

**THE SUMMARY OF THE MEETING OF THE
REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE
May 4, 2017**

1. Summary of the March 2, 2017 Meeting of the Hampton Roads Regional Environmental Committee (REC).

There were no comments on the meeting summary.

2. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

3. VA Department of Health, Division of Shellfish Sanitation Updates

Dr. Todd Egerton, Marine Scientist Supervisor for the VA Dept. of Health's (VDH) Division of Shellfish Sanitation (DSS), provided an overview of the Shellfish Sanitation program initiatives for the region. There are additional resources in place to assess sources of bacterial contamination in shellfish waters in order to evaluate and possibly conditionally open shellfish grounds that are closed. Monitoring is conducted in partnership with localities and the Hampton Roads Sanitation District. Dr. Egerton discussed current levels of classification, showed where shellfish grounds are closed or conditionally open, and discussed some of the work ongoing in the Nansemond River in Suffolk.

Ms. Whitney Katchmark asked if the watermen are the main drivers of this effort and Dr. Egerton replied that yes, they are the primary reason new resources have been allocated to VDH.

Ms. Barbara Brumbaugh asked how closures work following rain events, and Dr. Egerton responded that there is a 10 day temporary closure following a rain event, and that clock is reset every time a rain event that exceeds specific thresholds occurs.

Ms. Anna Drake asked if the program is also tracking nonhuman sources of bacteria, and Dr. Egerton replied that they are currently focused on human sources.

Dr. Filippino stated that 30 consecutive samples are required for closure and asked how long that status remains in effect. Dr. Egerton noted that each area is evaluated annually.

Ms. Amelia DaCruz asked if VDH was also monitoring the oysters and water for other contaminants like PCBs and metals. Dr. Egerton stated that it is not a part of their routine monitoring, however if a river is already impaired for those contaminants they will sometimes include those in their monitoring.

4. Clean Water Heritage Stormwater Maintenance and Repair Program

Ms. Fran Geisler and Mr. John Fuqua presented a history and possible solutions for neighborhood stormwater maintenance issues. The Stormwater Program Advisory Committee (SPAC) evaluated the problems and provided recommendations resulting in the Clean Water Heritage program. The program is designed to encourage long-term

maintenance of privately owned stormwater infrastructure. The County provides cost-sharing and builds capacity within participating home-owners associations (HOAs) by disseminating proper procurement, construction oversight, and permitting procedures. The maximum amounts provided for drainage repairs is \$50,000 and for BMP maintenance is \$7,500, and both types of projects require a 50-50 match from the HOA. The program has been successful - applications have increased, HOAs have set aside funds for future applications, and overall response has been positive. However, issues remain for County staff to provide constant oversight and training to the HOAs and non-HOA neighborhoods have not participated.

Ms. Jill Sunderland asked if they are seeing similar types of repairs across projects and Ms. Geisler responded that yes they are. The most common maintenance projects are ditches collapsing, litter clogged outfall structures, and sinkholes at drop inlets. Ms. Dyba explained that some of the projects are too big and expensive to be funded in one year, so they are broken into phases and funded over multiple years.

Ms. Katchmark asked if other localities have similar types of programs, and the response was negative.

5. Virginia Master Naturalists Training Program

Ms. Karen Cifranick, training coordinator for the Tidewater Chapter of the Virginia Master Naturalists, briefed the Committee on how the training program works in VA. Students attend 40 hours of instruction, which is a combination of classroom presentations and fieldwork. The Tidewater Chapter typically trains 15 to 20 participants annually. Trained Master Naturalists are then available to localities and NGOs to volunteer their time and expertise for restoration activities on public lands. Master Naturalists are required to complete 8 hours per year to maintain their certification.

Ms. Cifranick also gave a brief overview of one of the topics incorporated in the training regarding Urban and Developed Systems Ecology and Management, which focuses the impact of urbanization on ecology.

Ms. DaCruz asked if the program has a formal internship program for college students, and Ms. Cifranick responded that they do not but students are welcome to go through the training program.

