

Birch Creek and Dan River Watersheds TMDL Cleanup Plan
Agricultural Working Group
October 3, 2017
Danville Regional Airport, Eastern Conference Room

The agricultural working group will discuss ways to reduce bacteria coming from agricultural sources. The principal objective of this working group is to identify obstacles to implementation of practical solutions to reducing bacteria. This group will focus on identifying:

- Constraints to the implementation of BMPs
- BMPs that are both effective and affordable
- Alternative funding sources/partnerships
- The best strategies for reaching agricultural stakeholders

General questions and comments:

- 2008 study and 2017 IP why the time delay?
 - § Depends on the group some TMDLs go straight to IP and some there is a lag because people need a break and implement BMPs on their own
 - § Would be interested in seeing the data from within the last 10 years to see if we have better
- Any trend data to see differences between years?
 - § trend site on Sandy Creek
 - Logical disconnects- current status <1% direct deposition in Birch Creek?
 - § Remedy would be 87% reduction in direct deposition
 - § Buffer included in report. What other BMPs could we do to get at 87% reduction?
 - Are farms that are on impaired streams getting priority for cost share assistance?
 - § Yes
 - Who runs the 319 funding?
 - § SWCD or municipalities
 - Once implementation practices are put into place, are they checked?
 - § Yes, random spot checks
 - § Fencing is usually in compliance and watering trough issues
 - § Stream exclusion for 10 years
 - § SWCD have people signed up for cost share but no money to fund.
 - Updating any CAFO numbers?
 - § Will get updated numbers
 - § No CAFOs for WLA but may be misrepresented on land
 - Tobacco has been going away, what is replacing it?
 - § Soybeans, or idol
 - § A quarter going to cattle

Agricultural Questions:

- 1) *What is the current growth trend for agriculture in the area? Do you expect to see significant changes in farming practices over the next 5-10 years?*

Less tobacco in the area. More small ruminant (goats, sheep). There are no dairies in Halifax County. Farms are producing row crops and some beef cattle.

- 2) *Are local cattle producers receptive to stream fencing and improving grazing management?*

There is interest as long as there is a program to support it. There is more interest in grazing management.

- 3) *What barriers are holding back progress to implementing stream fencing and improving pasture management?*

Funding. People are more so interested in a watering system versus simply fencing streams, but people are willing to fence streams to get a water system.

- 4) *Is there existing manure storage in the watershed? Is there a need for additional manure storage?*

There is not a need for manure storage in Halifax County due to limited confined animal agriculture.

- 5) *Are there any problems with manure spreading on crop or pasture fields locally? What are the best BMPs to address this source?*

No Class B biosolids within Halifax County. Setbacks are in place such that no NEW confined animal feeding operations (CAFOs) will be established in Halifax County. Check with permit staff to determine what CAFO permits are in the watersheds from the time the TMDL was established.

- 6) *Is there poor pasture or erodible cropland in the area that should be converted to forest?*

95% of soils in Pittsylvania and Halifax are highly erodible. There is a need for better management.

- 7) *In general, are there practices that are more easily implemented and/or more appealing than other practices in this area?*

Rotational grazing is more easily implemented. Education is needed to prevent over grazing.

8) *What is the best way to let farmers know about conservation programs?*

Virginia Cooperative Extension staff and mailings

9) *Are there any groups in the watershed that would be good resources for education and outreach? Is there a need for education and outreach on pasture management for horse owners or owners of other types of livestock? Who is best to disseminate this type of information?*

- Cattleman's Association, SWCD, Farm Bureau, NGOs
- There are more people raising goats and sheep rather than horses.

10) *How much of the farmland within the project area is leased?*

Less than 10% of land is leased for livestock production. Most land is leased for row crop production.

11) *Are there many horse owners in the area?*

No

12) *Are there certain BMPs that you feel would be most appropriate for the agricultural community in the watershed?*

Rotational grazing and pasture management, stream exclusion, nutrient management.

Contact James Moneymaker if you are interested in representing the agricultural or residential working group on the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee will review the draft TMDL Implementation Plan before it is presented to the public. The Steering Committee will meeting next spring after a second round of agricultural and residential working group meetings.

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Meeting Adjourn

Birch Creek and Dan River Watersheds TMDL Cleanup Plan
Residential Working Group
October 3, 2017
Danville Regional Airport, Eastern Conference Room

The residential working group will discuss ways to reduce bacteria coming from human and pet sources. The principal objective of this working group is to identify obstacles to implementation of practical solutions to reducing bacteria. This group will focus on:

- Ways to address/identify and eliminate straight pipes and failing septic systems
- Identify potential means of funding
- Determine educational tools that are most likely to engage watershed residents
- Evaluate ways to reduce bacteria from pet waste

Sewer Overflows:

- 1) *Are you aware of any public sewer areas that may smell of sewage or show other evidence of a sewer leak/overflow, especially during heavy rain?*

None

On-Site Sewage Disposal:

- 1) *Are you aware of problems with straight pipes and failing septic systems in the area? Any particular areas?*

Not aware of any problems

- 2) *If funds were available to assist residents with straight pipes and failing septic systems, what would be the best ways to notify people of such funds?*

- Halifax radio, local newspaper, local churches bulletins

3) *Is there an ordinance in Halifax County, Pittsylvania County, Patrick County, City of Danville, or the Town of South Boston that requires septic tank pumpouts/maintenance? Possibly during property transfers?*

There is no ordinance in Halifax County. There are no representatives from other areas present.

