



Situation Analysis Report

Fluvanna County

2013

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Introduction

Virginia Cooperative Extension-Fluvanna (VCE-Fluvanna) takes pride in the premise that vital programming is based on the issues, problems, and needs of the people. This is a process determining what situations exist at the local level, and for determining which of those have become issues of major public concern. Situation analysis provides the foundation and rationale for deciding which problems should receive the time, energy, and resources of VCE.

The VCE-Fluvanna team for the Situation Analysis update was led by the Extension Leadership Council (ELC) and assisted by VCE Faculty and Staff. As a group, we devoted a quarterly meeting to discuss our methodology. We determined that each ELC member would assist in the effort, in that we found no need to form sub committees. At the subsequent quarterly meeting, we would bring information we gathered back together to begin processing information in preparation for writing the report. Our third quarterly meeting of 2013 would be devoted to reviewing the draft report, written collaboratively with members of the ELC and Extension Faculty.

Fluvanna-ELC determined the course of action we would follow:

- Conduct a thorough review of the 2008 Situation Analysis
- Study additional relevant materials such as the US Census Data, Thomas Jefferson Planning District resources for demographics and business data, Thomas Jefferson Health District planning and analysis documents, UVA/Weldon Cooper Center resources, and the Census of Agriculture
- Develop a survey instrument to gather information from our county
- Disseminate the survey by electronic and paper means around the various population centers

Following those tasks, the team also updated the unit profile and worked on the written report. The ELC was concerned that electronic surveys would miss parts of our demographics, so in addition to the survey we would use the survey to conduct interviews of community members. Once all that was completed, we chose to determine which priority issues we could address, and which we could not.

Unit Profile

Fluvanna County is located in Virginia's central Piedmont region. The county is on the Interstate 64 corridor between Richmond, the state capitol, and Charlottesville, home of the University of Virginia. Richmond is 54 miles east, Charlottesville is 25 miles west, and Washington D.C. is 100 miles north. The James River flows along the southern boundary of the county. Fluvanna County is bordered by Albemarle County to the East, Louisa to the North, Goochland to the East, and Buckingham to the West. The Rivanna River and the James River are the counties most defining geographical features, with the Rivanna bisecting the county in two quadrants. The Rivanna is known for its connection to Thomas Jefferson's

Monticello, providing a transportation link by a lock and dam system for agriculture goods, to the James River and on to Richmond.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2010 Census, the population is 25,693. There is only one incorporated town, Columbia, located by the James River on the Goochland-Fluvanna County line. Columbia has 38 residents within town residents, and is currently seeking to unincorporate,. Columbia was one of three locations on the list of potential sites for consideration as the state capital, when it was moved from Williamsburg to Richmond. Lake Monticello is our largest residential development. It is a gated community in the north/central part of the county and comprises approximately 40% of our total population.

The population growth rate in Fluvanna County has increased steadily: 20.2% from 1990 to 2000. Recent estimates indicate an accelerated population growth rate: 31.6% from 2000 to 2012. Fluvanna was one of Virginia's top five fastest growing counties for most of the first decade of the new millennium.

The county government is comprised of five members of the Board of Supervisors from the districts of Columbia, Palmyra, Cunningham, Rivanna and Fork Union. A list of county departments and services is available at www.fluvannacounty.org. The Board of Supervisors has declared their vision to be "Fluvanna County.... The heart of central Virginia and your gateway to the future." The tagline: A great place to live, learn, work and play. With those in mind the board is working to increase commercial development and economic prosperity in the county while maintaining rural character.

The 2010 estimated racial population of Fluvanna County according to US Census Bureau is:

Race	Number	Percentage
White	20,939	81.5%
Black	4008	15.6%
American Indian/Alaska Native	51	.2%
Asian	154	.6%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	25	.1%
Two or more races	513	2.0%
Hispanic	822	3.2%

The Virginia Employment Commission reports the unemployment rate in Fluvanna County is 4.7% in 2012. This puts Fluvanna well below both the state average of 5.9%, and the national rate of 8.1%.

According to the 2007 agriculture census, Fluvanna County ranks seventy eighth in the state in agriculture receipts (\$5,595,000). Fluvanna farmers raise corn, soybeans and wheat. Cattle, hay production, forestry and the horse industry round out our large farm related enterprises.

Looking at our population by age, we find the following:

Age	Number	Percentage
0-4	1805	7.26%
5-19	4554	18.31%
20-34	4510	18.13%
35-54	8147	32.75%
55-64	2452	9.86%
65-85+	1691	13.71%
<i>Note: 25% of population is under 19 years old</i>		

Community and Resident Perspectives

Agents provided current demographic updates to the unit profile. Fluvanna ELC members and unit faculty/staff surveyed key stakeholders to gather input on current and future issues VCE might address. Surveys were distributed electronically, in person and participation encouraged through local meetings. A county email system that is open to all county residents called “FAN Mail, Fluvanna Area News” was also used to distribute the survey. The stakeholders involved in survey review and distribution included Farm Bureau, the Fluvanna Ruritan Club, Fluvanna Chamber of Commerce, volunteer leaders, local farmers, 4-H Volunteers, and teen 4-H’ers.

