

Government Working Group Meeting

January 29, 2015

Meeting Notes

Location: CE&H Ruritan Hall, 8881 Eclipse Drive, Suffolk, VA 23434

Start: 1:00 pm

End: 3:00 pm

Meeting Attendees:

Dana Gonzalez- DEQ/TRO, Dinah Oliver-DEQ/TRO, Jennifer Howell-DEQ/TRO, Jim Winters-Nansemond River Preservation Alliance (NRPA), Stuart Lassiter-Suffolk DPU, Erin Rountree-Suffolk PW Engineering, Kim Hummel-Isle of Wight County, Bruce Schwenneker- Witman Requirdt & Assoc, Melissa Lindgren-Isle of Wight County, Geoff Paine-NRPA, Chuck Griffin-Peanut SWCD, Art Kirby-DCR, Taucha Fanslau-NRPA, Jamie Armentrout-Stokes Environmental, Mac Sisson-VIMS, Jack Eure-NRPA, Dave Basnett-resident, Jay Duell-Suffolk & Isle of Wight Health Dept., Matthew Ward-Suffolk News Herald, Danny Stephenson-Izaak Walton League of America (IWLA) Suffolk, David Allmon-IWLA Suffolk, Michael Reiss-NRPA, Elizabeth Taraski-NRPA, John Yon-resident, Bob Kerr-Kerr Environmental Services, Karl Mertig-Kimly-Horn & Associates, Joe Barlow Jr.-Cotton Plains Farm, Steven Barnum-NRPA, Ed Heide-City of Suffolk

I. Agenda Item: Overview of TMDL and IP Process

Discussion: DEQ representatives reviewed the TMDL for Chuckatuck and Brewers Creeks and explained the purpose of the implementation plan. The plan will address the unpermitted, nonpoint sources of fecal coliform pollution in the watershed. In addition, DEQ representatives explained that these types of plans are typically implemented in a phased approach, with phase 1 (1-5 years) addressing all anthropogenic sources in the watershed and phase 2 (years 6-10) addressing education, septic maintenance, and wildlife management, if needed.

II. Agenda Item: Houses and Septic Systems in the Watershed

Discussion: DEQ representatives requested that Isle of Wight and City of Suffolk representatives provide either GIS files or addresses of residences within the watershed and whether or not those homes use septic systems or are connected to the sewer. In addition, DEQ representatives requested that Isle of Wight and City of Suffolk representatives help identify neighborhoods that could still be connected to the sewer and which communities would be too difficult to connect to the sewer. This information will help DEQ representatives determine how many septic best management practices will be needed in the implementation plan. City of Suffolk representatives explained several projects that have been completed or will be completed in the near future for connecting communities to the sewer system. They also noted that the City of Suffolk treatment plant is no longer on septic, it is on sewer. City of Suffolk representatives and Isle of Wight representatives confirmed that they would work with DEQ to gather the requested information.

DEQ representatives requested that Isle of Wight and City of Suffolk representatives explain their septic pump-out notification procedures. City of Suffolk representatives reported that they send letters out to residents in the watershed notifying them of the need for septic pump-outs every 5 years; they have over 80% compliance. Isle of Wight representatives reported that they have

sent letters to residents needing septic pump-outs on a yearly basis since 2008; they have approximately 50% compliance in the county.

DEQ representatives asked the group if there were any neighborhoods within the watershed that are known for having greater septic failures. There were no neighborhoods that the group could point to and VDH representatives said that failures in the watershed are more sporadic.

DEQ asked meeting attendees if they were aware of any funding currently available in the watershed for addressing straight pipes and failing septics. VDH representatives noted that the Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project was a good source of information and funding in the watershed and that they would provide contact information for a local representative.

III. Agenda Item: Pet Waste

Discussion: DEQ representatives gave a brief overview of the types of pet waste best management practices that are typically included in implementation plans. They explained that pet waste stations and education signs could be placed in areas where dog walkers frequent and requested that if workgroup members could determine locations where pet waste stations would be useful, it would be helpful to include a map in the plan that would identify these locations.

DEQ representatives asked what pet waste education or best management practices are currently in the watershed. City of Suffolk and Isle of Wight representatives noted that they provide pet waste information at outreach events. It was also noted that the AskHRGreen.org website that is maintained by the Hampton Roads PDC has additional pet waste information.

DEQ representatives asked work group members if they were aware of any hunt clubs or dog kennels in the watershed. No workgroup members could point to any specific kennels within the Chuckatuck and Brewers Creeks watersheds, but they noted that the City Clerk in Suffolk should have a record of all kennel licenses sold; these licenses are for 10 dogs or more.

IV. Agenda Item: Education and Outreach

Discussion: DEQ representatives explained the types of education and outreach that are typically included in implementation plans and asked workgroup members if there were certain programs that have worked well in the past, or if there were programs that the workgroup believed would not work as well in the watershed. Workgroup members noted that the Nansemond River Preservation Alliance and the Izaak Walton League currently conduct many education programs and would be willing to help with education planning for the implementation plan.

V. Agenda Item: Source Assessment

Discussion: DEQ representatives explained that one of the ways bacteria loads are estimated within the watershed is through a source assessment. They requested that workgroup members evaluate the source assessment numbers for livestock and wildlife in the watershed that were reported in the TMDL. Peanut SWCD representatives noted that the number of cattle reported in the TMDL seemed high, rather than 113 cattle, a more accurate estimate would be 55-60 cattle. In addition, local farmers in the watershed noted that they did not believe there were any hogs in the watershed. There is one hog farm that is on the edge of the watershed boundary, but it might drain to a different watershed. DEQ representatives stated that they would investigate the number of hogs further. Workgroup members noted that they believed the number of ducks reported in the TMDL might be low, but acknowledged that the number is difficult to estimate because of the seasonal fluctuations in the duck

population. Workgroup members noted that it might be worthwhile to estimate the number of feral cats in the watershed and investigate management options for this potential source.

Workgroup members noted that it would be helpful to identify areas where boater pump-outs could be added as well as assessing the number of vessels that have on-board sewage systems. It was noted that the coast guard auxiliary may be able to provide this information.