

**Upper Roanoke River TMDL Implementation (Clean-up) Plan – Part II Development**  
**Government Working Group Report to Steering Committee**  
**Presented: March 16, 2016 1:30 p.m.; Updated April 14, 2016**  
**Blacksburg Library, 200 Miller St. Blacksburg, VA 24060**

**Working Group Participants:**

- Doug Burton - Montgomery Co.
- Joe Williams – Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries
- Leigh Anne Weitzenfeld - City of Roanoke
- Ashley Hall, Katie Shoemaker - EEE Consulting for VDOT
- John Burke - Town of Christiansburg
- Chris Barbour - Skyline Soil & Water Conservation District
- Kafi Howard - Town of Blacksburg
- Nick Tatalovich, Erin Hagan, Sue Lindstrom, Ginny Snead - Louis Berger Group
- Mary Dail, Charlie Lunsford, James Moneymaker – Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)
- Javad Torabinejad
- Shane Sawyer – Roanoke Valley Alleghany Regional Commission
- Dennis McCarthy – Virginia Department of Forestry
- Kelli Scott – Virginia Cooperative Extension (consulted but was unable to attend meetings)

**Purpose of Working Group:** The Government Working Group (GWG) assisted in determining the types and extent of Best Management Practices (BMPs) needed in the subwatersheds that will result in reductions in bacteria and sediment loads. GWG members helped identify potential partnerships and funding sources for implementing clean up measures included in the plan. In addition, the GWG aided in identifying additional programs and technical resources, lead agencies for agricultural and residential water quality improvement efforts, and regulatory controls currently in place that may compel water quality improvement in the impaired watersheds.

**Meeting Dates:** The Government Working Group met on July 29, 2015 at 2:00 p.m. at the Town of Christiansburg Administration Building (100 E. Main St., Christiansburg) and March 16, 2016 at 1:30 p.m. at the Blacksburg Library (200 Miller St., Blacksburg). The March 16<sup>th</sup> meeting was a combined with the Steering Committee.

**Key Topics and Recommendations**

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

**General Concerns:** Working Group members brought up BMP maintenance and are concerned about the lack of funding and personnel to maintain BMPs. Education and outreach with respect to all BMP categories is needed in these watersheds.

### **Sewage Handling and disposal systems:**

- Blacksburg and VT share a sewer system and Christiansburg has its own sewer system. Montgomery County has a Public Service Authority which maintains joint water and sewer lines. The Authority includes Shawsville.
- Localities are short on staff for inspections of overflows
- The Floyd County numbers of residents served by public sewer for the IP area are incorrect because there are only septic tanks and potential straight pipes in that portion of the county.
- The Town of Blacksburg requires connection to the sewer system if the structure is within 200 feet of the sewer line.
- Montgomery County mentioned that it has a sewage treatment plant at capacity.
- Working group members are concerned that VDH has not been involved in the process despite efforts to reach out to them.
- Karst topography exists in many parts of these watersheds.

### **Pet Waste:**

- There are not many concentrated areas for pets (like dog parks) in the watershed.
- Virginia Tech has data on pet waste bag use on the Huckleberry Trail.
- Roanoke Valley Alleghany Regional Commission has mapped pet waste stations in other parts of the Roanoke River watershed and is willing to share this information and assist with additional mapping.

### **Stormwater:**

- VDOT only installs BMPs to offset development projects.
- Montgomery Co. only installs BMPs as part of new developments; the county doesn't retrofit existing BMPs.
- Concerns exist over the wide range of stream restoration approaches available. There needs to be a plan in place to facilitate the permitting process to get streambank stabilization practices installed.
- Existing street sweeping efforts need to be evaluated.

### **Agriculture:**

- Some landowners fear losing control of their land if they participate in government-sponsored programs like cost-share.
- There is no longer money available for Landowner Incentive Program projects.
- Riparian buffers are not very efficient in mountainous areas and that top-of-bank fencing BMPs and interior fencing BMPs are needed.
- BMP installation in the Bradshaw Creek subwatershed will be difficult.
- Critical area acreage is typically low within the IP area.

## **Recommendations to Steering Committee:**

- The working group recommended the following organizations be included in clean-up planning and implementation activities: New River Valley Planning Commission, Roanoke County, and Virginia Tech.
  
- **Onsite sewage disposal and sewer line connection:**
  - Revise Floyd Co. numbers of homes served by sewer (e.g. no public sewer within IP area).
  - Education of citizens on sewer and pet waste problems is needed. A suggestion was made to include information in mailers; however, it is important to note that there is a discrepancy between people receiving water and sewer bills.
  - Project team needs to expand alternative system BMPs in light of karst topography.
  - Government Working Group participants recommend continuing to reach out to VDH to gain a better understanding of regional expertise related to septic systems, straight pipes, and alternative waste treatment systems.
  - Funding for low-income assistance for sewage management needs to be explored and included in the IP.
  
- **Pet Waste**
  - Pet Waste education is needed in all areas of the watershed and education campaigns need to be extended to all subwatersheds.
  - Pet Waste composters need to be included in the IP.
  
- **Stream Restoration**
  - North Fork Roanoke River watershed has opportunities for streambank restoration, but there is a need for targeted grant funds for these projects.
  - Landowner Incentive Program (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) funds are tapped out.
  - Streambank stabilization BMPs need to be incorporated in the IP because it is more appealing to an agricultural landowner than stream restoration BMPs.
  
- **Stormwater**
  - Street sweeping needs to be included in the IP and it was recommended that the project team reach out to the localities and VDOT to gain an understanding of where opportunities exist for program enhancement.
  
- **Agriculture**
  - Riparian buffers are not very efficient in mountainous areas and that top-of-bank fencing BMPs and interior fencing BMPs are needed.
  - Wilson Creek sub-watershed may be a good watershed to target BMPs.

- Recommended BMP costs for the following practices:
  - The cost for Cropland Buffer/Field Borders (CP-33 and WQ-1) should be \$1,000.
  - The cost for the SL-11: Vegetative Cover on critical area treatment was recommended to be \$2,500 - \$3,500 per acre.
  - Average SL-6: Stream Exclusion with Grazing Land Management practice cost in this area is \$40,000 - \$45,000.
  - Increase the cost of FR-1 practice from \$560 to \$1,000 because livestock are required to be excluded before trees can be planted.
- Wet detention ponds were recommended for implementation in the last stage due to the high cost.
- The (FR-3) Woodland Buffer Filter Area practice needs to be included in the IP.
- **Education and Outreach**
  - Education and outreach are needed for all BMP categories including pet waste and septic system maintenance.
  - There are opportunities to piggy-back the water quality and IP message onto existing events in the watershed.
  - Utility billing offers opportunities to get the word out about water quality, BMPs, pet waste, and septic system maintenance.
- **Technical Assistance**
  - Technical assistance is needed for BMP design, retrofits, and maintenance.