

**THE DRAFT SUMMARY OF THE MEETING OF THE
REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE
December 4, 2014**

1. Summary of the November 6, 2014 Meeting of the Hampton Roads Regional Environmental Committee

The Summary of the November 6, 2014 Meeting of the Hampton Roads Regional Environmental Committee was approved as distributed.

2. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

3. VDGIF Wildlife Action Plan

Mr. Chris Burkett, Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, gave a presentation to the Committee on the next Virginia Wildlife Action Plan, which is currently under development. The main goal of the Wildlife Action Plan is to help keep wildlife from becoming threatened or endangered. Wildlife Action Plans are not regulatory documents, though they are part of the larger federal endangered species framework. Wildlife Action Plans can, if successful, help states avoid the high regulatory burdens that result from species being declared threatened or endangered. Each Wildlife Action Plan has eight required elements:

- 1) Identification of species of greatest conservation need
- 2) Habitats
- 3) Threats
- 4) Actions
- 5) Monitoring (status and effectiveness)
- 6) Update
- 7) Partner collaboration
- 8) Public outreach

Mr. Burkett stated that DGIF hopes to improve on the state's current Wildlife Action Plan by developing a tool that is of greater use to local decision makers and the public. Issues identified with the current plan were that it is difficult to use, it does not always address habitat concerns, and it was not always actionable. For example, DGIF is considering writing chapters for each PDC, similar to the Virginia Outdoors Plan. These chapters could have locally actionable information, such as priority species, priority habitats, threats, conservation actions, and priority places. A major focus of the new action plan will be habitat, with water quality a major goal.

Following his presentation, Mr. Burkett asked for feedback from the Committee. Comments included:

- The Virginia Outdoors Plan is a good model; however, PDC boundaries don't always align with habitat zones.

- Data should be provided separate from the plan.
- A multiple benefits approach could help in convincing local decision makers to act on the new plan. Other items such as green infrastructure, climate change, sea level rise, and impaired waterways could be incorporated.
- DGIF should coordinate with other state programs, including non-profit efforts, such as habitat restoration and soil remediation.
- DGIF should look at both upstream and downstream impacts and incorporate efforts such as tree planting programs and living shorelines promotion.

DGIF will be conducting additional outreach in spring and summer 2015. Interested individuals should contact Mr. Burkett or the HRPDC staff.

4. Impaired Waters report from the Secretary of Natural Resources

Ms. Whitney Katchmark, HRPDC, briefed the Committee on the annual report from the Secretary of Natural Resources to the General Assembly on Virginia's impaired waters and Chesapeake Bay TMDL implementation progress. The report summarizes data and information from three sources:

- 1) The Annual Report on the Water Quality Improvement Fund (WQIF)
- 2) Cooperative Nonpoint Source Pollution Programs
- 3) Annual Funding Needs for Effective Implementation of Agricultural Best Management Practices

For the WQIF Point Source Program, DEQ has 67 agreements and has obligated \$744 million in state grants for nutrient reduction technology. These grants have a cost-share between 35% and 90%. For FY14, \$21 million was distributed to Soil and Water Conservation Districts for agricultural cost-share funds. Of the \$21 million, \$19 million was distributed to farmers for BMP implementation.

BMPs funded in FY14 resulted in 3,200,000 pounds of nitrogen reductions and 743,000 pounds of phosphorus reductions.

For FY16-FY21, the state estimates that \$1.55 billion may be required from state and federal funds and farmer contributions to meet 2025 agricultural load reduction goals. The detailed funding schedule for FY16-18 includes \$334 million in planned spending; however, these funds will not achieve the 60% reduction goal for the Chesapeake Bay TMDL. The 2017 goal should be met by over-achievement in other sectors, principally the wastewater treatment sector.

Regarding urban needs, SLAF projects were allocated \$29 million in FY14. These projects will remove a total of 7,374 pounds of total phosphorus annually once constructed. The state has not calculated a state-wide cost estimate for the urban sector.

Ms. Katchmark identified two potential analyses or steps that could help the state move forward. The first is to get additional information on agricultural costs compared to

urban costs before the state Stakeholder Advisory Group. The second is to pursue a state-wide cost estimate for the urban sector.

