

**FINAL Meeting Minutes  
Rivanna River Basin Commission**

August 2, 2007

6:00 pm

Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission  
401 East Water Street, Charlottesville

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**Attendance**

***Rivanna River Basin Commission (Commission) Members***

***Present:***

Ms. Jeri Allen, Greene County Board of Supervisors

Dr. Paolo D'Odorico, Charlottesville Citizen

Mr. Lindsay Dorrier, Albemarle County Board of Supervisors

Mr. John E. Easter II, Thomas Jefferson Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Directors

Mr. Kevin Lynch, Charlottesville City Council

Mr. John Martin, Albemarle County Citizen

Mr. Marvin F. Moss, Fluvanna County Board of Supervisors

Mr. Robert Runkle, Culpeper Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Directors

Ms. Sally Thomas, Albemarle County Board of Supervisors

***Absent:***

Mr. Smith Coleman, Greene County Citizen

Mr. Mickey Cox, Greene County Board of Supervisors

Ms. Kendra Hamilton, Charlottesville City Council

Mr. Gene F. Ott, Fluvanna County Board of Supervisors

Mr. Andy Wilson, Fluvanna County Citizen

***Speaker***

Ms. Roberta "Robbi" Savage, Rivanna Conservation Society

**1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 pm by Ms. Thomas.

**2. Roll Call**

The members introduced themselves and attendance was taken.

**3. Determination of Quorum**

It was determined a quorum was present.

**4. Approval of the Agenda**

Ms. Thomas suggested moving the Rivanna Conservation Society presentation to before "Initiating Work Product."

## **5. Comments from the Public**

There were no comments from the public.

## **6. Approval of the Minutes of the Preceding Meeting**

The minutes from the preceding meeting were approved.

## **7. Report of the Chair**

Ms. Thomas informed the Commission that she recently attended a NACO (National Association of Counties) meeting with 3,000 local government officials from all over the nation. She said that a lot of issues relating to water quality were discussed at the meeting. She found out that western counties have learned a lot about how to work with the Army. She said that with the expansion of the NGIC (National Ground Intelligence Center) in Albemarle, we should be thinking about this. The Army is interested in establishing buffers to protect their operations, which could also be beneficial for protection of the Rivanna River along which the property lies.

## **8. Report of the Fiscal Agent**

Ms. Diane Frisbee of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) stated that none of the Commission's funds have been spent. Ms. Frisbee was asked if the money is earning interest, and she replied that she wasn't sure but would look into that and get back to the Commission. The Commission expressed an interest in investing or otherwise earning interest on the funds.

## **9. Reports of Committees**

Ms. Thomas suggested everyone take a moment to read the summary from the minutes of the July 13 TAC meeting. At the meeting, TAC members reviewed a list of threats to the health of the Rivanna watershed and were asked to rank the top three threats and indicate their confidence in their votes. Ms. Frisbee showed the Commission the list with the votes from the TAC meeting. Altered hydrology/landscape changes, sedimentation, and dam management/flow regimes were overwhelmingly ranked as the top three threats. The level of confidence in the votes varied among members of the group. The TAC discussed the need to come to consensus about the level of confidence in the threats and the sources of the threats to determine what next steps should be. The TAC decided that they should tell the Commission that the TAC has a high degree of confidence that altered hydrology and sedimentation are very high threats to the health of the watershed, but that they would like to delve deeper into these threats before making recommendations about next steps the Commission should take.

Several Commission members asked for further description of the altered hydrology threat. Mr. Greg Harper, Water Resources Manager for Albemarle County, was in attendance and explained that altered hydrology is a change in the volume, velocity, and peak rate of flow of water in a watershed that often results from conversion of forest and other practices. There are many potential adverse effects of altering the natural flow regime. Ms. Allen asked if altered hydrology was too broad of an issue for the Commission to address. Ms. Frisbee replied that the TAC identified three top threats that are related and that they would like to have further discussion of the three threats at the next TAC meeting in order to determine next steps.

