



Upper & Middle James Riparian Consortium Guiding Document

Last Updated: June 10, 2021

This Guiding Document serves to outline the process, vision, goals, structure, and partner roles within the Upper and Middle James Riparian Consortium. Information about priority actions within each of the four goals may be found in the Action Plan [at this link](#). The time period covered for the Guiding Document is January 2019-December 2021; it will be updated to reflect future years in 2021.

For more information, see [this brief overview document](#), visit www.jamesriverconsortium.org or contact Amber Ellis, Senior Watershed Restoration Manager with the James River Association, at aellis@thejamesriver.org or 804-788-8811 x205.

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Overview

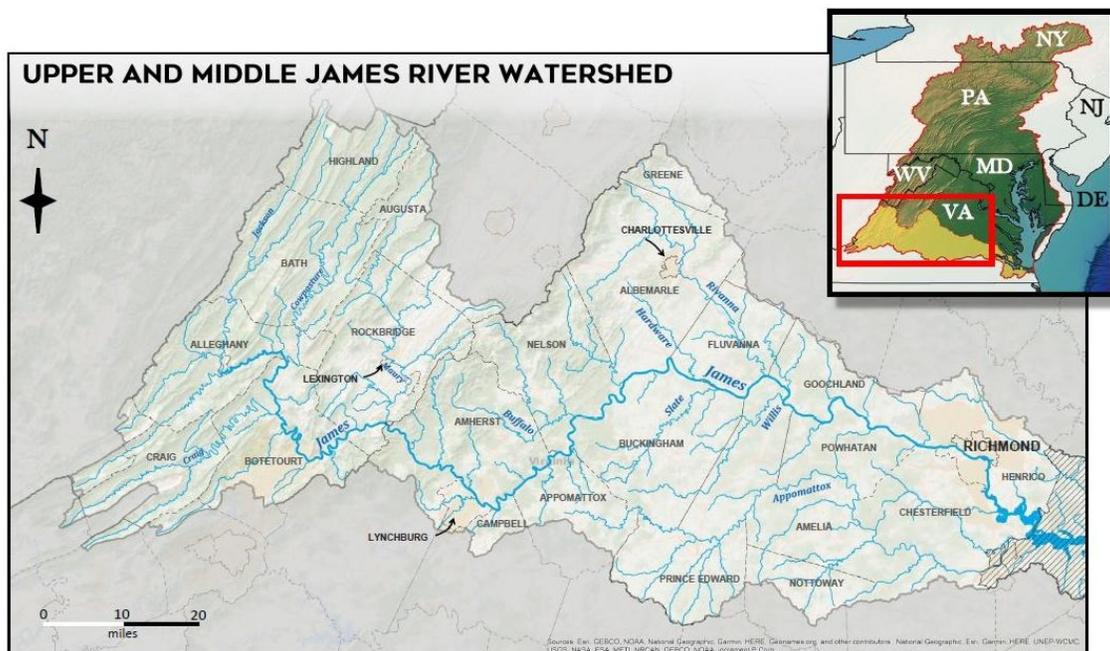
Vision

The Upper and Middle James Riparian Consortium (Consortium) is a group of partners that have a vision of “**Growing partnerships to create healthy streamside ecosystems for clean water in the James River today and tomorrow.**” Several Consortium partners work together in this collaborative effort with a Steering Committee guiding decision making, active action teams working on priority strategies, and an open door to new members and ideas.

Mission

The Upper and Middle James Riparian Consortium is a network of private, non-profit, and public partners. We share expertise and resources to increase implementation, as well as awareness of riparian buffers and their value to landowners, with a priority focus on riparian forest buffers, across the Upper and Middle James watersheds.

Geographic Scope



Values

Collaboration -- We can go further together and seek opportunities to support, collaborate with, and learn from diverse partners both within and outside the James River watershed.

Stewardship -- We care for our existing riparian buffers and believe that stewardship is vital to sustained improvements in water quality and successful buffers.

Holistic -- We integrate practices such as livestock exclusion fencing, streambank stabilization, grass and forest buffers, and conservation easements that respond to landowner, landscape, and habitat needs.

Initiative -- We are proactive and take initiative to create solutions that respond to the needs of Consortium partners and our streamside ecosystems for long-term health of the James River and our communities.

