

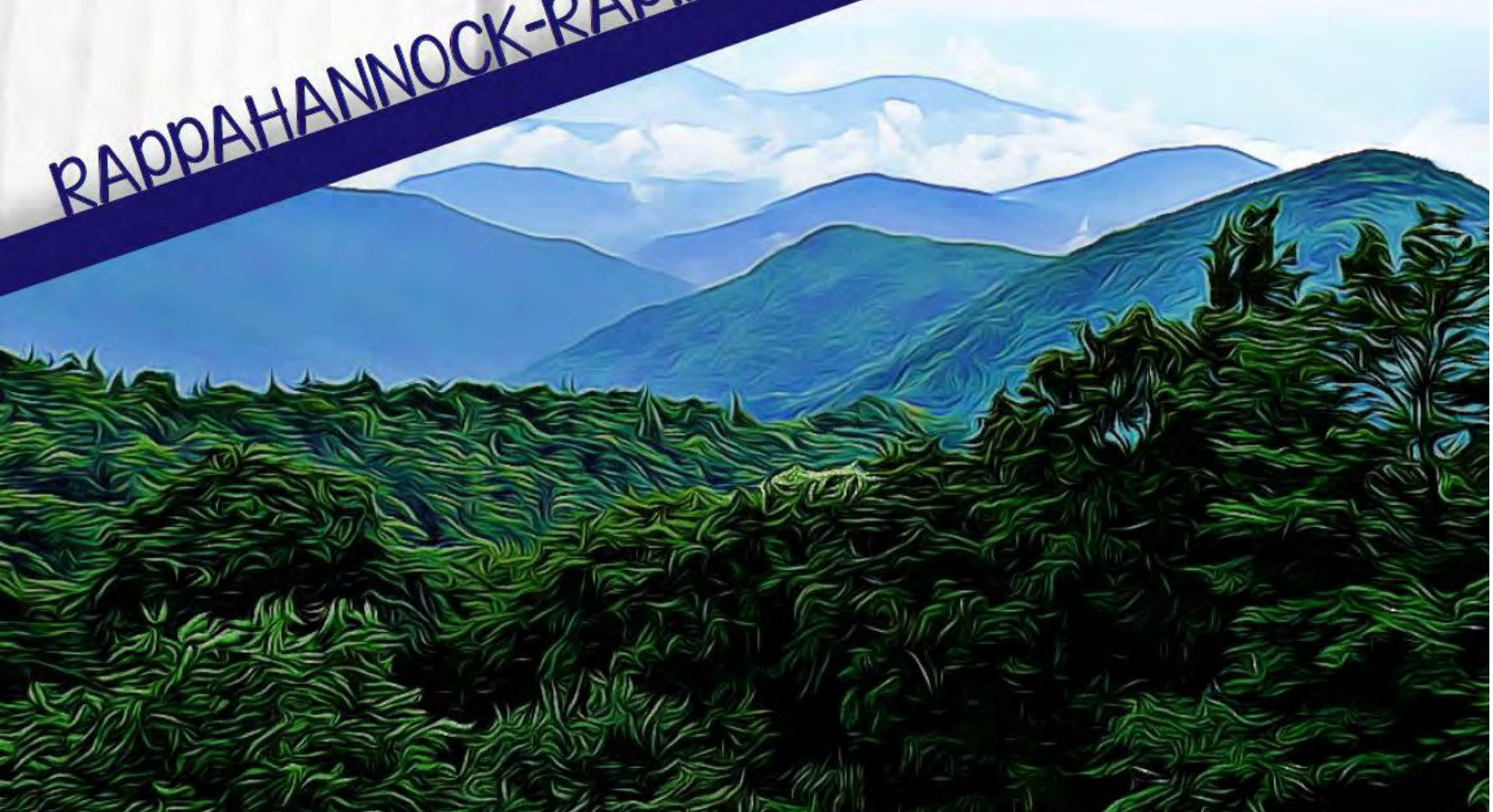
ANNUAL REPORT

FY2018



Rappahannock-Rapidan
REGIONAL COMMISSION

RAPPAHANNOCK-RAPIDAN REGIONAL COMMISSION



REGIONAL COMMISSION

About

The Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission (RRRC) serves the counties of Culpeper, Fauquier, Madison, Orange and Rappahannock, and the towns of Culpeper, Gordonsville, Madison, Orange, Remington, The Plains, Warrenton and Washington.

One of 21 regional commissions chartered by the Commonwealth of Virginia, we provide professional planning and technical resources, a concerted approach to regional cooperation, planning assistance with program delivery, and a forum for the interaction of appointed and elected local government officials and citizen members.

