



LAND USE & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes – May 25, 2017

Attendees:

Steve Cook	Virginia Department of Health
Michelle Edwards	Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission
Patrick Mauney	Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission
Emily Melton	Fauquier County
Joe Rosetti	Virginia Department of Forestry
Kyle Settle	Culpeper County

Virginia Water Quality

Michelle Edwards, Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission

To update the Committee on the Chesapeake Bay TMDL Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) III process, Michelle Edwards presented highlights of Joan Salvati's, Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), presentation to the Rappahannock River Basin Commission's Technical Committee on April 26, 2017 (see attached). Ms. Edwards noted additions and changes from information provided during DEQ's WIP III Outreach Meeting on January 30th, which she discussed at the previous Land Use and Environment Committee meeting.

“Development and implementation of local planning goals below the state-major basin scale” is listed as one of DEQ's top four expectations for the process, so localities will be asked to develop strategies as was done for WIP II. Goals and strategies are to cover 2018-2025, when the Chesapeake Bay TMDL is due to be completed.

The timeline for the WIP III has been pushed back by approximately four months, with DEQ now required to submit the draft Phase III WIP to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) by December 2018 instead of August 2018. While EPA will release the draft WIP Planning targets in October 2017, the final targets will not be released until March 2018. Since DEQ will need time to compile localities' information before submitting the plan to EPA, localities will likely have 6-8 months to develop their strategies and submit them to DEQ.

DEQ held initial outreach meetings with locality and Soil and Water Conservation District staff at DEQ regional offices in winter/spring 2017. The focus of DEQ's outreach shifts to elected officials for the remainder of 2017. While meetings for local elected officials were held at DEQ

regional offices, they were poorly attended. DEQ is now trying to reach elected officials by presenting at regional meetings of the Virginia Association of Counties. Further outreach to locality staff and other local stakeholders is not planned until early-2018, and will be done regionally. Training is also planned for the first quarter of 2018.

Kyle Settle pointed out that Ms. Salvati stated that EPA is considering dividing up the nutrient loads from the Conowingo Dam in Maryland amongst all of the Chesapeake Bay states, even those that do not drain to the dam's watershed such as Virginia. The Conowingo Dam, which had been trapping sediment from the Susquehanna River, has reached its storage capacity. Therefore, the dam is no longer trapping sediment and the associated nutrients over the long term, and the nutrient load will now have to be accounted for in the Chesapeake Bay Model. Mr. Settle remarked that local elected officials in Virginia would likely not support taking on the extra clean-up. Ms. Edwards stated that Pennsylvania, which comprises most of the Susquehanna River's watershed, is far behind Maryland and Virginia's TMDL progress. This may be a reason EPA is considering dividing responsibility.

Ms. Edwards then discussed the recent passage of House Bill 1774, which directs the Commonwealth Center for Recurrent Flooding Resiliency to convene a work group to consider alternative methods of stormwater management in the rural Tidewater localities (see attached text and official summary). While the bill's purpose is to address stormwater management issues unique to the Tidewater region, recommended policy changes and BMPs that arise out of the work group have the potential to be implemented state-wide. Ms. Edwards reported that this sentiment was expressed by many attendees at the April meeting of the Rappahannock River Basin Commission's Technical Committee. Kyle Settle, who also attended the meeting, echoed the concern. If a recommendation could potentially benefit localities across the state, or be difficult or less efficient to implement only in the Tidewater region, for example, it could be a reason for statewide implementation.

Ms. Edwards referred to the draft of the "Healthy Watersheds Forestry Healthy Watersheds Forest/TMDL Forest Retention Project Executive Summary," which was distributed during the River Basin Commission's Technical Committee meeting for comment. The document contains a section entitled "Suggested Tool Box Options for Consideration by HB 1774 Work Group." Most of the recommendations are not intended to be implemented only in the Tidewater region, and will be provided to the work group for consideration. The document was developed by the River Basin Commission, several state agencies, the Nature Conservancy, the Chesapeake Bay Commission and Virginia Tech.

Ms. Edwards cautioned that this is not an issue for immediate concern, but one that she will be monitoring as it progresses. The work group is required to report its recommendations by January 1, 2018. The bill also delayed the effective date of 2016 changes to the state stormwater law from July 1, 2017 to July 1, 2018.

DCR Virginia Outdoors Plan (VOP) Mapper Update- Local Data Request
Michelle Edwards, RRRC

The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), Division of Planning and Recreation Resources has requested updated recreation GIS data in order to update DCR's VOP

Mapper tool.

DCR staff is looking for data from three categories, with the following caveat's:

1. Water access
 - Looking for existing local sites.
 - DCR does not collect DGIF access since they maintain their own data and share that data with DCR already.
 - DCR does not collect private marina data, but does track public marina data.
 - DCR already has data for the state park and natural area sites.
2. Water trails
 - Existing and proposed water trails should be submitted.
3. Local parks and trails
 - DCR retrieved local parks data from on-line sources, but are attempting to get a comprehensive understanding of county and city park locations and numbers.
 - DCR is also looking for updated data on trailheads and thematic driving trails.

Emily Melton sent Fauquier County's GIS data prior to the meeting. Mr. Settle stated he will send GIS data for Culpeper County.

RRRC Initiative Updates

Upper Goose Creek TMDL – Jenny Biché, RRRC

Due to schedule conflicts, Ms. Edwards relayed project information provided by Jenny Biché, the RRRC staff lead for this project.

