



Stormwater in Virginia: What's Coming Down the Pipe?

Middle James Roundtable holds annual meeting

BY Leigh Isaac, Middle James Roundtable Coordinator

The Middle James Roundtable held its annual meeting, *Stormwater in Virginia: What's Coming Down the Pipe*, on March 25, 2010 at the Holiday Lake 4H Center in Appomattox, Virginia.

was held. Joan Salvati, Division Director, DCR Division of Chesapeake Bay Local Assistance spoke on the Chesapeake Bay Act Phase III, Chip Rice, Watershed



The MJRT 2010 annual meeting was held at Holiday Lake 4H Center in Appomattox, VA

Fifty-seven guests, who represented various stakeholder groups such as non-profit organizations, concerned citizens, state and local governments, soil and water conservation districts, and colleges/ universities within the middle James River watershed region attended the day-long event to learn more about pertinent stormwater issues in Virginia.

During the morning session, a Stormwater Panel Presentation

Implementation Coordinator, DCR Division of Soil & Water Conservation, spoke on Chesapeake Bay TMDL, and Dr. Jan Briede, Stormwater Outreach Manager, DCR Division of Soil & Water Conservation, spoke on the Stormwater Program

Proposed Regulations. A panel discussion followed, during which the presenters answered audience questions.

Bill Street, Executive Director,

James River Association, delivered a presentation on the state of the James River, citing information from the recently published *2009 State of the James*.

The afternoon portion of the meeting continued with two sets of breakout sessions. During the first breakout session, members had the choice to attend *City of Richmond Stormwater Utility* with Michelle Virts, Deputy Director, Department of Public Utilities, City of Richmond or *Addressing Stormwater Issues in Lynchburg* with Erin Hawkins, Environmental Planner, City of Lynchburg. The second set of breakout sessions included *Extreme BMP Project* with Laurel Woodworth, Stormwater and Watershed Planner, Center for Watershed Protection and *Greening the Capitol* with Nissa Dean, Regional Manager, DCR Division of Soil & Water Conservation.

Ida Swenson, as the acting MJRT chairperson, led a brief business session to elect new

Steering Committee members. Please refer to page 2 for a list of the members and their bios.

Bluebird houses, provided by Dr. Wilkie Chaffin, VASWCD President, were raffled off and awarded to five attendees.

An updated Steering Committee member list, annual meeting minutes, and several of the annual meeting presentations are

**Please visit mjrt.org
to see upcoming events in the area
and to access other information
about our
organization!**

**Contact Leigh Isaac at info@mjrt.org to
about listing events on the website or in fu-
ture newsletters.**

MJRT elects new Steering Committee members

The Middle James Roundtable welcomes five new Steering Committee members. The Steering Committee election was held during the MJRT's annual meeting on March 25th, 2010. The new members are:

Amy Doss is an environmental planner for the State of VA (DCR). She holds a bachelor's in Landscape Architecture from VT, and a Master's of Urban and Regional Planning also from VT. Previous jobs include working for a consulting firm and for local government. Amy is originally from the Richmond area and thoroughly enjoys spending time outdoors hiking or canoeing with her husband and their dogs.

Alex Forasté, P.E. is a practicing Senior Civil Engineer, currently working with Water Street Studio in Charlottesville, VA. He has provided site design services for owners of institutional, commercial and resi-

dential projects. Prior, he served as a Water Resources Engineer with the U.S. Peace Corps in Cameroon, sub-Saharan Africa. He worked with small villages to build drinking water wells and an elementary school classroom; he also hosted /organized seminars to raise awareness of HIV/AIDS. Most recently, he has worked with the Center for Watershed Protection and the Chesapeake Stormwater Network to develop the Rainwater Harvesting Specification and Spreadsheet for the Virginia DCR's state stormwater management program. Alex has also presented /published work on stormwater management BMPs in site design. He currently serves as President of the American Society of Civil Engineers Blue Ridge Branch and holds a Bachelor of Science in Civil and Environmental Engineering from the University of Vermont and a Master of Science in Civil Engineering degree from the University of Virginia.

