



Green Infrastructure Analysis:
A Tool to Inventory our Natural and Cultural Environment
VDOT 1601 Orange Road (VDOT Auditorium), Culpeper VA
Meeting Minutes – November 4, 2010

Attendees:

Kim Abe	Fauquier Co. – Dept. of Community Development
Jenn Allen	Friends of the Rappahannock
John Barrett	Culpeper Parks and Recreation
Jenny Biche’	Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission
Rick Carr	Fauquier Co. – Dept. of Community Development
Deirdre Clark	Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission
John Cooley	Culpeper County Engineering Dept.
Bruce Cornwall	Culpeper County, Green Building Resource Center
Stephanie DeNicola	Culpeper Soil and Water Conservation District
Virginia Dorkey	Citizens for Fauquier County
Neil Drumheller	Culpeper County Planning Department
Catherine Edwards	Citizen
Karen Firehock	Green Infrastructure Center, Inc.
Jenny Fitzhugh	Old Rag Master Naturalists
Kristin Ford	Virginia Outdoors Foundation
Bev Hunter	RappFLOW
Hal Hunter	RappFLOW
Cate Huxtable	Friends of the Rappahannock
Phil Irwin	Rappahannock League for Environmental Protection
Rick Kohler	Rappahannock League for Environmental Protection
Marshall Jones	Smithsonian Conservation Institute, Rapp. League for Environmental Protection
Terry Lasher	Virginia Department of Forestry
Don Loock	Piedmont Environmental Council
Maggi MacQuilliam	Piedmont Environmental Council
Patrick Mauney	Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission
John McCarthy	Rappahannock County
Larry Miller	Fauquier Co. Parks and Recreation
Gardiner Mulford	Culpeper Horse Owners Association
Patrick Mulhern	Town of Culpeper
Bob Orr	Culpeper County Building Official
Pam Owen	Old Rag Master Naturalists
Alicia Payne	Citizen
Sam Quinn	The Farm at Sunnyside, Rap. League for Environmental Protection
Chip Rice	VA Dept. of Conservation and Recreation, Virginia Commonwealth University
Joe Rossetti	Virginia Department of Forestry
Kristin Slawter	Fauquier Co. – Dept. of Community Development
Julie Still	Piedmont Environmental Council
Jim Stone	Fauquier Co. Planning Commission
Kerry Wharton	Fauquier Co. – Dept. of Community Development
Greg Wichelns	Culpeper Soil and Water Conservation District
Monica Worth	Rappahannock League for Environmental Protection

Introductions and Concept Review

Deirdre Clark, Environmental Programs Manager, R-RRC

Attendees were welcomed and introductions were made. The classic definition of green infrastructure, as developed by Mark Benedict and Ed McMahon of the Conservation Fund, was introduced and participants were asked to consider developing a shared vision for a regional resource inventory and management plan. Attendees were asked to think about identifying "What's important?" as the principal challenge to such an initiative. Data was shared to compel stakeholders to strongly consider the value of launching such a project now, and to support the need for regional analysis. The comment was made that the implementation of any plan, good or bad, was dependant on the buy-in and support of decision-makers who should be informed of the intent and value of the proposal.

Green Infrastructure Planning

Karen Firehock, Green Infrastructure Center, Inc., Charlottesville VA

Ms. Firehock provided information on the concept and applications of green infrastructure planning:

- Green Infrastructure planning is not anti-development; it encourages decision makers to consider development patterns;
- Although traditional cluster development typically conserves green space, there is often little consideration for what's happening beyond the limits of the parcel;
- Green infrastructure planning preserves corridors which facilitate species movement across man-made boundaries;
- Green infrastructure planning looks at green space first, assessing and protecting areas for parks and trails, connecting land and water corridors;
- Roads often divide forested areas and wetlands, reducing interior habitat;
- GI Planning Steps include
 - Asset Mapping,
 - Risk Assessment,
 - Opportunities, and
 - Policy Implementation.
- Regional green infrastructure planning takes into account Transportation, Water Supply, Service Delivery, and Economic Development, etc. and will
 - Require prioritization once a Regional Inventory has been completed,
 - Create parameters,
 - Require working with stakeholders from the community and each locality (Planners, Board of Supervisors, Landowners, etc.) and
 - Require one-on-one interaction.
- Regional analysis will require evaluation of what is already protected, what may be lost and/or what is least likely to change, including
 - ◇ Conserved Areas
 - ◇ Core Connections
 - ◇ Watershed Protection
 - ◇ Working Lands
 - ◇ Sustainable Timber Management
 - ◇ Recreation & Heritage
 - ◇ Zoning and Future Land Use Planning
- Ultimately incorporate the green infrastructure plan into the Comprehensive Plan.

