

**THE DRAFT SUMMARY OF THE MEETING OF THE
REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE
January 2, 2013**

1. Summary of the November 7, 2013 Meeting of the Hampton Roads Regional Environmental Committee

The Summary of the November 7, 2013 Meeting of the Hampton Roads Regional Environmental Committee was approved as distributed.

2. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

3. Subsidence Report Summary

Ms. Whitney Katchmark, HRPDC, briefed the Committee on the findings from a recently released USGS circular, "Land Subsidence and Relative Sea-Level Rise in the Southern Chesapeake Bay Region." The report summarizes the existing data and research on land subsidence in the Hampton Roads region. The circular finds that there is some variability in the rate of subsidence across the region, but that it is generally about 3 mm/year, which is more than half of the long-term observed rate of relative sea level rise (approximately 4.5 mm/year). The circular also states that most of the subsidence in the region is the result of aquifer compaction.

Based on the circular's findings, HRPDC staff recommends that the Commission and member localities support DEQ's budget to incorporate land subsidence into the existing groundwater model and encourage the consideration of variable rates of land subsidence in studies on the impacts of sea level rise and recurrent flooding.

4. Coastal Zone Program Update

Mr. Benjamin McFarlane, HRPDC, updated the Committee on the status of HRPDC's grant projects that are funded by the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program. HRPDC currently has seven CZM grants: the regional technical assistance program (approved), Section 309 (approved), Virginia Beach Sea Level Rise (approved), Suffolk public access (undergoing CZM review), Norfolk public access (approved), sea level rise technical assistance (undergoing NOAA review), and native plants (undergoing NOAA review).

As part of the technical assistance program, HRPDC staff conducts studies and special projects throughout the year. As part of the two most recent grants HRPDC staff has been working with the Virginia Association of Counties to estimate the number and value of properties in coastal localities that could be vulnerable to changing insurance industry policies. Maps have been completed for 42 of the 44 cities and counties in the coastal zone (all except for Essex County and King and Queen County). A summary

report will be prepared for the next technical assistance final report. All the maps will be posted on the VACo website, and HRPDC staff will post the maps for Hampton Roads localities on the HRPDC ftp server.

HRPDC staff is also working with CZM and several PDCs on planning for working waterfronts. HRPDC's role is mostly advisory, with some GIS/mapmaking. There will be a workshop for public officials and watermen at VIMS in February.

The Middle Peninsula PDC has been working on a series of Section 309 grants under the same state goal as HRPDC. One of their projects has been an analysis of whose responsibility it is to maintain drainage ways that lead from VDOT-maintained roadways to water bodies. The analysis indicates that maintenance of those drainage ways generally seems to be the responsibility of the property owner.

The Committee asked HRPDC staff to follow up on the VACo maps and the VDOT/MPPDC analysis.

5. Hurricane Sandy Coastal Resiliency Competitive Grant Program

Mr. McFarlane led a brief discussion with the Committee on proposals for the Hurricane Sandy Coastal Resiliency Competitive Grant Program. HRPDC staff is currently developing a proposal with VIMS to identify potential sites for natural resources (wetlands, dunes, etc.) restoration or construction and the prioritization of those sites based on the ecosystem and resiliency benefits provided.

Several localities are also developing proposals. Hampton staff noted that the online application appears to be extensive. Virginia Beach staff is looking at three projects: dune restoration, shoreline restoration in the Back Bay, and land acquisition near Pungo Ferry. Ms. Shannon Hulst, Wetlands Watch, stated they are working on a proposal to educate citizens. Gloucester staff reported that the County is looking at retrofitting lift stations and pump stations and restoring wetlands and riparian buffers. York County staff is considering various proposals. Norfolk is considering several proposals: an overall resiliency plan for the Lafayette River watershed, a homeowner tool with VIMS, and NEPA work for flood gate projects.

Ms. Shereen Hughes, Wetlands Watch, suggested that the Wetlands Watch proposal would be designed to align with local comprehensive plans and coastal resource management plans. There is a need to keep people engaged so that they support the implementation of local plans.

6. Legislative Agenda Discussion

HRPDC staff led a discussion with the Committee on the regional legislative agenda for the 2014 General Assembly session. HRPDC staff will be monitoring key bills.

Mr. Clay Bernick, Virginia Beach, suggested linking the legislative agenda that was distributed to specific bills.

