

Welcome to the Rivanna Watershed



The Rivanna Watershed is 1/80 the size of the entire Chesapeake Bay watershed. The James River is a major tributary of the Chesapeake Bay, which is considered the largest estuary in North America.

The 2012 Rivanna Watershed Snapshot is a summary of the health and current conditions of the Rivanna River and its watershed.

The Rivanna River drains **768 square miles** of land from its headwaters in the Blue Ridge Mountains to its confluence with the James River at Columbia, Virginia. The Rivanna River is the largest tributary of the James River upstream of Richmond, Virginia.

There are **7 jurisdictions** that have some or all of their land area within the Rivanna Watershed, including the counties of Albemarle, Fluvanna, and Greene and the City of Charlottesville. Nelson, Louisa, and Orange counties together comprise less than 3% of the Rivanna Watershed.

The Rivanna River Basin Commission

The Rivanna River Basin Commission (RRBC) was created with the vision that the river and its watershed can best be protected and conserved through regional cooperation and by seeking solutions across political boundaries. The RRBC members are the counties of Albemarle, Fluvanna, and Greene, the City of Charlottesville, and the Thomas Jefferson and Culpeper Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

Resource management decisions are most effective when they are based on geography that is defined by natural systems, such as watersheds.

% of Jurisdiction in Watershed	Jurisdiction	Square Miles within Watershed
100	Charlottesville	10
68	Albemarle	494
59	Greene	93
51	Fluvanna	149
3	Louisa	14
2	Orange	7
< 1	Nelson	< 1

What is a Watershed?

A watershed is an area of land from which all water drains to a common waterway.

Other terms used for a watershed are river basin or drainage basin.



The Rivanna River joins the James River at Columbia, Virginia, about 50 miles upstream of Richmond. Photo/Mary Porter

Look for me, **Snappy the Snapping Turtle**, for important information throughout this Snapshot. Snapping turtles are aquatic omnivores and help keep ponds and streams healthy. We are also one of the oldest living species, a true relic from the age of dinosaurs. For reasons not well understood, snapping turtles are declining in Virginia, so we have a lot at stake. A healthy and vital ecosystem serves all of us in the Rivanna Watershed.