Erin Hawkins is an Environmental Reviewer with the City of Lynchburg. She is responsible for the erosion and sediment control and stormwater review of development site plans, management of floodplain regulations and works on various committees related to natural resources/stormwater issues. She is also currently working on a baseline inventory on green house gas emissions for City operations. She has been with the City of Lynchburg for 5 years and previously worked as Conservation Specialist with the Robert E Lee Soil and Water Conservation District.

Anna Mathis is Program Coordinator for the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay's Virginia office. She coordinates the *RiverTrends* water quality monitoring program and other projects in partnership with watershed groups in Virginia's portion of the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Anna graduated from the Nicholas School for the Environment and Earth Sciences at Duke University with a Masters in Environmental Management. She has experience and knowledge in land conservation for water resource protection, environmental education, and watershed management.

Garret Jones, Education Specialist, Robert E. Lee SWCD. Garret grew up in Brevard, NC spending much time in Pisgah National Forest. He volunteered with multiple organizations in the area. In 1998, Garret graduated with a B.S. degree in Natural Resources/Ecosystem Assessment from North Carolina State University. He began working with the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, division of Conservation Education at the Pisgah Center for Wildlife Education. He held several positions at the developing center and in 2001 and was transferred to the new Outer Banks Center for Wildlife Education. Garret worked as an Education Specialist and later as the Program Coordinator for the

OBCWE. While working for OBCWE, Garret met his wife Christian, and moved to Amherst County VA in Sept. 2004. He then worked as the Facilities Manager at Amazement Square in Lynchburg until 2008.

Upcoming Events

April 20

[Liquid Assets Community Event](#)
5:30pm, Byrd Theater, Richmond

April 25

[Richmond Earth Day & Fish Festival](#)
noon - 5:00pm

May 5

[JRA's Rainbarrel Workshop](#)
6:30pm - 8:00pm, Richmond

May 12

[Henricopolis SWCD's Build a Barrel Workshop](#)
6:00pm - 8:00pm, Henrico

May 17

[Chesapeake Bay Small Watershed Grants Program - Applications due](#)

June 9

[Henricopolis SWCD's Build a Barrel Workshop](#)
6:00pm - 8:00pm, Henrico

July 29

[Henricopolis SWCD's Build a Barrel Workshop](#)
6:00pm - 8:00pm, Henrico

More information about these events can be found on mjrt.org

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Middle James Roundtable annual meeting in pictures



Above: Ida Swenson, current MJRT chairperson, conducts Steering Committee election during the morning portion of the

Below: DCR staff members, Joan Salvati, Dr. Jan Briede, and Chip Rice, answered questions during a stormwater panel discussion.



Above: Bill Street, Executive Director, JRA, presents information on the 2009 state of the James River.



Right: Laurel Woodworth, Stormwater and Watershed Planner, Center for Watershed Protection, leads a breakout session about the CWP's Extreme BMP Project.

Volunteers help with buffer planting at Greene County Community Park

BY Robbi Savage, Executive Director, Rivanna Conservation Society

April 3 was a beautiful, sunny day here in Greene and on the day before, Easter found nearly 50 volunteers gathered at Greene County Community Park to plant trees and shrubs on what has come to be known as “the red monster.” This monster is, of course, that huge expanse of red dirt that slopes up from the soccer field; you know the one that has caused many a mother to sigh in frustration as she tries to get those red stains out of her athlete’s uniform.



Volunteers plant trees on “the red monster” at Greene County Community Park

But it wasn’t just for a clean uniform for those team pictures that these families and friends gathered at the park. The planting, organized by Greene County (Stephanie Golan and Julius Bates) and facilitated by the Rivanna Conservation Society (Robbi Savage and Tanner Council) is a part of a comprehensive, watershed wide effort to

keep the dirt out of area rivers and streams. Plantings of this kind form a buffer that will keep dirt on the slope, off of the soccer field and out of the river. And, over the course of this year, there will be volunteer days to remove “invasive species” and to build a bioswale (rain garden) to reduce stormwater that carries soils to our waterways.

