

MINUTES
Powell River and Tributaries IP
Agricultural Working Group Meeting- Jonesville

WHEN: May 18, 2017; 6:00-8:00pm

WHERE: Daniel Boone Soil and Water Conservation District office
32637 Main Street, Jonesville, VA

ATTENDEES:

- Shawn Morris- Daniel Boone Soil and Water Conservation District (DBSWCD)
- Lisa Cope- Daniel Boone Soil and Water Conservation District (DBSWCD)
- Ronald Lambert- The Nature Conservancy (TNC)
- Kenny Thomas- Thomas Cattle
- Nathan Osborne- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
- Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)
 - Martha Chapman – TMDL Coordinator – SW Regional Office
 - Stephanie Kreps – NPS Coordinator – SW Regional Office

Meeting purpose: To discuss the agricultural aspects and ways to reduce the sediment and bacteria impairment in the Powell River watershed in Lee County; Engage the public in the development of the Implementation Plan (IP) (also known as a Water Quality Improvement Plan or Clean Up Plan).

Meeting goal: Collect information from agricultural stakeholders to inform the components of the Implementation Plan: landuse changes, best management practices, partnerships, potential funding sources, outreach/education; timeline and future plans that may contribute to IP goals.

Stephanie Kreps (DEQ) gave a brief introduction and set the context of the meeting. Handouts were provided and can be found on the DEQ website: <http://bit.do/DEQPowell-ImplementationPlanProgress>.

The following was discussed at the meeting:

- 1) **Landuse:** Landuse for beef has increased all over the county in the past 5-10 years. Move toward beef and less on cropland/tobacco. No dairies in the county. A lot of fields have grown up and now forest (more forest and more unmanaged/abandoned farmland now). “A lot” of timber has been harvested recently (for example, 500 acres along Rt 421 to Pennington Gap). It’s possible that the landuse data for the TMDL was before the prison was built in Lee County.
- 2) **Estimates on livestock:** The estimates in the TMDL are still relevant—not a lot has changed since 2008. Remove dairy for Lee County (none exist). The group doesn’t have a handle on the number of horses. There may be more cattle since tobacco has decreased.
- 3) **Biosolids** are still being applied. Confirmed with DEQ-SWRO, 54.08 dry tons were applied on 1 farm outside Pennington Gap in 2016. Can assume this occurs annually.

- 4) **Estimate of wildlife:** Need to add otters to the estimated wildlife in the watershed. Bears and wild boar are increasing in the area. All other estimates seem accurate.
- 5) **Best management practices:** Waste storage facilities and sink hole exclusions being done now. Streambank stabilization not as effective so do exclusions. Strip till and no till a big interest in Lee County. Cover crops could be done more. Only voluntary BMPs being done is no-till. Existing staffing levels at the SWCD are sufficient—no need for additional FTE. Only barriers are that some people still expect 100% cost-share.
- 6) **Partnerships:** [Regional Conservation Partnership Program \(RCP\)](#) administered by The Nature Conservancy focuses on Lee, Scott and Russell County. It “improves water quality and aquatic habitat by developing a local working group for resource identification and bmp prioritization, designing a GIS-based ranking system to prioritize RCP project investments, implementing agricultural and mining BMPs in biologically critical areas, and assessing the positive impacts of these BMPs on water quality.” Their funds must be allocated by 2018 and spent by 2021. DEQ 319 funds could be next step once this project is completed. The [Clinch-Powell Clean Rivers Initiative \(CPCRI\)](#) is up for renewal in October 2017. This coalition of partners can provide data and help implement the Implementation Plan.
- 7) **Funding:** No additional resources than what was provided as a potential list from past IPs.
- 8) **Outreach/Education:** Best way to reach out to farmers is the Powell Valley News, SWCD pasture walks (very popular), workshops on grazing would be a good idea.
- 9) **Timeline:** 10 years is realistic/adequate.
- 10) **Future plans:** There is a Clinch-Powell BMP effectiveness study being done that The Nature Conservancy is participating in (would need to get more information). DCR-Daniel Boone SWCD is doing a tillage windshield survey in 2017. UVA-Wise is doing DNA testing for critters in the river to get a sense of what species are living within the watershed.

General:

- 1) No other bacteria sources are considered an issue.
- 2) Logging is probably an issue with sedimentation.
- 3) Wilderness Road State Park is doing water quality monitoring at Indian Creek. Are there any on-going or planned citizen monitoring sites in the area? Should citizen monitoring (if not in place) be included in the IP?
- 4) Shawn Morris with Daniel Boone SWCD will represent this group in the Steering Committee.