Mr. Bill Johnston, Virginia Beach, stated that Virginia Beach is supporting a delay of the stormwater management regulations. The city wants to be fully compliant, but enforcement costs are high. The legislation is not ready, nor is the language clear. The regulations will be a huge financial burden on localities. Localities, not the state, are expected to make the program work. Delegates representing Virginia Beach will be co-sponsoring legislation to delay the regulations.

Mr. Justin Shafer, Norfolk, stated that Norfolk is opposed to delaying the technical criteria but is in favor of delaying the delegation of responsibility from the state to the localities.

Ms. Jenny Tribo, HRPDC, reported that HRPDC staff has been working with VGIN and others to develop funding solutions for the acquisition of high-resolution land cover data. Ms. Tribo also reported that the living shorelines general permit has hit a snag. The process is being streamlined, but existing legislation that protects wetlands and dunes does not allow for no public notice on proposed projects. HRPDC is talking with VMRC about possible legislative solutions. Ms. Gayle Hicks, Hampton, suggested talking with Tony Watkinson.

7. Envision Hampton Roads Community Values Listening Session

As part of the Envision Hampton Road regional strategic planning effort, HRPDC staff has been coordinating and hosting a series of listening sessions with various groups to help identify shared regional community values. These values will be the foundation for the strategic plan. Ms. Julia Hillegass and Ms. Jai McBride, HRPDC, led a listening session for the Committee that was designed to answer a series of questions.

Question #1: What community values or characteristics do you think have historically best defined our Hampton Roads region?

- Strong military presence
- Water dependent community
- Respect for history
- Great seafood
- Ability to commute
- Greenery/natural resources that are accessible
- Collaboration between communities for a shared vision
- Potential for redevelopment and improvement
- Port/maritime history
- Tourism
- Beaches
- Overdependence on military spending
- Higher education resources
- Diversification of economy

- Medical resources
- Access to water/blueways
- Strong environmental advocacy
- A lot of knowledge/great minds
- Proximity to Richmond and DC
- Great retirement community
- Temperate climate

Question #2: Do any of the community values or characteristics you listed above set Hampton Roads apart from other communities – other parts of the country?

- Military
- Port
- Beaches
- Natural resources
- Seafood
- Blueways

Question #3: What community values or characteristics would you like Hampton Roads to be more associated with in the future?

- Stable population
- Economy less dependent on military/more diverse
- Alternative energy development
- Major league sports team
- Better educational opportunities
- Coastal resiliency
- Real international airport
- Faster internet
- Better mass transit/light rail
- Network of bike paths
- Growth of arts community
- Redevelopment friendly regulatory environment
- Blueways and greenways

Question #4: Of all the values listed today, what are the top 3-5 most worth protecting in Hampton Roads – the values that demonstrate or could demonstrate our “best self” as a region?

- Port/maritime industry
- World class research facilities
- Diverse economy
- Coastal resiliency
- Coastal access/blueways/greenways
- Edible seafood
- Efficient transportation
- Employment opportunities

Question #5: Do you have any questions or input (advice) about the Envision Hampton Roads planning process?

- Who is HRPDC talking to?
 - o Rotary clubs
 - o WHRO
 - o Open invitation meetings
 - o Stakeholders are doing some outreach
- Should coordinate with other plans and regional organizations

The listening sessions are scheduled to be completed by the end of January.

8. Status Reports

Ms. Katchmark stated that there will be an update on water quality monitoring for the Phase I MS4 localities.

Ms. McBride stated that there will be a stakeholders meeting for Envision Hampton Roads at 10:30am Monday morning. Public meetings will be held later in the month.

Ms. Hicks announced that Hampton is advertising for several positions.

Ms. Hughes announced that a native plants marketing campaign meeting will be held January 28, 2014. The organizers are trying to set up a satellite meeting in Norfolk (possibly at Tidewater Community College) since the main meeting is being held in Culpeper. There will be a discussion on landscape certification for small BMPs.

Mr. Scott Rae, Gloucester, reported that staff will be sharing the submittals to DEQ with the Board of Supervisors at its meeting next Tuesday. Gloucester County supports delaying the regulations.

Ms. Rhonda Russell, Surry, reported that Surry is now covered by the Richmond Regional Office of DEQ for stormwater. The regional representative from that office was very complimentary of HRPDC's efforts, and Ms. Russell is sharing the information presented by HRPDC staff with the rest of the Crater PDC localities.

9. Other Matters

The next meeting of the Regional Environmental Committee is scheduled for February 6, 2014 at the HRPDC office in Chesapeake, Virginia. Materials will be sent in advance for review.