

**South Fork Rivanna Reservoir Stewardship Task Force
Minutes of Task Force Members Meeting
September 8, 2008**

A meeting of the members of the South Fork Rivanna Reservoir (SFRR) Stewardship Task Force was held on Monday, September 8, 2008, at 6:00 p.m. in Conference Room 241 at the Albemarle County Office Building, 401 McIntire Road, Charlottesville, VA.

SFRR Stewardship Task Force Members Present: Ms. Holly Edwards – Charlottesville City Council, Mr. Mark Fletcher – citizen from University of Virginia (UVA) representing recreational interests on the SFRR, Mr. Michael Gaffney – Rivanna Water & Sewer Authority Board of Directors, Mr. Thomas Jones – citizen representing property owners along SFRR, Ms. Karen Joyner – Ivy Creek Foundation, Mr. John Martin – Rivanna River Basin Commission, Ms. Wren Olivier – Sierra Club, Dr. Liz Palmer – Albemarle County Service Authority Board of Directors, Mr. Dennis Rooker – Albemarle County Board of Supervisors, Mr. Ridge Schuyler – The Nature Conservancy, and Ms. Sally Thomas – Chair, member of the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors and representing the League of Women Voters.

SFRR Stewardship Task Force Members Absent: Mr. Chris Lee – Charlottesville Regional Chamber of Commerce and Ms. Dede Smith – Citizens for Sustainable Water Supply.

Also Present: Ms. Tamara Ambler – Water Resources Manager, Dr. Richard Collins – sitting in for Ms. Dede Smith who represents Citizens for Sustainable Water Supply, Mr. Tom Frederick – RWSA Executive Director, Mr. David Golladay – Water Operations Manager, Mr. Greg Harper – Albemarle County Water Resources Manager, Ms. Lee Catlin – Albemarle County Community Relations Director, Mr. John Kauffman – Regional Fisheries Biologist with Virginia Department of Game & Inland Fisheries (VDGIF), Ms. Mary Knowles – Recording Secretary, Dr. Robert Wichser – RWSA Water & Wastewater Director, members of the public, and media representatives.

1.0 Call To Order

The meeting of the SFRR Stewardship Task Force was called to order by Ms. Thomas on Monday, September 8, 2008 at 6:00 p.m., and she noted that a quorum of the Task Force was present. She expressed her appreciation to the individuals who presented reports at the last meeting for their attendance today and willingness to serve as a resource for the Task Force as needed during the meeting. Ms. Thomas also noted that Mr. Chris Lee was unable to attend due to his schedule and that Dr. Richard Collins was sitting in for Ms. Dede Smith, who was out of town.

Approval or Amendment of Agenda: There were no changes or corrections to the Agenda.

Approval of Minutes: Ms. Thomas first complimented Ms. Mary Knowles on producing the “very detailed” minutes of the August 12, 2008 Task Force meeting. Ms. Joyner next noted that in the last paragraph on page 17, “Mr. Joyner” should read “Ms. Joyner.” As there were no further corrections, Mr. Rooker moved that the Task Force vote to approve the August 12, 2008 meeting minutes as amended, seconded by Ms. Palmer. The motion was unanimously approved.

Impressions from Field Trip, requests for more information: Ms. Thomas asked Mr. Mark Fletcher to provide background information on the purpose of the “field trip.” Mr. Fletcher stated that Mr. Kevin Sauer, coach of UVA women’s rowing program, was requested to provide his views on reservoir usage from a rowing perspective. Mr. Sauer related that the ideal situation would be the conditions that existed 20 years ago when rowers could travel two miles downstream from the boathouse and then three miles back upstream. Ms. Thomas added that a depth of four feet was needed to meet the needs of the rowing programs as indicated by Mr. Sauer. She also commented that UVA repeated the “road trip” experience for two Task Force members who missed the initial August 22 “field trip.”

Dr. Rich Collins next thanked Charlottesville Tomorrow for their very good job of audio and visual reporting, and he appreciated that citizens could “get a look at the reservoir through their eyes.”

Mr. John Martin then stated that he thought the “road trip” was extremely worthwhile. The reservoir was three feet down and some sandbars could be observed. His impression was that if not now, at some point in the future UVA’s rowing program could be impaired to some extent by the siltation. If removal of some of those sandbars was the sole reason for the expenditure of funds for dredging, he suggested that UVA help pay for maintaining their “sports venue.” He further stated that some type of cost-share agreement could be considered to fund other identified reasons for dredging. He felt that UVA’s rowing program was very important to the community as well as UVA’s entire athletic program.

Mr. Fletcher next commented that the rowing activities that occur at the reservoir are not undertaken solely by UVA and referenced the Rivanna Rowing Association as an example. He felt the issue concerned 20 years of not properly maintaining the reservoir for a variety of uses, which should be “factored in” to any type of cost-share arrangement. Ms. Thomas next stated that she asked the Planning and Coordination Council (PACC), which consists of City, County, and UVA representation, to consider placing on their November 20, 2008 meeting agenda a discussion on recreational uses and value of the reservoir to this community. Mr. Dennis Rooker serves on that Council, which could provide an opportunity to communicate the Task Force’s findings at that point in the process if agreed upon by this group.

Ms. Wren Olivier then stated that she was “struck” by how much the reservoir had changed over the years and was “appalled” by seeing the sandbars and evasive plants and their impact on the rowing programs. She felt very strongly that something needed to be done to prevent this community resource from filling in and becoming like a “landfill.”

Ms. Thomas next commented that there was some question as to whether the areas observed had become wetlands that would be valued and therefore could not be disturbed through a dredging operation. She then asked Mr. Ridge Schuyler if he had any information he could share at this time on this issue. Mr. Schuyler responded that he asked a Wetlands Restoration Specialist who works for The Nature Conservancy (TNC) to give a “back of the envelope read” about the state of the wetlands through quick on-site observations. The specialist felt there might be wetlands along the fringe of the reservoir, but the material collecting in the channels is not hybrid soil. Wetlands require the right kind of water, vegetation, and soil. The sediment accumulating in the channel was not the right kind of soil to support a wetland as it was being “washed off” the

uplands and included streambank erosion and some overland sedimentation. The specialist recommended that the US Army Corps of Engineers (the Corps) might be able to provide a more precise view of the wetlands issue. Mr. Rooker then asked if the specialist made his observations when the reservoir was full or when it was down, as it would be difficult to characterize an area that was completely submerged with nothing visibly growing out of it.

