

Robinson River and Little Dark Run TMDL Implementation Plan Development

Tuesday, October 26, 2010 - 7 P.M.

Madison Volunteer Fire Company

1223 North Main Street, Madison VA

Residential and Agricultural Working Groups Meeting #2

General Attendance (Agricultural and Residential Working Groups):

James Arrington, Madison County Board of Supervisors
Jenny Biche', Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission
Evan Blumenthal, Culpeper, Soil and Water Conservation District
Beth Burnam, Piedmont Environmental Council
Jennifer Carlson, VA DEQ
Deirdre Clark, Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission
Sidney Coates, Citizen
Bonnie Dixon, Citizen
Dwayne Dixon, VA Dept. of Health, Madison
Lynn Graves, Citizen
R. Clay Jackson, Madison County Planning Commissioner
Rodney Lillard, Chair, Madison County Planning Commission
David Massie, Culpeper Soil and Water Conservation District
Byron Petrauskas, Blue Ridge Environmental Solutions, Inc.
Lisa Robertson, Administrator, Madison County
Bob Slusser, VA Dept. of Conservation and Recreation
Carl Stafford, VA Cooperative Extension, Culpeper
Bryant Thomas, VA DEQ
Tommy Utz, Citizen
Frank Wilzak, Blue Ridge Foothills Conservancy

Welcome and Introduction:

- Attendees were welcomed and introductions were made. Attendees were provided with minutes from the last Public, Residential, Agricultural and Government Working Group meetings as well as copies of the Action Chart, DEQ's watershed summary and estimates of control measures and costs as provided by Blue Ridge Environmental Solutions.

Questions and Comments:

Following a brief review of each working group summary, discussion centered on techniques and frequency of sampling and the accuracy of the data collected. In response to questions from participants, the following information was provided by members of the project team, including Bryant Thomas, Jennifer Carlson, Byron Petrauskas and Bob Slusser.

- ◇ Usually, samples are taken at trend stations every 2 months for a 5-10 year period. This provides information that reflects a variety of weather conditions and flow characteristics which are noted at the time the sample is taken.
- ◇ The data collected in the original TMDL study, and throughout its monitoring history, indicate no significant variations in bacteria concentrations due to seasonal factors.
- ◇ The variance in exceedance rates in samples taken from the Robinson River in 2004 and 2010 could be due to a number of factors, including the number of samples collected. However, variations in conditions are accounted for by the extent of the testing period and the overall number of samples collected.
- ◇ Samples are collected by either wading out into the stream or by lowering a bucket from a bridge. Samples are stored in sterile containers.
- ◇ DEQ's samples are analyzed by Virginia Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services (DCLS) in Richmond, VA.
- ◇ Sampling schedules, reflecting staff availability and coverage of extensive areas, are developed monthly.
- ◇ Citizen monitoring can identify hot spots where DEQ can follow-up with more testing; however, because citizen monitoring does not typically follow DEQ standards, it isn't used to determine impairments.

- ◇ Testing costs vary with the tests performed. It was estimated that bacteria testing costs about \$200 to \$300 per station annually. [It has since been determined that the initial startup costs are about \$75, and it costs approximately \$35 per station annually for monthly Coliscan bacteria sampling.]
- ◇ Although macro-invertebrate assessments have been done in streams in Shenandoah National Park, it is uncertain whether any testing for bacteria has been conducted. No base-line has been established for bacteria in streams at the point where they exit the park.
- ◇ Citizens may request testing.
- ◇ The single sample maximum standard for *E. coli* is 235 colony forming units per 100mL of water. This is set to minimize the health risk for illnesses in humans based on primary contact recreational use. [It should be noted that EPA proposed the bacteria criteria and then states adopt the water quality standards. The VA Dept. of Health does not set surface water standards].
- ◇ Although nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment have been identified as impacting water quality in the Chesapeake Bay, they have not been identified as problematic in the Robinson River and Little Dark Run.
- ◇ In some instances, streams have been de-listed, demonstrating that the standard is attainable.
- ◇ Currently, funding to support BMP implementation in this watershed has not been specifically committed from state and federal funding sources.
- Attendees comments include:
 - ◇ Increasing sample numbers will increase the accuracy of the data. More samples need to be taken and more monitoring stations need to be identified.
 - ◇ Tests should be done every month at a set schedule that is the same, month to month.
 - ◇ It is not reasonable to ask people to spend time and money on test results that seem suspect. Testing should be based less on the convenience of staff scheduling and more on science.
 - ◇ Bacteria loads from Shenandoah National Park should be determined. (Following up on this comment, a USGS study on bacterial sampling in the Park was located, “*Escherichia coli* Concentrations in Recreational Streams and Backcountry Drinking Water Supplies in Shenandoah National Park, Virginia, 2005-2006”).
 - ◇ There is too much variability in the data.
 - ◇ The data results should be unquestionable.

