

The Future of Our Watershed

We are fortunate to live in the Rivanna Watershed, where many of our headwater streams are protected by National Park Service lands.

We have ample opportunities for recreation and enjoyment along the Rivanna River and its streams.

We have a high percentage of streams with diverse habitat and fish species.

Our local governments work to manage and protect our natural resources through innovative codes and ordinances and by setting an example of stewardship on public lands.

Many landowners understand the ecological and economic importance of conserving land and water at home, on farms, and at businesses.

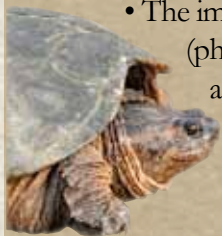


Stronger storms and longer periods of drought will require more robust and flexible water resource management. Photo/RRBC

Better Information to Support Better Policies

We will make better decisions if we have better data on:

- The health of all the streams in our watershed.
- The location and density of stream side buffers.
- The status of our groundwater resources and its projected level of use.
- The impacts of emerging pollutants (pharmaceuticals, personal care products, and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons) on our streams.
- The effectiveness of older, existing stormwater best management practices.



Our Future

The actions we take today to restore our impaired streams and to return our landscapes to healthy ecosystems will benefit our human and natural communities now and into the future.



Elected officials, local government staff, and citizens join an educational tour of local stormwater projects to learn about new ways to manage stormwater (above, Crozet wetlands project). Photo/RRBC

At the same time, over half of our assessed streams are degraded. Development results in more impervious surfaces that, if not properly managed, are damaging to our streams.

We can improve the health of our watershed if we:

- Improve stormwater management parcel-by-parcel, from fields, homes, and businesses, reducing damaging flows to our streams and increasing water resources for all.
- Identify and protect the landscapes that best protect river and watershed health.
- Improve forested stream buffers and systematically protect and restore these natural defense systems.
- Use policies, incentives, and education to create a culture of watershed protection in our community.
- Establish a water budget for all human and ecological needs and to inform water resource planning.
- Monitor and plan for the impacts of changing weather patterns on our water resources and natural systems.
- Develop tools for selecting the most effective and economical strategies for land and water conservation.
- Continue to assess our progress with subsequent snapshots.

A river is more than an amenity...It is a treasure. It offers a necessity of life that must be rationed among those who have power over it.

—OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES, JR. (1841-1935), U.S. SUPREME COURT JUSTICE, NEW JERSEY V. NEW YORK, 4 MAY 1931