Mr. Dave Imburgia asked what the difference is between Master Naturalists and Master Gardeners. Ms. Cifranick replied that Master Gardeners focus on plants and landscaping while Master Naturalists have a broader focus that includes fauna and ecosystems. Mr. Imburgia also mentioned that the Master Gardeners have been involved with shoreline plantings on the Northern Neck, which is a great way to enhance shorelines without having the government in your backyard. He suggested that similar outreach efforts may be appropriate for the Master Naturalists as well.

Mr. Daniel Robinson asked if urban training is part of the basic training, and Ms. Cifranick responded that it is.

6. **Coastal Hazards Grant**

Mr. Ben McFarlane relayed to the Committee that the Coastal Hazards Grant is wrapping up and updates will be forthcoming. There will be a workshop on May 9 on Integrating Coastal Hazards into Local Plans, Policies, and Ordinances. Additional details and registration information will be distributed via email.

7. **askHRgreen.org “Write as Rain” Campaign**

Ms. Katie Cullipher leads the “Write as Rain” sidewalk messaging campaign. Messages have been stenciled on sidewalks that only appear when they are wet. All four committees of askHRgreen are involved, each with 3 different messages. Example messages include “Only Rain Down the Storm Drain”, “Cigarette Butts are Litter, Too”, and “You Drop It, You Drink It.”

The regional effort was launched in conjunction with Earth Day to encourage citizens to think about how their actions affect the environment. There is an interactive map that shows where all of the messages are located in CH, HA, JC, NN, SU, VB, WG, and YK on the askHRgreen website. Messaging will soon be coming to IW, PO, and SM. There are over 60 messages on the ground. Several media campaigns have been rolled out to spread the word about this unique messaging initiative.

8. **Coastal Zone Program Updates**

Mr. McFarlane briefed the Committee on matters related to the VA CZ program. There was a lot of interest in the HR Native Plant guides, so more guides will be printed and distributed on an as needed basis.

The kayak launches in IW and NO are nearing completion, and funds need to be spent by June of this year.

HRPDC submitted a grant proposal to CZM to develop estimates of the first floor flood elevations. The proposal received the second highest score and has a good chance of getting funded in October. Mr. Imburgia asked what method they are using, and Mr. McFarlane responded that they proposed a regression analysis, and they are working with researchers at ODU to estimate accuracy. Mr. Imburgia mentioned that there is equipment available at NASA to use for better assessments. Mr. McFarlane will coordinate with Mr. Imburgia regarding borrowing backpack GIS instruments from NASA for the first floor flood elevations surveying effort.

Mr. McFarlane announced that the HRPDC has hired a new coastal planner, who will begin work in mid-June.

9. **Status Reports**

A. HRPDC – Mr. McFarlane reminded the group of the workshop next week for the Coastal Hazards Grant. Mr. McFarlane also mentioned on-going meetings with FEMA regarding new and very stringent requirements for tracking building improvements. FEMA Region III instructed HA to track all development in the floodplain, including interior home renovations such as painting and cabinetry. There has been

significant pushback, and the region is working together with FEMA to develop more suitable guidance.

Ms. Sunderland informed the Committee that the final IDDE training videos and field manual are available on the HRPDC website.

Ms. Sara Kidd announced the job opening available at HRPDC for a Senior Regional Planner, taking the place of Ms. Jai McBride.

- B. NN** – Mr. Joe Grist requested a follow-up of the Chief Administrator Officers (CAOs) meeting that occurred on May 3. Ms. Katchmark stated that she briefed the group on affordability issues for drinking water, stormwater, and wastewater that are facing the region and the nation as a whole.
- C. VDOT** – Ms. Jennifer Dail said that the VDOT MS4 permit is available for public notice on their website.
- D. Daniel Robinson** – Mr. Robinson, a VT graduate student, reminded the Committee that he distributed his green infrastructure survey last week. He asked for the participation of the Committee members.
- E. John Paine** – Mr. Paine reminded the Committee that topographic surveys now require a certification statement.

The next meeting of the Regional Environmental Committee will be held on Thursday June 1, 2017 in the Regional Boardroom at the HRPDC in Chesapeake, VA.