

Public Engagement Plan and Project Timeline

Stream Health Initiative – Phase II - Rural Areas

Project Description:

In 2017, the Albemarle Board of Supervisors directed County staff to develop strategies for improving stream health in the county; this project is referred to as the Stream Health Initiative.

A public engagement effort in 2017-2018 involved three stakeholder meetings, focused on development, conservation, and farming/forestry, as well as public meetings and surveys to reach the wider community. These efforts generated thoughtful discussion, as well as a recognition of the broad scope of the project, ultimately resulting in the division of the initiative into two phases. Phase I focused on development-related issues and strategies for improving stream health. Thirteen specific proposals were developed, some of which have been implemented; work on others is ongoing.

Phase II of the Stream Health Initiative will be focused on rural area issues and land uses, and on developing strategies for improving stream health in the Rural Areas. A public engagement effort is planned in order to build on what was learned in 2017, and to focus on solutions supported by the communities, landowners, and organizations that live and work in Albemarle's Rural Areas.

Public Participation Goals:

This Public Engagement Plan is focused on ensuring good communication among stakeholders and the community and encouraging public involvement in development of strategies and solutions. Goals for public engagement include:

- Developing a shared understanding among citizens and stakeholders of the current state of stream health in the County, and the value and benefits of improving stream health;
- Providing county residents and stakeholder groups opportunities to share expertise and experience, collaborate to identify constraints and develop solutions, and provide input and preferences on potential projects and policy;
- Utilizing an iterative process whereby future stages of the project continually adjust to incorporate public feedback; and
- Incorporating multiple tools and strategies to reach and engage different communities throughout the Rural Areas.

Stakeholders/Participants:

- County staff
- Rural Area residents
- State and local agencies
- Local organizations
- Conservation groups
- Local businesses

Engagement Approach, Activities, and Timeline:

The project will be divided into five stages. The following overview breaks each stage into 3 month windows; however, the process is designed to be agile and overlap among the tools and activities employed in each stage is expected.

- **Stage I: Planning and Material Development** – Sept-Dec 2020
Assembling the county staff team and public engagement workgroup, development of the Stream Health website and public engagement site, and identification and development of engagement tools and resources will take place during this timeframe.
- **Stage II: Discover** – Jan-March 2021
Stage II is focused on building a shared understanding and knowledge of the current condition of our waters and potential challenges or barriers to improving stream health in the Rural Areas. It will involve providing opportunities for the community to share expertise, knowledge and experience. Engagement tools may include online surveys, panel discussions, and facilitated conversations.
- **Stage III: Define** – April-June 2021
Stage III will involve identifying constraints, alignment among stakeholders, challenges, and opportunities. Initial concepts will be developed and reviewed internally and by a stakeholder work group.
- **Stage IV: Develop** – July-Sept 2021
The focus of this stage is development and review of final proposals, both internally and by stakeholders. A joint work session with the BOS/PC is planned.
- **Stage V: Decide** – Oct-Dec 2021
Final proposals will be presented to the BOS. Implementation of future programs or policy updates will extend beyond this timeframe.