Team leaders included Lori Gore, Frank Wilczek and Jill Meyer, with Norm Slezak,

Andrea Wilkerson and Cathy Kloetzli offering their technical and physical support. The Greene County Lions, Ruritans, Garden Club and Master Naturalists were also there to lend a hand, as were members of the Tree Stewards Association. According to Stephanie Golan, the County Planner, “We are

absolutely delighted by the turn out and we are so grateful for the support of the various organizations who called upon their members to be at the park this past Saturday.” Julius Bates added, “We were concerned that since the planting was held the day before Easter that we might have a low turnout, but the community sure came through for us.” And, according to Robbi

Savage, the project facilitator, “It has been a joy to see so many mothers and fathers working hand and shovel to plant and mulch more than 430 trees.

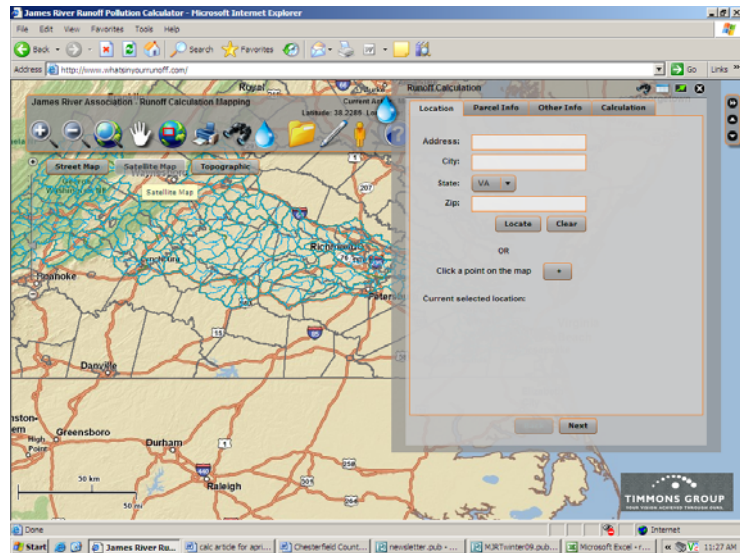
What a treat to see parents engaging their children in the process of caring for the natural environment, while building a sense of commitment to our community.” Phineus Godbold (age 7) summed it up this way, “My dad said that since our family uses this park all the time it is our responsibility to help make it a better place for everyone.” (Phineus is one of 6 brothers - Owen, Liam, Cullen, Perrin and Treston- who, with their dad Gene, planted from 9:00am – 1:00pm).

With funding provided by the VA Department of Forestry and a watershed wide grant provided by Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) to the Rivanna River Basin Commission, the buffer planting served as the first in a series of projects to improve the stormwater drainage at the Greene County Community Park. With planning and planting, the “red monster” may forever be banished from the park.

James River Association’s Runoff Calculator

BY Michelle Kokolis, Watershed Scientist, James River Association

The James River Association recently launched a new website to provide stormwater run-off solutions and increase public knowledge regarding pollution in the James River. We contracted with Timmons Group to create an interactive website which assists landowners in the estimation of rainfall run-off quality and quantity. Using a map-based website, landowners can easily locate their address, provide input for land use characteristics, and generate output reports detailing lot run-off values.



The user begins by entering their address. Once the property has been located, they are guided through a series of simple questions regarding the type of structure (single family home, condo etc), lot size, percentage of impervious area (i.e., area covered by driveways, sidewalks, and structures), frequency of lawn fertilization, and the presence of downspouts, rain barrels or a green roof. If the user is unsure of the percentage data, they can opt to use the default values that are provided for each structure type.

The output report from the run-off analysis includes estimated nitrogen and phosphorous loads, both of which contribute to pollution problems in the James River and the Chesapeake Bay. Each report also details tips for reducing run-off and pollution. The calculator can be accessed directly at www.whatsinyourrunoff.com or through the JRA website www.jamesriverassociation.org.

Saving a Place for Salamanders **BY Ralph White, Manager, James River Parks System**

Along Riverside Drive a hundred yards or two west of the Pony Pasture Rapids Park is a small spring. It's easy to find since it is directly opposite the end of the narrow, brown, aggregate pebble walkway. For decades the pool here has been the breeding site for a population of Spotted Salamanders.

