

Greetings York and Small Coastal Basin Committee members,

We now have a signed grant agreement for 2009 activities. The torch has been passed from Three Rivers SWCD (Michelle Carter) to Tri County City SWCD (Diane Beyer). Michelle and her staff did a stellar job keeping track of our finances and helping with meeting organization and the green infrastructure workshop. Now Diane, our new chair, will help with similar tasks for this year. Some of our plans include:

- ◆ An annual meeting celebrating the York River and Small Coastal Basins
- ◆ 3-4 Steering Committee meetings at varied locations in watershed, featuring special speakers
- ◆ Basin Community Project - Educational Sign at the new State Fairgrounds (in the York Basin)
- ◆ Continuation of Photo Contest
- ◆ Strategic Planning led by the MPPDC/Dragon Run Steering Committee
- ◆ Website maintenance

Our first meeting is planned for **March 26th, at the Pamunkey Indian Reservation Museum and Fish Hatchery**. We will also, weather permitting, take part in placing the sign developed for last year's community project along the West Point Greenway. We plan to meet from 10-2, and as usual we will include lunch for all attendees.

There are 2 small changes I would like to make concerning the grant this year. Since the river clean-up money was so well received last year, I wanted to see whether all of you would be ok with using our \$500 travel stipend money for 5 clean-ups at \$100 each. We barely touched the travel stipend funds last year, likely due to most of you using company/state vehicles (and carpooling of course). If anyone has a problem with this change, please let me know by **March 6**.

Another change for you all to consider has to do with the group assisting us with Strategic Planning. Instead of supporting 2 Dragon Run Steering Committee meetings, one report and one facilitated discussion to the YRSCB Roundtable (in current plan), the MPPDC/Dragon Run SC would appreciate support for the coordination for **Dragon Run Day** and one facilitated discussion to the YRSCB Roundtable describing the model that makes the Dragon Run successful and offer discussion on how the YRSCB Roundtable may incorporate some of these successful strategies. The rationale for this change includes:

-Dragon Run Day is a prime example of what has made the Dragon Run

Steering Committee and the Dragon Run Special Area Management Plan (SAMP) process work over the years. It is an excellent representation of the community support and community buy-in that is required to drive the process.

-Dragon Run Day is an important event that provides an opportunity for the watershed community to come together to celebrate the natural, cultural and historic aspects of the Dragon Run.

-The event provides an opportunity for watershed partners to educate the public on current opportunities, tools and efforts underway in the Dragon Run.

-This is a growing event. The event has gone from approximately 150 attendees to about 1,800 attendees in less than five years.

-Without a facilitator, the event will not take place in 2009, regardless of the availability of a prime venue, interested exhibitors and volunteers.

So, as this is such an important event in the watershed, I'd like all of you to consider the overall benefit of YRSCB Roundtable support. I have participated in this event and feel it is well worth our support. **Please let me know your thoughts, and if you have a problem with this change, please express it to me by March 6.**

At the very end of last year, we realized that we had a little extra \$ to use since we'd received some generous matching funds for the Green Infrastructure workshop. Michelle and I thought it would be good to purchase Doggie Pot Baggie stations, like the ones we had as a part of the West Point Community Project. As there are 7 districts involved in the SC, we thought it made sense for each district to get 2 to strategically place in the York or Small Coastal Basin watershed. Should a district refuse to accept their 2 stations, they will be available first come, first serve, to other SC members. Or, better yet, the district can coordinate with other SC members who would like to place the stations. The criteria for placement are:

- Must be in the York or small coastal basin
- Must be in an area where there is regular dog walking, like in parks, along trails, etc.
- Should be in an area that drains to a stream impaired for bacteria

Please let me know how you plan to meet the above and exact location, in an e-mail. This may require some coordination with a locality or other entity, of course, so please be sure to do this to ensure that the stations are welcome. We

will bring the stations with us to the March 26 meeting or work out other arrangements to get them to you. **If you do not want the stations, please let me know before March 23.**

The other gift for all SC members who make it to our first meeting is the Pocket Guide to Facilitation. As a VNRLI fellow this year, I am learning some great ways to guide more efficient meetings (aren't you all glad to know that!) so, I thought you all might appreciate this very compact guide that can make your facilitation efforts easier.

OK.....that is all. We look forward to seeing you all on March 26. More details to follow soon from your new Chair, Diane Beyer. Cheers and hope all of your conservation work is going well so far this year!