

Connecting Hampton Roads for Stronger Environmental Action

Internship: The Earth Viability Center | Place4Us | Summer 2026

The Regional Challenge

- ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION IS SCATTERED ACROSS SEPARATE WEBSITES, EMAIL LISTS, SOCIAL MEDIA PAGES, AND PUBLIC MEETINGS.
- PEOPLE OFTEN ORGANIZE AROUND ONE IMMEDIATE CONCERN BUT LACK A SHARED WAY TO REMAIN CONNECTED AFTERWARD.
- THIS CAN LEAD TO REPEATED WORK, MISSED PARTNERSHIPS, AND WEAKER PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.

What I Examined

- ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMUNITY EFFORTS WORKING ACROSS HAMPTON ROADS.
- REGIONAL MEETINGS, ENVIRONMENTAL EVENTS, AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.
- COMMON BARRIERS INVOLVING COMMUNICATION, TRUST, LIMITED TIME, RESOURCES, AND COORDINATION.
- WHETHER PLACE4US COULD HELP ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMUNITIES STAY CONNECTED

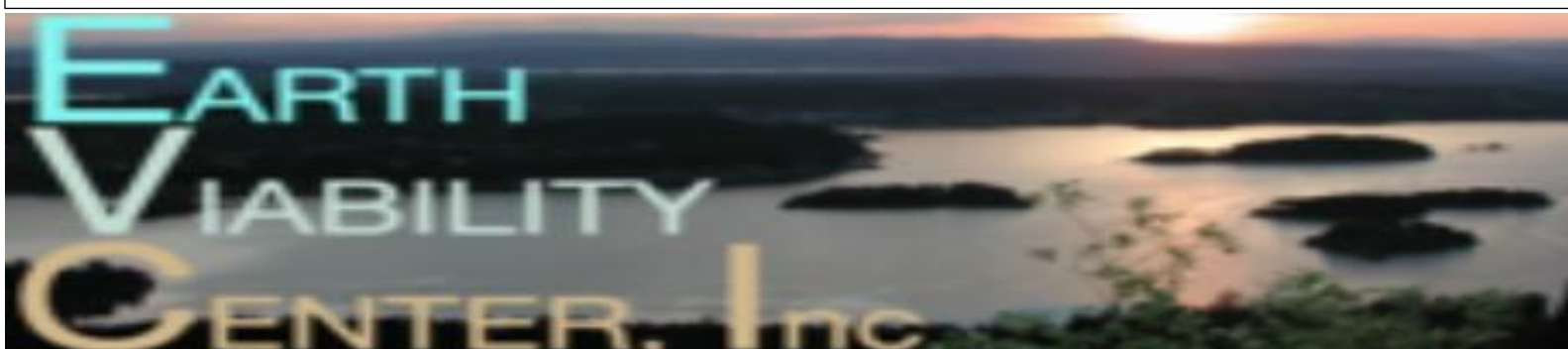


What I Found

- ENVIRONMENTAL WORK IS ACTIVE ACROSS THE REGION, BUT COMMUNICATION BETWEEN EFFORTS IS OFTEN INCONSISTENT.
- PUBLIC ACCESS TO MEETINGS DOES NOT ALWAYS CREATE MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION OR CONTINUED FOLLOW-UP.
- A WEBSITE ALONE CANNOT BUILD COLLABORATION; PEOPLE NEED TRUST, ACTIVE LEADERSHIP, USEFUL INFORMATION, AND VISIBLE RESULTS.

Recommended Next Steps

- STRENGTHEN THE EXISTING HAMPTON ROADS COMMUNITY WITHIN PLACE4US.
- CREATE A SHARED CALENDAR FOR MEETINGS, DEADLINES, EVENTS, AND VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES.
- PERSONALLY INTRODUCE ORGANIZATIONS TO THE PLATFORM AND HELP THEM GET STARTED.
- BUILD A SEARCHABLE DIRECTORY OF REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS.
- MAKE PRIVACY, MODERATION, AND INFORMATION-SHARING RULES EASY TO UNDERSTAND.
- CONNECT ONLINE DISCUSSIONS WITH WORKSHOPS, VOLUNTEER PROJECTS, PUBLIC MEETINGS, AND ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION.
- TRACK SUCCESSFUL CONNECTIONS AND SHOW WHAT PARTICIPATION ACCOMPLISHED.



JAMIE HEFFERNAN

Environmental Science, Old Dominion University

jheff002@odu.edu

