

**OUTGOING
CORRESPONDENCE**

SOUTHAMPTON COUNTY

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January 26, 2011

WHRO Community Impact Awards
5200 Hampton Boulevard
Norfolk, VA 23508

Dear Sir or Madam:

On behalf of the Board of Supervisors, I am delighted to submit this letter in support of Jeff Turner for a 2011 Community Impact Award. Jeff has combined his love of the great outdoors and passion for environmental stewardship to create and sustain an organization of almost 150 members, the Blackwater Nottoway Riverkeeper Program. This group dedicates itself to protecting and preserving two of Southampton County's most precious natural resources – the Blackwater and Nottoway River(s), both of which are now included in the State Scenic River System.

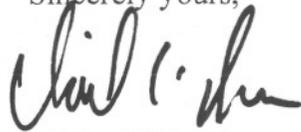
Affiliated with the national *Waterkeeper Alliance*, Jeff has been a tireless and vigilant protector of almost 100 miles of river and the watershed that surrounds them. Over the past decade, he has averaged 72 days annually on patrol, typically in multiple-day overnight camping trips. On these trips, he monitors and records water quality, searches for sources of pollution, observes wildlife and removes trash from the river and public boat landings. He immediately follows up on any instances of observed pollution, insuring that they are quickly resolved. Reports of his expeditions are regularly published in a widely-read column in the local newspaper, often detailing the humorous exploits of his faithful companions, *Freezing Deer* and *Moonpie*.

While not on regular patrol, Jeff spends much of his time in outreach activities, speaking to school groups and civic organizations about the importance of the rivers and the local watershed. He has outfitted a floating classroom (pontoon boat), the Eco-Cruise, providing guided tours for small groups and organizations, allowing them to observe firsthand the local flora and fauna along the rivers. His organization maintains an excellent website, www.blackwaternottoway.com, keeping the community well informed of their efforts.

They also organize and sponsor an annual "Clean Rivers Day," bringing in dozens of volunteers to remove trash from the watershed. Last year, they had 145 participants who removed more than 4,100 pounds of trash.

I really can't imagine that there's a more deserving recipient of your award than Jeff Turner. His vision and tireless efforts have served to educate hundreds on the importance of water quality. He has personally tracked down polluters and makes sure that our rivers remain pristine. Perhaps most importantly, he has single-handedly raised to unprecedented levels this community's awareness of its most precious resources, "the two rivers we call the Blackwater and the Nottoway."

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael W. Johnson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "M".

Michael W. Johnson
County Administrator