

# Joint Annual Meeting of the Virginia Chapter AFS & Virginia Chapter TWS

## Panel Discussion & Facilitated Work Session

### **Balancing Local Land Use Planning and Natural Resources Management: Challenges and Opportunities**

Thursday, February 4, 2010, 10:45 am – 12:15pm

#### **Panel Discussion**

*Panelists: Chris Burkett, Tom Martin, Tammy Stephenson, Erin Bryant Hawkins, and Kent White;  
Facilitator: Adrienne Averett*

The panel was comprised of local government staff involved in land use and environmental planning and state agency staff tasked with natural resource planning. The purpose of the panel discussion was to provide the audience with background information regarding: 1) how land use planning happens at the local and regional levels, 2) the challenges of natural resource planning at both levels, 3) any opportunities to coordinate land use and natural resource planning at each scale and examples/models of such planning, and 4) most importantly, how/where fisheries and wildlife biologists can participate in the planning process.

#### **Facilitated Work Session**

The panel discussion was followed by a facilitated work session in which the audience members were divided into three small work groups to further discuss and identify the constraints and opportunities of balancing land use planning and natural resources management. After the issue identification phase was complete, each participant received five (5) colored dots and voted on the top three (3) challenges and two (2) opportunities on their respective work group lists. The votes were tallied and each small work group appointed a reporter to report the group's top three (3) challenges and opportunities to the other work groups. The vote tally is indicated in parenthesis for each item that received one or more votes. Each work group's results are ranked in descending order based on the voting results.

#### **Work Group #1**

*Adrienne Averett, facilitator*

##### Challenges

- Land use planning is money/tax revenue driven process (20 votes)
- Political ramifications of biologists/agency staff participating in land use planning (16 votes)
  - Natural resource managers uncertain how far they can push the advocacy role
- Distrust of government and misuse of natural resource information (10 votes)
- Disconnect between biologists & engineers and planners & engineers (10 votes)
- Time & manpower requirement (8 votes)
- Avenue for invitation in the planning process (5 votes)
  - Do land use planners want natural resource managers at the table?
  - Difficulty in finding an association to feed natural resource info into
- Disconnect between natural resource and land use information (2 votes)
- Land use planning viewed as a complex, disaggregated planning system (1 vote)
- Perception that land use planning is an unbalanced process
- Perception that land use planning is a top-down process
- Social values are not well defined in either process
- Perception that the natural resource role is to take a side or position

##### Opportunities

- Development of a natural resource planning scorecard (9 votes)
  - Example: City of Lynchburg Environmental Scorecard

## Joint Annual Meeting of the Virginia Chapter AFS & Virginia Chapter TWS

- Understanding who the best natural resource management and land use planning contacts are (7 votes)
  - Develop a “call list”
- Knowing major ‘umbrella’ planning organizations in the state (7 votes)
  - VACO
  - VML
  - VAPA
- Provide agency liaisons to planning commissions, local government advisory committees, etc. (5 votes)
- Use wildlife action plans as tool to focus natural resource management & land use planning efforts (4 votes)
- Natural resource manager participation in local government advisory committees (4 votes)
- Offer natural resource management training/workshops for planning commissions (3 votes)
- Find a way to work together (2 votes)
- Distill/translate natural resource information & plans into user-friendly formats for planning officials (2 votes)
- Participate in local/regional non-profit environmental organizations (2 votes)
- More top-down regulation to provide assistance for local planning (1 vote)
- Finding the best mechanism to plug into the land use planning discussion

### **Work Group #2**

*Tammy Stephenson, facilitator*

#### Challenges

- How to show economic value of natural resources (35 votes)
  - Quantified & standardized direct & indirect economic value
  - Value of protecting water resources
- Improve identification of stakeholder groups & their timely input into planning process (14 votes)
- State & Federal agency coordination (7 votes)
- How to get information to decision makers (5 votes)
- How to get more involved in the ordinance development process (3 votes)
- How to eliminate spot rezoning (2 votes)
- Interconnectivity of regional planning (2 votes)
- Top/Down or Bottom/Up – which way is most effective?

#### Opportunities

- Focus on water resources protection (17 votes)
  - Human factor/impact
  - Common interest vs. specific agenda
  - Watershed health
- Highlight success stories (9 votes)
  - State to state
  - Locality to locality
- Inclusion of natural resources in the planning & decision making process (7 votes)
- Fine tune agencies’ message (5 votes)
- Finding opportunities for communication & education (4 votes)
- Comprehensive Plan (2 votes)
  - Participation in the development process
- Learning from failures (1 vote)
- Show socio-economic benefits to green infrastructure (1 vote)

### **Work Group #3**

*Jim Parkhurst, facilitator*

#### Challenges

- Land value/use under zoning (9 votes)

## Joint Annual Meeting of the Virginia Chapter AFS & Virginia Chapter TWS

- Poor incentive to keep in natural condition
- Finding consensus of real best use & selection of what to preserve (6 votes)
- Too little communication (6 votes)
- Focus tends to be on problems, not solutions (6 votes)
- Too few environmentally-minded planners (5 votes)
- Land use planning now done on economic metrics only, not other services (5 votes)
- Determining how much of various land types are necessary (2 votes)
- Manpower/resources to do necessary triage & planning (2 votes)
- Antiquated standards & reliance on “traditional” engineering methods (1 vote)
- Natural resource managers not clearly stating ecologic services
- Dillon Rule
- “Effective” planning process not being used
- Time frames under which decisions must be made impede realistic planning & review
  - Political scale

### Opportunities

- Education (K-12) about environment & land use planning (11 votes)
- Market/educate alternative land value to populace (7 votes)
- Use of incentives as means to enhance changes in code (4 votes)
- Provide recognition of land value or potential to local governments (3 votes)
  - Not everything has to be developed
- Pool among agency personnel & expertise to meet needs of local governments (3 votes)
- Work together to address legislative needs (1 vote)
- Incorporate local input into agency planning efforts

## Panel & Work Session Summary

While the original panel and work session schedule was truncated due the winter storm warning, the combined results above provide a good starting point for ongoing discussion on this topic. Potential follow up actions in the next six months to year include a continuing education workshop for agency and local government staff to further explore the nexus between land use planning and natural resource management (e.g. green infrastructure training through the Green Infrastructure Center in Charlottesville).

