

**FINAL Meeting Minutes
Rivanna River Basin Commission**

February 28, 2008
6:00 pm
Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission
401 East Water Street, Charlottesville

Attendance

Rivanna River Basin Commission (Commission) Members

Present:

Mr. Lindsay Dorrier, Albemarle County Board of Supervisors
Mr. John E. Easter II, Thomas Jefferson Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Directors
Ms. Holly Edwards, Charlottesville City Council
Mr. John Gooch, Fluvanna County Board of Supervisors
Mr. Satyendra Huja, Charlottesville City Council
Mr. John Martin, Albemarle County Citizen
Mr. Marvin F. Moss, Fluvanna County Board of Supervisors
Mr. Clarence Peyton, Greene County Board of Supervisors
Mr. Robert Runkle, Culpeper Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Directors
Ms. Roberta Savage, Greene County Citizen
Mr. Carl Schmitt, Greene County Board of Supervisors
Ms. Sally Thomas, Albemarle County Board of Supervisors
Mr. Andy Wilson, Fluvanna County Citizen

Absent:

Dr. Paolo D'Odorico, Charlottesville Citizen

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 pm by Ms. Thomas.

2. Roll Call

Attendance was taken.

3. Determination of Quorum

It was determined a quorum was present.

4. Approval of the Agenda

The agenda was approved.

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 October 18, 2007 full Commission meeting and the November 15, 2007 Executive Committee meeting were reviewed. Mr. Moss moved to approve the minutes, Mr. Runkle seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

7. Report of the Chair

Ms. Thomas said that as Chair she has written two letters of support for grant applications. One was for the Lewis and Clark Exploratory Center which is largely working on educational programs for children that include Rivanna River awareness. She also wrote a letter of support for two grants the Rivanna Conservation Society is seeking.

8. Report of the Fiscal Agent

Ms. Alyson Sappington of the Thomas Jefferson Soil and Water Conservation District (TJSWCD) provided the fiscal agent report. She stated that the Commission’s funds are still in an account at The Nature Conservancy (TNC) pending legal review by TNC to authorize transfer of funds to TJSWCD.

Balance as of September 30, 2007	=	297,556.59
Interest Earned (Oct. – Dec. 2007)	=	773.84
Cash donations received	=	35,200.00
Balance as of January 15, 2008 (cash only)	=	333,530.43
Stock value (estimated)	=	20,000.00
Balance as of January 15, 2008 (cash + est. stock)	=	353,530.43
Interest Earned (January 2008)	=	297.12
Donations received (including sale of above stock)	=	23,016.90
Balance as of January 15, 2008	=	\$356,844.45

Total Interest Earned to date = \$7,488.47 (of that, \$1,813.61 was earned since July 1, 2007 (FY08)).

Ms. Thomas asked Ridge Schuyler to provide a summary of how the Commission came to have these funds. Mr. Schuyler said that TNC went to the localities to talk about the idea of establishing the Commission and everyone liked the idea but said they didn’t have any funding to contribute. As a result, TNC raised this funding through private donations from the community.

9. Reports of Committees

Samuel Austin, Ridge Schuyler, and Greg Harper, all members of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), gave a presentation and report. Mr. Austin also distributed meeting summaries from the November 15, 2007 and January 17, 2008 TAC meetings.

Mr. Schuyler started the presentation with background on the Rivanna watershed and how the Commission came to be established. The Rivanna watershed covers 770 square miles and contains portions of seven different localities: the City of Charlottesville, and the counties of Albemarle, Greene, Fluvanna, Louisa, Orange and Nelson. In 1998, the Rivanna River Basin

Roundtable published the *State of the Basin Report*. The Roundtable was a group of local citizens and elected officials who voluntarily participated in the Rivanna River Basin Project, led by the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission. The *State of the Basin Report* originated the concept of a river basin commission for the Rivanna watershed. When TNC's Piedmont Program was established, Mr. Schuyler moved forward with the idea of establishing a river basin commission. On April 12, 2004, Governor Warner signed enabling legislation authorizing the creation of the Rivanna River Basin Commission. The purpose of the Commission is to "provide guidance for the stewardship and enhancement of the water and natural resources of the Rivanna River Basin." After the legislation was signed, TNC worked to raise funds for the Commission, and in 2006, the four localities that make up the majority of the watershed (Charlottesville, Albemarle County, Greene County, and Fluvanna County) agreed to join. The Commission is comprised of 14 members: two members of the governing bodies of each of the four localities, one member of each of the Soil & Water Conservation Districts in the Rivanna watershed (Culpeper and Thomas Jefferson SWCD), and one private citizen from each of the four localities.

