



GIC News Release

Contact Information:

Jim McGowan, Planning Director
Accomack County
jmcgowan@co.accomack.va.us
(T): (757) 787-5726

Karen Firehock, Exec. Dir.
Green Infrastructure Center
firehock@gicinc.org
(T): 434-975-6700, #222

Release Date: Feb. 23, 2010

COME HELP GREEN (AND BLUE!) ACCOMACK COUNTY

On Monday March 8 and Tuesday March 9, Accomack County and the Green Infrastructure Center team will present a workshop for residents, businesses, conservation groups, and developers to learn about the county's green infrastructure. Presentations will be held from 6:00-7:30 p.m. On Monday the workshop will be held at Arcadia Middle School and on Tuesday at Nandua Middle School. The public can attend either workshop. The workshop is offered twice to allow attendees to pick the most convenient time and location. The workshops will showcase new maps depicting the county's green and blue infrastructure resources.

Green and blue infrastructure include the connected natural systems such as streams and marshes, and the important land resources such as rich soils for farming, key fishery grounds, habitat for wildlife, drinking water storage areas and recreation lands and waters. Green and blue infrastructure also link to historic and cultural resources, such as hunting, hiking, boating or bird watching. County Supervisor Steve Miner explained the importance of having maps showing the county's most important natural assets, "The heritage of our county is tied to the land and water and these maps will help us to better plan and grow in ways that make the most sense for a strong economic future. Just as we plan for traditional infrastructure needs, we also need to plan for our green infrastructure too."

This project is a partnership between the Green Infrastructure Center team and Accomack County to assemble new maps to help the county better identify its natural and cultural resource assets. The project was launched in summer 2009, with funds from the USDA Forest Service and Virginia Department of Forestry, the Blue Moon Fund and the Virginia Coastal Zone Program.

Green and blue infrastructure planning entails inventorying both natural and cultural resources assets and identifying possible opportunities for their protection and/or restoration. The workshops provide an opportunity for people who live or work in the county to review the findings and contribute their ideas. Workshop participants can help to identify the county land and water aspects that are most important to them personally, as well as those aspects they believe to be critical to the county's future success. Results will inform the final report to be delivered to the Board of Supervisors and future planning efforts, such as updates to the comprehensive plan. Residents who cannot attend the workshop may also view the slide show on line that will be posted following the workshop at <http://www.gicinc.org/Accomack.htm>.

"Accommodating the county's future growth while also maintaining land and water resources will be a critical challenge facing the county in the years ahead" noted GIC Director Karen Firehock. Firehock added that "We hope the project maps will help the county make better informed decisions about how and where to grow and public input is critical to ensuring that the maps reflect community goals and needs." All county residents and organizations are welcome to the free workshops from 6-7:30 p.m. Workshops will be held at the following locations:

Monday March 8: Arcadia Middle School, 29485 Horsey Road in Oak Hall, VA
Tuesday March 9: Nandua Middle School, 20330 Warrior Drive, Onley, VA

###

Founded in 2006, the Green Infrastructure Center Inc. is a nonprofit organization located in Charlottesville, Virginia that assists communities statewide in developing strategies for protecting and conserving their ecological and cultural assets. The Green Infrastructure Center team is made up of staff from the GIC and E² Inc. which provides mapping analysis. The center has completed six projects in Virginia and two are now underway. The center is supported entirely through grants and donations. This project has been provided to Accomack County on a pro-bono basis meaning that all services from the GIC Team have been donated to the county. The Virginia Coastal Zone Program has contributed resources to support the participation of county staff.