



## THE RIVANNA RIVER BASIN COMMISSION

“Protecting the Rivanna River Watershed: A Confluence of Interests”

October 25, 2007

Dear Mr. Paylor:

I am writing to announce the formation of the Rivanna River Basin Commission by the counties of Albemarle, Fluvanna, Greene and the city of Charlottesville. These four localities cover nearly 90 percent of the watershed, which has been identified as one of the finest Piedmont river systems in Virginia.

Governor Mark Warner signed enabling legislation in April 2004 which established the purpose of the Commission to “provide guidance for the stewardship and enhancement of the water and natural resources of the Rivanna River Basin.” In 2006, each of the four localities voted unanimously to join the Commission and each appointed two members of the governing body to serve on the Commission. Other Commission members include one representative each from the Culpeper and Thomas Jefferson Soil & Water Conservation Districts, and one citizen from each of the four localities. In addition, the Commission has raised nearly \$300,000 in private funds to initiate its work.

Since its inaugural meeting in April of 2007, the Commission has met five times, adopted a charter, elected a chair and vice-chair, and appointed a technical advisory committee to help guide its work. To ensure that we focus on the greatest threats facing the Rivanna, the Commission requested that the technical advisory committee make a recommendation about which issues to tackle first. Following four two-hour sessions, the group of local watershed professionals advised the Commission that it should focus its resources on addressing the threat posed by altered hydrology. We believe that as the watershed has shifted from a forested to a non-forested environment, water which used to infiltrate into the ground and recharge our groundwater is now racing across the landscape and into streams, where it tears apart streambanks and buries the streambed in sediment. In addition to suffocating the life out of our rivers and streams, the sediment is also filling up the region’s reservoirs. The Commission intends to begin work to implement strategies on the ground designed to stop this excessive sedimentation and recharge our groundwater in the Rivanna watershed.

The Department of Environmental Quality is already working on several TMDLs within the Rivanna watershed, and we expect that as we move forward to abate the threats to the watershed, we will need to work closely with DEQ and other agencies of the Commonwealth with whom we share the goal of protecting and restoring the rivers and streams of our community.

Sincerely,

Sally Thomas, Chair

**Albemarle County**  
Sally H. Thomas (Chair)  
Lindsay G. Dorrier, Jr.

**City of Charlottesville**  
Kendra Hamilton  
Kevin Lynch

**Fluvanna County**  
Marvin F. Moss (Vice-Chair)  
Gene F. Ott

**Greene County**  
Jeri Allen  
Mickey Cox

**Culpeper SWCD**  
Robert Runkle

**Thomas Jefferson SWCD**  
John E. Easter, II