

The RAFT Middle Peninsula Progress Workshop

March 22, 2023

An aerial photograph of a golf course. A large, irregularly shaped water feature, possibly a lake or a series of connected ponds, is the central focus. The water is a light blue-grey color. Surrounding the water are various green spaces, including fairways, roughs, and clusters of trees. Some trees have yellow and orange foliage, suggesting an autumn setting. The overall scene is a mix of natural and landscaped elements.

Welcome and Introductions

Photo Credits to Virginia Dept. of Conservation and Recreation



Overview of The RAFT

Goal: To help Virginia's coastal localities improve resilience to flooding and other coastal storm hazards while remaining economically and socially viable.

Current Status –

- We have concluded Implementation Team monthly calls led by the RAFT team.
- Localities have received
 - Direct assistance and support on Resilience Action Checklist projects
 - Connections to expertise on topics such as transportation resilience and mapping

Today –

- Localities will share progress and lessons learned.

1. Scorecard, Interviews & Focus Groups

- Resilience Assessment (Spring 2021)

2. Community Workshop

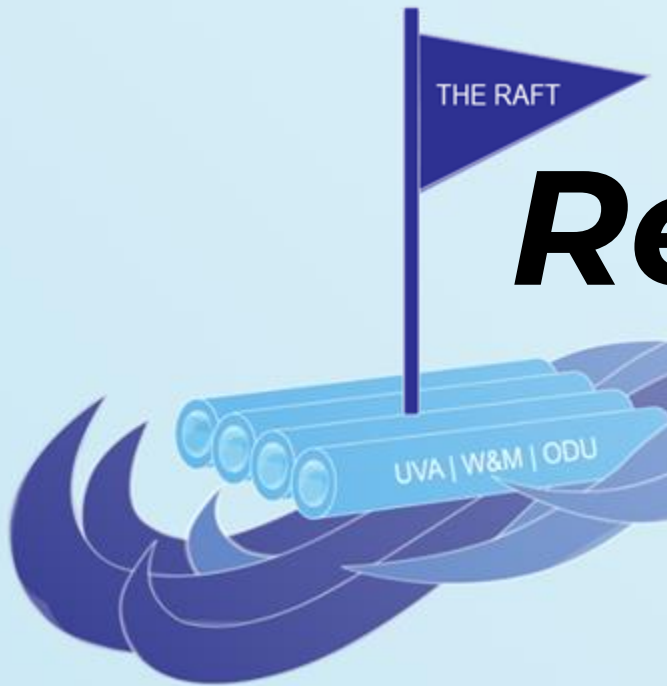
- Resilience Action Checklist (Winter 2022)

3. Implementation

- 12 months of focused action (Spring 2022-Spring 2023)



