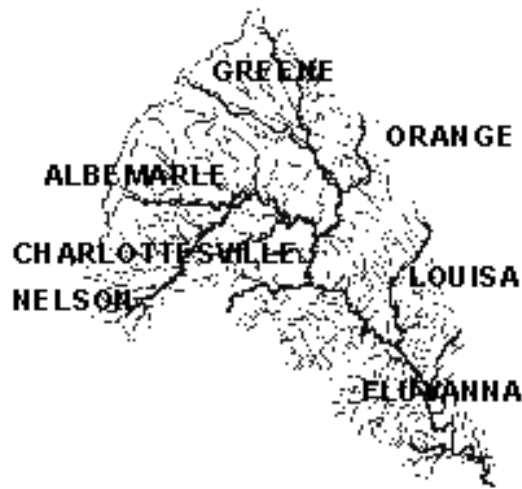


# Rivanna Watershed Needs Assessment

## Phase I Final Report



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*Prepared by John Hoover,*  
**Institute for Environmental Negotiation,**  
**Charlottesville, Virginia**

*for the Rivanna Watershed Center,*  
**P.O. Box 236, Charlottesville, VA 22902**

*and with funding from the*  
**Environmental Support Center, Washington, DC**

***Special Thanks to:***

the Rivanna Watershed Symposium Steering Committee

David Hirschman	<i>Albemarle County Water Resources Manager, Dept. of Engineering &amp; Public Works</i>
John Hermsmeier	<i>Environmental Education Center</i>
Donna Bennett	<i>League of Women Voters, Natural Resources Subcommittee</i>
Steve Pence	<i>Rivanna Conservation Society</i>
Angus Murdoch	<i>Rivanna Conservation Society</i>
Leslie Middleton	<i>Rivanna Watershed Center</i>
Harrison Rue	<i>Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission</i>
Rochelle Garwood	<i>Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission</i>

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# ***TABLE OF CONTENTS***

	<i>Page</i>
<b>I. Executive Summary</b>	1
<b>II. Project Background</b> <i>Introduction, Description of Watershed, Project Description</i>	5
<b>III. Ecological Threats and Organizational Needs</b>	10
<b>IV. Status of Organizational Efforts</b> <i>Organizational Focus Areas and Discussion</i>	18
<b>V. Case Studies and Characteristics of Successful Collaborative Initiatives</b> <i>Introduction to Case Studies, Old Problems/New Solutions, Defining Success, Levels of Collaboration, Successful Ingredients</i>	21
<b>VI. Potential Collaborative Scenarios for the Rivanna Watershed</b>	27
<b>VII. Conclusions</b>	31
<b>Bibliography</b>	33
<b><u>List of Appendices</u></b>	
A. List of Interview/Survey Participants	
B. Needs Assessment Survey Questionnaire	
C. Case Studies	
D. Focus and Activities of Representative Groups	
E. History of the Rivanna River Basin Roundtable	
F. Acronyms Used in this Report	

## Section I: Executive Summary

In the fall of 2001, the Rivanna Watershed Center contracted with the University of Virginia's Institute of Environmental Negotiation (IEN) to conduct the Rivanna Watershed Needs Assessment (RWNA) because it was concerned that its efforts to create a physical center on the Rivanna River might not be addressing critical watershed needs.

The goal of the RWNA is *to identify and assess opportunities, strategies and mechanisms for improving and expanding protection of the Rivanna River and its watershed*. The objectives of RWNA are to:

- Assess the current and future needs of representative organizations working towards watershed protection in the Rivanna River watershed.
- Assess the current condition and future desired condition of the Rivanna River by incorporating and building on previous work on watershed issues, such as the *1998 State of the Basin Report*.<sup>1</sup>
- Evaluate to what extent community watershed goals are being met by existing organizational efforts.
- Suggest opportunities for collaboration utilizing research on successful models of watershed conservation from other communities.

Using guidance from the existing Rivanna River Basin Roundtable and other community groups, IEN contacted state, local and regional agencies, community groups and non-profit organizations that have been actively engaged in water resource management and conservation in the Rivanna watershed. During Phase One, IEN conducted 22 confidential interviews with these organizations in order to assess community concerns regarding the watershed. Information from these interviews was combined with research on factors that have contributed to the success of watershed initiatives from other communities. This report summarizes the findings of Phase One.

Phase Two of the Needs Assessment consists of convening the Rivanna Watershed Symposium in February 2002 to discuss the results of Phase One and to explore possible future collaborative scenarios.

### Key Findings

This report identifies ecological and organizational problems in the Rivanna River watershed identified by interview participants. The most important issue ecological issue identified by participants is the future of the water supply. Concerns about how water supply and management decisions are made have led many to conclude that the

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<sup>1</sup> Rivanna River Basin Roundtable. Rivanna River Basin Project. The State of the Basin: 1998. The Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission, 1998.

institutional and organizational framework in which the watershed groups operate is not adequate to address the ecological problems.

### **Status of Organizational Efforts**

- **There is a dispersion of energy and lack of a more unified purpose among community groups that makes it more difficult for collaboration to take place between watershed groups.**
- **There is a general duplication of efforts and lack of coordination among groups that decreases effectiveness of projects because of the limited resources of individual groups.** Furthermore, this can cause confusion and frustration among citizens interested in watershed issues.
- **There is a lack of a central clearinghouse of information on watershed activities and issues.**
- **Excluding state and regional agencies, there is a notable lack of watershed organizations that have a focus outside of Albemarle County and the City of Charlottesville** (with the exception of Fluvanna County, where the Rivanna Conservation Society has a strong presence).

### **Organizational Needs**

- **Better communication between watershed groups can increase knowledge of roles and responsibilities of individual groups, reduce overlapping efforts, and provide opportunities for collaboration on common goals.**
- **A process or structure to resolve competing interests regarding water supply and management within the watershed is needed.** Participants felt that an accepted institutional structure to discuss water related issues is a prerequisite to resolving these interests. This need stemmed from the general reluctance of the decision-making authorities to address community and environmental concerns concerning water resources.

### **Characteristics of Successful Collaborative Initiatives**

The case studies contained in this report demonstrate collaborative initiatives that have helped communities successfully overcome their differences and work more efficiently and effectively to solve their problems. Several factors have contributed to the success of these efforts:

- **Ensuring “buy-in” by local government;**
- **Developing a watershed plan that has clearly-defined goals and action items;**
- **Building trust among participants through regular interaction;**
- **Utilizing a hired coordinator to staff the initiative;**
- **Finding ways to build on small early successes;**

- **Ensuring a link between decisions-making and implementation; and**
- **Using facilitators to guide meetings and processes.**

## **Alternative Scenarios**

IEN developed a number of possible collaborative scenarios for the Rivanna watershed community by relating the needs as identified by the community to the different organizational and process components outlined in the case studies of successful watershed initiatives included in this report. Most of these scenarios are based on two basic models:

- **A goal-based watershed initiative that would be convened for the purpose of creating a comprehensive watershed framework or plan for addressing the needs outlined in this report.**
- **An information-sharing forum that has the support of decision-making authorities,** which could serve as a place where information concerning the watershed could be presented, publicized and distributed.

### **Taking the Lead Role in a Local Effort**

Leadership and availability of resources is important in finding an “institutional home” for a community collaborative effort. Based on interview results, the organizations that are most appropriate in leading such an effort are: **Thomas Jefferson Soil and Water Conservation District, Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission** and the **Rivanna Water and Sewer Authority.**

## **Conclusions**

The institutional and organizational framework in which watershed groups currently operate is not adequate to address the ecological problems facing the Rivanna watershed. Community concerns over issues such as the future of the water supply have helped to ripen the opportunity to address these organizational problems in new ways.

The first step in tackling these problems is to build consensus on which alternative scenarios would best address the community’s needs. The Rivanna Watershed Symposium was designed with this purpose in mind. It is a forum in which community members can overcome reoccurring stumbling blocks and create new pathways for watershed conservation and protection.

Regardless of how the community decides to structure any further collaborative efforts, the following are essential for ensuring success:

- **Ensure meetings are facilitated** to keep energy focused on tasks at hand.
- **Identify, cultivate, and support effective leadership** to galvanize community support for collaborative efforts.
- **Commit** to the process of collaborative decision-making over the long haul, recognizing that success is a cumulative process of both long and short-term achievements.
- **Hire a coordinator** to assist the community in collaborative efforts.

Incorporating these elements, community recommendations on collaborative scenarios can create the impetus for significant change, such as opening new doors for funding or acquiring support from local governments and institutions. These changes, in turn, can help build the community's capacity to more effectively and efficiently address the ecological problems facing the Rivanna watershed.

## Section II: Project Background

### Introduction

In recent years, there has been increasing interest in and use of local, collaborative approaches to natural resources management. In part, this trend is a result of a growing dissatisfaction with more traditional, and often fragmented, approaches that involve multiple entities acting independently to manage and protect a given resource. Working separately, these groups are limited in their ability to deal effectively with the environmental problems of today, which are often diffuse, interconnected problems that transcend political boundaries. Watershed related issues, such as nonpoint source pollution, are characteristics of this type of problem.

In the fall of 1999, the Rivanna Watershed Center (RWC), a community organization focused on the Rivanna River watershed, formed with the mission to create a Center on the Rivanna River “where people of all ages could learn about the river, experience its treasures, and work cooperatively to protect it.” The Board of the RWC perceived a need for establishing a physical presence on the Rivanna River that could serve simultaneously as: a river and watershed education center; a repository for river data; a community gathering place where groups concerned with watershed conservation and river protection could meet and coordinate their efforts; and a public venue for citizen information and input.

From 1999 through the summer of 2001, the RWC worked to support and provide venues that might bring together many of the groups already actively engaged in watershed education and protection. Thus, the RWC helped coordinate the Rivanna River Festival in 2000, published a watershed-wide calendar of river related events in the spring of 2001, and provided multiple links to local and regional groups on its web-site. It was hoped that these efforts would serve as stepping stones towards establishing cooperative arrangements with existing groups and agencies to help eventually build and house a Rivanna Watershed Center.

