

Fauquier Times

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TIMES STAFF PHOTO/ROBIN EARL

Fauquier Springs Country Club golf course superintendent Ed Evers is flanked by members Dan Weber and Bob Dyer on a small bridge over Barrows Run, a stream that runs through FSCC property. The vegetation on either side of the stream has been allowed to grow a little "wild."

They speak for the trees

Fauquier Springs golf course implements sustainable initiatives

By Robin Earl
TIMES STAFF WRITER

Ed Evers, superintendent of Fauquier Springs Country Club's golf course, has invented a new meaning for the term "rough," when it comes to golf. The course has shifted from manicured to managed this year, allowing more no-mow areas to go natural. It's good for the environment, he said, and it's good for the course.

A tour of the 400 or so acres of the course reveals some areas where the grass is taller, the flora more diverse, especially alongside streams and river banks. Evers said that the natural barriers serve to slow down rainwater as it travels from the course to the water, al-

lowing it to seep into the ground to be naturally filtered before entering the streams or the water table.

As Evers drove the course in one of 50 electric golf carts Friday, he pointed out where the course has been allowed to "go more natural." "We have about doubled the no-mow area this year," he said.

Although the layout of the course looks like it just grew that way, the places where the vegetation is thicker and taller are carefully planned to provide new golfing challenges for members, as well as natural water filters and habitat for the wildlife that makes its home on the course — like deer, fox and geese.

See **GOLF**, Page 4

Town council names Brandie Schaeffer Warrenton town manager

Staff Reports

The Warrenton Town Council voted Tuesday night to name Brandie Schaeffer the new town manager. Schaeffer has been interim town manager since Jan. 1, when Edward "Bo" Tucker stepped down from that role.

Schaeffer has a bachelor's degree in public administration from Texas State University, and a master's degree in urban planning from Virginia Tech.

After moving to Warrenton six years ago, Schaeffer was placed on the Warrenton Planning Commission and began her service to the town. She said that she was working as a private consultant at the time, and that service on the planning commission gave leadership confidence that she could lead positive change.

When the community development director position became available, she applied. "The opportunity to work and make a difference in my own town really appealed to me," she said. She served in that position for two years.

Since taking on the role of interim town manager, Schaeffer has guided town council members through a complicated budget process. Members of council have expressed their appreciation to Schaeffer for her clear presentations that made it easier for them to see their options. They have said they appreciate her rigorous analysis of finances and creative solutions.



BRANDIE SCHAEFFER

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Fauquier Springs golf course implements sustainable initiatives

GOLF, from Page 1

Evers points to a bit of forest on the left, explaining it's a favorite spot for deer. "In a couple weeks, we'll start seeing some new fawns."

Evers estimates that about half of the course's acreage is wooded or more natural vegetation.

He explained that sustainable golf is not a new concept. In years past, bunkers were formed in a course when animals made burrows, goats would trim the grass, and putting green grass was tamped down because it was naturally trampled by golfers. "Golf is played outside, in nature," said Evers. "It should look natural."

FSCC golf pro A. Jeffrey Pianelli said that what people see on television when they are watching golf is not real. "Some courses are so manicured." He said, "If azaleas are not blooming at the right time, they'll go out and warm them." At one course he mentioned, "the greens are temperature controlled."

Irrigation is a good example of the benefits of Evers' more hands-off approach. "Some courses," he said, "run sprinklers no matter what, according to a timer."

Alternatively, he uses data from moisture sensors to determine which areas need irrigation — and which do not.

Evers also uses the "less is more" philosophy when it comes to fertilizers and weed control on the course. "The products we use have improved so much over the years, and they are very targeted. We can use a very small amount." As an example, he uses one product that only attacks the cell wall of one very specific fungus. "It doesn't affect anything else," he said.

Keeping up with nature

Nature is not always a cooperative partner. In the aftermath of a bad storm two summers ago, FSCC saw more than 20 fallen trees on the property. Evers said that the club also lost about 20 ash trees to the emerald ash borer insect.

He said, "We work hard to keep our trees healthy, but sometimes, the only cure for a diseased tree is a chainsaw."

Evers, who seems to have a personal relationship with every tree



Sometimes it's necessary to remove a tree along the Rappahannock, to keep it from falling into the river and taking a chunk of the bank with it.

Arbor Day golf tournament

Fauquier Springs Country Club will host an Arbor Fund golf tournament, Saturday, May 18 and Sunday, May 19. Proceeds will go toward tree removal, pruning and reforestation of the golf course.