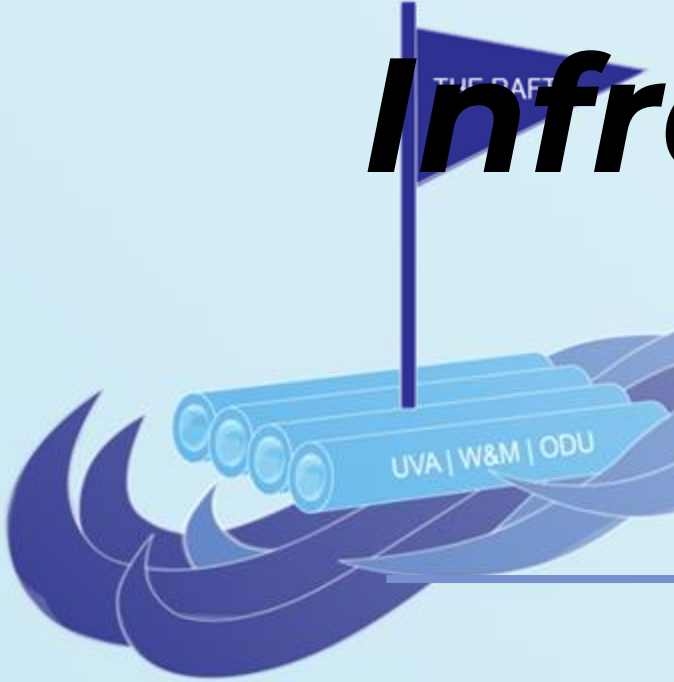
Tools & Resources for Localities



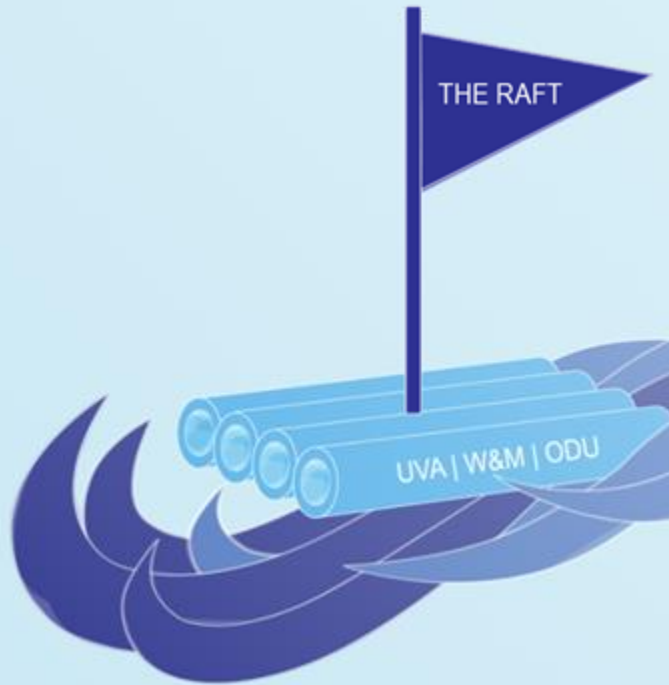
VDOT *Resilience Plan*

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The RAFT *Critical* *Infrastructure* *Policy* *Fact* *Sheets*

The logo features a stylized boat with a blue flag on a pole. The flag has the text 'THE RAFT' on it. The boat's hull is blue and contains the text 'UVA | W&M | ODU'. The boat is moving to the right, leaving a trail of blue and green wavy lines behind it.

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The RAFT

Resource

Sheet

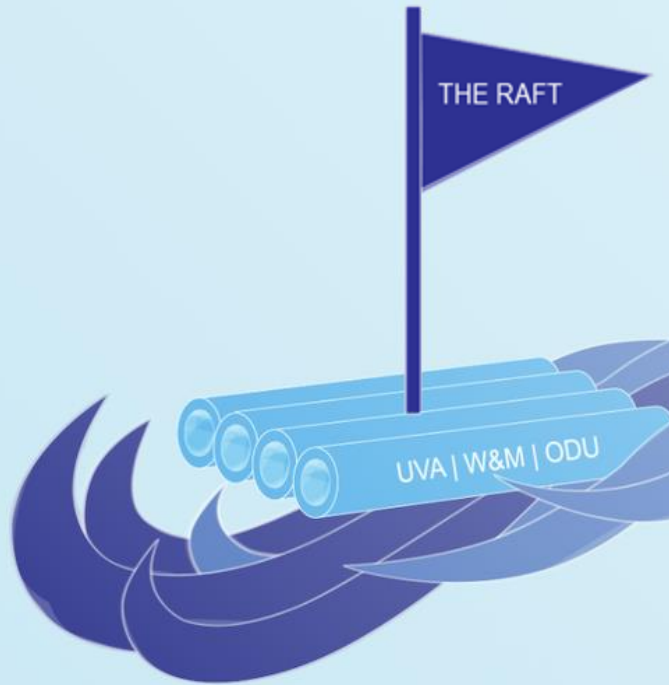
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Break

**Locality
Presentations:
Community
Achievements &
Application of
RAFT Tools**

The RAFT

King William County



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Standout Case Study

For the past year we have held virtual meetings to collaborate with other agencies and departments to identify the critical needs of King William County. During our meetings, we have been able to meet and connect with other agencies and work as a team in identifying these needs and come up with ideas to create a plan.

