

February 6, 2006

**To the Governor and Members of the General Assembly
c/o Division of Legislative Automated Systems (DLAS)
910 Capitol Square
General Assembly Building, Suite 660
Richmond, Virginia 23219
Attention: Legislative Documents and Reports Processing**

Re: 2005 Accomplishments of the Rappahannock River Basin Commission

As the recently re-elected Chairman, I am pleased to present this report to you on the accomplishments of the Rappahannock River Basin Commission. I remain deeply appreciative of the continued membership and the work efforts expended by members of the Senate and my fellow co-workers in the House of Delegates

With kindest personal regards and all best wishes, I remain

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert J. Wittman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "R".

**Delegate Robert J. Wittman
Chairman**

As defined in Section 61.1-659.27 of the Code of Virginia, the Commission's purpose and mission is to provide guidance for the stewardship and enhancement of the water quality and natural resources of the Rappahannock River Basin. The Commission is a forum in which the state, and fourteen local governments to include The City of Fredericksburg and the counties of Culpeper, Spotsylvania, King George, Orange, Richmond, Essex, Westmoreland, Fauquier, Caroline, Rappahannock, Stafford, Lancaster, and Madison County and citizens of the Commonwealth work to affect the Basin's water quality, quantity and other natural resources. We continue to promote communication, coordination and education, and by seeking appropriate solutions to identified problems, the Commission promotes activities by local, state and federal governments and individuals that foster voluntary resource stewardship for the environmental and economic health of the Basin.

Since our last report, we have continued to carry out our designated work program with significant success. In 2005, we conducted four meetings in March, June, September and December in the counties of Caroline, Rappahannock, Madison and the City in Richmond (at the General Assembly Building) respectively.

The Rappahannock River Basin Non-point Source Workgroup: There have been seven meetings of the Non-point Source Workgroup. Their charge is how the tributary strategy can be implemented in a reasonable way with a high degree of success. Dr. William Cox of Virginia Tech, who had previously worked with the RRBC and its Water Allocation Group, prepared a summary of the laws, regulations and agreements that govern water quality in Virginia. Using that resource the work group has found that appropriate authority exists to manage Non-point source pollution, however, the authority is fragmented. Many who have responsibility for Non-point source pollution oversight find the variety of laws and regulations confusing and have difficulty clearly matching authority to responsibility. Dr. Cox's report and power point presentation are available on the Commission's website. Others outside the basin have been using Dr. Cox's work. The work group will continue in 2006 to work on the seven items assigned by the Commission. Those tasks are:

- 1. Clarify the legal authority of various stakeholders to act and identify where authority is appropriate or inadequate to allow effective implementation of the solutions identified in the Rappahannock Tributary Strategy.**
- 2. Encourage "buy-in" of state, regional and local governments and agencies to the appropriate regulation of land use activities and land development in support of river-friendly water quality objectives.**
- 3. Is current or planned water quality monitoring going to provide effective data to evaluate the success of implementing Non-Point strategies? If not, recommendations for improvements will be made.**

- 4. Identify how to properly document successful and unsuccessful practices and to communicate those findings to others.**
- 5. On-going assessment of the practicality of implementation strategies or techniques and providing feedback to DCR and other appropriate overseers.**
- 6. Recommend how to effectively track changes in land use, and the rate of change, in the basin and how to use that information efficiently to make decisions that improve water quality.**
- 7. Provide input and feedback to decision makers on prioritizing the commitment of resources to maximize results for dollars invested.**

RRBC Members participated in the process of rewriting The Rappahannock Tributary Strategy. The Tributary Strategy seeks to reduce and maintain at levels mandated by the Department of Environmental Quality levels of nitrogen, phosphorous, and sediment in the Chesapeake Bay. This project was the product of monthly meetings with input from stakeholders (Soil and Water Conservation Districts, State and Federal agencies, planning district commissions, local governments, non government organizations, the Rappahannock Conservation Council and the RRBC). The meetings were led by DCR staff member, Matt Criblez, and we deeply appreciate the time and effort he dedicated to the project.

Regarding Water Supply Planning Regulations: the Commission was provided an update by the Department of Environmental Quality on the development of water supply planning regulations. The Commission provided direction to its staff member who participated in DEQ's Water Supply Planning Technical Advisory Committee. A report was presented to the full Senate and House of Delegates during the 2005 General Assembly. The Commission will continue to encourage localities of the basin to plan for water supply in a cooperative and coordinated manner. The city and counties of the basin had previously adopted the Commission's Guiding Principles for Water Resource Planning.

The Commission continued its work with and support of the efforts of the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers in seeing to completion the removal of the Embrey Dam. That project came to a successful completion in February 2005. The historical remains of the 19th century canal locks adjacent to the dam will be left intact.

A significant redesign and update of the RRBC's website has been completed. Our new website address is www.rappriverbasin.org. In addition to a listing of members and meetings and events it contains information on our Water Allocation Group meetings, our Non-point Source Group meetings, and the Water Supply Model.