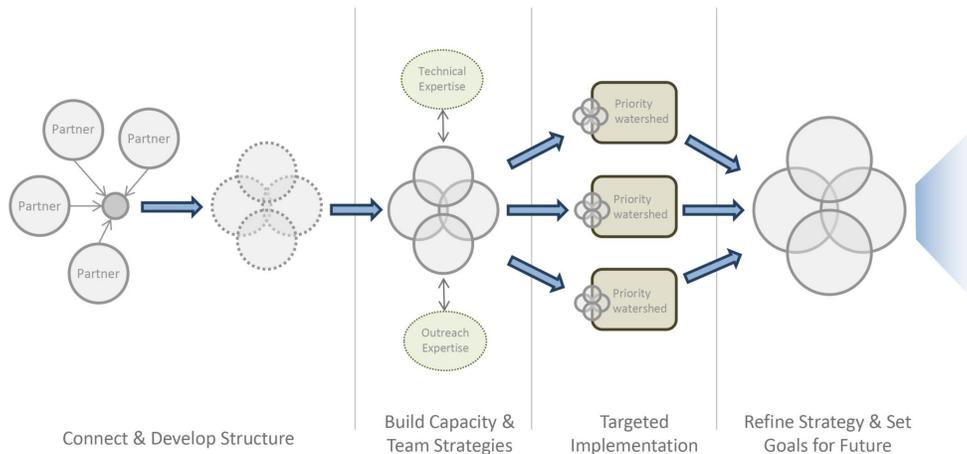
Consortium Goals

1. Increase collaboration and strengthen partnerships through developing an effective network of Riparian Consortium members.
2. Build knowledge and capacity about best practices and innovation to ensure the use of the best researched methods for the greatest success of riparian restoration.
3. Build awareness of the importance of riparian areas and deliver outreach based on identified partner priorities, landowner interests, and restoration opportunity areas to increase strategic riparian investments.
4. Coordinate implementation and fill funding gaps to support a holistic approach to riparian restoration projects that leverage partner resources and expertise.



Work Plan (2019-2021)

JRA received funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) to support the development of the Consortium between January 2019-December 2021. The Consortium is going through a three year process of formalizing a structure, testing out strategies, and refining as the partnership moves forward. For a full description of the work plan visit this [link](#).



There are two overarching objectives of the grant:

1. Formalize a Middle and Upper James Riparian Consortium.

2. Coordinate riparian forest buffer restoration on 292 acres within the Middle and Upper James watershed. This includes the 50 acres restored through NFWF funding, as well as the additional 242 acres implemented by JRA through the [James River Buffer Program](#) supported by the Virginia Environmental Endowment.

Structure and Communication

Consortium Structure

The Consortium builds on partner strengths and resources in order to work efficiently towards collective impact. The structure is somewhat informal to allow for flexibility, but includes a Planning Team (PT), Steering Committee (SC), Action Teams, and Consortium members.

Planning Team

- **Activities:** Coordinates the Consortium logistics and communication.
- **Goal:** Increase collaboration and strengthen partnerships through developing an effective network of Riparian Consortium members.
- **Schedule:** They meet bi-weekly.
- **Partners:** James River Association (JRA), Dialogue + Design Associates (D+D)

Steering Committee

- **Activities:** Includes 6-10 representatives from key partner organizations and Action Team leads who guide the direction, strategizing, and decision-making processes of the Consortium. Christine Gyovai and Sierra Gladfelter of Dialogue + Design Associates will be available as facilitative resources to the SC in a non-decision making capacity.
- **Expectations and Roles:** To ensure continuity in the decision-making process, one consistent representative per stakeholder group is asked to participate on the SC throughout the consensus based decision making process or alternatively keep an alternate informed of any key decisions or relevant information that they would need to make an informed decision. The Consortium requests that a representative (the designated site representative or alternate) be present during all SC meetings, which will be monthly one-hour conference calls or quarterly in-person or virtual meetings.
- **Consensus-Based Decision Making Process:** All members of the SC will have equal status and voice in SC operations and decisions about the Consortium, which are made by consensus. This means that all members can live with and support a decision. Consensus means that a participant who consents will actively work to support the proposal. A participant who consents will support all of the proposal, and not just the parts they like best. While consensus may entail compromise, a participant who consents to a proposal does not compromise interests or core values of fundamental importance to themselves or their constituents. The SC tests for consensus by using the following method:
 - Raising three fingers will indicate full support (or verbal vote/ chat roll).
 - Raising two fingers will indicate support with some questions and concerns (or verbal vote/ chat roll).

