

Rivanna River Basin Commission Review Comments on  
Goals and Implementation Strategies for  
2009 Greene County Comprehensive Plan Update

These comments follow the TJPDC document accessed online, "2009 Greene County Comprehensive Plan Draft Goals and Implementation Strategies." Comments are in *bold, blue italics*.

The 2009 Greene County Vision Statement includes the following:

- attracting low impact, environmentally friendly industry
- conserving the County's natural resources and cultural and historical heritage
- conserve and enhance the quality of life enjoyed by its residents by preserving rural character and natural beauty

It is hoped that these goals are seen as mutually inter-dependent, and that economic prosperity can be achieved within the context of natural resource protection and comments within this Goals and Implementation Strategies document have highlighted this interdependence.

In addition, the importance of developing or utilizing good natural resource inventories and data to help guide planning and implementation of these strategies (e.g. Healthy Waters inventory, StreamWatch data, Natural Heritage data, groundwater survey, etc.) is also stressed.

Finally, the Goals document has referenced a number of planning processes and actual plans including the Green County Infrastructure Plan, TJPDC Greene Infrastructure Plan, Water Supply Plan, Mountain Protection Plan, Healthy Waters Protection – and thus, comments are offered in the spirit of encouraging the integration and inclusion of these plans into the final Comprehensive Plan.

Economic Development Goals

1. Create incentives for development in preferred commercial growth areas
  - Consider establishing a fund to assist small business start-ups
  - Investigate the Community Development Block Grant opportunities for business district revitalization
2. Support commercial growth in Ruckersville, Stanardsville and the Route 29 corridor from Ruckersville to Corner Store.
  - Develop a detailed plan for the Ruckersville area that addresses the special issues of this area (traffic and access, new road construction, transit opportunities, multi-use facilities, architectural standards, utilities)

3. Enhance image of Greene County as a business-friendly location *that capitalizes on its natural and cultural assets including as the Shenandoah National Park and rural view sheds.*
  - Continue to support of Economic Development Authority activities, to include a Directory of Local Businesses and Economic Development Plan.
  - *Encourage environmentally friendly, low-impact businesses including eco-tourism businesses related camping/fishing/hunting and passive recreation in the outdoors (bike touring, bird watching, hiking)*
  - *Encourage businesses that take advantage of rural character and natural heritage and resources of the County*
4. Support rural broadband service to all portions of the County
  - Coordinate with other localities in the Thomas Jefferson Planning District to identify and secure funds necessary for County-wide service
  - *Encourage home-based businesses that have minimal impact on rural character*
5. Coordinate targeted areas of commercial development with adequate infrastructure: water, sewer and transportation
  - Study the feasibility of an adequate utilities ordinance
  - Work with utility executives and other service providers to help ensure their plans support the needs of Greene's economic development
  - *Encourage development of biking and walking trails to link neighborhoods, parks and businesses*
  - *Consider natural resources data (green infrastructure) to inform infrastructure planning and development to ensure that economic development and natural resource conservation are complementary.*
6. Balance the need for increased economic development with controlled residential development and proffer acceptance
  - Encourage mixed-use development in growth areas that offers commercial, office and residential development
  - *Encourage proffers such as riparian buffers, open space preservation, conservation easements, state-of-the-art stormwater management technologies that exceed code requirements (see January 2009 letter from Rivanna River Basin Commission to watershed counties)..*
7. Recruit businesses that have well-paying positions and provide services that are missing in the community

8. Improve attractiveness and accessibility on the Route 29 corridor
  - Coordinate future land use and transportation improvements with economic development opportunities on the Route 29 corridor
  - Consider developing an architectural review board to assist the County and development community in setting voluntary standards for new development and re-development
9. Identify and develop an economic anchor in Stanardsville that increases foot traffic.
  - Coordinate with the Town of Stanardsville and STAR

### Tourism Goals

1. Identify and preserve important scenic, historic cultural resources *and natural resources* as crucial to tourism (*also highlight as supporting Green Infrastructure objectives*)
  - Coordinate the preservation of important scenic, historic, *natural*, and cultural resources and natural resources with the County's future land use plan and appropriate ordinances
  - *From the Vision Statement (preserving rural character and natural beauty): develop billboard/sign ordinance to preserve view-sheds from major roadways*
2. Provide information for residents and visitors about local events
  - Develop and keep up-to-date county-wide tourism website
  - Create an active registry of establishments where tourists can stay and develop a system for managing reservations centrally
  - Create informational maps for tourists and citizens on hiking, biking, scenic drives and other tourist activities and sites
  - *Information for tourists (and residents) includes resource inventories and data (healthy waters, green spaces, natural heritage sites), thus ensuring that resource inventories support multiple objectives (e.g. tourism, habitat protection, drinking water source protection, etc.)*
3. Establish and fund an organizational structure to plan, implement and coordinate tourism activities
4. Generate new tax revenue as well as increased business and employment opportunities related to tourism
  - Promote agri-tourism, eco-tourism and niche farming opportunities
5. Establish a Visitors' Center in Ruckersville