When: A happy hour mixer will be held from 5 to 7 p.m. on Saturday, May 18 at The Turn. (The Turn is the break between the front nine holes and the back nine holes.) The kick-off event will include a longest putt competition. On Sunday, golfers arrive at 8 a.m. for a 9 a.m. shotgun start. An after-party will include a lunch buffet and cash bar.

Where: Fauquier Springs Country Club, 9236 Tournament Drive, Warrenton.

What: Two-person teams divided into flights by handicap, gross and net. Contests will include: long drive, straightest drive, closest to the pin, and trees hit — \$5 per tree, not to exceed \$25.

Who: Club golf and social members; potential members and former members are also invited.

Cost: \$65 per person (cart not included; walking is permitted)

Register: Call 540-347-4209

on the course property, added that woodpeckers drill holes in trees looking for insects, but "when woodpeckers are present, that usually means the tree is on the way out."

Sapsuckers, however, drill holes in healthy trees to get the sap, damaging the trees and shortening their lives. Evers said he's been known to go to the dollar store and buy colorful pinwheels to attach to the trees. The spinning toys discourage the sapsuckers.

Club member Dan Weber is the chair of the club's grounds committee. He and his team wanted to raise funds to address not just the damaged tree removal and replanting but also, the

overall health of the tree population on club grounds. About 64 club members and volunteers participated in the 2018 Arbor day golf tournament last April, with the \$7,765 proceeds going to improve the health of the trees.

Much of the tree removal, replanting and pruning work was accomplished by Evers and his staff, along with professional help from Williams Tree Service from Flint Hill. Most of the downed trees have been removed and a plan for planting has been developed and initiated. So far, FSCC has added pin oaks, dogwood, red buds, white oaks and an American hornbeam.

Of course, said club member Bob Dyer, some golfers are not unhappy to see certain trees come to the end of their lifespan — especially those in the middle of a fairway. But, he said, some trees are planned "course obstacles" that are part of the challenge of playing golf at FSCC.

A window to the Rappahannock

One of the special features of the FSCC golf course is its border on the west: the Rappahannock River. The river provides spectacular scenery for golfers playing the eighth or the 18th hole.

Evers said that he and his staff have allowed a more substantial buffer to grow up along the river, to provide filtering plants to clean the water before it enters the river.

Environmental initiatives at Fauquier Springs Country Club

- Installed sewage and greywater treatment system.
- Replaced gas-powered golf carts with new battery-powered carts.
- Increased vegetation bordering streams, pond and river.
- Replaced old HVAC systems in clubhouse with higher SEAR energy efficiency rating systems.
- Installed smart lighting in clubhouse areas.
- Replaced old commercial dishwashing equipment with decreased electricity usage equipment.
- Initiated Arbor Day tree and reforestation program.
- Enhanced no-mow buffer area.

Evers said that a group from Friends of the Rappahannock planted 200 saplings on course property last year, further extending the buffer.

But the Rappahannock also represents another hard-fought battle against the inevitable. Trees provide stability for the river banks, but when they do fall, they take a large amount of soil into the river with them, eroding the banks and throwing off the balance of the ecosystem.

He said that in 2018, the Rappahannock River flooded 13 times; in the years before that, the average was about four times a year. The high-water incidents make the trees more unstable.

Evers said they try to remove dead trees from the bank before they fall, leaving their roots intact to hold onto the soil.

River access

In a further effort to be a good community partner, FSCC may become a launching facility for canoe and kayak enthusiasts to enter the river. Currently, Fauquier's only access to the Rappahannock is at the new Riverside Park in Marshall.

Evers said, "We have a first draft of the necessary easement. It should not affect the course at all. We'd like to see that happen by spring 2020."

Members Dyer and Weber are eager to push FSCC's environmental efforts forward. Dyer said, "Our members are part of the driving force and support for these improvements, plus they want to pitch in to help. It is probably the case that people don't join country clubs with 'greening efforts' at the forefront of their decision ... but the evidence of their actions suggests that this is one of the key considerations that is received positively."

The members agree that, especially in Fauquier County, an environmental mindset is not uncommon. Weber recalled that recently, a member passed away and her friends wanted to plant a tree on the course in her memory. "Years ago, they would have wanted a bench with a plaque."

