

Wednesday, September 17, 2014
Water Trail Round Table Discussion
Facilitated by: Janit Llewellyn Allen & Lynn Crump

- **Trends in water trail development**

- No impoundments
- Gloucester water trails – 5 trails with marinas wanting to be part of the plan, destinations that are ADA accessible
- Focus on accessibility at planning and design phase.
- DGIF now funds paddle sports/non-motorized uses
- Water trails are more popular as a result of greenway popularity
- Demographics and change of users
- Private property owners are providing services
- Government is more receptive to water access due to realized benefits
- Paddle sports largest growing outdoor sport
- Affordability
- Stand up paddle boarding - changes in the way people recreate – fishing from kayaks
- FEMA – minimum improvement to show use

- **List impediments and issues keeping water trails from advancing**

- Crown grant access issues, access in general
- Focus on boats, canoes, kayaks but not on other users (waders, bank fishing, wildlife, environmental education)
- Low wage service sector job creation often associated with tourism – simply be aware of the kinds of job creation – focus on living wage
- Difficulty in getting all partners to the table due to county, state or organizational leaders initially view this type of project as another cost and/or future issue.
- Maintenance of site – no parks and recreation in local counties.
- Lack of property – all privately owned
- High banks along the shoreline
- Land access
- Funds to build
- Maintenance
- Security
- Perceived liabilities for local governments
- Access points that are closer together for short paddles are needed to attract new people and for aging populations.
- Dams are a physical barrier and an impediment as well as a safety issue for river recreation.
- Lack of money to market trails to the public. Need to increase visibility and awareness of existing trails.
- One statewide resource/website that provides up to date blueway information.
- Difficulty in getting government (local) to assist legislatively, financially and operationally.
- Site locations – land ownership – land control

- Hard data on economic benefits so municipalities are willing to allocate funds for essential facilities (i.e. bathrooms) and so private investors have the necessary information to formulate business plans.
- Railroad barriers
- Need a grant writer that groups can call on –even if the grant writer needs to be paid by local groups.
- Private property objections
- Lack of funding
- Lack of access points
- Need for funding
- Inform landowners & elected officials
- River access (put-ins & take-outs)
- Lack of vision/cooperation from locals: they don't seem to understand the potential and/or aren't interested in "outsiders" on their river
- Lack of rental facilities
- Education –Casual users aren't always aware of what a water trail is or its importance. Many think water trails re hiking/biking trails along waterways or that they are all marked with buoys.

- **Who needs to be involved to increase support for water trails?**

- Government needs to help establish multi-jurisdictional trails
- Work with Virginia Tourism and others for grants and guidance
- Support for advocacy groups/Friends group/ private and public sectors
- Cross promotion
- NPS – RTCA

- **What needs to happen to increase support for water trails?**

- Need for process description
- Need for assistance with websites/outreach/marketing
- Develop partnerships (Government, private sector, non-profits)
- Look at natural resources of the area to expend less on facilities
- Training for partnership development and sustenance
- Help with websites/outreach/marketing
- Look at natural resources of area
- Work with VTC and others

- **Next steps**

- Send notes out to the team as an attachment to the follow-up survey monkey.
- Ask workshop participants who would like to be involved in a group to formulate initiatives to move water trails forward.