

**FINAL Meeting Summary
Technical Advisory Committee
Rivanna River Basin Commission**

February 16, 2010

9 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Albemarle County Office Building – 5th Street Extended, Room A

Technical Advisory Committee:

Tamara Ambler (RWSA)
Darren Coffey (Fluvanna County)
Missy Creasy (City of Charlottesville)
Louise Finger (DGIF)
Greg Harper (Albemarle County)
John McClain (VDOT)
John Murphy (StreamWatch)
Dan Ratzlaff, (Greene County)
Alyson Sappington (TJSWCD, TAC Vice Chair)
Erin Yancey (TJPDC)

Commission:

Ann Mallek
John Martin
Leslie Middleton (Executive Director)
Rose Brown (Program Coordinator)

1. Introductions

Introductions were made.

2. Review and adopt meeting agenda

Tamara Ambler moved to approve the agenda, and John McClain seconded. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

3. Review and approve Previous Meeting Summary

The TAC reviewed the 10Nov17 TAC summary. Three typos were noted, and John Murphy changed the wording of a sentence related to the StreamWatch land use effects study. Leslie Middleton stated that she would like to obtain Todd Scanlon's approval of the TAC summary, which includes a summary of his presentation. Tamara Ambler moved to approve the 10Jan12 TAC summary, and the 10Nov17 TAC summary contingent upon Todd Scanlon's approval. Darren Coffey seconded. All were in favor and the motion passed.

4. Reports from sub-committees

- Rainwater harvesting subcommittee: Alyson Sappington reported that a meeting with the VA Department of Health (VDH) and Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) was postponed to March 12. The subcommittee plans to work with DCR, VDH, the Department of Environmental Quality and the Department of Community Housing and Development. These are the four agencies that will sign off on the rainwater

harvesting guidelines.

- Modeling subcommittee: Greg Harper reported that the land cover map is nearly done. The subcommittee will meet again in the next month and plan how to best use the map.
- Monitoring subcommittee: Tamara Ambler reported that Erin Yancey, from the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission, is preparing monitoring plan for the BMPs associated with the NFWF grant. UVA received a Jefferson Citizen Scholar grant for monitoring, which will allow UVA students to aid in monitoring. UVA already has protocols for BMP sampling, and the RRBC will be borrowing these protocols to complete the monitoring plan. At its next meeting, the subcommittee will be able to focus on other monitoring goals and objectives in the watershed.

5. Review January TAC planning session

Alyson Sappington asked Leslie Middleton to facilitate this portion of the meeting. Alyson stated that toward the end of the January 12 meeting, the TAC had a well-developed list of the gaps in science. The TAC may have neglected the more structural discussion of how the TAC will interact and function. Leslie Middleton noted that she would review the January 12 meeting, put it into context from the position of the Executive Director, and review possible pathways forward. Leslie began by asking TAC members to share their impressions of the January 12 meeting.

Tamara Ambler stated that the TAC focused on the science and data discussion because the TAC wants to make sure that it remains technical and wants to retain participation of technical partners. It remains unclear how the TAC should relate to and guide the RRBC. When the TAC has a feel for data are already gathered, maybe it will be more comfortable with future steps.

John Murphy stated that the TAC's data gathering and study design goals are unknown. Part of the reason for this is that the RRBC has not yet engaged in developing a watershed plan. The technical and political aspects of that process will inform the TAC's monitoring or study designs.

Tamara Ambler stated that the TAC has bits and pieces of watershed plan, but no comprehensive plan. The community has still have not acted on all of the recommendations from the *State of the Basin Report*.

Alyson Sappington stated that the TAC and RRBC have enough information to move forward with some recommendations, but the political will is missing. A watershed plan may help build the political will.

John Murphy noted that the community has made some progress since the *State of the Basin Report*, especially with the StreamWatch monitoring program and consolidation of data in the Rivanna StreamWatch database.

Tamara Ambler recalled an early TAC conversation in which a TAC member suggested that in order to get political will, the RRBC would need a policy question with a science-based answer. This could drive politicians to seek the answer. Perhaps the TAC and RRBC must frame a policy question that is based on science.

Alyson Sappington added that the TAC exists to inform the RRBC, so it can suggest policy.

Tamara Ambler stated that in other similar groups, political questions gave rise to the creation of the body/organization. The RRBC and TAC have been based more on technical info, so the TAC has been waiting for direction from policy makers.

