Hampton Roads Watershed Roundtable

Final Report 2012

PEP13-05

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PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION

March 2013

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JOHN M. CARLOCK, AICP	HRPDC DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
JIMONTANAE McBRIDE	PRINCIPAL REGIONAL PLANNER
BENJAMIN J. McFARLANE, AICP	REGIONAL PLANNER
CHRISTOPHER W. VAIGNEUR	ASSISTANT GENERAL SERVICES MANAGER
JENNIFER COLEMAN	ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

HAMPTON ROADS PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION

HAMPTON ROADS WATERSHED ROUNDTABLE
FINAL REPORT 2012

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AUTHORS:

John M. Carlock, AICP
Jimontanae McBride
Benjamin J. McFarlane, AICP

ORGANIZATION NAME, ADDRESS AND TELEPHONE

Hampton Roads Planning District Commission
723 Woodlake Drive
Chesapeake, Virginia 23320
(757)420-8300
http://www.hrpdcva.gov

ABSTRACT

This report describes the Hampton Roads Watershed Roundtable activities conducted by the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission during 2012 under a grant from the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation. This program encompasses the development of the current Hampton Roads Watershed Roundtable and meetings of the Roundtable and the Hampton Roads Joint Environmental Committee, which addresses technical issues related to the work of the Roundtable. This report contains minutes from the Roundtable meetings throughout the grant year. It recommends ongoing Roundtable activities for FY 2013.

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INTRODUCTION

In 2001, watershed roundtables were established in each of the major watersheds in Virginia. Roundtables were comprised of representatives of local governments and representatives of business and industry, agriculture, forestry, fishing and environmental organizations, as well as other groups that are of special importance to the various watersheds. The purpose of the roundtables was to advise agencies of the Commonwealth of Virginia on refinement and implementation of Tributary Strategies for Nutrient and Sediment Reduction and related water quality initiatives. Moreover, the roundtables were to provide a mechanism for educating the participants on water quality issues, funding opportunities and technologies, and techniques for achieving water quality and living resource goals. The roundtables were designed as a forum for exchange of information among the participants on water quality and related issues, including planning, implementation, and funding. The goal of these efforts was to build consensus among the Roundtable participants.

In 1995, the Hampton Roads region's sixteen (16) local governments established the Hampton Roads Tributary Strategies Project Steering Committee, under the auspices of the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission. That Committee included representatives of the region's local governments, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and the Hampton Roads Sanitation District, and invited participation from several environmental organizations. The Committee worked for six years to build consensus among the region's localities on water quality issues and potential management strategies and to advise local and state government on implementation issues. Through this process, the HRPDC and local government staff analyzed local government programs to determine their ability to achieve nutrient and sediment reduction goals, developed a preliminary set of local government management options to assist in future implementation, conducted educational workshops and developed regional consensus on a number of Chesapeake Bay-related issues. In response to state direction and in part as a successor to this Committee, formation of a roundtable for the Hampton Roads portion of the James River Watershed was proposed in February 2001. The HRPDC and its partners in the establishment of the Lower James River (Hampton Roads) Watershed Roundtable – the region's localities and Soil and Water Conservation Districts and the Virginia Departments of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and Environmental Quality (DEQ) – intended for the Roundtable to enhance existing efforts by broadening involvement and striving for a broader consensus.

In 2007, the Lower James River (Hampton Roads) Watershed Roundtable was restructured to promote participation from groups outside of state and local government and to meet HRPDC goals for citizen input. The reorganized roundtable includes representatives from the agricultural community, the development community, chambers of commerce, and industry and civic organizations, in addition to local and regional environmental organizations. Additionally, the Hampton Roads Watershed Roundtable now encompasses all the watersheds found in the region, including the James, York, Chowan, and Southern Rivers and Atlantic Coastal Basins. Coordination with the York River and Albemarle-Chowan Roundtables occurs on a regular basis. As the structure of the group continues to

evolve, the Hampton Roads Watershed Roundtable is providing greater value to the region as a vehicle for broad stakeholder interaction and discussion of topics of mutual interest.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the Hampton Roads Watershed Roundtable is to serve as a viable regional mechanism for improving dialogue between the private sector and state, local, and regional agencies on environmental issues. The focus of the Roundtable is on a broader community representation. Previous iterations of the group functioned primarily with representation from state and local government organizations with a few regional environmental representatives.

