

**SUMMARY OF THE MEETING OF THE
HRPDC REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE
June 4, 2020**

Pursuant to Governor Northam's Executive Order 53 issued on March 23, 2020 and Executive Order 61 issued on May 8, 2020, the Regional Environmental Committee meeting was held electronically via WebEx. The meeting was held on June 4, 2020 at 10:00 AM.

1. Attendance

The following members attended electronically:

Regional Environmental Committee Voting Members:

Barbara Brumbaugh, CH	Justin Shafer, NO
Kevin Landry, GL	Meg Pittenger, PO
Kim Hummel, IW	Erin Rountree, SU
Toni Small, JC	Diana St. John, VB
Allison Watts, NN	Heather Markle, WM
Angela Hopkins, NN	
June Whitehurst, NO	

Regional Environmental Committee Non-Voting Members:

Bryant Bays, VDOF
Meghan Mulroy-Goldman, VDOF

2. Summary of the March 5, 2020 Meeting of the Hampton Roads Regional Environmental Committee.

There were no comments on the March meeting summary.

3. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

4. Virginia Department of Forestry – Urban Forestry and Coastal Resilience Programs

Mr. Bryant Bays and Mr. Robbie Lewis of the Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF) presented an overview of their projects and programs related to urban forestry and coastal resilience in Hampton Roads.

Mr. Bays first introduced VDOF urban forestry services, including developing neighborhood-scale forest management plans, monitoring for insects and disease, developing outreach initiatives, and providing grant and cost-share funding. Mr. Bays

highlighted the Virginia Trees for Clean Water Program, which encourages municipalities and the public to plant trees where they can have the most benefit for improving water quality. He also featured the Virginia Urban Wood Program, which provides options for landowners and municipalities to use dead or dying trees and aims to improve the management of small urban forests. Another program of interest to the municipalities is the Community Tree Planting Map. This map will be available online later this year and will allow citizens to report tree plantings.

Mr. Lewis shared two projects happening in the region: 1) the Resilient Coastal Forests project for the York River watershed and 2) the Natural Mitigation efforts within the Virginia Beach Adaptation Strategy.

VDOF partnered with the US Forest Service and the Green Infrastructure Center for the Resilient Coastal Forest project. The municipalities within the York River watershed, along with several NGOs and other stakeholders, have been involved from the beginning. The focus of the project is to identify the benefits provided by the forest and to develop an adaptive plan for forest resilience. Some of the management recommendations include increasing canopy cover, strengthening rural zoning, and identifying areas to plant stream buffers.

VDOF is working with the City of Virginia Beach, the Nature Conservancy, and several more partners to integrate forest infrastructure into stormwater management in the City. Using trees as stormwater pumps can be a cost-effective complement to more structural practices, as found in a recent study published by Daniel McLaughlin et. al of Virginia Tech. HRPDC staff will distribute a link to the study, per the request of several Committee members. Dr. McLaughlin presented the study at the December meeting of the regional Water Quality Technical Workgroup. HRPDC staff will also distribute a copy of that presentation.

Mr. Brian Swets of Portsmouth shared an interesting related [article](#), which describes how researchers at Descartes Lab are using artificial intelligence to better map urban tree canopy.

5. Get Flood Fluent

GetFloodFluent.org is a public outreach initiative by the HRPDC and its member localities to encourage residents to purchase flood insurance. The campaign began in 2019, with the launch of the website, paid media with an emphasis on radio spots, and public relations. Mr. McFarlane demonstrated the new flood insurance rate calculator on the website that provides homeowners estimates of their annual insurance rate costs based on the location, structure type, and property value. The campaign will be promoted this year with an emphasis on TV spots and continued public relations.

6. Chesapeake Bay Program Update

The Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) and the Virginia DEQ (DEQ) have been very active during the spring months holding regular meetings and hitting deadlines.

Dr. Filippino first briefed the Committee on Virginia's recent efforts towards meeting state commitments of the Bay TMDL. The state has received comments from the EPA on the draft two-year milestones and is working to incorporate those edits. The final version is expected to be posted on DEQ's website in July. DEQ is also working to finalize the draft Bay TMDL Action Plan guidance, which the MS4 permittees use to develop their strategies for the Special Conditions of their permits. Once the draft is final, DEQ will publish notice of the guidance and initiate a formal public comment period. Lastly, DEQ held the first Regulatory Advisory Panel (RAP) for the Water Quality Management Planning Regulation, which is focused on discharges from wastewater treatment plants. They are discussing the new chlorophyll-a criteria and the floating WLAs that were proposed in the Phase III Watershed Implementation Plan. The next meeting of the RAP will be held virtually on June 10.

The next updates were centered on the activities of the CBP Workgroups. Dr. Filippino noted that the Urban Stormwater Workgroup is primarily focused on the stream restoration protocols and is developing a memo to better apply protocols 2 and 3 to integrated stream and floodplain restoration projects. They have created a small group to more closely evaluate the Impervious Cover Removal and Disconnect BMPs, which Dr. Filippino is part of. The next status report on the IDF curve development will be presented at a joint meeting of the Climate Resilience and Modeling workgroups on June 16. The Land Use Workgroup is reviewing new land cover data, however, the data specific for Hampton Roads will not be available until next year. The Water Quality Goal Implementation team (GIT) has been discussing the impacts of COVID-19 to Bay TMDL deadlines and funding, the effects of climate change on Bay modeling, and the potential challenges of incorporating new data into CAST when the Phase III Watershed Implementation Plans were based on the 2017 version. Dr. Filippino explained that the CAST updates include BMP implementation but do not change the overall reduction goals.

The next meeting of the Regional Environmental Committee will be held on Thursday, July 2, 2020. The July meeting will be held virtually via WebEx.