

Steering Committee Meeting

January 8, 2014

Meeting Notes

Location: Northampton County Board Room, County Administration Building, 16404 Courthouse Road, Eastville VA

Start: 9:00 am

End: 11:00 am

Meeting Attendees:

Rick Hubbard - Resident, Board of Supervisors, Granville Hogg-Resident, Board of Supervisors, David Boyd-Resident, Dana Gonzalez-DEQ/TRO, Jennifer Howell-DEQ/TRO, Cole Charnock – ES SWCD, Bob Meyers – Resident, Steve Sturgis – Northampton County F.B., Jody Humphreys – Resident, John Humphreys – Resident, Ralph Dodd – Resident/Farmer, Josephine Mooney – ES RC&D

I. Agenda Item: Watershed Clean-up Plan Presentation and BMP Review

Discussion: DEQ representatives gave an overview of the watershed implementation plan and explained the different BMPs that would be proposed for each creek included in the plan. There was discussion about making sure that agricultural buffer widths were in line with what is required by the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act. Stakeholders were concerned that having an alternate buffer width to that required in the Bay Act would create confusion. In addition, meeting attendees explained that many farmers in the watershed do not choose to implement small grain cover crops because the deadline for planting is too early in the season. Currently, the deadline for planting is in the middle of November, but because the monetary incentive for planting is reduced at the end date, the cost share offered does not warrant the time and effort to implement the practice. SWCD representatives have been working to extend the final planting date later in the season, but stakeholders mentioned that it would be helpful to include this concern in the plan.

Meeting attendees also stated that funding for septic tank inspections should be included in the report. It was suggested that this practice could be merged with the septic pumpout practice in the plan and the cost per unit could be increased from \$300 for a septic pumpout to \$500-\$750 for a septic pumpout and inspection. Stakeholders explained that specific inspection of septic tank distribution boxes and drainage fields would be necessary in order to locate systems in need of repair before they completely fail. In addition, education for plumbers and septic system repairmen should be added to the implementation plan. Education for this group could include training personnel to correctly inspect a system and could also include a checklist to be used by each inspector. Lastly stakeholders pointed out that septic pumpouts and inspections should also be included in the second phase of implementation.

II. Agenda Item: Funding and Monitoring Efforts

Discussion: DEQ representatives noted several funding opportunities that could be available in the watershed and explained that the IP would serve as a building block for future water quality proposals. Many of the stakeholders expressed that funding for molecular source tracking to determine fecal bacteria sources should be included in the plan. They stated that there would be more local buy-in if people understood where most of the fecal bacteria were coming from. Many of the stakeholders believe that the primary sources of fecal contamination in the watersheds are wildlife. DEQ representatives explained that the cost of QPCR

analysis is often prohibitive, but that they would investigate potential sources of funding for a study.

To conclude the meeting, committee members were reminded that the final public meeting would be on January 20, 2015.