

Yeocomico River Watershed Implementation Plan – Agriculture Working Group Meeting

Northumberland Public Library, Heathsville, VA

Feb. 2, 2017 6:00-8:00 p.m.

Q: What is the best source for identifying Ag BMPs?

A: All of the paid ag BMPs should be in the DCR database. No one is entering the voluntary BMPs. SL6, we don't do LE2D or LE1D. All of ours are 35 ft buffers. Entered into the tracking program as SL6s.

Q: What is the best way to let farmers know about conservation programs?

A: We have 99% participation... we have educated the farmers of our annual sign ups, postcards, in the radio, all the papers, put it in the newsletter (4 local newspapers), we have a facebook page, not tv.... word of mouth.

Q: Are there any outreach events that are used to reach the Ag community? Do you have any fairs?

A: Closest thing is the Richmond County fair but it's the last week of sign ups... Cooperative extension.

Q: Are there any other groups related to Ag practices in the area?

Virginia Cooperative extension. NAPS (Northumberland Association Progressive Stewardship), homeowner associations (but don't know where to begin), Master Gardeners, Master Naturalists reached through cooperative extension...

Q: Is the majority of the farmland owned or leased?

A: If they have cows, most of them are owners... not too many areas are leasing. Cropland is a mix of leased and owned. If it's leased, we can do half and half. But owners can say outright no.

Q: Do you expect to see significant changes in farming practices over the next 5-10 years?

A: In the next ten years, most likely to see more houses than farmland... a lot of these small farmers are likely to go out of business. In the future, if the prices are right, they're going to try to develop it. Only way you'd know would be to go through land reports.

Q: Are there many horse owners in the area?

A: There are some horses. A lot of stables for recreation, but no farms.

Q: There are new BMPs for the equine. Any idea how many?

A: We don't know because they're not defined as agriculture so they don't have to participate.

I'd be surprised if we had 30 horses in the entire area.

Loose pigs in the area... they're on national news actually. "Free-range"

We have funding, but not many people are coming forward...

We have a totally different experience with ag BMPs, there was a tremendous interest in the 100% cost-share program, all completely funded. We're still in the later stages of the 80% funded. We had more people come forward than we thought had cows. We still interest after the 100% reduced. We still have some open ones right now.

Everyone that works in our district, lives in these counties.

Q: Could you send a list of how many livestock farms?

No dairy. We have beef. Swine. Horses. Considerable amounts of chickens/goats. We have no permitted chickens. No permitted operations.

Q: What about biosolids?

A: That would have to be through the local health department. They apply and we smell it. We have no records of that. DEQ would have to check with the permits.

Q: Any ideas to how many feet are in one water system of fencing?

A: Varies from farm to farm. You'd have to look at the records individually. Probably \$20,000/project would be an average. 2,500 linear ft/system is pretty close to what we do.

Q: How big of a problem is the no-discharge zone?

A: It's a huge problem. They put in a community well and a wwtp, upgraded their facilities to attract boaters that had more discretionary income that had well-equipped boats. But we have a lot of sailboats that do a lot of anchoring.

They don't keep their equipment well-functioning, so they are not actually treating the discharge. The grey water discharge is also bad, with the dish soap in galley kitchens.

Only one marina has a pump out station. There is a huge volume of marinas around Allen Point, Long Point, White Point, Oberston's... have been functioning since the 60's.

There's no enforcement here really... each county has a different policy. The county only sends out a letter to meet their requirement. No follow-up.