The Purpose of Planning Districts

"... to encourage and facilitate local government cooperation and state-local cooperation in addressing on a regional basis problems of greater than local significance. The cooperation resulting from this chapter is intended to facilitate the recognition and analysis of regional opportunities and take account of regional influences in planning and implementing public policies and services. The Regional Commission shall also promote the orderly and efficient development of the physical, social and economic elements of the district by planning, and encouraging and assisting localities to plan for the future." (Code of Virginia § 152-4207)

Staff Members:

Executive Director
Patrick Mauney

Planning Assistant
Monica Creel

Grant Administrator/Fiscal Officer
Terry Snead

Human Services Program Manager
Jenny Bichè

**AmeriCorps Vista Member
Housing Intern**
Jessi Mason

Central Entry Specialist
Colleen Vesperman

Environmental Programs Planner II
Michelle Edwards

Regional Planner
Joe Costello

TDM Coordinator & Mobility Manager
Kristin R Lam Peraza



Our Mission

The Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission exists to serve our members by providing professional planning and technical resources, a concerted approach to regional cooperation, planning assistance with program delivery, and a forum for the interaction of appointed and elected local government officials and citizen members.

Focus Areas:

RRRC adapts focus areas based on the needs and priorities of the localities served as well as funding availability. In 2018, RRRC's priorities were focused into the following program categories: Planning, Tourism, Environmental, Housing, and Transportation.

Many of our programs have their own individual webpages, supporting partners, and outreach activities. Listed below are the webpages managed through the commission:

| | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| www.rrregion.org | Commission's Site |
| www.foothilshousing.org | Housing |
| www.fams.org | Local Transportation |
| www.tweenriverstrail.com | Agri-Artisan Tourism |
| www.thevirginiapiedmont.org | Tourism |
| www.rrcommute.org | Commuter Transportation |
| www.purelypedmont.com | Local Food Promotion |

MISSION & FOCUS



The Virginia Piedmont
...something special in the foothills



RRRC Presents Distinguished Leadership Awards to Robert Bradford and Brian Duncan

The RRRC annual Distinguished Leadership—Citizen & Government Awards were initiated in 2007 to acknowledge the achievements and contributions of member jurisdiction citizen and government leaders who have gone above and beyond in their promotion and encouragement of enhanced regional communication, coordination and planning across the region.

In 2017, the Regional Commission honored the past (and present) service to the public of retiring Rappahannock-Rapidan Community Services Board-Area Agency on Aging Executive Director Brian Duncan and longtime Culpeper Soil & Water Conservation District Board Member and Orange County farmer Robert Bradford.

Mr. Bradford was selected in acknowledgment of his voluntary service and stewardship of the region's natural resources. Mr. Bradford has served as a member of the Culpeper Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Directors since 1996 as an elected representative from Orange County. His service as Chairman of the District's Technical Committee includes oversight of technical operations related to flood control dams in the District's service area, applications for cost-sharing incentive programs supporting Best Management Practices, and policy guidance. Mr. Bradford is also a past President of the Central Virginia Cattleman's Association, and is an advocate for innovative solutions for agriculture and natural resource management, including water quality measures, forestland management, and forage management on his farm in Orange County.

Mr. Duncan was selected as an honoree in appreciation for his 25-year service to the Rappahannock-Rapidan region as Executive Director of Rappahannock-Rapidan Community Services. As RRCS Executive Director, Mr. Duncan oversaw the expansion of services for behavioral health, developmental disabilities, mental health, and aging services in the region, as well as progress in providing timely access to treatment, increased residential options, collaborative transportation initiatives, and facility expansion and renovations. Mr. Duncan's steady, patient, and analytical leadership style improved outcomes and opportunities for RRCS as an organization and for the coordination of services within the Rappahannock-Rapidan region prior to his retirement in February 2018.



PLANNING PROJECTS

RRRC Staff Provides Local Assistance Throughout the Year

Regional Commission staff continued to engage with member localities in the provision of comprehensive and technical planning assistance throughout the past fiscal year. In addition to on-call provision of data indicators from the U.S. Census Bureau, Virginia Employment Commission, and other sources and Geographic Information System (GIS) data analysis and mapping, the Commission also provides larger technical assistance projects through agreements with member jurisdictions. Examples from the past year include:

- Comprehensive Plan Data Collection, Review, and Formatting for Madison County
- Comprehensive Plan Transportation Chapter Development for Madison County
- Comprehensive Plan Data Collection for Rappahannock County
- Comprehensive Plan Data Collection for the Town of Madison
- Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance Digitization for Town of Remington
- Community Development Block Grant Application Assistance for Culpeper County (Carver Center) and Orange County
- Smart Scale Project Applications for Fauquier & Madison Counties
- Solid Waste management Plan and Water Supply Plan Updates for Madison County
- Rapidan Transportation Concepts Plan



Solar Planning & Analysis

Utility scale solar energy development pressure has increased seemingly overnight for the Rappahannock-Rapidan Region. In an effort to consider the impacts of utility scale solar development at a regional scale the RRRRC completed a land suitability analysis for the region. The analysis aims to do in part what a solar developer would do- that is figure out where utility scale solar projects can go in terms of essential utility scale solar site elements such as slope and proximity to grid infrastructure. Identified suitable areas are where local planning commissions and planners can generally expect utility scale solar applications to come from. The major benefit of a PDC doing this study, this suitability analysis aims to include local input on where they want utility scale solar to go. This includes maintaining prime agricultural lands and protected historic and culturally significant land. This assessment can be used as a general reference tool when considering zoning code amendments or rezoning for certain areas and also aid in long range planning initiatives. Identified optimal areas may have other potential elements that make those areas non-suitable for large scale solar including but not limited to impacts on viewsheds, storm water runoff and impact on forested lands.