Mr. Schuyler replied that the specialist conducted his observations when the reservoir level was down.

Dr. Collins then stated that the whole question of dredging areas that included wetlands was “vastly exaggerated.” The 404.B.1 guidelines, which is used by the Corps to determine the existence of a wetland and mitigation of “filled” wetlands, makes “plenty of allowances” for dealing with this issue. He was working on a reservoir located in King William County where over 180 acres of wetlands were going to be “lost”, and there was no problem permitting that project through the mitigation process. “To the extent that it is considered an absolute bar for dredging the reservoir or expanding the size of the reservoir, it was not that “big of a problem.”

The Corps has informally told him that if a decision was made to dredge as opposed to the authorization for the new Ragged Mountain Dam, they would consider this plan “open-mindedly.” Mr. Rooker then commented that during the review of the water supply options, the Corps and other regulatory agencies demanded that the “least environmentally, damaging option” be selected, which was measured in terms of impacts on wetlands and streams, and should be considered when pursuing water supply options. Dr. Collins agreed with that comment and next asked if any of the members had seen and read the environmental documents issued by the Corps on Ragged Mountain Dam project. Mr. Gaffney then stated that the approved Community Water Supply Plan was not included in the Task Force scope of work. Dr. Collins reiterated that it was not an “accurate portrayal” to state that wetlands loss was a “barrier that you cannot pass over.” Mr. Schuyler next clarified that he was not “exaggerating” the existence of wetlands but was stating that he did not feel there were a “sense of wetlands” in the reservoir. Dr. Collins then commented that he was responding to Ms. Thomas’s opening comments about observing the middle of the reservoir to determine the possibility of wetlands being created, which would further complicate the process of dredging. Ms. Thomas’s responded that wetlands was one of the issues that needed to be addressed by this group, and the informal answer given was that the soils were not conducive to creating wetlands. She further commented that questions, such as posed by Dr. Collins, need to be recorded and answers sought from appropriate agencies. Mr. Schuyler next clarified that he was responding to one of the questions raised at the very first Task Force meeting concerning whether this group was limited by regulatory action, such as required permitting for disturbing wetlands. An “outgrowth” of that question related to the extent of the wetlands, which resulted in TNC’s specialist going out in the reservoir to determine the type of wetland issues that might be encountered. Mr. Schuler then repeated his earlier report that the specialist did not believe that the soil building up in the channels were wetlands because they were not the right kind of soils.

Returning to Task Force members’ impressions from the “field trip,” Mr. Gaffney commented that he was not only “struck” by the amount of sediment in the reservoir, which at that time was at 75% capacity, but also thought about the amount of the reservoir that would be lost over the next 50 to 150 years and what could be done to prevent this from occurring. After further consideration, he felt that the sedimentation process could not be stopped and pursuing ways to remove the material and maintain the reservoir as a viable community resource were measures

that he would want to see undertaken. Ms. Olivier then suggested looking at other localities with reservoirs to see how they have dealt with removing sediment, as she felt it was not feasible to allow them to “fill up” and then build new reservoirs. Mr. Rooker next noted that it has been 42 years since the reservoir was built and felt it would be a good idea to undertake some type of clean-up operation now, repeat the process if needed every 25 to 40 years, and in the interim pursue ways to slow down the sedimentation process. Mr. Gaffney then voiced his support of Mr. Rooker’s comments, but he also felt that it would be realistic to understand that there will always be a certain amount of sediment that comes through the watershed.

Mr. Schuyler then stated his understanding that 60% of the sediment that will be observed over the next 50 years has not yet reached the reservoir. He felt a good start would be to “tackle” the sediment source, as he felt all could agree that slowing the sedimentation from entering the watershed in the first place would be a very important measure, not only to protect the future of the reservoir but also to protect the habitat being “suffocated” by the sediment. There were ways to address the excessive sedimentation rate, but the process should not be completely stopped as some amount of sedimentation is necessary for a “fully functioning river system.”

Dr. Palmer next asked Mr. Schuyler if the observations by the wetlands specialist included the Ivy Creek area and if wetlands were identified as being in that area. Mr. Schuyler responded that he did not know the extent of the specialist’s travels.

Dr. Palmer then referenced Mr. Schuyler’s comments about trying to keep the sediment out of the reservoir and asked him to further define ways that could reduce a significant amount of sediment and at what percentage did he consider a significant amount of sediment removal. Mr. Schuyler stated that the idea of stopping the excessive amount of sedimentation is the primary focus of the Rivanna River Basin Commission and its Technical Advisory Committee. The increased volume and velocity of water that is coming into the streams is causing much of the streambank and streambed erosion resulting from changes in the landscapes surrounding the streams. A long time ago streams in their natural condition “meandered” along forests, which is not always the case today. He felt the answer in trying to address the problem of sedimentation goes back to trying to fix the flows coming off the landscape. The Rivanna River Basin Commission was pursuing ways to live on the land that “replicates the function that forests used to provide in terms of dealing primarily with rainwater.” The idea of stormwater management is to remove water from the site and into the stream as quickly as possible by either having the water infiltrate into the ground or evaporate, which would have occurred in forested lands. An example of “replicating” the forest function would be to use the rainwater coming off a roof and using it to water the lawn, which would result in the water being infiltrated more slowly into the ground.

Mr. Martin next commented that his overall impression during the “road trip” was the “extraordinary view of that body of water.” His second impression related to how “built up” the area was in large lots and large houses. He was also looking for a public access site, since currently there are no access areas to safely accommodate boat ramps and other public uses of the reservoir. During that trip, he did not see any logical areas that could serve that purpose. He also did not observe any logical site that was currently available without “condemnation of land” to place a staging area for a dredging operation if that option is pursued at some point in the future.