## Agriculture and Forestry Goals

1. Investigate County measures to encourage and retain farming and land use operations
  - Maintain land use taxation and promote awareness of tax incentives for farmers
  - *Use the Rivanna Watershed/Greene County Land Cover Map (from RRBC) and other tools to identify, locate, quantify and promote the economic contribution of agricultural and forestal resources to the economy and (rural) quality of life of Greene County*
  - *Encourage use of riparian or vegetated buffers to a minimum width of 35 feet on either side of streams to protect fish and help keep water clean*
  - *Encourage Best Management Practices (BMPs) in agriculture and forestry*
  - *Publicize available cost-share and incentive programs available using farmer-to-farmer mentor programs and the SWCDs*
  - Partner with other organizations to encourage and target easements, *based on identified conservation priorities*, to conserve agriculture and forestry and high priority resources. *Include areas and streams whose health may be considered "borderline" and thus worthy of extra protection.*
  - Concentrate future development into growth areas in accordance with land use section of the comprehensive plan.
2. Protect forest resources in parallel with protecting agricultural resources
3. Encourage and promote specialty and niche farming such as equestrian, vineyard, nursery and greenhouse crop activities.
4. Attract and retain young farmers
  - Partner with the Greene County office of Virginia Cooperative Extension to help recruit young farmers and reduce the barriers to entry inherent to farming in the area.
5. Encourage alternative farming techniques that help protect farmland and water quality
  - Find ways to encourage organic and/or hydroponic farming.
  - *Encourage agricultural BMPs such as no-till, contour plowing, cover crops that conserve soil integrity and health, encourage rainwater infiltration, and reduce overland flow of water to area streams*
6. Achieve recognition of farming and farmers as vital part of the County's future and make them part of tourism
  - *Use the Rivanna Watershed/Greene County Land Cover Map (RRBC) and*

*other tools to identify, locate, quantify and promote the economic contribution of agricultural and forestal resources to the economy and(rural) quality of life of Greene County*

- Encourage annual events such as the County Fair and the Strawberry Festival.
  - Promote agro-tourism businesses targeted toward the D.C. metro area.
7. Actively celebrate farming heritage
- Collect stories from generational farmers to produce a pamphlet or documentary about the area's farming heritage.
8. Support local agriculture through, for example a farmers' market and Buy Fresh, Buy Local campaign
- Grow current farmers' market to a weekly event at a dedicated location from spring through fall season (or possibly year-round) to provide additional retail opportunities for local farmers.
  - Additional need for farmers markets in Stanardsville and Ruckersville for agricultural products as well as crafts.
  - Partner with Piedmont Environmental Council to encourage more Greene County farmers to be listed in the annual *Buy Fresh, Buy Local* shoppers' guide.
  - Advertise *Buy Fresh, Buy Local* campaign.

Natural Resources and Environment Goals

1. Protect and conserve surface and groundwater resources including headwaters of key rivers and tributaries

*Note: All headwaters are "key tributaries." Perhaps another way to say this would be: Protect and conserve surface and groundwater resources, with special protection for headwater streams and "healthy waters."*

- Limit the use of septic systems on slopes of 25% or greater
- ***Limit building and construction (including road building) on slopes of less than 15%.***
- Consider adoption of water protection ordinance ***that includes*** provisions that establish "riparian buffers" around ***streams to protect those waters that have been inventoried and identified as*** valuable surface and ground water resources
- Consider adopting Watershed Protection Design Standards
- For developments of 10 or more homes, require a hydrological study to demonstrate that the groundwater supply is sufficient to support the development : ***We suggest that a groundwater inventory be undertaken for***

*the whole county in order to better understand the totality of groundwater resources.*

