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Rivanna River Basin Commission Receives Grant For Accelerating Local Stormwater Management Programs

The Rivanna River Basin Commission (RRBC) has been awarded a grant of \$725,000 from the USEPA Chesapeake Bay Program and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) to accelerate the adoption of stormwater management practices in the Rivanna watershed. This funding launches the Rivanna River Basin Commission's work with local governments to implement strategies to manage stormwater volumes and quality in order to recharge groundwater, reduce siltation in the Rivanna and its tributaries, and improve the river's water quality. Money from this grant will be directed to projects in Albemarle, Fluvanna and Greene counties and the City of Charlottesville, all members of the Rivanna River Basin Commission.

The grant will help Greene County install a bioswale to capture runoff from the athletic field and parking lot at Green County Park and an inventory of retrofit opportunities in other public spaces. Albemarle County will receive funding for the Crozet Stormwater Wetlands, to treat runoff from the planned increase of density in downtown Crozet. Fluvanna County will receive funding towards rainwater harvesting for athletic field irrigation as well as an inventory of retrofit opportunities. The grant provides funding to the City of Charlottesville to help install a bioswale to promote stormwater infiltration at the Charlottesville High School this summer, as well as a rainwater harvesting system. Each project includes monitoring to measure the reduction in stormwater flows to area streams, something that the RRBC's Technical Advisory Committee has identified as the greatest threat to the Rivanna and its tributaries.

Sally Thomas, Albemarle County Supervisor and Chair of the Rivanna River Basin Commission, noted that, "This grant will assist our localities in showcasing ways of reducing harmful flows to our streams," and added that "the projects are in highly visible, public spaces where our community can see first-hand how it is done." Other activities including collaborating with local planning and engineering staff and area builders to identify ways to make it easier – and more cost effective – to install stormwater management practices that better protect area streams. "The loss of open space to developments is the fastest growing source of stormwater pollution," said Marvin Moss, Fluvanna Board of Supervisors Chair and Vice-Chair of the Commission. "This grant will help us minimize the impacts of development, especially in our rural areas."

The RRBC was authorized by legislation of the General Assembly and began meeting in 2007. Support from The Nature Conservancy of Virginia's Piedmont Program enabled the Commission to hire its first Executive Director, Leslie Middleton, in April 2009. "This grant funding enables the Commission to leverage the contributions of private donors with matching effort by our local governments in exactly the kind of partnership that the Commission is working to foster," said Middleton.

xxx

Albemarle County
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