



Upper & Middle James Riparian Consortium Upper James Urban Roundtable Online Meeting Summary

Thursday, May 20th, 2021

Executive Summary

The fourth general meeting of the Upper & Middle James Riparian Consortium (Consortium) of 2021 was held on Thursday, May 20th, 2021 as a virtual meeting. This meeting was an Urban Roundtable focused on stakeholders of the Upper James Watershed. The meeting included small group discussions around opportunities and challenges and presentations by Amber Ellis of the James River Association on the Consortium's various tools, as well as Elise Sheffield on Boxerwood's COREworks and Community Carbon Offsets Program.

The last Consortium meeting focused on urban issues in the Middle James Watershed was held on May 12th, 2021, and the summary can be found [at this link](#). For more information on the Consortium, see www.jamesriverconsortium.org. A PDF of general presentation slides for this meeting can be found [here](#), and Elise Sheffield and Karen Stanley's slides on Boxerwood's COREworks and Community Carbon Offsets Program in Rockbridge County are available [here](#). Finally, a list of attendees is included at the end of the summary.

Ways to Engage

- Sign up for the June 3rd Catawba Sustainability Center webinar [here](#) and save-the-date for June 26th for a field day to the center!
- Save the date for Wed. Sept 1st from 10:30 am-1:00 pm for an Urban Roundtable follow-up meeting for the Upper + Middle watersheds likely in Scottsville, followed by an hour lunch break and a free group float trip on the James River from approximately 2:00 to 5:00 pm! [RSVP here!](#) More details to follow.
- Check out the Consortium's [Coordination Tool](#) and the [Streamside Program Report Tool](#) which were shared during the meeting.
- To learn more about the Boxerwood on COREworks and Community Carbon Offsets Program or reach out to Elise Sheffield or Karen Stanley you can contact them at elise@boxerwood.org and karen@boxerwood.org. Learn more at <https://boxerwood.org>.
- To stay up-to-date on events, please visit the website at www.jamesriverconsortium.org and sign up for the Consortium's monthly newsletter there.
- Reach out to Amber Ellis at aellis@thejamesriver.org or another member of the Planning Team if you are interested in potentially serving in a greater capacity with the Consortium.

Action Items

- **The Planning Team** will follow up with participants about next steps for addressing priority urban topics such as model ordinances for a possible follow-up discussion or meeting in order to move ideas forward for the September 1st meeting.

Several participants share several opportunities for further watershed-wide engagement and education:

- Participate in the [Chesapeake Watershed Forum](#) on November 4th and 5th.
- Registration for the Urban Buffers Workshop Oct. 19 & 26, once it is open for registration, will be found [here](#).
- Registration is also open for the CBLP Level 1 summer session and they have a field day scheduled for Charlottesville in August. Info/Registration for Level 1 is [here](#).

Welcome and Introductions

At the beginning of the meeting, Christine Gyovai with Dialogue + Design Associates welcomed everyone to the meeting and shared that this is the second of two Urban Roundtables that the Upper & Middle James Riparian Consortium (Consortium) is hosting in May. The Roundtable purpose is to develop a deeper shared understanding of the needs, opportunities and challenges of urban stakeholders in the James watershed, as well as to foster new partnerships. In March, the Consortium held a meeting with Planning District Commissions (PDCs) to discuss ideas on how the Consortium might help them to address some of their challenges in meeting their buffer goals. The need for better data sharing emerged as a key need, so this meeting will present several data sharing tools that have been developed by the Consortium and also continue to address urban-specific issues. The first Urban Roundtable focused on the Upper James Watershed took place on Wednesday, May 12th. The meeting summary can be found [at this link](#).

Next, Emily Carlson with Dialogue + Design Associates provided a brief overview of Zoom best practices and technology, then shared an agenda review. Participants were then invited to share their name, affiliation and a favorite river spot in the Upper James Watershed. A list of meeting attendees and affiliations is included at the end of this summary.

