



### **Commission Sets Meetings Dates for 2010**

Mark your calendars, please, for January 21, April 15, July 15, and October 21 (the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of these months) from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. All meetings will be held at the Albemarle County office building on McIntire Road in Charlottesville (Room 235).

The Commission's Technical Advisory Committee meetings are set for February 16, May 18, September 21, and November 16 from 9 a.m. to noon at a location to be announced (see January 12 planning retreat info below).

Commissioners are encouraged to attend the TAC meetings, and TAC members are always welcome at Commission meetings. All Commission and TAC meetings are public meetings and noticed as such.

### **2009 Commission Activities: A Transition Year**

The Commission launched in April 2007 and met for the first two years with considerable assistance, including staff support, from The Nature Conservancy. Since January 2009, the Commission has moved into new office space at 706 G Forest Street (Charlottesville); hired an Executive Director; transitioned fiscal agency from the Thomas Jefferson SWCD to the Commission itself; updated its Bylaws and elected an Executive Committee (Marvin Moss, Robbi Savage, Holly Edwards, John Easter, and Sally Thomas); obtained three federal and state grants totaling \$785,000; and commenced its work in supporting the Rivanna localities with tools for enhanced watershed protection. In July, Marvin Moss was elected Chair and Robbi Savage was elected Vice-Chair of the Commission, each to serve two-year terms. The Commission is in the process of selecting a Treasurer and members of a Finance Committee.

At the October meeting, the Commission recognized Sally Thomas, founding Chair of the Commission, for her consistent leadership and essential contributions to the Commission during its formative years.

### **Technical Advisory Committee Update**

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) continues under the leadership of Sam Austin as Chair, with Alyson Sappington (Thomas Jefferson SWCD) as Vice-Chair. At the October meeting, TAC members Sam Austin (USGS), Greg Harper (Water Resources Manager, Albemarle County), and John Murphy (StreamWatch) provided a recap of the work of the TAC. Early on, the TAC concluded that the main threat to the Rivanna is the "altered hydrology" (high, scouring flows) that has led to excess sedimentation in area streams. The question remains, however, "If we were able to manage our stormwater perfectly, would our streams be in perfect health?"

The TAC's Watershed Modeling Subcommittee hopes to use a sophisticated Land Cover Map, to which the Commission contributed significant funding, as a tool for better understanding how land use is contributing to the impairment of our waterways. The Land Cover Map is expected to be completed in mid-December and can be used by anyone with ArcGIS software. The map will cover all of Albemarle, Fluvanna, and Greene counties. Charlottesville has separately acquired similar data.

The TAC will be undertaking a review of its technical program at a planning retreat to be hosted on January 12, 2010 from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m. in Room 241 of the Albemarle County Office Building (weather date: January 26, same location). All Commissioners are invited to attend this meeting.



RRBC October 22 field trip: Dan Frisbee, Stormwater Coordinator for the City of Charlottesville, shows Commissioners the bio-swale at Charlottesville High School



## RRBC Grant Projects

### **NFWF: Pulling Together: A Watershed Approach for Stormwater in the Rivanna.**

This \$725,000 grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation provides funding to accelerate the implementation of stormwater measures in public and private development and redevelopment in the Rivanna watershed. The Commission has authorized cost-sharing for specific stormwater best management practices (BMPs) in each of the localities, as well as for contracts with StreamWatch, Center for Watershed Protection, and Rivanna Conservation Society as partners to help conduct aspects of the grant project. Staff is hoping to have all contractual documents with our partners in place before the end of this calendar year.

**DCR: Healthy Waters Pilot Program.** This \$55,000 grant from Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation provides a one-time, synoptic assessment that will identify the Rivanna watershed's "healthy streams" using methodology developed by Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) under the INSTAR program (see <http://instar.vcu.edu/>). Biological (benthic macroinvertebrates and fish) and habitat assessment is being conducted at 55 sites throughout the watershed. Data will be analyzed by VCU and "healthy waters" will be identified by late spring, 2010. This pilot project also includes developing planning tools (for example, language for comprehensive plans, ordinances, etc.) that will provide specific protection for healthy waters. This Rivanna pilot program signals the beginning of a shift on the part of USEPA to reinvigorate the "anti-degradation clause" of the Clean Water Act by focusing resources on the protection of waters not yet degraded under the principle that an ounce of protection is worth a pound of cure.

**Rainwater Harvesting Initiative.** The Commission has been working with partners to urge the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) to expeditiously complete its 1998 legislative charge to develop guidance for the reuse of water harvested from rooftops. While rainwater harvesting becomes more common, its widespread adoption as a water conservation and stormwater management tool is presently hampered by guidance that is inconsistent, contradictory, or simply not available to local building inspectors, health departments, and designers. We plan to meet with the VDH and the other state agencies in late November or early December to review the draft guidance and provide feedback from a local perspective.

### **Commission Website: almost ready to launch**

The website will be launched in December and staff will be asking everyone to take a look and offer suggestions. Phase II web and online development will include the social marketing tools as well as the capacity to conduct workshop registration, to generate e-newsletters, and manage contacts and public inquiries. All RRBC and TAC meeting materials (including previous meetings' minutes and presentations) will be available at the site, as well as a host of other Rivanna resources for use by our watershed localities and the general public. Commissioners and others will be able to download meetings materials in advance of meetings from the website.

<http://www.rivannariverbasin.org/>