## Panelist Biographies

**Chris Burkett** works for the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries and serves as Virginia’s Wildlife Action Plan Coordinator. Wildlife Action Plans are the nation’s core program to prevent species from becoming endangered. Burkett’s career has focused on the social, economic, and policy aspects of natural resource management and his current duties involve working with agency personnel and partners to identify opportunities to implement proactive wildlife conservation. Previously, Burkett worked for the Wyoming Game and Fish Department as a social scientist and planner. He also spent more than a year in Washington D.C. working with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies to evaluate, promote, and help implement the national wildlife action plan program. Burkett earned his bachelor’s in Environmental Sciences from the University of Alabama and earned his master’s degree in Geography from the University of Wyoming.

**Tom Martin, AICP**, is the City Planner for Lynchburg, Virginia. Tom supervises a staff of four planners in long range planning, development review, ordinance writing, and historic preservation. Tom serves as the Chair of the City’s Technical Review Committee, secretary to the Lynchburg Planning Commission, and serves as the planning staff representative to the City Council.

Tom is a member of the Fifth Street Community Development Corporation Board of Directors and was the lead planner in preparation of the Fifth Street Corridor Master Plan. This plan proposes the

## Joint Annual Meeting of the Virginia Chapter AFS & Virginia Chapter TWS

revitalization of one of Lynchburg's oldest commercial corridors. Phase I of the plan was completed in September 2009 at the cost of \$1.7 million and involved the construction of an urban roundabout, sidewalk widening, the installation of new sewer and raw water lines as well as separation of a portion of a combined sewer system.

Tom is also the principal of K.G.R.L. providing planning & consultant services to local governments. Tom received a degree in Urban Studies & Planning from Virginia Commonwealth University in 1993 and has worked in the planning field since that time. He has been a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners since 2003.

**Tambera (Tammy) D. Stephenson** is Senior Water Supply Planner for the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality. In this capacity, she works with localities in western and southwest Virginia, as well as the eastern shore and several other localities in developing local and regional water supply plans. She has a B.S. in Business Administration from Old Dominion University. Tammy serves as President of the Upper James River Roundtable/RC&D and Chairman of the Alleghany Highlands Emergency Food and Shelter Board. Tammy also provides DEQ staff support to the Roanoke River Basin Bi-State Commission and the Virginia Roanoke River Basin Advisory Committee. Prior to joining DEQ, Tammy worked for Alleghany County from 1989 until 2005. She served as County Administrator from 2000 – 2005 and Deputy County Administrator from 1989 – 2000. While working for the county, she served on the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission Board of Directors and worked directly with the development and update of the County's Comprehensive Plan.

**Erin Bryant Hawkins** is an Environmental Reviewer with the City of Lynchburg's Division of Zoning and Natural Resources. Her primary duties include the review of erosion and sediment control and stormwater management plans and field inspections for private development and subdivisions. She serves as Secretary to Natural Resources Advisory Committee which was appointed by the Planning Commission to review environmental issues.

In 2008, the City joined ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability as part of the City's sustainability initiative. Since then she has begun work on a Greenhouse Gas Inventory in partnership with E<sup>2</sup>, Inc. based in Charlottesville, Virginia. She also serves on a stormwater committee that is addressing impacts of current and future regulations on the City's stormwater system.

Erin previously worked for Robert E. Lee Soil and Water Conservation District where she administered the agricultural cost share program, focused on watershed management and conservation, and provided educational outreach to the community. She is a native of the Lynchburg area and a graduate of Lynchburg College with a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science. She currently lives in Lynchburg with her husband and young son.

**Kent White** is a native of Southside Virginia and attributes his early exposure to rural life as a major influence in his involvement with natural resources conservation. As an adolescent he worked with his father, a District Conservationist with the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service, on the survey, design and construction of many agricultural best management practices [BMPs] in his region. Mr. White received his Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science from Virginia Tech in 1995 and his Masters in Public Administration from the same in 2002. He is a certified Combined Administrator through the Virginia Erosion and Sediment Control program and holds a Level II certification in River Morphology.

Kent's professional experience includes both private and public sector employment, with work ranging from an Environmental Scientist and Occupational Safety and Health Administration compliance officer with a construction firm to Conservation Administrator with the local Soil and Water Conservation District. Following his tenure with the District, Kent worked as an Environmental Planner and currently serves as Senior Planner for the City of Lynchburg's Department of Community Development. His primary job responsibilities include reviewing development plans to ensure their compliance with code

## Joint Annual Meeting of the Virginia Chapter AFS & Virginia Chapter TWS

requirements, as well as authoring staff reports for a variety of rezoning, special use permits, ordinance and comprehensive plan amendments.

Kent serves as Vice Chairman and a City of Lynchburg Director for the Robert E. Lee Soil and Water Conservation District and Secretary/Treasurer for the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts. He was appointed as an Associate to Lynchburg College's School of Sciences in 1998 and is a member of the Virginia Planning Association and the Greater Lynchburg Environmental Network.