

Upper York River Watershed
Total Maximum Daily Load Implementation Plan (TMDL-IP) Development

Tuesday, June 7, 2011

6 P.M.

Town of Orange Public Works Community Room
235 Warren Street, Orange Virginia

Agricultural Working Group Report to Steering Committee

Agricultural Working Group Participants:

Bart Almond, Citizen
Jenny Biche, Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission
William Biscoe, Citizen
Cynthia Bowman, Citizen
Jennifer Carlson, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality
Deirdre Clark, Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission
Raleigh Coleman, Thomas Jefferson Soil and Water Conservation District
Sonny Coleman, Citizen
Willie Coleman, Citizen
Willie Gentry, Chair, Louisa County BOS
J.R. Goodwin, Citizen
Thomas Graves, Citizen, Orange County Farm Bureau
K. Green, Citizen
Steve Hopkins, Virginia Cooperative Extension
Vernon Jones, Citizen
James Kean, Citizen
Courtney Lipski, Virginia Department of Health
Etta Lucas, Tri-County/City Soil and Water Conservation District
Charles Lunsford, Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation
Patty Madison, Citizen
Janice Mayhugh, Eastern View High School
Bob McConnell, Citizen
Dan Ober, Citizen
Christopher Owens, Citizen
Byron Petrauskas, Blue Ridge Environmental Solutions
Cody Phelps, Eastern View High School
Helene Purcell, Citizen
Alison Rau, Piedmont Environmental Council
Chip Russell, Virginia Department of Health
Monk Sanford, Citizen
May Sligh, Department of Conservation and Recreation
Bob Slusser, Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation
Doug Smith, Citizen
Richard Street, Spotsylvania County
Bryant Thomas, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality
Clorese Vaughan, Citizen
Joey Vaughn, Citizen
Greg Wichelns, Culpeper Soil and Water Conservation District

Ron Wisniewski, USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service
Bob Weiner, Citizen
Michael Willis, Citizen
Ron Wisniewski, Natural Resources Conservation Service
Lindsay Woolfolk, Citizen
Spencer Yager, Culpeper Soil and Water Conservation District

Meeting Dates:

The Agricultural Working Group met on January 25, 2011, February 8, 2011 and May 10, 2011.

The overall goal of the Agricultural Working Group 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.

The following is a summary of the issues discussed at the Agricultural Working Group meetings and their recommendations to the Steering Committee:

Key Topics:

- Primarily beef operations exist in these watersheds. Confined animal feeding operations consist of four dairies and two poultry facilities;
- Providing electricity to a groundwater well can be a big issue in these watersheds due to the expense (solar power an option where practical);
- Livestock exclusion fencing is not practical in flood-prone areas and would be destroyed frequently in some areas of the watershed;
- More geese exist near Lake Anna than what is estimated in the 2005 TMDL study and stay year round;
- Changes in land use since 2005 include cropland changes from corn production to pasture, and limited residential building due to the economy;
- Continuing Conservation Initiative Stream Exclusion fencing (CCI-SE) program is a new Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) cost-share practice that pays \$1 /ft. for 5 years for one-sided stream exclusion fencing and \$2/ft. for both sides. Promotion of CCI-SE hopes to capture voluntary practice data. The only requirement is that the fencing must be for stream exclusion, there is no set back requirement;
- While stream-side fencing is not popular with older farmers, they do favor trough installations and recognize the benefits of cold, clean drinking water for their livestock;
- Work load will determine the number of projects completed within the allotted time;
- Lake Anna Civic Association (LACA) is interested in funding a demonstration project in which they would partner with a farmer participating in the exclusion fencing cost-share programs by covering the difference between the cost-share amount and the total amount needed; and
- The Soil and Water Conservation Districts can assist farmers individually to find the best cost share programs that will work for their needs – flexible options exist.

Recommendations:

- Include supplemental cost-share for fence repair/replacement when fencing is destroyed by floods;

NOTE: *If a fence is constructed using cost-share funding and is destroyed due to a natural disaster such as a flood, it may be replaced one time if the disaster did not take place within the same year as the construction of the fence.*

- Farm labor needs to be valued the same as contractor labor and farmers should get same credit as if a contractor did the work. Currently, cost-share estimates farmer labor costs at a lower rate than contractors;

NOTE: *With regard to cost-share programs, Farm Labor and Contractor Labor cost credit may vary depending on the county. Orange county credits farm and contractor labor equally. In Spotsylvania County, contractor labor receives a higher value than farm labor. It was recommended that farm labor and contractor labor be credited equally within the watershed. Cost estimates should be irrelevant of who does the work;*

- Applicable education/outreach methods should include farmer to farmer interaction, Soil and Water Conservation District, Farm Bureau, educational events conducted by Virginia Cooperative Extension, Cattleman's and Dairymen's Association events, FSA newsletter, information booth at CVCA Field Day and County Fair (although more residents than farmers would be reached at the fair).
- Securing and researching funding will be critical for success of the TMDL-IP
- More focus should be placed on educating and supporting the Equine industry;

NOTE: *There is a 50% cost share program available to horse owners for grazing paddocks with a \$15,000 cap. Horse owners are also available for cost-share for the LE-1T, LE-2T and SL-6T practices at 50% up to 85% cost-share.*

- More water testing needs to be done and samples taken in other locations than where previously collected;
- Retention ponds should be a last resort/catch-all if needed to reduce the exceedance rate to 0% due to their considerable expense;
- One Full Time Equivalent (FTE) technical assistant was not adequate to complete the proposed workload for the entire project area within a 10 year period;
- When standards are being set, such as requirements for fencing type used in cost share programs, input should be collected from the public; and
- Pasture management, not just exclusion fencing, is an important factor in achieving reduction loads.

A ten year timeline, with all watersheds receiving equal attention, is recommended. Eight years will be devoted to stage 1, with the remaining two years focused on stage 2.