Dr. D'Odorico said that we need to have a better idea of sources of sediment and need to do geological comparisons to find out where exactly the sediment is coming from. Mr. Easter asked if any work has been done on the identification of sediment sources. Mr. Ed Imhoff was in attendance and said that 5 years ago he was part of a group that spent a good bit of time trying to figure out sources of sediment, and that there was also some work done on sedimentation for the water supply plan. Mr. Imhoff also said no geochemical work has been done, though a student at UVA did some research on the reservoir. Dr. D'Odorico also mentioned another UVA student who recently completed a Master's and was proposing to do some radioisotope testing to determine sediment sources but she didn't get funding to do the testing. Mr. Harper and Ms. Frisbee mentioned that The Nature Conservancy requested a proposal for identification of sediment sources in the watershed which included detailed isotopic analysis and the cost was over \$1 million. Ms. Frisbee said that it is important to strike a balance between a very detailed and expensive analysis and getting enough information on the magnitude of the different sources to be able to develop management strategies to abate the threat. She said that perhaps detailed analysis could be used in a subset of small watersheds in the Rivanna that could then be extrapolated to the whole watershed. Mr. Moss asked what geotechnical analysis would produce as far as management strategies for altered hydrology. Ms. Thomas stated that if we determined sediment is coming from agricultural fields for example, buffers may be an appropriate management strategy, but if the sediment is coming from in-stream, management strategies to address altered hydrology and runoff would be pursued. Dr. D'Odorico said he thinks we should do some watershed monitoring and perhaps some monitoring of developments.

Ms. Thomas also mentioned that the TAC suggested the Commission appoint Jeff Sitler, Hydrogeologist and Environmental Compliance Manager with the University of Virginia, to the TAC. Upon a motion by Mr. Runkle, the Commission voted unanimously to appoint Mr. Sitler to the TAC.

## **10. Old and Unfinished Business**

### **Organizational Items**

#### **1. Discuss media plan**

The group reviewed the media plan prepared by The Nature Conservancy and Mr. Moss. Mr. Moss stated that an article about the Commission appeared in two Fluvanna weeklies in addition to the Daily Progress. Mr. Moss said he would send copies of the articles to Ms. Frisbee to forward to the rest of the group. Ms. Allen said she would rather see a picture of someone doing something rather than just a group shot of the Commission. Mr. Lynch mentioned that establishing a website is important for media relations.

Ms. Frisbee showed the group the draft letterhead TNC has been working on. There were several suggested changes to the logo on the letterhead, including improving the visibility of the City, showing the entire county boundaries, using black outlines of the counties rather than different colors, and showing the entire Rivanna watershed in one solid color (blue or green). Everyone liked the tagline and the other aspects of the letterhead.

Ms. Thomas mentioned that meetings of the Commission have been posted on the TJPDC building and TJPDC website. She asked if Commission members wanted to list future meetings anywhere else. Members said they would contact their localities to list future meetings on their calendars.

## **2. Discuss field trip ideas**

Mr. Moss said that there is a long stretch of the Rivanna River in Fluvanna that is under conservation easement, and the Commission could organize a field trip to visit some of these properties. Mr. Moss said this would be good publicity and would be educational for the members. Ms. Thomas mentioned that she talked to Ridge Schuyler with TNC who mentioned a hospital in Roanoke that is doing rainwater harvesting that the Commission could visit. Ms. Thomas suggested the Commission make a list of potential field trips and go on trips several times a year. Mr. Martin said that if the Commission wants to look at places that have problems in the watershed, they ought to look at the Moormans River because it is dry for a good portion of the year and is a state designated scenic river. Ms. Allen and Mr. Runkle said they had no ideas for a field trip in Greene County at this time. Mr. Lynch said that perhaps the Commission could visit Moores Creek which is an impaired waterway. Ms. Thomas said that there are four field trip ideas and Greene will think about an idea for a trip in their county. Ms. Thomas said she would work with Mr. Moss and Ridge Schuyler to try to schedule the Fluvanna field trip for October.