They live underground for 11 months of the year in abandoned mole and vole holes under the soft soil of decaying leaves. In late January or February, on the night of the first warm rain (above 40 degrees) they come out gather and carouse in a rather Spring Break / Fort Lauderdale fashion in the spring pool and adjacent roadside ditch. This year a near disaster occurred when a nearby land owner convinced the City Department of Public Utilities that this was a fetid mosquito swamp and in need of storm water and drain management. The site was dug out and destroyed in December before anyone knew what was happening.

In a show of great sensitivity and care for the environment, the Deputy Director, Bob Steidel, immediately stopped any further work at the site and then arranged to have a stop-log placed across the mouth of the newly installed culvert pipe so that water would be allowed to build up a new site slightly downstream (west) of the original pool. "This department" he said, "is not going to cause the destruction of any unique pockets of wildlife in this City, if I have anything to do with it" is the approximate summary of what he said. A laudable statement and wonderful management ethic for any urban area.

The fix was somewhat successful. Several sitings of salamanders were reported in the new pool. Six egg masses were found in the

shallow remnants of the original site; there might have been three times that several years ago.

Since the site was too small to sustain a population (perhaps 2 x 3 feet), five masses were moved to the new area as a salvage effort. And in the future, on the nights of the melting snow and first rains, the roadway will again be blocked off to cars. Spotted Salamanders, especially males, have been know to wiggle along the asphalt to more quickly reach the breeding scene heedless of the passing traffic. The City looks out for its wildlife

Chesterfield County developing new comprehensive plan **BY Heather Barrar, Senior Planner, Chesterfield County**

Chesterfield County is in the process of developing a new comprehensive plan, a process that will help solidify the county's vision for the future. The project began in June 2009 and will take approximately 18 months for completion and depends upon public participation.

The Board of Supervisors appointed a citizen Steering Committee to lead the process with the county staff and consulting team. The vision for the comprehensive plan has been developed and the draft plan is currently under way. The draft plan will be prepared by Fall 2010 and will be presented at a series of District workshops.

Visit our website at: www.chesterfield.gov/cp to find the vision, a calendar of meetings and a citizen questionnaire. If you are a member of a civic group, church or organization that is interested in the comprehensive plan, we would be happy to make a presentation. Barbara Fassett is the project manager and can be reached at 748-1081 or fassettb@chesterfield.gov.

Virginia Celebrates 40th Anniversary of Scenic River Program

A small group of people sits on the banks of the Rivanna River next to the remains of the Woolen Mills Dam in Charlottesville. The only things left of this dam are rock walls and debris on the river banks. Downstream are fishermen and a hill overlooking Monticello; upstream is a tree-shaded road. The site is near civilization at Charlottesville, but the call of the bullfrog can be heard, and pileated woodpeckers fly by.

The group is debating the scenic quality of this river. Who could deny that Virginia's rivers are beautiful? But is this river one of the best Virginia has to offer?

Celebrating its 40th anniversary in 2010, Virginia's Scenic Rivers Program honors the highest quality, natural waterways in the state. This means that views of development – of bridges, power lines, roads, buildings, parks, man-made fishing areas, dams, etc. – are limited along the river's main course.

Just before the group gathered on the shore of the river, the team floated a length of the river from Route 29 to the dam. Six boats carried 11 people through a quiet stretch with just a few small rapids. The team was to identify and record details about vegetation on the banks, human modifications to water flow, signs of development, parallel roads, and utility line and road crossings. The details gathered are added to previously collected information, including water quality, presence of endangered species, quality of fisheries, historic features, land conservation measures and river access points.

Group members gave each criterion a score and came to a consensus within the group; that score is weighted against an ideal to see if the river even qualifies to be in the

program. In this case, the score allowed it to be added to an adjacent downstream stretch already in the program.

But the Scenic Rivers Program is more than just a few people paddling a river and saying that it's one of Virginia's prettiest rivers. To get to the field study, each locality adjacent to the river or river segment must agree on and submit a request for the study. After it's complete, it takes an act of the Virginia General Assembly to add the river into the program.

"This program would never exist without community involvement and government support at all levels within the state," said Lynn Crump, manager of the Scenic River Program. "But mostly, it's amazing to see all of the communities around the river come together to honor their beautiful natural features. So far, there are 24 rivers or river segments in the program, and the number grows almost every year."