- Prior to issuing a building permit in areas not served by central water, require landowner to demonstrate that the well provides adequate water
  - *Protect headwater streams and healthy tributaries with additional protection: buffers, enhanced erosion and sediment controls during development and utilizing stormwater management BMPs in building and development areas*
  - *Utilize data and designations from StreamWatch ("Good" or "Very Good") or the Healthy Waters assessment to provide special protection for these waters. This will have a positive economic impact as it is always less expensive to keep healthy waters healthy than it is to clean up degraded streams.*
  - *Work with state agencies to install groundwater monitoring wells*
  - *Cultivate awareness and practice of water conservation and the relationship between groundwater, stream flow, and impounded water resources through public education, school and community programs, using Soil & Water Conservation District programs and non-profit resources such as the Rivanna Conservation Society*
2. Enact measures to protect Greene County's irreplaceable natural resources and become a model County for natural resource stewardship *by incorporating natural resources data (land cover analysis, water resource assessment, green infrastructure) into the county's code and ordinance framework.*
- Consider the adoption of a Mountain Protection Plan *and, if adopted, ensure that this is consistent with and coordinated with other planning tools*
  - Discourage road construction on slopes of 15% or greater. Permitted roads should follow the natural topography.
  - Discourage excessive changes to the existing topography or tree cover, including designated growth areas
  - Encourage dark sky protection through an ordinance that shields exterior lighting and aims fixtures downward
  - *Encourage open space dedication, riparian buffers, pervious surfaces that promote infiltration (as opposed to runoff) and other best management practices*
3. *Encourage* open space dedication, riparian buffers, *limits to impervious surfaces* and similar practices
1. Follow the recommendations of the County Green Infrastructure Plan: *We recommend adopting the Green Infrastructure Plan by reference as part of the Comprehensive Plan so that these two planning tools can be used to reinforce each other.*
  2. *Encourage the voluntary dedication (through proffers and other tools) of*

*land* in conservation easements or Agricultural and Forestal Districts

3. Create governmental and public awareness of the importance of preserving natural resources while accommodating residential growth *linking the public benefit of a healthy natural resource base to improved tourism amenities and other factors that positively contribute to the tax base, thus serving other County goals*
4. Inventory and protect ecologically sensitive areas, including land to protect habitat and others necessary to enact Green Infrastructure Plan
  - *Enact natural resource protection measures through development standards*
  - Encourage cluster development in rural areas so that residential development protects the site's sensitive natural resources
  - Minimize impact and preserve aesthetics of the rural countryside by buffers and natural vegetation screening

#### Education Goals

1. Encourage Piedmont Virginia Community College to establish a satellite center in the County
2. High school graduates should be either trained for the work place or be prepared to successfully attend institutions of post-secondary education
3. All students achieve SOL objectives
  - *Utilize natural resource inventory data regarding unique natural and cultural resources as part of learning curricula.*
4. Increase community awareness and support for public education as an essential part of the quality of life.
5. Work to achieve parity between the salaries and benefits of Greene County teachers and those in the greater region.
  - Evaluate Greene County public teachers' salaries in comparison with other districts in the region to determine what measures are necessary to reach parity.
6. Consider development of a performance incentive system for teacher pay
  - Research current merit pay propositions for similar communities
7. Create volunteer teaching opportunities
  - *Build partnerships for ongoing use of Master Naturalists, Master Gardeners, Tree Stewards, and volunteers through non-profits to develop ongoing*

***volunteer opportunities for working with students.***

8. Create a state-of-the-art magnet Vocational Technical center

Community Services Goals

1. Support affordable housing initiatives in the County
  - Coordinate affordable housing needs with the County's housing arm, Skyline Community Action Program
2. Encourage more private medical facilities in the County, including comprehensive walk in and emergent health care services
  - Work with Martha Jefferson Hospital and UV Medical Center to offer medical services and facilities in the County
3. Study feasibility of branch library in Ruckersville
  - Coordinate with the Jefferson-Madison Regional Library System to assess feasibility of Ruckersville branch library.

Law Enforcement and Emergency Services Goals

***Provide additional activities for children and teens and take advantage of "no child left inside" initiatives. Studies show that youth who have been provided with multiple opportunities for structured and unstructured outdoors learning experiences and opportunities for natural resource stewardship are less likely to turn to destructive behaviors.***

1. Manage growth so that it does not outstrip infrastructure and resources, including emergency services and sheriff's department
  - Expand emergency services through grants
2. Support volunteers with paid fire and rescue staff, when required, to assure adequate 24-hour coverage
  - Recognize volunteers and recruit new volunteers
3. Ensure well coordinated emergency response and disaster management planning
  - Ensure law enforcement officers and emergency services providers have County-wide broadband coverage
  - Research feasibility of a satellite sheriff station on Route 29 in Ruckersville

4. Maintain adequate School Resource Officers to safeguard school facilities and grounds as well as to spearhead community involvement in safety training and intervention
  - Establish a Public Schools Safety Advocacy group, including parents, administrators, teachers, and law enforcement officials and encourage outdoor recreation?