Raft has opened our eyes to what is needed to help make King William safe and better community for our citizens. We have uncovered issues that affects all Counties in the Middle Peninsula, allowing us to share issues and ideas.

We face different types of emergencies which include different types of flooding, fires, wind, snow and ice, aging population, special needs population. RAFT has made it possible to identify these needs and create plans to improve, to give and receive community feedback, and provide a plan for the County to manage these risks.



Resilience Action Checklist

Plan and Host Regional Community Workshop on Resilience

- Hosted and attended a resilience workshop with presentations from a diverse group of stakeholders
- Interest in having a similar group meet once a month or quarterly to keep everyone in place in case of an emergency situation
- Chesapeake Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (VIMS) will be hosting a follow up community workshop that will help localities identify hazards, solutions, and funding opportunities.

Create a Plan to Promote Affordable Housing

- We had a small group breakout to discuss this issue and potential solutions
- Renee Robinson from Habitat for Humanity spoke on affordable housing
- The Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors have been looking at incorporating incentives within the subdivision ordinance to attract developers to include a portion of lots for affordable housing. Affordable housing has also been incorporated in our Comprehensive Plan.

Identify and Develop Plan to Address Vulnerable Transportation Infrastructure

- IT members attended a workshop held by VIMS and VCPC addressing critical infrastructure impacts from sea level rise, including road inundation, and potential policy considerations
- We identified an issue of road access to the Pamunkey and Upper Mattaponi Reservations

Take Steps to Enact Proactive Resilience Planning

- County is developing a list of stakeholders to convene regularly to discuss resilience and emergency response.
- The IT has discussed the benefit of working regionally on issues of affordable housing and addressing the needs of the elderly

Address Needs of the Elderly and Physically Disabled Residents

- Need for community partner collaboration on a regional level to address this issue; continue efforts through the RREW
- County and Social Services are working on developing services at the county level to address the needs of the elderly



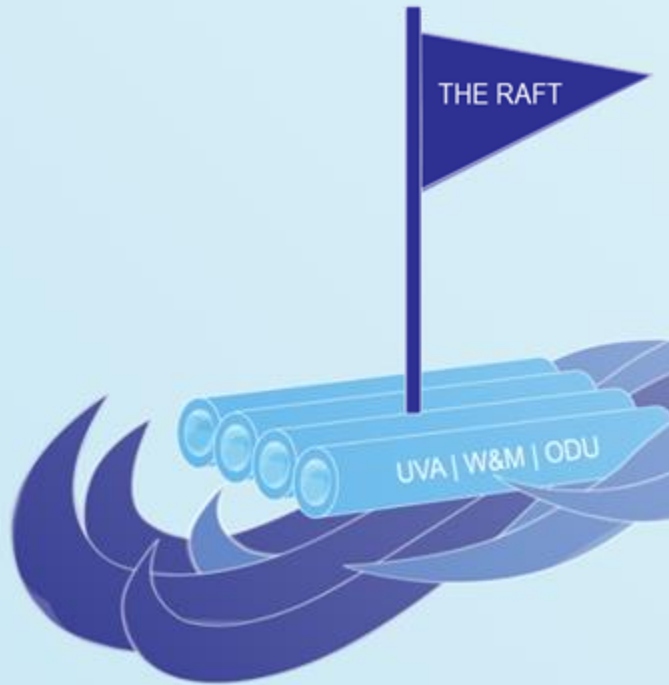
Lessons Learned from RAFT

- Meeting in person and establishing face to face connections would have helped move action items along.
- Resiliency has many different facets; valuable to look at all different aspects of resiliency and how it can impact a community (i.e. climate impacts to emergency response, food access, affordable housing).
- Biggest success has been getting diverse stakeholders together, identifying issues and coming up with solutions to address these issues. Developing relationships among stakeholders.

