

York River and Small Coastal Basin Roundtable Biannual All-Hands Meeting

October 19, 2020

9:00 AM – 2:30 PM

virtual via Zoom

Link to recording can be found here:

<https://wmedu.hosted.panopto.com/Panopto/Pages/Viewer.aspx?id=d4e09ac9-d93e-48f4-9e1a-ac59015a62d0>

Meeting Purpose:

To convene the Roundtable membership for updates and discussion on forward movement.

Meeting Objectives:

- Participants will learn of Roundtable progress and updates, and discuss emerging issues and opportunities within the watershed
- Participants will discuss and strategize Roundtable priority projects, as well as membership capital
- Participants will hear from neighboring watershed collaboratives, funders and DEI practitioners in an effort to bolster Roundtable initiatives

AGENDA w/ Take Home Points

9:00am **Welcome/Opening**
Cirse Gonzalez, Coastal Training Program Coordinator, CBNERR

9:10am **Steering Committee Updates**
Cirse Gonzalez, Coastal Training Program Coordinator, CBNERR
Ben Watson, Coastal Climate Extension Specialist, Penn State/VIMS

- The Education and Outreach Steering Committee will be recognizing environmental educators within the watershed that have excelled in their programming in the face of COVID. Nominations by the Roundtable will be accepted through February 2020.
- The Business Advisory Steering Committee is finalizing “Top 12 Best Business Practices for Watershed Resilience.”
 - The idea will be to post these practices on the Roundtable website, and begin socializing in November. Ultimate aim will be to feature adherents of these practices on the website, beginning Spring 2021.
- The Science Steering Committee has discussed prioritizing a “State of the York” report, though goals and audience have yet to be determined. Input from the membership during this meeting will help orient the direction of this report and bolster any funding requests.

- **The last State of the York report can be found here:**
<https://scholarworks.wm.edu/reports/1864/>
- A York River and Small Coastal Basins Research Symposium is on the Roundtable's radar. Recognizing that it may not be in person, the membership, when polled, evinced a preference for:
 - A hybrid meeting with synchronous and asynchronous components (53%)
 - A May delivery (60%)
- Community Climate Outlooks are relatable - and updatable - summaries of climate projections and associated effects for cities and counties across coastal VA. These customized – and customizable – resources were developed for informed decision-making.
 - **Details can be found here:** www.marisa.psu.edu/outlooks
 - Contact Ben Watson at ben.watson@psu.edu with questions, feedback and ideas

9:25am Overview of WIP Efforts by PDCs

- MPPDC and GWRC - *Denise Nelson, Environmental Engineer, The Berkley Group*
 - Middle Peninsula PDC has been focused on their endeavor: *Beyond the Watershed: Rural Coastal Virginia's Solutions for Transforming Clean Water Into Jobs*
 - Based on premise that you can clean water and create jobs; integrated economic development
 - Includes trainings for localities, grant support, advocacy, support of living shorelines where appropriate and septic system maintenance, among other efforts
 - **Fight the Flood:** www.FightTheFloodVA.com – a way for homeowners to get info on best practices and connect with providers
 - George Washington's Regional Commission has been focused on a multi-prong approach: technical assistance, grant support, retrofitting existing BMPs, green infrastructure, advocacy
 - **More here:** <https://gwregion.org/environment/chesapeake-bay>
 - Denise is also helping launch a 3-year project on resilience
 - Contact Denise at: denise@bgllc.net for more details
- Plan RVA - *Sarah Stewart, Planning Manager, Plan RVA Environmental Program*
 - PlanRVA has focused their endeavors on outreach materials and campaigns to educate the public, including the *Don't Trash Central Virginia* campaign and *Yards of Tomorrow* workshops
 - **Don't Trash Central Virginia:** www.donttrashcentralva.org
 - Plan RVA is also finalizing methodology for a regional-scale, GIS solar suitability analysis
 - **For more info, connect on:** <https://www.facebook.com/planrva/>
 - Contact Sarah at: sstewart@richmongregional.org for more details
- HRPDC - *KC Filippino, Senior Water Resources Planner, HRPDC*
 - An in-house CBPA workgroup comes together quarterly to share best practices; this group has developed outreach to homeowners:

- **Ask HR Green** is a clearinghouse for environmental issues in the region; **this page describes shoreline management:** <https://askhrgreen.org/gtk-gtd/living-on-the-water/>
- They are also developing training materials for their wetlands and CBPA boards
- With a NFWF technical assistance grant, HRPDC will identify 10-12 businesses/industries willing to design and implement BMPs for TMDL credit and flood protection
- Through Chesapeake Bay workgroups, KC also promotes tree canopy preservation and works on shorelines
- Contact KC at: kfilippino@hrpdcva.gov for more details

9:50am Nearshore Habitat Restoration Overview
Andrew Larkin, Chesapeake Bay Office, NOAA

- Habitat Focus Area is a designation that NOAA awards a geography, allowing the agency to align support and resources; it is not a regulatory framework
 - A concept document has been submitted for a Middle Peninsula Habitat Focus Area; a decision on its status is expected in 2021
- Nearshore Habitat Restoration Community of Practice announcements:
 - The steering committee has established a restoration vision and mission, and identified habitat priorities and related ecosystem services
 - The next Habitat Steering Committee meeting will take place 11/17; those interested are welcome to take part and can contact:
 - Lauren Taneyhill: lauren.taneyhill@noaa.gov or
 - Andrew Larkin: andrew.w.larkin@noaa.gov
 - A Spring 2021 restoration workshop is in development

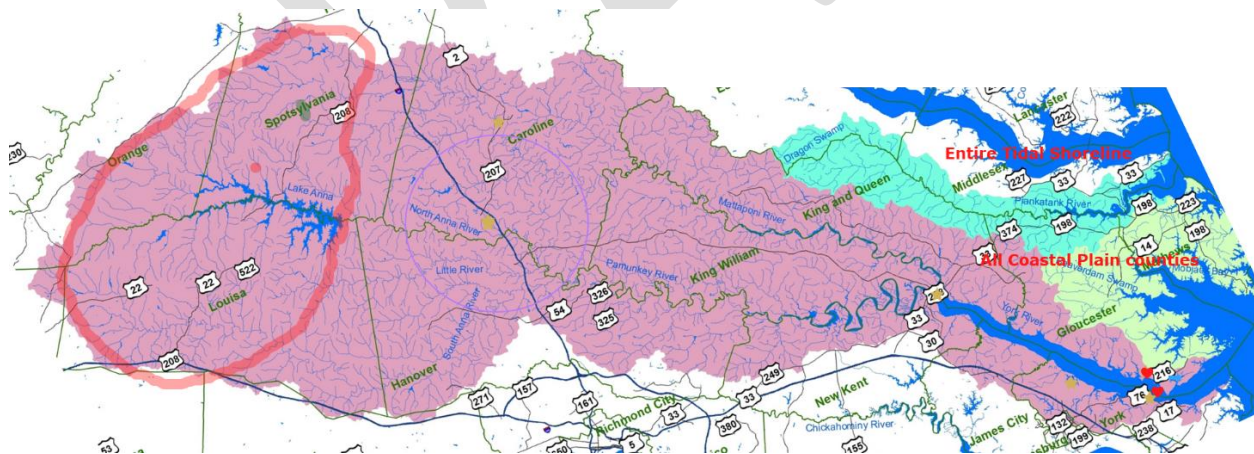
10:05am Local Watershed Collaboratives – Overview and Q&A
Amber Ellis, Senior Watershed Restoration Manager, James River Association
Daria Christian, Executive Director, Friends of the Rappahannock

- Amber Ellis presented on the [Upper and Middle Riparian Consortium](#) that she convenes.
 - A State of the James report, that's delivered every other year, informs the consortium's focus areas
 - Where the Upper and Middle James are focused on riparian buffers toward the creation of healthy streamside ecosystems, the Lower James is focused on living shorelines
 - This year the consortium is dedicated to implementing and testing its team strategies, which will be refined next year alongside new goals
 - Their planning team meets twice a month
 - Steering committees meet once a month
 - Action Teams meet between Consortium meetings: Implementation, Outreach and Targeting, Research, Knowledge Network
 - Consortium members meet at Consortium meetings and participate on Action Teams
 - Two tools help the Consortium provide accessible information to stakeholders:
 - [Coordination Tool](#) – Focused on partners, a visual depiction of buffer progress at county-level