Ms. Holly Edwards then stated that her impression was somewhat different from others since her trip occurred one week after the August 22 outing. She was “struck” by the beauty of the river, and was convinced that the heron was “the most beautiful bird that I have ever seen.” She felt it was clear that the next step should be to proceed with dredging in order to remove the sedimentation. She was also able to travel much further due to the rain the area received after August 22 and was able to observe another public access site near the Woodlands area.

Ms. Edwards was accompanied by two of her friends that had lived in Charlottesville all their lives but had never been out on the reservoir. She felt it was very important to ensure that a decision is made that is for the greater good of the entire community. A “thriving African-American community” used to exist at the reservoir’s current location, but all “vestiges” of that community is now gone. Another portion of African-American history was “taken away” during the City’s urban renewal planning in the Vinegar Hill area as a way of providing water resources for the entire community. She was also “just amazed” by the athletes that she saw that morning and the discipline that is required to participate in the rowing program. She felt this was an opportunity to inform other athletes about the benefits of participating in this sport. Most importantly, she felt that the process should be as open and inclusive as possible.

Dr. Collins next commented that he was “struck by the fact that the observations of people kind of confirm their fears or their prejudices.” He then referred to Mr. Gaffney’s comments about sediment being “perpetual,” which he felt was his “view of the world and confirmed by what he saw,” and Mr. Martin’s observation about the lack of a site for dredging equipment unless “eminent domain” is utilized. Dr. Collins felt that both statements were “left-handed kind of references to the objections to dredging” in general. He further stated that his observations were more positive and confirmed his belief that “dredging would be of an immense benefit” to the reservoir and the community for purposes of rowing, water supply, natural beauty, public recreation and greater access. He saw the deteriorated conditions and felt that if dredging had been done earlier in the process, then the reservoir would not be in its current state. He did not want to see what he believes is currently being suggested that dredging is “secondary and after the fact of the water supply plan.” Mr. Collins felt that it “could be and should be considered as part of the water supply plan,” as well as the other reservoir functions.

Ms. Thomas then stated that the Task Force has not been “charged” to consider dredging as part of the water supply plan. Mr. Martin echoed Ms. Thomas’s by stating that this issue was not “on the table for the Task Force.”

Dr. Palmer next commented that she was not able to participate in the “road trip,” but her parents have lived on the reservoir for about three years. She visits her parents multiple times during the week and was very familiar with the reservoir. People keep telling her that the reservoir will at some point turn into a “wetlands” and will become a river again during storms that will “scour a channel through there.” She does not share this “terrible vision” and envisions that the reservoir will “be a very pretty place over time.” Dr. Palmer sees it maintaining its recreational value except for the rowing activities. She also lives on the Mechums River and has observed the changes that have resulted over time from the continuing sedimentation.

Mr. Thomas Jones then stated that he does appreciate the reservoir as a rower and observes a lot of fisherman utilizing this resource. Forty-two years ago the community created a habitat that is now well established in terms of riparian habitat. He felt that the reservoir was “as close as we

get in Albemarle County to a good-size natural lake” that has significant inflow as compared to some smaller reservoir. The reservoir was not valued for just its beauty and recreational opportunities but has also become an important habitat that did not exist elsewhere in the County. Every year he has observed on multiple time bald eagles, as well as ospreys, river otters, minks, beavers, wood ducks, herons, and egrets. Mr. Jones felt another aspect is preserving the open-water habitat, which would be lost if it became a river entering through mud flats and built-up wetlands.

Mr. Jones next referred to the observations by TNC’s wetlands restoration specialist related to the soil collecting in the channel not being suitable for the development of wetlands. He further stated that some of the siltation is occurring in the middle of the reservoir and used Turtle Island as an example of built-up sediment. He also did not realize how much shoreline had moved out until Mr. Sauer noted this on the “field trip” and inquired if the specialist had examined any of that soil. Mr. Schuyler reiterated that the specialist who conducted a “back of the envelope” review of the reservoir suggested that the Corps would be willing to provide a more thorough sediment analysis. Although the specialist did not check the soil, he did note some vegetation along the fringes that he felt through his “trained eye” could be the formation of wetlands. Mr. Jones next commented that there could possibly be a distinction between what was happening in the center of the channel where the flows are “by definition greater” versus along the fringes of the reservoir.

Mr. Schuyler then reported that he was fortunate to have been able to go on the second reservoir tour when the reservoir was full. He did not want to impose on UVA, but he felt it would be helpful for the Task Force to view the reservoir in its more typical state of being full. He also noted that on that second tour, there was more vegetation floating on the surface than growing up from the bottom. It was not known at this time whether that was due to the recent rainfall or the vegetation was now submerged under water.

“Questions and Answers” discussed: Ms. Thomas referred to the handout included in each member’s meeting packet entitled “Member Roundtable Questions and Comments from August 12, 2008 meeting,” which originated from the list of questions raised by the members at the end of the last meeting as recorded by Mr. Frederick and Ms. Thomas.

Ms. Thomas then proceeded to the first question concerning the type of aquatic weed growing in the shallows within the reservoir. She noted that Mr. John Kauffman, Regional Fisheries Biologist with VDGIF, was in attendance to respond to Task Force questions concerning this issue. Ms. Thomas stated that in addition to Mr. Kauffman’s input, information provided by Ms. Michelle Garwood of the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission (TJPDC) about Lake Anna was included in the response to this question. Officials at Lake Anna were concerned that hydrilla would enter the power station’s intake system and received a grant to assist in controlling this aquatic plant. Prior to implementing this grant, a big storm in 1995 “scoured out” Lake Anna sufficiently to remove all the hydrilla. Since some areas had been fenced off previous to the storm event for the placement of grass eating carp to control the hydrilla, it was decided to proceed with the plan. In the fenced-in areas designed to keep out the grass carp, the hydrilla had grown back. In the areas where the grass carp has access, the hydrilla has either disappeared or was very sparse. Another source of information came from a newspaper article about the Fredericksburg area’s use of equipment that “mows” the hydrilla to keep the plant away

from the docks in order to promote more recreational boating activities in the river. The process resulted in the spread of hydrilla to other parts of the river, but removed the plant from critical areas.