This assessment aims to provide a holistic suitability assessment, combining the wide-ranging land suitability needs and constraints of a utility scale solar installation including the limitations imposed by the existing transmission infrastructure while also incorporating local input on how and where solar development should occur.

In April, more than 70 participants including local elected officials, planning commissioners, county and town staff, and interested citizens, attended the Shedding a Light on Solar workshop hosted by RRRRC and the Piedmont Environmental Council at the American Legion Post 247 building in Remington. Attendees heard from a diverse range of state agency representatives, solar energy professionals, and local planners from other areas of Virginia, and were able to take information back to their respective localities as solar energy projects from utility scale to rooftop installations continue to emerge in the region



Montpelier Transportation Analysis

The Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission received requests from the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), Orange County and the Montpelier Foundation to aid in a high-level analysis of Montpelier's existing transportation network. The Montpelier Foundation identified possible future development opportunities that align with the historic and agricultural nature of what was formerly James Madison's estate. The Montpelier Foundation wanted to understand the costs and benefits associated with transportation enhancements needed to support identified development opportunities.

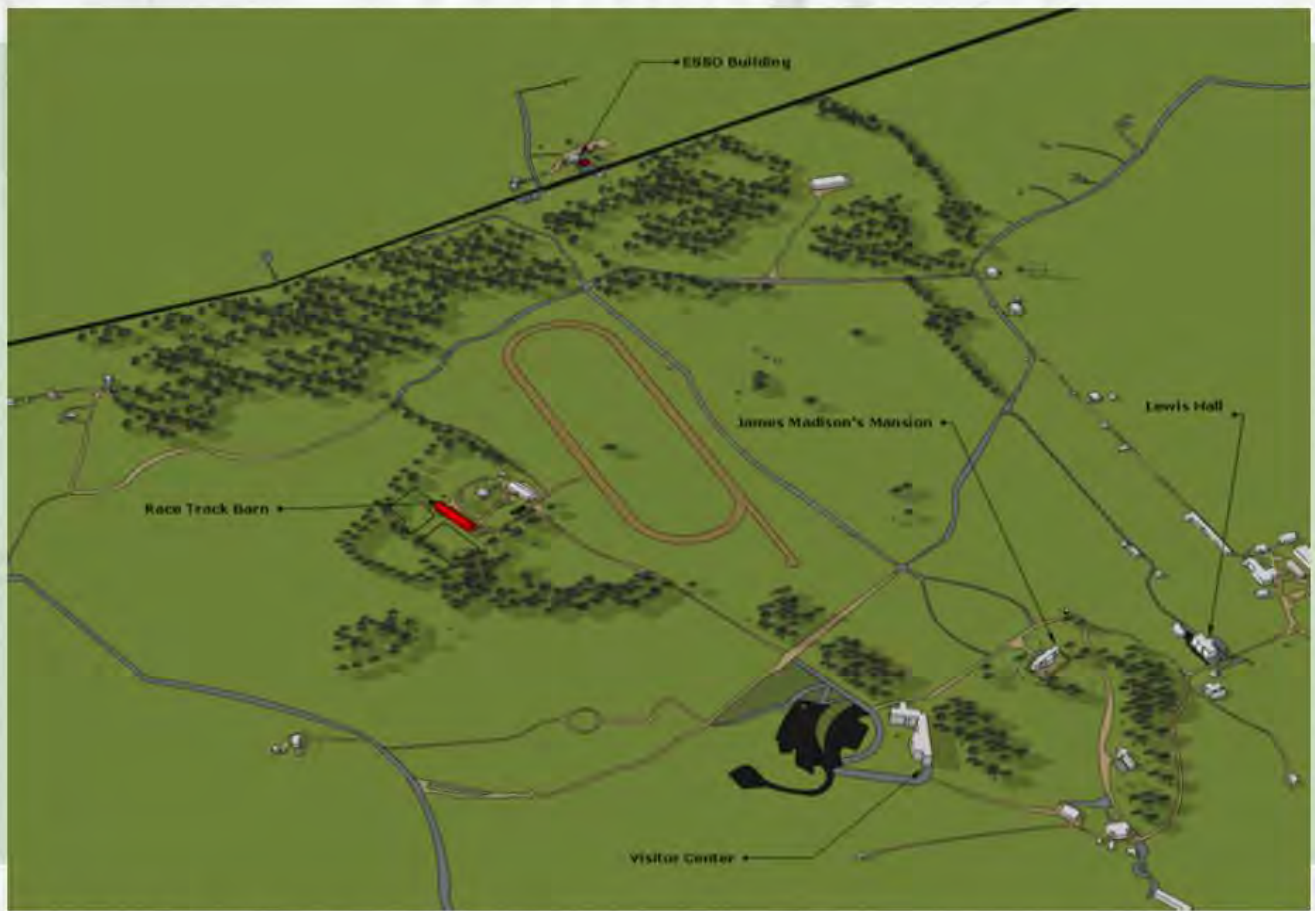
The transportation analysis compiled quantitative and qualitative data on the existing transportation network at Montpelier. Goals and objectives for improvements to Montpelier's transportation network were derived from an assessment of the regional transportation system, demographic and tourism trends, existing site conditions, a review of previous plans and stakeholder interviews. GIS and SketchUp were used as analytic design and modeling tools. The SketchUp model was created to scale based on ArcGIS shapefiles converted to CAD .dwg files.

