

Birch Creek and Dan River Watersheds TMDL Cleanup Plan
Agricultural Working Group
October 3, 2017
Danville Regional Airport, Eastern Conference Room

The agricultural working group will discuss ways to reduce bacteria coming from agricultural sources. The principal objective of this working group is to identify obstacles to implementation of practical solutions to reducing bacteria. This group will focus on identifying:

- Constraints to the implementation of BMPs
- BMPs that are both effective and affordable
- Alternative funding sources/partnerships
- The best strategies for reaching agricultural stakeholders

General questions and comments:

- 2008 study and 2017 IP why the time delay?
 - Depends on the group some TMDLs go straight to IP and some there is a lag because people need a break and implement BMPs on their own
 - Would be interested in seeing the data from within the last 10 years to see if we have better
- Any trend data to see differences between years?
 - trend site on Sandy Creek
- Logical disconnects- current status <1% direct deposition in Birch Creek?
 - Remedy would be 87% reduction in direct deposition
 - Buffer included in report. What other BMPs could we do to get at 87% reduction?
- Are farms that are on impaired streams getting priority for cost share assistance?
 - Yes
- Who runs the 319 funding?
 - SWCD or municipalities
- Once implementation practices are put into place, are they checked?
 - Yes, random spot checks
 - Fencing is usually in compliance and watering trough issues
 - Stream exclusion for 10 years
 - SWCD have people signed up for cost share but no money to fund.
- Updating any CAFO numbers?
 - Will get updated numbers
 - No CAFOs for WLA but may be misrepresented on land
- Tobacco has been going away, what is replacing it?
 - Soybeans, or idol
 - A quarter going to cattle

Agricultural Questions:

- 1) *What is the current growth trend for agriculture in the area? Do you expect to see significant changes in farming practices over the next 5-10 years?*

Less tobacco in the area. More small ruminant (goats, sheep). There are no dairies in Halifax County. Farms are producing row crows and some beef cattle.

- 2) *Are local cattle producers receptive to stream fencing and improving grazing management?*

There is interest as long as there is a program to support it. There is more interest in grazing management.

- 3) *What barriers are holding back progress to implementing stream fencing and improving pasture management?*

Funding. People are more so interested in a watering system versus simply fencing streams, but people are willing to fence streams to get a water system.

- 4) *Is there existing manure storage in the watershed? Is there a need for additional manure storage?*

There is not a need for manure storage in Halifax County due to limited confined animal agriculture.

- 5) *Are there any problems with manure spreading on crop or pasture fields locally? What are the best BMPs to address this source?*

No Class B biosolids within Halifax County. Setbacks are in place such that no NEW confined animal feeding operations (CAFOs) will be established in Halifax County. Check with permit staff to determine what CAFO permits are in the watersheds from the time the TMDL was established.

- 6) *Is there poor pasture or erodible cropland in the area that should be converted to forest?*

95% of soils in Pittsylvania and Halifax are highly erodible. There is a need for better management.

7) *In general, are there practices that are more easily implemented and/or more appealing than other practices in this area?*

Rotational grazing is more easily implemented. Education is needed to prevent over grazing.

8) *What is the best way to let farmers know about conservation programs?*

Virginia Cooperative Extension staff and mailings

9) *Are there any groups in the watershed that would be good resources for education and outreach? Is there a need for education and outreach on pasture management for horse owners or owners of other types of livestock? Who is best to disseminate this type of information?*

- Cattleman's Association, SWCD, Farm Bureau, NGOs
- There are more people raising goats and sheep rather than horses.

10) *How much of the farmland within the project area is leased?*

Less than 10% of land is leased for livestock production. Most land is leased for row crop production.

11) *Are there many horse owners in the area?*

No

12) *Are there certain BMPs that you feel would be most appropriate for the agricultural community in the watershed?*

Rotational grazing and pasture management, stream exclusion, nutrient management.

Contact James Moneymaker if you are interested in representing the agricultural or residential working group on the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee will review the draft TMDL Implementation Plan before it is presented to the public. The Steering Committee will meeting next spring after a second round of agricultural and residential working group meetings.

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Meeting Adjourn