

**THE SUMMARY OF THE MEETING OF THE
REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE
September 1, 2016**

Note: The order of the agenda was slightly modified to accommodate the schedules of the presenters.

1. Summary of the August 4, 2016 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. Overview of Sources of Regional Data

Mr. Luciano Ramos, United Way, presented an overview of the Greater Hampton Roads Community Indicators Dashboard. The dashboard features open data from a variety of sources and provides querying capabilities to examine individual communities or compare specified communities in a number of topic areas, including health, education, the economy, and social environment. It covers 20 counties and municipalities in the greater Hampton Roads area. It has been a collaborative effort with partners across the region, including the City Managers for VB, NO, and SU, healthcare providers, education organizations, etc. A beta version of the dashboard is available online at <http://www.ghrconnects.org/>. The official launch is scheduled for later this year.

Mr. Ramos asked for suggestions on additional data sets that could be included, particularly for the Natural and Built Environment category. Some ideas offered by the Committee included acreage of parks, numbers of building permits, or beach closures.

4. Lafayette River Restoration Briefing

Mr. Joe Rieger, Elizabeth River Project, discussed the recent removal of the Lafayette River from DEQ's list of bacteria-impaired waterways. The Lafayette River Restoration Plan was funded by NFWF in 2008. The Plan established three goals for the river:

- Reduce harmful bacteria to levels that are safe for recreational contact by 2014
- Achieve healthy, plentiful wildlife
- Encourage river stewardship through public awareness and action

Some of the actions taken to achieve these goals include:

- Stormwater projects
- Wastewater pipe replacement
- Bacteria monitoring
- Wetland restoration
- Oyster reef restoration
- RiverFest events
- River Star Homes program
- Outreach programs in the school within the river watershed

The progress has been significant. The Lafayette River is no longer listed as bacteria-impaired and more than 50% of the river meets the state criteria for shellfish harvesting. These achievements can be attributed to the collective impact of numerous partners. Mr. Reiger emphasized the importance of using all available tools to see substantial water quality improvement.

Some Committee members asked about the data DEQ uses to determine whether a waterbody is impaired. There are two monitoring stations in the Lafayette River, one near the mouth and the other near the Granby Street Bridge. Each station is sampled once a month, and a six-year average is used to determine whether the criteria are met.

The Lafayette Restoration Plan and the Eastern Branch of the Elizabeth River Restoration Plan are available at www.elizabethriver.org.

5. Regional Land Use Data Briefing

Ms. Kidd briefed the Committee on the land use data update, which will support a variety of projects including the Long-Range Transportation Plan. The current regional land use data was approved by the TPO Board in June 2011. The approved major classification codes were the following: residential, commercial, industrial, mixed use, military, institutional, agriculture, vacant, and greenways. The minor codes provide a more specific description, such as low and high density residential, light and heavy industrial and different types of greenways such as parks, conservation, or historic lands.

The TPO will take the following actions to update the regional land use data:

- Identify the GIS POC for each locality
- Add major and minor classification codes based on local knowledge
- Maintain major and minor classification codes to ensure future updates can be completed more efficiently

HRTPO staff is also updating the transportation analysis zones (TAZ) boundary. The current boundaries will be reviewed and then compared with population, employment, updated land use, and transportation network. The localities and VDOT will have an opportunity to review the adjusted boundaries and then it will be submitted to the TPO Board.

6. Chesapeake Bay Local Area Targets

Ms. Katchmark serves on the CBP Local Area Targets (LATs) Task Force, and she provided a summary of the most recent call, which was held on August 30, 2016. Mr. Shawn Garvin, EPA Region III, said that EPA is not looking to assign pollutant reductions at the county level; however, he also encouraged implementation plans at a scale smaller than states. Mr. Gary Shenk, a modeler with the CBP, clarified that he cannot estimate the accuracy of the Phase 6 model at different scales. Mr. Shenk is confident that tools like CAST can be used to compare BMPs and implementation scenarios. Several issues were raised by the Task Force members, including:

- Easier for elected officials to understand a target
- Do not want across-the-board targets for all states and all sectors – make it optional

- Federal facilities already have targets, and it is unfair if they are the only sector
- HRPDC, NVRC, VAMSA said they do not want LATs and are concerned about the lack of legal authority for enforcement
- NY wants a plan for agriculture at the watershed scale