Reach Robin Earl at rearl@fauquier.com

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Sunday, May 19, 2019

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For more information, contact Vicki Willis at 540-364-1066, or vickirect@aol.com, or visit www.RectortownUMC.org

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School Board seeks a designer for school expansion

By Robin Earl
TIMES STAFF WRITER

The Fauquier County School Board agreed to release a request for proposals for the design of the expansion and renovation of Cedar Lee Middle

School at its work session Monday, Sept. 23. The goal of the expansion is to make room for 300 more students in the Bealeton middle school. Some students who currently attend Warrenton middle schools would be redistricted to Cedar Lee, and the rest of the boost

in student population would come from predicted growth in the southern part of the county.

School board members are looking for a design that will: add 12 to 14 classrooms (and perhaps two science labs), increase cafeteria space,

redesign and expand the front office space, create a secure front entrance and expand and redesign the parking area and front bus loop, as well as the student pick up and drop off area.

See **SCHOOL BOARD**, page 4



TIMES STAFF PHOTO/ROBIN EARL

Sara Lara, founder and executive director of Women in Conservation explained her group's mission at Friday's climate change rally in Rady Park.

Fauquier held its own climate change rally at Rady Park Friday

By Robin Earl
TIMES STAFF WRITER

Recognizing the massive climate change rally playing out across the world on Friday, Sept. 20, several local environmental groups gathered at Rady Park in Warrenton to compare notes on recent projects and share information.

Adam Rossi, environmental science teacher at Highland School in Warrenton and member of the Fauquier County Climate Change Group welcomed about 20 humans (and one dog) to the gathering. Group leaders introduced themselves and explained their missions.

The Fauquier Climate Change Group meets every third Wednesday at Fauquier Hospital's Bistro on the Hill at

See **CLIMATE RALLY**, page 4



Dance lesson

Marilyn Beck enjoys a dance class at Poet's Walk on Sept. 12. See more photos on page 2.

PHOTO BY CARSON MCRAE/MCRAE VISUAL MEDIA

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TIMES STAFF PHOTO/ROBIN EARL

Cindy Burbank is with Citizen's Climate Lobby.

Fauquier held its own climate change rally at Rady Park Friday

CLIMATE RALLY, from page 1

7 p.m. Its mission is "to raise awareness of climate change and advocate solutions that reduce greenhouse gas emissions in order to avoid the worst impacts of climate change."

"We get together to talk and work on projects. It's a fun group," said Rossi.

Sara Lara is the head of a Warrenton nonprofit, Women for Conservation. She said she feels that women working together can make a real difference in protecting wildlife and their habitats. She talked about the species of birds that have been lost in recent years. Their loss could have been prevented through awareness, she said.

A civil engineer, she added, "I think women have been neglected and ignored in conservation spaces. I want to educate women who want to be part of the solution."

Cindy Burbank, representing Citizen's Climate Lobby, said her group

focuses on influencing government policy. With 18 local members, the organization spans the globe. Its focus, she said, is on bipartisan solutions. "We have been working with Del. Denver Riggleman, R-Va. 5th, and have seen a lot of movement."

One national bill the group has been working on -- The Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act -- has 63 sponsors thus far. It places a price on carbon at the source, charging businesses. In turn, they charge households, who start to use less of that energy to reduce their cost.

The bill is meant to appeal to conservatives as well as progressives, she said. It sends a signal to businesses to innovate, and the money collected is given back to households. "Several large oil companies are supporting it," she said. "It lets the marketplace work, rewarding those who cut back on energy usage and encouraging innovation."

Julie Bolthouse, Fauquier field of-

The Green Team at St. James' Episcopal Church

Kathy Ellis, a parishioner of St. James' Episcopal Church in Warrenton, explained during the Sept. 20 rally that the church's Green Team is one of many committees that operate under the direction of the priests (the Rev. Ben Maas and the Rev. Randolph Charles) and vestry.

The group's mission statement is: "With God's help, the Green Team is dedicated to educating and mobilizing the congregation, school, and community to care for this fragile earth, our island home."

Ellis said, "The Episcopal Diocese of Virginia has a Creation Care Task Force made up of representatives of other churches, and we coordinate and network with them. The Episcopal Diocese of Virginia will have its annual convention

in November, and its theme will be Creation Care with a focus on the inequality of climate change's impacts."

She added, "The national Episcopal Church has stated strong resolutions about climate change, and the Diocese of Virginia's Bishop Goff participated in a Climate Event in Minneapolis on Sept. 20."

