

Meeting Summary Excerpt
Technical Advisory Committee
Rivanna River Basin Commission

July 14, 2009 9:00 am– 12:00 pm
The Nature Conservancy
490 Westfield Road, Charlottesville

Missy Creasy, Greg Harper, Dan Ratzlaff, Darren Coffey, Alyson Sappington, Rochelle Garwood, Sam Austin, Dave Hirschman, John Murphy, Bill Kittrell, Jeff Sitler, Sally Thomas (RRBC, Chair), John Martin (RRBC), Leslie Middleton (staff), Rose Brown (volunteer staff), Dan Frisbee (City of Charlottesville, Stormwater, for Kristel Riddervold), Steve Williams (TJPDC)

Facilitated discussion of the TAC's role and next steps

Sam Austin facilitated a discussion of the TAC's 1-year and 5-year goals. The purpose of the Commission from the statute was read:

ARTICLE 3. POWERS AND DUTIES

The Commission shall have the following powers and duties:

1. *Develop a plan to promote the coordination of water management within the Basin to maintain flow conditions to protect instream beneficial uses and public water supplies for human consumption;*
2. *Provide guidance and make recommendations to local, state, and federal legislative and administrative bodies, and to others as it deems necessary and appropriate, regarding the use, stewardship, and enhancement of the Basin's water and other natural resources;*
3. *Undertake studies and prepare, publish, and disseminate information in reports and in other forms related to the water and natural resources of the Basin and to further its purposes and mission, including but not limited to studies to determine the flow conditions necessary to protect instream beneficial uses and public water supplies for human consumption.*

The group brainstormed ideas for the role and activities of the TAC, guided by Sam Austin's suggestion that it think in terms of 1-year and/or 5-year goals:

Possible five-year goals:

- Local elected officials know what they must do to protect the watershed
- Master plan for river access.
- RRBC is an umbrella organization that encompasses policy, recreation, and scientific interests.
- RRBC takes a more "activist" role – Commissioners move from local interests to watershed-wide interests.
- Science based master plan for the Rivanna, which could be integrated into locality comprehensive plans.
- Elected officials champion the Rivanna in comprehensive (and other) planning processes.

Ideas:

- Create two Advisory Committees: one for science and one for policy recommendations.
- Create a policy sub-committee.
- Maintain communication between policy/implementation members and technical members.
- Work to promote and improve recreational and public access to the river, which will in turn enhance public education and protection.
- RRBC should have a relationship with the Rivanna River Coordinating Group.
- RRBC needs to decide what it needs with respect to science and data.
- TAC should meet quarterly and in-between RRBC meetings.
- Get public officials on to the river.
- Gather a list of the top threats to the watershed *from the localities*. The RRBC could then engage multiple localities to influence decisions and negotiate how and where to protect.
- Continue to educate the community about the watershed, before there is a crisis that would force the community to manage the watershed more actively.
- Empower the RRBC/Commissioners to think and speak on a watershed scale.
- Emphasize scientific understanding of the threats: update the conservation strategies from TNC and update the State of the Basin Report.
- Establish a science-based Rivanna basin management plan,
- Help localities update their comprehensive plans.
- Help increase awareness among localities of the importance of a comprehensive plan.
- Add technical staff to the RRBC, so it does not have to draw so much from the skills and time of the TAC members.
- Keep "marriage" alive between planner/policy folks and scientific folks.

Additional ideas submitted by Joanna Curran after the meeting:

- Conduct an historical analysis of channel change in the watershed using aerial photos, land use, GIS and flow rates.
- Make a list of BMP locations and types and prioritize them for monitoring.
- Begin some sub-watershed measurements at key locations to help understand the processes operating in the watershed.
- Work with UVA and GIS classes to create one or more class projects.
- Collect data in order to understand better how the river reached its current state. This would help the RRBC to know what to advocate, how to change policy, where to focus restoration, and how to explain channel change.