Overview of the Consortium

Amber Ellis with JRA then provided a brief overview of the Upper & Middle James Riparian Consortium. She congratulated everyone on how much work has been accomplished in this past challenging year. Amber emphasized that the Consortium's primary objective is working to get riparian forest buffers installed throughout the Upper and Middle James Watershed, though they support buffers of all types, along all the tributaries within the watershed. The Consortium is funded by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) as well as the Virginia Environmental Endowment (VEE), which is supporting much of the implementation work through the James River Buffer program. The Consortium was launched in 2019 and has grown in the last couple of years to grow partnerships and leverage resources through the establishment of four Action Teams: the Planning Team, Knowledge Network Team, Outreach & Targeting Team, and Implementation Team. The Consortium also has a Steering Committee and welcomes individuals to reach out about interest in serving on this committee.

The Consortium's Steering Committee and Action Teams operate based on the following vision, mission, and values.

VISION

Growing partnerships to create healthy streamside ecosystems for clean water in the James River today and tomorrow.

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.

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.

More information about the Consortium and to sign up for newsletter updates, visit www.jamesriverconsortium.org.

Consortium and Tool Overview

Next, Amber Ellis provided an overview of two tools developed by the Consortium for use by partners and stakeholders in the Upper and Middle James Watershed. These include the [Coordination Tool](#) and the [Streamside Program Report Tool](#). Amber shared that when the Consortium was first initiated, participants flagged that the greatest need was knowing who was working on projects and where, as well as what assistance programs exist for landowners to install and maintain riparian buffers. The easiest way to currently navigate to these tools is via the Consortium's website home page: www.jamesriverconsortium.org.

The screenshot displays the James River Consortium website. At the top, there are navigation links for "COORDINATION TOOL" and "EXPLORE OUR PROGRAMS", along with the website URL "www.jamesriverconsortium.org". The main content area is divided into two sections. The left section, titled "Coordination Tool", features a map of the James River watershed with various colored overlays representing different riparian buffer zones. A legend on the left side of the map lists buffer types and their corresponding colors. The right section, titled "Streamside Program Report", shows a form for generating a report, with fields for "Property Type", "Acres", and "Miles". Below the form, there is a section for "Property overview" and a "STREAMSIDE PROGRAM REPORT" button. The bottom right corner of the screenshot shows a "3" in a blue box, likely indicating the page number.

Coordination Tool Overview

The Consortium's [Coordination Tool](#) developed by the Chesapeake Conservancy through the [Chesapeake Assessment Scenario Tool \(CAST\)](#) is available through the Consortium website at this [link](#). Amber provided a brief overview of the data visualization available in the Coordination Tool, including WIP Buffer goals by HUC 12, HUC 10, and county; type of progress (i.e. forest buffer, fenced pasture); year of progress; percentage of goal reached to date, and a number of other reference layers. The progress data is only included if the project information has been submitted to the DEQ (Department of Environmental Quality). This data is updated annually and can be organized by year or a particular conservation practice. For example, you can filter the data to look at urban forest buffers by county for example. Amber highlighted the "Partners" layer, although not comprehensive, can be useful for identifying other organizations and agencies working on watershed restoration projects in a particular geographic area. Planning District Commissions, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and Department of Forestry offices are also listed which helps in identifying potential partners to reach out to since contact information is also included. The "Priority" layer highlights areas of overlap for various organizations working in the watershed. The Consortium also plans to send out a survey shortly to solicit feedback on the tools and information that should be added during updates.

Streamside Program Report Tool Overview

Amber also highlighted the Consortium's [Streamside Program Report Tool](#) which is geared toward landowners and practitioners interacting directly with landowners. The tool is available on the Consortium's website [here](#) by selecting the "Programs" page and clicking on the orange "streamside program report" button. This tool allows individuals, including practitioners, to enter a landowner's address and generate a report of all relevant programs available in that particular regional footprint along with a map indicating potential riparian restoration areas. Included in the report is a list of contacts at relevant offices and a number of fact sheets about best practices. This could potentially be a very useful tool particularly for those working with localities. These tools were developed to meet the needs of Consortium partners, so feedback is always welcome.

Questions

- Elise asked in the chat roll if Amber anticipates that the tool can identify those stream side landowners via tax records?
 - Amber responded that the Center for Watershed Protection did conduct a study in Powhatan, Goochland, and Buckingham counties where they used all the priority parcels to identify specific types of outreach for those targeted areas and audiences. They intended to also include Rockbridge County, but they had significant problems with the condition of the county GIS data. The Consortium had a meeting on April 22nd that focused on this work. The meeting summary can be found [here](#).