Multiple brew-pub site locations and design scenarios were modeled and transportation recommendations were applied to each scenario based on the developed factors for consideration. Based on stakeholder input, a review of on and off-site existing conditions and consideration of previous plans recommendations,

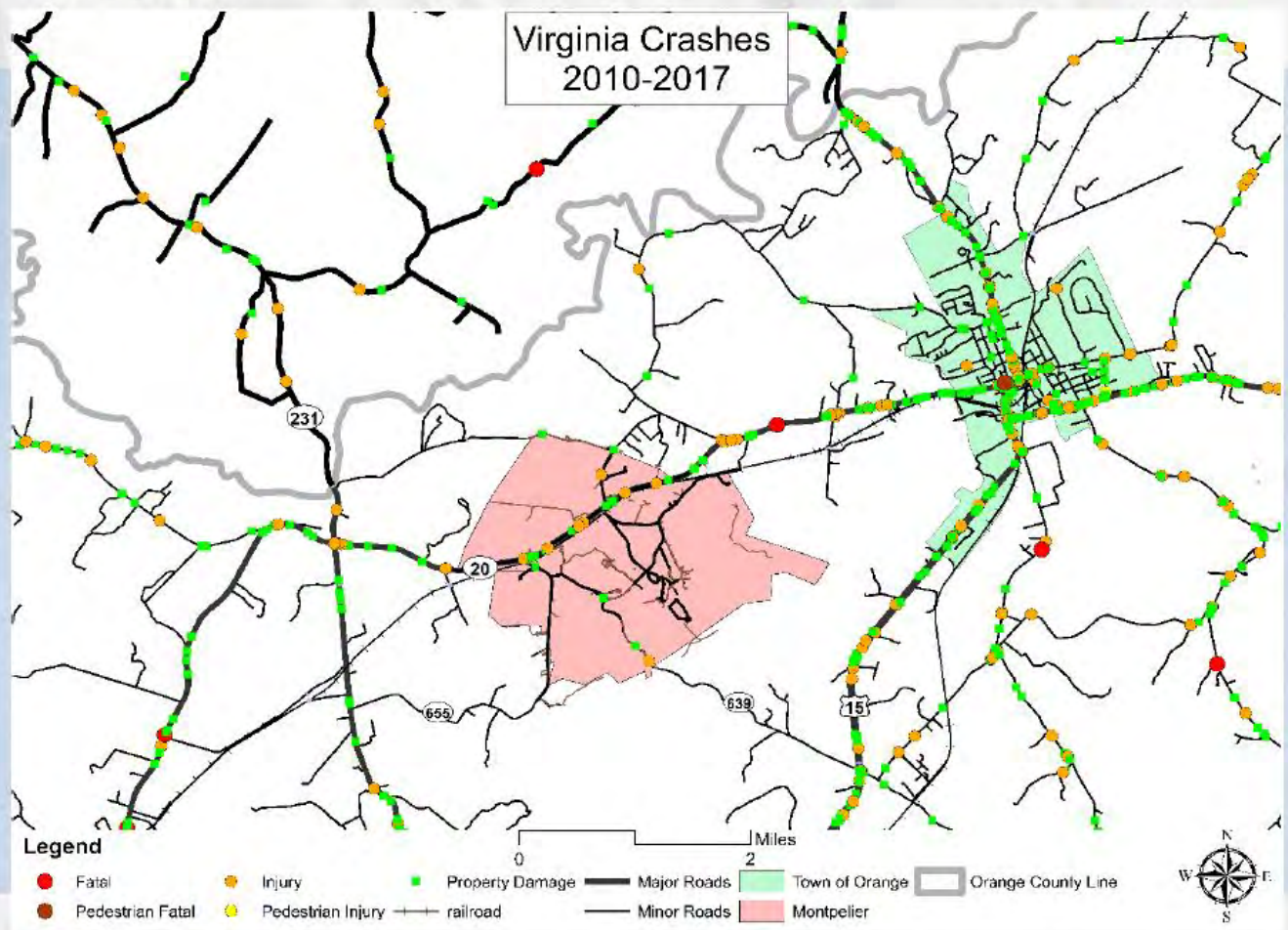
The Project Recommended:

- Continued development of strategic Bicycle and Pedestrian connections on-site and to other locations in Orange County, including the Town of Orange, Town of Gordonsville, and regional trails where practicable.
- Widening & paving Farm Road & Race Farm Road to allow for two-way traffic if the Race Track Barn is the site developed for future uses identified in VT opportunities Report (2015)
- Configuring on-site traffic flow to support a more intuitive and comfortable connection between James Madison's Mansion, Lewis Hall, The Visitor Center, the potential Brew Pub Site and Parking.
- Designing on and off-site parking that supports new development with as minimal an impact on the historic property as possible
- Exploring bus and other mass transit connections to reduce parking demand and support connections between Montpelier and local towns.
- Implementing Assessing Opportunities for Agriculture and Agritourism at Montpelier
- Participate with Orange County and the Virginia Department of Transportation on activities and projects to enhance accessibility to Montpelier

The transportation analysis complimented previous plans completed within the last decade while still supporting ongoing initiatives at Montpelier and in the larger surrounding area.