The Task Force chairs asked for written input. Ms. Katchmark presented the following list as a start:

- Abandon the term Local Area Target
- Improve WIPs by describing implementation strategies with enough detail to know:
 - How many pounds of nutrients will be removed by strategy
 - Who has authority to require implementation
 - Who is funding implementation
 - If strategy is not required by regulation, what incentive is driving implementation
 - Estimate the cost of incentives and who will provide incentive
 - Who is tracking the implementation of each strategy

In short, Virginia will have to provide a better description of how they will implement BMPs and how they will achieve reductions on unregulated urban and agricultural lands without the specified legal authority to do so.

The minutes for the LAT Task Force calls are available on the CBP meetings calendar available here: <http://www.chesapeakebay.net/calendar>.

7. **Coastal Zone Program Update**

Mr. McFarlane provided a brief update on matters related to the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program. The next Coastal Policy Team meeting is scheduled for September 20, 2016. The Coastal Partners Workshop, to be held at the DEQ Central Office, will be on November 16 and 17, 2016.

Progress has been made on the NO and IW public access grant projects. The NO project is close to construction, and the IW project team is ironing out issues with title certification. HRPDC staff will apply for six-month extensions on both grants.

The Green Infrastructure Workshop was held at the CBF Brock Center on August 24, 2016. About 50 attendees from across the region attended the free workshop, which was funded by the technical assistance grant.

The technical assistance and public access strategic plan grants begin on October 1, 2016.

8. **Stormwater Local Assistance Fund (SLAF) Update**

Ms. Fran Geissler, JC, presented the VAMSA SLAF Committee's proposed changes to the SLAF Guidelines. The State Water Control Board (SWCB) will consider these and other proposed changes at their next meeting on September 22, 2016.

VAMSA's proposed changes are as follows:

- Add clarification for the purchase of non-point source nutrient credits, which was newly required by state law
- Grant award process changes, distributing funds to the greatest number of localities
- Changes to the priority ranking criteria, increasing the points for cost-effectiveness and readiness to proceed
- A more detailed evaluation of stream restoration proposals
- The costs for professional services will be limited to no more than 35% of the construction cost for the project
- Reduce the minimum allowed grant from \$100,000 to \$50,000

Ms. Geissler added that there is still some discussion on whether it would be beneficial to be allowed to calculate reductions using the CBP protocols instead of the Virginia Runoff Reduction Method (RRM). Ms. Scheessele said that in her experience, the calculated loads and reductions are higher using the RRM. Mr. Schwenneker said the advantage of using the RRM is that the state can more easily compare projects statewide. Mr. Heide noted that it has been cheaper for SU to retrofit wet ponds using the CBP protocols instead of trying to meet the VA BMP Clearinghouse specifications.

DEQ said they will issue agreements for each individual project instead of issuing one agreement for several. This will streamline the process, and localities should receive funds sooner.

Mr. Shafer suggested DEQ consider adding the option of using TN as the pollutant of concern so that SLAF could fund septic tank disconnects and living shorelines. He encouraged the Committee members to submit suggestions during the public comment period following the September 22, 2016 SWCB meeting.

9. **FY18 Stormwater Budget**

The following localities voted in favor of the FY18 Stormwater Budget: CH, FR, HA, IW, JC, NN, NO, PQ, PO, SH, SU, SY, and YK. GL, WG, SM, and VB will vote via email because they did not have voting members present at the meeting.

10. **Status Reports**

- HRPDC** – Ms. Cullipher announced that the askHRgreen Annual Report for FY16 should be complete by the end of next week. Ms. Sunderland said that 4 of the 6 Phase I Effectiveness Indicators reports have been completed, and she still needs data from CH and VB. Ms. Katchmark reminded the Committee that the Water Quality Technical Workgroup will meet this afternoon at 1:00pm in the Boardroom.
- Wetlands Watch** – Ms. Stiff said that registration for the Chesapeake Bay Landscape Professional (CBLP) certification will open next week. The website is <http://cblpro.org/>.

The next meeting of the Regional Environmental Committee will be held on October 6, 2016 in the Regional Boardroom at the HRPDC in Chesapeake, VA.