2004 ANNUAL REPORT ON WATERSHED PLANNING AND PERMITTING

SUBMITTED BY
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DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

February 2005

February 14, 2005

TO: The Honorable Mark R. Warner
Governor of Virginia

The Honorable Members of the General Assembly

FROM: Robert G. Burnley

Director, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality

SUBJECT: REPORT ON WATERSHED PLANNING AND PERMITTING

The Department of Environmental Quality has finalized its annual report on watershed planning and permitting activities and the Watershed Planning and Permitting Coordination Task Force (established under §10.1-1194 of the Code of Virginia).

The report summarizes how the participating agencies worked to coordinate and promote watershed planning and permitting in the Commonwealth. It includes information on the Chesapeake Bay Tributary Strategies, nutrient permitting activities, the Total Maximum Daily Load Program, and local watershed initiatives.

The full text of the report can be found on the Department's web site at http://www.deq.state.va.us/regulations/reports.html or by calling Rick R. Linker, Water Policy Manager, at 804-698-4195.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report for the year 2004 is submitted to the Governor and the General Assembly in response to the requirement under §10.1-1193 of the Code of Virginia for an annual report on the Department's watershed planning and permitting activities, the Department's findings and recommendations and the findings and recommendations of the Watershed Planning and Permitting Coordination Task Force, the "Task Force" (established under §10.1-1194 of the Code of Virginia).

The Task Force is composed of the Directors, Commissioners or their designees from the following agencies:

- Department of Environmental Quality - [DEQ]
- Department of Conservation and Recreation - [DCR]
- Chesapeake Bay Local Assistance Department - [CBLAD] [1]
- Department of Mines, Minerals, and Energy - [DMME]
- Department of Forestry - [DOF]
- Department Agriculture and Consumer Services - [VDACS]

[1] NOTE: In 2004, CBLAD became a division of DCR.

The Virginia Department of Health [VDH], while not listed as a member of the Task Force in the Code, also participates.

While the Task Force did not meet during 2004, Task Force members were engaged in watershed planning and permitting activities throughout the year. This report provides information on the Chesapeake Bay tributary strategies, nutrient permitting activities, the Total Maximum Daily Load [TMDL] program, and local watershed initiatives.

1. INTRODUCTION

Sections 10.1-1193 through 1197, Article 3, Chapter 11.1 of the Code of Virginia mandate the Department of Environmental Quality, with the assistance of participating state agencies, to coordinate and promote watershed planning and permitting by state and local agencies and authorities.

The legislation also created the Watershed Planning and Permitting Coordination Task Force ("Task Force") composed of the Directors, Commissioners or their designees from the following agencies:

- Department of Environmental Quality - [DEQ]
- Department of Conservation and Recreation - [DCR]
- Chesapeake Bay Local Assistance Department - [CBLAD] [1]
- Department of Mines, Minerals, and Energy - [DMME]
- Department of Forestry - [DOF]
- Department Agriculture and Consumer Services - [VDACS]

[1] NOTE: In 2004, CBLAD became a division of DCR.

The Virginia Department of Health [VDH], while not listed as a member of the Task Force in the Code, also participates. This report was prepared in accordance with the requirement to report annually on the watershed planning and permitting activities in Virginia (§10.1-1193 of the Code of Virginia).

2. TASK FORCE ACTIVITIES

While the Task Force did not meet during 2004, Task Force members were engaged in watershed planning and permitting activities throughout the year. This report provides information on the Chesapeake Bay tributary strategies, nutrient permitting activities, the Total Maximum Daily Load [TMDL] program, and local watershed initiatives.

3. AGENCY WATERSHED PLANNING AND PERMITTING ACTIVITIES

Task Force members were engaged in watershed permitting and planning activities throughout the year. This section provides an overview of the agency activities related to watershed permitting and planning. Specifically, it presents information on the Chesapeake Bay tributary strategies, nutrient permitting activities, the TMDL program, and local watershed initiatives.

