

Notes on the January 23, 2008 YRSCB Roundtable Steering Committee Meeting

Attendees:

Michelle Carter, Pam Mason, Pat Tyrell, Julie Pruitt, Chris French, Jerry Kelly, Wayne Davis, Kilby Majette, Diane Beyer, Sandra Erdle, Sharon Williams, Don Nelson, Claire Jones, Ann Edmonds, Connie Bennett, Marian Moody, Brian Noyes, May Sligh

The meeting began with May Sligh, WFC for the Tappahannock DCR office, presenting elements of the proposal for 2008. The following was taken from the proposal , submitted 12/7/07. It is currently under review by Richmond DCR staff.

The Roundtable Steering Committee will meet at least 4 times during the grant cycle to develop a more formal organizational structure, perform tasks related to special projects, continue communications through website improvements, share 2007 mini-grant project progress and plan and produce a basinwide meeting in September. At that larger meeting, it is intended that a wide array of local government officials, citizens and others will come together to learn how communities in the Chesapeake Bay watershed are planning for reductions in non-point source contributions to the Bay. This meeting may be coupled with a workshop targeted for local planning staff, such as Green Infrastructure. The meetings for the entire Roundtable membership will be both informative for a variety of interests in the watershed.

- *Roundtable meetings:* There will be a total of four meetings during the grant cycle. The first meeting will be a Steering Committee meeting which will focus on developing the new structure of the organization (rotational plan for district sponsors of grant and identification of needed committees for 2008), plans and meeting dates for the rest of the year, the Green Infrastructure workshop/ Annual meeting for the fall, special presentations for SC meetings during year, and additional information needed for the website. Each meeting will include time for the development of projects, such as the Fact Sheet. Time will also be given to the sharing of the 2007 mini-grant projects and a brown bag speaker series. The SC meetings will be held in various locations throughout the basin in order to make it fair for those who must travel long distances. This will also provide members a chance to experience other parts of the basin, further strengthening the basin-wide approach to the organization. A larger basin-wide meeting, much like the 2007 Summit, will aim to present to a larger audience the work of the

Roundtable and other key water quality concerns of the basin. Details will be discussed at the January SC meeting.

- *Basin Project:* A project that includes the promotion of non-point source reduction strategies will be introduced to a willing community in the watershed. One idea already discussed with some SC members is the possibility of an educational project along the Mattaponi River in West Point. The community has just completed a portion of their greenway, which is also a part of the John Smith Capture Trail. The opportunity for developing a kiosk with NPS educational information would be high, taking advantage of an existing trail and waterfront access. The SC and community partners would develop educational signage and brochures. As the trail is a popular dog walking location, the installation of doggie pot stations would provide much needed educational messaging for the headwaters of a TMDL listed stream segment. Recent meetings with potential partners and the locality suggest that this would be a well-received effort to further their community improvements. It would also be an excellent way for the Roundtable to get localized exposure with homeowners, many of whom live on the waterfront. This effort would involve all SC members and other partners rather than just a single district and their partners.
- *Website Maintenance:* The website will be maintained and changed as Roundtable projects and activities occur through the watershed. There will also be a section of the website for any stakeholder to advertise their special projects in the York and Small Coastal Basins. Updates to membership as it grows with group weblinks will be important to facilitate communication about educational workshops around the watershed and TMDL meetings. As well, the site will continue to serve the local governments in the basin by providing tools and resources to make their jobs easier, connecting what they do to the state's objectives for cleaning up the CB and presenting opportunities for initiating their own partnerships with roundtable members to fill needs where resources are limited. Updates to funding resources will also be necessary. Mapping resources of the York and Small Coastal Basin will continue to be improved and updated to provide additional resources for website users, such as local governments where GIS resources are weak due to funding constraints. It is estimated that for this grant period, monthly updates will be required by a contracted webmaster.

