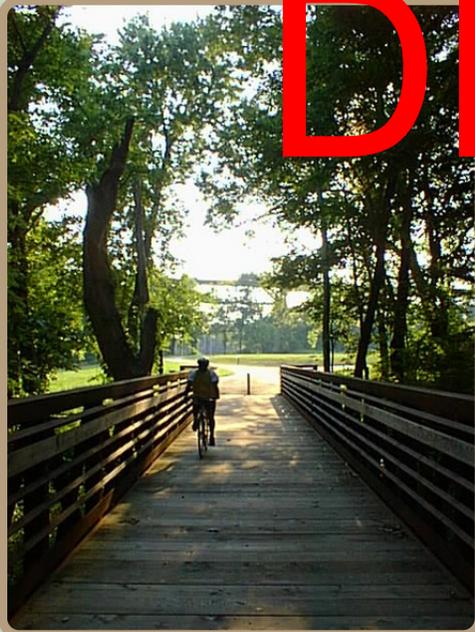


Hampton Roads Watershed Roundtable

Final Report 2011



DRAFT



March 2012

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**HAMPTON ROADS WATERSHED ROUNDTABLE
FINAL REPORT 2011**

This project was funded, in part, through a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Chesapeake Bay Program at the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) via grant number BAY 2010-00-PT.

The views expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of DCR.

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Preparation of this report was included in the HRPDC Unified Planning Work Program for FY 2010 - 2011, approved by the Commission at its Executive Committee Meeting of June 17, 2010 and the HRPDC Unified Planning Work Program for FY 2011 - 2012, approved by the Commission at its Executive Committee Meeting of June 16, 2011

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ABSTRACT

This report describes the Hampton Roads Watershed Roundtable activities conducted by the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission during 2011 under a grant from the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation. This program encompasses the development of the current Hampton Roads Watershed Roundtable and meetings of the Roundtable and the Hampton Roads Joint Environmental Committee, which addresses technical issues related to the work of the Roundtable. This report contains minutes from the Roundtable meetings and copies of presentations made to the Roundtable throughout the grant year. It recommends ongoing Roundtable activities for FY 2012.

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INTRODUCTION

In 2001, watershed roundtables were established in each of the major watersheds in Virginia. Roundtables were comprised of representatives of local governments and representatives of business and industry, agriculture, forestry, fishing and environmental organizations, as well as other groups that are of special importance to the various watersheds. The purpose of the roundtables was to advise agencies of the Commonwealth of Virginia on refinement and implementation of Tributary Strategies for Nutrient and Sediment Reduction and related water quality initiatives. Moreover, the roundtables were to provide a mechanism for educating the participants on water quality issues, funding opportunities and technologies, and techniques for achieving water quality and living resource goals. The Roundtables were designed as a forum for exchange of information among the participants on water quality and related issues, including planning, implementation, and funding. The goal of these efforts was to build consensus among the Roundtable participants.

In 1995, the Hampton Roads region's sixteen (16) local governments established the Hampton Roads Tributary Strategies Project Steering Committee, under the auspices of the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission. That Committee included representatives of the region's local governments, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and the Hampton Roads Sanitation District, and invited participation from several environmental organizations. The Committee worked for six years to build consensus among the region's localities on water quality issues and potential management strategies and to advise local and state government on implementation issues. Through this process, the HRPDC and local government staff analyzed local government programs to determine their ability to achieve nutrient and sediment reduction goals, developed a preliminary set of local government management options to assist in future implementation, conducted educational workshops and developed regional consensus on a number of Chesapeake Bay-related issues. In response to state direction and in part as a successor to this Committee, formation of a roundtable for the Hampton Roads portion of the James River Watershed was proposed in February 2001. The HRPDC and its partners in the establishment of the Lower James River (Hampton Roads) Watershed Roundtable – the region's localities and Soil and Water Conservation Districts and the Virginia Departments of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and Environmental Quality (DEQ) – intended for the Roundtable to enhance existing efforts by broadening involvement and striving for a broader consensus.

In 2007, the Lower James River (Hampton Roads) Watershed Roundtable was restructured to promote participation from groups outside of state and local government and to meet HRPDC goals for citizen input. The reorganized roundtable includes representatives from the agricultural community, the development community, chambers of commerce, and industry and civic organizations, in addition to local and regional environmental organizations. Additionally, the Hampton Roads Watershed Roundtable now encompasses all the watersheds found in the region, including the James, York, Chowan, and Southern Rivers and Atlantic Coastal Basins. Coordination with the York River and Albemarle-Chowan Roundtables occurs on a regular basis. As the structure of the group continues to

evolve, the Hampton Roads Watershed Roundtable is providing greater value to the region as a vehicle for broad stakeholder interaction and discussion of topics of mutual interest.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the Hampton Roads Watershed Roundtable is to serve as a viable regional mechanism for improving dialogue between the private sector and state, local, and regional agencies on environmental issues. The focus of the Roundtable is on a broader community representation. Previous iterations of the group functioned primarily with representation from state and local government organizations with a few regional environmental representatives.

