



## **LAND USE & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

### **Meeting Minutes – November 13, 2014**

#### **Attendees:**

Jenny Biche'	Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission
Michael Cartwright	Virginia Department of Environmental Quality
Steve Cook	Virginia Department of Health
Deirdre Clark	John Marshall Soil and Water Conservation District
Michelle Edwards	Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission
Bryan Hofmann	Friends of the Rappahannock
David Holtzman	Piedmont Environmental Council
Gardiner Mulford	Culpeper Horse Owners' Association
Becky Sheffield	Virginia Cooperative Extension
Debra Switzer	Virginia Department of Environmental Quality
Michael Trop	John Marshall Soil & Water Conservation District
Greg Wichelns	Culpeper Soil and Water Conservation District
Hanna Zegler	Virginia Department of Environmental Quality

#### **Upper Rapidan TMDL Implementation Plan**

*Michelle Edwards, RRRC*

*Jenny Biche', RRRC*

The Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for the Upper Rapidan River was developed in 2006-2007 and is available on the Commission's website at [www.rregion.org/rappbasin.html](http://www.rregion.org/rappbasin.html). It covers nine streams segments within Madison, Greene, Orange and Albemarle counties that are impaired due to high bacteria loads, and sets a pollution diet for these segments (see attached map).

RRRC will be working with the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to develop an Implementation Plan for this TMDL. Once completed, it is anticipated that cost share will become available to those counties to implement Agricultural and Residential BMPs. RRRC is waiting on the contract from DEQ but is anticipating the first of the public meetings to be held this winter.

Jenny Biche' distributed a draft stakeholder list that will be used to send invitations and save the date information for the upcoming TMDL-IP meetings. She asked the committee to review it and send her or Michelle contact information for anyone they think needs to be added or removed.

Michelle provided a progress update for local TMDL Implementation in the region as compiled by May Sligh, DEQ (see attached). Greg Wichelns stated that while the state model is based on 95% bmp compliance, it is not always necessary to achieve 95% in order to meet the bacteria load standard and get a river delisted. Thumb Run in Rappahannock County is one such example, and the Robinson River in Madison County is close to having one of its segments delisted as well.

Michael Trop added that Carter, Thumb, Deep and Great Runs are showing improvement despite an increase in cattle in the watersheds. Carter Run may be delisted in a few years and has been featured by EPA as a success story. Mountain Run out of Gordonsville is also close to delisting, and the Upper Hazel will soon be reviewed for delisting. Marsh Run's watershed is seeing the greatest reduction in the lower reaches with barely any bacteria during monitoring, but the upper reaches are still experiencing violations.

### **Regional Food System Study Update**

*Michelle Edwards, RRRC*

Ken Meter of Crossroads Resource Center was selected as the consultant who will be developing the Economic Analysis for the Food System Plan. He will present the draft findings of the data analysis to the Commission's Agriculture Working Group on December 1<sup>st</sup> at 1:30pm. He will also be interviewing a total of 10 local producers and large-scale buyers to support the data analysis, and three public meetings will be held across the region in early February to present the combined results. Additionally Michelle will be conducting surveys and focus groups discussions during winter 2015 to help fill in gaps in the data. The Agriculture Working Group also developed a draft Food System Asset Assessment for the region, which is available on the project webpage at [www.rrregion.org/foodsystem.html#assessment](http://www.rrregion.org/foodsystem.html#assessment). Michelle asked committee members to review the drafts and email her any input they may have. This Asset Assessment will be shared at the strategic planning meetings and the finalized version will be included in the appendix of the Regional Food System Plan.

### **Agri-artisan Trail Update**

*Jenny Biche', RRRC*

After invitation letters were sent to agri-artisan and forestry businesses in the region, 47 businesses applied to be agri-artisan trail sites and 21 businesses applied to be supportive sites. Each county has good representation and the Tourism Committee was pleased with the responses they received.

A logo was developed for the 'Tween Rivers Trail and the Regional Tourism Committee is looking to hire a website developer within the next few weeks. A website address ([www.tweenriverstrail.com](http://www.tweenriverstrail.com)) has already been purchased. A brochure will also be developed as well as window clings, signs, and other items used to identify the businesses as trail/support sites. The Tourism Committee also is promoting the trail at the Manassas Welcome Center during the months of November and December. Trail sites and supportive sites loaned a few of their items for the event and the Tourism Committee is looking to advertise the trail in the magazine Edible DC beginning in January as well as through other marketing venues.

The Tourism Committee is also looking to host a workshop entitled "Agritourism in a Creative Economy" in March in Culpeper. The Department of Housing and Community Development, who is the funder for the Food System Plan Project, developed the workshop and inquired as to whether or not the Tourism Committee would be interested in hosting it in the region. More information will be shared once the details have been worked out.

### **Member Roundtable**

- **David Holtzman, Piedmont Environmental Council** – The Farmer-Chef Express website, which links area farmers with restaurants and other buyers, is now available. The Exploring the Small Farm Dream course is currently being held in Fauquier County and will be held in Albemarle County in January at a cost of \$160.
- **Steve Cook, Department of Health** – VDH is developing actions plans for Ebola.
- **Becky Sheffield, Virginia Cooperative Extension** – Extension is offering well water testing in Fauquier, Rappahannock and Culpeper Counties for \$49. May 11 will be the initial kick-off meeting. A cottage foods workshop dealing with regulations and safety may also be offered.
- **Michael Trop, John Marshall Soil & Water Conservation District** – EPA and DEQ reviewed the District's TMDL program on November 4-5.
- **Debbie Switzer, Department of Environmental Quality** – Hanna Zegler and Michael Cartwright were hired last month and will be spending the bulk of their time conducting stormwater inspections at opt-out localities. Stormwater plan review for opt-out localities will be conducted in DEQ central office. Opting-in for local stormwater programs is rolling.
- **Bryan Hofmann, Friends of the Rappahannock** – Bryan will be working with RRRC on the Backyard Rainscaping project in Spring 2015, and working with the City of Fredericksburg to develop a GIS-based smart tool that calculates and uploads residential stormwater BMP credits. He will be meeting with organizations in the region regarding the Student Stream Team program, which will also start again in the Spring. FOR recently released a movie about the Rappahannock River and will be hosting the Wild and Scenic Film Festival in Culpeper this April. Finally, FOR will be starting an oyster shell recycling program throughout the region.

- **Gardiner Mulford, Culpeper Horse Owners' Association** – The Association is still working toward completion of its 1000-acre horse park. Culpeper County donated 88 acres in 2011. Three or four parcels remain to be purchased.
- **Deirdre Clark, John Marshall Soil & Water Conservation District** – Together with the Piedmont Environmental Council, the District will hold the Thumb Run Conservation Initiative Workshop on November 16 at the Orlean Fire Department to work with landowners on riparian buffers and contiguous wildlife corridors.
- **Greg Wichelns, Culpeper Soil & Water Conservation District** – Of the approximately 250 Resource Management Plans being funded by DCR, approximately 150 are in CSWCD and JMSWCD. The plans will be valid for nine years. While the private sector is contracted by DEQ to write them, the SWCDs will be reviewing the draft plans.

**Next Land Use & Environment Committee Meeting:**

The next Land Use and Environment Committee meeting is scheduled for February 19, 2014, at 10:00 am – 12:00 noon.

Please provide any suggestions for future meeting topics to Michelle at [medwards@rrregion.org](mailto:medwards@rrregion.org).