3.1. CHESAPEAKE BAY TRIBUTARY STRATEGIES

The Chesapeake Bay tributary strategies revision started in April 2003 with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's [EPA] publication of water quality criteria for the

Chesapeake Bay ("Bay"). The goal of the revised strategies is to meet these newly developed tidal water quality criteria and designated uses. Tributary teams were established in summer 2003, and over the course of 2003 and early 2004, state agency staff worked with local stakeholders to develop tributary strategy plans composed of a variety of pollution reduction techniques. Tributary strategy team meetings were held in each basin, during which participants devised strategies they felt were realistically achievable. Revised strategies were released by the Secretary of Natural Resources ("the Secretary") for public comment in April 2004. Based on comments received, and several policy decisions made by the Secretary, the Strategy documents have been revised and will be issued as final in early 2005.

Following is a summary of the key elements in the revised Tributary Strategies. While each Bay tributary basin has specific nutrient and sediment load allocations to reach, they are all a part of an overall Virginia Chesapeake Bay nutrient and sediment reduction goal. As the result of the efforts by state staff and stakeholders in all five Bay tributaries, Virginia has crafted a series of basin strategies that surpass Virginia's nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment goals.

To reach these ambitious new reduction goals, the revised strategies build on previous water quality improvement efforts. The Strategy looks at the agricultural nonpoint source practices and wastewater treatment plant reductions that were critical to the earlier plans to see where practices could be increased. The revised Strategy also looks more closely at measures involving land use, urban nutrient management and stormwater management that will need to play key roles in meeting the new basin allocations.

York and the James Rivers - Special Cases: While the strategies are viewed as 'final', work remains for the York and James Rivers. While previous monitoring and modeling work confirmed that nutrient and sediment loads in the York and James don't significantly affect dissolved oxygen conditions in the Bay's mainstem, they do impact water quality within the tidal rivers themselves. Therefore, as was recognized when the total allocations were established through the federal-interstate Chesapeake Bay Program, the York and James allocations are considered interim until final water quality standards are adopted by the State Water Control Board [SWCB] and approved by the EPA. Because the total Virginia allocations for nitrogen and phosphorus are the sum of the allocations for each of Virginia's five basins, the total allocations may change as well.

Point Source Revisions: In August 2004, the Secretary of Natural Resources issued a statement on revisions to the draft strategies regarding point source controls. A set of "Guiding Principals" were included, which have now been applied as the basis to set annual waste load allocations for the significant nutrient discharges in the Bay watershed. The point source guiding principles are:

- Achieve the nutrient reductions necessary to restore the Chesapeake Bay and its tidal tributaries in the timeframe set by the Chesapeake 2000 Agreement;
- Provide for the full use of existing design capacity at each of the significant municipal and industrial wastewater treatment plants; and,
- Apply currently available, stringent nutrient reduction technologies at these treatment plants.

Annual point source waste load allocations, using a combination of current permitted design capacity and stringent nutrient treatment, have been recalculated for each of the Tributary Strategy basins, in accordance with the Secretary's statement.

Nonpoint Source Revisions: Unlike point sources where treatment technologies can achieve specified nutrient reductions, nonpoint source controls are much more difficult to implement and maintain. They encompass multiple control strategies and must be placed on land by thousands of landowners, land managers, local governments and others. Basin-wide, the revised Strategy calls for Best Management Practices [BMPs] to be installed and maintained on 92% of all available agricultural lands, 85% of all mixed open lands, 74% on all urban lands and 60% of all septic systems. The extent of the proposed practices contained in the strategies goes far beyond what current programs and resources can deliver and well beyond the highest participation levels ever achieved in the BMP cost-share and technical assistance efforts. All of the practices proposed cannot be implemented immediately.

The nonpoint source approach, under the coordination of DCR, is to refocus available tools, to steer new resources to Virginia's strongest nonpoint source control programs, and to push them to maximize reductions across the landscape. These efforts will focus on seven programmatic areas:

1. Agricultural BMP Acceleration
2. Expansion of Nutrient Management Planning and Implementation Efforts
3. The Consolidation and Strengthening of the Virginia Stormwater Management Program
4. Enhancing Implementation of the Virginia Erosion and Sediment Control Program
5. Strengthen Implementation of the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act
6. Enhancement of the NPS Implementation Database Tracking Systems
7. Enhancing outreach, media and education efforts to reduce pollution producing behaviors

These broad implementation approaches set the general direction, but more detailed implementation will be needed to carry them forward. Most of this work will be done at the basin level. State staff will elicit input from existing tributary teams, other stakeholders and citizens of the individual basins. They will then work together to meet these ambitious and necessary nutrient and sediment reductions. Ongoing tributary strategy implementation cannot be seen as a process that is separate from other ongoing water quality initiatives. In fact, tributary strategies should be seen as a way to connect and incorporate local water quality initiatives.