On a local scale, St. James' Green Team has completed various projects to encourage people to reduce use, re-use and recycle.

This fall, said Ellis, "We want to address the spiritual and emotional damage that climate change is doing. There is no precedent for this, and so we are 'feeling our way.' We feel this is a place the church is called to be. We'll begin with three Creation Care Listening Sessions for church members in the fall."

ficer for the Piedmont Environmental Council, reminded those assembled that the PEC "always has climate change at the back of everything we do."

She talked about the group's emphasis on public transportation (instead of road construction), land use and land conservation. "Land conservation is the number one way to prevent climate change," she said.

She added that the PEC lobbies the general assembly on energy issues and is working on initiatives to "Solarize the Piedmont."

Gerry Eitner spoke for her group, Communities of Peace. One of the group's gradually emerging goals is a response to climate change. "We're all in this together," Eitner says on her website (communitiesofpeace.org). "We're now sponsoring gatherings of women who are involved in climate change, called 'Climate Change -- From the Heart.' Our intention is to connect, collaborate, cross-fertilize and create sustainable solutions, at all levels."

Kathy Ellis, representing the Green Team at St. James' Episcopal Church in Warrenton (see accompanying box) explained that young people are deciding not to have children because of climate anxiety. "They don't want to bring children into this world ... We need a way to address the anger people feel and their sense of loss for the future they thought was guaranteed."

She said the church will be sponsoring listening sessions this fall so that people can express their grief and support one another. "People need to know that we are not in this alone," she said.

Before gathering to take a group photograph to mark the occasion, Rossi summed up how he feels about climate change activism, "What gives us hope is the ability to act."

Reach Robin Earl at rearl@fauquier.com

School Board seeks a designer for school expansion

SCHOOL BOARD, from page 1

The plan also calls for an expanded gymnasium or possibly, the addition of an auxiliary gymnasium. Dave Graham, executive director of administration and planning, said at the meeting, "I don't know how Cedar Lee has managed this long without an auxiliary gym."

Graham added that the expansion will include other adjustments that will be necessary to add not only 300 students, but the teachers and extra staff needed to serve those students.

The price tag for the project has been set at \$10 million.

Susan Monaco, procurement manager for the school division, said that there has already been considerable interest in the project, so she expects to have plenty of proposals to sort through. She said that the ideal candidate will be one with experience in the expansion and renovation of middle schools. "This is not new construction. We need a company that knows how to work around an existing school building."

The RFP will go out Sept. 31, a meeting with interested companies will be held Oct. 8 at Cedar Lee and sealed proposals will be accepted until Oct. 31. After review by the school board, the design con-

tract could be awarded in late January. The chosen company will have one year to complete the design.

After a construction company is selected, that company would have 18 months to finish the expansion and redesign, for a projected finish date of August of 2022.

The school division has not yet decided which one of two Warrenton middle schools -- Taylor Middle or Warrenton Middle -- will close and which will be expanded and renovated.

Cell tower proposed for Fauquier High baseball field

Also at Monday's school board work session, Matt Penning of Milestone Communications in Reston presented a plan to replace an 80-foot light pole on the baseball field at Fauquier High School with a 130-foot pole. The field lights would be placed at the same height as they are now, but the pole would also support up to four wireless carriers above the lights. Penning said that T-Mobile has already committed to locating on the tower if it is approved.

If the board agrees to the proposal, the school division would receive \$20,000 up front from Milestone and \$5,000 from Milestone when each new provider signs on. In addition, Fauquier



Milestone Communications presented an example of what a cell tower (center) placed on an athletic field looks like.

COURTESY PHOTO

County Public Schools will receive 40 percent of all gross revenue generated from carriers locating on the cell tower.

Penning said that Milestone would need to obtain zoning permission from the town of Warrenton and conduct a community outreach campaign to local residents. Obtaining all the necessary permits and permissions would probably take nine to 10 months; the project could be accomplished in late summer or early fall, to avoid any disruption to Fauquier High School or American Legion baseball seasons.

Reach Robin Earl at rearl@fauquier.com

Environmental project contributes to the health of the Rappahannock River

By Robin Earl
TIMES STAFF WRITER

The Rappahannock River is one of the healthier rivers in the Virginia segment of the Chesapeake Bay watershed, said Friends of the Rappahannock program manager Bryan Hofmann; Fauquier High School students conducted water testing on its banks April 1.