Priority Issues

Issue 1: Water Quality Issues

Local rivers, livestock watering systems, household water systems and water table fluctuations are becoming more prevalent in people’s minds. The health of the Rivanna River in the county is monitored, and appears to be static or declining according to StreamWatch volunteers. This will continue to be an issue for our region as our population demands more water resources from the ground water supply. With the recent growth near the I-64, HWY 15 intersection, discussions about providing infrastructure to that growth area, and subsequent residential growth this issue will only become more and more important.

VCE-Fluvanna has been and will continue to provide educational training for home owners through a household water quality testing program. VCE will also continue to promote conservation measures on farm and at home, and partner with other agencies to provide water quality programming to community youth and adults. VCE has offered many youth training opportunities on river health, water testing and macro invertebrate monitoring.

Issue 2: Environment

With population growth, comes greater concern for the management of our natural resources. Those include open and forested spaces, and wildlife populations in addition to water quality.

Fluvanna was one of the top four growing counties from 1990-2000, and is poised to regain some of that growth rate as Zion Crossroads develops just to the North of the county. Additional subdivisions and businesses around the county have increased the incidents of wildlife interactions with county residents. The coyote population has also increased rapidly here over the last ten years.

VCE-Fluvanna has been working with county officials to develop projects on county land that are environmentally conscious. A Quail Habitat Restoration project has been developed for park property. Reforestation is promoted with landowners and county officials. Timber workshops have been held every other year to encourage environmentally sensitive forest management. Youth programming has been offered and will continue to be offered for Cloverbud youth, shooting sports education and conservation programs. Also ongoing is our Master Gardener program, and recruitment of Master Naturalists.

Issue 3: Agriculture Sustainability / Preservation

Development pressures have created profit in the selling of farm land for subdivision's. Protecting land from those development pressures is vital so that we can retain some of the rural nature of our region while still allowing for appropriate growth. Interest in locally grown, locally purchased food continues to grow, though our region cannot meet the perceived demand.

Local VCE faculty has worked one on one with local producers to develop management strategies to remain profitable, and to expand local markets for their products. The Fluvanna Farmers Market was developed to provide an avenue to local farms for direct sales, and a catalyst to develop working relationships with farmers. Farm transitioning, and land use taxation information has been and will continue to be shared with residents with the hope of allowing families to hold on to their land. Youth programs offered to ensure the next generations appreciation for farm preservation include Agriculture Day, a program held annually for all 4th grade youth in Fluvanna. VCE also works as a catalyst with other agencies, such as StreamWatch, Department of Forestry, and the Soil and Water Conservation District to provide information and education to the public. More can be done in this area.

Issue 4: Animals and Livestock

Livestock production continues to be a large part of our regional economy. Price fluctuations have made production more difficult, but the potential profit due to increased beef prices is still positive. However in order to receive a premium for the product and remain competitive, best management practices are necessary to find every efficiency and tap every market opportunity. Additionally, many residents are finding that they are interested in "returning" to the land at retirement age, or as a homesteader. That is fueling the continued demand for information on livestock. That includes small ruminants as well as beef cattle and horses.

Programming for Horse owners, beef cattle, and sheep and goat producers is routinely offered in our region. Also farm visits for all of the above are done as requested. A newly formed

sheep and goat producers association is working in central Virginia in an effort to increase profitability and market presence. Much more can be done in this area, but this is a programming focus that is already very developed.

Issue 5: Local Government

Over the past several years, issues impacting tax payers have had the added burden of an economic downturn. Tax pressure on residents has increased, business dollars into local coffers have slowed, thus creating challenges for local governments. This has created an greater interest in government itself and civic engagement has increased in our county.

VCE is currently supporting the Fluvanna Leadership Development Program, which was developed to educate residents about local and state government processes and actions, and local history. VCE works closely with many civic organizations such as Ruritan, Rotary, Farm Bureau and others to stay abreast of civic issues that we could address. 4-H Leadership trainings are offered to give the youth opportunities to learn about government first hand, and how they can be involved. VCE is also involved in local comprehensive planning, and has been specifically written into the Fluvanna Comprehensive Plan.

In summary, VCE-Fluvanna is working on many of these projects directly as they have been identified already in the 2004 and 2008 Situation Analysis. However, much more can and will be done as we determine specific opportunities to educate and engage.