

## **Crooked, Stephens and West Runs and Willow Brook Water Quality Improvement Plan**

First Community Meeting: Lord Fairfax Community College

January 28, 2016

### ***PARTICIPANTS***

Dan Murray	Richard Hoover	Wayne Webb
Tim Stowe	Sandra Ritenour	Larry Stacy
Mack McComas	Katie Shoemaker	Larry Atkinson
Janice Atkinson	David Nichols	Bud Nagelvoort
David Beahm	Phil VanAlsburg	Tom Sayre
James Pinsky (LFSWCD)	C William Staples	H.B. Simpson
Joe Lehen (DOF)	D. Stanley	Don Kain (DEQ)
Nesha McRae (DEQ)	Tara Sieber (DEQ)	Matt Wolanski (DOF)

### ***MEETING SUMMARY***

The meeting began with a welcome from Nesha McRae, from the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (VADEQ). Nesha provided an overview of the water quality problems observed in Crooked, Stephens and West Runs and Willow Brook. Monitoring conducted by VADEQ has shown that the creeks are violating the state's water quality standard for *E. coli*, which Nesha explained is a human health concern when people have primary contact with the water. A TMDL study was completed for the creeks in 2014. The results of this study were shared with attendees including a "de-listing" reduction scenario. Nesha explained that as part of the study, an assessment of all of the sources of *E. coli* in the watershed was completed, and then reduction scenarios were developed for the different sources outlining what would be needed in order to meet the water quality standard. Nesha outlined the process that will be used to develop the water quality improvement plan and stressed the importance of public involvement. Implementation of the plan will be conducted on a voluntary basis, so local support is very critical to the overall success of this effort.

One participant at the meeting asked how this effort related to the Chesapeake Bay restoration effort. DEQ staff explained that this is a local effort that is specifically targeted at the bacteria impairment on the streams, while the Chesapeake Bay restoration efforts are focused on nutrients and sediment. However, there are definitely areas of considerable overlap between what needs to be done to address bacteria pollution in these streams and what needs to be done to improve water quality in the Chesapeake Bay. The participant noted that he would like to see representation from the federal government at the meeting, and that farmers were poorly represented at the meeting that night. DEQ staff explained that multiple outreach efforts had been made including a large mailing notifying local residents of the meeting.

Another participant asked DEQ staff to explain where Stephens Run starts and what it actually considered Crooked Run. The group revisited the project area map which shows both Stephens and Crooked Runs. Stephens is a tributary of Crooked Run, and has been called Crooked Run by some local residents, creating some confusion.

The group discussed the bacteria load that has been attributed to forest after a participant asked what the source of that bacteria would be. DEQ staff explained that this is bacteria from wildlife. The load is very small since very little runoff occurs from forested areas. Another participant asked about the load from wildlife that is directly deposited into streams. He explained that he has a number of beavers on his property that spend a lot of time in the stream. It was explained that this direct load of bacteria has a greater impact on the stream since bacteria deposited on the land requires rain to carry it to the stream, and some of it dies off on the way there.

One participant asked about the maintenance requirements for livestock exclusion practices and noted that 100% cost share had been made available to farmers for these practice recently. However, he explained that the maintenance requirements of livestock exclusion fencing are very involved and expensive. DEQ staff explained that the typical BMP cost share contract for fencing is a 10 year agreement during which the farmer is responsible for maintaining the fence. They could reapply to the Soil and Water Conservation District if the fence is washed out. They may or may not receive additional funding to repair the fencing depending on how their application ranks against others and how much funding the Soil and Water Conservation District has available. The participant asked about other requirements of these contracts including buffer width and maintenance. DEQ staff explained that requirements depend on the type of practice the participant signs up for. Some programs allow the fence to be put 10 feet back from the stream, others require 35 foot setbacks, while others provide additional incentives for even wider buffers. Some programs require that trees be planted in the buffer, while others allow farmers to bush-hog the buffer area during certain times of the year. There is considerable flexibility available to farmers through all of the different program options that are out there.

DEQ staff noted that water quality in all of the creeks except for West Run has been improving over the past three to five years. In addition, a large amount of work as already been done by the agricultural community to fence livestock out of the creeks and prevent runoff from crop and pasture land.

The group dismissed for a five minute break after which attendees reconvened in two breakout sessions: an agricultural and a residential working group. Nesha explained that the agricultural working group will discuss the best ways to reach out to farmers in the watershed, appropriate best management practices to address bacteria coming from agricultural land in the watershed, and obstacles to implementation of these practices. The residential working group will discuss ways to locate straight pipes in the watersheds, how to educate homeowners about septic system maintenance, and suitable ways to address runoff of bacteria from pet waste.