

Cowpasture River Preservation Association Strategic Plan Revised: July 2007

Mission Statement

The mission of the Cowpasture River Preservation Association is to preserve the natural condition and beauty of the Cowpasture River and its tributaries for present and future generations.

Vision

The CRPA seeks to be:

- A model conservation organization in the region, acting as a leader in watershed education and stewardship
- An organization whose membership is inclusive of all river owners, admirers, users, and watershed residents
- Recognized by the local community as a valuable resource, respected and trusted
- A driving force in the preservation of the natural condition, water quality and beauty of the Cowpasture River watershed
- A proactive advocate for environmental issues in the Alleghany Highlands
- A partner in cooperative efforts to protect the environment

Core Values

- The Cowpasture River is a unique, precious, non-replaceable resource
- The River is a vital resource in recreation, economic, and aesthetic terms, thus it is important for everyone to protect and support
- Riparian landowners and other users of the river are vital to maintaining water quality
- Healthy water and soil (high quality and well cared for) produce healthy wildlife, livestock, and people and therefore is essential to the quality of life in the watershed

Strategic Issue: Organizational Development

Goal: Create an organizational structure which enables us to carry out our mission and strategic plan

Oversight: Executive Committee

Objectives and Action Plans

Objective: Define and record internal policies and procedures to be effective/efficient and to eliminate confusion/duplication of effort

Action Plan: Develop necessary policies

- Membership
- Board
- Dues
- Record retention

Action Plan: Record important and historical CRPA information

Action Plan: Consider accounting mechanisms such as purchase orders, credit cards to streamline business transactions

Action Plan: Establish and implement review processes

- Executive Director
- Board
- Strategic Plan

Objective: Board and Staff Development

Action Plan: Establish standing committees to oversee implementation of strategic plan and mission

- Education
- Monitoring
- Membership
- Budget/Fundraising
- Public Relations

Action Plan: Develop Board Member Handbooks (By-laws, Board Member rights and responsibilities, volunteer hour logs, etc.)

Action Plan: Conduct Board Member training on relevant topics

Action Plan: Support staff development through training opportunities, conferences, etc.

Strategic Issue: Membership

Goal: Increase CRPA's member base and encourage their involvement in our activities.

Oversight: Membership Committee

Objectives and Action Plans

Objective: Increase and broaden (geographically and ages) our membership

Action Plan: Form junior membership level

Action Plan: Host new member recruiting events

- have each board member bring two new members to an event
- house parties

Action Plan: Identify and solicit riparian land owners for membership

Objective: Develop member database to identify, track and better use membership

Action Plan: Track member volunteer hours for grant and other purposes

Objective: Increase involvement of non-board members in activities and leadership

Action Plan: Cultivate current members into leadership positions by identifying interest and availability

Action Plan: Plan social/recreation event for entire membership

Action Plan: Identify non-controversial project for universal support

- Adopt-A-Stream Program

Strategic Issue: Water Quality Monitoring

Goal: Conduct water quality monitoring in the Cowpasture River Watershed to engage local community members to become water quality stewards, establish and augment current water quality baseline data, document water quality changes over time and identify potential water quality problems

Oversight: Monitoring Committee

Objectives and Action Plans
<p>Objective: Increase number of volunteer monitors</p> <p>Action Plan: Use mailings, personal contacts, and media to identify interested individuals</p> <p>Action Plan: Host training events for interested individuals</p> <p>Action Plan: Identify monitoring teams and sites</p>
<p>Objective: Conduct biological and bacterial monitoring throughout watershed and report results</p> <p>Action Plan: Monitor macroinvertebrate and <i>E. coli</i> on a quarterly basis at designated sites along the river and throughout the watershed</p> <p>Action Plan: Report results to VA Save our Streams/DEQ, through our newsletter and on our website</p>
<p>Objective: Expand the monitoring program</p> <p>Action Plan: Develop a Monitoring Plan document to outline the goals and objectives of our monitoring activities</p> <p>Action Plan: Identify additional, critical sites along the river and in the watershed to monitor (TMDL areas, etc.)</p> <p>Action Plan: Begin chemical monitoring, specifically pH and dissolved oxygen (DO) at monitoring sites and report results</p> <p>Action Plan: Monitor physical characteristics along the river (bank erosion, stream walks)</p> <p>Action Plan: Team with local colleges and universities to determine other available water quality monitoring resources</p> <p>Action Plan: Develop historical record of river water quality using historical data in addition to qualitative data (interviews with older residents, other documentation – could tie in with education element)</p>
<p>Objective: Provide ongoing support to the fish kill investigations headed by DEQ/DGIF and serve as liaison with community and investigators</p>

Strategic Issue: Education

Goal: Educate the entire watershed community about water quality issues to encourage protection of the water quality and to promote appreciation for the river

Oversight: Education Committee

Objectives and Action Plans

Objective: Raise young community members' awareness of the importance of water quality and conservation

Action Plan: Support environmental education in schools

- Develop criteria for school program support and review subsequent requests
- Identify educational opportunities, such as the Chesapeake Bay Foundation educational programs, and encourage and support the schools systems to include these opportunities in their curriculum

Action Plan: Conduct annual scholarship program to support area students interested in environment-related fields and to raise awareness of CRPA

- Continue to provide annual scholarships to students in area high schools
- Consider increasing funding level or funding more scholarships
- Establish an endowment to support the scholarship program
- Broaden scope of scholarship program to include camps and other enrichment programs

Objective: Engage adult members of the community through environment- related programming

Action Plan: Collaborate with local organization to promote environmental education opportunities in the area

Action Plan: Sponsor environmental education workshops (Watershed Workshops Series) and lecture events to inform public, consider collaboration with other organizations

Strategic Issue: Public Relations and Advocacy

Goal: Strengthen reputation of CRPA and promote benefits of environmental stewardship in the watershed

Oversight: Public Relations and Advocacy Committee

Objectives and Action Plans

Objective: Use print, verbal, and electronic communications to inform community about CRPA focus, activities and other relevant issues

Action Plan: Improve website with focus on becoming an informative, current, and useful site for members as well as general public

- watershed map, public use areas
- monitoring results
- newsletter, fact sheets
- events calendar
- on-line donations, merchandise purchase

Action Plan: Publish and distribute quarterly newsletter to members and other interested parties (paper and electronic versions)

Action Plan: Develop brochure and other media materials (fact sheets, etc.) to distribute throughout watershed and for use at conferences, festivals, etc.

Action Plan: Participate in public events, festivals, etc. to inform community members about CRPA and our programs

Action Plan: Write reoccurring column for local media

- monitoring results
- watershed FYIs and macroinvertebrate IDs

Objective: Inform public regarding river access/use and promote environmental stewardship among river users

Action Plan: Join DCR's Adopt-A-Stream program focusing on public river use points

Action Plan: Put public access/use and private land ownership information on website and other public relations materials

Objective: Advocate for the River, acting as an informed source regarding the watershed and its use

Action Plan: Establish positive relationships with local government

Action Plan: Communicate and collaborate with local organizations and other watershed groups

Action Plan: Become involved in issues relevant to the watershed

- Comprehensive Plan Reviews

Strategic Issue: Financial Management

Goal: Increase CRPA's financial base to support our programs and projects

Oversight: Finance Committee

Objectives and Action Plans
<p>Objective: Strengthen financial base of CRPA</p> <p>Action Plan: Identify and Solicit further financial support from key members</p> <p>Action Plan: Develop grant proposals in accordance with CRPA mission and strategic plan</p>