

Roanoke River Implementation Plan Part 2: North Fork & South Fork Roanoke River, Bradshaw Creek and Wilson Creek

Combined Residential Working Group & Agricultural Working Group Meeting Notes

**12/3/15, 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Meadowbrook Community Center, Shawsville, VA**

Combined Residential and Agricultural Working Group Participants:

Sue Lindstrom, Erin Hagan, Ginny Snead (Louis Berger Group); Katie Shoemaker (EEE Consulting for VDOT); John Burke (Town of Christiansburg); Kafi Howard (Town of Blacksburg); Shane Sawyer (Roanoke Valley Alleghany Regional Commission); Cynthia Hancock (Skyline Soil & Water Conservation District); James Moneymaker, Mary Dail, Charlie Lunsford (Virginia Department of Environmental Quality [DEQ]); Doug Burton (Montgomery Co.); Javad Torabinejad, and Zach Martin.

Goals of Meeting

- Review estimates of implementation measures that will result in reductions in residential and agricultural bacteria and sediment loads. The proposed Best Management Practices (BMPs) by subwatershed presented are designed to meet water quality goals (sediment and bacteria reductions).
- Identify potential partnerships and funding sources for implementing clean up measures identified in the plan.

Meeting Notes

Mary Dail briefly introduced attendees to the Roanoke River Implementation Plan Part II for the North and South Fork Roanoke River. Mary introduced new faces to the Louis Berger part of the project team including Ginny Snead and Susan Lindstrom. Today marks Nick Tatalovich's last day at Louis Berger.

Residential BMPs/Educational Outreach Discussion:

Attendees participated in a brief round-robin to inform the group of current activities. John Burke mentioned partnering with the Town of Blacksburg to improve educational outreach. Educational topics include pet waste, lawn care, etc. Doug Burton mentioned working with the school board to include the school board as part of the county MS4. Getting stormwater and bacteria issues into the curriculum could go a long way to modifying behavior. In addition, Shane Sawyer brought up the Clean Valley Council's very active role in Roanoke area schools. That sort of outreach is needed in the Roanoke IP Part II area. There needs to be more educational effort to modify behavior including outreach concerning erosion control especially in the mountains and other steep sloped areas.

A participant asked what incentive is there for the public to modify behavior. Stormwater utility fees are relatively low for the localities that have the fees. It would cost more for a homeowner to purchase a rain barrel for example. The Roanoke Valley Alleghany Regional Commission (RVARC) is working on a grant application to have funding to distribute rain barrels to people that participate in a workshop. However, non-structural BMPs will continue to be important for residential areas. Pet waste is another

challenging area. It is difficult to get people in residential areas to pick up pet waste. Citizens are more likely to utilize pet waste stations in a park, for example, as compared to those with pets in a fenced backyard that may not pick up pet waste.

The group discussed proposed pet waste stations within the project area. The group also discussed maintenance issues and responsibility for those stations. Hotels are good options for pet waste station placement. Cynthia mentioned placing some pet waste stations at restaurants as an option. The group also discussed pet waste digesters which treat waste on-site. A discussion followed concerning the calculation of numbers of digesters. It was suggested that it would be better to base this on a percentage of the population perhaps with a higher percentage in the more urban Wilson Creek subwatershed. Kennels, animal shelters, and veterinary offices would be good locations for pet waste stations. Doug Burton provided some updates to the proposed pet waste locations list. RVARC has mapped all existing pet waste station location. Shane offered to map the location of pet waste stations for Montgomery County and others. A pet waste education campaign was discussed with an average cost of \$5,000 per locality per campaign. A suggestion was to have pet stores give out flyers explaining the importance of pet waste pickup and including bags. As part of the education campaign, participants thought helpful information could include a discussion of ways to dispose of pet waste such as throwing it in the trash, composting, or flushing it. A campaign typically includes outreach costs, printed materials, displays, etc. It was suggested that pet waste education materials could be include with existing water treatment and other mailings. Another outreach recommendation was to use an online “exam” after which the participant could receive a free pet waste composter, bag holder, or rain barrel.

The group briefly discussed the different types of septic BMPs. Blacksburg requires homeowners in cases where a septic system has failed to connect to public sewer. A homeowner has to be within 400 feet of existing sewer line. A participant asked about cost-share for septic/sewer BMPs. Those residents typically pay for materials and the town provides the equipment and labor to connect to public sewer. When outlying systems fail, the town does allow a homeowner to repair their septic system. Bacteria may be coming from aging sewer systems. Funding is needed to repair aging sewer systems. Replacing an aging system is very cost prohibitive. The project team will follow up with the Town of Christiansburg to see if they have a similar approach to assisting homeowners within a certain distance of the sewer line.

Go Fest Festival may be an opportunity for outreach. We need to find other ways to reach out because it is difficult to get citizens to come to just a water quality meeting. Perhaps farmer’s markets would be a good idea. The tomato festival in Shawsville was also mentioned.

Agricultural BMP Discussion:

Livestock exclusion remains a challenge in this area with narrow river valleys it is difficult for some landowners to fence 35 ft on each side of a stream.

A meeting participant suggested that it would be helpful to explain that consecutive lengths of stream restoration would be better than small, individual pieces.