By the summer of 2001, it became apparent that other water-related issues, such as ensuring adequate water supply for all watershed inhabitants, were fully utilizing the time, resources, and energy of many of the hoped-for private and public partners. The Rivanna Watershed Center started to focus its attention on envisioning the kind of organizational relationships and structures that might enhance all efforts to protect the river and its watershed. The Board decided to try to determine what the true needs were in the Rivanna watershed community, with a particular interest in evaluating how cooperative or collaborative efforts might be enhanced.

Deciding to address problems through collaboration is a complex endeavor, for there are many questions that arise, such as: How would a collaborative effort be initiated? What would it look like? Who should be involved? How would it benefit the individual entities and the community at large? Once formed, what would be its responsibilities? The Rivanna Watershed Needs Assessment was designed with these questions in mind.

### Description of the Rivanna Watershed

The Rivanna River Basin extends from the Blue Ridge Mountains to the James River in Virginia and covers approximately 60% of Greene County, 68% of Albemarle County, 51% of Fluvanna County, 3% of Louisa County, and all of Charlottesville. The approximately 487,000 acres (760 sq. miles) covered is an area roughly 70 times the City of Charlottesville<sup>1</sup>.

### Rivanna Watershed Needs Assessment (RWNA)

The goal of the Rivanna Watershed Needs Assessment is *to identify and assess opportunities, strategies and mechanisms for improving and expanding protection of the Rivanna River and its watershed*. The objectives of RWNA are:

- Assess the current and future needs of representative organizations working towards watershed protection in the Rivanna River watershed.
- Assess the current condition and future desired condition of the Rivanna River by incorporating and building on previous work on watershed issues, such as the *1998 State of the Basin Report*.
- Evaluate to what extent community watershed goals are being met by existing organizational efforts.
- Suggest opportunities for collaboration utilizing research on successful models of watershed conservation from other communities

These objectives are achieved by the completion of two distinct phases, which are described below:

- **Phase One: Research and Community Watershed Interviews (September – December 2001)** - The goals, needs, concerns, and current efforts of representative watershed organizations have been determined through interviews and survey questionnaires. In addition, research on successful watershed initiatives provides opportunities for future discussion about different ways these needs can be addressed. This document reports the results of Phase One.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: <http://monticello.avenue.gen.va.us/Gov/TJPDC/rivproj.html>

The following organizations participated in the Phase One interviews and survey:

Albemarle Co., Dept. of Engineering & Public Works  
Albemarle County Parks & Recreation  
Chesapeake Bay Foundation  
Department of Environmental Quality  
Department of Forestry  
Department of Game & Inland Fisheries  
Division of Mineral Resources  
Environmental Education Center  
Friends of the Moorman's River  
Ivy Creek Foundation  
Izaak Walton League Save Our Streams (VA)  
League of Women Voters, Natural Resources Subcommittee  
Piedmont Environmental Council  
Rivanna Conservation Society  
Rivanna Trails Foundation  
Rivanna Water & Sewer Authority  
RWSA Citizens Advisory Committee  
Southern Environmental Law Center  
Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission  
TJ Soil & Water Conservation District

- **Phase Two: Rivanna Watershed Symposium (February 2002)** - The purpose of this meeting is to assemble representatives from all interested parties in the watershed to discuss the results of Phase One and explore opportunities for future collaboration. In addition, this will be an opportunity to evaluate to what extent community watershed goals are being met by existing organizational efforts. Facilitated by the Institute for Environmental Negotiation (IEN), the groups will have the opportunity to decide what strategies or mechanisms, if any, will be helpful in achieving common goals for watershed protection and conservation.

## **Phase I Methodology**

### Survey Questionnaires and Interviews

Between October 21st and December 21st, 2001, IEN conducted twenty-two interviews with principal stakeholder organizations in the watershed (see Appendix A for list of survey participants and Appendix B for survey questionnaire), including public agencies (state, local, and regional) and local community organizations. In addition, IEN interviewed a number of key individuals involved in local watershed issues. IEN mailed surveys to those groups whom IEN wished to include but could not interview directly, due to time and resources limitations. Not all surveys were returned.

### Selection of Participants for Interview/Surveys

IEN initially planned to conduct 15 to 20 interviews, realizing up front that we would not be able to include all of the organizations that have a mission relating to the Rivanna watershed. We created a preliminary list of potential groups and agencies based on the following criteria: (1) local or regional activities or jurisdiction, and (2) principle focus on watershed-related issues. We finalized the list using feedback from members of the current Rivanna River Basin Roundtable.

While the intention of the project was to include representative input for all jurisdictions within the watershed, we note the following about the final list and resulting survey data: (1) there is a notable lack of input from counties in the watershed other than Albemarle; and (2) there are some local agencies and governments that are not as well represented in the final list. This is a consequence of the following factors:

- Albemarle County has staff devoted specifically to water resources management. In other counties in the watershed, there are no comparable departments.
- There are presently fewer organizations in other counties that have a specific focus on watershed issues than there are in Albemarle County.
- There was a lower response rate to requests for interviews and input via survey questionnaires from local governmental officials and staff than there was from regional agencies and private organizations.

### Confidentiality

One of the goals of the interview process was to elicit community perspectives on the potential obstacles of collaboration and other important concerns that may be of sensitive nature. In other words, it was a goal to have the interviewees speak frankly about their experience working with other organizations in the watershed. IEN encouraged frank discussion by assuring complete confidentiality on the written surveys and personal interviews. Thus, the only information made available in this report that is specific to the individual groups is the status of their current projects.

### Interview Process

Survey participants were emailed a copy of the survey questionnaire prior to the scheduled interview. The survey instrument was designed to capture the range of issues that would be relevant for all groups. Thus, some questions designed for community organizations were not applicable to public agencies and visa versa. Therefore, each interview was tailored to match the needs, interests, and mission of each individual organization. In general, the interview was unstructured in order to allow representatives from the organizations to speak about those issues most relevant or important to them.

Compilation of Data

The survey questionnaire was used to gather information from the participants in four areas:

- **Watershed Needs:** including critical or valued watershed functions and ways to improve present efforts to protect and conserve the watershed.
- **Organizational Goals:** the mission and goals of the organization and how these relate to preserving or protecting watershed functions, current projects and activities.
- **Organizational Capacity:** organizational, planning and decision-making structure, funding and other resources, capacity building efforts.
- **Coordination and Collaboration:** organizational impetus, readiness, and desire to coordinate or collaborate with others.

## Section III: Ecological Threats and Organizational Needs

### Introduction

The survey instrument was designed to ask participants to identify ecological threats to the watershed and the organizational problems that are obstacles to meeting those needs. Participants were asked to identify the greatest threats to the ecological health of the watershed. Identified threats or issues (with most frequent answers mentioned first) are listed below.

- Water supply issues (new impoundments, instream flows, etc.)
- Pressures from development (reduction in biodiversity, lack of recharge areas, loss of forest resources, increase in impervious surfaces)
- Changing hydrological regime (higher high flows, lower low flows)
- Increase in sedimentation
- Groundwater contamination/depletion
- Degradation of riparian areas
- Decreased accessibility

It is the general perception of those interviewed for this project that these problems are not being adequately addressed.

One of the most important issues is the future of the water supply. Extensive studies have outlined numerous possible solutions to the water supply issues (including the creation of new impoundments and dredging). These studies and the unclear fate of the resulting recommendations have triggered community concerns about how water management decisions are made in the Rivanna watershed. Thus, these concerns have led many to conclude that, in addition to the ecological threats, there are organizational problems as well. Many of the participants believed that the institutional and organizational framework in which the watershed groups operate is not adequate to address the ecological problems. Community concerns over issues such as the future of the water supply have ripened the opportunity to address organizational problems within the watershed community.

The following is a list of those needs that, according to the participants, are most important in solving the organizational problems facing the community (ranked from greatest to least importance).

- A. Communication**
- B. Decision-Making Structure and Process**
- C. Prioritizing and Planning**
- D. Coordination and Collaboration**
- E. Education**
- F. Data**
- G. Other Watershed Community Needs and Suggestions**

Each category will be discussed in detail, elaborating on the needs identified by participants, and (if applicable) particular concerns and specific recommendations from participants during the interview or from the written survey. For some categories, there is both a general need (describing the problem or concern at the most fundamental level), and one or more specific needs (particular concerns that are a part of the larger problem). This section of the report also introduces examples of possible innovative strategies and other pertinent information for addressing specific needs, which appear as text boxes on the right side of the page.

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## A. Communication

**Community Need:** By far the most commonly identified need from the community surveys was for better communication between watershed groups. Participants cited the following benefits to the community that could result from improved communication:

- (1) Increase knowledge of roles and responsibilities of individual groups, including mission, focus areas, and projects (see Group Focus Area Matrix in Appendix D).
- (2) Eliminate inefficiencies, overlapping efforts, and reinventing the wheel by having experiences and successes about current efforts.
- (3) Provide greater opportunities for collaboration on common goals or tasks.

**Concerns:** The community desire for better exchange of information was balanced by a generally held concern that meetings or forums whose only purpose is informational exchange are not worth the effort. Numerous interviewees indicated meetings of this nature were not “productive” and that, in order to be worthwhile, such meetings should have a clear goal or fit into a larger plan or framework.