- *Workshop on Green Infrastructure:* In an effort to continue providing a toolbox of resources for all localities and other in the YRSCB area, the Roundtable plans to hold a hands-on workshop for local planners, in particular, in the integration of Green Infrastructure planning. Several key speakers and guides for the process of green infrastructure planning have been identified and interest has been expressed from a number of SC members and local governments. The issue of planning for a community's trails, protecting sensitive species, limiting activities along streams, etc. fits in well with the need for more water quality protective initiatives at the local level. (Note: working with Pat Tyrell and Jim Lawrence of the RC&D to secure speakers, facilitation and technical assistance and possibly additional funding – will present update soon to the various committees established for the event).
- *River Clean-Up and Photography Contest:* At the January meeting, we will gauge the interest in holding a “Clean Up and Learn about the York and Small Coastal Basins” Day. The event will consist of advertising in YRSCB communities and various websites and will focus on at least two areas of the basin where attention is needed. It is hoped that an event would cost very little, depending on partners to help organize. We would strive to support an actual clean-up in the upper, middle and lower portions of the basin, with districts teamed for each area. The RT could provide lunches and other supplies and offer some educational presentation to volunteers. An effort to have this event around Earth Day would be made, and coordination with the DCR Adopt-a-Stream program and Clean Virginia Waterways would also take place. Getting SC members and others more connected to the rivers, streams and wetlands that make up the York River and Small Coastal Basin will be the goal of this effort. It may be more efficient to support an already planned event or two in the basin so as not to conflict with other group's efforts. In addition to the clean-up, a photography contest may be conducted through the contacts of each district in an effort to assemble special photos of the YRSCB area for the website and the State of York report scheduled for 2010.

May also emphasized the need to maintain momentum and continue with meaningful projects and activities that can be duplicated throughout the basins. Also, efforts need to be focused on urban issues as the area is experiencing

considerable growth in certain areas. The Green Infrastructure (GI) planning idea incorporates the interests of all and provides a platform for resource first based development, considering the protection of ecological functions, working forests and farmland, recreational and economic opportunities along our rivers: the Mattaponi, Pamunkey, Dragon Run, Sarah Creek to name a few. Here, in summary are some comments from the meeting by various stakeholders:

One member stated that we should continue with efforts that benefit all across the region and learn from others' projects. A focus away from some ag issues that are already covered so well by the districts and NRCS is good and rather looking at ways we can support the localities is good. Projects that target educating developers and staff are a good idea.

Another member suggested that we should offer Continuing Educ. Credit as an incentive for them to participate. This was reiterated by another member who suggested that there needs to be a strategy, like having well-informed HOA's hook the developer early in the process. We should also be careful to include the level of detail needed for them to actually implement. Someone else shared that a group of this scope could inform and further enable watershed groups as they help to move change in our area. Another member suggested working through the Homebuilders Assoc. to reach the developers. However, a member also shared that the developers goal is to make money and no matter what incentives it may be hard to get them to an event. Perhaps targeting certified land disturbers? A member reminded us that development is outpacing what we do on the ground for NPS pollution problems. Also, in support of something like GI planning, we need to help those on ag lands know better what they have and mechanisms for keeping it that way.

One member brought up the idea of recognition, like the signs for cover crops. Maybe putting a message on a silt fence to show they are Bay friendly developers (we'd need to work with the manufacturer of silt fence to see whether this would be possible...we could use as an award for developers who attend our event).

A member of the group shared that the GI planning is good idea for the focus of our fall event. It may empower localities to give credits for green roof projects, etc. They need an urban financial incentive program, but before get tools and resources...that's what we should offer. (Note: webcast attended by M. Sligh on 1/29 revealed an excellent speaker for the topic of financing GI planning).

A member shared that since we are in the implementation phase now, we must find ways to work together, to have the ag/urban interests learn from each other. We need to define, demonstrate and act and move forward in our dealings with localities who don't have the resources or a way to promote a good idea for reducing NPS pollution. Also, member suggested learning from the HOA project on urban nutrient concerns.

Another stakeholder brought up the need for localities to have enough good printed material to give citizens. Her area has seen progress in engaging citizens in comp plan development. Also, to make it easier for locals to attend, we should consider the 2 day event with the same material.