Next Steps and Future Opportunities

- Convening in person to implement tangible projects coming out implementation team discussions
- Incorporate the Town of West Point and Tribal communities in future efforts
- Convene a stakeholders group quarterly (at minimum) to discuss resilience and emergency preparedness in King William County

The RAFT *Town of* *West Point*

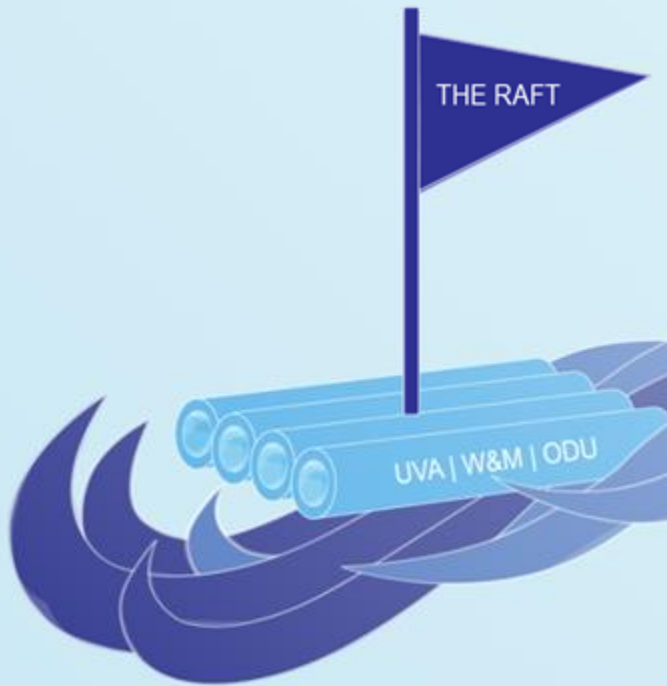


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Resilience Action Checklist

1. Host an event to educate the community on the fight the flood program and resilience
2. Develop a process to focus on flooding in the Kirby Street corridor
3. Assess critical infrastructure weaknesses and develop a plan to fix them
4. Plan to develop a holistic resilience plan for West Point



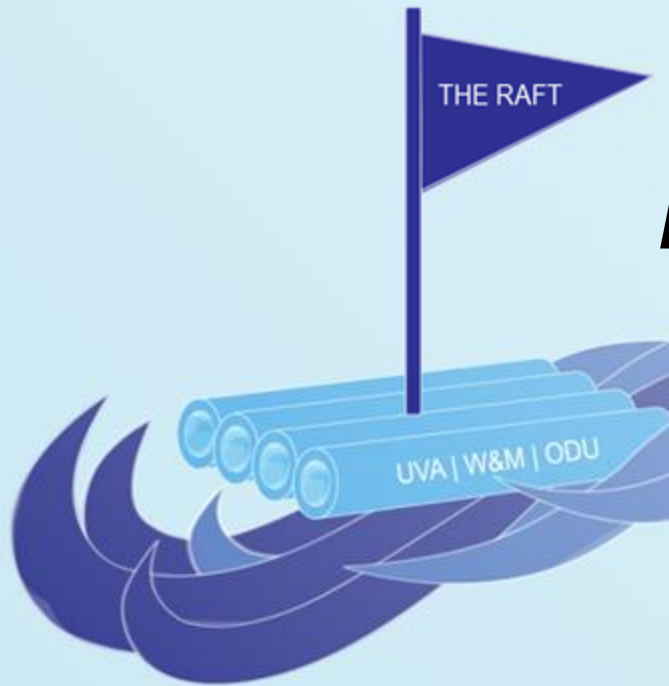
The RAFT *Mathews* County

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Resilience Action Checklist

- **DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO ENHANCE COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH**
- **ADDRESS VULNERABILITY OF PRIVATE WELL AND SEPTIC SYSTEMS**
- **COMPREHENSIVELY PLAN FOR PRESERVING AND SUPPORTING THE WORKING WATERFRONT**
- **ADDRESS VULNERABILITY OF SHORELINE PROPERTY**
- **INCREASE RESILIENCE OF BUSINESSES**



The RAFT

Essex County

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Essex County Goals

- Community-based Emergency Management & Preparedness
- Housing & Sheltering Team
- Food Security Team
- Water Quality/Septic Pump Outs

