

**Public Meeting for Nassawadox Bacteria TMDL and Little Mosquito and Assawoman
Dissolved Oxygen TMDLs**

March 10, 2016

Meeting Notes

Location: Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission Building at 23372 Front Street, Accomac, Virginia

Start: 6:00 pm

End: 8:30 pm

Meeting Attendees:

John Reuter - Northampton PSA, Soheir Ellethi – resident, Shannon Alexander – ANPDC, Joe Valentine – resident, David Liu – NASA, Richard Hooks – NASA, Kristen Tremblay – Accomack County Planning, Wanda Thornton – resident, Scott Belfit – resident, Ken Dufty – resident, Richard Snyder – VIMS, Ken Schultz – shorekeeper, Stewart Hall – Accomack County Public Works, Grayson Chesse – Accomack BOS, Marilyn Ailes – Waste Watchers, Cole Charnock – ESSWCD, Mary Jane Dodson – resident, Jian Shen – VIMS, Mac Sisson – VIMS, Roger Everton – DEQ, Anne Schlegel – DEQ

The meeting started with introductions of all attendees. Anne Schlegel then provided a summary of the TMDL development process to date. The TMDL development process for these waterbodies began in the summer of 2015. Since then, there have been two workgroup meetings and one public meeting wherein information was gathered from stakeholders for use in the development process. The purpose of this meeting was to provide the public with the draft TMDL reports (posted at <http://www.deq.virginia.gov/programs/water/waterqualityinformationtmdls/tmdl/tmdldevelopment/documentationforselecttmdls.aspx#NassAssa>). Mac Sisson and Jian Shen of the Virginia Institute of Marine Science presented a summary of the watershed characterization, modeling results, and the draft TMDL allocations and reductions for these waterbodies. Stakeholders were informed of the 30 day comment period commencing at the time of the meeting and ending on April 10, 2016. Comments are to be submitted to Anne Schlegel of DEQ (Anne.Schlegel@deq.virginia.gov or Department of Environmental Quality, P.O. Box 1105, Richmond, VA 23218).

There was discussion surrounding the number of failing septic systems in the Nassawadox and Westerhouse Creek watersheds and whether or not 100% reduction of this source was realistic. It was explained that the TMDLs seek to eliminate 100% of the human-derived fecal component and that the TMDLs ask for this reduction to septic systems that are failing; not to all properly installed and maintained septic systems.

A concern was voiced about the population density of Nassawadox watershed. VIMS explained that the numbers were derived by obtaining number of homes from 911 data and then multiplying this number by 2.5 (assumption of average number of people per household). The concern was that this watershed is biased towards seasonal and weekend populations.

A question was raised about the means for deriving wildlife populations. VIMS explained that the population densities of the different wildlife categories were based on a combination of data from DGIF and from local input. Those numbers are then multiplied by the land area (land uses) in the watershed in which these wildlife categories would be reasonably expected.

A comment was made that they hope the Implementation Plan addresses a means of decreasing the Canada goose population in the Nassawadox watershed.

A stakeholder informed the group of a stream exclusion BMP that was put in place within the last couple of years in the Nassawadox Creek watershed. He believed that the BMP would exclude about 100 cattle from the stream. VIMS informed the group that this was not taken into account in the model because model development uses a greater number of years for calibration, validation, and scenario development. However, this should be noted when the Implementation Plan development begins. Additionally, future monitoring results may reveal that the BMP has done its job reducing bacteria loads.

A question was raised about whether the Assawoman and Little Mosquito TMDLs accounted for improper practices at chicken houses. VIMS indicated that no information to this effect has been provided to DEQ during this process and so it was believed that this was not an issue.

A stakeholder asked how long it would take for groundwater to experience significant reduction levels of nitrogen. VIMS responded that this would take substantial amount of time and, at this point, we do not know with certainty. Discussion commenced concerning the source of groundwater nitrogen. VIMS explained that this was due to historical applications of fertilizer. It was noted that current fertilization practices are likely much more conservative since farmers now use calibration to determine how much fertilizer to use.