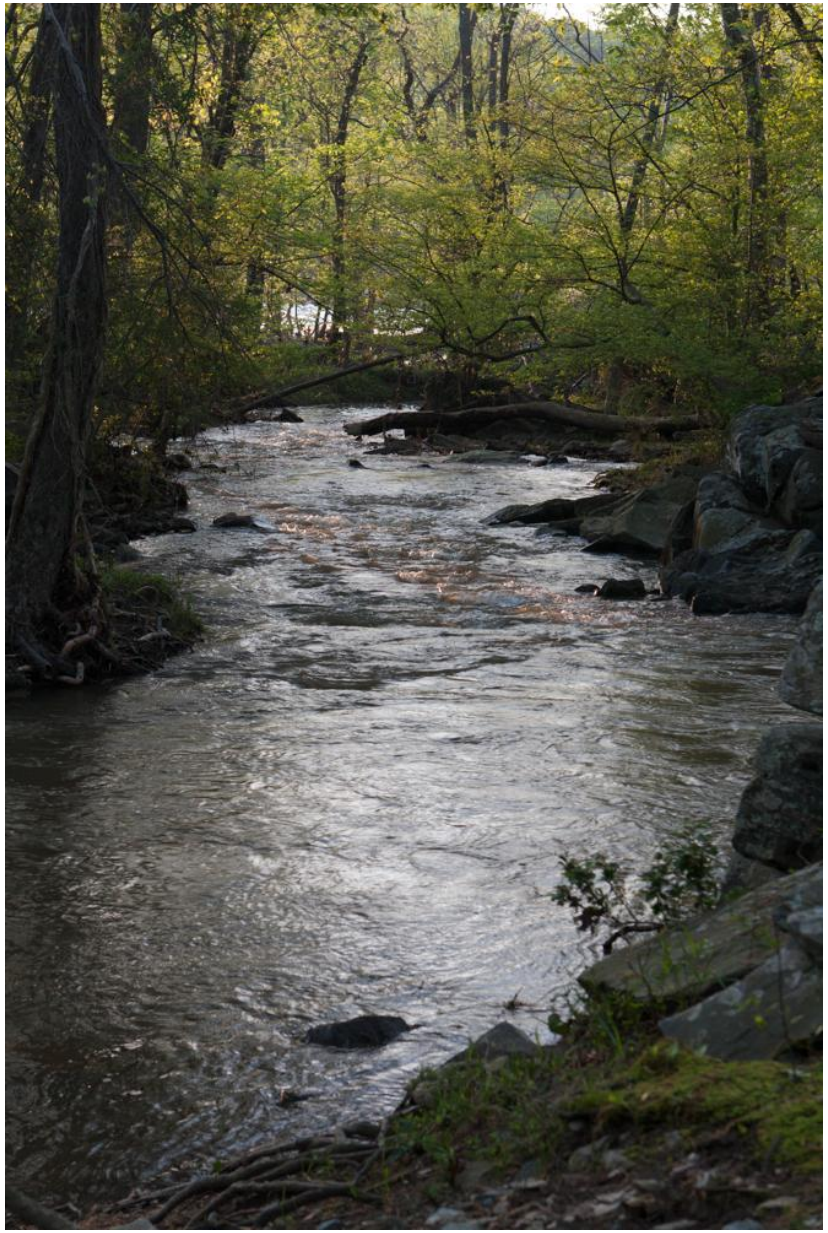
District Representation

District	Member
At Large	Eric Goplerud, Vice-Chair
At Large	Kersey Manliclic
At Large	Andreana Jinjue Lin
At Large	Alexis Dickerson
Braddock	Bryan Campbell
Dranesville	Kenneth Gubin
Hunter Mill	Kenneth Lanfear, ARE Editor
Franconia	Johna Gagnon
Mason	Vacant
Mount Vernon	Larry Zaragoza, Chair
Providence	Kathryn Alsegaf
Springfield	Clyde Wilber
Student Member	Nishka Shah
Sully	Richard Weisman



Special thanks

- Maggie Beetstra, Kelly Zitzer, Matthew Meyers, and John Morrill (OEEC)
- Supervisor/Congressman Walkinshaw and Andrea Lewis
- Ken Lanfear, 2025 EQAC Vice Chair and Photographer
- Supervisors, you are the ones whose support implements our recommendations



Discussion and Questions

