



Meeting Notes: GWRC Environmental Managers Meeting
Tuesday May 18, 2021, 1:00PM – 3:00PM EST
Prepared by Luke Peters

Speaking: (6)

Bettina Rayfield – Manager, Office of Environmental Impact Review, DEQ
Harry Mooney – Lake Anna Civic Association
Katie Cullipher – Principal Environmental Education Planner, Hampton Roads PDC
Benjamin McFarlane – Senior Regional Planner, Hampton Roads PDC
Luke Peters – Environmental Planner, Berkley Group
Denise Nelson – Senior Environmental Engineer, Berkley Group

In attendance: (14)

John Saunders – Environmental Programs Administrator, Stafford County
Les Johnson – Project Manager, University of Mary Washington
Tyler Gelles – Senior Stormwater Manager, Fredericksburg
Marta Perry – District Manager, Tri-County/City Soil and Water Conservation District
Christopher Clarke – Parks and Recreation, King George County
Adam Lynch – River Steward, Friends of the Rappahannock
Liz Adams – All Hazards Planner, VDEM Region 7
Emily Torrey – Deputy Environmental Programs Administrator, Stafford County Public Works
Benjamin Leach – Deputy Director of Environmental Codes, Spotsylvania County
Mark Killgore – Dam Safety Engineer, DCR
Michelle McGinnis – Director of Community Engagement, Spotsylvania County
Patrick Coady – Seale & Associates | Northern Virginia Conservation Trust
Kate Gibson – Interim Director, GWRC
Rebecca Acland – Intern, Berkley Group

Meeting Notes

CZM Technical Assistance Training, Bettina Rayfield:
Bettina.rayfield@deq.Virginia.gov, 804-698-4202

- Conducts EIRs on major state construction projects – airports, oil and gas drilling, etc.
- EIRs required for projects over \$500k, which takes 60 days. VDOT has their own process and is exempt.
- DEQ is required by statute to coordinate with a “chief administrative officer”. Certain electric utilities also have this requirement.
- Airport projects require a public hearing and public notice and have a 90 day review period.

- SCC reviews include solar farms, compressor stations, battery storage facilities, etc. and have a 60 day review period.
- The 1972 CZM Management Act says that anything affecting the shore must be consistent with that state's CZM regulations.
- For federal projects, DEQ is only required to review those listed by NOAA. Usually includes wetlands.
- DEQ does not have any federal funds listed in their program, so they don't have to conduct federal-style reviews. They do follow federal guidelines on behalf of other entities that do get funding.
- Virginia's coastal zone is essentially every county east of I-95.
- Federal agencies use the "effects test", which means if a consequence is reasonably foreseeable they have to do a review. But they do not receive a permit until the state determines it is consistent. For unlisted projects, DEQ can petition NOAA if they want regulatory oversight.
- "Effects" can be beneficial, indirect, cumulative, etc. Broad definition.
- Virginia just made changes to its enforceable policies. The regulations and laws are now in a narrative format to make them better understood. They also added new categories for nuisance and threatened species.
- DEQ's CZM program is a networked program that does work for many other state agencies (wagonwheel diagram).
- When DEQ reviews a project, they can concur, give conditional concurrence, or object. Objections *must* be based on enforceable policies. Federal agencies can override this by saying it's being done to the extent practicable or that there's a national interest, which DEQ can do nothing about.
- DEQ is open to localities' comments for comp plans, local permits, E&S controls, etc. The comments are always included and summarized in the report.
- DEQ's process allows permittees to see the project manager for their case.
- Some projects require EIR public notice – federal consistency and aviation projects.
- DEQ is essentially up-to-date on the public notice database.

Harry Looney, Lake Anna Water Quality Update:
Harry.Looney@lakeannavirginia.org

- Kinetic Multisports is holding multiple events at Lake Anna State Park.
- The Civic Assc. Is in the process of purchasing turbidity/water quality monitoring equipment. Transitioning to YSI [brand name] instruments.
- There are e. coli, PCBs, and invertebrate impairments in creeks leading to the lake.
- The area south of the lake is not impaired because, Harry thinks, the lake acts as a filter.
- On August 11th 2020, the Upper Pamunkey had a recreational advisory.
- The Terry's Run area of the lake suffered from red algal blooms because of these issues. There are also green algal blooms in other parts of the lake.
- Lake Anna has never had an advisory because of algal toxins, but purely due to cell counts.
- Lake Anna is part of the York River watershed. The main area of concern is the Upper Pamunkey and Lake Anna drainage area, however.

- LACA feels they should be working outside of the lake to improve water quality around the state through overarching strategy documents.
- 2021 WQIP Components:
 - Water Quality Monitoring
 - Sediment Sampling
 - Algae Monitoring – 6 stations each on North Anna River and Pamunkey
 - Remote Sensing using Sentinel 2A and 2B satellites (Copernicus program)
 - Floating Treatment Wetlands in the Pamunkey branch
 - Data Analysis and Analytics in combination with DEQ's
- *Are all landowners members of LACA by default?* No, there are about 800 families.
- The York River Roundtable does a lot of work in environmental literacy and tribal outreach.