Dr. Palmer next asked Mr. Kauffman to describe the “mowing” operation. Mr. Kauffman stated that the underwater operation involves the placement of a boat equipped with an underwater cycle bar on a continuously moving ramp. As mentioned by Ms. Thomas, the fragments resulting from the “mowing” operation can spread the hydrilla to other areas. This method is used for controlling hydrilla located in specific areas of a body of water.

Mr. Rooker then referred to the statement in the answer about the potential for loose hydrilla fragments to clog the intake screen at the treatment plant and inquired if this had actually occurred. Dr. Robert Wichser, RWSA Director of Water and Wastewater Operations, responded that this has not occurred during the six years that he has been involved with the Authority’s operations. Mr. David Golladay, RWSA Water Operations Manager, also stated that this has not been an issue during his 30 years with Rivanna. Mr. Rooker then commented that there were not many negative aspects mentioned in the answer related to the presence of hydrilla, which included the potential of clogging the intake screen and excess amounts making it more difficult for the rowing programs. The health of the reservoir did not appear to be negatively impacted by the presence of the hydrilla. Ms. Thomas added that hydrilla has a positive effect on water quality by absorbing nutrients.

Mr. Jones next commented that had a different impression from researching various websites about the impacts of hydrilla, and he is not “comfortable” at this time to state that hydrilla “on balance” is good for the reservoir. He also noted that as a rower he did not observe any hydrilla in the reservoir until last year, and the amount being observed now illustrates how rapidly the plant is growing. Last year, the area about 2,000 meters upstream of the boathouse contained very little hydrilla and now you cannot row on that side of the reservoir due to the density of those plants at the surface. Mr. Rooker then stated that it was not apparent from the written answer that hydrilla is a problem, but actually going out on the reservoir and observing the amount of the plants would lead him to conclude that hydrilla was a problem for the rowers. Mr. Gaffney next inquired if the hydrilla became more noticeable as the reservoir was drawn down. Mr. Jones stated that the hydrilla was present when the reservoir was at or near normal level but increased as the reservoir level went down.

Mr. Rooker then referred to a question raised at the last meeting that he felt had not been really addressed to this point concerning the extent to which reservoir capacity has been taken up by the plants. Ms. Thomas asked Mr. Kauffman to respond to Mr. Rooker’s question as it related to how the depth of the reservoir can limit the growth of plants. Mr. Kauffman stated that the plants would probably not grow beyond a depth of 10 feet and asked Mr. Jones if he observed plants growing below 10 feet where he was rowing. Mr. Kauffman further commented that the depth range could range as much as 12 to 15 feet, depending on water clarity. Mr. Jones next referred to a discussion he had with a fisherman about whether the “weeds” interfered with fishing. The fisherman commented that the “weeds” were a good habitat for the fish, but the fishermen could not reach them due to the dense growth. Mr. Kauffman then commented that about 20% to 30% plant coverage is good for the fish

habitat, but a higher number would interfere with fishing nets. Ms. Thomas next questioned how the coverage percentage is determined, and Mr. Kauffman replied that number is provided through aerial views of the water. Ms. Thomas then asked if Mr. Kauffman would be able to advise the Task Force on this matter. Mr. Kauffman felt this information could be obtained by mapping the depth of the areas where the hydrilla is observed.

Mr. Jones next stated that he recalled from Mr. Kauffman's discussion at the first meeting the fishermen's preference for the area upstream from the Earlysville Road Bridge rather than down by the dam. He has observed during the bass fishing tournaments held during the summer that the fishermen congregate near Ivy Creek and then proceed upstream toward the shallow water where the hydrilla is most likely present. He suggested getting input from those fishermen on the impact of hydrilla on their fishing. Ms. Thomas asked Mr. Jones to "hold on" to that suggestion until the discussion on the best way to solicit input from people who appreciate the reservoir.

Mr. Rooker then commented that he thought that a decision needed to be made at some point as to whether or not hydrilla was a problem, and if it was a problem, determine what the options are for dealing with this issue. It appeared that grass carp was one of the options that could be used to reduce the coverage area of hydrilla. Mr. Kauffman next stated that due to the reservoir's large drainage area, the grass carp would most likely go downstream. Mr. Rooker then inquired if there were other options for dealing with hydrilla. Mr. Kauffman replied that another option would be the use of chemicals. Mr. Rooker asked if there were any chemicals that would not contaminate the water in some way. Mr. Kauffman stated that he would have to review the labels to see what types of restrictions are associated with specific chemical use related to fishing and drinking water purposes. Dr. Palmer next commented that she thought there would be negative feedback from this community if chemicals were used to kill the hydrilla. Mr. Rooker further commented that the options dealing with the hydrilla would not only need to be effective but also "palpable" to this community. Ms. Thomas next asked about the depth of a dredging operation if that option was selected to remove the hydrilla. Mr. Kauffman stated that you would need to dredge down to the original substrate in order to prevent the hydrilla from returning.

Ms. Thomas next asked the groups if they wanted to learn more about this hydrilla issue or agree that this is a condition but not a problem. Ms. Olivier stated that she wanted to learn more about this issue related to the reservoir's use. Mr. Gaffney next questioned the amount of growth that would occur during a 10-year period based on the rapid increase during the past year.

Ms. Thomas then commented that obtaining information about the depths of the reservoir would be very helpful in determining whether hydrilla would pose a problem due to depth limitations on its growth. She next inquired if the area downstream from the Ivy Creek area was generally deeper than 10 to 15 feet. Dr. Wichser replied that he would need to review the survey data to see if that area was included in the findings.

Referencing the information provided by Mr. Kauffman, Mr. Rooker commented that if dredging were undertaken, the depth of the reservoir would be increased and the amount of areas that would be too deep for the hydrilla to "really take root" would also increase. If dredging were ultimately recommended by this group, the dredging process might deal with a substantial amount of the hydrilla. Mr. Rooker further stated that the volume of water being absorbed by the hydrilla when the reservoir is full would probably not be an issue. When the reservoir was down

he felt there would be more hydrilla growing, which could potentially reduce the amount of water available for consumption. He felt more scientific information was needed in order to make a determination on this issue.