Field trip options:

Conservation easements along Rivanna in Fluvanna County  
Hospital in Roanoke doing rainwater harvesting  
Moormans River in Albemarle County  
Moores Creek in Charlottesville

## **3. Discuss website**

Mr. Lynch said that he thinks a website would be a great part of the media plan. He mentioned that when the Commission sends out a press release, the website can provide background material the reporters can access. He also said there are a lot of interesting presentations and materials that have been shared with the Commission since its first meeting and it would be great to have these on a website. In addition, the City can put a link on its calendar of events for each Commission meeting and the link will lead to the website with agendas, minutes, etc. Ms. Thomas said that the website can also have links to other websites, such as the Rivanna Conservation Society site. Ms. Allen said it would be better to use a website name such as “www.rivannabasin.org” instead of a website with Rivanna River in the name since it would be more representative of the composition and work of the Commission.

Ms. Frisbee said that she looked into whether TNC could host the website and found out that it could be done, but it would have to be a page accessed through the TNC website. Mr. Moss said that the cost to have a stand-alone Commission website would include a cost per year for the domain and then a monthly fee for the server. Mr. Lynch asked if TJPDC could host the site on their server. Ms. Rochelle Garwood of TJPDC was in attendance and replied that TJPDC doesn't own the server but has the ability to put domains on it. She said she was not sure how many domains they can have but she would look into it and get back to the Commission. TJPDC

also has a webmaster and has done free web hosting for some groups in the past. She said if the site is fairly simple, they may be able to host it for free, but may need to charge if it is a complicated site.

Mr. Moss mentioned the Fluvanna County website may be a good source for pictures. He also mentioned that Leslie Middleton and Karen Firehock did a class at UVA on the Rivanna and it would be good to link that study to the Commission website. Ms. Frisbee also offered TNC's assistance with the website or providing materials to post to the website. Ms. Thomas suggested Mr. Lynch, Mr. Moss and TNC serve on a subcommittee to work on establishing a website.

#### **4. Discuss need and options for legal counsel**

Ms. Thomas said she is still waiting on information on this topic and suggested this be deferred to the next meeting.

#### **5. Set next Commission meeting date**

The next meeting was set for September 20 at 6 pm at the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission.

#### **Presentation by Robbi Savage, Executive Director, Rivanna Conservation Society**

Ms. Thomas introduced Ms. Savage and said that the Commission is planning to have representatives from other groups working in this area give presentations about their work at Commission meetings. Rivanna Conservation Society is the first of these presenters.

Ms. Savage gave an overview of her background and experience in water quality issues. She began working for RCS in November 2006. Ms. Savage told the group about the many activities RCS is working on. A summary of these activities is below.

- Third Thursday Brown Bag Public Education Forums – These monthly lunch forums are held at the Jefferson Madison Regional Library in Charlottesville. A variety of topics have been discussed at these lunches. Mr. Moss will be speaking at the next Brown Bag, and Ridge Schuyler will be giving a talk about the Commission soon.
- Fourth Sunday at Scheier – Scheier Natural Area is a 100-acre preserve owned by RCS. The Fourth Sundays are field educational experiences. The next event will be about pond culture, with a focus on the 7 fish farm ponds on the property that are currently being studied.
- River Clean Ups and Paddles – RCS is known for river clean ups and paddles. Recently RCS did a River Regatta and were also involved in the James River Sojourn. RCS is considering doing a Rivanna River Sojourn as well, and Ms. Savage asked the Commission to consider how they might want to take part in this.
- Youth Education Programs and Teacher Training Programs – RCS partners with Chesapeake Bay Foundation and others to offer programs for local schoolchildren. They also do a Teacher Summit to train Teachers, and are interested in offering a Youth Summit as well.
- Rain Barrels – RCS promotes the use of rain barrels and sells rain barrels from several nurseries and shops in the area.