- [Streamside Program Report](#) – A tool for property owners that provides an overview of programs available specific to their area, alongside a report about the property
 - Contact Amber at aellis@java.org for more details
- Daria Christian gave an overview of the Rappahannock River Roundtable, coordinated through Friends of the Rappahannock
 - The group is focused on land and water conservation, community outreach and education, and capacity building through the entire Rappahannock River basin
 - Roundtable coordinators focused on meeting partners where they were by attending partner meetings in order to help identify partner needs and priorities
 - “River Stewards” are the boots on the ground getting out into the community, through meetings, public forums, etc.
 - Outcomes have included the creation of the [Headwater Stream Initiative](#) (providing 100% cost share for riparian buffers in the region), and enhancement of the [Restore Urbanna Creek Partnership](#)
 - A huge investment by the facilitating agency is a key to success, alongside strong and consistent communications
 - Resources enable and encourage partners to take part in collaborative efforts
 - Contact Bryan Hofmann for more details: bryan.hofmann@riverfriends.org

10:35am Break!

- A real-time, crowd-sourced representation of where the watershed work of our participants is focused:



11:05am Breakout Brainstorming Discussions

*Cirse Gonzalez, Coastal Training Program Coordinator, CBNERR
 Karen Duhring, Coastal Scientist, Center for Coastal Resources Management
 Lauren Taneyhill, Partnerships Program Analyst, NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office*

- Facilitated brainstorming sessions in small groups focused on:

- **Setting the Stage: The State of the York Report**
 - It's been 20 years since the last State of the York report, what has changed? Who needs to know about it? What new questions do we need to ask?
 - **Goal:** To describe the characteristics of a State of the York report that would meet the needs of Roundtable members and bolster their work.

- **Bridges: Exploring Opportunities for More Headwaters/Tidewaters Collaborations**
 - Our collective reach spans 2,669 square miles, or about 6% of the Commonwealth's total land area - that's a huge geography to cover - with many place-based issues and varying priorities... BUT, we all belong to one watershed. What are concrete ideas for how our headwaters/tidewaters geographies can work better as a unified watershed? Is it common messaging? Is it common products? What do these look like?
 - **Goal:** To develop concrete ideas for how our members in both headwaters and tidewaters geographies can connect the respective actions and assets pertinent to each geography to one another through a watershed lens.
 - **Objective:** Identify and explore new project ideas that:
 - Involve Roundtable members in both geographies (think: 3-5 specific ones)
 - Capitalize on member strengths and geographic assets in the headwaters and tidewaters
 - Build on and inform the work of multiple Roundtable Cornerstones

12:05pm Lunch Break

- Check out the new YRSCBR announcement board– and feel free to post relevant updates, links, documents, etc.

1:00pm Funding Opportunities for Watershed Work – with Q&A

Perry Hickman, Virginia Community Programs Director, Rural Development, USDA

Kristen Hughes Evans, Executive Director, Sustainable Chesapeake

David Hirschman, Principal Hirschman Water & Environment, LLC

- Perry Hickman described funding opportunities through the Water and Waste Disposal Loan and Grant Program:
 - Available to households and businesses in eligible areas for acquisition, construction and system improvements, as well as legal and engineering services, among others
 - Eligible applicants include: state and local governments, nonprofits and federally-recognized Tribes
 - Eligible areas have populations of 10,000 or less and include Tribal areas
 - Applications are accepted year-round
 - Loan terms: 40-year payback, or useful life of asset being financed; interest rates are based on the median household income of the area being served
 - Grants can be combined with loans:
 - SEARCH and PPG grants both support technical assistance; PPG is available to localities with populations up to 10,000 residents
 - The Guaranteed Loan Program is lender-driven and supports localities with a population up to 50,000 residents; maximum loan guarantee is 80%
 - Partnerships are encouraged to enhance financial sustainability