Break Out Groups

Christine noted that at the Middle James Urban Roundtable held during the previous week, working with the railroad and their properties along the James and developing model ordinances came up as being important. Then, Christine shared that meeting participants will be invited to join separate break out groups of 4-5 individuals for discussion and to take notes in a shared [google note-taking doc](#). The specific questions that participants were asked to engage with included:

- What are the biggest opportunities or challenges to riparian forest buffers in urban/developed areas in the Upper James watershed?
- What specific steps could be taken at a watershed scale to address these challenges and build on opportunities?

Large Group Discussion

After participants met in small groups, meeting participants returned to the large group to share top ideas from their small group conversations. A complete list of ideas from the note-taking document is included in Appendix A of this meeting summary. Participants shared the following top ideas from their group in report outs in the large group meeting.

Group 1

- One participant shared that although people usually love increased green space and open space, the increase comes with challenges of security and safety perceptions, as well as maintenance challenges.
 - An example of the security challenge is where private land borders public land, and people are concerned about access onto their personal property.
 - Planning for maintenance from the beginning of a project is crucial for securing community support and confidence.
- Working with larger areas and partners will increase impact.
 - HOAs (Homeowner Associations) could be both a challenge to balance aesthetic with ecological function, but also an opportunity to work with many adjacent landowners at once.
 - Other partners or groups could include Public Works departments, Parks and Recreation departments, or publicly employed horticulturalists and arborists.
- Creating a deeper sense of ownership and engagement is key.
 - Boxerwood's model works with families over multiple years in engaging the whole restoration process from growing the tree, to planting the tree, and then watching it grow as they pass by it on local trails.
 - Working with municipalities and local organizations to organize volunteer teams to maintain the plantings helps build that community support and understanding is key. They will come to realize that they are part of the growing forest.
 - Boxerwood's model for carbon sequestration is another model for building community ownership and engagement.

Group 2

- Dave with Green Fin shared that their group recommended taking advantage of the TreeUSA program which recognizes communities for their increased tree canopy.
- The group discussed the potential of getting local civic groups such as Rotary Clubs engaged.
 - Church groups should be involved since they're already place based, civic-minded, and could also be a site for events and plantings.
 - Sarah added in the chat roll that their group also brought up churches since they can help with long term stewardship/maintenance, which is the biggest concern.
 - John mentioned in the chat roll that their national research focused on implementation of community food forests (some of which included buffers), they found churches to be one of the most common players.
- The Upper James is mostly composed of rural areas and needs a more strategic approach to work with small towns and counties, building off of existing relationships of trust.
 - Elise added that the Upper James watershed is far less urban so small towns should be more targeted where they have the names of landowners and trusting relationships.
 - Amber commented that they've been working closely with SWCDs for targeting that adds onto existing projects and relationships. For example, the Virginia Outdoor Foundation works with a lot of landowners in Upper James which could be an effective relationship to grow projects from.
 - Elise added that rural areas such as the Upper James are county-focused. Boxerwood could work with partners on a county-based strategy. Each county has its own way of operating.
 - Christine mentioned that at the Middle James Urban Roundtable, developing or learning about model ordinances was a priority. Perhaps with Boxerwood, the PDCs and county governments could work together on follow-up conversation. The Consortium can be a place to move those ideas forward.
 - Amber noted that the CWP (Center for Watershed Protection) can do a county level parcel analysis and would need additional funding of about \$3,500 per county.
 - Elise agreed that developing county ordinances would be a great resource for a group like Rockbridge County.

Group 3

- Taylor and his group discussed the opportunities that correspond to transportation corridors such as Main Street programs as a forum for implementing green infrastructure which can mitigate flooding hazards and address urban heat island issues, but also boost tourism and local aesthetics.
 - Building greenways and rail-trails are multifunctional opportunities that support economic development and civic engagement.
- Buffer maintenance and perceptions of safety pose a challenge. Waynesboro and Shenandoah Valley have examples of building ecotourism through conservation.
- Shereen added that VDOT (Virginia Dept. of Transportation) has a lot of urban impact on all of these ideas; they have power to do a lot and have maintenance crews.
 - Christine agreed that the VDOT Transportation Alternatives Program grants can be a significant source for funding.