Leslie Middleton walked through her Power Point presentation. During the presentation, Ann Mallek asked if RRBC staff planned to present more information to boards of Supervisors to begin the process of education. For example, there could be a presentation about the *State of the Basin Report*. Leslie Middleton replied that the first round of presentations was about the NFWF grant. It will soon be time to present the NFWF update. Also, in the next couple of months, RRBC staff will be hosting work sessions for each locality especially for Commissioners, TAC members, and staff members. This is partly to introduce new Commissioners to the RRBC, and also to provide them with tools that can be taken back to their Boards. After these locality meetings, Leslie will make presentations to full Boards. At the end of the PowerPoint presentation, Leslie introduced the steps of a watershed planning and implementation process, and she solicited TAC feedback.

Darren Coffey stated that as a planner, he prefers the term “implementation” to the term “plan.” Many plans are never implemented. This could be the main role of the RRBC. He added that the TAC must complete its assessment of existing information and identify the data gaps. Then the TAC can begin sending information back to localities and the community. He suggested beginning the process by reissuing the BMP recommendations.

Alyson Sappington stated that RRBC and local officials should drive the plan, not the TAC. The localities must be fully involved from the beginning and committed to implementing the plan. Data and information must be paired with political will.

Missy Creasy stated that the TAC already has 72 recommendations from the *State of Basin Report*. The TAC should assess and prioritize those. It is important not to lose the highly technical members of the TAC. These members are less likely to participate in full planning exercise beyond the one that was just held.

John Murphy stated that rather than a planning exercise, the TAC could take on an implementation program based on the data already gathered. If there is room and need for more data gathering, it can be done simultaneously. The TAC could focus on a re-packaging of the data with a commitment to involving the stakeholders such as business owners and farmers.

Tamara Ambler stated that the community is now asking basic questions, and the TAC and RRBC must be able to answer those questions to ensure community involvement. The TAC and RRBC cannot assume that their actions and motives are clear and understandable to the public.

John Murphy offered the example that the TAC might recommend cattle exclusion when possible. Without input from members from the farming community, the TAC will not know what justifications or incentives will be received by the farming community. The recommendation might be rejected because the TAC or RRBC have not engaged with the farming community. He suggested a community advisory group made up of stakeholders.

Dan Ratzlaff noted that the TAC is an isolated group. The challenge is to communicate concepts to groups that are not already represented in the TAC or RRBC. It may be worthwhile to involve farmers, business members, developers and others in the RRBC. The RRBC currently makes

recommendations to boards (or the Council), the boards then send to the recommendations planners. Perhaps there is another way to transfer those solutions to the community.

Tamara Ambler stated that there is a gap in translation between technical staff and policy makers and politicians. Perhaps the TAC needs a planning committee.

Darren suggested workshops with stakeholder groups. It may be the role of planners to translate between technical staff and the rest of the community.

Alyson Sappington stated that the bottom line is economics. Most farmers know that cows impact the health of streams. When incentives are offered, some farmers use them to exclude cattle from the streams, but for some farmers, the incentives are not enough.

Darren stated that the stormwater workshops [“Developer Roundtables” to provide accurate information about the new stormwater regulations] worked well. State politics have caused a delay in stormwater regulations, but the RRBC process did work as intended. The RRBC could have similar workshops with farmers and other groups.

Tamara Ambler questioned whether this is the role of the TAC. Perhaps subcommittees should focus on scientific and planning discussions, and the TAC as a whole deals with implementation.

Leslie Middleton stated that there is a strong opinion voiced by many Commissioners that the TAC should remain diverse. She pointed out that if the TAC is to be a full representation of stakeholders, some stakeholders are missing. However, the stakeholder process does not necessarily need to be the responsibility of the TAC. She also noted that there might not always be full participation of stakeholders in the RRBC because commissioners change over time.

John Murphy stated that it is important to strive for stakeholder participation. If no amount of data will change a farmer's mind, then that should be apparent to the RRBC and boards of supervisors.

Dan Ratzlaff stated that diverse stakeholders could hold the TAC and RRBC accountable and keep the recommendations realistic. Some of the TAC recommendations may not be applicable to the full community. The TAC has the common goal of improving water quality, but farmers, developers, and other stakeholders may not have same common goal. Dan Ratzlaff asked whether the TAC would try to get buy-in from these other stakeholders.

