

**THE DRAFT SUMMARY OF THE MEETING OF THE
REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE
August 7, 2014**

1. Summary of the July 3, 2014 Meeting of the Hampton Roads Regional Environmental Committee

The Summary of the July 3, 2014 Meeting of the Hampton Roads Regional Environmental Committee was approved as distributed.

2. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

3. Virginia Beach Sea Level Rise Project

Ms. Whitney McNamara, Virginia Beach, and Mr. Ben McFarlane, HRPDC, briefed the Committee on the final report for the HRPDC's CZM grant project, "Developing a Local Sea Level Rise Adaptation Plan for Virginia Beach." The report covers the findings for three deliverables:

- 1) An assessment of codes and policies from Virginia Beach and other areas
- 2) Mapping of areas vulnerable to sea level rise and storm surge
- 3) Development of a strategy for public communications and outreach

The report summarizes activities that Virginia Beach has already completed or is working on that relate to sea level rise. Case studies from other Hampton Roads and Virginia communities were also included. National case studies, such as Louisiana and San Francisco, were assessed for their applicability to Virginia Beach. The report also includes a prioritized list of critical infrastructure in Virginia Beach which includes private facilities. Maps were created showing which areas are vulnerable to sea level rise and storm surge combined with sea level rise. The report also identifies several next steps that Virginia Beach will undertake in response to the report and aligned efforts.

Mr. Bill Johnston, Virginia Beach, asked how difficult it was to get the public and city staff engaged on the issue. Ms. McNamara stated that there was quite a bit of interest already from those who live in vulnerable areas, but not much from others. Mr. Clay Bernick, Virginia Beach, stated that, with the comprehensive plan update meetings starting in the fall, city committees and boards will begin looking at possible policy and ordinance changes in response to sea level rise.

4. Sea Level Rise Update

Mr. McFarlane briefed the Committee on efforts related to recurrent flooding and sea level rise. HRPDC, in partnership with several other organizations, including the VCZMP, Wetlands Watch, and CBNERR, hosted a training workshop provided by the

NOAA Coastal Services Center/Office for Coastal Management on Climate Adaptation for Coastal Communities. The training was held at Newport News Waterworks from July 29 to 31, and included several presentations and activities designed to teach attendees about climate change, adaptation, and implementation. Several local staff presented as part of the workshop. Overall attendance was approximately 40 each day.

The next meeting of the Special Committee on Recurrent Flooding and Sea Level Rise will be held in September.

The new LIDAR for eastern Hampton Roads has been delivered to VGIN, and HRPDC staff is in the process of obtaining it for local and regional projects. There are eight deliverables available:

- 1) Classified Point Cloud
- 2) First and Last Return Surfaces
- 3) Bare Earth Surface
- 4) Intensity Imagery
- 5) Breaklines
- 6) 3D and 2D Buildings
- 7) Forest polygons and tree points
- 8) Extents

Due to size issues, the data will not be put on the HRPDC ftp site. Any interested localities should contact either Mr. McFarlane or Ms. Sara Kidd to discuss how to obtain the data.

HRPDC staff briefed the Commission on the Dutch Dialogues at the July Commission meeting. HRPDC staff will be working with the Dutch Embassy to schedule interviews and meetings for early fall. The workshop will likely be held in late fall. At this point, Hampton, Norfolk, and Virginia Beach have expressed interest in hosting workshops.

5. Regional Trails Update

Ms. Sara Kidd, HRPDC, briefed the Committee on the status of regional trails in Hampton Roads.

The Southeast Coast Saltwater Paddling Trail is continuing to identify partners and developing a long-term strategy. Map data is also being updated.

The National Park service has completed the final plan for the James River segment of the Captain John Smith National Historic Trail. The Nansemond River segment was opened and dedicated in May 2014. A number of kiosks are planned to be installed in several Hampton Roads localities.

Construction on the Pughsville-Driver segment of the South Hampton Roads Trail will begin this year. A rails-to-trails segment in Portsmouth has received funding from the HRTPO for design and construction. The Tidewater Bicycle Association is planning a trip to Charlotte to look at light rail and trails.

DCR is currently working on a plan for the Beaches to Bluegrass Trail, and HRPDC is supporting using the South Hampton Roads Trail as the route through Hampton Roads. At this point there are many gaps in the trail; those in Hampton Roads are being filled by on-road bike routes.

There is interest in adding a spur to the TransAmerica Bicycle Trail that would take bicyclists to Virginia Beach (the current trail ends in Yorktown).

Several segments of the Virginia Capital Trail have opened, and the rest are under construction. The goal is to complete the entire trail by September 1, 2015.

There are two grant opportunities available that may be of interest to localities. DGIF Public Boating Access grant applications are due October 1 (information at <http://www.dgif.virginia.gov/boating/access/grants>). NPS Maritime Heritage Program grant applications are due September 23 (information at <http://www.nps.gov/maritime/grants/2014.htm>).