### **Recommendations:**

- Create a repository of information including collected data, research, events and meetings, which could be made accessible to the general public, thereby serving an important educational and networking function.
- Create a position of Coordinator that would be responsible for amassing information and keeping the groups notified of upcoming events, etc. Some participants suggested the Coordinator be a staff position at either the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission (TJPDC) or the Rivanna Sewer and Water Authority (RWSA).
- Utilize internet-based communication infrastructures, such as the “virtual community” currently in use by the Rivanna River Basin Roundtable. A free service, hosted by Ramius Corporation at [www.communityzero.com](http://www.communityzero.com), provides a site that can be accessed by all “designated” members for posting messages and calendar listings, attaching documents and conducting discussions on matters of interest and concern. Email and list-servers, if used actively by members, could greatly enhance communication between watershed community members.

*For a case study example of an informational-sharing structure, see “The Darby Partnership” in Appendix C.*

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## **B. Decision-Making Structure and Process**

**Community Need:** *A method to resolve competing interests regarding water supply and management within the watershed.*

**Specific Need:** Many participants pointed to the need for an accepted institutional structure in which discussions and planning of water resource management can take place in the Rivanna watershed community.

**Concerns:** The majority of community groups, as well as a number of public agencies, commented that decision-making authorities had a general reluctance to address community and environmental concerns concerning water resources. The commitment to incorporate these concerns by those most empowered to influence watershed decisions (local governmental officials) is a necessary prerequisite to creating a decision-making structure that can resolve competing interests within the watershed. Some participants noted that there has historically been good support and response to community concerns on the staff level. A few mentioned that support and response was better from Albemarle County than from the City of Charlottesville.

**Recommendations:** Participants offered the following ideas for addressing these needs:

- Form a parallel board to the RWSA board that has an ecological focus.
  - Establish an oversight group responsible for integrating community and agency concerns.
  - Obtain commitment from local governments to support the collection of additional data to develop models that would address environmental concerns.
  - Officially change the mandate of RWSA to include community and environmental concerns in its decision-making process regarding water supply issues.
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## **C. Prioritizing and Planning**

**Community Need:** *A framework for addressing the many and various community needs regarding watershed protection.*

**Specific Need:** Numerous interviewees stated that this general need would be best addressed through the creation of a watershed plan, developed in such a way that individual groups and agencies can participate in its implementation while simultaneously fulfilling their own mission and objectives. This plan would:

- (1) Define priorities for accomplishing watershed protection;
- (2) Provide the context in which the different watershed interests are working (whether independently or collectively); and

(3) Provide a means to evaluate progress and identify gaps and additional needs.

**Concern:** Since there is presently no overarching plan for the Rivanna watershed, groups are spending inordinate amounts of time “putting out the fires” of crises, which reduces an organization’s ability to address its primary objectives. However, most groups indicated that because they were so busy with their own agendas that they felt they had little time to devote to developing such a plan.

**Recommendation:**

- Develop a comprehensive watershed plan by prioritizing the *1998 State of the Basin* recommendations.

Those who favored a watershed plan felt strongly that any such plan should have explicit goals and action items required to reach the stated goals. Participants identified these advantages to developing a watershed plan: (1) increased awareness of resources and funds needed to achieve these goals, and (2) better ability to deal with conflicting interests that arise. A few participants suggested that a community visioning process is one way that goals could be established or prioritized.

*For a case study example of a goal-based watershed plan, see “The Upper Tennessee River Roundtable” in Appendix C.*

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## D. Coordination and Collaboration

**Community Need:** Response to the question of whether or not there is a need for more coordination and collaboration on watershed issues was mixed, ranging from a great need for collaboration to little or no need, with most interviewees indicating at least some need. Comments fell into three general categories: (1) collaboration between community groups and public agencies, (2) ensuring stakeholder involvement, and (3) coordination between localities.

### Collaboration Between Community Groups and Public Agencies

By pooling skills and resources, community groups and agencies believed that their combined efforts could lead to a greater degree of success in certain areas. Interview respondents ranked the activities that they felt their organizations would most benefit from undertaking in cooperation or collaboration with other groups (from greatest to least).

- Lobbying
- Funding opportunities
- Public outreach and education
- Prioritizing watershed goals

### ***Why Collaboration?***

Collaborative efforts, such as watershed partnerships, have a number of benefits. They can maximize the diverse capabilities of stakeholders, increase the effectiveness of individual groups through pooling of resources, build relationships that encourage future interactions and help create innovative solutions. In the words of one advocate, watershed councils “allow you to talk a little more holistically about how to manage a watershed instead of managing little components, everybody’s little pieces.” – McKenzie Watershed Council participant (see Appendix C).

- Building a watershed center

**Recommendations:** Because of the differences of opinion on the need for collaboration, there were no clear recommendations from the groups interviewed on specific actions that should be taken. However, some pointed out that coordination was needed to ensure ownership of community needs that are not currently being addressed, such as stream monitoring. Also, some felt that coordination is only appropriate when dictated by specific projects (i.e. a river festival).

#### Ensuring Stakeholder Involvement

Many interviewees indicated the importance of having key stakeholders at the table when pursuing collaborative initiatives. The University of Virginia was most commonly identified as a significant player (due to its available resources and influence on water-related issues) that was not heavily involved in discussions and planning for watershed projects. A few participants mentioned that other interests, such as business and agriculture, need better representation in planning discussions.

#### ***Support from Universities and Colleges.***

Many colleges and universities are actively involved in community watershed issues. Locally, UVA departments that might support community watershed efforts include: Environmental Science, Urban and Environmental Planning, and Landscape Architecture.

#### Coordination between Localities

Many said that there should be better coordination between the City of Charlottesville and Albemarle County on water-related issues. In addition, some also expressed concern about lack of coordination between local and state governments. There was a difference of opinion regarding whether or not planning efforts should be watershed wide, which would include multiple counties and jurisdictions. Although dealing with issues on this level would overcome the current fragmented approach (multiple public agencies/governments, each with their own jurisdiction or area of focus), a few mentioned that it would be difficult to get buy-in for watershed planning because there are no problems perceived as sufficiently pressing as to provide the counties with incentive to participate in this level of planning.

#### Obstacles to Collaboration

By far the most commonly identified obstacle was the difficulty in determining what kind of collaborative structure would best serve the community. Other obstacles, in order of importance, were lack of knowledge on how to conduct a collaborative process, constrained resources, mistrust, and different missions and goals of the different groups and agencies.

Many interviewees felt that different missions and goals of the various groups was a benefit to the community rather than an obstacle to collaboration, because this allows for the various groups' activities to complement each other, resulting in more comprehensive coverage and less duplication of efforts.

## E. Education

**Community Needs:** Many interviewees indicated the need for greater education and public outreach over a wide range of watershed issues, from the conceptual (such as the relationship between land use and water quality) to the practical (information about septic system maintenance). Many also indicated that raising the awareness of local citizens on watershed issues is critical to getting buy-in from local government.

There was also strong agreement from the community groups on the need for education of local governmental officials on watershed issues (*see box to the right*). Some noted a significant difference in general awareness of community and ecological concerns by local agency staff members.

A few thought that a watershed center would provide an excellent opportunity for education and would raise the visibility of watershed issues for the entire community.

**Recommendation:** One respondent suggested that RWSA should take the lead in education and outreach efforts, because of its responsibility as a public agency to provide water and sewer services to the region.

### **Project NEMO (Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials)**

In Connecticut, a partnership effort including the University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension Service, developed the NEMO program to educate local governmental decision-makers about the causes and effects of non-point source pollution. The project is managed with assistance from the EPA, CDEP (Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection), The Nature Conservancy and others.

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## F. Data

**Community Need:** The need for more data was a high priority for most of the groups interviewed. Participants said the most important need was for more water quality monitoring data. Other data needs cited were: (1) information from the public at large regarding watershed issues, such as would be revealed by a public survey, (2) GIS information/data layers and (3) well monitoring data.

### Stream Monitoring

Interviewees identified three areas in which stream monitoring efforts could be improved:

- (1) More stream gauges
- (2) Better coordination with DEQ on monitoring site selection

### **Monitoring Network**

A number of colleges and universities, partnering with local community groups, non-profits and public agencies have been involved in establishing volunteer monitoring networks in Virginia. Both Shenandoah University (Winchester) and Longwood College (Lynchburg) have committed resources to train volunteers, analyze samples, and establish clearinghouses of data for these efforts.

- (3) The establishment of a volunteer monitoring network within the Rivanna watershed.

Many felt that any established network must be part of an overall watershed protection plan. Also, some participants mentioned that quality assurance must be a priority. A few suggested that a central repository of data would be a necessary component to any monitoring program.

#### Public Survey

Some participants said that a public survey could be an important source of data on various watershed issues, including: the use of river access sites, water usage, and knowledge of watershed issues. Data from such a survey could then be used to help establish watershed priorities for the entire watershed community.

#### **VDEQ Citizen Nomination Request for Monitoring Sites**

Every year VDEQ accepts nomination requests for surface waters for inclusion in DEQ's annual Water Quality Monitoring Plan. For more information, contact Joyce Brooks, Volunteer Monitoring Coordinator, VDEQ, at 1-800-592-5482.

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## **G. Other Community Needs and Suggestions**

#### Funding

Funding was a high priority for all groups, both private and public. Some public agencies noted that much of their current funding has strings attached, which limits their ability to address needs that currently are not being met (e.g. monitoring, public outreach). Funding limitations have also prevented progress on previous collaborative efforts, such as work on a Corridor Plan for the Rivanna River. Both public and community groups were very interested in working together to identify potential funding sources and to pursue grant opportunities as partners. A few mentioned the need to look for funding from local businesses. Almost all groups indicated willingness to pool resources and information for common causes.

#### **Local Governments Help Finance Watershed Initiative**

The Chagrin River Watershed Partners, Inc. in Willoughby, Ohio, has secured 60% of their second-year funding from local governments. The Board of Trustees, which consists of representatives from the different localities within the watershed, has strong oversight over CRWP and helps to establish the group's goals and program plans.