Darren Coffey noted that this is the value of a workshop, if timed correctly.

John Murphy stated that a community advisory council could be an intermediary solution. Buy-in must be a two way street. If science is not going to persuade farmers, and economics are more important, then perhaps this should bear on the TAC and RRBC recommendations.

Leslie Middleton added that it bears on policy too. Recommendations can get translated into action and opportunities at the local level (for example, the ACE program).

Tamara Ambler stated that at a technical level, the TAC is discussing a lot of science. As a TAC, what should be done with this science? For example, Alan Gellis made a presentation to the TAC about buffers and stated that they may not be as effective as believed. Should the TAC be investigating this further?

John Murphy noted that science is almost always more complicated than one wishes it to be when communicating it in short summaries. The presentation referred to buffers in particular settings. The TAC does have to digest this and make provide some judgment about what is reliable information, what are the doubts, and what are the take-home messages.

Tamara Ambler asked what the TAC could do to help the RRBC understand this type of science question.

Leslie Middleton referred to the Watershed Implementation Program, and asked if the TAC could pull together steps 2-4 as a way to focus the TAC. The TAC could package what is known, determine where there are gaps, and decide possible solutions.

John Murphy stated that the TAC might want to assess data in the StreamWatch Rivanna database and conduct a literature review. The TAC needs more expertise about certain issues (such as buffers). The TAC cannot recommend next steps without more of a plan and without the stakeholder involvement.

Tamara Ambler asked how the StreamWatch Rivanna database could be presented. John Murphy replied that it is a relational database. Water quality data are in one table, stream data in another table, land use conditions in another table, etc. One can ask the database questions that would relate those variables.

Leslie Middleton suggested that the TAC could work with the database and design the kinds of questions that can be answered. The land cover/land use map is also a body of data, with another set of associated questions. John Murphy noted that the land cover map data would be integrated into the StreamWatch Rivanna database. Tamara Ambler stated that a plan could characterize which types of questions can be answered by the database.

Alyson Sappington stated that the RRBC needs a framework within which to work. Steps 1-3 on the Watershed Implementation Program could be the framework. If the RRBC can get through Step 3, it can then focus on getting community buy-in before moving to steps 4-6. John Murphy suggested that stakeholder involvement could be included in steps 1-3. Leslie Middleton suggested giving stakeholders a chance to ask the questions that are of concern to them.

Darren Coffey asked to revisit the discussion about how the TAC could be organized differently. The TAC may not be organized as efficiently as it could be. Darren suggested a policy/planning TAC (PTAC), a marketing/outreach TAC (MTAC), a science TAC (STAC). These TACs would be bridged by a steering committee, which would report to the RRBC. Other stakeholders could be involved in the PTAC or MTAC. Leslie Middleton asked where RCS would be involved. Darren replied that RCS could be in the MTAC. RCS and SW should remain as separate entities, but be involved in the TACs.

Dan Ratzlaff noted that this would put the TAC in the role of outreach and education. So far, the TAC has been an advisory group to the RRBC, and the RRBC is responsible for disseminating the information.

Darren stated that the STAC and PTAC would input to the steering committee and RRBC, and then the MTAC would be the output for RRBC recommendations and decisions. The steering committee will enable the Commission to be more assertive with the information taken from the

TACs.

Alyson Sappington summarized that the STAC would provide science to PTAC, which would translate it into policy recommendations, which would then be directed to the steering committee and RRBC. The RRBC's role is the marketing and outreach. Darren stated that the MTAC could be made up of commissioners and staff.

Leslie Middleton asked who would be on the steering committee. Darren replied that it would be one representative from each TAC, plus RRBC staff. The PTAC would gather input from farmers and other stakeholders. Alyson Sappington noted that if issues happen to be farm related, the Soil and Water Conservation Districts communicate with farmers for input. If issue are development related, the TAC can ask locality staff to get input about issue. She noted that some full meetings of all of the TACs would be required.

Tamara Ambler stated that tasks could be assigned to different TACs to begin work on the Watershed Implementation Process.

Erin Yancey stated that the value of the PTAC is in identifying stakeholders (their constituents), then packaging the recommendations with implementation suggestions. This gives guidance to the RRBC on how to make the recommendation possible. In this way, recommendations might not just sit on the shelf.