Mr. Austin then spoke about the TAC and the threat of altered hydrology. The TAC was appointed by the Commission, and is comprised of staff of the localities along with local experts. Members of the Commission are also members of the TAC. The purpose of the TAC is to guide the Commission on technical issues related to its work. Mr. Austin stated that altered hydrology is the threat the TAC and Commission have decided to focus on. He explained that there are three main elements to the water cycle: infiltration, runoff, and evaporation. As forest has been converted to other land uses, the amount of rainfall that was once absorbed by the forest floor now falls onto hard surfaces (such as pavement) and is unable to infiltrate. That water now runs off more quickly and with higher volumes than it did when this area was forested. He gave an example from a modeling exercise in the Mechums River watershed that showed that surface runoff increased by 92% with future buildout. Mr. Austin stated that the Commission had requested the TAC suggest some other possible terms for altered hydrology, since that is a difficult term for people to understand. The TAC came up with some other terms, including "altered water flow," "accelerated stream flows," "unnatural flow regime," and "scouring flows." The TAC also offered a definition of altered hydrology to help the Commission explain this threat to others: "Excessive sedimentation is choking the life out of our rivers and streams. 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."

Mr. Harper followed, with a presentation on management practices to address the threat of altered hydrology. He explained that there are a number of practices that can be used to "unalter" the hydrology, such as rainwater harvesting, bioretention (e.g., raingardens), green roofs, and porous surfaces. The TAC is looking into which practices will perform the best and are most appropriate for our region. He conducted a brief literature search to get an idea of the amount of information available on these practices. He found that the last comprehensive literature review on effectiveness of stormwater management practices was done by EPA in 2000. There are three major databases with information on effectiveness of practices. There are also other localities and organizations adopting various tactics, such as the Runoff Limits Program implemented in the Etowah watershed in Georgia. To synthesize all of the information

on these practices would take about 100-200 hours of work. He mentioned that there are a lot of different ways the Commission can get involved in improving stormwater management and unaltering the hydrology, and the TAC is working to develop recommendations for how the Commission might proceed.

Mr. Austin then gave a summary of the January TAC meeting and next steps for the TAC. At the January TAC meeting, Greg Harper reported back to the group on what he discovered during his brief literature search. The TAC also learned that Dave Hirschman of the Center for Watershed Protection (CWP) is working on a literature review and technical report on effectiveness of practices at reducing runoff. Mr. Hirschman will share a draft of the report at the February TAC meeting. The TAC will review the report and decide if there are gaps that need to be filled. The TAC also formed a subcommittee to look at practices to control stormwater quantity that aren't development-related (e.g., riparian buffers in agricultural fields), since the CWP report will not cover this. Alyson Sappington is the Chair of the subcommittee, which will report back on their findings at the February TAC meeting. The TAC also formed a subcommittee to look into applying for a NFWF Small Watershed Grant for implementation of rainwater harvesting at Fluvanna High School. Rochelle Garwood is the Chair of the subcommittee and would write the grant if the subcommittee decides to move forward with this.

Rochelle Garwood was in attendance and said that she spoke with Pat Groot, a grant writer for Fluvanna County, about applying for the NFWF grant. Mr. Moss mentioned that Fluvanna County staff decided it was inappropriate to apply for the grant at this time because of the high school's timeline for development. They are interested in the idea, and will wait to apply during the next grant cycle when the timing is better.

Ms. Thomas stated that she concluded from the TAC's report that the TAC will be assessing what gaps need to be filled and whether some synthesis needs to be done or more on-the-ground research is necessary. The goal of this will be to find out what practices to implement in this area. The Commission will then figure out what to recommend and how.

10. Old and Unfinished Business

1. Discuss field trip ideas

Ms. Thomas said that the Commission thought it would be a good idea to conduct some field trips and asked the TAC for ideas. Mr. Austin presented a list of potential field trip options that the TAC came up with and a map showing their locations. The first field trip could be to sites where the Commission could see healthy streams and manifestations of altered hydrology. On the second field trip, the Commission could visit sites where management practices are in place. Commission members liked several of the ideas, including Carroll Creek above and below Glenmore, and practices at the Albemarle County Office Building, the John Paul Jones Arena, Guildford Farm, and Friendship Court. Ms. Thomas requested that the TAC develop a schedule and logistics for the field visit sometime in the spring. The Commission would prefer to conduct the visits in one day if possible.

2. Discuss website

The Commission discussed possible contractors to develop the website, and viewed some sample websites suggested as examples of what the Commission's website might look like. The Commission would like to establish a website to provide information to the community, such as contact information and materials including the minutes and agendas from Commission meetings. The sample websites the Commission viewed were prepared by The Bald Guy and the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission. The group decided to proceed with requesting a proposal from The Bald Guy to develop the website. The Commission also reviewed possible domain names for the website, including:

- www.rivannariverbasin.org
- www.rivannariverwatershed.org
- www.rivannawatershed.org
- www.rivannariverbasincommission.org
- www.rivannacommission.org

After some discussion, Mr. Huja made a motion to use www.rivannariverbasin.org, Mr. Wilson seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously.