We began discussion on how to reach better: a member felt we needed more basic educational material on our website, so benefits realized. A member shared their plans for raingarden workshops in Richmond this summer that will engage the urban arena. On the topic of education, a member also shared their support of the clean-up event as they too were planning an event to engage citizens and target areas that need attention. The member liked the idea of having several and advertising across the watershed. It would also be important to choose dates in sync with other group's efforts. A member shared that working with Clean VA Waterways would be excellent.

**May needs to provide an excel spreadsheet to all members on the citizen groups to help target where the clean-up needs are and if we can support an existing event planned.

Another member said that the coordinated clean-up, projects along the river with educational signs, etc all help create an identity for us, the roundtable.

Also, the basinwide compilation of data and resources such as that in the State of the York, which we should help update in 2010 (if not sooner), could bring together water supply planning, impacts of activities on climate change, estuary and human health, etc to create the whole picture.

After lunch, more discussion about the fall event continued. A member also shared some educational materials developed for septic system owners in their county so as to better inform them of maintenance requirements and possible participation in a cost-share program used as an incentive. They also shared that their CBNEMO activities could be accessed on the Mathews County Library website if other members were interested in learning more about the

benefit of that resource. It has given the locality an opportunity to sit back and observe through a facilitated discussion amongst citizens.

Speaker ideas and groups to target were discussed for the GI planning event. Speakers to cover: basics, case studies, financing, hands on work session, etc. Audience: Planners, BOS, Districts/directors, Public works, Farmers, Architects, Planning Comm., Civil Engineers and others

Could we work it out for them to get credits?

Committees set up as follows (chairs listed in bold):

Communications:

Kilby, **Julie**, Sharon, May, Claire

Program Development/Education: Pat, Wayne, Brian, Claire, **Pam**, Don, May Greg W.

Funding: Sandra, Connie, **May**, Pat

Administrative/Logistics: Sandra, HCSWCD, **Michelle**, Diane, May

Committees to get together by phone or e-mail before March 3 meeting (Quinton). Chairs will organize communications of each. See this e-mail for listing of everyone's e-mails. If that does not work, May will get our e-mail list week of Feb 11.

Locations considered: VIMS, Randolph Macon.....

Again, many thanks to those who attended and we hope to see everyone at the March 3 meeting in Quinton. For those unable to come, your thoughts are appreciated! Thanks also to Michelle for organizing lunches and to the staff of the USDA Quinton Service Center for hosting our meeting...we loved it so much we are coming back next time. I also thank you all for your energy, time and steadfast support in this effort.

Here are some thoughts of some of our Steering Committee members concerning the January 23, 2008 meeting:

"I thought the meeting went very well. There was a lot of interaction - socially and trying to develop the program path. I was pleased with the groups willingness to sit on committees and in having a vested interest in the programs. I think the more we meet and work on programs together we will become more comfortable and willing to express thoughts and ideas."

"I think that we had a lot of good ideas at the meeting, but we still need more time to narrow down our decisions about programs. I feel like we made good progress, but there is still more that needs to be discussed."

"The roundtable has great potential in engaging the various stakeholders within the watershed. It is a good networking vehicle and allows for information exchange. One of the areas that needs to be further addressed is the roundtables ability to function as either a program or something else (stand alone entity, etc.). This comes down to an issue of capacity. Given "members" time constraints and focus on local challenges, I think it will likely remain difficult for the roundtable to evolve to something where it may become its own entity. Perhaps the best role for the roundtable is to strictly be a network of people and a vehicle to help identify potential funding sources for improving water quality. If people keep it simple and focus on getting good conservation programs established, continue with some level of local gov't interaction and provide educational services and opportunities I think this effort can be successful. The workshops being planned is a perfect role for the roundtable and is the type of outreach local stakeholders can associate with. I thought the meeting yesterday went well and there is good potential for forward momentum."

"The York Roundtable is a very diverse group and for that reason, I feel it is a very strong group in the varying strengths and affiliations of its members and their ideas and perspectives. The group has grass roots power to make a difference in a high visibility, high impact area stretching over a vast portion of Southern Virginia."

"I was impressed and inspired by the resources and level of commitment that Roundtable members 'brought to the table!' I thought it was a very productive meeting, and sure to be an indicator of a great year ahead."