John McClain stated that the division between science and planning would help the two groups become more efficient. There is highly technical science, but there also has to be data presentation for the public. Alyson Sappington stated that this would be the interaction between the STAC and PTAC.

Greg Harper noted that the difficulty with one single TAC is that it is more difficult to process information. Sub-TACs will increase efficiency. He stated that he prefers to be discussing concrete issues, and this would be more productive within an STAC. He also asked if marketing might be considered advocacy or lobbying. He asked if the RRBC should be known as an advocacy group or a lobbying entity. For example, the rainwater harvesting issue is very political right now. Does the RRBC have the authority and reputation to encourage citizens to act?

Louise Finger stated that she is partly averse to breaking the TAC into sub-TACs and possible subcommittees. Her job involves both science and planning, and she must be cognizant of both aspects. In order for actions to occur, advocacy needs to happen. There must be a translation from the RRBC to the community about issues such as the safety of kids swimming in the river and the cleanliness of drinking water. Is this the TAC's role?

John Murphy stated that the RRBC as an entity can endorse particular ideas without calling it lobbying.

Dan Ratzlaff noted that the TAC is not sure of the best structure because exact goals and objectives are unclear. It would be good to invite other stakeholders from the community sit in on some TAC meetings before any community workshops. This could help stakeholders be more receptive to policies.

Leslie Middleton asked if the problem is about TAC structure, or if it about lack of path and goals. Tamara Ambler replied that she believes it is lack of proper form.

Ann Mallek stated that if the RRBC does not advocate for the watershed, no one else will. Strategically, if stakeholders are not brought to the table early and repeatedly, there will be no success with the community. Roundtables have been effective in gathering input. People felt heard. TAC recommendations must involve some citizen input. Supervisors must hear from citizens in order to make decisions.

John Martin stated that the TAC needs to know from the RRBC what it should be doing. The RRBC meets 4 times per year for 2 hours, which leaves little time for TAC reports of substance. He suggested that the RRBC meets more often and conduct some strategic thinking and discussion in order to better direct the TAC.

6. Recommendations to RRBC

Leslie Middleton stated that there would be a TAC report at the RRBC meeting on February 18. Summaries from this meeting and the last meeting will be included. Leslie asked each TAC member to write a sentence: If you were reporting a recommendation or consideration to the RRBC at this point in time, what would it be?

John Martin: A joint meeting between the RRBC and TAC.

Alyson Sappington: The TAC wants assurance that the RRBC will serve as an advocate for the watershed.

Dan Ratzlaff: Same recommendation as Alyson.

Louise Finger: The TAC wants empowerment for the Watershed Implementation Program to incorporate and look at gaps based on the *State of the Basin Report*.

Tamara Ambler: The TAC should be allowed to restructure into a science and policy group and undertake tasks related to the Watershed Implementation Plan. If the TAC will not be restructuring right now, it should develop working groups to undertake those tasks.

Darren Coffey: The RRBC has organizational issues. The Commission needs three advisory committees with a coordinating steering committee. Two of the committees will coordinate and advise, and one will package information for the public and provide outreach.

Greg Harper: The TAC's role is to determine what is best for the watershed. Some of this is obvious. It is the RRBC's role to break down or overcome political or logistical barriers to implementation.

Missy Creasy: The TAC needs to consolidate data in one place, then assess the current state of the 72 objectives, then remove what is not relevant, and prioritize the rest. The TAC's form will depend on the details of the mission. Planning and science could meet together, split for part of the meeting, then finish the meeting together.

John McClain: Support, implementation, and public involvement.

Erin Yancey: Does the RRBC want science recommendations, policy recommendations, or both?

John Murphy: The TAC has identified the overarching threat. Further technical work should proceed in the context of the RRBC's goals for the watershed. Will the RRBC endorse the development and implementation of a watershed plan with extensive stakeholder involvement?

Leslie Middleton asked if the TAC was comfortable with these highlights being presented at the RRBC meeting. The TAC agreed.

7. Next Steps

The next TAC meeting is May 18. Subcommittee meetings will occur as needed.

8. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 12:05 p.m.

Attachments:

RRBC_TAC_agenda_10Feb16

RRBC_TAC_summary_09Nov17_FINAL

RRBC_TAC_summary_10Jan12_FINAL

EPA_Steps_in_Watershed_Planning_Fig2-1

Leslie_Middleton_presentation_10Feb16