The Secretary of Natural Resources web site contains a page dedicated to updates about the process. (http://www.snr.state.va.us/Initiatives/TributaryStrategies/index.cfm)

In November 2003, DEQ published a Notice of Intent for Regulatory Action [NOIRA] to initiate the rulemaking process to adopt the EPA's criteria into the Virginia Water Quality Standards. The public comment period on the proposed regulatory changes closed on January 31, 2005, and DEQ staff are now developing recommendations for the SWCB to consider at an upcoming meeting, likely in March or June 2005. It is DEQ's intent to promulgate the final water quality standards before the end of 2005, with EPA approval expected in early 2006. Information about this process is available on the DEQ web site at http://www.deq.state.va.us/wqs/rule.html

3.2. REGULATORY ACTIONS ON NUTRIENT PERMITTING

On January 26, 2004, DEQ published a NOIRA to start the process of revising two point source control regulations that will set limitations on nutrient discharges from certain facilities in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. The regulations are 9 VAC 25-40, Policy for Nutrient Enriched Waters, which will set technology-based numerical discharge limits, and 9 VAC 25-720, Water Quality Management Planning, which establishes annual phosphorus and nitrogen waste load allocations for significant nutrient dischargers, and authorizes a trading and offsets program. A Technical Advisory Committee was formed and met four times over the spring and summer of 2004, with approval given by the SWCB in August 2004 to present the proposed regulations for public review. The Notice of Public Comment is scheduled for Virginia Register publication in February 2005, with public hearings set for mid-March. Final recommendations to the SWCB are expected by September 2005, with the revised regulations becoming effective before the end of the calendar year.

3.3. TMDL PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

The goal of the TMDL Program is to restore water quality in Virginia's impaired streams, rivers, lakes and estuaries. Activities under the TMDL Program include TMDL development and TMDL implementation, including TMDL implementation plan [IP] development. TMDL development is governed by a 1999 Federal Court Consent Decree [CD] as well as by the Water Quality Monitoring, Information and Restoration Act, which also governs TMDL implementation in Virginia. DEQ, in cooperation with DCR and DMME, is developing a progress report that provides summaries of BMP implementation and corresponding water quality responses in six TMDL areas throughout the Commonwealth. The report, once finalized, will be available on DEQ's TMDL web page (http://www.deq.virginia.gov/tmdl/homepage.html). Following is a summary of key information.

TMDL Development: Tables 1 to 3 shows the number of impaired waters and TMDL development progress to date. TMDLs for waters not covered by the CD are developed within a period of no more than 12 years from the date of their first identification as impaired. Where possible, DEQ groups waters in close geographic proximity together for TMDL development, regardless of the initial listing date (see Table 2). This allows a more comprehensive approach to managing water quality in the affected watershed.

Table 1. TMDL Development Progress for CD Waters 1999 through 2004

Basin	Freshwater CD segments with completed TMDLs	Delisted Freshwater CD Segments [1,2]	Freshwater CD segments scheduled for 2006
Bay/Coastal	0	0	1
Chowan	3	3	29
James	19	8	8
New	7	0	3
Potomac, Shenandoah	55	3	18
Rappahannock	4	2	11
Roanoke	21	4	14
Tennessee, Big Sandy	12	3	11
York	0	0	12
Total	121	23	107

[1] includes 3 partial delists
[2] does not include non-consent decree delists

Table 2. TMDL Development Progress for Non-CD Waters 1999 through 2004

Basin	Non-CD Segments with Completed TMDLs	Non-CD Segments with TMDL scheduled to be completed by May 2006
Bay/Coastal	0	0
Chowan	0	3
James	11	0
New	2	0
Potomac/Shenandoah	2	9
Rappahannock	1	2
Roanoke	2	15
Tennessee/Big Sandy	0	4
York	0	7
Total	18	40