- Some opportunities exist among partners where regulatory violations need to be reconciled
- **Full listing of water and waste disposal programs:** <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/all-programs/water-environmental-programs>
- **Full listing of rural development programs:** https://www.rd.usda.gov/sites/default/files/508_RD19_SummarOfPrograms112519.pdf
- **USDA Rural Development home:** www.rd.usda.gov
- **USDA Rural Development coronavirus site:** www.rd.usda.gov/coronavirus
- **Virginia Staff directory:** https://www.rd.usda.gov/sites/default/files/VA_EmployeeDir_Master3_18_20.pdf
- Perry was joined on the call by Ann Herring, Community Solutions Specialist, and Tara Delaney, Community Programs Area Specialist focused on Central VA, Tidewaters and the Norther Neck
- Contact info for more details:
 - Perry Hickman: perry.hickman@usda.gov, (804) 287-1615
 - Anne Herring: anne.herring@usda.gov, (540) 319-6467
 - Tara Delaney: (804) 287-1599
- Kristen Hughes Evans and David Hirschman, NFWF Field Liaisons, described [Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund](#) opportunities
 - Projects are typically aligned with the Bay's Phase III WIP and focused on priority watersheds
 - Program priorities include:
 - Improved water quality by 2025
 - Restoration and protection of key species and their habitats, and
 - Stakeholder engagement
- As NFWF Field Liaisons, Kristen and David work with NFWF applicants on developing and executing effective proposals
- NFWF's major funding sources are as follows:
 - INSR: Innovative Nutrient and Sediment Reduction (\$500k - \$1million)
 - Serves mature collaboratives focused on strategic implementation
 - Has a 1:1 match requirement, performance period 2-3 years
 - Includes projects related to cover crops, precision nutrient management, rotational grading
 - The most successful proposals result in multiple benefits – in addition to nutrient reduction, including social and economic gains
 - SWG: Small Watershed Grant
 - Serving implementation efforts (up to \$500k)
 - 1:1 match, performance period of 2-years or less
 - Serving planning and technical assistance (up to \$50k)
 - Could be used for example, to develop a restoration plan for a sub-watershed of the York
 - No match requirement, performance period of 1 year or less
- Collaboration among complementary partners and multiple resulting benefits are key elements of successful NFWF proposals
 - **Info on NFWF's regional collaborative model:** <https://public.3.basecamp.com/p/4AjyQ7ffjuxAvM44WNHThpwz>
- Kristen and David were joined by Kristen Saacke Blunk, HeadWaters LLC
- Contact info for more details:
 - David Hirschman: dave@hirschmanwater.com (434) 409-0993

- Kristen Hughes Evans: kristen@sustainablechesapeake.org (415) 730-7503
- Kristen Saacke Blunk: kristen@headwaters-llc.org (814) 360-9766