- Woolen Mills Dam Breach – RCS has been working for years on a project to breach the Woolen Mills dam and Ms. Savage said that by Sunday they should know when they can begin the actual breaching process, which hopefully will start in the next two weeks.
- Watershed Score Card – James River Association started the score card 3 years ago. RCS, the Environmental Law Clinic at UVA and the Southern Environmental Law Center are working to update the score card for the Rivanna watershed and make recommendations to localities about ordinance changes. Ms. Savage said she would like to present this to the Commission and to supervisors before going before the localities with a formal presentation. The assessments of Charlottesville and Albemarle are almost complete.
- World Water Monitoring Day – RCS wants to initiate this in the Rivanna watershed. This event gives children and older folks an opportunity to get out in streams and collect samples. The data are posted online in the largest citizen monitoring database in the world. The monitoring includes pH, turbidity, temperature, and dissolved oxygen.
- Student Intern Program – RCS utilizes college students throughout the year as interns.
- Citizen Dialogue on Stormwater – Ms. Savage wants to initiate and facilitate a dialogue on stormwater among citizens, and is currently looking for funding for this.
- TMDLs – RCS is also engaged with DEQ on the TMDLs for the Rivanna Watershed. Ms. Savage suggested that perhaps TNC, RCS, TJPDC, and the Commission can all work together to try to get funding for the TMDLs. She also mentioned that she is concerned about a change to the criteria for bacteria that is being proposed as part of DEQ’s triennial review. This would increase the maximum allowable bacteria levels from 8 persons in 1000 being affected to 10 in 1000. Ms. Savage is concerned that this is a way for DEQ to reduce their standards so that they can meet their goals.

Ms. Savage closed by saying she would be glad to work with the Commission to help with field trips, loaning RCS’s kayaks, etc. She also invited the Commission members to the September 15 RCS Annual Meeting. Ridge Schuyler, along with Jeff Lape from the Chesapeake Bay Program at EPA, will be there and Ms. Savage invited Ms. Thomas to come speak with Ridge if she is interested. Mr. Moss pointed out that some of these things that are happening at the state level can be joint letters from RCS and the Commission as well as other organizations. Ms. Savage said that Mr. Andy Wilson is the past president of RCS and he has been keeping RCS updated on the Commission’s activities. She added that RCS is there to help and that the Commission should feel free to call on them at any time.

## **Initiating Work Product**

### **1. Discuss and adopt next steps from TAC recommendations**

See “Reports of Committees” above.

### **2. TJPDC report on action steps for Moores Creek TMDL**

Ms. Rochelle Garwood of TJPDC said that she reconvened the Moores Creek TMDL implementation group recently. She gave an update on what happened at the meeting, including action steps that were identified. Action steps include working to finish connecting Southwood Mobile Home Park to the public sewer service, completing mitigation near the stockyard, continuing educational efforts and PSAs on pet waste, targeting Soil and Water Conservation

District efforts to get livestock out of streams, and identifying potential stream restoration projects. Another item discussed at the Moores Creek meeting was septic system cleanouts. TJPDC and others have written grants to try to get WQIF funding for cleanouts but haven't been able to get funding. Ms. Garwood heard that it may be difficult to get these grants without a septic cleanout ordinance in place. Ms. Thomas said that Albemarle County doesn't have a septic cleanout ordinance but she has tried in the past to have one adopted. Ms. Garwood said she would look into whether or not it's true that an ordinance is required to get WQIF funding and will report back to the Commission at the next meeting. Ms. Thomas suggested Ms. Garwood look into if an ordinance has to be at the county level or if it can be at the level of an impaired watershed. Mr. Moss said that he would be interested in seeing model ordinances and learning more about how they were put in place in other localities. Ms. Allen said she was also interested in knowing how this was done in other places.

### **3. Discuss writing letter to request funding for Moores Creek TMDL implementation**

Ms. Garwood also reported back to the group regarding the research she and Alyson Sappington did regarding the 319 priority list and the associated questions raised at the last Commission meeting. Ms. Sappington found out from DCR that there is not a priority list for 319 funding, but there are 12 projects currently being funded and two more to be started. These are long term, high cost projects, and 319 funding won't be available for Moores Creek until these other projects are completed. She was told that the best option for funding for Moores Creek is to apply for a WQIA grant. Ms. Sappington suggested the Commission wait to send a letter until discrete activities to address the Moores Creek TMDL have been identified. At that point, the Commission can send a letter to Charlie Lundsford and/or Nicole Sandberg at DCR requesting funds for a specific purpose.