Group 4

- Amber shared that her group agreed that increasing local governments' awareness of riparian buffers is crucial. This includes education of government staff and officials. They could use comprehensive plans as an opportunity to incorporate buffers.
 - Shereen added that Comprehensive Plans and local government outreach/education came up in her group as well!
 - Jenny shared that they now have a great new resource from the Local Leadership Workgroup and their friends with Green Fin Studios for educating local elected officials. See this [link](#) for more information, and specifically Module 4 on trees.
 - Sarah agreed that working with the city arborist or Public Works Department is important.
 - Shereen noted that registration for the Urban Buffers Workshop Oct. 19 & 26, once it is open for registration, will be found [here](#). Registration is also open for the CBLP Level 1 summer session and they have a field day scheduled for Charlottesville in August. Info/Registration for Level 1 is [here](#).
- Golf courses pose a challenge since trees and golf courses don't always mix well.
- Development pressure combined with small land-holdings can pose a challenge.
- The Upper James doesn't have as many organizations and groups which raise challenges of securing funding and volunteer support.
- Trails offer an opportunity to educate with signage.

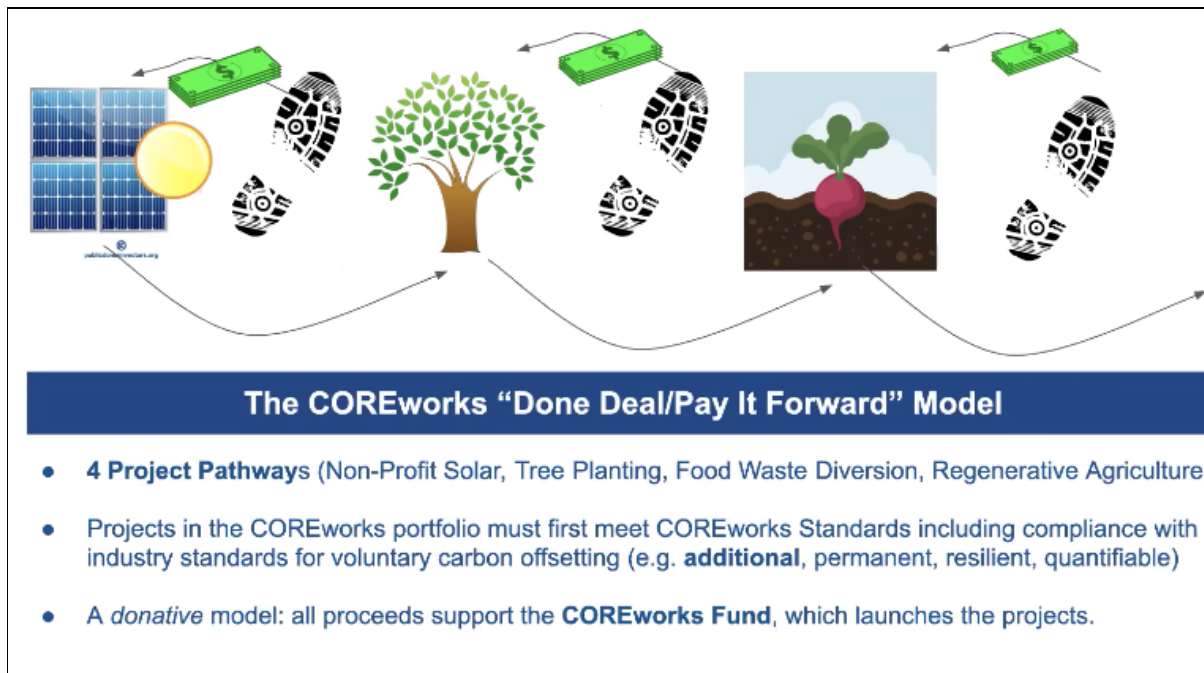
Christine summarized that some of the key ideas shared during small group report outs overlap with the Middle James Urban discussion. Participants were then invited to share recommendations on next steps to be incorporated prior to the Urban Roundtable Follow-up Meeting that will be hosted by Consortium on Wed. Sept 1, 10:30 am-1:00 pm. Christine asked participants to share in the chat roll whether they would prefer an in-person or virtual meeting for September 1st. Six participants were in favor of holding the meeting outside, with one person waiting on their organization's policy update. Christine asked for recommendations on locations and venues for the meeting.