#### Existing Regulations and Ordinances

Some indicated that local governments need to adopt clearly written recommendations and regulations for the protection of streams, rivers, reservoirs, and other sensitive areas, in particular noting that such recommendations would require cooperation between localities and political jurisdictions, such as Albemarle County and the City of Charlottesville. As some noted, these recommendations could be developed from the *1998 State of the Basin Report*. A few interviewees also pointed out that enforcement of existing erosion and sediment control regulations is not adequate.

Watershed Center

Although many of the people interviewed thought that creating a physical watershed center was a good idea, the general consensus was that working to create a center is not a priority at this time. Some suggested that the energy and resources for building a center could be best spent addressing other needs such as developing a watershed plan or establishing a water-monitoring network in the Rivanna watershed.

Advocacy

Many groups felt that a coordinated lobbying effort would be an effective use of community resources, especially since there is a perceived reluctance among water resource decision-makers to address community and environmental concerns. Participants suggested that lobbying efforts could be more successful if there was better coordination between existing groups so that citizens could be mobilized more effectively and key influential persons could be encouraged to weigh in on the issues.

**Virginia Organizing Project (VOP)**

Based in Charlottesville, VOP has been effective in changing public policy. Their strategy includes determining exactly what is needed to make the desired change (number of votes, citizen signatures) and mobilizing their grass-roots network to meet those needs. Mechanisms used to achieve their goals include an email "Action Alert" network, a newsletter, and making personal contacts.

## Section IV: Status of Organizational Efforts

One of the tasks of Phase One of the Needs Assessment was to gather information on the current projects and activities of the various organizations in the watershed. For this purpose, a chart entitled “Activities and Focus Areas of Representative Groups” has been developed and can be found in Appendix D. This chart provides information on the organizations that participated in the interviews and survey questionnaire. Though the information contained in this chart is not comprehensive, it has been constructed to give the reader a general idea of the array of different interests and foci of watershed organizations. For those groups whose missions encompass geographic areas larger than the Rivanna watershed, only those activities and focus areas that are relevant to the Rivanna watershed have been included. A summary of the chart is found below, followed by a brief discussion and analysis of the status of organizational efforts.

### Types of Groups

Of the twenty groups interviewed, 17 specified activities directly relating to the watershed (only these 17 are listed in the chart). These 17 groups can be categorized as follows: 6 local community organizations, 4 state agencies, 2 local governmental agencies, 2 multi-state non-profit organizations, and 1 local governmental advisory committee.

### Focus Areas of Groups

- **Technical Assistance/Research:** 4 local/regional agencies, 2 state agencies.  
Projects include: stream assessment of developed areas, groundwater/surface water studies, researching baseline reference condition for forest streams, sedimentation problems
- **Education:** 3 local/regional agencies, 3 community/non-profits.  
Projects include: informational pamphlets, newsletters, workshops, field trips, youth camps
- **Monitoring:** Although there is some monitoring occurring in the watershed, there is no comprehensive network established.
- **Advisory:** 1 regional agency, 1 local agency committee.
- **Lobbying:** 4 community organizations.  
Projects include: restoring in-stream flows, promotion of Integrated Resource Planning (IRP), promotion of buffer trails
- **Habitat Management:** 2 regional/state agencies
- **Recreation:** 2 community organizations, 1 local agency, 1 state agency.  
Projects include: establishment of a footpath, greenways, river accesses, water trails and river festivals
- **Restoration:** 2 community organization/non-profits, 2 regional agencies, 1 state agency.  
Projects include: buffer plantings, restoration of riparian forests, teaching and implementing best management practices (BMPs), river cleanups

- **Geographic Focus:** (excluding statewide/national organizations) 2 community organizations focused on the Rivanna Watershed, 2 Albemarle County departments, 3 community groups focused in Albemarle Co./Charlottesville, 2 regional agencies

### Discussion

There are a number of observations that can be drawn after reviewing the information in the chart. Most important, the sheer number of groups all working on watershed issues contributes to the difficulty in coordination, a fact that has been confirmed by the comments of both public agency and community group representatives.

- **Dispersion of Energy among Community Groups:** Numerous public agencies interviewed for this project have indicated that it would be easier to work with the community on projects if there a more unified purpose among the different community groups. One public agency representative stated, “[The community] would benefit from groups that have a clear voice. Right now [the community voice] is too diffuse.”
- **Duplication of Efforts:** There is a general duplication of existing efforts, which is evident from the list of activities and focus areas of the groups. Smaller, individual groups working independently are often less effective in achieving their goals because of limited resources and visibility of activities. In addition, it can be both intimidating and confusing for interested citizens to become involved in local activities and events.
- **Lack of a Repository of Information:** The chart also highlights an issue mentioned earlier. There are many groups working in the watershed, yet none acts as central repository of information or provides an overall coordinating function for and between the individual groups. Whether it is functionally a clearinghouse or an actual facility, such a repository would help raise the visibility of the issues and groups within the watershed and could provide additional educational opportunities. Although the participants said that the construction of a new building is not a priority at this time, there might be opportunities to create a repository at an already existing facility.
- **Inconsistent Geographical Coverage:** Not including the state and regional agencies, there is a notable lack of watershed organizations that have a focus outside of Albemarle County and the City of Charlottesville, with the exception of Fluvanna, where the Rivanna Conservation Society has a strong presence. Specifically, the other counties that comprise the majority of the watershed (Fluvanna and Greene) do not have comparable local agencies that focus primarily on water-related issues. However, the issues that each county faces are quite different and thus cannot be easily compared. For example, Fluvanna and Albemarle face different kinds of development pressures and from a water resources standpoint have different problems and thus different solutions. It is

#### Section IV: Status of Organizational Efforts

important to keep this difference in mind when considering collaboration on a watershed scale, since other jurisdictions may have different priorities and levels of resources, which may limit participation in such efforts.

## Section V: Case Studies and Characteristics of Successful Collaborative Initiatives

### Introduction

One of the primary obstacles to collaboration identified in the interviews was the difficulty in determining what sort of collaborative structure would be most appropriate for the Rivanna Watershed. With this in mind, three case studies were selected to provide a range of models that differed in organizational structure, purpose and reason for formation (see chart below). Various aspects of each case study relate to the needs and conditions present in the Rivanna community. One may start to compare the relative benefits, drawbacks, and feasibility of adopting some of these strategies in this community, which will hopefully be a guide in deciding an appropriate course of action for the future (*see Section IV: Potential Collaborative Scenarios for the Rivanna Watershed*).

### **Old Problems, New Methods**

Collaborative efforts are often initiated in circumstances where there is a less than desirable future resulting from the current approach to natural resource management. If community needs are not addressed, other alternatives that can be more costly to all involved may ensue, such as lawsuits or additional regulations. For example, where Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) are being developed, collaboration between public agencies and landowners on improving local water quality can maximize the opportunity for flexible and innovative solutions. Without collaboration, more regulatory measures may be employed by agencies, leaving landowners with fewer options and greater burdens. For more information, refer to Collaboration: A Guide for Environmental Advocates, available in hardcopy from the IEN or on the web at [www.virginia.edu/~envneg/IEN\\_home.htm](http://www.virginia.edu/~envneg/IEN_home.htm).

### Case Study Attributes

<b>Case Study</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Structure</b>	<b>Lead Groups</b>
Darby Partnership	Information sharing	Informal, open to all	State agencies, local groups
McKenzie Watershed Council	Information sharing, policy recommendations	Specified balance of interests, with subcommittees	Local governments
Upper Tennessee River Roundtable	Goal-based watershed plan	Executive board, organizing group, large public meetings	DCR, NRCS

Each of these is discussed in Appendix C, where the following characteristics are briefly described: background, mission, resource concerns, reasons for formation, funding, structure, representation, outcomes and advice. The following is a discussion of the lessons that can be learned by examining the experience of each case.

### Defining Success

When defining success for watershed initiatives, it is important to realize that there are two different ways success can be defined and thus evaluated. The first is defined by organizational and process outcomes, which relate to resolution of disputes, formation of adequate decision-making processes and building trust between participants. The second

definition of success, which, for many, is the ultimate measure, is whether a collaborative approach results in on-the-ground, tangible solutions. This kind of success is often more difficult to measure because of the scale and complexity of the problems involved. Consequently, successes may take longer to be realized. For example, increasing public awareness of watershed issues is both time-consuming and hard to measure. Often, as is true in the case of the Upper Tennessee River Roundtable, process outcomes are realized first, which can then set the stage for larger, on-the-ground achievements later.

Truly successful initiatives combine both of these elements by celebrating both short and long-term milestones. By doing so, “ecosystem managers can make the ‘ethereal’ benefits of such institutions visible and also justify the institutional and resource costs of partnering for ecosystem management.”<sup>1</sup>

As the case studies indicate, there are numerous ways in which watershed initiatives can be structured. In large part, the purpose and function of the group determines structure. In general, there are three categories of watershed initiatives that most groups fall into, based on differences in purpose and structure. These categories reflect different levels of collaboration between the groups involved. In all cases, however, there are a number of important characteristics that contribute to the overall success of the initiative.

#### Levels of Collaboration in Watershed Initiatives

- (1) **Information-Sharing:** Some groups form purely for the purpose of sharing information. Regularly-held meetings, even if held only to share information, can help address problems by: increasing knowledge of roles and responsibilities of individual groups (including mission, focus areas, and projects); creating a forum to share experiences and successes about current efforts; and providing greater opportunities for collaboration on common goals/tasks. Open, frequent communication between individuals and organizations is the most important and fundamental element in any effort to increase protection of the watershed.
- (2) **Goal-Oriented:** Some groups form around a specific goal or purpose, such as developing policy recommendations for local governments (McKenzie Watershed Council) or developing a strategic plan for the watershed (Upper Tennessee River Roundtable). Whether or not tasked with carrying out their recommendations, these groups often are effective in creating a framework for dealing with the numerous competing interests within the watershed.
- (3) **On-the-Ground Collaborative Projects:** On-the-ground projects, such as comprehensive monitoring networks, can be implemented on their own; however, often they are a part of a larger framework (such as a watershed plan). Indeed, such a network would have a greater chance of success and long term viability were it part of a larger framework of defined relationships between public and private entities.