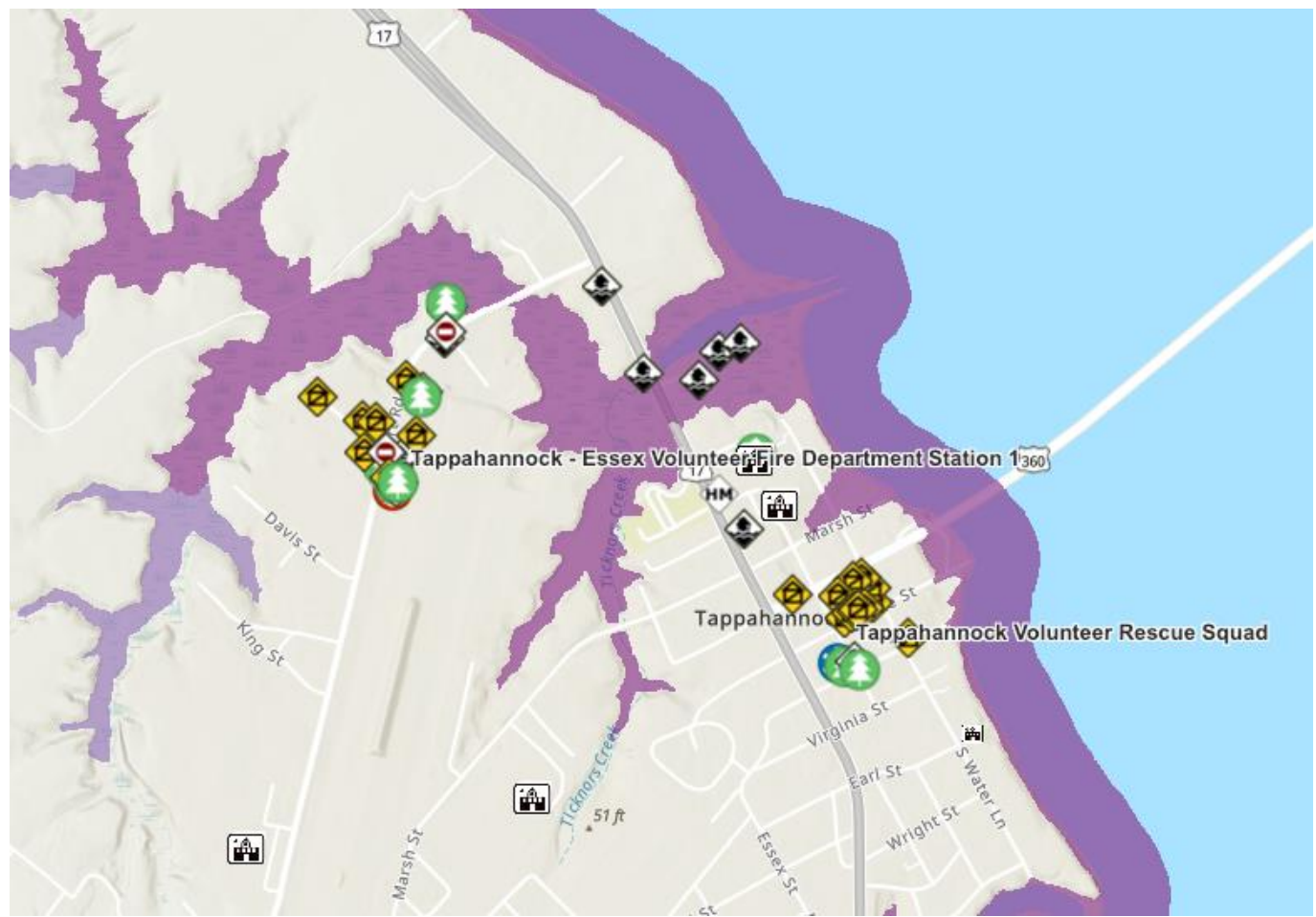


Resilience Action Checklist

Enhance Community Engaged Disaster Preparedness

1. Essex Emergency Services hosted an emergency stakeholders meeting in July 2022 with the goal of identifying gaps in the County's disaster preparedness plans. This was successful and a similar meeting will be held in Essex County Spring 2023.