Boxerwood on COREworks and Community Carbon Offsets Program in Rockbridge County Presentation

Next, Amber Ellis with JRA introduced Elise Sheffield and Karen Stanley of Boxerwood. Elise is the Education Director at Boxerwood, and Karen is the Interim Managing Director. Carbon offsets have been of interest to Consortium members. Boxerwood Education Association is a 15-acre Nature Center and Woodland Garden with extensive environmental education programming for children and adults. The COREworks and Community Carbon Offsets Program in Rockbridge County is a grassroots initiative that accelerates local earth care actions by implementing new, emission-reduction projects funded by voluntary, carbon offsetting donations. A link to Elise and Karen's presentation slides, including details, are available [here](#).

The concept of COREworks is as a third branch of the organization to accomplish their mission of educating and inspiring people of all ages to become successful stewards of the Earth. This program would build on their existing network of volunteers and partners, creating a local-scale version of the

international voluntary carbon offset markets. For example, if you flew to Los Angeles and back and wanted to offset your carbon footprint, you could go online, find a carbon offset company to enter the carbon tonnage of your flight, and off-set it by giving a certain amount of money to a tree-planting project in a location. Boxerwood modeled that idea on a very localized level where community members could offset their impacts by donating to local and regional carbon-offset projects and invest in their community's ecological and social well-being. For Boxerwood, this is a way to accelerate conservation actions and encourage community investment.



The other crucial difference between the international carbon offset model and Boxerwood's model is that their funding is regenerative that includes social investment as well as the traditional environmental impact offset. They are offering local consumers a storefront to be curious and also be part of a greening economy to invest in it directly. This investment is an initial gateway for the consumer to engage more deeply in the local environment. At Boxerwood they call this a 3-M Invention: a **m**ethod for engaging more people in conservation learning and action, a **m**echanism for funding that work, and a **m**odel for other communities.



The 3-M Invention

As a **program** of Boxerwood Education Association, **COREworks** is both a means to an end and an end in itself:

- A **method** for engaging more people in conservation learning and action
- A **mechanism** for funding that work
- A **model** for other communities



The funding works through four pathways: solarizing nonprofits and low income housing, tree planting, diversion of waste, and regenerative agricultural practices to build soil health with local farmers. They are just starting but already have one solar project running. In the international voluntary model, they have a registry of projects that are verified to actually offset carbon tonnage with specific criteria. Those projects must meet those criteria and pay a sum of money to enter their project in the registry. Boxerwood is working on a smaller scale; they have a registry for projects that meet core project standards: it must bring societal benefits and meet industry standards of providing quantifiable improvements. Due to legal constraints, COREworks is a donation-based model in order to protect themselves from legal risk and also provide tax-deductible incentives to donors.

The first COREworks project is the solar array at Boxerwood which primes a pump, granting a metric ton offset of \$165 per ton offset until the cost of the project is met. This price would depend on the cost of the project. A \$165 donation would offset a flight to Denver and back! Once the offset is complete, then they pay the amount forward for another project, and so on. There could be all kinds of projects in these “cycles of good.” The pitch to consumers is to support COREworks; all of the money goes to earth-care actions in the Rockbridge area.

They offer two ways to donate: either through direct impact to accelerate projects or through a ton for ton challenge where donors can offset their carbon activities. How does this work for tree planting? Plant 165 trees, use the carbon sequester equation plus labor and materials and add or subtract subsidies. The remaining cost is the donation opportunity.

The program is just starting. 2020 was spent in research and development. The first project was completed and assessed. This year, they are launching the website and soliciting offset donations from the first completed project. In the Fall, they hope to complete their second project of perhaps a tree planting. In 2022 they hope to launch two to four additional projects. In 2023, they plan to export this model to other communities.

Donation Option #2: The Ton-for-Ton Challenge

Live lightly. Offset a ton (or more) of your carbon-emitting activity by donating what it cost to generate an equivalent reduction from one of our up-and-running COREworks projects.

Our innovative, pay-it-forward model enables you to achieve your own offset goals, while also providing COREworks Fund the capital needed for launching future projects.