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<sup>1</sup> Korfmacher, Katrina, “What’s the Point of Partnering?” American Behavior Scientist, August 2001, p. 345.

Other examples of collaborative projects are conducting educational campaigns and creating a watershed center.

In some cases, efforts begin at the first level of collaboration (information sharing), because it requires the least amount of commitment and resources from participants. In other cases, particular circumstances will lead communities to begin their efforts with a particular goal in mind (i.e. policy recommendations). In cases where groups begin with information sharing, they may decide to continue to the next level of pursuing common goals after spending time building relationships and trust. In “What’s the Point of Partnering?”<sup>1</sup>, Katrina Korfmacher suggests that relationships that ensue from information-sharing meetings can lay the foundation for a more integrated management plan in the future, including joint decision-making processes. Korfmacher goes on to suggest that if the Darby Partnership had been able to agree on objectives and a decision-making process early on, it might have been able to more directly influence regional land use decisions. It should also be noted that the particular needs of the communities should determine the level of functioning and that there is no “right” level of collaboration.

#### Successful Ingredients

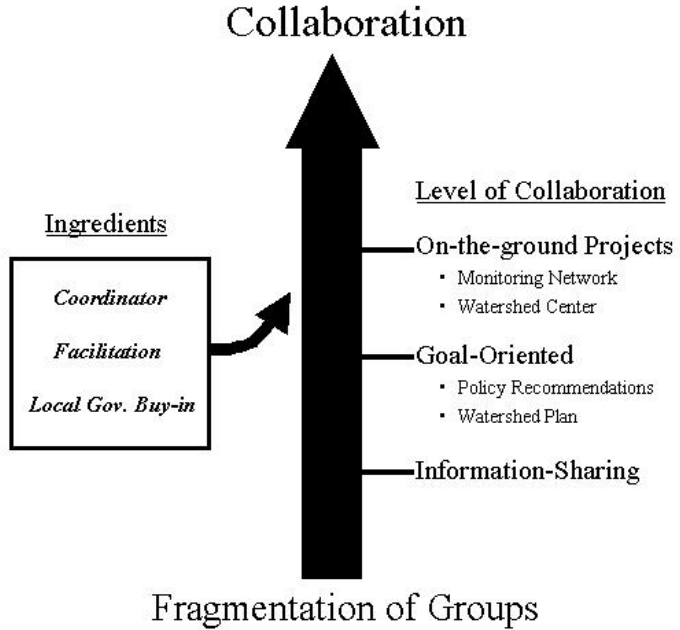
Regardless of the level of collaboration in watershed initiatives, there are certain ingredients that contribute significantly to their success. The following is a summary of successful ingredients that have been collected directly from the case studies presented in this report and from other guidance documents on watershed and ecosystem management (for more information see EPA’s *Top 10 Watershed Lessons Learned in Bibliography*).

- (1) **Local Governmental Buy-in:** Depending on the purpose and structure of the group, the amount of local governmental buy-in required differs. Many initiatives, such as the Darby Partnership, have achieved on-the-ground success through informal partnerships and voluntary commitments. Other community collaborative efforts have been initiated partly through the efforts of local governments (for example, the McKenzie Watershed Council). In these cases, a shared understanding of purpose and respective responsibilities between public officials and those involved in developing strategies and plans, as well as sufficient opportunities for communication throughout the effort can contribute to overall success. Still other groups are successful in achieving their goals by first developing plans independently of government and then gaining support from the local governments as the success of the effort grows, such as is the case with the Upper Tennessee River Roundtable.

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<sup>1</sup> Korfmacher, p. 349.

Determining which organization is responsible for initiating and carrying forward a collaborative initiative is perhaps one of the most critical factors in its success. In the Upper Tennessee River, DCR created the position for a new watershed coordinator position, which then enabled the community to develop a watershed plan. In general, most watershed initiatives are begun by agency staff members that have expertise and/or resources that they can commit to the effort.



Some watershed initiatives have been successful in getting a commitment of support by formalizing the relationships between the different players. Memoranda of Understanding (MOU's) are one example of achieving this goal. These letters can specify certain relationships between these players, such as defining an advisory body composed of representative members of the groups.

- (2) **Development of a Watershed Plan with Clearly-Defined Visions, Goals and Action Items:** Once a community has decided on an appropriate model for addressing its needs, a plan can help achieve goals through developing specific strategies and action steps. As seen in a number of the case studies, coordinators, among other things, can provide useful assistance in researching funding opportunities for each of the action steps. An excerpt from Upper Tennessee River Watershed Strategic Plan is shown below.

**Issue and Concerns:** Lack of Education Personnel

**Goal:** Increase education staffing

**Strategies:**

Item	Suggested Organization	Cost
Upper Tennessee Watershed Education Coordinator to prepare and present watershed programs in the multi-county area. Coordinate education programs with other organizations/agencies. Conduct teacher training programs.	Upper Tennessee River Roundtable and Black Diamond Resource Conservation and Development	\$50,000
Hire a full time Environmental Education Specialist, for each of the Soil and Water Conservation Districts.	Soil and Water Conservation Districts	\$210,000

(3) **Building Trust and Process Legitimacy:** For many, building trust between participants and ensuring a legitimate and fair process for decision-making are the most important elements in successful collaborative efforts. In many collaborative efforts, these elements evolve naturally as participants develop working relationships with one another through constant interaction. Impartial facilitators can also be important in helping groups achieve trust and process legitimacy. In the words of one stakeholder, “If you don’t have trust and understanding and communication, then the more diversity you have, the quicker things are going to fall apart.”<sup>1</sup>

(4) **Coordinators:** The complexity of problems, the amount of information, and the number of stakeholders all contribute to the need for some degree of coordination on watershed-related issues. Many efforts have hired coordinators to serve this purpose. Coordinators can also serve an important communication link between groups and to the general public. Coordinators can also serve groups by facilitating processes and meetings and by working to secure funding. In the Darby Partnership, the river steward position involved advocacy and outreach, including: working one-on-one with local landowners to improve water quality, educating students and local citizens, and assessing stream conditions (including pollution sources).

***Coordinators Can Make a Difference***

The Huron-Manistee National Forest in Michigan has a full-time coordinator who acts as a point person for citizen groups and forest service personnel to facilitate coordination on projects. The position has led to an increase in both the number of projects and their visibility. The estimated value of partnership contributions has increased from \$129,000 in 1989 to \$1 million in 1992.

(5) **Building on Small Successes:** Many involved in collaborative efforts are often frustrated with the lack of “products” or on the ground achievements. Thus, it becomes important to incorporate interim goals and to celebrate small successes so that members feel that their time and effort is worthwhile. Large-scale plans can be more difficult to implement, as was found in a survey of watershed organizations conducted by the Center for Watershed Management.<sup>2</sup>

***A Realistic Plan***

The efforts of the Santa Ynez Watershed failed because they were aimed at planning issues relating to the entire watershed while most stakeholders were most interested in specific projects and issues. A partnership effort might have been more successful if it had focused on those particular issues as starting place for larger-scale efforts. (EPA, *Protecting and Restoring America’s Watersheds*, p. 34)

(6) **Linking Decision-Making and Implementation:** Collaborative planning efforts are much more successful when there are established mechanisms and/or assigned responsibilities for implementing a group’s plans. Successful initiatives evolve when there are relationships between those that plan and those who have responsibility or authority to see that the plans are carried out. As a

<sup>1</sup> Coughlin, Chrissy, et. al. A Systematic Assessment of Collaborative Resource Management Partnerships, p. 9-11.

<sup>2</sup> United States Environmental Protection Agency, Protecting and Restoring America’s Watersheds: Status, Trends, and Initiatives in Watershed Management, p. 42.

result, it is crucial to ensure that all the necessary persons are at the table from the outset.

- (7) **Facilitators:** Third-party, impartial facilitators can be an essential factor in the success of a group by providing critical skills and assistance. Facilitators can be instrumental in developing a fair process, managing efficient meetings, ensuring adequate representation, developing and prioritizing plans, and keeping the group on task.

## Section VI: Potential Collaborative Scenarios for the Rivanna Watershed

### Putting the Pieces Together

The list of Rivanna watershed community needs identified in this report is diverse and extensive. Any effort to begin addressing these needs is an inherently complex task due to the numerous possible ways that these needs can be addressed and the challenge of prioritizing these needs. The case studies presented in Section V provide examples of different ways other communities have successfully addressed similar needs through collaborative partnerships. Section VI discusses common themes and components that contributed to the success of these initiatives.

Finally, this section will provide a number of possible collaborative scenarios for the Rivanna watershed community by relating the needs identified by the community to the different organizational and process structures and elements described in the previous sections. Some of the scenarios listed below come directly from suggestions or recommendations of the interviewees. Others scenarios use one or more components of successful collaborative efforts from the case studies. Each of these scenarios falls into one of two basic categories: (1) a comprehensive watershed planning effort or (2) an information-sharing mechanisms that are endorsed by decision-making authorities.

However, before the examples are reviewed, the reader may gain additional insight into the current state of affairs regarding collaborative initiatives in the Rivanna watershed by reviewing the “History of the Rivanna River Basin Roundtable,” located in Appendix E.

### Taking the Lead Role in a Local Effort

Many participants shared their ideas about the appropriate location for a local watershed initiative. Many felt that the TJPDC or the TJSWCD, because of their technical and administrative resources and their organizational and geographic focus, were well suited for this role. Others felt that RWSA, because of its relationship to local governments and its funding resources, could most effectively host the effort. For each scenario, the organizations that were most commonly suggested for the initiative are indicated below.