The Hampton Roads Roundtable provides stakeholder input to the HRPDC technical staff committees and to the HRPDC, which is the regional policy entity. The functions of the Roundtable include education, capacity building, information exchange, and dialogue between the private and public sectors.

PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Watershed Technical Work

The HRPDC Joint Environmental Committee, which is funded separately under the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program (CZM); Chesapeake Bay Steering Committee; and the locally-funded Hampton Roads Stormwater Management Program, undertook activities to support the Hampton Roads Watershed Roundtable effort and to address the technical aspects of regional environmental issues. Issues of mutual interest identified by the Roundtable were researched by HRPDC staff and items requiring additional information and action were brought to the Committee for review. Issues addressed included implementation of regulatory programs, Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) and implementation plan development, and green infrastructure issues. HRPDC staff pursed continued development of TMDL implementation plans under separate funding sources and presented information on the process and content of the plans to the Roundtable. Roundtable members provided reaction on the potential impact of the plans on various regional efforts and constituencies.

Exchange of information between the Roundtable, the Joint Environmental Committee, and the Chesapeake Bay Steering Committee allowed for the inclusion of a greater range of stakeholders and provided direction for future work. In order to provide a full understanding of the Committee's role, complete summaries of its meetings over the grant period are provided below.

- January 5, 2012 – This was a meeting of the Joint Environmental Committee. HRPDC staff updated the Committee on the Chesapeake Bay Phase II Watershed Implementation Plan. Ms. Peggy Sanner, from the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, gave a presentation on local government authority to enact ordinances to improve water quality. Mr. Clay Bernick, from the City of Virginia Beach, gave a presentation on

various ordinances and policies Virginia Beach has enacted to protect and improve water quality. HRPDC staff also led a discussion of the various impacts of water quality regulations on local governments.

- February 2, 2012 – This was a meeting of the Joint Environmental Committee. HRPDC staff updated the Committee on the Chesapeake Bay Phase II Watershed Implementation Plan. HRPDC staff also informed the Committee about several Sustainable Communities grants from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Hampton Roads' selection as a kickoff location for the Great American Cleanup™ by Keep America Beautiful. HRPDC staff updated the Committee on various legislative items of interest, and CZM staff gave a presentation and workshop on Virginia's Coastal Geospatial and Educational Mapping System (GEMS).

- March 1, 2012 – This was a meeting of the Joint Environmental Committee. HRPDC staff briefed the Committee on the results of HRPDC's application for a Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant. Ms. Janit Llewellyn, DCR, gave a presentation on the 2013 Virginia Outdoors Plan. HRPDC staff also presented some initial findings regarding a Section 309 grant project focused on water quality protection.

- April 5, 2012 – This was a meeting of the Joint Environmental Committee. HRPDC staff updated the Committee on the Chesapeake Bay Phase II Watershed Implementation Plan. HRPDC staff also presented information on the activities of askHRgreen.org, the region's environmental education resource, the Hampton Roads Watershed Roundtable, aquaculture, HRPDC applications for Coastal Zone Management Program grants, and the FY10-11 HRPDC Climate Change final report.

- May 3, 2012 – This was a meeting of the Joint Environmental Committee. HRPDC staff updated the Committee on the Chesapeake Bay Phase II Watershed Implementation Plan. The meeting featured a presentation from Shereen Hughes, Wetlands Watch, on a HRPDC study of "Opportunities and Constraints for Nutrient Reductions on Private Property". HRPDC staff also briefed the Committee on the Great American Cleanup™, Reality Check Hampton Roads, Stormwater Regulations, and PDC competitive grants from the Coastal Zone Program.

- June 7, 2012 – This was a meeting of the Joint Environmental Committee. The meeting featured three presentations as well as several briefings. HRPDC staff gave presentations to the Committee on the results of Reality Check Hampton Roads and on the FY10-11 HRPDC Climate Change Final Report. Ms. Barbara Brumbaugh, from the City of Chesapeake, updated the Committee on state stormwater regulations and local programs. The Committee also received brief updates on CZM grants and the 2012 Hampton Roads Sustainable Living Expo.