- A “one finger” position by one or more participants indicates that consensus has not been reached and more discussion is potentially needed (or verbal vote/ chat roll).
- Schedule: The SC meetings monthly by phone and in person (when possible) before Consortium Meetings.
- Partners: JRA, Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, GreenFin Studio, Monacan SWCD, Natural Bridge SWCD, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Peter Francisco SWCD, Stroud Water Research Center, Thomas Jefferson SWCD, Trout Unlimited, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Virginia Department of Forestry, Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, Virginia Tech, Dialogue + Design Associates (as facilitator).

Budget Approval

- For shared budgets that support the Consortium, the SC adopted this process on March 9, 2020:
 - Action Team leads or other SC members can bring up budget items during monthly calls or during in-person meetings, and the SC will approve budget requests or bring up concerns about the proposed use of the unallocated funds on monthly SC calls or quarterly in-person meetings.
 - If budget decisions are needed in a quicker manner, budget items would be sent to the SC via email with a timeframe for review and decision-making, with additional calls being held if needed.
 - The SC determined that receiving the budget in print during meetings and at the end of each quarterly in-person meeting summary would be helpful, which JRA will provide.

Consortium Members

- Activities: Members interact in a variety of ways from serving on Action Teams, attending Consortium meetings and the annual Buffer Summit, as well as partnering with other members on riparian projects and grant proposals.
- Partners: Consist of a larger network of partners working in the Upper and Middle James watershed to partake and share in training and collaboration around the five focus areas of riparian restoration including riparian forest buffers, agricultural infrastructure, wildlife habitat, streambank stabilization, and protection.

Action Teams

- Activities: Each Action Team is an implementation arm of the Consortium to accomplish the Consortium goals. Each Action Team has a chair and sometimes a co-chair. Action Teams are open to anyone that is interested and it is where ideas from the broader Consortium membership are moved into action. As the Consortium continues to calibrate its structure, Action Teams may be adjusted. Action Team strategies will be included in the Consortium Action Plan outlining the goals and actions for the effort ([document link](#)). Consortium vision ⇒ Four goals ⇒ Action items that Action Teams implement
- Action Team Lead roles and tasks:
 - Coordinates Action Team calls or meetings. Leads will set up a meeting schedule early in the year with the consultation of team members so they can get on people's calendars.

- Give updates at each SC meeting and brief updates at Consortium meetings.
- For Action Team meetings or call:
 - Develop an agenda in advance, have someone to take notes during the call, and distribute the notes to all members of the Action Team contact list.
 - Update Action Planning worksheet, or other similar document, with active actions items the Team is working toward with timeframe, coordinators, etc. for implementation. Update consistently or on a quarterly basis.
- Identifies action items, coordinators and a timeframe for implementation for their goal with Action Team members.
- Keep Action Team contact list up to date.
- Brings ideas from larger Consortium meetings to the Action Team to consider for moving forward or incorporating into Team strategies as funding and interest allows.
- Keep the team moving forward – checks in on progress and implementation – and keeps the “team spirit” moving forward.
- **Schedule:** Each Action Team aims to meet in-between each Consortium meetings.
- **Partners:** Any Consortium Member may serve on an Action Team, however Teams are led by specific organizations. See Team Leads below.

Action Team Goals and Team Leads

1. **Outreach & Targeting:** Build awareness of the importance of riparian areas and deliver outreach based on identified partner priorities, landowner interests, and restoration opportunity areas to increase strategic riparian investments. *(Team Lead: GreenFin, Center for Watershed Protection)*
2. **Knowledge Network:** Build awareness of the importance of riparian areas and deliver outreach based on identified partner priorities, landowner interests, and restoration opportunity areas to increase strategic riparian investments. *(Team Lead: Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, Stroud Water Research Center, Chesapeake Conservation Landscape Council)*
3. **Implementation:** Coordinate implementation and fill funding gaps to support a holistic approach to riparian restoration projects that leverage partner resources and expertise. *(Team Leads: JRA, Trout Unlimited)*

Feedback Loop and Evaluation

Information gathered in Consortium meetings, Buffer Summits, and one-on-ones are brought back to the Steering Committee to either integrate into Action Team strategies, inform future meeting topics, or used to adjust the Consortium to be more effective. The SC incorporates informal check-ins on effectiveness of the Consortium throughout the year in addition to the following methods for processing ideas and evaluation:

- **Evaluations:** After Consortium meetings and Summits, attendees are sent an evaluation to provide feedback. These are reviewed by the PT and used to inform future efforts.
- **Summaries:** D+D writes summaries from all Consortium meetings and Summits and shares these with the full Consortium membership and sends out via the newsletter. Specific items that relate to an Action Team are sent to the Team Lead for integration as needed.
- **Surveys:** As information gathering is needed by Action Teams or for the Consortium as a whole, online or written surveys are used and then synthesized by the appropriate party.

