

Browns, Craig & Marsh Runs TMDP Implementation Plan Development
STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

November 4, 2010

7:00pm

Cedar Lee Middle School
11138 Marsh Road (Route 17)
Bealeton, VA

Steering Committee Meeting Summary

Attendance:

Jenny Biche', Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission
John Buchanan, Citizen Representative – Residential Working Group
Toni Buchanan, Citizen
Rick Carr, Fauquier County Dept. of Community Development
Deidre Clark, Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission
Virginia Dorkey, Citizens for Fauquier County
Roger Flint, Natural Resources Conservation Service
Kimberley Fogle, Fauquier County, Dept. of Community Development
Eugene Hankinson, Citizen
Charles Lunsford, VA Dept. of Conservation and Recreation
Byron Petrauskas, Blue Ridge Environmental Solutions, Inc.
John Schied, John Marshall SWCD
Mary Sherrill, Fauquier County, Dept. Community Development
Bob Slusser, VA Dept. of Conservation and Recreation
Chester Stribling, Fauquier County Board of Supervisors
Jim Stone, Fauquier County Planning Commission
Whitney Wright, VA Dept. of Health

Welcome and Introductions:

Attendees were welcomed and introductions were made. Copies of reports to the Steering Committee from the agricultural, residential and government working groups, as well as a copy of the Action Chart and a draft of the Craig, Browns and Marsh Runs Water Quality Improvement Plan Power Point Presentation were provided for review.

Residential Working Group Report:

Mr. Buchanan presented the Residential Working Group Report to the Steering Committee, noting the following:

- Currently there is no enforcement or monitoring of the county septic tank pump-out ordinance;
- The practice of directly processing the undiluted product of septic tank pumping at public water treatment plants was questioned because of the possible burden on the treatment system;
- Current land use characteristics and population statistics were not provided to working group participants;
- Alternative waste water systems are expensive to install and maintain and, as a new product, will need to be regulated;
- Recommended residential pet waste management strategies include installation of pet waste collection kiosks along trails and in common areas, as well as educational outreach to pet owners and businesses;
- Education is needed to assure proper fertilizer application practices;

- Along with e-coli, tests for chemicals and viruses should also be conducted, both before and after treatment;
- The testing process should be consistent and thorough with regard to timing and location;
- Retention ponds to capture road runoff should be included in new road construction;
- Treatment of the public water supply should be improved to reduce staining, odors and unpleasant taste;
- Citizen monitoring should be incorporated into the Implementation Plan.

Comments following the presentation included:

- Chester Stribling's inquiries into the quality of the public water supply revealed that the treatment process meets or exceeds all requirements and standards;
- The Action Chart lists potential partners for educational outreach, including John Marshall SWCD which routinely works with local students in performing water quality tests;
- The location of testing stations is often determined and limited by accessibility; it is not always possible to conduct tests upstream to bracket the source;
- DEQ does not have enough staff to regularly test the 1,700 stream segments currently identified as impaired;
- Not all streams are monitored;
- Bacteria source testing identified humans, pets, livestock and wildlife as the sources of contamination – TMDLs focus on man-induced bacterial sources;
- DEQ has moved away from antibiotic resistant analysis because it is costly and the reference data is limited;
- Bacterial contamination in streams can result in lesions on fish;
- Fish are tested for metals and hormones by other agencies;
- Any improvements to water quality will improve fish health;
- The Chesapeake Bay TMDL-IP will require localities to address nutrient and sediment goals – more practices will be needed.

Agricultural Working Group Report:

Mr. Ron Messick presented the Agricultural Working Group Report to the Steering Committee, noting the following:

- Of the four dairy farms mentioned in the TMDL study, only one remains active;
- Since the TMDL study was conducted, there has been a decrease in agricultural land uses;
- The Fauquier County Ordinance should be revised to address the number of acres available and accessible to animals;
- Overgrazing and generally poor pasture management is not uncommon on small acreage horse properties;

Comments following the presentation included:

- Different types of fencing, including temporary fencing, are allowed in the flood plain; however, since it can be impacted by high water and associated debris, electric fencing is not practical for a boundary fence if it is in the floodplain.
- Perimeter fencing must meet legal requirements;
- Requests to DEQ for financial support for more data and BMP maintenance should probably come from county officials and/or members of the working groups;
- Although all efforts to improve water quality will help conditions in the Chesapeake Bay, the goal of the TMDL-IP is to de-list streams and improve local water quality by reducing bacterial impacts;
- The Chesapeake Bay TMDL-IP addresses nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment levels;
- In Virginia, 70% of impairments are due to bacteria.

- Virginia uses the Contact Recreation Standard, selected in the 1970s, to determine excessive bacterial levels;
- Agricultural communities in the Chesapeake Bay watershed are eligible for 85% cost share on stream fencing practices, compared with 75% elsewhere.
- Practices installed as the result of the Carter's, Great, Thumb and Deep Runs TMDL-IP have resulted in improved water quality.

Government Working Group Report:

Mr. Bob Slusser presented the Government Working Group Report to the Steering Committee noting the following:

- More monitoring by citizens trained in DEQ protocols is needed;
- Malfunctioning septic systems more often need repair than replacement;
- Enforcement of Fauquier's pump-out ordinance is needed;
- Alternative septic systems are expensive to install and maintain;
- Educational outreach is needed to inform septic system owners of the proper use and maintenance of their systems;
- For the last few years, the Fauquier Health Department has been tracking septic system locations;
- Stream flow data should be included in monitoring;
- LID practices should be included in subdivision and business developments;
- Working models, such as the Horse Friendly Farm project in Prince William County, can be used to promote best management practices;
- Information provided by the Virginia Outdoors Foundation suggests the possibility for partnerships that may benefit landowners while promoting stream buffers.

Comments following the presentation included:

- Core tests may be performed to determine sewage levels in septic tanks; however, costs for such tests are about the same as for pumping;
- Reminders of pump out requirements could be included in tax assessments. Currently, the only enforcement practiced is at the transfer of property when a receipt must be presented verifying pumping within the previous five years.
- The Action Chart should include the need for educational outreach on septic system maintenance and residential fertilizer management.

Overview of the Browns, Craig, and Marsh Runs Water Quality Improvement Plan

A summary of the water quality improvement plan was reviewed. Comments and recommendations were as follows:

- The wording in the phrase "poor water quality" should be changed to make it clear that the reference does not include the public drinking water supply;
- Marsh Run was initially monitored by DEQ in 1996, with Browns and Craig Runs added later;
- Determine when Browns and Craig Runs were first monitored;
- Remove all reference to permitted point sources, bio-solids and wildlife from the Bacteria Sources slide;
- Define Straight Pipes and provide examples;
- Remove the term "direct deposit;"
- The TMDL IP Strategy 10-year time line should be moved to a separate slide.
- "Worst case" should be changed to "best case;"
- Define the 10.5% DEQ State Standard;
- Include an explanation of which streams are listed;
- Explain that retention ponds are a last resort solution and, as such, are rarely used.

- John Marshall Soil and Water Conservation District should have a display of the Thumb Run TMDL program at the second public meeting on November 16th.

Attendees were reminded that the second public meeting will be held as follows:

November 16, 2010, 7PM

Cedar Lee Middle School

11138 Marsh Road (Route 17)

Bealeton, VA

All documents, including meeting agendas, notes, maps, and presentations may be viewed on-line at http://www.rregion.org/tmdl_bcm.html