Dr. Collins next stated that he felt a determination on whether the depth of the reservoir is related to the growth rate of hydrilla would be helpful for both dredging and for pump back purposes. If water is being withdrawn from the reservoir during critical periods and pumped to another reservoir, depth would also be a “factor in that equation.”

Mr. Rooker then commented that if it is unacceptable in this community to put chemicals in the water to kill the hydrilla and fragments resulting from a “mowing” operation could actually worsen the situation, dredging might be the most effective ways of eliminating the hydrilla for some period of time if it is determined to be a problem.

Mr. Martin next commented that he wanted to correct Dr. Collins’ statement about taking the water out of the reservoir and pumping it up to the Ragged Mountain Reservoir during critical periods of time. During drought periods, water would not be transferred from the SFRR to the Ragged Mountain Reservoirs. Under extreme conditions, water would be sent from the Ragged Mountain Dam to the SFRR. Dr. Collins responded that he did not know the “particulars of that,” but he was aware that you could not exceed more than 45 millions of gallons per day (mgd) being pumped upstream. He was referring to the variable between depth and hydrilla. He did not know what period in which that amount of water leaving the reservoir would have an effect on hydrilla growth. Mr. Thomas then noted that 97% of the water in the SFRR flows over the dam at this point, so in good flow times that much water could be piped to the other reservoir. She reiterated that there is no plan to pipe water out during times of drought. The pipeline will run in both directions and can supplement the water useable for the South Fork Water Treatment Plant in times of drought from the Ragged Mountain Reservoir. Dr. Collins then noted that the reservoir is not isolated from the river situated below it, which also contains a great amount of hydrilla. The river has seven miles of stream between the South Fork Reservoir Dam and the Moores Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant with great public access and should be viewed as a continuous system.

Ms. Thomas then concluded from the group’s discussion that no further questions would be raised about hydrilla at this point. The issue of reservoir depth and the rate of hydrilla growth might be addressed for other purposes during this process. Mr. Jones next commented about a question raised during the discussion about the need for more information as to whether fishermen were being affected by the hydrilla growth. Ms. Olivier then referred to the third paragraph in the second bulleted item and suggested that this topic be included in the routine sampling conducted by the park service officer. Dr. Collins added that recreational fishermen are affected by a much smaller amount of hydrilla than rowers due to their lures being snagged in the vegetation. Mr. Rooker then questioned if the presence of hydrilla during drought conditions would reduce capacity further than reported due to the inability to obtain the water from the vegetation. Ms. Thomas stated that those two questions related to hydrilla would be addressed.

Ms. Thomas next discussed the second bulleted item concerning fishing licenses. She stated that has been pointed out during the previous discussion, Mr. Pat Mullaney of Albemarle County Parks and Recreation is asking his park service officers to survey cars to determine residency of

users at the public launch sites. She felt this would be a group to target during the public input process.

Dr. Collins then commented that Mr. Jim Brewer, who has an article in the newspaper and is active in all the fishing tournaments, would be a good source of information on the number of fishermen who use the reservoir.

Moving on the next bulleted item concerning how to keep sediment out of the reservoir, Ms. Thomas stated that the Task Force briefly discussed this topic during the first part of the meeting. Mr. Stephen Bowler, whose report was included in the member's meeting packet, would be willing to meet with the group sometime on Monday, September 29, 2008. She asked the members to "hold that thought" until the discussion on setting the regular meeting schedule for the Task Force, as well as public input meetings. Mr. Bowler no longer lives in this area, so this would be an opportunity for the group to draw on his expertise. He currently works for the government in the hydroelectric plant licensing field and his work group regulates RWSA's hydroelectric plant.

Ms. Thomas next added on to earlier comments by Mr. Schuyler regarding the work of the Rivanna River Basin Commission. She stated that their Technical Advisory Committee has looked at a number of what is called "best management practices" and is grading them based on implementation cost and effectiveness. This is still an ongoing process, but she felt it would be a very useful tool for local governments and developers.

Dr. Collins then commented that he felt having Mr. Bowler attend a Task Force meeting was a great idea because he would not only be able to talk about current issues but would also have some interesting ideas for the future.

Dr. Palmer next suggested having a representative from the Rivanna River Basin Commission speak at a meeting to get an idea as to how effective some of the "best management practices" would have on reducing the sediment in the reservoir. Ms. Thomas felt it would be appropriate to have both Mr. Bowler and a representative from the Rivanna River Basin Commission at the September 29 meeting. She will check with Mr. Bowler concerning his availability to meet at 6:00 p.m. that date.

Ms. Thomas then recognized Mr. Greg Harper, Albemarle County Water Resources Manager, who would speak on the sediment issue. Mr. Harper stated that there was no "secret formula" that would stop sediment from entering the reservoir. Sediment is a natural process that occurs in reservoirs. Even if the entire watershed of the reservoir were converted back into a forest, sediment would still come into the reservoir. The question is how to get all the property owners within the watershed to try to replicate "forest hydrology" on each property. The "best management practices" under discussion will be incorporated into future development, but there are a number of existing developments, such as forestry and agricultural activities. Although Albemarle County and other organizations have implemented programs to reduce sediment, farming is still a major source of sediment. Efforts to minimize sediment should be undertaken, but sediment will be an ongoing issue for the reservoir for a long, long time.

Dr. Collins next asked Mr. Harper if there was any County ordinance that has “setback” or buffer requirements on new development. Dr. Collins referenced Mr. Bowler’s paper in which Mr. Bowler stated that the sediment trap at Lickinghole Creek Basin was no longer effective and recommended that “setbacks” or buffers be mandated. Mr. Harper replied that the County had “setback” requirements for all intermittent and perennial streams. Many of the developers upstream of the Lickinghole Basin are proffering additional stormwater management, erosion, and sediment control measures. The Lickinghole Basin does serve as a regional stormwater management system, but the County was increasing its efforts to work stormwater management and erosion control into developing properties.