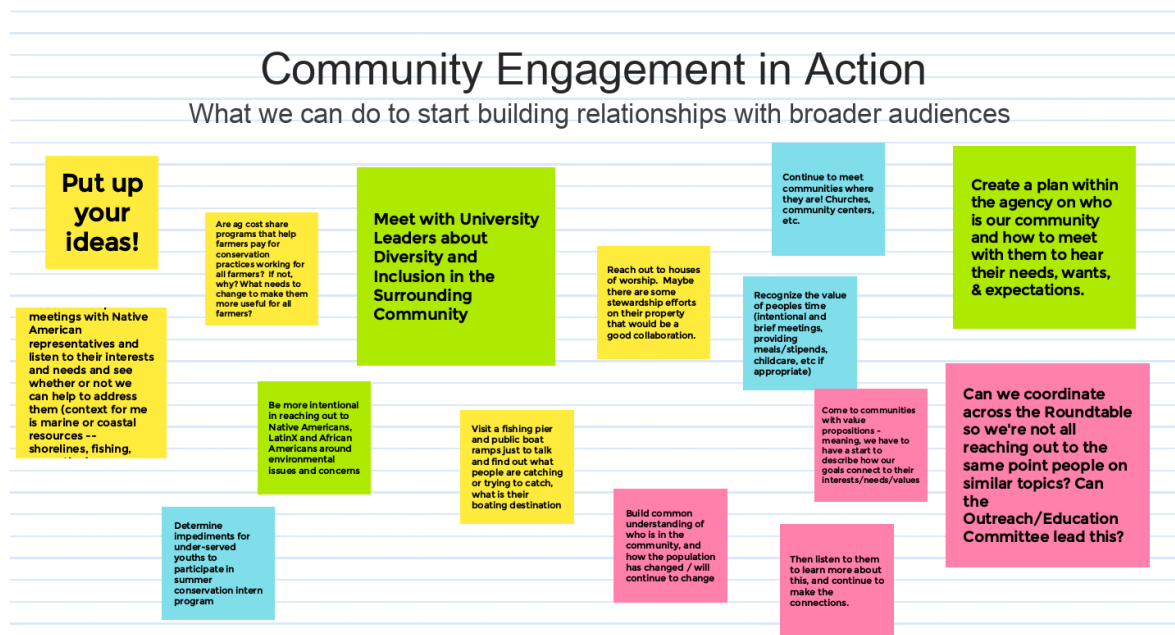
1:35pm

Internal Capacity Building

Barbara Hamm Lee, *Sharing Info, LLC*

Cirse Gonzalez, *Coastal Training Program Coordinator, CBNERR*

- Barbara Hamm Lee began a discussion with Roundtable members by posing some questions for their consideration as they endeavor to be more inclusive and reflect the wide variety of watershed stakeholders in their membership. Those questions included:
 - Why would the Roundtable embark in inclusive efforts?
 - How does the Roundtable recognize diverse audiences as being important?
 - What would be the Roundtable's motivation for wanting to reach out to additional audiences?
 - Is everyone on the Roundtable on board with inclusive strategies?
- Barbara suggested that an effective way forward in engaging additional audiences begins with an assessment of who those audiences are, followed by a strategy to engage them predicated on communication and the identification of community leaders. Meanwhile, she provided the following recommendations and pointers:
 - After identification of audiences and individuals, do not only invite participation, but consider asking "can we come to you" - and show up; involvement helps demonstrate authenticity.
 - Remember that relationship building takes time - and leg work! One-and-done events do not form sustainable relationships; building an audience base is a commitment, and change will not happen overnight.
 - Effective projects will be mutually beneficial and culturally inclusive, don't try and force one, find out what everyone's interests are and take their ideas seriously.
 - Prepare to mitigate against barriers.
- Barbara referenced this partnership looking at African American history in the Bay: <https://thezebra.org/2020/10/01/groundbreaking-partnership-to-document-african-american-historic-sites-in-chesapeake-bay-watershed/>
- Participants engaged in a whiteboarding exercise to brainstorm how we might begin engaging with broader audiences, the results below:



- Cirse Gonzalez mentioned that she's pulling together a social network analysis to examine the internal and external watershed connections among Roundtable members. She hopes to provide members with a glimpse at where we can strengthen connection toward improved collaboration and support.
 - The Roundtable's Yellow Pages document is also a great resource for discovering potentially fruitful partnerships and identifying ways in which we can support one another.
 - There exists the possibility of making the Roundtable Yellow Pages public; Cirse polled participants on their thoughts – a survey that was inconclusive; she'll circle back on the option in subsequent communications.
- The Yellow Pages and all related Roundtable Documents have transitioned to a Google Drive, accessible to Roundtable members only – (and meeting attendees for one week)
 - If you are unsure whether you are a Roundtable member, please check the website's member listing and reconcile any discrepancies with Cirse

2:25pm Kudos and Close-Out

Cirse Gonzalez, Coastal Training Program Coordinator, CBNERR

- Shout outs to Andrew Larkin for his leadership in Roundtable efforts, as well as VIMS and Pew Charitable Trusts for their contributions to the region, and meeting producers Karen Duhring and Lauren Taneyhill for a successful remote endeavor!

2:30pm Adjourn