SketchUp Model



Safety Influences

REGIONAL WORKSHOPS

Regional Workshop Series Serves Wide Audience

The Regional Commission continued to serve as a convener for information sharing, coordinated responses to regional planning issues, and collaborative focus on asset development through a widely varied series of workshops during the past year. These workshops brought together planners, administrators, emergency management officials, engineers, destination marketing organizations, and citizens and included:

- Floodplain Management Training focused on ordinance development, floodplain regulations, GIS tools for floodplain mapping, and dam safety.
- GIS Land Cover Workshop focused on innovative uses of recently released 1-meter digital land cover data.
- Infrastructure Funding Workshop focused on available funding resources for water system construction, wastewater systems, and other local infrastructure needs.
- Solar Planning Workshop focused on the ongoing interest in utility scale solar development in rural areas across much of Virginia.
- Regional Tourism Workshops focused on development joint Packages & Promotions for tourism destinations.

Partners and presenters at the workshops included staff from the region's Counties and Towns, Piedmont Environmental Council, Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation, Chesapeake Conservancy, Regional Decision Systems, USDA Rural Development Virginia, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, Virginia Department of Health-Office of Drinking Water, SERCAP, Virginia Department of Housing & Community Development, Virginia Association of Counties, Solar Foundation, Northern Virginia Regional Commission, Gloucester County, Southampton County, and Virginia Tourism Corporation.



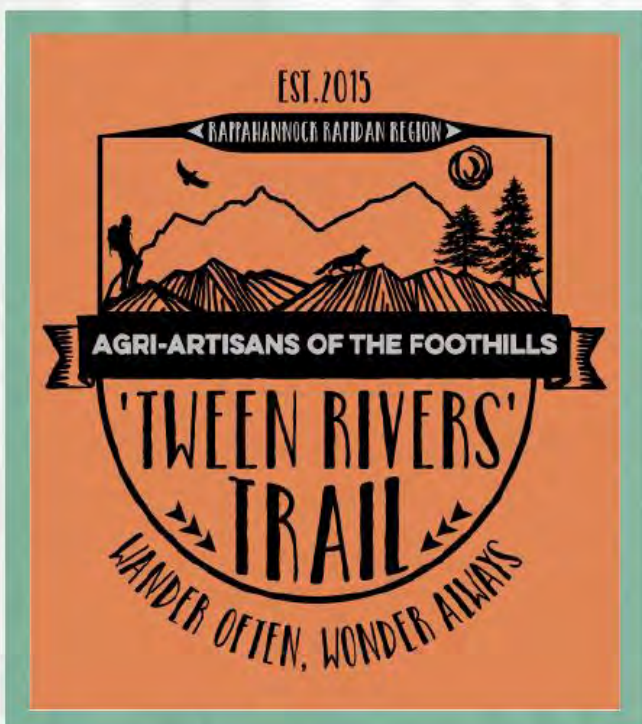
Tourism

The Regional Tourism Committee was awarded \$21,012,500 through a Virginia Tourism Corporation Leverage and Marketing Program Grant (VTCLMP) in February of 2018, one of only 56 in the state of Virginia. The grant required a 2:1 match (\$42,025) totaling \$63,037,500 that will be used to continue developing the 'Tween Rivers Trail marketing materials and promote the region's tourism industry. Brochures and videos will be produced, ads will be placed in print, digital and social media venues, and both the

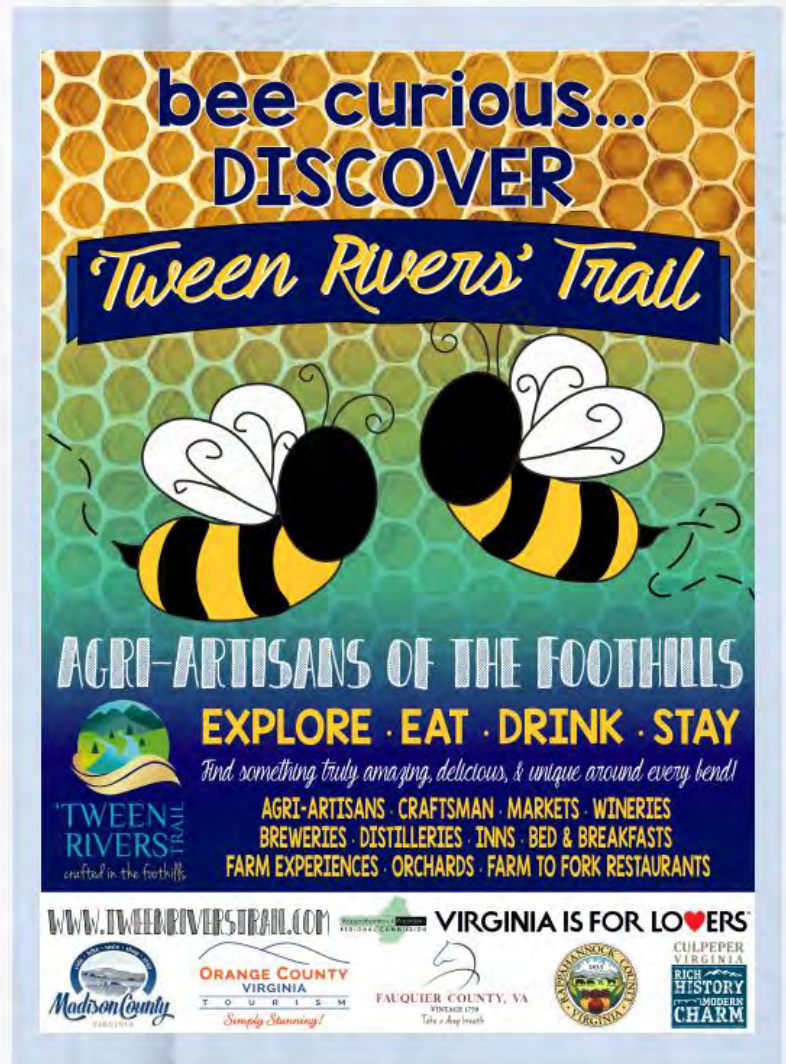
The Regional Tourism Committee continues to host free quarterly workshops on various topics designed to assist and support agri-tourism businesses and activities in the region. Funded in part through RRRC's USDA Farmer's Market Promotional Program grant, this year's workshops topics included:

- Packages & Promotions held in March
- Digital Advertising and Customer Reviews to be held in October
- TRT Networking Social to be held in December

There are nearly 80 businesses in the region listed as trail sites on with the 'Tween Rivers Trail System.



Above: 2018 TRT T-Shirt Design



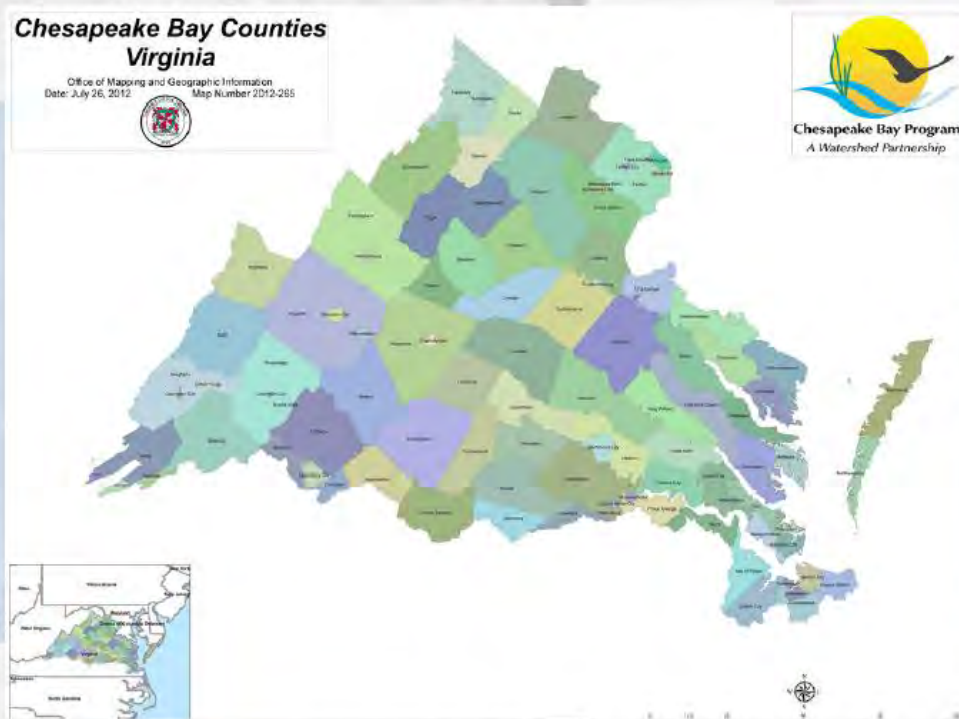
Above: 2018 Trail Photo Op Advertisement

Chesapeake Bay TMDL - Phase III Watershed Implementation Plan

The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), together with the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, is developing the Phase III Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) to meet US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) requirements to reduce pollutant loads to the Chesapeake Bay by 2025. To support this effort, RRRC and most other Planning Districts Commissions (PDCs) in Virginia's Chesapeake Bay watershed are coordinating the regional process to develop a slate of Best Management Practices and implementation strategies for the urban sector.

RRRC staff have held three monthly stakeholder meetings to collect input on stormwater, septic systems and urban forestry. Approximately 30 people have participated in the process, including representatives of all five counties in the region, state agencies, soil and water conservation districts, home builders, land trusts and environmental non-profit organizations. Soil and Water Conservation Districts are addressing agriculture and the remaining forestry BMPs separately through their concurrent process. DEQ will then combine both sets of data to review at a final joint agriculture and urban meeting to be held by RRRC in November. All meeting minutes, presentations and associated documents are available on RRRC's website at www.rrregion.org/chesbaytmdl.html

Water quality monitoring data have shown improvement in the Bay and our local streams with implementation of the previous WIP. This is encouraging news. Implementation strategies can have many benefits beyond water quality improvement, however, such as reduced flooding, main street beautification, recreation and economic development. All interested stakeholder organizations are encouraged to participate in the public process. In addition to crafting a document that better reflects local conditions and resource needs, local input in the plan can drive future state policy and influence future funding availability for related programs.