Ms. Thomas then drew attention to a notice she distributed before the start of the meeting concerning a Water Forum sponsored by the League of Women Voters that will focus on this issue.

Mr. Rooker next commented that since it appeared from the previous discussion that it will not be possible to completely stop the sediment entering the reservoir, he felt it would be helpful to get a preliminary report on the Rivanna River Basin Commission’s findings on the effectiveness of “best management practices.” Mr. Rooker also noted the large mitigation project associated with the Community Water Supply Project, which included 75,000 linear feet of new stream buffers and the planting of 200 acres of forestation. He felt it would be helpful if the Rivanna River Basin Commission looked at the extent to which the Mitigation Plan itself would help with sedimentation.

Concerning the September 29 meeting, Ms. Joyner suggested that the Task Force members identify some questions and e-mail them to Ms. Thomas, who will forward them on to Mr. Bowler and the Rivanna River Basin Commission representative so that they can prepare for this meeting. Ms. Thomas noted one of the questions for Mr. Bowler concerned what would happen to the reservoir if nothing was done.

Ms. Thomas then addressed the bulleted item concerning forebays and stated that the reservoir is unusually narrow, which impacts the effectiveness of this option.

Ms. Thomas next commented that she felt the fifth bulleted item concerning the appearance of the reservoir if nothing was done would be an appropriate item for Mr. Bowler to address at the September 29, 2008.

Concerning the elements of a dredging study, Ms. Thomas stated that the list included in the handout was suggested by Gahagan & Bryant and could serve as a guide for this group.

Mr. Jones referred back to the bulleted item concerning the appearance of the reservoir if nothing was done. He assumed that it would essentially become a “run of the river” intake to provide the community’s water supply if it filled up with sediment. He also assumed that as the river filled in that the flow velocity would increase and the silt would remain in the water. He asked about the “trade-off” between removing the sediment actively in the process of filling up or recharging the Ragged Mountain Dam in terms of chemical costs versus allowing the reservoir to be “your settling agent essentially,” while recognizing that you would need to “maintenance dredge” every 40 years or so. He inquired how the sediment would be removed prior to pumping to the Ragged Mountain Dam. Mr. Gaffney next stated that the question might state that if the

reservoir becomes a “run of the river,” what would be the cost for removing the sediment prior to pumping to the Ragged Mountain Dam. Mr. Jones next commented that as the volume of the reservoir decreases he would assume that it would take a smaller and smaller storm event to turn the water brown.

Mr. Schuyler next stated that he felt the previous comments were leading to the question about what would the reservoir look like if dredging is not undertaken and the excessive sedimentation is not stopped. He further stated that when the moving water hits the “slack” water that is when sediment “falls out.” Mr. Schuyler thought that Mr. Jones’s question dealt with the stage at which there will be “slack” water. The reservoir was designed to have “dead storage” right at the dam, which is the deepest part of the reservoir, but the sediment has not yet reached that area because it was all accumulating back at the mouth of the river. He felt an interesting question would be as follows: “As the velocity increased and sediments carried further into the reservoir would the dead storage area start satisfying its purpose, which was to settle the sediment well below the intake, and what would be the area of slack water when that starts to happen?” Mr. Jones added that another part of the question concerned whether the remaining sediment in the water would gradually increase as the water is removed.

Dr. Palmer then asked given the topography upriver if there were any sections that would be expected to experience back flooding as the reservoir filled with sediment. Ms. Thomas noted that due to time constraints, Dr. Palmer’s question will be noted for response at the September 29 meeting.

Ms. Joyner requested that the group finish the questions on the rowing issue. Ms. Thomas stated that Mr. Sauer indicated that his rowing program would need sediment cleared from an area three miles upstream and two miles downstream from the boathouse at a depth of four feet. Mr. Fletcher added that Mr. Sauer’s was making a reference to what existed 20 years ago. Ms. Joyner further stated that it would be helpful to see that area illustrated on the map in order to get the sense of urgency from a rowing perspective. It is still useful for their purposes, but at what point does it stop being useful for their program? Mr. Jones next commented that he felt there were more dimensions to this issue than the “three miles up and two miles down” description because there are more points where the boats can only go in one direction due to sedimentation. At certain times of the year, there are several groups using the reservoir for rowing and due to the narrowing caused by sedimentation, the reservoir becomes less useful and more dangerous for that purpose. Ms. Joyner then commented that it would be helpful if Mr. Sauer could provide some type of estimation as to when the reservoir would become less useful for rowing purposes. Ms. Thomas suggested that Ms. Joyner, Mr. Jones, and Mr. Fletcher meet with Mr. Sauer to further refine this issue.

Dr. Collins next stated that one very important reason to dredge is to ensure that the intercollegiate training and education are continued. He felt it was an important activity for our community and has tremendous advantages for the University and our community.

Mr. Rooker then commented that another question that could be explored is the extent to which the hydrilla makes areas unusable for racing purposes.

Mr. Fletcher next stated the urgency of this issue is “relative,” and depends on the events that occur at that time. Two years ago the hydrilla issue was not a concern, and he questioned what would the impact of a major storm event have on sedimentation in the reservoir. He did not think it would be fair to ask Mr. Sauer when the reservoir would become useless for his program because it would depend on unforeseen future events. Mr. Sauer previously indicated that due to the current conditions he is not able to use the reservoir now for major events where there were multiple boats racing at the same time.

Regular schedule of meetings: e.g. 2nd and 4th Mondays of Sept., Oct. and Nov?

Ms. Thomas began the discussion on the meeting schedule for the Task Force by suggesting the second and fourth Mondays at 6:00 p.m. Since the next Task Force meeting has already been scheduled for September 29, she recommended that the regular schedule begin in October. RWSA has indicated that their Board meetings are held on the fourth Monday each month in the afternoon. Dr. Collins stated that Ms. Dede Smith, who he is replacing at today’s meeting, indicated that she would not be able to attend on Mondays. Some of the other members expressed their understanding that Ms. Smith’s schedule only impacted this particular Monday meeting. Mr. Schuyler then suggested e-mailing Ms. Smith to confirm whether she had a conflict on Mondays as a general rule or if it was just today’s meeting, which Ms. Thomas agreed to handle. After further discussion, it was the consensus of the group that the Task Force would meet on the second and fourth Mondays at 6:00 p.m. beginning in October.