- July 12, 2012 – This was a meeting of the Joint Environmental Committee. HRPDC staff gave a presentation to the Committee on the FY10-11 HRPDC Climate Change

Final Report. HRPDC staff also updated the Committee on the possible acquisition of regional LIDAR elevation data and the HRPDC's Section 309 grant project.

- September 6, 2012 – This was a meeting of the Joint Environmental Committee. HRPDC staff updated the Committee on stormwater regulations. The Committee received a presentation on a redevelopment study commissioned by the HRPDC that focused on the potential for redevelopment to be used in local Chesapeake Bay TMDL compliance efforts. HRPDC staff also updated the Committee on the Great American Cleanup™, and led a discussion with the Committee on the regional legislative agenda for the 2013 General Assembly session.

- October 4, 2012 – This was a meeting of the Joint Environmental Committee. HRPDC staff updated the Committee on state stormwater regulations and developments with the Chesapeake Bay Program. HRPDDC staff also presented several reports for consideration and recommendations as well as the stormwater budget for the Committee's approval. HRPDC staff also briefed the Committee on the Section 309 project as well as a Sea Level Rise and Extreme Event Workshop held at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia.

- November 1, 2012 – This was a meeting of the Joint Environmental Committee. This meeting featured a presentation from Dewberry on various modeling tools that can be used to assess the impacts of sea level rise on coastal communities. Mr. Clay Bernick, from the City of Virginia Beach, gave a presentation on the Virginia Beach Sustainability Plan. HRPDC staff updated the Committee on a Bacteria Study being conducted to study ways to identify the sources of bacteria in surface water. HRPDC staff also briefed the Committee on the development of a stormwater BMP decision matrix and comments on the Municipal Separated Storm Sewer System (MS4) Phase II General Permit.

- December 13, 2012 – This was a meeting of the Joint Environmental Committee. HRPDC staff updated the Committee on regional comments related to the Small MS4 General Permit. HRPDC staff also briefed the Committee on the Coastal Partners Workshop, MARCO Climate Change Adaptation Workshop, and the status of the Section 309 grant project.

Roundtable Meetings

The Roundtable held meetings in January 2012, February 2012, September 2012, November 2012, and December 2012. These meetings focused on areas of interest identified by the Roundtable and on the continuing evolution of the Roundtable structure and membership. Participants included representatives from local & state government, environmental groups, & citizens groups. The Roundtable also hosted a special meeting on May 9, 2012. The purpose of this meeting was to allow the Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation to provide the public with information on the Chesapeake Bay Phase II Watershed Implementation Plan during the comment period.

Summaries of Roundtable meetings over the grant period are included below.

- January 25, 2012 - This meeting and workshop focused on utilizing best management practices (BMPs) for nutrient reduction on existing residential and light commercial private property. Ms. Shereen Hughes of Wetlands Watch reviewed the model public/private/non-profit watershed stewardship programs that train citizen volunteers to facilitate voluntary implementation of stormwater best management practices on private property. Ms. Allyson Whalley of the Virginia Zoo briefly discussed the Zoo's experiences with design, installation, and maintenance of retrofit BMPs, the partnerships involved in the projects, and future actions. HRPDC staff led a facilitated discussion on the need for a Watershed Stewards Academy-type program in Hampton Roads. The meeting concluded with a Tour of Best Management Practices at the Zoo.

- February 29, 2012 – The topic of the Roundtable was the Impact of Air Pollutants on Water Quality. Mr. Lewis Linker, Modeling Coordinator, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency led a discussion on Atmospheric deposition of nitrogen in the Chesapeake watershed and its role in the Chesapeake Bay TMDL. Mr. Chris Moore, Scientist, Chesapeake Bay Foundation discussed the impacts of air pollutants on water quality and shared CBF's role in the Chesapeake Bay cleanup effort. Mr. Thomas Ballou, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality led a discussion on the interaction between air and water pollution and the impacts on the Chesapeake Bay efforts.