6. askHRgreen.org Annual Report

Ms. Katie Cullipher, HRPDC, briefed the Committee on the FY13-14 askHRgreen.org annual report and highlights of the 2014-15 plan. Overall, askHRgreen.org:

- conducted
 - o a search engine optimization program
 - o a search engine marketing campaign
 - o 12 themed media campaigns with creative advertising materials
 - o A brand campaign
- Held media training
- Distributed 12 newsletters and hundreds of social media posts
- Contributed to the 3rd edition of Green Living
- Launched “Toolbox”
- Held trailer appearances and provided event support
- Held local promotions

Examples of themed advertising messages were “What Not to Flush” (Fats, Oils, & Grease Education), “Fix-a-Leak” (Water Awareness), and “Pet Waste” (Stormwater Awareness). The report summarizes traffic to the askHRgreen.org website, including sources, visitors, page views, and other metrics. Staff and committee members also conducted media outreach, including news releases, events, guest columns, and appearances on radio and television. AskHRgreen.org also worked with many partner organizations throughout the year, including the Virginia Museum of Contemporary Art and Norfolk SPCA. Overall, visitation to the website was up 63% and the total return on investment for the outreach efforts was 1.61 to 1.

For FY14-15 askHRgreen.org will continue improving the website and marketing strategies. Public relations work (news releases, e-newsletters, etc.) will also continue. Evaluation research has been scheduled for January 2015. The \$100,000 budget for

FY14-15 will be split among media (25%), public relations (23%), creative development (30%), research (17%), and consulting (5%). Funding for branding will decrease from previous.

Mr. Johnston noted that the askHRgreen.org program goes a long way in meeting local MS4 requirements. Ms. Barbara Brumbaugh, Chesapeake, noted that there has been a good response so far to the pet waste station program.

7. Stormwater Local Assistance Funding White Paper

Ms. Jill Sunderland, HRPDC, briefed the Committee on an analysis of projects funded through the 2013 Stormwater Local Assistance Fund (SLAF). In 2013 DEQ solicited proposals; of the 114 applications 102 were deemed eligible and 71 were funded (after it was decided to only fund projects with total phosphorus removal costs less than \$50,000 per pound per year). Using information provided by DEQ, HRPDC staff analyzed the funded projects to determine which types were mostly likely to be funded and develop recommendations for DEQ to consider in future funding years.

The most common projects submitted were stream restoration, bioretention, wet ponds, and wetlands, comprising about two-thirds of all eligible projects. All submitted stream restoration projects were funded. Most wet pond and wetland projects were also funded, but only 11% of the bioretention projects met the cost threshold. Most (59%) of the funded projects were submitted by MS4 Phase II communities.

HRPDC staff made three recommendations to DEQ.

- 1) Incorporate nitrogen and sediment removal in addition to phosphorus
- 2) Utilize some funds for innovative projects that exceed the \$50,000 per pound per year removal cost
- 3) Change the methodology from using the Runoff Reduction Method to using loading rates consistent with Chesapeake Bay TMDL MS4 guidance
- 4) Track additional project information, such as
 - a. Specific BMPs used and classification levels
 - b. Acres treated
 - c. Impervious and pervious acres on the site
 - d. Nitrogen and sediment removed
 - e. Whether a project is in a regulated or non-regulated portion of a locality
 - f. Design versus construction costs

HRPDC staff will send the analysis to Walter Gills at DEQ next week, so comments should be submitted as soon as possible.

8. Statewide Land Cover Project Update

Ms. Jenny Tribo, HRPDC, updated the Committee on an effort to develop statewide land cover data. Funding for statewide land cover data was included in final budget for FY14-15. This data will be derived from the VBMP orthophotography and is intended to

be available to improve the accuracy of the Chesapeake Bay model in 2017 during the reassessment. Funding for the proposal is coming from WQIF funds. An initial stakeholder meeting, including representatives from DEQ, DCR, and VGIN, was held to discuss technical requirements and classification schemes. The group is still working on whether to aim for land use data, land cover data, or some combination. The goal is to get the RFP out in the fall using VGIN's technical assistance contract. Stream corridors will not be included as a separate classification, but will affect the loading rates of contributing areas.

9. PARS

The Stormwater Workgroup identified specific enhancements to the PARS reporting system to help with tracking for MS4 permits. The Committee discussed the proposed enhancements and whether or not to use reserve funds from the regional Stormwater Program to pay for them, with the estimated cost of \$42,357.40. The Committee voted to use reserve funds to pay for the project, with two abstentions (Newport News and Portsmouth). James City County, Williamsburg, and Windsor were not represented at the meeting, so they did not vote.

10. Envision Hampton Roads Visioning Session

Due to time constraints the Visioning Session for Envision Hampton Roads was postponed to a future Committee meeting. There will be a vision session held at HRPDC on August 20 from 10am to 12pm that interested parties are invited to attend.

11. Status Reports

Ms. Tribo announced that the first technical subcommittee meeting will be after the September Committee meeting. Suggestions for topics and interested local staff not already on the Committee should be sent to HRPDC staff. It is estimated that the subcommittee will meet quarterly. Ms. Tribo also announced that she will be leaving the HRPDC in the fall, and that there will be an opening for a Senior Water Resources Specialist.

Ms. Kim Hummel, Isle of Wight, announced that there will be an open house for new FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps on Monday, August 11, 2014.

Water Jam will be held September 8-11 at the Hampton Roads Convention Center in Hampton.

12. Other Matters

The next meeting of the Regional Environmental Committee is scheduled for September 4, 2014 at the HRPDC office in Chesapeake, Virginia. Materials will be sent in advance for review.