2. The RAFT team drafted an Emergency Resources Directory to work in conjunction with a publicly available sheltering inventory published on the Visit Tappahannock website.

Internal Information

American Red Cross

Address: 2825 Emerywood Parkway
Richmond, VA 23294

Phone number: (804) 780-2250

Link: <https://www.redcross.org/local/virginia/about-us/locations.html>

Summary: National-branch nonprofit which provides emergency assistance, disaster relief, and preparedness education. Vast majority of responses across the country are fire-related, but Essex Co. is particularly vulnerable to flood-related damage and injury. Long-term work includes emergency financial assistance to affected households and providing grants at the community level.

External Information



BUDGET INN

Conveniently located at 823 N. Church Lane, Budget Inn offers an economical spot to rest your head. Free Wi-Fi.



DAYS INN BY WYNDHAM TAPPAHANNOCK

Free coffee and breakfast item and free Wi-Fi. Pet-friendly with early and late checkout available.



HAMPTON INN TAPPAHANNOCK





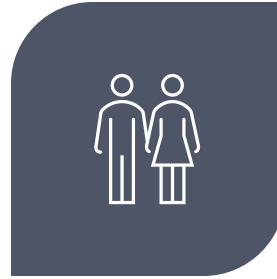
3. Information gleaned from a series of meetings hosted by Essex Emergency Services and the RAFT has been documented to bolster contingency during personnel turnover.



Sheltering- Broader Concern



EDUCATION ON
RESOURCES



TEMPORARY
SHELTER OR DAY
SHELTERING



EMERGENCY
SHELTERING



Resilience Action Checklist

Increase Affordable Housing and Sheltering Options

1. Conversations with community partners including Bay Housing and Essex Churches Together have made clear that affordable housing must be expanded alongside workforce development for population retention.
2. Short-term housing solutions provided by networks including The Haven, GUEST, and Essex Social Services requires continual cross-agency communication and adequate funding.
3. Efforts to establish a day-shelter in the area by the Essex Strategic Housing team are ongoing through the RAFT's Regional Resilience Equity Workgroup (RREW) and will seek cooperation with the Town of Tappahannock, Essex County, and potential partners like Fix Ministry.



Standout Case Study

- Housing and Sheltering Strategic Meetings with Stakeholders have begun (Goals 1 and 2).
- Contacts and conversations have begun for identification, planning, and training for Emergency Shelter Operations. (Goals 1 and 2).
- Tommy facilitated and hosted a Community Resource Meeting to identify and familiarize partners and resources. (Goals 1-5).
- Essex Churches Together - invited the Red Cross to present on Red Cross Programs and Be Red Red Cross Ready Disaster Preparedness. (Goal 1).
- Links provided to access American Red Cross Preparedness information and tools.(Goal 1).



Lessons Learned from RAFT

Include any lessons learned, including challenges, that your implementation team worked to overcome during the year of implementation. What have you learned about resilience in the process?

- Maintaining connections and ongoing conversations between stakeholders is critical
- Developing strategic goals to improve processes and solutions
- Continuity plans should be emphasized to retain contact during personnel turnover

Next Steps and Future Opportunities



The RAFT

King & Queen

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Resilience Action Checklist

Educate shoreline owners and local residents on the Fight the Flood Program

1. Mattaponi & Pamunkey Rivers Association (MPRA) put articles in two newsletters about the Fight the Flood program (Winter 2022 & 2023) sent to 150 members and an additional email group of 250 people.
2. MPRA is working with the York River Small Coastal Basin Roundtable to include information on the Fight the Flood Program in upcoming series of workshops for King William and King and Queen County residents, including tribal communities (Upper Mattaponi, Pamunkey, Mattaponi and Rappahannock)
3. MPRA is working with the Mattaponi RiverKeeper (employed by the Friends of the Rappahannock) on creating a database of shoreline owners of the Mattaponi and Pamunkey Rivers to invite to the workshops and disseminate information about the Fight the Flood and state programs relating to environmental shoreline issues.