- September 12, 2012 – The topic of the Roundtable was Green Building in Hampton Roads. The meeting was led by the Hampton Roads Green Building Council which is a consortium of building industry leaders promoting sustainable and environmentally sound buildings in Hampton Roads. The meeting's goal was to promote sustainable planning, design, construction, and operations in Hampton Roads. A panel of HRGBC members shared their experiences with sustainable development and design and discussed the benefits utilizing this type of development of stormwater best management practices.

- October 24, 2012 – The Roundtable was held at the Hampton Roads Agricultural Research Extension Center (AREC) in Virginia Beach, VA. The topic of the Roundtable and workshop was Floating Wetlands. HRPDC staff gave a brief overview of using floating wetlands as a stormwater best management practice. Ms. Laurie Fox and Mr. David Sample lead the group on a tour of the AREC facilities and highlighted the floating wetlands project. Mr. Robert Crook, Floating Wetlands International presented information to the Roundtable on their floating wetlands products and projects. The meeting concluded with a Roundtable discussion on floating wetlands.

- November 15, 2012 – The Roundtable consisted of a Tour of the Grandy Village Wetland Mitigation Project and the Elizabeth River Learning Barge.

- December 13, 2012 – This Roundtable discussion was part of the Joint Environmental Committee meeting held in the HRPDC Regional Boardroom. HRPDC staff briefed the committee on the progress of the CZM grant project (309) on land and water quality protection. This projects purpose is to analyze the requirements of the new state stormwater management regulations and the Chesapeake Bay TMDL and to develop tools to assist localities in reducing the impact of land development on water quality.

HRPDC Staff Activities

HRPDC staff provided the following support to the Hampton Roads Watershed Roundtable.

- Expanded and updated the membership roster for the Roundtable.

- Maintained contact with Roundtable members via telephone and email.

- Organized meetings based on Roundtable member suggestions. This includes contacting potential speakers and arranging for them to attend.

- Prepared agenda packets and distributed them to the Roundtable.

- Acted as meeting facilitator and chair; provided updates on pertinent issues.

- Provided updates on Roundtable activities to the Joint Environmental Committee.

- Attended and participated in the York Roundtable and Albemarle-Chowan Roundtable meetings.

CONCLUSIONS

For nearly twenty years, the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission has facilitated the work of the HRPDC Joint Environmental Committee, which is comprised of representatives of the region's sixteen member localities, the Hampton Roads Sanitation District, five Soil and Water Conservation Districts, two towns in Isle of Wight County, and a number of state and federal agencies. About ten years ago, representatives of regional environmental and business organizations were invited to join the Joint Environmental Committee for purposes of addressing the development of Tributary Strategies for reducing nutrient and sediment discharge to the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. The expanded group became known as the Lower James River (Hampton Roads) Watershed Roundtable. The Roundtable was successful in developing consensus among the participating governmental entities and the environmental organizations on a number of Chesapeake Bay and Tributary Strategies matters. However, it was less successful in engaging the region's business community in this discussion.

During 2007, the HRPDC identified the need for developing citizen involvement in the environmental planning activities of the Commission and its technical committees. The identified need was all-encompassing with respect to environmental issues and was not restricted to watershed issues. It was determined that the Roundtable was an appropriate vehicle for addressing these issues.

Based on the region's experience to date, as described in this report, the Hampton Roads Watershed Roundtable is a viable mechanism for developing community input to the HRPDC on a range of environmental issues. There is considerable interest on the part of community groups in participating in this process and a general agreement on issues, specifically water quality planning, air quality, energy, and green infrastructure/green building that should continue to be addressed. Participants in both the Roundtable and Joint Environmental Committee processes are continuing to recruit new members and the evolving structure and focus of the Roundtable is providing greater value to the region as a whole.

Based on this experience, the HRPDC finds that the Hampton Roads Roundtable is a viable means of involving the Hampton Roads community in addressing environmental issues facing the region. Steps should be taken by the HRPDC, in cooperation with its member jurisdictions and the private sector, to continue strengthening this initiative.