



Be River Friendly
It's Your Backyard

The Rappahannock River Basin Commission

February 12, 2017

The Honorable Terry McAuliffe
Governor of Virginia

The Honorable Chris Jones,
Chairman, House Appropriations Committee

The Honorable Thomas K. Norment, Jr.
Co-Chairman, Senate Finance Committee

The Honorable Emmett W. Hanger, Jr.
Co-Chairman, Senate Finance Committee

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: 2016 Accomplishment of the Rappahannock River Basin Commission

Dear Governor McAuliffe:

As Chairman of the Rappahannock River Basin Commission, I am pleased to present this report to you on the accomplishments during 2016. I remain deeply appreciative of the continued membership and the work efforts expended by members of the House of Delegates and Senate as well as my colleague members of the local governing bodies of the basin.

Please do not hesitate to call upon me if I may be of further assistance.

With kindest personal regards and all best wishes, I remain

Sincerely,

M. Keith Hodges
Chairman, RRBC and
Member, Virginia House of Delegates

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 fifteen local governments to include the city of Fredericksburg and the counties of Rappahannock, Madison, Fauquier, Culpeper, Orange, Stafford, Spotsylvania, King George, Caroline, Essex, Westmoreland, Middlesex, Richmond and Lancaster 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 are very pleased to report that, as in previous years, we have continued to carry out our designated work program with significant success. In 2016, we conducted four meetings in March, June, September and December in King George County, Tappahannock, Warrenton and the city of Richmond (in the Capitol building) respectively. Meeting materials are available on the Commission's website: www.RappRiverBasin.org

The Commission spent considerable time on Phase 2 of the Healthy Watershed Forest effort, a series of discussions with local leaders, land owners and other stakeholders to investigate acceptable strategies to promote conservation of existing forestland as a means of promoting greater water quality and cost-effective progress toward Chesapeake Bay TMDL targets. The effort is exploring land use tools, policies and incentives to identify and conserve high conservation value forests and to gain acknowledgment from EPA of progress toward Ches-Bay TMDL goals.

Phase 2 of the Healthy Watershed Project with the Department of Forestry and other partners began in March 2016. The discussions have included over a dozen public meetings and focus groups. The project will continue into the first half of calendar year 2017.

The Rappahannock River Basin Commission's Technical Committee met nine times over the course of the year. Serving as the Commission's technical advisory group their charge is to advise us on, among other things, the Healthy Watershed Forest effort.

At the request of the Chesapeake Bay Commission Chair, staff gave a presentation to the Chesapeake Bay Commission on the work of the RRBC.

The Commission staff continues to maintain information on the website. In addition to a listing of members and events it contains information on Commission meetings and the continuing efforts of the Technical Committee.