Discussion of desired public input: what do we want to learn from the public? What is the best way to get broad and deep input? Ms. Thomas introduced Ms. Lee Catlin, Albemarle County Community Relations Manager, who was invited to today’s meeting in order to provide feedback to Task Force members on possible approaches to a public input process.

Ms. Catlin stated that in preparation for this meeting she reviewed the charge of the Task Force. She referred to Item #3, which asked that the group *receive public input on the community expectations for the future of the SFRR*. She then turned that identified item into a goal for the Task Force’s public participation effort, which is as follows: “Work directly with the public through a variety of input options to insure that issues and concerns regarding the future use of the SFRR are understood, considered and shared with decision-makers.” She next noted some of the discussion among the group about the public input process, which included the need for inclusiveness and a very broad ranging program. The goal is a way to insure that all steps are taken to satisfy what the group envisioned as a successful public participation effort.

Ms. Catlin next commented on the previous Task Force discussion concerning the community expectations for the future of the SFRR, which included wildlife habitat, fishing, UVA athletic facility, community recreational boating, water supply, scenic blue space, wetlands, and educational resource. Public input should be brought forward in a way that the group can evaluate and make a meaningful part of the Task Force process. She then discussed some outreach tools that the group might want to consider in its public participation effort. It is desirable to have some ongoing opportunities in place that will enable all members of the public who are unable to attend a meeting or are not necessarily interested in being part of a public forum to provide input at any point in the process. She used as an example a website with feedback opportunity and possibly a survey for public comment. Since the electronic tool is limited to the public that have access to a computer, a paper option should also be available for

those who prefer this option. A paper survey could be made available at appropriate locations throughout the community or handed out during certain intervals of time.

Ms. Catlin then discussed some of the special events that are more focused on opportunities for people to provide their public input. Some of those included targeted outreach to user groups through survey/questionnaires, field interviews, and attendance at their regular meetings, open house or drop-in opportunities, structured workshops or public forums depending on the amount of detailed information requested, and public hearings or public comment opportunities for recommendation in draft form.

Ms. Catlin next commented on the group's task to make a public presentation of its final report to the joint meeting of appointing bodies. She felt it was important to inform the people who have participated in this process are informed about this opportunity.

Ms. Catlin then discussed the "feedback loop" item, which involved making input available and accessible to the public. The focus should be on clear and transparent communication to the public on the results and decisions received during this process. She used as an example the posting of all public comments and survey results to a designated website in order to validate the time and efforts of the people participating during the public input process.

At the conclusion of Ms. Catlin's presentation, Dr. Collins asked which tools she thought would be most effective based on this group's short time table for accomplishing its goal. Ms. Catlin stated that she thought this group could undertake a variety of the tools, particularly the ongoing opportunities involving electronic and paper feedback. The open house and then a public hearing later in the process were also options for this group. Ms. Catlin stressed the variety aspect in order to provide a broad spectrum of public input opportunities.

Public present at the meeting asked for suggestions re: process of getting public input:

Ms. Betty Mooney commented that she felt that a lot more of the public would attend these meetings if the Task Force allowed some public comment at every one of its meetings. She has also heard from many people that they do not understand why the water supply is not as important as all the other reservoir uses. When the topic of the water supply gets mentioned, "it gets somehow shut down." The public feel like they are "being shut out."

Mr. Howard Pape next commented that he would suggest that to not only identify user groups but to also actively solicit their ideas through presentations rather than just using the paper option.

Mr. Tom Olivier, from the Piedmont Group of the Sierra Club, next commented that he had two suggestions for the Task Force. First, City Council and the Board of Supervisors have group e-mail addresses so that the members of the public can conveniently write to them. It was difficult to find e-mail addresses for the members of this Task Force. He would suggest that group e-mail address for this group be provided on RWSA's website. Second, he felt members of the public had a lot of comments about the values that should be protected, purposes of the reservoir and how it could be accomplished and suggested that a public hearing for input should be held sooner rather than later.

Ms. Karen Pape next commented that the Rivanna Rowing Club has an excellent web serve, which can reach about 60 to 75 people. She also recommended that the group contact Blue Ridge Mountain Sports or possibly placing information in the “Blue Ridge Outdoors” magazine.

Ms. Leslie Middleton next suggested contacting both the independent and public schools because we have not heard much about how the reservoir is accessed or could be accessed. She further stated that she was “very heartened” by the larger conversation of the amenity and the value of this resource. She felt there was a huge educational opportunity because rather than getting “polarized over questions of water supply” to ensure that the public not only has an opportunity to speak about the reservoir’s value but also has the opportunity to learn as much as this Task Force has learned in just a few weeks. If this did not occur, then she felt the discussion would “implode on itself into positions rather than a more expansive conversation.”

Mr. Richard Lloyd next thanked Ms. Thomas and stated that “she was a breath of fresh air” and he was glad she was here. He has been to most of the County and City meetings with the “stream of people standing up for their three minutes and felt it was an ineffective method. He would encourage the group to hold the town meetings, work with Charlottesville Tomorrow, and coordinate so that there are not too many diverse programs or agendas taking place so that it can be focused and organized into something that is manageable.

Mr. Ernie Reed, Charlottesville resident, next stated that he felt it was a great opportunity for people in attendance at this meeting who are interested in this topic actually be allocated 10% to 20% of the meeting time to give their comments. He suggested that posting the meeting agenda on-line ahead of time would give the members of the public who were interested in that particular topic to attend the meeting. His experience with public hearings dealt with infrastructure, especially VDOT. Public meetings tend to be going towards isolating people from actually making giving public comments, and he saw the value of allowing public comments on an ongoing basis so that people feel they are part of the process.

Ms. Catlin made a point for clarification that the agenda is posted on the website, but Mr. Reed’s comments indicate that improvements could be made in communicating that to the public.

