

7. PROPOSAL TO INSTALL ADDITIONAL FLOW GAUGES IN THE CHOWAN RIVER BASIN

In 2008, Southampton County contributed slightly less than \$6,500 for its pro-rata share of a \$90,000 study prepared by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers which identified the location, number and types of river gauges that would better predict the timing and extent of flood events within the Chowan Basin (Blackwater, Nottoway and Meherrin Rivers). Other participating communities included the counties of Greenville, Sussex, Surry and Isle of Wight as well as the cities of Emporia and Franklin.

The study was completed in 2010 and recommended construction of a number of new gauges throughout the basin, locally on the Blackwater River near Zuni and the Meherrin River near Branchville. There are existing gauges on the Nottoway River near Sebrell and the Blackwater River near Burdette. The Commonwealth of Virginia and U.S. Geological Survey have agreed to split the cost of buying and installing the gauges throughout the basin, but the cost of maintenance must be shared equally by the local communities. Those costs have been estimated at approximately \$7,000 per locality for the first 2 years and will be reviewed and adjusted accordingly thereafter.

Mr. Mark Mansfield, Chief of Policy and Planning for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Norfolk District, is scheduled to make a brief presentation on the project and solicit your participation in maintaining them. The proposal was approved by the Franklin City Council on April 9.

MOTION REQUIRED:

If the Board is so inclined, a motion is required to approve annual funding of \$6,915 for maintenance and operation of the gauges.

mikejohnson

From: Mansfield, Mark T NAO [Mark.T.Mansfield@usace.army.mil]
Sent: Tuesday, April 17, 2012 1:43 PM
To: mikejohnson
Cc: 'James P. Councill'; 'Jim Councill'; 'Councill, James'
Subject: RE: Chowan Basin (UNCLASSIFIED)

Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Caveats: NONE

Confirmed.

Regards,
Mark

-----Original Message-----

From: mikejohnson [mailto:mikejohnson@co.southampton.state.va.us]
Sent: Tuesday, April 17, 2012 12:19 PM
To: Mansfield, Mark T NAO
Cc: 'James P. Councill'; 'Jim Councill'; 'Councill, James'
Subject: Chowan Basin

Mark,

Just wanted to confirm that Mayor Councill has arranged for you to present the proposal to install the flow gauges to our Board of Supervisors next Monday night (April 23) at 7:00 p.m. Please confirm that you have us on your calendar - we meet in the Board of Supervisors Meeting Room, Southampton County Office Center, 26022 Administration Center Drive, Courtland.

Thanks,

Mike

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Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Caveats: NONE

Flood forecasting gets boost from state

Published 2:17pm Saturday, April 7, 2012

Email Comments

FRANKLIN—A plan to help Franklin and other localities in the Chowan River Basin better predict river flooding has gotten a boost from Gov. Bob McDonnell's office.

McDonnell will use money from an economic contingency fund — a flexible fund used to help Virginia localities — to fund an \$80,000 match of federal funds for the installation of six new flow gauges as suggested by the Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Geological Survey and the National Weather Service, said Virginia Secretary of Natural Resources Douglas Domenech.

"The Corps did a study and thought the best thing we could do was provide warning gauges," Domenech said.

Now it's up to members of the Chowan River Basin, which includes Franklin, Isle of Wight County, Southampton County, Greensville County, Emporia, Sussex County and Surry County in Virginia, to approve annual funding of \$6,915 each for maintenance and operation of the gauges, said Franklin City Manager Randy Martin.

The Franklin City Council will discuss the proposal at 7 p.m. Monday, April 9, during its regular meeting.

If the project is approved, Martin said, the state money would come to Franklin by June 20 on behalf of all of the member localities.

The gauges would be placed throughout the entire river basin but locally on the Blackwater River near Zuni and the Meherrin River near Branchville, Domenech said.

Blackwater/Nottoway Riverkeeper Jeff Turner thinks that the installation of the flow gauges and the upgrades to four rain gauges along the basin will improve the warning time for localities during flood situations.

"It will help them gauge what's coming," Turner said. "It'll help with predictions. It won't do anything to stop the flooding, but it's a forecast tool."

The project won't affect the city's plan to acquire Federal Emergency Management Agency funding for drop gates at culverts downtown, Martin said. He said the city hopes to hear more about that project by the end of the month.

The Blackwater, Nottoway and Meherrin rivers are all part of the Chowan River Basin, which is about 130 miles long and drains 5,000 square miles of southeastern Virginia and northeastern North Carolina.

Hurricane Floyd produced the flood of record in 1999, swamping downtown Franklin. A smaller flood in October 2006 also covered part of downtown.

City Council agrees to install flood gauges

Published 10:22am Tuesday, April 10, 2012

Email Comments

BY STEPHEN H. COWLES/CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Playback58@gmail.com

FRANKLIN—City Council during its Monday meeting voted unanimously to participate in a plan to install stream and rainfall gauges.

Mark Mansfield with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers told Council that flooding continues to be an issue for Hampton Roads and Western Tidewater.

A few years ago, Franklin, Emporia, and the counties of Greensville, Isle of Wight, Southampton, Surry and Sussex sought recommendations from the Corps on how to prepare for floods.

After two years of negotiations, a plan was suggested, said Mansfield. The state government and U.S. Geological Survey agreed to split the cost of buying and installing five gauges upstream to warn the city of flooding and downstream if intense and long-term flooding was forthcoming.

Two gauges already exist in Franklin to indicate what's happening, he said.

However, participation from all localities must be unanimous, and they would share the cost of maintaining the gauges, with each at \$6,915 for the first two years.

"This would give a better forecast of when, how much and how long flooding would occur," he said. "More effective tools are needed."

Mansfield asked the panel to think of Franklin as the narrow part of an hourglass when it comes to high water. He said the gauges in the wider portion would give residents and businesses time to relocate. Further, the areas south would be warned.

"The key is advance warning," said City Manager Randy Martin.

Mansfield said the gauges could be put in place this summer.