Data

- Use existing peer-reviewed models
 - Add local data to a regional map as long as it is available regionally (i.e. rivers, historic districts, etc.).
 - Have consistent reasons for choosing new data to be included (not just a data dump). Does every locality have that info? If not, use that data for local plan.
 - Use a regional map to connect local assets.

- Ask questions:
 - ◊ What are we going to use this map for?
 - ◊ What information do I need/want?
 - ◊ What am I looking for?
- Choose the right data/model:
 - Why was this model created?
 - Does its purpose meet your needs?
 - Does it tell us something we need to know?
 - When was the data collected? Is it up to date?
- Prioritize

Opportunities

Attendees broke out into working groups and were asked to discuss what they thought should be included in the regional green infrastructure plan and what steps should be followed to develop it.

Greg Wichelns presented the Culpeper/Orange/Madison Working Group results:

1. Local priorities should be identified;
2. On-going efforts should be supported (e.g. Journey Through Hallowed Ground);
3. Identify implementation strategies;
4. Proffers may be an opportunity for funding the project;
5. USDOF would be helpful with the process and may have funding opportunities; and
6. PEC and VOF could assist with mapping and funding.

Jim Stone presented the Fauquier County Working Group results:

1. Fauquier County includes boundaries with Prince William, Loudon and Stafford Counties and the challenge will be to manage development pressures from those counties and integrate any corridors;
2. Counties will have to reconcile contradictory environmental initiatives and regulations;
3. There may be a need for green infrastructure repair;
4. Existing available data includes soils, floodplain, impaired streams, easements, historic resources, some trails information;
5. Richmond will need to be on board with Green Infrastructure Planning if Fauquier is to be successful. Legislation will need to be changed. Problems identified include alternative sewer treatment systems, urban development requirements, and by-right development; and
6. Fauquier has already demonstrated a commitment to its heritage resources through easements and an inventory.

Gardiner Mulford presented the Culpeper County Working Group results:

1. Interest in a green infrastructure plan and its implementation is dependent demonstrating its economic value;
2. Regional map should include possible uses for identified areas – recreation, tourism, hunting, etc.;
3. Current land use and property rights issues could be challenging;
4. Decision makers will be interested in the economic impact green infrastructure will have on the community;
5. Establishing economic value of green infrastructure will be a tool for decision makers; and
6. Informational presentations will have to be tailored to each specific audience in order to get buy-in.

Marshall Jones presented the Rappahannock County Working Group results:

1. Easements are a terrific resource;
2. The committee would need to identify potential information sources such as PEC, Shenandoah National Park, etc.;
3. A strategy will need to be developed to determine how to integrate the data collected; and
4. White space on a map does not mean nothing is there - it could just mean there is no data available.

Identification of Stakeholders

Attendees discussed the need for a balanced, regional representation Stakeholder Working Group to lead the planning process. The role of the Stakeholder Working Group will be to:

- Lead the planning process;
- Ensure the plan is regional;
- Share resources and ideas; and
- Present plan at the local level

Attendees drafted a list of potential Stakeholder Working Group members:

- Soil and Water Conservation Districts
- Regional Commission
- Farm Bureau
- Department of Forestry
- Conservation and Environmental Groups
- VDOT
- PEC
- Business Alliances/Tourism
- Landowners
- Local Government (Board of Supervisors, Planners, etc.)
- History, Heritage and Culture organizations
- Trail and Recreation Groups
- Public Utilities
- Home Builder Associations/Developers

Comments/discussion points:

- In order to assure a regional consensus, all voices and opinions should be heard;
- In order to develop a meaningful plan, we need to think about what the region will be like in 5 to 10 years without one;
- Project planning should include achievable, measurable steps.

Due to time constraints, the Stakeholder Working Group formation and Developing an Asset Inventory agenda items were tabled for continuation at the next meeting.

Next Steps

- Each attendee was asked to reflect on the meeting and determine their level of commitment and level of support (staff time, data collection, mapping contribution, etc.) to the project.

NEXT MEETING:

December 2, 2010

9AM – Noon

Virginia Department of Transportation Auditorium

1601 Old Orange Road

Culpeper, VA 22701

Please park in the rear of the building and enter through the Auditorium Door.

Questions? Please contact:

Deirdre Clark

Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission

420 Southridge Parkway, Suite 106

Culpeper, VA 22701

dbclark@rrregion.com (540) 829-7450