### Parks and Recreation Goals

***Include "natural areas" as part of county parks to provide trails, wildlife habitat, and other unstructured and passive outdoor activities for the public, as well as to implement connectivity goals of Green Infrastructure Plan.***

1. Create a County park in Ruckersville
  - Consider siting off Rt 29 South at Antiques Mall
  - Connect a community park in Ruckersville with a hike/bike trail following the recommendations of the County ***Green Infrastructure Plan***
  - Planning should move quickly before growth in development makes land acquisition difficult.
  - Secure grant money for property acquisition (see funding opportunities in this chapter of the draft 2009 Comprehensive Plan)
2. Support the development of a public swimming pool or swimming at water impoundment
  - Consider including pool with community park in Ruckersville area, or neighborhood park in Stanardsville.
  - Include swimming in plans for water impoundment
  - ***Water impoundment selected for its "healthy waters" criteria, but additional protection needed in order to maintain water quality downstream (i.e. chlorine and other treatment chemicals must be avoided)***
3. Inform residents of programs
  - Conduct County-wide mailing
  - Continue posting current opportunities for involvement on County web site in order to inform all Greene County residents of recreational activities
  - Have flyers available in libraries, schools, and other strategic locations.
  - ***Utilize natural resources data bases to inform outdoors activities, such as***

***hiking, hunting, and fishing (in cooperation with VA Department of Game and Inland Fisheries and Department of Conservation & Recreation).***

4. Provide additional activities for children and teens ***and take advantage of "no child left inside" initiatives.***
  - Grow existing sports programs and create new programs as demand allows.
5. Encourage "pocket parks" and interconnected trails in new neighborhoods
  - ***Include "natural areas" as part of county parks to provide trails, wildlife habitat, and other unstructured and passive outdoor activities for the public, as well as to implement connectivity goals of Green Infrastructure Plan.***
  - Inform developers that proffers of small parks and trails would meet the communities goals.
  - ***Strategically locate and develop park resources to achieve both recreational and conservation goals***
  - Create neighborhood park in Stanardsville
  - Encourage clustering of buildings in zoning and subdivision ordinance to leave room in new developments for small parks.

Solid Waste Goals

***Identify and locate (map) illegal dumps and brownfields to target for restoration and protection of water resources (ground and surface water).***

1. Maximize recycling of solid waste materials, to reach a minimum recycling rate of 25%, by providing a full range of options that are easily accessed by County residents
  - Establish a household composting program on a regional basis in partnership with the TJPDC
  - Examine the feasibility of establishing recycling collection sites in additional locations in the County.
2. Participate in the region's household hazardous waste collection days
  - Publicize the importance of participation in household hazardous waste collection days
3. Promote recycling and proper solid waste disposal through advertising and through education
4. Continue to manage and operate the solid waste facility efficiently and within budget goals
5. ***Consider natural resource priorities (particularly ground water and healthy waters) in expanding existing or siting any future solid waste facilities.***

## Water Goals

*This section would benefit from being reorganized around a discussion of the relationships between the hydrologic cycle, surface water resources, groundwater resources, water conservation, and stormwater.*

1. Establish a safe and reliable water supply to meet the projected needs for business and residential growth through 2050

*The Commonwealth requires regional water supply plans to be completed by 2011.*

- *Move forward with a plan for water impoundment sooner rather than later that considers the opportunity to conserve identified healthy waters. Ensure that this goal does not conflict with Natural Resources goal to protect important headwater streams.*
  - *Continue utilizing all potential groundwater sources.*
  - *Undertake resource assessment of groundwater resources to inform land use designations*
  - *Conduct a ground water resources assessment (map) for the county to ensure the sustainable use of groundwater resources*
2. Investigate alternative options for public water supply, including the construction of a water impoundment, to meet projected demands for the next twenty-five years or more.
    - *Develop stormwater ordinances that require downspout disconnect, bioswales/raingardens, and other tools that promote infiltration on site rather than stormwater conveyance away from the site.*
    - *(see Letter from RRBC to localities, January, 2009, attached).*
    - *Encourage rainwater harvesting (cisterns) abandoned well capping, green roofs where possible.*

*Note: Rainwater harvesting for public and private water supplies must be implemented on much larger scales than use of rain barrels, whose utility is generally limited to additional water for landscaping and as an educational tool to promote water conservation.*

3. Promote water conservation
4. Protect valuable water resources through education and implementation of riparian (rivers and streams) buffers *utilizing natural resource data to guide development and focus of stormwater BMPs in the county.*

- *Use healthy waters inventory (from the StreamWatch data and Healthy Waters program) to inform resource conservation and to incorporate into codes and ordinances for proactive resource protection.*

5. Provide adequate water pressure and supply for Stanardsville

#### Wastewater Treatment Goals

*Consider the siting of wastewater facilities so that they do not discharge into identified healthy receiving streams.*

1. Ensure the integrity of wastewater treatment facilities through comprehensive system upgrades, including the Town of Stanardsville
  - Direct residential and commercial growth to designated areas by proactively planning and constructing services which will be restricted to those identified areas
2. Develop residential and business growth in higher density areas where adequate sewer supply is provided
3. Utilize public/private partnerships to assist in funding wastewater treatment system construction