While a dozen or so students worked with FOR representatives peeking into test tubes and reading charts, another group worked with John Marshall Soil and Water Conservation District to dig in the dirt and pound on wooden stakes.

The three classes of science students were planting trees at the soon-to-be-opened Riverside Preserve in Marshall (see page 1). They pulled their sweatshirt hoods tight around their faces and tried to stand in patches of sun. The wind whipping along the river was cold, but they stayed tough and finished the job.

More than 200 trees were planted that morning. "We are extending the buffer, putting in about 650 feet of trees," said Hofmann. He said there are plans to eventually plant more trees in other sections of the park in the future.

The trees are important because they slow the nutrient-rich water running into the river, allowing it instead to seep into the ground, where it is filtered naturally before moving



TIMES STAFF PHOTO/ROBIN EARL
Sage Smith, Caleb Barron and Xavier Barreda, Fauquier High School students, had a hand in planting more than 200 saplings last week at Riverside Preserve in Marshall.

into the groundwater and eventually, the adjacent Rappahannock River. The trees also hold onto soil to prevent erosion of the banks.

Hofmann said, "Trees help to stabilize the soil, reduce pollution, and provide habitat for wildlife. The

leaves provide shade and help regulate the temperature of the water and the tree canopy also helps to slow down the rain and allow the water to slowly reach the ground."

The saplings — yellow poplar, river birch, willow oak, pin oak, sycamore, red maple, persimmon, red osier dogwood, silky dogwood and alder — cost about \$4.50 each to plant, thanks to grant funds and all the volunteers. Each is equipped with a heavy plastic tube "to protect them from deer and other things that want to eat them," said Joseph Rossetti, with the Virginia Department of Forestry.

The Chesapeake Bay Program has laid out a plan of 900 new miles of riparian buffer needed each year to meet the pollution reduction goals for a healthy Chesapeake Bay.

For the past three years, Friends of the Rappahannock and the Piedmont Environmental Council have offered their Headwater Stream Initiative, which provides 100 percent cost share for technical assistance, project design, materials and installation for riparian buffers to qualified property owners in the upper Rappahannock River watershed.

Environmental education

All students in Virginia are required to complete three Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences during their schooling (once in elementary, middle and high school). One phase of the MWEE is a student action project.

The idea of the MWEE is that students learn about human impacts on watersheds and then take action to correct the impacts.

Additionally, the John Marshall Soil and Water Conservation District, Virginia Department of Forestry, and local Natural Resource Conservation District offices also have programs available for similar riparian buffer projects.

Funds for this project and others like it come in part from the Kortlandt Memorial Grant of the Northern Piedmont Community Foundation, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Patagonia, Arbor Day Foundation and more. "We are very fortunate to have a lot of different sources of funding for tree planting programs," said Hofmann.

Riverside Preserve

The Rappahannock River flows all through Fauquier County's newest park, for about 0.8 miles of river frontage. "It's a good place to fish for small-mouth bass," Hofmann said. "It has good access and it's not too deep here, which is perfect for fly-fishing."

He added, "This section is part of the upper Rappahannock. The whole river is 184 miles long, traveling from Rappahannock County's foothills all the way to the Chesapeake Bay. It includes 18 different counties."

Water quality

FOR recently completed a study of the middle section of the river (the Fredericksburg area). Eleven river tributaries were studied to arrive at a representative sample of the streams in that area. Streams were graded on human health, land use, stream ecology and community engagement. The middle Rappahannock was graded a "C."

FOR was recently awarded a "Make it Happen" grant from the PATH Foundation to develop a second report card focused on the upper Rappahannock River.

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To keep the Rappahannock healthy

The Friends of the Rappahannock River Middle River Report Card suggests some ways residents can help keep the Rappahannock healthy:

Scoop the poop: The report card on the middle section of the Rappahannock River found unsafe bacteria levels in eight of 11 streams tested. Pet waste can introduce bacteria.

Fertilize in fall or not at all: Lawn fertilizers add unhealthy amounts of nutrients to streams, harming aquatic ecology and causing dead zones downstream, especially if applied in the spring.

Organize a river cleanup: The Friends of the Rappahannock can help with supplies, set up and getting rid of the trash afterward.

Support water shed education in schools.

Treat runoff on your property: Green infrastructure like rain gardens and rain barrels help capture and absorb pollutants from impervious surfaces like roofs and driveways.