Metric Ton of CO2 Emissions	Equivalent Emission Activity	Value of COREworks Solar
1	4-hr direct RT flight to Denver	\$165.32/MTCO2
2	5,000 average car miles	\$330.64/MTCO2
6	Average home electricity use one year	\$991.92/MTCO2

Elise concluded that they have found other example models in the US, but none that are based in environmental education. They are excited to have a COREworks fellow on board. They welcome any feedback. To contact Elise Sheffield or Karen Stanley to learn more, email them at elise@boxerwood.org and karen@boxerwood.org. Learn more at <https://boxerwood.org>.

Next Steps and Upcoming Events

Meeting participants were invited to share feedback on the meeting content and structure by completing this [evaluation](#). To stay up-to-date on events, please visit the website at www.jamesriverconsortium.org and sign up for the Consortium's monthly newsletter there!

At the end of the meeting, Amber encouraged meeting participants to join the upcoming webinar on buffers at the Catawba Center with John Munsell and Adam Taylor of Virginia Tech. Registration link is below. She also mentioned that the Consortium is developing a mini-grant program to be launched this next month which will fund upcoming buffer projects this fall. Christine reminded people that they can share their preference for in-person or virtual for the upcoming September 1st meeting in the evaluation form.

Upcoming meetings include:

- Thurs. June 3, 6:00-7:00pm - Buffers at Catawba Webinar ([register here](#))
- Sat. June 26 - Hold the Date: Catawba Sustainability Center Field Day
- Wed. Sept 1, 10:30 am-1:00 pm - Urban Follow-up Upper + Middle Meeting in Scottsville followed by an hour lunch break and a free group float trip on the James River likely from 2pm until around 5pm! [RSVP here!](#)

Meeting Participants

1. Parker Agelasto, Capital Region Land Conservancy
2. David Byrd, US Fish and Wildlife Service
3. Sarah Coffey, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, CBF
4. Amber Ellis, James River Association
5. Taylor Evans, Valley Conservation Council
6. Melody Foster, Executive Director of Commonwealth Regional Council
7. David Hirschman, Hirschman Water & Environment, LLC
8. Alston D. Horn, Chesapeake Bay Foundation
9. Shereen Hughes, CBLP & Wetlands Watch
10. Gabriel Irigaray, Roanoke Valley Alleghany Regional Commission
11. Dave Jasinski, Green Fin Studio
12. Grace LaRose, City of Richmond
13. Dominique Lavorata, Thomas Jefferson PDC
14. Rebecca L Joyce, Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission (CSPDC)
15. Jenny McGarvey, Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay
16. Tim Miller, Mountain Castle SWCD
17. Cindy Miller Roberts, Robert E Lee SWCD
18. John Munsell, Virginia Tech
19. Molly O'Liddy, VA Department of Forestry (VDOF)
20. Elise Sheffield, Boxerwood Education Association (Lexington)
21. Karen Stanley, Boxerwood Education Association
22. Sandra Stuart, Natural Bridge SWCD
23. Jill Trischman-Marks, Botanical Garden of the Piedmont
24. Sammy Vest, Trout Unlimited
25. Barbara Walsh, Rockbridge Area Conservation Council (RACC)
26. Emily Carlson, Dialogue + Design
27. Christine Gyovai, Dialogue + Design
28. Lea Taylor, Dialogue + Design

Appendix A. Notes from Small Group Discussions

Breakout Group 1

Participants: Emily Carlson, Cindy Miller, Karen Stanley, and Sarah Coffey

Discussion questions:

- What are the biggest opportunities or challenges to riparian forest buffers in urban/developed areas in the Middle James watershed?
- What specific steps could be taken at a watershed scale to address these challenges and build on opportunities?