CZM Special Project – Regional Flood Risk Communication Plan:

- Goal is to create a more comprehensive messaging strategy around flood risk, especially for citizens who might've been grandfathered into situations where they're at risk.
- Will include copy/paste messaging for PIOs to post to Facebook, Twitter, and other social media.
- The focus is on flood risk awareness in general, not just including those who are not required to buy flood insurance, and to bring the content down to a understandable level instead of targeting flood plain managers.

Katie Cullipher, Ben McFarlane, HRPDC – Get Flood Fluent:

- HRPDC has a coastal resilience initiatives:
 - Aggregating information regionally,
 - Educating stakeholders,
 - Developing technical products that account for climate change
- Regional Resilience Inventory: want to document the need for assistance and identify opportunities for collaboration.
- The Regional Resilience Projects Dashboard brings information about what the region is already doing. There are over 450 projects in 11 categories, including \$173MM of completed projects and \$1.7b worth of projects underway.
- HRPDC uses the ESRI StoryMap to discuss resilience questions in a narrative format.
- Communities are very invested in improving their CRS scores.

Educating Residents:

- Precipitated by looking at the impacts of Hurricane Harvey in Texas (2017) and what a disaster not having insurance was for their communities.
 - Only 15% of flooded properties had flood insurance, which covered 40% of the \$30b in damage.
- Many citizens have misconceptions about the need for insurance.
- Goals: educate about facts, debunk myths, and encourage people to contact an insurance agent and get a quote.

- The www.Getfloodfluent.org website and toolkit are a major component of education. They've included a calculator that will give an estimate of what insurance would cost.
- Included an interactive quiz challenge for visitors to the site.
- HRPDC is developing a media toolkit full of assets that anyone can download and use to promote purchasing flood insurance.
- Launched paid media/PR campaigns in Spring 2019 using TV, radio, digital and print. In Summer 2020 they also included streaming advertisements for cordcutters.
- 7MM impressions from social media campaigns have generated 13,087 visitors to the site, spiking around the times of the campaigns.
- In 2021 they have activities happening every season, especially Spring and Summer with Flood and Hurricane preparedness weeks and the start of hurricane season.
- Developed videos to show local experiences.

Web Content:

- HRPDC is trying to identify topics they can put on the website in order to get communities' CRS scores up, with messaging straight from the FEMA CRS Manual.
- Looking into insurance calculator updates to match FEMA's changes, disclosure requirements for repetitive loss properties, and flood loss history.

Improving Local Policies:

- HRPDC adopted sea level rise planning scenarios, like 4.5' between years 2080-2100.
- Taking it to the next level is creating floodplain maps that incorporate sea level rise, new stormwater standards, and building elevation basemaps that include SLR.

Les Johnson thinks it would be useful to create a geodatabase and benchmark sea level rise in all our materials. Which would be the most helpful for the localities? People need to understand that even if they're not in a FEMA floodplain, a 100 year event could cost them a lot.

Comments were due back to the Flood Fund guide May 12th, still waiting to figure out what proposals will look like. There are opportunities to add staff, do training, complete projects, etc.

Flood Preparedness Fund manual will be coming out after the June Water Control Board Meeting.

DCR funded HRPDC's calculator and other website elements through their dam safety grants. They mainly fund dam issues, but also floodplain management efforts.

CZM Resilience Updates:

- Berkley Group is investigating geodatabases and datasets regarding resiliency issues.
- To keep up with what Dewberry, the engineering firm hired by the state to manage the CZM Master Plan, visit the DCR website.
- Denise spoke with Vision, the outreach consultants, about the survey they're going to distribute. She needs information from the localities about the best places to leave physical materials as well as which communities to reach out to digitally.

- *Would it be an effective move to take a paper survey door to door in certain communities?*
- Dewberry will be joining us for the July 20th meeting to meet with PDCs. They will deliver survey results and then discuss who to target.
- Opinions on returning to in-person meetings?

Roundtable Discussion:

- Caroline County: David Nunnaly is not here.
- King George: gave away 400 trees with Friends of the Rappahannock. Sidell Brooks Jr. Park – beavers have created a dam. However, they’ve blocked the culvert that leads to the water treatment plant. Anyone with knowledge of how to handle that should contact Chris offline.
- Spotsylvania: Ben Leach left the meeting.
- Stafford: Brooks Park stream restoration project amendments are lengthening the scope by 100 feet or more. Will be kicked off in the Fall. Should schedule a tour for the 1st of January.
- Fredericksburg: Tyler and senior planner Mike Craig are working on their trails project, for which funding has become an issue. Likewise with stream restoration planning.
- Marta Perry: Wrapping up strategic planning efforts, will send out draft materials shortly. If localities know any farmers who haven’t implemented cover crops or stream barriers, please encourage them.
- FOR: due to several deaths on the river, they are ramping up Spanish-language river ambassadors to preach safety on-site at parks. Partnering with several organizations to get this done.