3. Discuss need for Executive Committee

The Commission discussed the need for an Executive Committee to meet more regularly than the full Commission is meeting. The group felt that it was necessary since the Commission is only meeting four times per year and there may be interim decisions that need to be made. The Executive Committee could be called on short notice, if needed, to hold a meeting and make decisions. The Committee would be comprised of one member from each locality and one member from either the Thomas Jefferson or Culpeper Soil and Water Conservation District. Mr. Moss suggested the Commission continue with a temporary Executive Committee and at the next full Commission meeting, the group can adapt the bylaws to include duties of the Executive Committee. The group decided to continue with a temporary Executive Committee to meet once in between each quarterly Commission meeting. The group discussed the idea of having the Committee consist of Sally Thomas, Marvin Moss, Robbi Savage, either Holly Edwards or Satyendra Huja, and either John Easter or Robert Runkle.

Ms. Thomas mentioned that Rivanna Water and Sewer Authority has done bathymetric studies in the past which show where sediment is in the South Fork Rivanna Reservoir. She said that RWSA had \$150,000 in their budget to do a new bathymetric study but removed the item from the budget. Ms. Thomas asked the group if they felt this was something that would help the Commission, and if so, whether the Commission should write a letter requesting RWSA put this back in their budget. After some discussion, the group decided that they still do not know exactly what their priorities are for research questions so they should not write a letter. There may be other things they would prefer RWSA pay for that may be better able to address the questions the Commission needs to answer to address the threat of altered hydrology.

4. TJPDC report on septic ordinance

Rochelle Garwood with TJPDC stated that she had looked into how the community can get funding for TMDL implementation for bacteria. Previously a grant funder had told Alyson Sappington that the community didn't get funding because we had no septic ordinance in place. Ms. Garwood looked into this further and found that having a septic ordinance isn't a requirement for funding, but she added it is actually a moot point now because there is no WQIF

funding at this time. The Commission had also requested seeing some sample septic ordinances at a previous meeting, so she distributed sample ordinances from other localities in Virginia.

5. Set next Commission meeting date

The remaining Commission meetings for 2008 will be April 24, July 24, and October 23. Meetings will be held at 6 pm at the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission.

11. New Business

1. Discuss and act on TAC recommendations

Ms. Alyson Sappington distributed a draft letter for the Commission to consider sending regarding use of rainwater. She explained that there is a section of the Code of Virginia that directed the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) to develop guidelines for the use of rainwater. While guidelines have been developed for the reuse of gray water, direct use of rainwater has not yet been addressed by the VDH. The TAC had mentioned this to the Commission at a previous meeting as a roadblock to implementation of rainwater harvesting systems that may help address the threat of altered hydrology. At that time, the Commission had asked what they could do to help. The letter requests that the VDH develop guidelines for the use of rainwater. The Commission decided to send the letter to the Governor, and cc department heads at the VDH.

2. Review draft letter of thanks to Commission donors

The Commission also reviewed a draft letter of thanks to those people who have donated funding to the Commission. The group approved sending the letter with a few minor edits.

3. Review draft letter of support for including TMDL segments on priority list

The Commission also reviewed a draft letter of support to recommend the Rivanna watershed be given high priority for TMDL Implementation Plan development and Implementation funding. The group approved sending the letter with a few minor edits.

Mr. Schmitt distributed a report that the Culpeper SWCD prepared which is a blueprint for regional soil and water conservation. The report lays out what they thought would be the best practices to pursue. Mr. Schmitt suggested the TAC in particular take a look at the document.

Ms. Savage mentioned that the Rivanna Conservation Society will be holding a Teacher Education Summit on April 2 and the Rivanna River Sojourn on April 19-20.

Ms. Thomas added that the Army is expanding the National Ground Intelligence Center. The Army's analysis was that they are not causing any environmental impact, and the county replied with some specific suggestions about things they could do better.

12. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm.

Attachments:

RRBC_Agenda_08Feb28
Outline_for_TAC_presentation_08Feb28
Presentation_by_TAC_08Feb28
RRBC_Donor_Appreciation_08Feb28
RRBC_Donor_Appreciation_Letter
RRBC_Financial_Report_08Feb25
RRBC_TAC_07Nov13_FINAL
RRBC_TAC_08Jan11_FINAL
RRBC_TMDL_Support_Letter_Brent
RRBC_TMDL_Support_Letter_Lunsford
RRBC_TMDL_Support_Letter_Martin
RRBC_TMDL_Support_Letter_Mizel
RRBC_Water_Reuse_Letter
Dynamite_handout_08Feb28
Gloucester_county_code
Franklin_code
Gloucester_county_letter_05June20
SWCD_Blueprint_handout