Table 3. TMDL Development Progress for Shellfish Waters 1999 through 2004

Basin	Shellfish CD Segments with completed TMDLs	Shellfish CD Segments – Delists and Closures	Shellfish CD Segments Scheduled for 2005
Bay/Coastal	4	30	43
Chowan	0	0	0
James	0	2	4
New	0	0	0
Potomac, Shenandoah	9	7	0
Rappahannock	0	3	8
Roanoke	0	0	0
Tennessee, Big Sandy	0	0	0
York	0	6	0
Total	13	48	55

In order to meet its commitments under the CD governing the Virginia TMDL Program, the Commonwealth developed ~ 100 freshwater TMDLs in time for the May 1, 2004 submittal deadline (see Table 4). The majority of these TMDLs was also presented to the SWCB for approval. Additionally, wasteload allocations for pollutants without numeric criteria in Virginia's water quality standards regulation were adopted by the SWCB as part of the Water Quality Management Planning regulation. Specific information on each TMDL report can be found at http://gisweb.deq.virginia.gov/tmdlapp/tmdl_report_search.cfm

In 2004, EPA also approved the removal of 39 waters from the 303(d) report that had been listed due to discharges not attaining their technology-based limits. All such waters covered by the CD are now in full attainment of their limits.

Table 4. TMDL Activity by Pollutant

TMDL Activity from 1/1/99 to 12/31/03								
	Total	Bacteria	Benthic	PCB	Nitrate	pH	DO	T
TMDLs	68	46	15	5	2			
CD segments	49							
CD Delistings	20						1	
- full	19	11	4		1	2		
- partial	1		1					
TMDL Activity from 1/1/04 to 12/31/04								
	Total	Bacteria	Benthic	PCB	Nitrate	pH	DO	T
TMDLs	108	65 shellfish 13	33	0	0	0	0	
CD segments	72							
CD Delistings	3							
- full	1							1
- partial	2		2					

TMDL Implementation: During 2004, three IPs were completed, specifically an urban IP for Four Mile Run in Northern Virginia and IPs for Catoctin Creek in Loudoun County and Holmans Creek in Shenandoah County. Development of a mining IP for Guest River in Southwest Virginia also began in 2004, and the IP is expected to be final in early 2005. Copies of draft and final IPs are made available to the public at **http://www.deq.virginia.gov/tmdl/implement.html**. Table 5 shows the distribution of the IPs in Virginia's major river basins.

Table 5. TMDL Implementation Plans by River Basin

Basin	IPs Completed	# of segments in completed IPs	IPs Under Contract/in Planning	# of segments in pending IPs
Chowan	0	0	2	9
James	0	0	2	2
New	0	0	1	2
Potomac, Shenandoah	4	10	4	9
Rappahannock	0	0	2	7
Roanoke	1	4	2	8
Tennessee, Big Sandy	1	4	2	3
Shellfish	0	0	1	2
Total	6	18	16	42

Implementation activities proceeded in watersheds with completed IPs utilizing a variety of funding sources. Some highlights from 2004 include:

- Following DMME remediation activities from 2000 to 2002, the biological assemblage in a stream in a watershed impacted by mining activities was found to have rebounded sufficiently that it is no longer considered impaired (Middle Creek, Tazewell County).
- Successful leveraging of state, federal and other grant funds occurred in the Three Creeks project area in Washington County where encouraging water quality improvements are observable.
- Four urban communities (Arlington County, Fairfax County, City of Alexandria and City of Falls Church, with support and leadership from the Northern Virginia Regional Commission) jointly developed a list of commitments aimed at restoring water quality in Four Mile Run.
- The City of Virginia Beach, in cooperation with the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission, has initiated an IP project for Lynnhaven Bay.
- DCR in cooperation with Loudoun County led the development of an IP for the Catoctin Creek watershed and is pursuing the implementation of BMPs.
- The Holman's Creek Citizens Watershed Committee coordinated the development of an IP for the Holman Creek sediment and bacteria TMDLs and is working with the Lord Fairfax and Shenandoah Valley Soil and Water Conservation Districts to encourage the implementation of BMPs.