- 1) **Utilize a “Virtual Roundtable”** – The Rivanna River Basin Roundtable’s “virtual office” consists of a web page hosted by CommunityZero that tracks a variety of information on community events and issues regarding the watershed. Some of the features include: community calendar, message posting, file sharing, and web links.

Potential Lead Organization(s): N/A

Needs addressed:

- Increased knowledge of group’s focus and activities (communication)

Dependant upon:

- Commitment of community users to utilize, update, and maintain the web-site

- 2) **Hold Semi-regular Information Sharing Meetings with a Coordinator** – These information sharing meetings would include a diverse array of stakeholders within the watershed. The meetings could either have balanced representation or be open to all

(see Appendix C, Darby Partnership and McKenzie Watershed Council for advantages and disadvantages). Like the McKenzie Watershed Council, the group could also make policy recommendations to local governments. This scenario is similar to the current Rivanna River Basin Roundtable.

Potential Lead Organization(s): TJPDC, TJSWCD

Needs addressed:

- Increased knowledge of individual groups' areas of focus and activities (communication)
- Reduce inefficiencies and overlapping efforts (communication)
- Greater opportunities for collaboration on common goals/tasks (communication)
- Repository of information for the greater community, including collected data, research, events and meetings (communication)
- Research on funding opportunities (other needs)

Dependant upon:

- Time and commitment of individuals to participate in meetings
- Funding for coordinator

- 3) **Create a Goal-based Watershed Plan, with Coordinator** - Similar to the Upper Tennessee River Roundtable, this group would be convened for the purpose of developing a comprehensive watershed framework or plan for addressing the needs outlined in this report. A coordinator to staff the group's efforts and provide facilitation would help ensure a successful effort. A goal-based watershed plan would provide a context for addressing and prioritizing other needs in the watershed such as monitoring and education. Although important in the long run, local governmental buy-in is not absolutely necessary to begin such an effort.

Potential Lead Organization(s): TJPDC, TJSWCD

Needs addressed:

- Increased knowledge of individual group's focus and activities (communication)
- Repository of information for the greater community, including collected data, research, events and meetings (communication)
- Reduce inefficiencies and overlapping efforts (communication)
- Greater opportunities for collaboration on common goals/tasks (communication).
- A framework for addressing/prioritizing the various needs within the watershed community (prioritizing/planning)
- Research on funding opportunities (other needs)

Dependant upon:

- Local governmental support
- Availability of resources
- Leadership

4) **Undertake Integrated Resource Planning (IRP):** IRP is a “comprehensive approach to evaluating supply-side and demand-side resource alternatives with respect to explicitly defined and often conflicting objectives.”<sup>1</sup> IRP places emphasis on an open and participatory decision-making process and encourages policy and planning considerations on regional levels that incorporate specific utility plans, customers’ values, local, state, federal and other plans (i.e. Chesapeake Bay Program). IRP is distinguished from other similar processes in that it generally refers to planning efforts initiated by the water management authorities. For example, in the McKenzie Watershed Council, it was the Lane County and Eugene Water and Electric Board (EWEB) proposed the formation of a watershed council. Because IRP is an approach to watershed planning rather than a specific organizational structure, a potential example is provided below that relates IRP to the Rivanna Watershed.

**A. Establishment of a Forum under the auspices of the Rivanna Water and Sewer Authority.** This Forum could serve as a place where information concerning the watershed could be presented, publicized and distributed. It would meet periodically on an informal basis and would include representative stakeholders in the watershed. Discussions could focus on key concerns, problems, research needs and competing interests. Facilitators could manage forum meetings by developing its capacity to develop, reach consensus on, and implement tasks. Although such a forum would be similar to scenario 2 in this section, it would also address the need for an accepted institutional structure (RWSA) in which discussions can ensue.

Potential Lead Organization(s): RWSA

Needs addressed:

- Better coordination between local governments (coordination)
- Increased knowledge of individual group’s focus and activities (communication)
- Reduce inefficiencies and overlapping efforts (communication)
- Greater opportunities for collaboration on common goals/tasks (communication)
- Repository of information for the greater community, including collected data, research, events and meetings (communication)

Dependant upon:

- Local government buy-in
- Education of governmental officials

**B. Develop of a Water Budget for the Region** - A comprehensive water budget would incorporate surface and ground water supplies and other factors such as weather patterns in order to determine an overall picture of inflows and outflows within the watershed. Technical staff from local agencies and governments are often most involved in the development of a water budget. Once developed, a water budget could provide important information that could be used to address other needs in the watershed, such as determining in-

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<sup>1</sup> American Water Works Association. Integrated Resource Planning in the Water Industry.

stream flows for the river and its tributaries. A prerequisite for developing such a model is gathering extensive data on groundwater/surface water supplies.

Potential Lead Organization(s): TJSWCD, Albemarle County (Dept. of Engineering and Public Works)

Needs addressed:

- A method to resolve competing interests regarding water supply and management through application of scientific models (decision-making structure)
- Data on groundwater/surface water supplies (data)
- Better coordination between local governments (coordination)

Dependant upon:

- Local governmental support
- Funding

C. **Surface Water Management Area (SWMA):** The Virginia Surface Water Management Area Act (1989) enables Department of Environmental Quality to designate a specified area as a SWMA when there is a history of low flow conditions in the designated area. A conservation plan is approved by the Virginia Water Control Board (VWCB) to ensure that there are minimum flows during periods of drought. Once adopted, a SWMA requires permits for any new withdrawals more than 300,000 gallons/month and a surface water withdrawal certificate to permit continuous withdrawals. Although, a regulatory authority (DEQ) oversees a SWMA, the law encourages stakeholders to negotiate the specific conditions that would go into effect during low flow conditions. In addition, water allocation permits are transferable among users.

Potential Lead Organization(s): RWSA

Needs addressed:

- A method to resolve competing interests regarding water supply and management through application of science and involvement of the community (decision-making structure)
- Better coordination between local governments (coordination)
- Data on groundwater/surface water supplies (data)

Dependant upon:

- Designation by DEQ

## Section VII: Conclusions

The Rivanna watershed is faced with a number of ecological problems that are typical of many watersheds across the nation, such as an increase in impervious surfaces, degradation of riparian areas and increases in sedimentation. These types of ecological problems in the Rivanna watershed have given rise to controversial issues regarding the future of land use within the Rivanna watershed. In particular, the future of the water supply has stimulated community concern about how decisions are made concerning the management of the area's water resources. However, as indicated by the case studies, controversial issues can help instigate new processes, structures, or opportunities for addressing the variety of competing interests within a given community.

This RWNA was designed to assist local organizations involved in watershed conservation and protection by identifying and assessing opportunities in order to improve and expand protection of the Rivanna River and its watershed. The aim of this report is to provide the raw materials for future discussions about how the community might best work to improve watershed protection. The Rivanna Watershed Symposium (February 2002), phase two of this needs assessment, is an opportunity to focus on the organizational and structural elements that can benefit the community.

Deciding upon a common strategy is a complicated matter because of the many questions that arise, such as:

- *How would a collaborative effort be initiated?*
- *What would it look like?*
- *Who should be involved?*
- *Who should take the lead role in organizing it?*
- *How would it benefit the individual entities and the community at large?*
- *Once formed, what would be its responsibilities?*
- *To whom would it be accountable?*

The interviews conducted revealed a wide range of and often conflicting responses to these questions. This may help explain why over recent months and years, conversations among watershed conservationists reoccur about the "best" course of action. A few of these conflicting ideas are indicated below:

### Differences of Opinion on Perceived Needs for Watershed Community

<b>Communication</b>	Need for communication	vs.	Information-sharing is not worth the effort by itself, there are other things "to do"
<b>Prioritizing/Planning</b>	No overarching framework for addressing needs of watershed; groups spend most of their time putting out fires	vs.	Groups are too busy with own affairs, no time to develop framework
<b>Prioritizing/Planning</b>	On-the-ground needs such as monitoring network and education should be a priority	vs.	Such projects should only be addressed in a context or plan

Section VII: Conclusions

<b>Coordination/ Collaboration</b>	Coordination is needed to ensure ownership of needs not currently being addressed	<b>vs.</b>	Coordination is only appropriate when dictated by specific projects
<b>Geographic Coverage</b>	Need to deal with problems on watershed scale	<b>vs.</b>	Difficult to get buy-in from all localities, better odds of success if focused on high priority issues
<b>Local Governmental Buy-in</b>	Need local governmental buy-in to address problems effectively	<b>vs.</b>	Need credibility or to be perceived as a coordinated effort to gain local governmental buy-in

Some of these differences may need to be addressed before moving forward in a collaborative effort. Others may come in time. For example, in the Tennessee River Roundtable, local governmental interest and involvement was initially characterized as “sluggish”. However, because of the increased attention that the project received and the number of stakeholders involved, local governmental cooperation has increased.

Section VI offers a number of possible scenarios that could address some of identified community needs. Although it is unlikely that there will be complete agreement on any one scenario, these can be useful starting places for discussion and can be rejected, combined or modified to better match community needs. The Watershed Symposium is designed as one forum in which this discussion can take place.

The case studies contained in this report demonstrate collaborative initiatives that have helped communities successfully overcome their differences and work more efficiently and effectively to solve their problems. Regardless of how the Rivanna watershed community decides to structure any further collaborative efforts, the following are essential for ensuring success:

- **Ensure meetings are facilitated** to keep energy focused on tasks at hand.
- **Identify, cultivate, and support effective leadership** to galvanize community support for collaborative efforts.
- **Commit** to the process of collaborative decision-making over the long haul, recognizing that success is a cumulative process of both long and short term achievements.
- **Hire a coordinator** to assist the community in collaborative efforts

By taking these steps, decision-makers, agency staff, and community members can come together in innovative ways to more effectively address some of increasingly challenging natural resource problems affecting the Rivanna Watershed.