Resilience Action Checklist

Increase education about and connections to the watershed and resilience

1. MPRA is working with the York River Small Coastal Basin Roundtable on an upcoming series of workshops for King and Queen County residents and other residents of the York River watershed. Other partners include representatives from local governments in the entire watershed, Chesapeake Bay National Estuarian Reserve, VIMS, VA Cooperative Extension, Lake Anna Civic Association, etc.
2. MPRA, VA Cooperative Extension 4-H, VA Dept. of Forestry, VA Dept. of Wildlife Resources, the Mattaponi RiverKeeper and King and Queen Public Schools are coordinating a River Day on March 31 for all 6th graders in King & Queen (rain date April 19). This event was originally scheduled for the fall but canceled twice due to weather and flooding at Sandy Point State Forest.



Resilience Action Checklist

Expand availability of fresh food

1. Community Gardens - Christina
2. THRIVE VA
3. Feed More
4. Meals on Wheels in King and Queen
5. Rappahannock Tribe - Jay
6. Ag Education at Central High - Rob



Resilience Action Checklist

Develop a transportation plan to transport fresh foods and medicines to people

1. A survey was developed with collaboration from RAFT team members, Bay Aging, & Bay Transit & distributed to community members in an effort to gauge public awareness about current services offered in King & Queen.
2. The survey results showed us that the community was largely unaware of Bay Transit/Bay Aging services available to them.
3. Using this feedback Bay Transit, Bay Aging, & others will continue to work with local government & planning commissions to discuss expansion of services & how advertising can be improved through the Regional Resilience Equity Workgroup (RREW) transit subgroup.
4. Stipulations around public transportation funding make adding additional programs difficult, but with the support of local government expansion of programs may be possible.



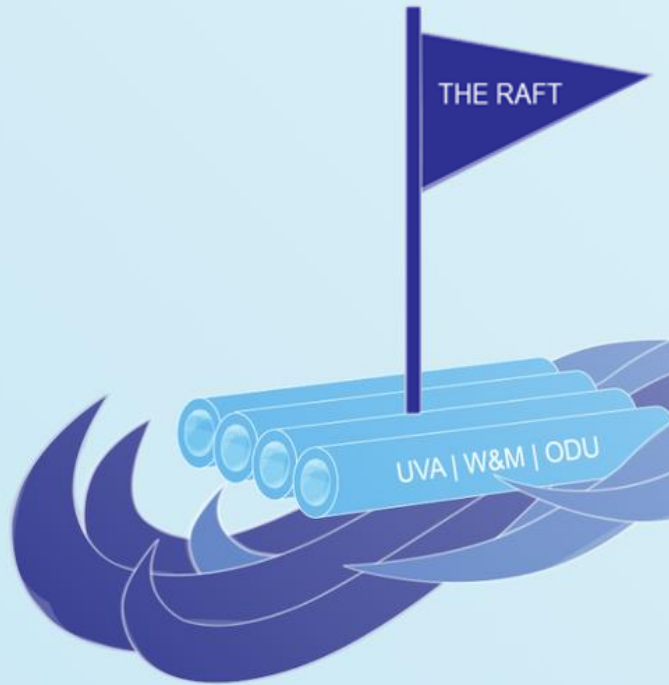
Lessons Learned from RAFT

- There's a lot more going on in King and Queen than people know
- It's difficult getting information to residents (already knew this!)
- RAFT brought people together who didn't know each other or what others were doing in the county and created new coalitions.
- It's a challenge to get local government involved and let them know what people are doing. Agency/organizational staff or volunteers tend to work with groups or people close to adjacent counties where there are more resources and communication going on. Difficult to connect countywide in King and Queen.

Next Steps and Future Opportunities

- MPRA, VCE and King & Queen Schools plan to continue a River Day for 6th graders each year.
- Thrive Virginia will be bringing a Family Resource Center to King & Queen. This will be a space to continue existing programs & spread awareness about all community efforts in the county.

The RAFT *Middlesex*



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Carla Minor-Blake, Community Outreach Liaison
Three Rivers Health District



Resilience Action Checklist

Include a brief overview of the items on your locality's Resilience Action Checklist, progress made, challenges, and next steps.