- *How much does a septic system pump-out cost in this area? How many companies do this type of work? Look at companies bringing the pumpout waste to the waste water treatment plant.*

A pumpout will typically cost \$130. There are a number of companies offering septic pumpout services. We should be able to get an estimate of how many companies take sewage to the Danville WWTP.

- *Is there a need for alternative systems? What are the regulations associated with alternative systems?*

There is not a high demand for alternative systems. Soils typically perk well in most locations.

4) *Is there a need for education regarding the operation and maintenance of septic systems?*

Yes, education would be beneficial.

5) *What are some local agencies and organizations best suited for this effort? Available programs?*

Local Public Service Authorities, Town of South Boston, Tri-County Community Action Agency, etc.

6) *How should education be offered?*

- Brochures?
- Workshops/community meetings?
- Public service announcements?
- Neighborhood canvassing?
- Other?

Education would best be offered as a public service announcement.

Pet Waste Questions:

- 1) *Are you aware that pets (i.e. dogs) can be a significant source of bacteria entering surface waters in the state? (This is based on bacteria source tracking data collected by DEQ.) Are there hunt clubs, dog kennels, veterinary hospitals, boarding facilities that should be considered potential sources for pet waste bacteria?*

Yes, people in more urban areas are aware that pet waste is an issue.

Double Creek and Birch seemed to have a high number of pets versus the human population. We will need to check the numbers for Double Creek.

The group mentioned that veterinary offices could be a source.

- 2) *Have you heard about the need to pick up and properly dispose of dog feces locally?*

There are a few pet waste stations available in Halifax although they are not always used or bags and not stocked.

- 3) *Are you aware of any localities in the watershed with a “scoop the poop” ordinance?*

Not aware of any ordinance

- 4) *There are accessible pet waste disposal stations in the watersheds? If so, where are they located? (parks, schools, subdivisions, public space) Are there areas where people tend to walk their dogs where such stations could be especially useful?*

There are not many pet waste stations in Halifax County.

A station(s) at Virginia International Raceway could be useful.

- 5) *Are there any local education programs related to pet waste? (ASPCA, veterinarians, 4-H, kiosks, etc.)*

There are no active pet waste education campaigns. It is important to keep reminding citizens that pet waste is an issue.

6) *How can we educate homeowners about the impact of pet waste? Would people use a pet waste digester?*

Most people would probably not use a pet waste digester. Education is best accomplished through a campaign with mailings, flyers, outreach at public events.

Stormwater Questions:

This Cleanup Plan will address the need for some stormwater Best Management Practices to collect and treat runoff from residential and urban land areas that contribute to bacteria from pets, failing septic systems, and illicit sewage discharges. These may include rain gardens, bioretention filters, infiltration trenches, vegetated buffers along streams, rain barrels, etc.

1) *Do you know of any areas where flooding consistently occurs during heavy rains?*

The Riverdale area floods frequently

Halifax SWCD completed three rain barrel workshops in 2016.

2) *Have you seen any areas of severe bank erosion within the watersheds? If so, where?*

No areas were specifically identified.

3) *Do you feel that the term stormwater is recognized by most citizens?*

Probably not

4) *Have any of you implemented stormwater BMPs on your property to deal with runoff? If so, what practices?*

Two citizens have rain barrels in this group.

5) *Are you aware of what riparian buffer zones are? How willing would your neighbors or other community members be willing to create or expand these zones?*

There isn't much in the way of riverfront development in Halifax.

6) *Are there any public areas where you know of stormwater BMPs having been implemented?*

What practices? Where?

Other Items for discussion:

- 1) *Are there any organizations or groups in the area that work on projects related to any of these issues (sewer overflows, sewage disposal, pet waste, stormwater management, stream restoration and cleanup) that aren't represented here?*

Master Gardeners

- 2) *Is there interest in a watershed tour?*

The group does not see there being interest in a watershed tour.

- 3) *What are some of the barriers to implementing water quality improvement projects in the watershed?*

Funding is a barrier to implementing most BMPs.

- 4) *Is there a considerable amount of recreation that happens on the Dan river (tubing, boating, canoeing, etc.)?*

The group mentioned a new boat launch that was recently installed utilizing funds received from the Dan River coal ash incident. There are people the use the river for fishing. There is a little canoeing. River access is limited.

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