The Hampton Roads Roundtable provides stakeholder input to the HRPDC technical staff committees and to the HRPDC, which is the regional policy entity. The functions of the Roundtable include education, capacity building, information exchange, and dialogue between the private and public sectors.

PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Watershed Technical Work

The HRPDC Joint Environmental Committee, which is funded separately under the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program, Chesapeake Bay Steering Committee; and the locally-funded Hampton Roads Stormwater Management Program, undertook activities to support the Hampton Roads Watershed Roundtable effort and to address the technical aspects of regional environmental issues. Issues of mutual interest identified by the Roundtable were researched by HRPDC staff and items requiring additional information and action were brought to the Committee for review. Issues addressed included implementation of regulatory programs, Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) and implementation plan development, and green infrastructure issues. HRPDC staff pursued continued development of TMDL implementation plans under separate funding sources and presented information on the process and content of the plans to the Roundtable. Roundtable members provided reaction on the potential impact of the plans on various regional efforts and constituencies.

Exchange of information between the Roundtable, the Joint Environmental Committee, and the Chesapeake Bay Steering Committee allowed for the inclusion of a greater range of stakeholders and provided direction for future work. In order to provide a full understanding of the Committee's role, complete summaries of its meetings over the grant period are provided below.

- January 6, 2011 – This was a meeting of the Joint Environmental Committee. HRPDC staff gave presentations on the Chesapeake Bay TMDL, regional land cover data, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Program. HRPDC staff relayed comments from HUD concerning the HRPDC grant application from the previous August.

- February 3, 2011 – This was a meeting of the Joint Environmental Committee. HRPDC staff updated the Committee on changes to Virginia’s Stormwater Management Regulations, the Chesapeake Bay TMDL, and the Commission’s legislative agenda. Staff from VDOT gave a presentation to the Committee on new guidelines VDOT is using to address new stormwater regulations. Staff from HRTPO briefed the Committee on a regional land use data project.
- March 3, 2011 – This was a meeting of the Joint Environmental Committee. Staff from the City of Hampton gave a presentation on the City’s efforts to obtain and develop high resolution impervious cover data. HRPDC staff updated the Committee on the Chesapeake Bay TMDL and other TMDLs in the region. HRPDC staff gave presentations on regional land use/land cover data possibilities and the Commission’s Coastal Zone Management Technical Assistance Program. The Committee also discussed potential changes to the Committee’s structure meeting and schedule.
- April 7, 2011 – This was a meeting of the Joint Environmental Committee. Staff from the Virginia Department of Emergency Management gave a presentation to the Committee on the process for applying for and receiving Hazard Mitigation Grant funds. HRPDC staff updated the Committee on the Chesapeake Bay TMDL and Virginia Stormwater Management Regulations. HRPDC staff also presented updates on regional climate change work, regional trails, and the Plant More Plants campaign. HRPDC staff also presented the FY11-12 Unified Planning Work Program to the Committee for its review and comment.
- May 5, 2011 – This was a meeting of the Joint Environmental Committee. Staff from the Department of Conservation and Recreation gave a presentation to the Committee on the Chesapeake Bay TMDL Phase II Watershed Implementation Plan. HRPDC staff updated the Committee on stormwater issues, HUD’s Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Program, the Kodak Greenway Grant program, HRPDC’s climate change work, regional land cover/impervious surface data, and environmental education programs.
- June 2, 2011 – This was a meeting of the Joint Environmental Committee. Representatives from the University of Virginia and VDOT gave a presentation to the Committee on a study analyzing the impacts of climate change on regional transportation planning for projects and policies. HRPDC staff gave a presentation to the Committee on the results from the second year of HRPDC climate change work, as well as a summary of subsidence research conducted by Dr. John Boon of the Virginia Institute of Marine Science. The meeting also featured updates

and briefings from HRPDC staff on a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Grant opportunity, proposed wetlands delineation guidance regulations from EPA and USACE, and the Chesapeake Bay TMDL.