The Upper Goose Creek TMDL-IP includes parts of northern Fauquier County and southern Loudoun County. A public meeting, two agricultural and two residential working group meetings, and a government working group meeting were held last year. In December 2016, DEQ put the Implementation Plan (IP) process on hold due to the departure of the DEQ staff lead, May Sligh. Dave Evans was hired to fill this role in February, and work on the IP resumed in March. A Steering Committee meeting will be held today, May 25, at 1:00 pm at Tri-County Feeds in Marshall. The Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin and DEQ staff will present the draft IP for review. The final public meeting will be held on June 21 at 6:00-8:00pm at Wakefield School in Marshall.

The minutes and handouts from the previous meetings can be found on RRRC's website at www.rregion.org/tmdl_goose.html. For additional information, contact Jenny Biché at jkbiche@rregion.org or (540) 829-7450.

Tween Rivers Agri-artisan Trail – Jenny Biché, RRRC

Due to schedule conflicts, Ms. Edwards relayed project information provided by Jenny Biché, the RRRC staff lead for this project.

Ms. Biché has been interviewing owners of the Tween Rivers Trail sites to learn more about their businesses, take photos, and gather feedback. The response has been positive, and very supportive of the project. Trail site members appreciate the mission of the trail and encourage

the Regional Tourism Committee to continue to maintain the agri-artisan focus. They have referred other businesses to join the trail, and the number of sites has increased to 66.

The Trail's website is being re-vamped to give it a fresh look and will incorporate some of the recommendations the Trail site owners provided. Ms. Biché has been utilizing social media platforms to market the trail and is maintaining the website's event page. A Trail Networking Social event will be held on June 8th from 5-7pm at Graves Mountain Lodge. Two other workshops will be planned for the Fall and Winter. A newsletter, brochure and advertisements will also be developed as part of the Trail's marketing efforts.

For additional information on the Tween Rivers Trail, please visit www.tweenriverstrail.com, or contact Jenny Biché at jkbiche@rrregion.org or (540) 829-7450.

Regional Food Policy Council – Michelle Edwards, RRRC

In conjunction with its local foods marketing effort, RRRC received technical assistance funding from the Path Foundation to hire a branding consultant and graphic designer to develop a brand name and logo for the region's locally grown food and beverages. Following stakeholder interviews, a consumer survey, and public input sessions, the Rappahannock-Rapidan Food Policy Council chose "Purely Piedmont" as the brand name at its March meeting. A logo was voted on and announced in early May. Ms. Edwards distributed copies of the news release announcing the brand with the chosen logo (see attached).

The Purely Piedmont logo will be used on marketing materials for the public awareness campaign, a planned local foods label program, and future marketing of the region's local foods and beverages. Mr. Settle suggested advertising in Edible Blue Ridge magazine, to which Ms. Edwards replied that an ad and possible article are planned for the public awareness campaign.

The Council's next meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 18, 2017, at 6:30 pm in the RRRC Conference Room. Tom McDougall, 4P Foods, will be presenting on the plans for a proposed Food Port that would aggregate products from smaller aggregators/food hubs and be able to sell to larger buyers such as Sysco. For further information about the regional Rappahannock-Rapidan Food Policy Council, including upcoming meetings, please contact Michelle Edwards at (540) 829-7450 or medwards@rrregion.org, or visit RRRC's Regional Food System webpage at www.rrregion.org/foodsystem.html.

Hazard Mitigation Plan Update – Patrick Mauney, RRRC

RRRC is in the process of updating the region's Hazard Mitigation Plan in cooperation with local Emergency Managers and Emergency Planners. Patrick Mauney passed out informational flyers to attendees and provided an overview of the process.

The purpose of the Plan is to reduce the risk of loss of life and property by lessening the impact of disasters. RRRC developed the original plan during 2004 to 2005. The plan is required to be updated every five years, with the last update in 2011. The current update is expected to be finished by June 2018. The Town of Gordonsville will be participating in the process for the first time, since they now participate in the National Flood Insurance Program.

Flooding is the main hazard effecting the region. Other top hazards the current plan covers include, hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, wildfires, storms, erosion/landslides, and dam and levy failures. RRRC is conducting a community survey and will then re-rank the hazards. Public meetings will also be held, providing further opportunities for input into the process.

Various implementation projects are possible following the update, including:

- Infrastructure improvements
- Floodplain and stream restoration
- Green infrastructure/stormwater BMPs
- Public awareness/education campaigns

For more information about the region's Hazard Mitigation Plan and public meeting schedule please visit www.rregion.org/mitigation.html.

Member Roundtable

- **Kyle Settle, Culpeper County**– The County plans to work with Ecosystem Services to update the County's Watershed Management Ordinance, which is currently 27 years old. The County will apply for a Technical Capacity Grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation once the Request for Proposals is released. The release of the RFP has been delayed.
- **Emily Melton, Fauquier County**– The County is having issues with how agriculture fits within the new state stormwater management regulations, because farm roads are now being pulled into the stormwater requirements. The County has asked DEQ to explore new methodology, but is not sure what that methodology may be. County staff have been looking at how other localities deal with this issue. The main conflict lies with equestrian operations that are building permanent gravel roads with culverts.
- **Joe Rosetti, Department of Forestry (DOF)**– To follow-up on Ms. Melton's comments, Mr. Rosetti stated that he has run into landowners that are doing timber harvesting and tells them that if the logging road is going to be permanent, they need a stormwater permit. Mr. Settle asked if DOF has a database of permitted timber harvests, to which Mr. Rosetti responded yes and agreed to send Mr. Settle the information. However, DOF does not issue a "permit" but a "notification" with a notification number. Logging activity has gone down in the region; only two projects have started in Fauquier County this year, but there are other on-going projects.

Next Land Use & Environment Committee Meeting:

The next Land Use and Environment Committee meeting is scheduled for August 31, 2017 at 10:00 am – 12:00 noon in the RRRC conference room. Please provide any suggestions for future meeting topics to Michelle Edwards at medwards@rregion.org.