Notes:

- **Main Ideas:**
 - Maintenance needs to be planned for from the beginning of a project and is an on-going need for many riparian projects. Invasive management is a big part of this.
 - There is a need to address public perceptions of greenspace such as concerns about security and access as greenspaces are growing in connectivity and trail access.
 - HOAs are both an opportunity and a challenge.
- Sarah: focus on benefits of greenspace to make forest buffers seem like a park. Challenge: decision makers really concerned about maintenance, considered unsafe.
 - - Working with HOAs.... Are they common in the Upper James: an opportunity to work with landowners. Karen knows of some in Rockbridge.
- Karen: Depending on the type of landowner, concerns about connecting buffers and attracting people on property. Yes, maintenance is an issue, need to plan and consider invasives. Make sure buffers look pleasing and continue in function.
 - For opportunity: Boxerwood works to get students and families hands on in watersheds and restoration: such as in Lexington. Part of growing plants in nursery and work with volunteers to plant them, get to see the progress and name trees! Families involved with the process, get buy in. Coreworks gets community based carbon offsets: get people to donate, and credits go back into new programs that benefits local community.
 - In Lexington they have a city arborist that identifies areas in the city to do projects, do tree inventories. They have a good urban canopy. Stanton and Waynesboro other cities have town horticulturist or arborist.
- From Cindy Miller Robert E Lee to Everyone: (10:53 AM)
 - I completely agree and think that a volunteer group to maintain and monitor the space.
 - Cindy also mentioned there are some HOAs in Lynchburg Area.

Breakout Group 2

Participants: Elise Sheffield, Gabriel Irigaray, Molly O'Liddy, Dave Jasinski

Discussion questions:

- What are the biggest opportunities or challenges to riparian forest buffers in urban/developed areas in the Middle James watershed?
- What specific steps could be taken at a watershed scale to address these challenges and build on opportunities?

Notes:

- Tree city USA program for projects in developed areas. Communities like to be recognized for managing their tree canopy. Could be an opportunity to get the conversation started on tree planting and tree care.
- It's easier to get things done in lightly populated areas. Things are less complex and things are more relationship based. Word of mouth is important.
- Do an inventory of properties along streams and work from that to identify potential projects.
- Elected officials are responsive to community wants and needs,
- How do riparian buffers fit into the economic and other community needs? Identify and communicate that.
- Churches are part of the organizational structure of many communities. The same people who go to church and the same people who farm who are the same people who own the land. Could be service events or community events. Involve youth groups.
- Get civic groups involved - Jaycees, Rotary, etc.

Breakout Group 3

Participants: Shereen Hughes, David Bryd, David Hirschman, Taylor Evans, John Munsell

Discussion questions:

- What are the biggest opportunities or challenges to riparian forest buffers in urban/developed areas in the Middle James watershed?
- What specific steps could be taken at a watershed scale to address these challenges and build on opportunities?

Notes:

What does Urban/Developed mean in the Upper James?

1. Lexington, Glasgow, etc...
2. Smaller towns when compared to Middle James - what is the Suburban growth pressure around the towns?
3. Development pressure? VCC mainly low density development around the small towns and then around transportation infrastructure, pipelines, truckstops/rest stops. All roads maintained by VDOT.

Can we consider buffering sinkholes and cleaning them up near towns? VDOT is an important partner

Taylor E. - VCC

1. Opportunities- Greenways/Rail Trails with forest buffers for education
 - a. John Munsell - Agrees with rail trails/greenways infrastructure - multifunctionality is key (education, access, recreation, civic experience, conservation) - survey of Mayors
 - b. Similar to Ag fencing - intersectional experience of conservation, livestock health, etc.. brings more people in
2. Challenges - Compliance with comprehensive plans (for easements)
 - a. Work with locality on what is and is not considered conservation in comprehensive plan
 - b. Encourage protection of riparian buffers during development
 - c. Link with economic development, tourism, greenways - Waynesboro, VA and urban trout fishery are an example

John Munsell

1. Challenges - Maintenance, oversight, and liability
 - a. Invasive species, wildlife, public perception
 - b. Safety concerns from public
 - c. Visibility to water

Shereen -

1. What about outreach to the small businesses that own the land that they are on - for increased appeal of property plus
 - a. Target small businesses along a main thoroughfare - build a network of buffers along transportation corridors that support green infrastructure (Flooding prevention, etc...)
 - b. Tourism boost - aesthetics and conservation mindset
 - c. Outreach campaigns and design modules depending on context (mainstreet vs. businesses on creek frontage)
 - d. Example: Program in Lynchburg to revegetate medians w/ businesses signs that states "this median is cared for by..."
 - e. VDOT should be a steering committee partner