

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

The residential working group will discuss ways to reduce bacteria coming from human and pet 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:

- Ways to address/identify and eliminate straight pipes and failing septic systems
- Identify potential means of funding
- Determine educational tools that are most likely to engage watershed residents
- Evaluate ways to reduce bacteria from pet waste

Sewer Overflows:

- 1) *Are you aware of any public sewer areas that may smell of sewage or show other evidence of a sewer leak/overflow, especially during heavy rain?*

None

On-Site Sewage Disposal:

- 1) *Are you aware of problems with straight pipes and failing septic systems in the area? Any particular areas?*

Not aware of any problems

- 2) *If funds were available to assist residents with straight pipes and failing septic systems, what would be the best ways to notify people of such funds?*

- Halifax radio, local newspaper, local churches bulletins

- 3) *Is there an ordinance in Halifax County, Pittsylvania County, Patrick County, City of Danville, or the Town of South Boston that requires septic tank pumpouts/maintenance? Possibly during property transfers?*

There is no ordinance in Halifax County. There are no representatives from other areas present.

- *How much does a septic system pump-out cost in this area? How many companies do this type of work? Look at companies bringing the pumpout waste to the waste water treatment plant.*

A pumpout will typically cost \$130. There are a number of companies offering septic pumpout services. We should be able to get an estimate of how many companies take sewage to the Danville WWTP.

- *Is there a need for alternative systems? What are the regulations associated with alternative systems?*

There is not a high demand for alternative systems. Soils typically perk well in most locations.

- 4) *Is there a need for education regarding the operation and maintenance of septic systems?*

Yes, education would be beneficial.

- 5) *What are some local agencies and organizations best suited for this effort? Available programs?*

Local Public Service Authorities, Town of South Boston, Tri-County Community Action Agency, etc.

- 6) *How should education be offered?*

- Brochures?
- Workshops/community meetings?
- Public service announcements?
- Neighborhood canvassing?
- Other?

Education would best be offered as a public service announcement.

Pet Waste Questions:

- 1) *Are you aware that pets (i.e. dogs) can be a significant source of bacteria entering surface waters in the state? (This is based on bacteria source tracking data collected by DEQ.) Are there hunt clubs, dog kennels, veterinary hospitals, boarding facilities that should be considered potential sources for pet waste bacteria?*

Yes, people in more urban areas are aware that pet waste is an issue.

Double Creek and Birch seemed to have a high number of pets versus the human population. We will need to check the numbers for Double Creek.

The group mentioned that veterinary offices could be a source.

- 2) *Have you heard about the need to pick up and properly dispose of dog feces locally?*

There are a few pet waste stations available in Halifax although they are not always used or bags and not stocked.

- 3) *Are you aware of any localities in the watershed with a “scoop the poop” ordinance?*

Not aware of any ordinance

- 4) *There are accessible pet waste disposal stations in the watersheds? If so, where are they located? (parks, schools, subdivisions, public space) Are there areas where people tend to walk their dogs where such stations could be especially useful?*

There are not many pet waste stations in Halifax County.

A station(s) at Virginia International Raceway could be useful.

- 5) *Are there any local education programs related to pet waste? (ASPCA, veterinarians, 4-H, kiosks, etc.)*

There are no active pet waste education campaigns. It is important to keep reminding citizens that pet waste is an issue.

6) *How can we educate homeowners about the impact of pet waste? Would people use a pet waste digester?*

Most people would probably not use a pet waste digester. Education is best accomplished through a campaign with mailings, flyers, outreach at public events.

Stormwater Questions:

This Cleanup Plan will address the need for some stormwater Best Management Practices to collect and treat runoff from residential and urban land areas that contribute to bacteria from pets, failing septic systems, and illicit sewage discharges. These may include rain gardens, bioretention filters, infiltration trenches, vegetated buffers along streams, rain barrels, etc.

1) *Do you know of any areas where flooding consistently occurs during heavy rains?*

The Riverdale area floods frequently

Halifax SWCD completed three rain barrel workshops in 2016.

2) *Have you seen any areas of severe bank erosion within the watersheds? If so, where?*

No areas were specifically identified.

3) *Do you feel that the term stormwater is recognized by most citizens?*

Probably not

4) *Have any of you implemented stormwater BMPs on your property to deal with runoff? If so, what practices?*

Two citizens have rain barrels in this group.

5) *Are you aware of what riparian buffer zones are? How willing would your neighbors or other community members be willing to create or expand these zones?*

There isn't much in the way of riverfront development in Halifax.

- 6) Are there any public areas where you know of stormwater BMPs having been implemented? What practices? Where?

Other Items for discussion:

- 1) *Are there any organizations or groups in the area that work on projects related to any of these issues (sewer overflows, sewage disposal, pet waste, stormwater management, stream restoration and cleanup) that aren't represented here?*

Master Gardeners

- 2) *Is there interest in a watershed tour?*

The group does not see there being interest in a watershed tour.

- 3) *What are some of the barriers to implementing water quality improvement projects in the watershed?*

Funding is a barrier to implementing most BMPs.

- 4) *Is there a considerable amount of recreation that happens on the Dan river (tubing, boating, canoeing, etc.)?*

The group mentioned a new boat launch that was recently installed utilizing funds received from the Dan River coal ash incident. There are people the use the river for fishing. There is a little canoeing. River access is limited.

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