- July 7, 2011 – This was a meeting of the Joint Environmental Committee. VIMS staff gave a presentation to the Committee on living shorelines, including the requirements of SB964 regarding local regulations and comprehensive plans. Staff from VDH and VDHCD gave a presentation to the Committee on regulations and guidance concerning rainwater harvesting. HRPDC staff updated the Committee on the Chesapeake Bay TMDL Phase II Watershed Implementation Plan. HRPDC staff also gave presentations to the Committee on HUD’s Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant program, developments with aquaculture regulations and potential legislation, and an in-development client survey.
- July 14, 2011 – This was a meeting of the Chesapeake Bay Steering Committee. This meeting featured presentations from DCR and HRPDC staff and a facilitated discussion of locality needs, priorities, and concerns regarding the Chesapeake Bay TMDL.
- August 2, 2011 – This was a meeting of the Joint Environmental Committee. Staff from VIMS gave a presentation to the Committee on the requirements of SB964 and the implications of the to-be-developed general permit for living shorelines. HRPDC staff updated the Committee on the HR Green program and the Chesapeake Bay Phase II Watershed Implementation Plan. HRPDC staff also briefed the Committee on the draft environmental assessment for a proposed offshore wind lease program.
- August 4, 2011 – This was a meeting of the Chesapeake Bay Steering Committee. The meeting included presentations on GIS data relevant to the Chesapeake Bay TMDL as well as the relationship between the Phase II WIP and MS4 permits. The meeting also included a discussion of regional priorities related to the TMDL.
- September 1, 2011 – This was a meeting of the Joint Environmental Committee. Staff from VDH gave a presentation to the Committee on regulations concerning septic tank systems, including alternative onsite sewage systems. HRPDC staff updated the Committee on the Chesapeake Bay TMDL Phase II Watershed Implementation Plan, aquaculture, coastal zone management grant applications, and HUD’s Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant program.
- September 1, 2011 – This was a meeting of the Chesapeake Bay Steering Committee. The meeting featured presentations from the Navy on its

Chesapeake Bay TMDL efforts and from VDH on alternative onsite sewage systems and WIP strategies impacting septic systems.

- October 6, 2011 – This was a meeting of the Joint Environmental Committee. Staff from James City County gave a presentation to the Committee on the status of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Nutrient Credit Exchange Program. Staff from the Institute for Environmental Negotiation gave a presentation on a potential dialogue between EPA, the Navy, and the Cities of Chesapeake, Norfolk, Portsmouth, and Virginia Beach that would address stormwater issues in the Elizabeth River watershed. HRPDC staff updated the Committee on the Chesapeake Bay TMDL Phase II Watershed Implementation Plan.
- October 6, 2011 – This was a meeting of the Chesapeake Bay Steering Committee. The meeting included a presentation from Richmond city staff on efforts to encourage private property owners to install BMPs, as well as a report on needed septic system legislation.
- November 3, 2011 – This was a meeting of the Joint Environmental Committee. Virginia Department of Forestry staff gave a presentation to the Committee on urban tree canopy analysis. HRPDC staff gave a presentation to the Committee on the Great American Cleanup and a kickoff event that will be hosted in Hampton Roads. HRPDC staff also updated the Committee on regional trails and the Chesapeake Bay TMDL Phase II Watershed Implementation Plan.
- November 3, 2011 – This was a meeting of the Chesapeake Bay Steering Committee. The meeting included presentations on the use of monitoring data to measure the effectiveness of management actions and the impact of reducing or eliminating sanitary sewer overflows on urban stormwater loads. HRPDC staff updated the Steering Committee on the status of the Phase II WIP.
- December 1, 2011 – This was a meeting of the Joint Environmental Committee. Staff from DCR gave a presentation to the Committee on new requirements for local stormwater management programs. HRPDC staff updated the Committee on regional climate change initiatives, working waterfronts work with VIMS, and the Chesapeake Bay TMDL Phase II Watershed Implementation Plan. HRPDC staff also led discussions with the Committee on the impact of new water quality regulations on local plans and policies and on the Commission's legislative agenda.
- December 1, 2011 – This was a meeting of the Chesapeake Bay Steering Committee. The meeting included a presentation from HRPDC staff on identifying cost effective BMPs and a draft BMP decision matrix developed by HRPDC staff. HRPDC staff also updated the Steering

Committee on the federal/state lands GIS analysis and the status of the Phase II WIP.

Roundtable Meetings

The Roundtable held meetings in February 2011, September 2011, November 2011, and January 2012. These meetings focused on areas of interest identified by the Roundtable and on the continuing evolution of the Roundtable structure and membership. Participants included representatives from local & state government, environmental groups, & citizens groups.

Summaries of Roundtable meetings over the grant period are included below.