Draft Little Dark Run and Robinson River Water Quality Improvement Plan:

- Byron Petrauskas, Blue Ridge Environmental Solutions, Inc. reviewed recommended BMPs and associated costs. Input was requested on the information outlined. Attendees were asked to review the maps provided to verify needed practices, provide information on changes in land use and suggest locations where efforts should be concentrated.
- Piedmont Environmental Council announced the availability of some funding for livestock exclusion fencing for the next six months. Funds remaining from a grant for BMPs on the Upper Hazel River may be used to supplement the cost share program administered by the Culpeper Soil and Water Conservation District. It was noted that the state mandates a 90% cap on financial assistance; producers must provide a 10% match.
- It was noted that Health Department regulations require full code compliance for septic systems when a property is sold
- The Health Department recommended consideration for the installation of septic system monitoring ports that facilitate inspection without the need and cost of excavation.

Steering Committee:

- Information on the role and responsibilities of the Steering Committee was presented along with an invitation to all to consider participating as members of that committee. Those interested were encouraged to contact Deirdre Clark (contact information listed below).

Working Groups

- Attendees broke out into two Working Groups: Agricultural and Residential.

Residential Working Group Meeting

Attendance:

Jenny Biche', Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission
Deirdre Clark, Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission
Bob Slusser, VA Dept. of Conservation and Recreation
Bryant Thomas, VA DEQ
Bonnie Dixon, Citizen

Discussion Points:

A resident expressed her extreme frustration with practices observed at a dog kennel located in the flood plain of the Robinson River, directly across the river from her property in Criglersville.

- Dogs, often as many as 20 at a time, have uncontrolled access to the river.
- There is no apparent waste management program in place on the property.
- Foul odors are noted along that stretch of the river on a regular basis.

The complainant suspects that the property owner is flushing dog waste directly into the stream. She maintains that despite numerous complaints to county and state officials, the problem has not been investigated. The aggressive nature of the dogs has discouraged her from taking water samples. The Health Department representative verified that "once or twice a year" complaints were received regarding dogs from the kennel biting individuals. The resident requested sampling of the Robinson River near her residence on Lindsay Lane in Criglersville. Mr. Thomas indicated that he would forward her request to the proper staff person at DEQ.

Agricultural Working Group Meeting**Attendance:**

Evan Blumenthal, Culpeper, Soil and Water Conservation District
Beth Burnam, Piedmont Environmental Council
Jennifer Carlson, VA DEQ
Sidney Coates, Citizen
Lynn Graves, Citizen
R. Clay Jackson, Madison County Planning Commissioner
Rodney Lillard, Chair, Madison County Planning Commission
David Massie, Culpeper Soil and Water Conservation District
Byron Petrauskas, Blue Ridge Environmental Solutions, Inc.
Lisa Robertson, Administrator, Madison County
Carl Stafford, VA Cooperative Extension, Culpeper
Tommy Utz, Citizen
Frank Wilzak, Blue Ridge Foothills Conservancy

Discussion Points:

The group reviewed and updated aerial maps of the watershed, noting potential livestock access locations.

What's Next?

Attendees were encouraged to sign up to participate as part of the Steering Committee by contacting Deirdre Clark or Byron Petrauskas before the scheduled Steering Committee meeting on November 30, 2010. All meeting notes, maps and presentations, as well as the draft document, may be viewed on-line at http://www.rrregion.org/tmdl_rld.html. The final public meeting will be held on December 16, 2010.

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