### **11. New business**

Mr. Martin stated that he wants the Commission Chair to write a letter to the Rivanna Water and Sewer Authority (RWSA) regarding in-stream flows. He suggested the letter state that in-stream flows are important and the Commission wants RWSA to look into every possible way to restore in-stream flows for the Moormans River. Mr. Martin said that the community water supply plan has measures to protect the Moormans but it won't be in place until 2013. He said that right now 0.4 mgd (million gallons per day) are released from the dam at Sugar Hollow Reservoir and the release will continue at this rate until the new dam is built at Ragged Mountain Reservoir in 2013.

Mr. Martin gave a brief summary of the water use history of the area. He said that during the summer months, especially during the 1990s, the Moormans has dried up. In 1999, the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors had a work session on in-stream flows in the river. At the time, RWSA said it was not possible to increase releases to the river. Mr. Martin said that at the work session, Ms. Thomas suggested that they ask RWSA to tell them how it can be done instead of saying it can't be done. Mr. Martin said that nothing really happened after that until a later date when RWSA came before the Board of Supervisors and stated that they see a need to better balance the needs of humans and aquatic life. At that time RWSA made the specific recommendation of releasing either 0.4 or 0.8 mgd from the dam. RWSA left it to the Board of Supervisors to decide and they approved the 0.4 mgd, as did City Council. Mr. Martin stated

that he is worried about the releases to the Moormans remaining at 0.4 mgd for the next 7 years, and said that 0.4 mgd is not based on any data, it's just a number RWSA felt they could live with. Mr. Martin said that he thought a letter from the Commission could encourage RWSA to think about other options.

Ms. Thomas mentioned the study done by TNC to provide RWSA with flow recommendations for the river. Mr. Lynch stated that he wasn't sure if the Commission should get involved in water policy. Mr. Martin replied that the Commission should be involved in encouraging communication on a regular basis and should send the letter. Ms. Thomas said that she fears the timing for a letter could not be worse since we are entering a drought. Ms. Allen said that she didn't see that this issue meets the goals of protecting the health of the Rivanna watershed. Mr. Martin replied that when there is no flow in the river things die. He also said that the Moormans is probably the cleanest water in the Rivanna watershed and it deserves protection. Ms. Allen said that there are a lot of rivers that have gone pretty much underground because it's so dry. She said that's what typically happens in August. Mr. Martin replied that it doesn't happen every year and it didn't used to happen in the Moormans. Dr. D'Odorico said he thinks it is pretty early for the Commission to make a statement like this about sedimentation but that the Commission may be ready to make a statement about flows. Mr. Martin said that is has never been his understanding that the only point of the Commission was to do studies, and he thinks what is needed is action such as this. Ms. Allen said that she doesn't want the Commission to lose their sense of priority and focus. She thinks we need to start with the major threats to the basin as a whole, and perhaps we should ask the TAC what they think about this. Ms. Thomas said that low flows were on the priority list the TAC identified and agreed that the TAC can weigh in on this issue. She said she is a bit hesitant to have the Commission send a letter, especially since we are entering a drought which makes the timing bad. Mr. Martin said that the timing is important because DEQ will soon release a draft permit, followed by public comment, and then the river's fate will be set in stone. Ms. Thomas replied that the fate of the Moormans is a good fate, it's just that the money isn't there to build the dam and implement the low flow recommendations right away. Mr. Martin replied that if there is something the Commission can do to prevent the river from being dry for the next seven years we should try it. Mr. Lynch said there may be ways that we can better manage our water resources but he doesn't think the Commission should address this issue because it will open up the door and the Commission will be considered the Water Policy Board. Ms. Thomas stated that she feels the issue Mr. Martin brought up should be brought to the attention of the TAC and she feels comfortable that the Commission has addressed this because it is one of the three threats that the TAC will further discuss.

Mr. Moss mentioned the Chesapeake Watershed Forum scheduled for October is a great event that he went to last year and will be speaking at this year.

## **12. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.

**Attachments:**

- A. RRBC Agenda 07Aug02
- B. RRBC TAC 07Jul13 FINAL
- C. RRBC Proposed media plan 07Jun21
- D. RRBC Proposed Letterhead 07Aug02
- E. RRBC Daily Progress 07Jul05
- F. RRBC Daily Progress 07Jul08
- G. RRBC RCS presentation 07Aug02
- H. RCS TMDL 07Mar15
- I. RRBC Chesapeake Watershed Forum 07Aug02