TMDL Program Outlook: Over the last five years, the Virginia TMDL program has successfully met the demands of a rigorous TMDL development schedule contained in the CD. By applying the program efficiencies developed in the past few years, assuming no unforeseen new needs, and based on current estimates, future TMDL development needs can be met with level funding**.** However, challenges exist in the development of TMDLs for complex pollutants such as PCBs and mercury, as well as in the maintenance of a growing TMDL pool with the potential for future TMDL modifications to accommodate permit needs.

A growing challenge for the program is the transition from developing TMDLs to actual water quality improvements. Because there are no new authorities for enforcing TMDLs, it has been Virginia's expectation to implement TMDLs using existing programs and funding sources. Existing programs include the DEQ's VPDES and DMME's NPDES program for permitting discharges to state waters. These programs are utilized when stream impairments are attributed to a permitted facility. For non-permitted activities, Virginia's approach has been to rely on incentive-based programs such as EPA Section 319 grant funds, the Virginia Agricultural Cost Share Program, the State Revolving Loan Fund, Virginia Water Quality Improvement Fund, and USDA cost-share assistance programs, etc. These programs are available to eligible interested citizens, land owners or local governments who want to implement BMPs to reduce nonpoint source inputs. Virginia has also made available dedicated 319 grant funding for BMP implementation in TMDL watersheds where an EPA-approved IP was developed.

As the highlights described in this report show, there have been some success stories of water quality improvement in watersheds where BMP implementation has occurred. These water quality successes have occurred not only in areas with ongoing TMDL implementation but also, as was the case for Middle Creek, in areas where water quality restoration was driven by stakeholder interest or other resource management programs that preceded TMDL completion (often called the "proactive approach"). The documented water quality improvements in three implementation areas and the delisting of several streams due to water quality improvements in the surrounding watershed are encouraging signs that Virginia's streams can be restored to meet water quality goals.

To date no stream has been delisted due to TMDL implementation efforts, and the pace of BMP installation has not been as rapid as anticipated. After five years of effort under the TMDL program and evaluating the resulting impacts on water quality, certain questions arise, for example:

- Are existing programs to minimize non-permitted pollution sources enough to result in water quality improvement/attainment? How can existing regulatory programs such as the Agricultural Stewardship Act and VDH regulations be better leveraged?
- What are the options for faster action/more action? What can be done to further maximize efficiencies? What innovative approaches can be tried? What funding opportunities exist?
- What are the opportunities to obtain additional funding for agency staffing and/or contractual assistance to develop IPs and implement BMPs?

Virginia's TMDL program has shown that properly applied and maintained BMPs do result in measurable improvements in water quality. It will be the goal of Virginia's natural resource agencies to work with the general public to take this success to the next level by successfully remediating a number of impaired streams within the next few years. The information collected during the last few years on ongoing implementation efforts will help in identifying strategies to achieve this goal and will inform stakeholders that the corrective actions that they are being asked to implement can result in water quality improvements.

3.4. LOCAL WATERSHED INITIATIVES

Local Watershed Management Planning: Following the six successful "Watershed Management Planning Workshops" that occurred in 2003, DCR has begun to work one-on-one with many local governments and community watershed groups to begin local watershed planning. In 2004 DCR worked with Albemarle County, Fairfax County, Henrico County, City of Virginia Beach, Piedmont Environmental Council, Elizabeth River Project, James River Association, Tennessee Valley Authority, Northern Virginia Regional Commission, and the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission to name but a few of the diverse groups.

Roundtable Update:

Shenandoah - The Shenandoah Pure Water 2000 was very active throughout 2004. Major actions included: participating in the removal of the McGaheysville dam on the Shenandoah River, working on development of GIS of sinkholes on I-81 transport corridor to prevent toxic spills and hazardous materials from polluting source water for Shenandoah County water supplies, leadership of the Shenandoah Sojourn II, and work on Wastewater Treatment Plant Network.

Potomac Watershed - This past year the Potomac Watershed Roundtable has been very involved in the development of the Potomac River Tributary Strategy. They hosted the Strategy "kick-off" event attended by over 100 diverse stakeholders, promoted public participation in the draft comment period, and, have included the Strategies as an agenda item at each quarterly meeting. The Roundtable has been especially involved in outreach activities in support of the Strategies, hosting a Low Impact Development [LID] Tour last fall and planning for a basin-wide forum this summer.