5. The State of Recycling in Hampton Roads White Paper

Ms. Katie Cullipher, HRPDC, briefed the Committee on a white paper, “The State of Recycling in Hampton Roads,” produced by the askHRgreen.org Recycling and Beautification Committee. The white paper was released in November. The white paper provides a snapshot view of recycling in Hampton Roads and is intended for a variety of audiences. Several data sources, including surveys and state and federal agencies, were used in the production of the white paper. The white paper includes nine sections:

- 1) History of recycling in the Hampton Roads
- 2) Types of recycling programs in the region
- 3) Jobs associated with the recycling industry
- 4) Examples of local recycling companies
- 5) A “snapshot” of residential recycling programs
- 6) Residential recycling perceptions and behaviors
- 7) A description of the business of recycling
- 8) National and regional initiatives of note
- 9) Summary and goals

The white paper has been developed in such a way that it can be easily used by localities or other organizations, and the graphics and data in the paper can be repurposed. The document is intended to be updated as programs change. The white paper is available for download at the askHRgreen.org website:

<http://askhrgreen.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/askHRgreen-CurbsideRecycling.pdf>.

6. Land Subsidence Update

Ms. Katchmark updated the Committee on a discussion about whether and how to monitor land subsidence. This issue was discussed with the Special Committee on Recurrent Flooding and Sea Level Rise in September, and the recommendation from that discussion was to pursue a study or research project to identify the best method of monitoring and predicting future land subsidence. At the November HRPDC meeting, the HRPDC staff presented two options to the Commission:

- 1) The HRPDC could fund a study by the USGS to assess various methods of monitoring land subsidence and develop cost estimates, which would then be used to support future budget requests or grant applications. The estimated cost for the study was \$50,000.
- 2) The HRPDC could issue a request for proposals for InSAR analysis, which would include an assessment of existing data. The estimated cost for this approach was \$250,000.

The HRPDC requested that staff work with the advisory committees to develop a specific recommendation.

The Committee suggested contacting other regional entities, such as ODU and NASA, including local sediment compaction, being aware of possible insurance implications, and considering the crater. Mr. Andrew Scott, VDOT, suggested contacting Mr. Danny Williams in the Suffolk office to look at VDOT surveys.

7. Sea Level Rise Update

Mr. Ben McFarlane, HRPDC, updated the Committee on matters related to sea level rise and recurrent flooding. The HRPDC staff will be taking advantage of new LIDAR data to develop new sea level rise inundation maps. The Recurrent Flooding and Sea Level Rise Committee will be consulted on appropriate scenarios and methods.

In November, the HRPDC hosted a meeting to discuss holding a Dutch Dialogues workshop in Hampton Roads. The meeting featured a representative from the Dutch Embassy and an architect/designer from New Orleans whose firm was involved with the original Dutch Dialogues. Several localities sent staff representatives to discuss topics to emphasize and potential case study locations.

On December 2 ODU hosted a FEMA-led exercise on sea level rise and flooding as part of the federal agency pilot project. Several federal agencies and local governments took part in the exercise.

The HRPDC Special Committee on Recurrent Flooding and Sea Level Rise will meet on Friday, December 19, at the HRPDC offices in Chesapeake.

8. Coastal Zone Management Program Update

Mr. McFarlane updated the Committee on matters related to the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program. The VCZMP will host the Virginia Coastal Partners Workshop on December 10 and 11 in Richmond. Local staff representatives are encouraged to attend to hear about VCZMP-funded projects and to participate in discussions regarding the next round of Section 309 Strategies, which will be submitted to NOAA in 2015. These strategies will run from 2016-2020.

VCZMP staff has indicated that the process for applying for PDC competitive and Section 309 grants for FY15-16 will be moved up to early 2015. However, total available funds will not be known at that time. It is likely that the same guidance used for last year's application process will be used for this year. The RFP for FY15 PDC Competitive Section 306 and Section 309 projects will be sent out in mid-January, with proposals due to VCZMP by mid-February.

9. Status Reports

The regional environmental technical workgroup will be meeting at 12:30pm.

The next Committee meeting is scheduled to begin at 9:30am to allow for scheduling conflicts with other groups.

10. Other Matters

The next meeting of the Regional Environmental Committee is scheduled for January 8, 2015 at the HRPDC office in Chesapeake, Virginia. Materials will be sent in advance for review.