- February 3, 2011 - This meeting focused on the Chesapeake Bay TMDL and Virginia's Phase I Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP). HRPDC staff briefed the group with a presentation outlining the Chesapeake Bay TMDL, a summary of Virginia's Phase I Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP), and a Summary of the Phase II WIP Pilot Study. HRPDC staff began the roundtable discussions by asking the group to consider the following questions: Should Hampton Roads localities coordinate development of Phase II WIPs; What is an appropriate scale for "regional" coordination (watershed, SWCD, PDC, and Are other entities interested in coordinating WIP development? Additionally, HRPDC facilitated discussions between Roundtable attendees and DWR.

- September 14, 2011 - This meeting focused on Sustainability Planning in Hampton Roads. Local government staff from Newport News and the City of Chesapeake provided an overview of their localities current and planned sustainability efforts. HRPDC staff gave a presentation on the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Program and the Hampton Roads Region's proposal for this grant.



- November 28, 2011 - This meeting included presentations and discussion from Virginia Clean Cities, Tidewater Fiber, & the City of Chesapeake on Alternative Fuels & Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) Conversion. Allen Harned of Virginia Clean Cities (VCC) discussed alternative fuels and cleaner transportation options. Ed Farmer of Tidewater Fiber discussed TFC's

efforts in converting its fleet to CNG. Additionally, TFC provided a demonstration of one of its' CNG vehicles. Mr. George Hrichak of the City of Chesapeake discuss the city's efforts in converting its fleet of solid waste collection trucks from diesel fuel to cleaner burning compressed natural gas (CNG). The meeting concluded with a discussion of the Commonwealth of Virginia Alternative Fuels legislation.

- January 25, 2012 - This meeting and workshop focused on utilizing best



management practices (BMPs) for nutrient reduction on existing residential and light commercial private property. Shereen Hughes of Wetlands Watch reviewed the model public/private/non-profit watershed stewardship programs that train citizen volunteers to facilitate voluntary implementation of stormwater best management practices on private property. Allyson Whalley of the Virginia Zoo briefly discussed the Zoo's experiences with design, installation, and maintenance of retrofit BMPs, the partnerships involved in the projects, and future actions. HRPDC staff led a facilitated discussion on the need for a Watershed Stewards Academy-type

program in Hampton Roads. The meeting concluded with a Tour of Best Management Practices at the Zoo.

HRPDC Staff Activities

HRPDC staff provided the following support to the Hampton Roads Watershed Roundtable.

- Expanded and updated the membership roster for the Roundtable.
- Maintained contact with Roundtable members via telephone and email.
- Organized meetings based on Roundtable member suggestions. This includes contacting potential speakers and arranging for them to attend.
- Prepared agenda packets and distributed them to the Roundtable.
- Acted as meeting facilitator and chair; provided updates on pertinent issues.
- Provided updates on Roundtable activities to the Joint Environmental Committee.
- Attended and participated in the York Roundtable and Albemarle-Chowan Roundtable meetings.

CONCLUSIONS

For nearly twenty years, the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission has facilitated the work of the HRPDC Joint Environmental Committee, which is comprised of representatives of the region's sixteen member localities, the Hampton Roads Sanitation District, five Soil and Water Conservation Districts, two towns in Isle of Wight County, and a number of state and federal agencies. About ten years ago, representatives of regional environmental and business organizations were invited to join the Joint Environmental Committee for purposes of addressing the development of Tributary Strategies for reducing nutrient and sediment discharge to the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. The expanded group became known as the Lower James River (Hampton Roads) Watershed Roundtable. The Roundtable was successful in developing consensus among the participating governmental entities and the environmental organizations on a number of Chesapeake Bay and Tributary Strategies matters. However, it was less successful in engaging the region's business community in this discussion.

During 2007, the HRPDC identified the need for developing citizen involvement in the environmental planning activities of the Commission and its technical committees. The identified need was all-encompassing with respect to environmental issues and was not restricted to watershed issues. It was determined that the Roundtable was an appropriate vehicle for addressing these issues.

Based on the region's experience to date, as described in this report, the Hampton Roads Watershed Roundtable is a viable mechanism for developing community input to the HRPDC on a range of environmental issues. There is considerable interest on the part of community groups in participating in this process and a general agreement on issues, specifically water quality planning, air quality, energy, and green infrastructure/green building that should continue to be addressed. Participants in both the Roundtable and Joint Environmental processes are continuing to recruit new members and the evolving structure and focus of the Roundtable is providing greater value to the region as a whole.

Based on this experience, the HRPDC finds that the Hampton Roads Roundtable is a viable means of involving the Hampton Roads community in addressing environmental issues facing the region. Steps should be taken by the HRPDC, in cooperation with its member jurisdictions and the private sector, to continue strengthening this initiative.