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## APPENDIX A: LIST OF INTERVIEW/SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

Rivanna Water & Sewer Authority	Gene Potter
Department of Forestry	Sam Austin
Chesapeake Bay Foundation	Pat Calvert
Izaak Walton League Save Our Streams (VA)	Jay Gilliam
Piedmont Environmental Council	Babette Thorpe
Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission	Rochelle Garwood, Nancy O'Brien
Albemarle Co., Dept. of Eng. & Public Works	Stephen Bowler
Dept. of Game & Inland Fisheries	John Kaufman
Division of Mineral Resources	Nick Evans
Environmental Education Center	John Hermsmeier
League of Women Voters, Natural Resources Subcommittee	Lois Rochester, Marsha Parkinson
Friends of the Moorman's River	Donna Bennett
Rivanna Conservation Society	Andy Wilson
TJ Soil & Water Conservation District	Alyson Sappington
Department of Environmental Quality	Rod Bodkin, Ron Williams
Albemarle County Parks & Recreation	Pat Mullaney
Rivanna Trails Foundation	Diana Foster
Southern Environmental Law Center	Kay Slaughter
RWSA Citizens Advisory Committee	Donald Sours
Ivy Creek Foundation	Dede Smith

## APPENDIX B: NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Name of Organization: \_\_\_\_\_  
Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone/Fax: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email/Website: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Please review the following questions that will be asked during the interview process. You need not answer them now, for the entire interview will be dictated using a computer laptop, however, please have at hand any information that will be useful in providing these answers.

### Notes about interview process:

- Interview will last approximately 45 min – 1 hr
- Responses to questions will remain confidential. Compiled results will reflect only the type of organization (public agency, community group) that contributed individual comments.
- The four sections of this questionnaire are:
  - Watershed Needs
  - Organizational Goals
  - Organizational Capacity
  - Coordination and Collaboration

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### I. Watershed Needs

- a. What do you value most about the Rivanna Watershed?
- b. Briefly describe those watershed functions, whether ecological (i.e. clean water), recreational (canoeing) or other, that are most critical to sustaining those aspects mentioned in (a).
- c. Which of these or other watershed functions are threatened? Why?
- d. What are some ways in which watershed conservation/protection could be improved in the Rivanna Watershed?

### II. Organizational Mission

- a. What is the mission of your organization? (What needs are your organization addressing?)
- b. How does your mission relate to the overall functioning and needs of the watershed, as identified in Part 1?
- c. What are some of the recent and ongoing projects that your organization has been involved in? What needs are they addressing? Did you partner with other groups in these efforts? Who?

Project	Date	Description	Need	Partner Organization

### III. Organizational Capacity

#### a. Planning

- i. How do you decide what projects to work on? (What is the process? What entity is responsible? i.e. board of directors, staff, etc.)
- ii. How are they prioritized/implemented? Does your organization have a long-term strategic plan?
- iii. How do you evaluate the success of the projects?

#### b. Needs

- i. What kind of data would help you in your current efforts/allow you to be more effective?

GIS/land use
Public survey
Funding sources
Scientific data
Group processes
Other:

- ii. Training needs?

Technical/computer
Grant writing
Other

- iii. What are your administrative needs?

Strategic planning
Facilitation
Secretarial (letter writing, copying, etc.)
Other

- iv. What are your volunteer needs?

#### c. Funding

- i. How are you funded? \_\_\_ % Membership, \_\_\_ % Grants, \_\_\_ % State/Fed/Local funds, \_\_\_ % Other = 100%
- ii. What other revenue sources are you exploring?
- iii. In what ways would your organization use additional funds, if they became available?

Do you have staff? How many? Generally, what would be most important for you to build the capacity of your own organization?

**IV. Coordination and Collaboration**

- a. Is there a need to coordinate your efforts with other governmental and private organizations? (1 – great need, 2 – some need, 3 – little need, 4 – no need)
- b. What other private or public organizations do you work with? In what capacity?
- c. For the following areas, indicate whether there is a need for better communication/collaboration between conservation organizations. (1 – great need, 2 – some need, 3 – little need, 4 – no need)?

public outreach (newsletter, etc.)	
prioritizing watershed goals	
funding opportunities	
lobbying (political pressure)	
visibility of groups (central location)	
other	

- d. What kinds of communication and/or infrastructure would facilitate these outcomes?
- e. What are obstacles to collaboration?

Groups have different missions/goals	
Difficulty in determining collaborative structure (what it's going to look like)	
Mistrust (ulterior motives of groups)	
Lack of process	
Red tape/burdensome processes	
Differences in data collection methods/analytical techniques	
Constrained resources	
Lack of support from upper level management	

- f. Would you be willing to pool resources (financial, informational, outreach efforts) with other organizations for a common purpose?
- g. What areas do you think that this would be most effective?

Pursue grant funding
Public outreach/education
Water quality monitoring
Lobbying/political pressure

- h. Has your organization utilized public surveys to gather data about the watershed? If so, what have you learned?
- i. Has your organizations utilized the findings and recommendations from the 1998 State of the Basin Report? If so, how? If not, why?

## APPENDIX C: CASE STUDIES

### The Darby Partnership

**Description:** Located in west central Ohio near the urban center of Columbus, the Big Darby Creek watershed is approximately 580-square miles and contains roughly 80% agricultural lands. As a result, most of the threats to the watershed result from agricultural uses (see Resource Concerns).

**Mission:** The mission of the Darby Partnership is “to be a proactive resource for the citizens of the watershed who want to protect the resource and acts as a “think tank” for conservation efforts within the watershed.”<sup>1</sup> Although primarily an information-sharing organization, a large focus of the group’s efforts is education.

**Resource Concerns:** Sedimentation, high quality habitat for freshwater fish/mussels (including rare and endangered species)

**Reasons for Formation:** In the Darby Partnership, several distinctions bestowed upon the Darby Creek has increased the political visibility of the watershed (the Darby was named “One of the Last Great Places in the Western Hemisphere” by the Nature Conservancy (TNC)). As a result, federal and state agencies were more able to devote resources and funding to the Darby watershed.

**Funding:** Although there was no independent funding for the partnership, the high visibility of the Darby watershed enabled groups to redirect existing resources to Darby-related work. In addition, TNC (lead member) received \$250,000 from the Kellogg Foundation to establish a citizen-based group to focus on improving agricultural practices in the watershed.

**Structure:** Of the case studies in this report, the Darby Partnership is the most informal in nature. Meetings are open to all and included representatives from agencies, private entities and citizens. No policy recommendation or decisions are made at any meeting, and all organizations maintain independent decision-making authority. “The Darby Partnership is a place where information can be exchanged without the need for judgment and so people can come to their own conclusions about what the information means to them.”<sup>2</sup> Members can choose to work in any of four teams associated with different problems within the watershed: livestock management, communications, land use, and stream management. In addition, the Nature Conservancy has hired a river steward,



<sup>1</sup> Coughlin, p. 8-3

<sup>2</sup> Coughlin, p. 8-3

which is similar to a coordinator position, but who has additional responsibilities, including: working one-on-one with local landowners to improve water quality, educating students and local citizens, assessing stream conditions (including pollution sources), and acting as a liaison between different agencies and nonprofit organizations. The river steward position is one of advocacy and has been alternatively been referred to as the “the eyes and eyes of the watershed” and a “watchdog” for the river.

**Representation:** Members felt that the openness of the meetings was the most important factor in attracting a diverse membership. However, many involved noted the desire for the partnership to become more citizen-based. This desire was balanced with a concern that if the number of citizen members increased, agency members would become less comfortable with discussing issues, and the meetings would become less productive. Others indicated the need for more local governmental involvement.<sup>1</sup>

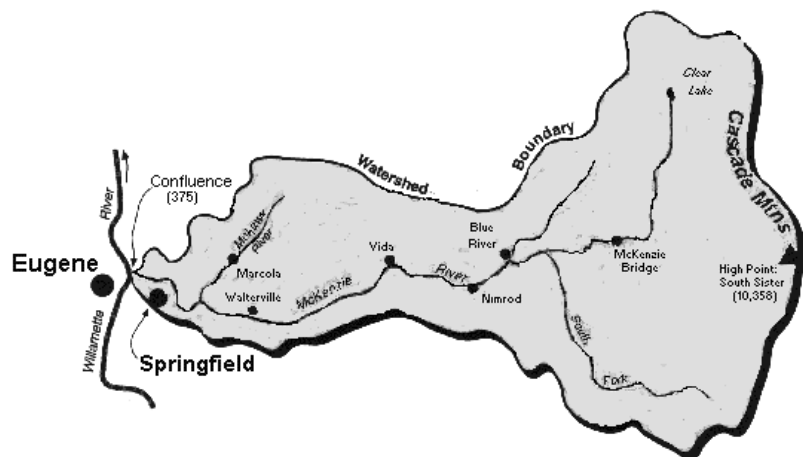
**Outcomes:** Because of the informal nature of the partnership and the fact that it did not go beyond information sharing, many of the successes have been credited to the individual member organizations. It is noted, however, that the successes would have been much smaller without the partnership. In general, the partnership has brought a greater awareness of issues affecting the Darby watershed. The partnership is responsible for numerous educational activities, including canoe trips, cleanup days, and the publication of educational booklet for residents.

**Advice:** The members felt that the following elements are essential for successful partnerships: non-confrontational atmosphere, a neutral facilitator, perseverance and commitment to the process, and a staff person to support partnership activities.

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## McKenzie Watershed Council

**Description:** The McKenzie River Watershed is approximately 1300 square miles and is located in west central Oregon. The headwaters flow out of the western foothills of the Cascade Mountains through primarily wilderness and forest lands. Once out of the foothills, the McKenzie River flows through industrial forestlands and farmland until



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<sup>1</sup> Coughlin, p. 8-9

it reaches the Eugene-Springfield area in Lane County, which contains approximately 200,000 people. The McKenzie River is the main drinking and industrial water source for this area and is characterized as exceptional quality.

