



ROCKFISH RIVER COMMUNITY WATERSHED FORUM

On Saturday Feb. 3 and Sunday Feb. 4* the first Rockfish River Watershed Forum will involve community members in developing a plan to improve and protect the health of the Rockfish River and ultimately the Chesapeake Bay. The forum is free and open to the public.

*(snow dates Feb. 17, 18)

The community will create a local plan for protection and restoration of the Rockfish by:

- * identifying environmental values important to the community;
- * understanding innovative tools to protect, manage and monitor the watershed; and,
- * devising strategies for protecting social, cultural and environmental resources.

Why a watershed forum?

The land that drains to a particular river makes up its watershed. The river's health reflects the health of the land, much like the canaries that were used to tell coal miners of the presence of deadly gases. By taking a watershed perspective in planning for the future, we can ensure that the ways we use our land not only prevent harm to the river and our community, but actually improve health for people, wildlife and fish.



The Rockfish River Valley, with its winding river and streams, mountains, hayfields, vineyards, small organic farms, galleries and country lifestyle is one of the most beautiful and popular destinations for tourists. An increasing number of people are moving to the valley to take advantage of the rural character and proximity to Charlottesville. This population growth is reflected in a growth rate of 10 percent per year which will mean 1,100 more people in the next ten years moving to the County, many of whom will likely choose to locate in the headwaters of the Rockfish River. As development occurs, patterns and types of land uses change and bring with them runoff pollution from paved surfaces, increased stream temperatures, increased flooding and streambank erosion, air pollution, traffic congestion and changes in the rural landscape.

Today, the Rockfish River is impaired with excessive siltation, which has harmed the aquatic life in the river. We can seek to prevent the harmful consequences of growth by channeling it to appropriate locations, changing development patterns to preserve open space, retaining stormwater on site, reducing or eliminating pollutants, and preserving our farms and culture — but only if we begin planning now for our desired future. That's why the Rockfish River Community Watershed Forum Coordinating Committee was formed. By working together now, we can seek solutions that meet all of our needs and restore and preserve the things we all value, whether we are recreationists, farmers, homeowners or businesses owners.

Agenda

Citizens will be provided with the tools and training to evaluate the current health of the watershed and to draft an action plan to address these issues. Components of the plan will also be used to inform the content of the next Nelson County Comprehensive Plan in Spring 2001. The Comprehensive Plan guides the county's development and identifies options for protection of key resources, such as historic structures or water supply, as well as land areas for growth or preservation.

Saturday's session will run from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and will include presentations and workshops on issues concerning the current health of the river and options for ensuring it is conserved in the future. On Sunday, interested participants will return from 1-5:00 p.m. to devise a coordinated action plan to restore and protect the watershed. Presentations will cover tools such as conservation easements, river habitat restoration and forested stream buffers, financial incentives and education

ROCKFISH
VALLEY
COMMUNITY
CENTER
Feb. 3-4, 2001

and water monitoring opportunities. Community members will provide their perspectives on issues and ideas for protecting the watershed to inform development of a watershed action plan.

The community watershed forum will incorporate the following elements:

- * learning about the local watershed ecosystem;
- * envisioning and identifying common community concerns and values;
- * brainstorming and designing implementation ideas and strategies for the community using tools and techniques presented at the workshop;
- * linking ideas between groups and devising strategies and responsibilities for their implementation; and,
- * identifying organizations, programs and funding sources to meet needs.

Who Should Attend?

Anyone who lives or works in the watershed of the Rockfish River is encouraged to attend. Farmers, residents, realtors, developers, business owners, teachers, students, government officials and anyone with a stake in the quality of life in the Rockfish River watershed can benefit from and contribute to the Forum.

Project Sponsors

The forum is being planned and coordinated by a local coordinating committee with assistance from the Institute for Environmental Negotiation (IEN) at the University of Virginia. The project will complement existing efforts such as the Middle James River Roundtable and the James Tributary Strategy. The Environmental Protection Agency's Chesapeake Bay Program provided funding. In kind sponsors include Rural Nelson and the Virginia Tech Cooperative Extension Service.

Registration Information

Location: Rockfish Valley Community Ctr., 190 Rockfish School Ln., Nellysford, VA

Lunch: Lunch will be sold for a nominal fee on Sat. with proceeds benefiting the Community Center, which is providing facilities at a reduced rate.

Registration Deadline: January 26. Walk-in registration will be available but is not guaranteed. There is no fee to attend the forum. To register please fill out the following and mail, fax or email to: Rockfish Forum, Institute for Environmental Negotiation, 164 Rugby Rd., Charlottesville, VA 22903 or call (804)263-5000, FAX: 804-924-0231, email to: Watershedforum@cs.com Detailed agendas will be sent with confirmation.



Rockfish River Watershed Forum Registration

Name: _____, Organization: _____
Address: _____, City/town _____, State ___ Zip _____
daytime phone _____, fax _____ email _____,
(If you have special needs please) describe _____
Please check one or both: I will attend the ___ Sat. education session, ___ Sun. planning session

Rockfish Forum
Institute for Environmental
Negotiation, UVA
164 Rugby Road
Charlottesville, VA 22903

Forum Committee

Hugh Swain,
Farm Bureau
Michael Lachance,
Extension Service
Fred Boger,
Nelson County
Conny Roussos,
Kim Cash,
Dana Pauly,
Peter Agelasto,
Rural Nelson
Gene Poutasse,
NAMA
Chip Morgan,
WNF