Purely Piedmont

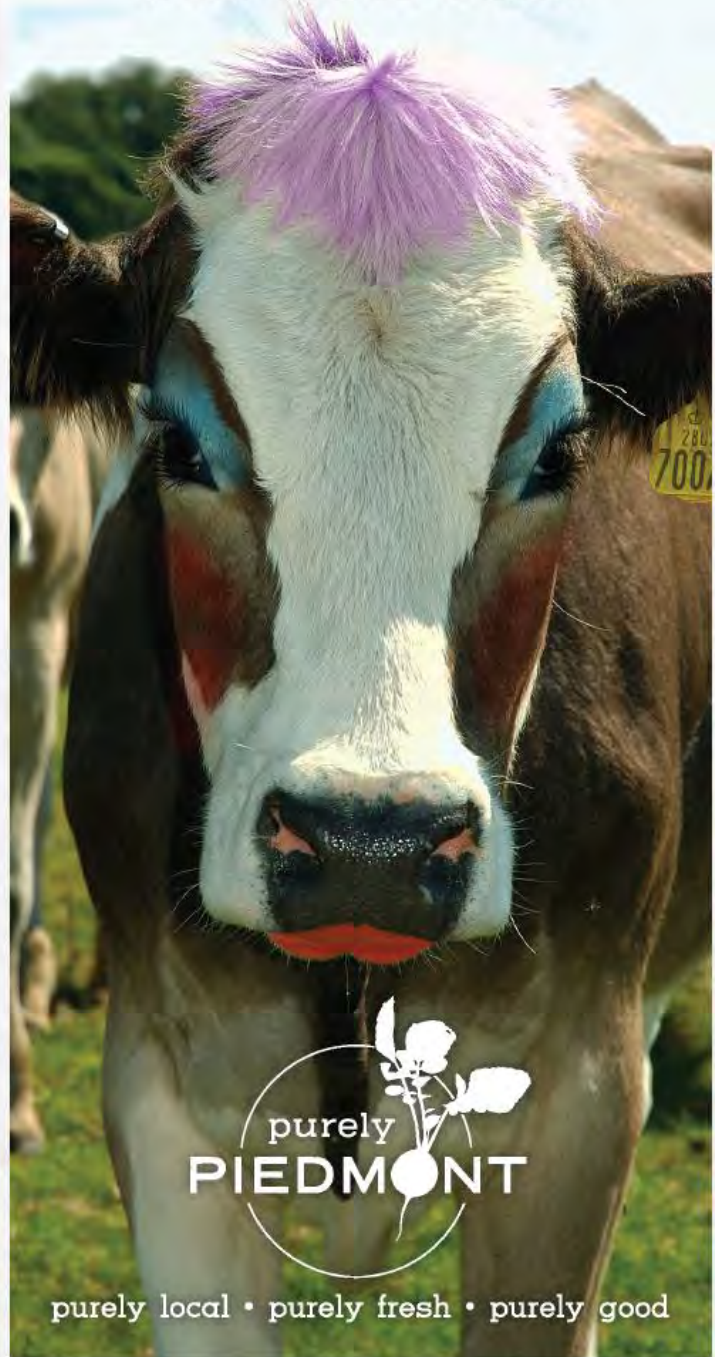
The Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission launched its Purely Piedmont label program in November 2017, to promote the region's locally grown food and beverages. Similar in concept to the state's Virginia Grown program, producers who register their products with the program receive free labels with the Purely Piedmont logo to affix to their products, in addition to digital versions of the logo to incorporate into their own marketing materials. Displaying the regional logo allows consumers to easily identify our farmers' products and make more informed choices.

In addition to the label program, the Commission has also promoted the region's locally grown food and beverages through a public awareness campaign. Highlights included postcards mailed to 20,000 residences across the region, a billboard erected in Culpeper, and advertisements on the Orange-Culpeper Connector bus. RRRC staff also attended Culpeper Fest and Taste of the Mountains to distribute Purely Piedmont promotional items and information materials, reaching over 500 individuals.

Additionally, the region's Farm to Table Showcase was held on September 24th at Rock Hill Farm in Culpeper County. RRRC jointly hosted this farmer-buyer event with the Piedmont Environmental Council. Producers were invited to set up tables with displays of their products, food or beverage samples, and information about their farm/business, while the buyers circulated. The event provided a wonderful opportunity for area food and beverage producers to connect with potential buyers and tap into additional markets.

To register for the label program or to learn more, please visit our new website www.purelypiedmont.com.