**Mission:** The McKenzie Watershed Council (MWC) was formed in 1994 to “help address watershed management issues in the McKenzie River watershed and provide a framework for coordination and cooperation among key interests in the development and implementation of a watershed action program.”<sup>1</sup> The Council has primarily been successful in sharing information and making policy recommendations for watershed management, such as creating guidelines for model stream ordinances.

**Resource Concerns:** Threatened resource base due to habitat loss, the presence of hydroelectric dams, and development pressures.

**Reasons for Formation:** In addition to the threats listed above, the state of Oregon was pushing for the creation of government-run watershed councils throughout the state. In response to these factors, Lane County and the Eugene Water and Electric Board (EWEB) proposed the formation of a watershed council.

**Funding:** With local governmental support, the Lane Council of Governments received \$600,000 from EPA in initial funding. In later years, additional support for MWC has come from continued support grants to local Soil and Water Conservation Districts. Most recently, the Council’s budget has been funded by a joint effort between EWEB and the Bonneville Power Authority.

**Structure:** The MWC utilizes task-based subcommittees to make policy recommendations to local decision-making authorities. A council coordinator has responsibility over administrative tasks, such as communications and budget management. Subcommittees have focused on process, citizen involvement, program resources, and other tasks on an ad hoc basis. The Council appoints technical advisors to each subcommittee that assists the group on data-related needs. The Council uses a consensus decision-making process when making recommendations.

**Representation:** The MWC charter requires a specific ratio of representative interests on the Council, including private interests (business, community), elected officials, and agency representatives. Requests for additional members must be reviewed using specific criteria in the charter. Because of the formal nature of the Council and the specific rules on the number of representatives, many have indicated that it has been hard to ensure that all interests are at the table. Specifically, some mentioned that environmentalists and residents have been left out. In the words of one member, the Council is “walking a fine edge between having a sort of representative stakeholder process, and trying to open it up to a broader range of folks and bring them in.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Coughlin, p. 9-1.

<sup>2</sup> Coughlin, p. 9-10.

**Outcomes:** Like the Darby Partnership, the primary achievement of the MWC has been the establishment of a forum for information sharing. In addition, advisory recommendations from the Council were responsible for changing the policies of some agencies and governments. For example, Lane County involved citizens in the drafting of new land use regulations. Other outcomes attributed to the Council include development of a water quality monitoring network and compilation of a GIS database. Many members felt strongly that the Council should be only advisory in nature and that it should not take on issues where consensus is not possible.

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### **Upper Tennessee River Roundtable**

**Description:** The Upper Tennessee River Watershed (headwaters for the Tennessee River) is located in the southwestern tip of Virginia. The river flows through parts of eleven counties: Bland, Wythe, Grayson, Smyth, Washington, Russell, Tazewell, Dickenson, Wise, Scott and Lee. Three major tributaries make up the Upper Tennessee River Basin. They are the Clinch, Holston and Powell Rivers with over 4,400 miles of rivers and streams, which drain over 2 million acres (3131 square miles) or about 8 percent of the total land area in the state of Virginia. The population of the Upper Tennessee Watershed is approximately 270,000 and consists of the following land uses: 37% agricultural, 55% forest, 8% urban, mining and recreational lands.<sup>1</sup>

**Mission:** “The purpose of the Roundtable is to provide a watershed-based forum for stakeholders to participate in defining critical watershed needs, targeting problems for solution and providing input on potential management options.”<sup>2</sup>

**Resource Concerns:** Failing and non-existent septic systems and acid mine drainage.

**Reasons for Formation:** The Upper Tennessee River Roundtable formed in 1998 through a partnership effort between the Black Diamond and New River/Highlands Resource Conservation and Development services (a division of the Natural Resources Conservation Service) and the Department of Conservation and Recreation. In the early stages of the effort, a community liaison was hired to set up public meetings in different communities within the watershed to elicit community concerns regarding the watershed.

**Funding:** Tennessee Valley Authority, Canaan Valley Institute and DCR.

**Structure:** Structure consists of an Executive Board, an Organization Coordinating Group and other committees, including a legislative (responsible for proposing legislation to address water quality issues) and a grants committee. Semi-annual meetings are open to the public. With input from all of these groups, the Roundtable has identified problems and solutions and has prioritized a list of 250 strategies to address these needs.

<sup>1</sup> Source: <http://www.upperriver.org/Section%201%20B.doc>

<sup>2</sup> Upper Tennessee River Watershed Plan, p. 5.

As each of these strategies is adopted, the Roundtable will assign an implementation date and detailed cost estimate.

**Representation:** The Executive Board consists of approximately 25 members who represent various stakeholder interests in the watershed, including: agriculture, local government, forest industry, community watershed groups. The Board is responsible for researching funding opportunities and prioritizing water quality projects. The organizing and coordinating group consists of agencies and other organizations that provide technical assistance to Roundtable (includes TNC, USFWS, USFS, NRCS, DEQ).

**Outcomes:** Because the effort is in the early stages, there are few achievements to date. However, there is a funding contract pending from the United States Forest Service, which would pay a full-time coordinator for this project for five years.

**Local Governmental-Buy In:** In the early stages, local governmental interest and involvement was characterized as “sluggish”. However, because of the increased attention that this project has received, interest and cooperation by local governments has increased.

**Advice:** When asked what made this project successful, one participant mentioned the willingness for all involved to work together, trust between participants, and leadership.

## APPENDIX E: HISTORY OF THE RIVANNA RIVER BASIN ROUNDTABLE

The Rivanna River Basin Roundtable (RRBR) was created in 1996 by the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission to “assess past and current conditions of the Rivanna River and its tributaries and to articulate desired future conditions.” Originally, the Roundtable consisted of twenty-four members that represented diverse interests and different political jurisdictions in the watershed. When formed, the primary task of the Roundtable was to undertake the Rivanna River Basin Project.

### Rivanna River Basin Project, 1996 through 1998

The goal of the Rivanna River Basin Project was to “gather information that can be used to maintain and improve water quality and to provide this information to citizens and decision makers within the region.”<sup>1</sup> Numerous studies were undertaken in addition to in stream monitoring and assessment by the field teams. This information was then used to develop recommendations relating to water quality improvements. The *State of the Basin Report* describes the project in detail and includes maps, data, and a thorough discussion of the recommendations (information on acquiring this report can be found at <http://monticello.avenue.gen.va.us/Gov/TJPDC/rivproj.html>). Since the issuance of this report, TJPDC staff has updated the list of recommendations to provide information on progress and resource levels needed to implement these recommendations.

### The Roundtable from 1998 to Present

After producing the *State of the Basin Report*, a Rivanna River Basin Roundtable Forum was held at Camp Friendship on September 26, 1998. The overriding recommendation of this forum was that

“there should be an organization which works with government, non-profit, and for-profit sectors of the watershed to implement the recommendations of the *State of the Basin Report* and which will work to protect the water quality and the environs of the River through cooperation and coordination of existing efforts, fill gaps in watershed protection issues or activities, and which will speak out for the River.”<sup>2</sup>

Participants in the Forum noted that the current approach to watershed protection was greatly fragmented as indicated by the sheer number of groups. It was suggested that, together, groups should pursue collaborative projects, while, at the same time recognizing the need for each group to pursue its own agenda.

Since the Forum at Camp Friendship, the Roundtable has continued to meet regularly and be involved in various watershed-related projects. Through community interviews and thorough review of Roundtable meeting minutes, the following comments describe some of the successes and challenges that have faced the Roundtable during this time.

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<sup>1</sup> Rivanna River Basin Project, The State of the Basin: 1998, p. i.

<sup>2</sup> Source: <http://monticello.avenue.gen.va.us/Gov/TJPDC/rivproj.html>

### Successes

There was strong agreement among interview participants that the Roundtable's greatest attribute is that it provides an open and inclusive forum for communication and networking. Some also noted the importance of having an organization that speaks for the watershed as a whole. Others pointed to the fact that many organizations have since used the recommendations from the *State of the Basin Report* in their efforts.

### Future Challenges

By far the most common remark concerning the Roundtable was that it has lacked a focus since the *State of the Basin Report* was completed. Newcomers to meetings have "found it difficult to get a handle on where the group is going" and many noted a general lack of energy and momentum that has resulted in poor meeting attendance. Many felt that the next logical step was that the recommendations in the *State of the Basin Report* should "be moved forward," but there was a general uncertainty and/or lack of consensus on how to proceed.

Over the course of many Roundtable meetings, members discussed various ideas for addressing these issues, such as formalizing an organizational structure, getting local governmental support for the Roundtable, re-visiting the Roundtable's mission, and moving the "home" of the Roundtable to an organization that had a legislative mandate to address watershed issues.

Some felt that the Roundtable could take on the task of developing a Corridor Plan for the Rivanna River and that such a plan could be used to further the recommendations in the *State of the Basin Report*. Although the plan had initial support from the City of Charlottesville and Albemarle County, lack of significant funding and ineffective organizational structure within the Roundtable prevented meaningful progress on the task past the very preliminary stages.

## **APPENDIX F: ACRONYMS USED IN THIS REPORT**

DCR	(Virginia) Department of Conservation and Recreation
DEQ	(Virginia) Department of Environmental Quality
EWEB	Eugene Water and Electric Board
HUA	Hydrologic Unit Area, a program of USDA
IEN	Institute for Environmental Negotiation
IRP	Integrated Resource Planning
MWC	McKenzie Watershed Council
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
RRBR	Rivanna River Basin Roundtable
RWNA	Rivanna Watershed Needs Assessment
RWSA	Rivanna Water and Sewer Authority
TJPDC	Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission
TJSWCD	Thomas Jefferson Soil and Water Conservation District
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
USFS	U.S. Forest Service
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
VDGIF	Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries
VDOF	Virginia Department of Forestry