

Browns Run, Craig Run, and Marsh Run TMDL Implementation Plan

AGRICULTURAL WORKING GROUP REPORT TO STEERING COMMITTEE

AWG Meeting Attendees

Melissa Allen (JMSWCD)	John Baker (Citizen)	Ben Cooper (Farm Bureau)	Jeanie Costello (Citizen)	Debbie Cross (VADCR)
Daron Culbertson (Citizen)	Earnest Dodson (Citizen)	Michael H. Dwyer (Citizen)	Roger Flint (NRCS)	Howard L. Grove (Citizen)
Marsha Hamilton (Citizen)	Eugene Hankinson (Citizen)	Walter P. Hodge (Citizen)	Jennifer R. Hoysa (JMSWCD)	Sue Keller (Citizen)
James Messick (Citizen)	Ronald Messick (Citizen)	Paul Neale (Citizen)	Terry Nyhous (Fauquier Co. BOS)	Frank Ott Jr. (Citizen)
Morgan Ott (Citizen)	Byron Petrauskas (BRES)	John Schied (Farm Bureau)	Jim Stone (Fauquier Co. PC)	Chester Stribling (Fauquier Co. BOS)
Tom Turner (JMSWCD)	Alton Willingham (Citizen)			

Background

Two AWG meetings were held at Cedar Lee Middle School in support of this project, the first following the public meeting on May 4, 2010 and the second on September 28, 2010. A total of 22 people attended one or both of the meetings. The overall goal of the AWG was to identify obstacles to implementation of best management practices to reduce bacteria from agricultural operations and recommend workable solutions that will overcome these obstacles.

Key Topics

- ★ Several issues were raised regarding water quality monitoring performed by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (VADEQ), these included: exceedance rates depicted in the public meeting graph (especially the 100%), data validity, correlation to flow conditions, and sampling frequency. Suggestions for providing additional water quality monitoring included citizen monitoring or a monitoring project financed with grant funds.
- ★ Primarily beef and dairy operations exist in these watersheds. According to attendees, two of the four dairies were converted to beef operations and were unsure of one of the remaining operations. Sufficient liquid manure storage and land use is available for producers to collect and spread collected manure according to nutrient management plan.
- ★ Horse population was discussed with concern towards the condition of pasture horses were being kept on (i.e., overstocking and overgrazing).
- ★ A decreasing trend in agricultural land uses continues in watersheds, especially in Craig Run.
- ★ Successful partnerships JMSWCD and NRCS have formed with producers in these watersheds already participating in cost-share programs will be invaluable in promoting programs to other producers.
- ★ NRCS has written contracts for leased land and should not be an issue.
- ★ Inquiry was made whether assistance was available for BMP maintenance after the cost-share contract expires and the possibility of extending CREP contracts. VADCR is in the process of developing incentives for producers to continue BMP maintenance.

- ★ Constraints to BMP implementation indicated by group include – BMP maintenance cost, responsiveness of agencies providing technical assistance, fence maintenance in flood prone areas, and belief that producers need to spend money on BMPs when confidence in water quality monitoring data and extent of contamination is lacking.
- ★ Applicable educational /outreach methods that work well in the area include: farmer-to-farmer interaction; JMSWCD, Farm Service Agency, and NRCS newsletters; field tours conducted by JMSWCD; educational events conducted by Virginia Cooperative Extension; Cattleman’s and Dairymen’s Association events; information booth at Fauquier County Fair; and updates on the Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission website.

Recommendations

- ★ Increase funding to amplify VADEQ water quality sampling and assure testing on a regular basis.
- ★ Pursue additional water quality monitoring opportunities such as citizen monitoring or a monitoring project financed with grant funds.
- ★ Incentive is needed to maintain BMPs beyond the typical 10-year lifespan requirement of cost-share assistance programs.
- ★ Fencing options in flood prone areas should be assessed to not preclude full program incentives for producers.
- ★ Educational workshop for horse owners needs to be held.
- ★ Further evaluate effect decreasing trend in agricultural landuses has on bacteria loads.