

# Upper Goose Creek, Cromwells Run, and Little River Implementation Plan Residential Working Group Meeting #1

June 21, 2016  
Meeting Notes

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**Location:** Wakefield School  
4439 Old Tavern Road  
The Plains, Virginia 20198

**Start:** 7:00 p.m.  
**End:** 8:15 p.m.

## **Meeting Attendance:**

May Sligh, VA Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Facilitator  
Jenny Biche, Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission (RRRC), Scribe  
Heidi Moltz, Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin (ICPRB)  
Deirdre Clark, John Marshall Soil and Water Conservation District  
Jeff Sledjeski, Soil Tech, Inc.  
Maunette Makowski, 3E Consulting  
Andrew Hopewell, Assistant Chief of Planning, Fauquier County Community Development  
Ben Shoemaker, Loudoun Water  
Tim Ohlwiler, Virginia Tech Extension Agent  
Gem Bingol, Piedmont Environmental Council

## **Meeting Minutes:**

The meeting started with the distribution of a handout and introductions of all attendees. May Sligh, DEQ, asked the group specific questions pertaining to septic system concerns, pet waste management and education and outreach methods that might work in an effort to identify areas to focus on and best management practices that would be successful in the area. She also answered questions regarding the residential cost share programs. The group shared the following comments:

- The Loudoun Health Department has a list of known areas of potential failing septic systems;
- In Loudoun County, the majority of residential cost share funds were used for replacing distribution boxes, drain fields and pump outs (Catocin Implementation Plan area);
- Education is needed to raise the awareness of homeowners who are unfamiliar with having septic systems and the systems' required maintenance;
- Fauquier and Loudoun Counties both have ordinances requiring homeowners to pump out their septic system every 5 years; Loudoun County sends post card reminders to all known septic system owners on a 5 year cycle concerning the septic tank pump out requirement. The licensed septic waste hauler will report the pump out to the Loudon Health Department, who tracks the information. Sometimes the haulers neglect to report the pump out right away and homeowners may receive another post card reminder;

- In Loudoun County, 99% of all waste from septic tank pump outs gets hauled to the Broad Run Facility, which gets overwhelmed with 20-50 trucks arriving a day. Upgrades have been made to the facility to help manage the septic waste;
- Loudoun County is currently reviewing their septic pump out ordinance with regard to noncompliance. A decision as to whether the penalty would be civil versus criminal has not yet been made;
- Many of the counties outside the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Area are adopting the 5 year pump out ordinance, like Fauquier and Loudoun, which is good;
- Additional education is needed for homeowners on what not to put in their septic systems, such as paint, and to consider not installing disposals due to the increased solids content;
- Include educational materials on how to properly maintain septic systems for both Counties as this information is not currently included in the pump out reminder notices;
- Most new homes in Loudoun County are being built with alternative systems due to the nature of the soil and the density of the developments. It was noted that these alternative systems are particularly sensitive to "mistakes" in use/operation. Any area with good soil already has a house on it;
- Cost share programs would be welcome and residents would be interested in participating;
- The average pump out is estimated to cost \$250 in the area;
- There were a lot of low income homes built on poor soils and those septic systems are now in need of repair;
- No one was aware of any educational outreach on septic system maintenance that is being done currently, even with the pump out notices. Information printed on door hangers was suggested;
- Realtors present an opportunity to help educate new home owners when completing land exchange transactions. Realtors can also help update the county health departments about septic problems;
- The health departments have lots of useful tools that can be used to get good data on septic systems. Loudoun County does an excellent job of record keeping and tracking information;
- Various county health departments, regional planning districts and soil and water conservation districts across the state have led residential cost share programs. For this project area, it may make sense for John Marshall Soil and Water Conservation District (JMSWCD) to be the lead in this watershed due to their experience in several other Implementation Plan (IP) areas in Fauquier County and since most of the project area is in Fauquier County;
- Best management practices (BMP) cost share programs associated with non-permitted bacteria sources (e.g. residential septic, agricultural) are voluntary, though practices are expected to be maintained for their specified lifespan;
- If there were not a lot of participation by homeowners in the cost share programs, then the programs will be evaluated to see if other incentives would be more successful;
- Pet waste is a real source of bacteria that can impair streams. There is data to support that it contributes to deteriorated stream conditions, but only a small percentage of the bacterial load is from pets in this IP area;
- Pet waste BMPs include pet waste stations, composters, leash bag holders and educational programs;
- Pets are often not allowed on school property in Loudoun county, so schools would not be a good location for the pet waste stations;
- There is cost share for pet waste stations, but commitments must be made to maintain them (bags);
- It was noted that at a dog walk area in a homeowners association pet owners are less likely to pick up after their pet after dark;
- Information on how much dog waste one dog contributes, along with an estimate of how many dogs are in the area, can make an impact and encourage pet owners to pick up after their pet. People are more likely to get engaged if they can connect the situation to themselves. In other watersheds, surveys showed that education on the diseases that can affect humans and pets due to lack of pet waste management provided the best incentive for picking up after one's pet;

- Many small lot homeowners associations (HOAs) in Loudoun County have pet waste stations already; less dense residential areas may be potential areas to target for additional stations;
- In Fauquier County, the only park that would be a possible location for pet waste stations would be in the Marshall area as other County parks already have them;
- In areas where there are no Public Works Facility to maintain the pet waste stations, sometimes the County Parks and Recreation Department provides the service;
- Cannon Ridge in Marshall may be a possible place for a pet waste station;
- Businesses along Main Street in The Plains may be interested in having pet waste stations available;
- Educating horse owners on BMPs may have the biggest impact, in particular practices for small horse farms and the Chesapeake Bay Friendly Farm example (paddock management);
- A suggestion for educational materials, such as a kiosk along horse trails was recommended. There are horse trails all along Little River;
- Horse owners can be reached through feed stores, Equine Alliance in Loudoun County, hunt clubs (for both horses and dogs), riding clubs, 4H clubs and the Mare Center in Middleburg;
- In Fauquier County, dog kennels must have a pet waste management plan before permits are approved. There are a large number of kennels in both Fauquier and Loudoun Counties and they may require specialized outreach efforts;
- Fauquier Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) is a great example of a facility with proper pet waste management and treatment for their large concentration of dogs;
- Middleburg Humane Society, Friends of Homeless Animals, veterinarians, and other animal rescue groups are possible partners in educating dog owners about picking up dog waste;
- There was a suggestion to partner with Virginia Outdoor Foundation as they could help with education and outreach when they work with landowners to develop easements (since so much of the land in the area is under easement);
- While this Total Maximum Daily Load-IP focuses on reducing bacteria, the BMPs can also address nutrient reductions as well.

The next Residential Working Group meeting is tentatively scheduled for September 22, 2016.

The residential representatives for the Steering Committee will be Ben Shoemaker, Loudoun Water, and Gem Bingol, Piedmont Environmental Council.