PROGRESS MADE - We identified vulnerabilities in our county which deserve consideration and preparation. Action plans needed for basic services to prepare for high water events include septic systems, water, areas with limited road access will need transportation options, (we were able to remove dam safety as a concern for our area).

CHALLENGES – We began looking for connections between community vulnerabilities and sources of assistance (i.e. grants), directories of entities to call upon to help with preparedness

NEXT STEPS – There is a need to raise awareness at public events, help local communities pinpoint potential hazards in vulnerable areas, help residents prepare for periods of time when services may be unavailable. There is nothing worse than feeling helpless.

Lessons Learned from RAFT



My top three lessons learned in this past year while working with several RAFT Implementation Teams are; #1. The importance of *good* communication #2. The *need* for community involvement & participation and #3. The fact there are “no little I’s or little T’s” within Implementation/Project teams. Everyone has a voice. Everyone should speak up. Everyone has a gift/strength to share, plans can be completed in decency and in order if everyone practices autonomy *and* teamwork. It’s what I call a Happy, Hyped Synergy!

2022 was my first experience serving on several RAFT Implementation Teams, several of our goals; to tackle some very difficult community and environmental issues within the Northern Neck Middle Peninsula (NNMP) areas, and to adopt fresh ideas, plans and people to assist with this monumental vision. The first two community engagement challenges I set for myself... totally flopped! I did not get community feedback as projected, I was stunned. A definite *Teachable Moment*.

I had to (and eventually did) come to the understanding that I should always have a plan “C”, “D” and a possible “E” in planning for best practices, especially with community involvement and support.

Maintaining resilience (and patience) during this process is important.

Next Steps and Future Opportunities

**"The way to get started is to quit talking
and begin doing." - Walt Disney**

➤ **Next Steps**

- Continue meeting with involved RAFT members, preferably once a month
- Brainstorm & share new thoughts, ideas and planning initiatives
- New innovative planning within our scope of practice
- Introduce and encourage new members

➤ **Future Opportunities**

- Work closer with family businesses, places of worship and civic organizations
- Work closer with Three Rivers Health District Environmental Health Departments – assisting NNMP residents with plain language instructions for ease of understanding and processes
- Encourage RAFT members to reach out to Disability, Access and Functional Needs communities to help our team and goals be meaningful and applicable for the entire NNMP population

Think **Livable Communities** for Everyone

We All Need Each Other



Break

Resilience Planning Going Forward:

**Role of Localities, PDC, and
Ongoing Collaboration**

The RAFT Fund

Mini and Micro

Grants



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Regional Resilience Equity Workgroup (RREW)

Sierra Gladfelter, IEN

- Regional effort including the 10 counties of the Middle Peninsula & Northern Neck
- Facilitation and participant honorarium support from the Jessie Ball duPont Fund
- Planning phase in Fall 2022
- Core Workgroup launched in January 2023 and is now meeting monthly
- Subgroups to host kick-off meetings in March or April- these meetings are open to all who are interested!

RREW Subgroups and Co-Leads

To get connected with a Subgroup,
contact Sierra Gladfelter at:
sg6us@virginia.edu

- **Economic Development & Living Wages:** Beth Sharpe
- **Healthcare & Mental Well-being:** Brenden Rivenbark and Vanesa Livingstone
- **Food Security:** Jay Grebe and Haley Moog
- **Affordable Housing & Shelters:** Hunter LeClair and Chris Bruce
- **Transit:** Ken Pollock
- **Programs for Youth & Families:** Chad Lewis and Chris Bruce

The Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission

Fight the Flood

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Q&A

Moving Forward Together

- How do you move forward with resilience planning in your community, while balancing all of the different pressures and needs and interests?
 - What needs, priorities, or opportunities do you see in your town or county, or the Middle Peninsula region as a whole, for increasing your resilience?
 - What do you see as the biggest challenges for advancing resilience that need attention?

Evaluation

Many thanks to funders that support bringing The RAFT to the Northern Neck

- *Jessie Ball duPont Fund*
- *Virginia Environmental Endowment (VEE)*
- *Virginia Sea Grant*
- *Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program (CZM) - National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)*



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