- **Mid and End of Year Review:** During the summer, the PT does a mid-year review through one-on-one conversations, surveys, or other methods to ensure the Consortium is on track for progress toward the vision, goals and to check-in on process considerations. In December, the PT holds a longer planning session to review the work plan and stakeholder input to plan for the upcoming year. In January the PT conducts individual outreach to Team Leads to touch base on interest in continuing their role, updating the Action Plan, and address any areas they need support.

Communication Tools

Developing a team hub and coordination tools were key to improving effective communication and outreach. The following have been developed are in development by the Consortium.

Team Hub: All files are saved on a shared Google Drive that is hosted by JRA. The Steering Committee and Action Teams can access files through a Team Hub that utilizes GoogleSites and accessed via www.jamesriverconsortium.org or through Google Drive.

Coordination Tool: The Chesapeake Conservancy created the Coordination Tool for the Upper and Middle James Riparian Consortium to facilitate coordination and collaboration among implementation partners across the James River watershed per Consortium members' request and guidance. The layers within the Tool provide spatial information and landscape context to support collaborative decision-making for members of the Consortium. [Click here](#) to access the tool.

Streamside Program Report Tool: The Chesapeake Conservancy developed a web-based mapping application, "Streamside Program Report" tool to be used in the Middle and Upper James for landowner outreach per Consortium members' request and guidance. Landowners or practitioners can enter a few questions about the property and the report provides a narrowed down list of potential riparian programs and local contact information. [Click here](#) to access the tool.

Newsletter: D+D publishes a newsletter that is sent out to Consortium members that give updates on upcoming meetings, project highlights, team updates, and potential funding for riparian restoration, with content welcome from Consortium members. The graphic standards for the newsletters may be found on the next page.

Consortium Events

For a **Master Schedule** of events visit this [link](#).

Steering Committee Meetings: The purpose of these monthly meetings is to allow Action Teams to give updates, vote on budget requests, make decisions around upcoming events or projects, and guide structure and process.

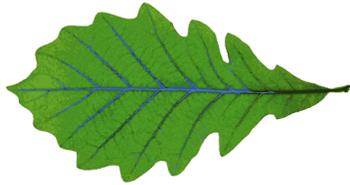
Consortium Meetings: The purpose of these meetings is to update the larger Membership of Action Team projects, share information, get feedback, and learn. There are between four to six meetings per year (4 in 2019, 4 in 2020, and 6 in 2021).

Field Visits: Often in conjunction with the Consortium meetings, field visits and site tours allow for practitioners and partners to learn from on-the-ground examples and discuss techniques and insights.

Buffer Summit: The purpose of the Annual Summit is to update the larger Consortium membership on the status of riparian buffers in the Middle and Upper James watershed, brainstorm around needs and potential solutions across the region to riparian buffer restoration, and celebrate successes of the year. This event is typically held in October.

Outreach Events: Each year there are at least 2 events that are focused on raising awareness to the public about riparian ecosystems. Locations are determined by the Outreach Team with input from Consortium members and led by any stakeholder.

Riparian Consortium Graphic Standards



Upper & Middle James Riparian Consortium



Butler Stencil Med 24pt

Butler Stencil Light 16pt - one point spacing

Streambank stabilization practices are implemented to address excessive erosion rates. Streambank stabilization can involve a variety of activities depending on the circumstances at a given site. These activities range from simply planting the bank to grading/matting/planting to installing deflection structures at the toe of the bank to armoring with large rock and/or tree roots. In some instances, the extent of streambank erosion and channel instability may require a more comprehensive restoration approach. (Cabin Regular 12pt)

Cabin Medium 24pt

Cabin Regular 16pt - one point spacing

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RGB 127, 190, 31

CMYK 50, 0, 100, 0
LAB 74, -41, 61

RGB 254, 166, 33

CMYK 0, 35, 85, 0
LAB 79, 17, 70

RGB 75, 195, 242
HSV 197, 69, 95
CMYK 69, 19, 0, 5
LAB 74, -19, -33

RGB 77, 97, 115
HSV 208, 33, 45
CMYK 33, 16, 0, 55
LAB 40, -3, -13

RGB 16, 26, 38
HSV 213, 58, 15
CMYK 58, 32, 0, 85
LAB 9, 0, -10