

Dragon Run Special Area Management Plan

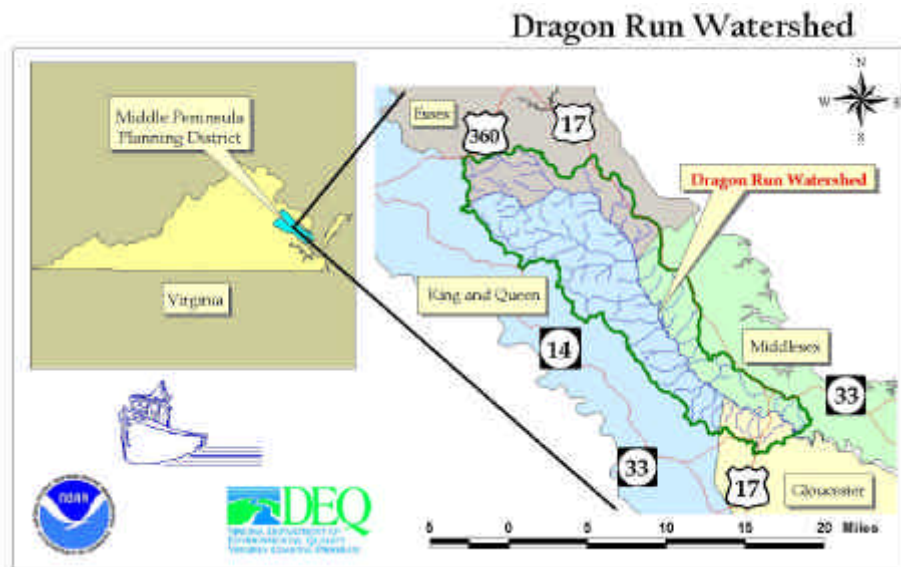
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Where is it and who is involved?

The Dragon Run Steering Committee, the Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission, and the Virginia Coastal Program are co-sponsoring the development of the Dragon Run Special Area Management Plan, or SAMP, with funding from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The 140 square mile (90,000 acre) Dragon Run Watershed encompasses parts of Essex, Gloucester, King and Queen, and Middlesex Counties on the Middle Peninsula of Virginia (see map). The Steering Committee includes elected officials and landowners from each county in the watershed and its SAMP Advisory Group represents a cross-section of the community, including: Steering Committee members; local government officials and staff; landowners; state agencies; farmers; foresters; educators; non-profit organizations; and ecotourism operators.

What is the mission?

The project's mission is to support and promote community-based efforts to preserve the cultural, historic, and natural character of the Dragon Run, while preserving property rights and traditional uses within the watershed.



What is the Memorandum of Agreement?

The signatories of the Memorandum of Agreement (i.e. the Counties and the Commission) agree to participate in the SAMP to promote the distinctive treatment deserving of the Dragon Run Watershed through the support and efforts of local government, the fostering of educational partnerships and grassroots support and the involvement of landowners whose stewardship has served to preserve the wonder of the Dragon. The signatories will consider the recommendations of the Steering Committee and its SAMP Advisory Group to achieve the project's goals and objectives.

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Goals and Objectives

GOAL I

Establish a high level of cooperation and communication between the four counties within the Dragon Run Watershed to achieve consistency across county boundaries.

OBJECTIVE A

Develop a plan to address the inevitable future development pressure to change the traditional use of land in the Dragon Run Watershed.

OBJECTIVE B

Achieve consistency across county boundaries among land use plans and regulations in order to maintain farming and forestry and to preserve natural heritage areas by protecting plants, animals, natural communities, and aquatic systems.

OBJECTIVE C

Provide ongoing monitoring of existing plans and planning tools in order to assess traditional land uses and watershed health and take action necessary to preserve the watershed.

OBJECTIVE D

Comprehensively implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) for water quality, wildlife habitat, and soil conservation.

GOAL II

Foster educational partnerships and opportunities to establish the community's connection to and respect for the land and water of the Dragon Run.

OBJECTIVE A

Encourage experience-based education consistent with the Stewardship and Community Engagement goals of the Chesapeake 2000 Agreement.

OBJECTIVE B

Promote the community and economic benefits of the Dragon Run derived from its natural characteristics and traditional uses such as farming, forestry, hunting and fishing.

GOAL III

Promote the concept of landowner stewardship that has served to preserve the Dragon Run Watershed as a regional treasure.

OBJECTIVE A

Address the potential dilemma of preserving the watershed's sense of peace and serenity by protecting open space and reducing fragmentation of farms, forests, and wildlife habitat versus the landowners rights in determining or influencing future land use.

OBJECTIVE B

Educate landowners about the regional importance of the Dragon Run.

What will happen in the future?

The Dragon Run Steering Committee and its SAMP Advisory Group will develop recommendations to achieve the goals and objectives in the Agreement. The signatories of the Agreement will consider whether to implement these recommendations. The Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission has signed the Agreement and recommends that the four counties also sign the Agreement.

For More Information or To Get Involved

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