Ms. Collette Hall next stated that she was not aware that there was a website. She asked the gentleman who was sitting next her about where he got the meeting agenda and if she could take a look at it so she would know the details of what would be discussed at this meeting. She then asked if Ms. Catlin could share with the public in attendance where the meeting information was located.

Mr. Catlin stated that at this time the Task Force information is posted to RWSA’s website. She further suggested for the purpose of this Task Force setting up a short cut in order to make Rivanna’s site, as well as the link posted on the City and County’s web pages, more user friendly for Task Force information.

Ms. Thomas next asked if someone could read what was written on the sign placed on one of the chairs in the audience. An unidentified person read the following: “The people forced into voiceless drought by Reservoir Task Force.”

Committee decision on issue. Other member comments: Ms. Thomas then commented that she checked with Richmond because she understood they had done some “visioning” of the James River that might be useful to this group. She learned that it dealt with their entire comprehensive plans instead of focusing on the James River. The City of Richmond found that businesses were interested in that process and were willing to put up posters and inform the public about the meetings. She felt that people around the reservoir would be also interested in helping to disseminate information during the public input process.

Ms. Catlin next stated that if there was interest from the group, some type of ongoing public comment item could be placed on the website. Mr. Rooker felt that the public should be provided that opportunity, but he felt it would be more valuable if people were required to give their names and addresses as part of that process. Ms. Catlin felt that could be done, and the Task Force could decide how much weight to give comments without that identifying information. She also suggested giving the public the paper option as well. Mr. Rooker then inquired about the best way to inform the public on these opportunities besides through the use of the website. Ms. Catlin stated that the availability and the contact information for obtaining a paper version of an on-line document could be advertised at a Task Force meeting. Mr. Rooker next suggested making public comment sheets available at each Task Force meeting, which could either be returned at a meeting or mailed to the address indicated on the comment sheet. Ms. Thomas then stated that 13 organizations are represented on the Task Force and suggested that each member decide the best way to disseminate the information throughout their organization. Dr. Palmer next commented that there is a place at the top of the ACSA’s water bills for alerts and suggested that could be a means for informing the public. Mr. Rooker suggested inserting the public comments sheets/surveys into the City and ACSA water bills. Dr. Collins next stated that he felt the public needed more information and suggested that a “Frequently Asked Question” sheet be developed to provide more information about the Task Force process. He also felt it would helpful to get the perspective on what the Corps would do if the decision were made to dredge, what type of permits were required, and would the wetlands be “precluded from being filled.” Ms. Catlin thought that providing some background information to the public would be helpful during the process. Ms. Joyner next suggested adding a question to a survey about how and why the person values the reservoir. Ms. Thomas suggested that the group e-mail her with suggested questions that would supply the group with the input needed to meet the goal of this process. She felt some type of public hearing would be needed, possibly similar to what RWSA used during the Community Water Supply planning process. Ms. Olivier next stated that she favored a process where the public would have the opportunity to not only present their comments but also get a response at that time. Mr. Jones then commented that there might be a better opportunity to respond to comments after a draft recommendation can be presented and explained to the public. Dr. Palmer next commented that she felt that RWSA’s facilitated open house workshop format would work well for the Task Force’s public meeting purpose. She did not feel that a “stream of people” approach would meet those needs.

Ms. Thomas then stated that the conversation concerning the public input process will need to be continued to another meeting to due to the length of this meeting. She recognized Mr. Tom Frederick, RWSA Executive Director, who would present some logistical information to share with the group.

Mr. Frederick stated when the Task Force was formed the logistics about how RWSA staff would support this group was not clearly defined. RWSA staff has assumed the role of assisting the group as much as staff time allowed. He appreciated the positive comments at the beginning of the meeting concerning the work performed by Ms. Knowles related to the Task Force meeting minutes. He still has directives from his Board of Directors to carry out work related to RWSA programs that were defined before the decision to form the Task Force. He has assigned Ms. Tamara Ambler, RWSA Water Resources Manager, the primary responsibility for coordinating staff involvement in supporting the Task Force. He realized with the Task Force's current decision to meet twice a month that it will become more than RWSA can expect Ms. Knowles to accomplish in addition to her work responsibilities at RWSA and for RWSA's Board of Directors. RWSA is looking into outside resources and might even go before the Board this month asking for additional budget support for this Task Force in order to get everything accomplished that might not be possible with existing staff. Mr. Frederick noted that RWSA staff would continue to assist the Task Force to the extent possible with available resources and will communicate the need for additional resources as defined.

Ms. Thomas next commented that the Task Force is an officially created body and therefore fall under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and Ms. Catlin will next provide further clarification on this matter. Ms. Catlin then noted that any e-mails or communications between the Task Force members or with anyone else that is related to the business of the Task Force can be requested by the public and has to be provided under this Act. If more than two Task Force members have any kind of gathering or meeting to discuss the business of the Task Force that qualifies as a public meeting that has to be advertised similar to other public meetings. She felt it was important for the members to consider the provisions of the Act when conducting their business. Ms. Thomas added that the Act also applies to when a personal computer and personal e-mail address are used for that communication. Dr. Palmer asked about the best way that the public could e-mail the Task Force members and suggested a common site where all this communication could be directed. Ms. Catlin will check on the possibility of developing and the legal implications of a separate e-mail site. Mr. Jones then asked if there were any record keeping requirements under this Act. Ms. Thomas replied that if a FOIA request is received related to the Task Force business, one is required to submit all the requested information currently on his/her computer. Mr. Martin asked if he was correct that if more than two Task Force members attended an RWSA Board meeting that it would not be considered a public meeting unless Task Force business was discussed, and Ms. Catlin replied that he was correct. Mr. Fletcher then inquired if as discussed earlier three of the Task Force members meet with Mr. Sauer concerning his rowing concerns, would this constitute a public meeting and would the public be invited to participate as well. Ms. Catlin stated that they would only be required to post that gathering as a Task Force meeting.

2.0 Adjournment

The SFRR Stewardship Task Force meeting was adjourned by Ms. Thomas at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ms. Sally H. Thomas
Chair
SFRR STEWARDSHIP TASK FORCE