**No matter how you
dress up the competition,
local tastes better.**



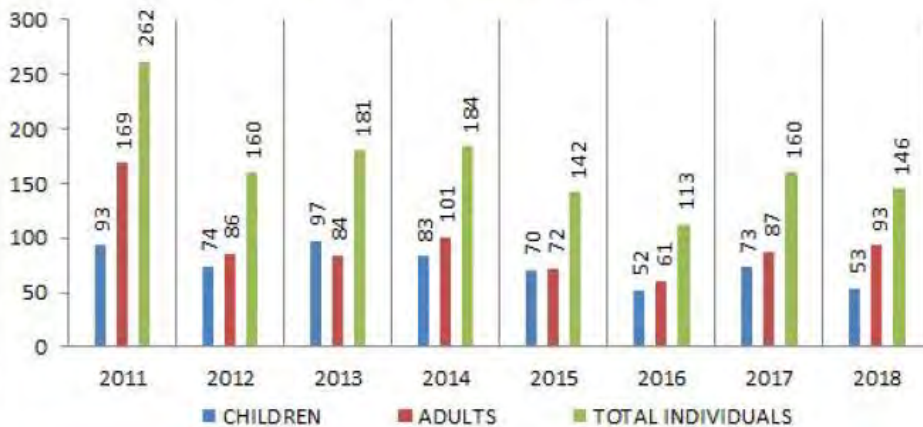
LOCAL FOODS

HOUSING

Foothills Housing Network

The Foothills Housing Network continued to work collaboratively to understand and address homelessness throughout the region. The Point In Time (PIT) count was held on January 24, 2018 and resulted in 139 total individuals, down from 160 in 2017, and 77 households, up from 72 in 2017. Additionally, there was rise in those who were at the Emergency Shelters and those Unsheltered, and a decrease in those in Transitional Housing (see chart). The Virginia Homeless Solutions Program (VHSP) grants for the Prevention, Rapid Rehousing, Central Entry and Emergency Shelters were submitted in April and awarded in July. Community Touch, Culpeper Housing and Shelter Services, People Inc. and RRRC will continue to implement these programs based on the Housing First model while incorporating other appropriate community resources such as the Rappahannock-Rapidan Community Services Housing Choice Voucher Program and Fauquier Department of Social Services' General Relief fund as needed. This ensures a unified crisis response system and a no wrong door approach.

FHN Point-In-Time Count 2011-2018
Number of Individuals



FHN Point-in-Time Trend 2011-2018
TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS



May brought significant changes with FHN founder Cathy Zielinski retiring, Jenny Biche replacing her as Human Services Program Manager, and Jessi Mason, AmeriCorps VISTA worker beginning her year long internship with FHN. In June, Jenny presented "Coordinated Entry in Practice: An Urban and Rural Perspective" with Thomas Barnett, Program Manager at the Fairfax County Office to Prevent and End Homelessness, at the Virginia Housing Authority (VHA)'s Housing the Most Vulnerable Conference in Richmond. And in July FHN Central Entry initiated the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Central Entry Program as required by the Balance of State Continuum of Care. HMIS will enable FHN to document and track data on needs, unmet needs and outcomes for those residents in need of housing assistance in PD9.

FAMS

The Foothills Area Mobility System (FAMS) continues to work collaboratively to address human services transportation needs in the region. The FAMS website (www.fams.org) has been expanded to include a Transportation Matrix, that allows users to input starting and ending destinations to populate a list of transportation options that could potentially meet their needs. In addition, social media platforms for FAMS have been developed to now include Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

The Foothills Express is in its 8th year of service transporting residents from Culpeper and Madison to Charlottesville. The handicapped accessible bus runs three times a day, three days a week. While the majority of clients utilize the service for medical appointments, we encourage anyone to ride for any reason.

In FY18 the FAMS One Call Center welcomed new employees, Martin Flattery and Penny Thompson; they have contributed a wealth of knowledge and caring compassion to their roles!

FAMS is working with localities, stakeholders, and agencies to identify and conquer transportation gaps in variety of capacities: improving transit signs and maps, conducting community advertising, travel training for vulnerable populations, and applying for additional funding to create and implement new solutions!

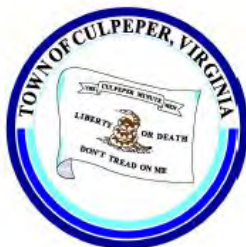
Commuter Services

Commuter Services is a program primarily focused in providing transportation information, car and van pool ride matching services, and vanpool subsidies across the region.

This year the program has focused heavily on advertising alternative transit options such as biking and vanpooling. Several promotions, surveys, and targeted advertising have been conducted over the past year. With plans to increase targeted outreach methods with creative strategies – it is our hope to continue to support the region's commuting population and lower 'single-occupancy' travel to conserve the our region's beauty and accessibility as well as decrease the amount of money and time that individual commuters expend on a daily basis.

Rural Transportation/Smart Scale

SMART SCALE is a statewide program that distributes funding based on an evaluation of projects that will determine how effectively they help the state achieve its transportation goals. SMART SCALE funds are awarded on a competitive basis at the district and state levels based on how well projects score for in factor areas including safety, congestion mitigation, accessibility, environmental quality, economic development and land use. As a part of the RRRC's participation in VDOT's Rural Transportation Assistance Program the regional commission worked with localities and VDOT to identify, scope and optimize scoring on SMART SCALE project applications. The RRRC submitted SMART SCALE applications on request from localities on projects that are within a regional network or on corridors of statewide significance.



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