The Scenic Rivers Program also has an associated governor-appointed board to enhance and promote the program. Virginia Scenic Rivers Board members make recommendations on the stewardship of scenic rivers and advise on the addition of river segments.

Richard Gibbons, chair of the Scenic Rivers Board, stated, "It's an honor to work for the promotion of Virginia's finest scenic features. The team of dedicated board members comes together from across the state to give local residents a voice in river-related issues."

Inclusion in the Scenic Rivers Program encourages protection and preservation of the river, but does not give the state control

over land use decisions. Nor does the state commercially promote designated rivers or give public access to private lands. Designation is truly just a celebration of the wonder and beauty of the resource. For more information about the Virginia Scenic Rivers Program, please visit http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational_planning/srmain.shtml.



3rd Annual Rivanna River Sojourn

BY Robbi Savage, Executive Director, Rivanna Conservation Society

More than 50 paddles participated in the first weekend of the 3rd Annual Rivanna River Sojourn, sponsored by the Rivanna Conservation Society and Blue Ridge Mountain Sports.

In celebration of the Year of the Rivanna, as a part of the 40th Anniversary of Virginia's Scenic Rivers Program, RCS and BRMS designed this Sojourn to traverse the entire river from just below the South Fork Reservoir to the confluence with the James River at Columbia.

The Rivanna, as the first river to be designated as scenic by the Commonwealth, has also been named as a National Treasure by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Robbi Savage, Executive Director of RCS said that "the goal of the Rivanna River Sojourn is to provide an opportunity for those who live or come to Central Virginia to experience the beauty and history of River of Presidents. This is such an awesome river with few, if any, industrial discharges of pollution. It is our hope that once people experience the Rivanna they will be more more aware of the need to care for and

protect this beautiful watershed."

According to John Holden, Manager of Blue Ridge Mountain Sports at Barracks Road, "The Sojourn is one of the most

important events we support each year because we are able to share our love of the outdoors, nature and the resources of the river."

The first leg of the Sojourn took place on Saturday, launching from Rt. 29 at Rio Mills, with the pull out at Shadwell. Ann Mallek, Chair of Albemarle County's Board of Supervisors was among the Sojourners and said that "this has been a wonderful experience and it would be great if other elected officials could take this trip."

Launching from Shadwell on Sunday, the group paddled the second leg to Palmyra. The third and final leg of the Sojourn will take place next Saturday with the launch from Palmyra with final pull out at Columbia, where the Rivanna converges with the James River.



The Ballad of the Middle James Round Table

To the tune *Beverly Hillbillies*

BY Robin Buckalew, Administrative & Public Information Specialist, Piedmont SWCD

Oh listen to the story of a Round Table and its knights,
For healthy streams and rivers they weren't afraid to fight.
They all lived in a watershed they call the Middle James;
We will long recall their deeds and ne'r forget their names.

Back in 1983 the rivers were a mess,
Fouled with excess nitrogen, mud and phosphorus,
And so the leaders of the land tried to find a way,
To clean up tributaries that pour into the Bay...Chesapeake that is.

The General Assembly empowered DCR
To set the clean-up goals but they knew they wouldn't get far
If they didn't have feedback from folks like you an me;
Input leads to grass-root improvements you can see.

In 1998 the first Round Table was organized,
Providing a watershed-based forum for you and I
To participate in defining critical watershed needs,
And develop an action plan, inspiring good deeds.

Eleven Conservation Districts joined hands in '99,
Piedmont and Monocan made them tow the line.
With funds from DCR they hired an employee
To help spread the word about tributary strategies.

The first MJ Round Table was in Farmville Town,
In September of 2000, 100 people came around,
To talk about pollution and what might be its source-
Phosphorus, and nitrogen, and sediment of course.

The Round Table in 2001 met at Tiger Inn,
And in '02 at Holiday Lake the Round Table met again.
By then they had a website, email and newsletter,
Getting out the word on ways to help the James get better.

In '06 they organized marking for storm drains,
And prime time TV spots and a marketing campaign.
Information labels on bags of fertilizer
Helped inform on how and when to spread it all the wiser.

In '08 a paid intern- the Roundtable Coordinator,
Organized a Roundtable at Longwood Student Center.
In '09 an Executive Committee in high gear,
Made sure that the Roundtable would last for many years.