Rappahannock – Members of the Rappahannock River Basin Commission have been discussing the Rappahannock Tributary Strategy and the implications and opportunities for local governments, including proposed funding sources. The Commission, which is composed of both local and state officials, has been an active participant by providing significant feedback during Strategy development, and is now actively searching for ways to help in implementation. The Rappahannock Conservation Council has also provided direct input and it is eager to assist in Tributary Strategy promotion and implementation. The Council has already developed promotional brochures and is developing strong regional ties among Soil and Water Conservation Districts [SWCDs] and localities by using small grant funds to encourage the development and implementation of various projects, such as rain gardens, educational field days, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program promotional activities.

York - The newly re-established York River and Small Coastal Basin Roundtable is a forum for regional information exchanges to address water quality issues with the York River, Mobjack Bay and the Piankatank River Watersheds. The mission of the group includes establishing position statements for practices and policies that affect water quality in these watersheds, to influence state agencies and decision makers. The practices and policies they have identified

include; agricultural BMPs, nutrient tracking programs, funding opportunities, nutrient point source and nonpoint source regulations.

Upper James - Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) Councils provide a formal mechanism for citizens and government agencies to cooperatively address a wide range of issues including: environmental education; land conservation; water quality; and outdoor recreation. The Upper James River Roundtable is providing the lead support for forming an Upper James River basin RC&D Council that would cover Highland, Bath, Alleghany, Craig, Botetourt and Rockbridge Counties. Representatives from federal (U.S. Forest Service, Natural Resource Consveration Service), state (DCR, Department of Game and Inland Fisheries), and local (Covington, Buena Vista, Rockbridge, Central Shenandoah PDC) agencies, Soil and Water Conservation Districts (Natural Bridge, Mountain Castles), and Dabney S. Lancaster Community College participate in this work. Key elements supporting the drive to implement an RC&D include the greater degree of sustainability with annual federal funding, the fiscal advantages of 501(c)(3) (*i.e.*, non-profit) status, particularly with respect to obtaining and disbursing grants, and the ability of a RC&D Council to continue and expand upon the work of the Upper James Roundtable. Monthly meetings are planned through the end of 2005. A formal application package will be submitted to the U.S. Department of Agriculture before October.

Middle James – The Piedmont James River Roundtable continued to focus on promoting the James River Tributary Strategy. Over the past four years, the Roundtable has sponsored local government informational sessions to ensure understanding of water quality issues and policies that may affect local governments. Local government sessions completed to date: Albemarle, Amelia, Amherst, Bedford, Buckingham, Cumberland, Fluvanna, Goochland, Powhatan, & Prince Edward counties; City of Charlottesville; Region 2000 & Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commissions.

The Thomas Jefferson SWCD, in partnership with the Roundtable and local government support, hosted a successful stormwater management and LID workshop. A second workshop with the same theme is being planned for the Richmond metropolitan area in 2005.

The fertilizer label initiative expansion continued with the securing of funds to contact and work with local and regional fertilizer suppliers. Other activities conducted by the Roundtable include website redevelopment, a regional public relations campaign and urban BMPs and stream restoration workshop development.

Lower James River - The Lower James River Roundtable, hosted by the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission, has undertaken the planning process for the Lower James portion of the James River Tributary Strategy revision process and is working to facilitate the implementation of the Lower James portion of the James River Tributary Strategy. Currently the Roundtable is providing input on the effectiveness of Street sweeping as a BMP for sediment removal in Hampton Roads and a bacteria sampling protocol for use in IPs. The Roundtable is actively linked to the Elisabeth River, Lynnhaven River and other grassroots efforts.

Eastern Shore Watersheds (Bay/Seaside) - Building successful capacity building, monitoring and planning, the Eastern Shore Watersheds Network is dedicated to furthering environmental

education and awareness and research in sustainable watershed restoration. The Network, a diverse group of Eastern Shore stakeholders has made great strides in coordinating and implementing the multitude of natural resource planning efforts on the shore since their formation in 2000. Currently, the Network in partnership with the Virginia Institute of Marine Science [VIMS] is working on a water quality monitoring program to assess sediment discharge in two bayside creeks and a household hazardous waste disposal program. The Network continues to work closely with VIMS, DEQ's Coastal Zone Management program, DCR, The Nature Conservancy and local stakeholders in building a seaside strategic conservation plan.

