

Looney Creek TMDL Implementation Plan
Residential Working Group Meeting Summary - Draft
Buchanan Town Council Chambers: January 23, 2007

Attendees

Tom Wilbow, Resident
Eddie Wells, RVARC
Rebecca Evans, MCSWCD
County

Charlene Oliver, MCSWCD
Charlie Lunsford, DCR
Carol Linkenhoker, Botetourt

Introduction

The working group began the meeting with attendees introducing themselves. Charlie Lunsford mentioned that DCR is currently funding 12 implementation projects with EPA Section 319 funding. He provided a *Success Story* publication for Middle Fork Holston River and Muddy Creek and Lower Dry River, as examples of watersheds where water quality improvements have been attained.

The group reviewed the agricultural working group fact sheet to emphasize the purpose of the working groups. The framework for implementation plan (IP) development was discussed which includes residential, agricultural and government working groups and a Steering Committee. The output from the residential working group will be a report that goes to the Steering Committee.

TMDL Study Results

Map Tech, Inc. the consultant that is assisting DCR in development of the IP had prepared a three page summary of source assessment data from the TMDL study completed in 2004. The group reviewed the data that is pertinent to the residential/commercial/urban sources in Looney Creek. Estimates of housing units were evaluated. Eddie Wells with Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission and Carol Linkenhoker with Botetourt County thought the 2007 estimate of 1,832 housing units was accurate (*this was confirmed via communication since the meeting*). There was a question as to whether the estimate of 283 housing units connected to public sewer included subdivisions where dwellings are served by community systems. (Follow-up action item)

Residential BMP Needs (On-Site Sewage Disposal) for Looney Creek Bacteria TMDL

The group reviewed the (5) residential cost-share BMPs available to address the elimination of the estimated (30) straight pipes and (77) failing septic systems in the watershed. These include:
Septic tank pump-out

Connection to public sewer
Septic system repairs
New septic system
Alternative waste treatment system

There was discussion as to how to outreach to residents to make them aware of funding to eliminate straight pipes and failing septic systems. The following issues were discussed:

- Concern about the cost of alternative waste treatment systems (\$20,000 - \$30,000) and the maintenance requirements along with additional expenses.
- Even with 50 to 75% cost-share many residents would have difficulty in paying for replacement of failing systems and eliminating straight pipes.
- Number of older homes where plumbing cost would be a factor in installing septic systems or alternative waste treatment systems. DCR mentioned that in such cases a composting toilet or vault privy could be a cost-shared BMP.
- Need to identify other funding sources in the IP that could assist residents with the remaining 25 to 50% of their costs. The Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project (Southeast RCAP) was mentioned along with a Community Block Grant and the Virginia Revolving Loan Program. The later two have to be applied to by local governments.
- Septic tank pump-out is an eligible cost-share practice (50%). It is used to help educate and to encourage homeowners to make this a routine maintenance practice every 3-5 years and it helps to identify septic systems that may need to be repaired (*e.g.*, distribution box re-leveled or replacement of a drainfield line).
- Need input from Health Department to verify that the estimated cost per practice in the Map Tech handout are accurate.

Other topics of discussion regarding straight pipes and failing septic systems included funding would be provided for technical assistance to outreach to landowners to make them aware of available funding and technical assistance, and also to lead local educational efforts. Charlie Lunsford mentioned that SWCDs, or the Health Department have taken on this responsibility in the implementation projects mentioned above. Attendees did not comment on local preference or interest as to which agency should have responsibility for the residential program. Health Department would still handle the permitting and design for the non-engineered on-site septic systems.

Pet Waste

DCR mentioned that one way to address the pet waste reductions in the bacteria TMDL is through a pet waste control program that includes 1) education materials, 2) signage in public areas that encourage proper disposal of waste, and 3) pet waste disposal stations in public areas. The Looney Creek watershed offers some opportunities to implement actions 2 and 3 with a Interstate rest area, truck stops, and convenience stores where travelers stop and will walk their dogs as well as parks (*e.g.*, in Buchanan along James River just outside watershed).

It was mentioned that there are licensed kennels in the watershed. An option would be to follow up with Botetourt Zoning Department to determine where the kennels are located and then investigate further how they dispose of pet waste.

Misc. Sources

It was mentioned that tractor trailers hauling livestock and parking along I-81 overnight such as at Exit 56 (? Mill) have been observed contributing to leachate leaving the site. This is a potential source of bacteria that could need further investigation.