

MINUTES
Powell River and Tributaries IP
Agricultural Working Group Meeting- Jonesville

WHEN: May 24, 2017; 10am-noon

WHERE: Lonesome Pine Soil and Water Conservation District office
Clintwood, VA

ATTENDEES:

- Landon Johnson- Lonesome Pine Soil and Water Conservation District (LPSWCD)
- Wes Stanley- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
- Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)
 - Martha Chapman – TMDL Coordinator – SW Regional Office
 - Stephanie Kreps – NPS Coordinator – SW Regional Office

Meeting purpose: To discuss the agricultural aspects and ways to reduce the sediment and bacteria impairment in the Powell River watershed in Wise County; Engage the public in the development of the Implementation Plan (IP) (also known as a Water Quality Improvement Plan or Clean Up Plan).

Meeting goal: Collect information from agricultural stakeholders to inform the components of the Implementation Plan: landuse changes, best management practices, partnerships, potential funding sources, outreach/education; timeline and future plans that may contribute to IP goals.

Stephanie Kreps (DEQ) gave a brief introduction and set the context of the meeting. Handouts were provided and can be found on the DEQ website: <http://bit.do/DEQPowell-ImplementationPlanProgress>.

The following was discussed at the meeting:

- 1) **Landuse:** Landuse for beef has increased in Wise County; LPSWCD and NRCS projects increasing too. There's more grazing land (reclaimed mine land) and people with interest. LPSWCD and NRCS have several projects in Beaver Dam Creek in Powell Valley. In Wise County within the TMDL, all agriculture is in Powell Valley. Cropland in Powell Valley is mainly corn and hay. Clinch Haven Farms in Powell Valley has 30-50 acres (largest in county). Lots of poor pasture in Powell Valley. Lonesome Pine Golf Course on Butcher Fork may be a source of runoff.
- 2) **Estimates on livestock:** Butcher Fork sheep estimate about 25-30. SF Powell (VAS-P18R_PLL02A00) there are about 15-20 sheep and 100 cattle; SF Powell (VAS-P18R_PLL01A02) there's hay/corn mostly and 25 cattle, 6 horses; SL Powell (VAS-P18R_PLL01A98) there are 25 cattle, 6 horses; Powell (VAS-P17R_POW01A94) no agriculture; Powell River (VAS-P17R_POW03C14) no agriculture..
- 3) **Biosolids** used to be applied at airport in Guest River drainage. Nothing within the Powell TMDL.

- 4) **Estimate of wildlife:** Overall estimates ok but surprised by geese and duck estimates (seem high).
- 5) **Best management practices:** Currently doing SL-6 and WP-4 BMPs within s TMDL area in Wise County. Would be interest in dredging sediment clogging up creeks on farms and controlling invasive species (autumn olive, multiflora rose, kudzu) if there are BMPs available. No voluntary BMPs are being done now. The only constraints is the economy and folks getting laid off (therefore, can't pay for practices). BMPs to address poor pasture is relevant anywhere in Powell Valley (especially around Butcher Fork and South Fork (VAS-P18R_PLL02A00)). There's no interest in doing conversion to forest. There are 10 people logging to every 1 tree planted—people want land cleared. The only areas where trees are being planted are associated with EQIP. CREP not eligible in Wise County.
- 6) **Partnerships:** There's a good working relationship between NRCD and LPSWCD. It depends on the scale of the project but the LPSWCD can get better rates on SL-6. There's no problem with interest in folks signing up..
- 7) **Funding:** A \$100k project over 2 years is reasonable for the LPSWCD to do (no additional FTE needed). No additional funding sources mentioned.
- 8) **Outreach/Education:** Best way to reach out to farmers in Wise County is the Coalfield Progress, horse shows, cattle market, extension events, newsletter done/mailed by LPSWCD; Tractor Supply (10% discount at Wise location if participate in BMP program); Jonesville Co-Op a good place to advertise; farm tours. No social media outlets but email is affective.
- 9) **Timeline:** 10 years is realistic/adequate.
- 10) **Future plans:** More residential areas coming in and agriculture decreasing into Powell Valley because of younger generations not doing agriculture;

General:

- 1) No other bacteria or sediment sources are considered an issue.
- 2) Mountain Empire Community College or DMME office may be a good place for the Steering Committee to meet in September.
- 3) Landon Johnson will participate in the Steering Committee to represent Wise County agriculture.