Albemarle Sound – The Southern Watershed Area Management Program, hosted by the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission continues to work with the Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Program [APNEP] in an effort to exchange planning and environmental management information with the neighboring North Carolina counties. Through recent grant funding from APNEP and the Virginia Coastal program, an effort is under way to update Geographic Information System [GIS] mapping of the Southern Watershed Area (SWA) in Chesapeake and Virginia Beach and extend the mapping to include Camden and Currituck Counties. This effort will involve collecting the most current GIS information available for the SWA and consolidating the information so that each of the participating localities has access to the four-locality data set for use in future planning efforts.

Chowan River – The Chowan Roundtable is continuing its work on capacity building within both the Virginia and North Carolina portions of the Chowan watershed. The Roundtable's work is focused on being bi-state project oriented and consistent with the goals and objectives of Virginia's agreement with North Carolina as a partner in the APNEP. Recently the Chowan Roundtable, in coordination with J.R. Horsley Soil SWCD and the Blackwater/Nottoway River Keepers Association has been working with DEQ and DCR on the development of TMDLs in the Chowan watershed.

Roanoke River – During 2004 the Upper Roanoke River Roundtable [URRR] has been working actively to establish name recognition and create partnerships. The URRR now has representatives on the Virginia Roanoke River Basin Advisory Commission, the Smith Mountain Lake Association, the Smith Mountain Lake Chamber of Commerce, the SW VA Environmental Roundtable and the Radford University Business Assistance Program. The URRR is also involved in joint efforts with the City of Roanoke, Virginia's Explore Park and Roanoke County, the Science Museum of Western Virginia, Virginia Tech, the Western Virginia Water Authority and the Roanoke River Basin Association.

The URRR outreach efforts include meetings with area governmental agencies, non-profit groups, regional citizen's groups, students and teachers and the general public. The URRR has developed a stand-alone exhibit for conferences, a nice membership brochure and an interactive website. They also created an email system and list serve for our Board members and are working toward an online newsletter. The URRR was present and visible for various general environmental conferences including The National River Rally, Environment Virginia, the Citizens for Water Quality Summit and Roanoke's Earth Day (at Hollins University).

The URRR held its annual meeting on October 16 at Explore Park. The project priorities, which are based on a recently completed strategic plan, were decided for the coming year. The projects deemed to have the highest priority were:

1. Development of a general mailing to local households on important watershed issues.
2. Promotion of public awareness and participation in the Roanoke TMDL plan development.
3. Promotion and organization of a citizen water quality monitoring event similar to the citizen monitoring day, which was held on October 15, 2004 near Roanoke.

New River – With the assistance of DCR, the New River Watershed Roundtable is approaching finalization of its structure. The Roundtable has invited over 85 local government elected officials, industry representatives, local interest group leaders, SWCDs, sportsmen groups, etc. to a formal seating of the Executive Board for the New River Watershed Roundtable on January 26, 2005 in Wytheville.

Upper Tennessee River Roundtable, Inc. (UTRR) - The UTRR is nearing the halfway point of the three-year EPA grant that was received in 2003. The partnership initiated by DCR netted $800,000 for Tennessee, North Carolina, and Virginia (with nearly $500,000 going to Virginia). The UTRR now has a full-time coordinator, a part-time education specialist, and has contracted a grazing specialist to help implement projects related to rotational grazing. The UTRR recently implemented a new fund-raising program with eight fundraising teams that focus on the eight subsections of the Five Year Plan (i.e., Mining, Litter, Endangered Species, Agriculture, Forestry, Citizen Action, Education, and Urban).

Big Sandy River Basin Coalition, Inc. (BSRBC) - The BSRBC includes the states of Kentucky, West Virginia, and Virginia. Their recent partnership initiative with the Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission (ORSANCO) is proving to be a fruitful venture. ORSANCO, because of their regulatory authority, has been able to bring partners to the table that previously had not been eager to do so. The BSRBC is considering the possibility of expanding their Board of Directors from a current level of five, to as many as 21 directors. The primary reasons for this expansion are to diversify the Board and increase their "reach" into the community by drawing on a larger group of people that have access to more resources and contacts.