

James River and Tributaries TMDL Implementation Plan – Lynchburg Area

Agricultural/Residential Working Group Meeting

Wednesday, June 30, 2010

Agricultural Building, 163 Kabler Lane, Rustburg, Virginia

Attending

Paula Nash, DEQ

Todd Scott, Cooperative Extension Service – Campbell County

Don Yancey, Natural Resource Conservation Service

Dave Sandman, Robert E. Lee SWCD

Anne Marie Clarke, Robert E. Lee SWCD

Scott Baker, Cooperative Extension Service – Bedford County

Terri Bollinger, Peaks of Otter SWCD

E. B. Watson, Peaks of Otter SWCD

Charlie Elliott, Producer

Anne S. Thaxton, Campbell County Resident

Charles E. Thaxton, Campbell County Resident

Charlie Lunsford, Dept. Conservation and Recreation

G. D. Gilliam, Campbell County Resident

Kelly Hitchcock, VA's Region 2000 Local Government Council

Rod Bodkin, MapTech, Inc.

Meeting Summary

1. Introduction/Meeting Goals

Kelly Hitchcock began the meeting by providing a brief overview of the meeting purpose.

Introductions of the participants of the Agricultural/Residential meeting participants followed.

Rod Bodkin, MapTech, provided additional information on the role of the Agricultural Working Group in providing recommendations and suggestions for implementation tasks to be included within the James River and Tributaries TMDL IP. The Agricultural Working group will provide its recommendations to the IP Steering Committee.

Key elements to be achieved during the meeting were:

- Review pollutant reductions identified within the TMDLs;
- Discuss preliminary estimates of contributors and allocation scenarios within the study area;
- Document existing efforts underway to address bacteria from the agricultural and residential community within the watershed; and
- Identify additional measures that should be included in the IP to reduce loads.

2. Review of TMDLs

Rod Bodkin, MapTech, provided an overview of the TMDLs. Using Handout #1 (project area map) Bodkin noted that the original TMDL completed in 2007 utilized 1992 land use data and at that time, the GIS data had some limitations in its ability to accurately depict adequate land use information. The land use data utilized within the TMDLs noted that any grass land that did not have a building on it was classified as pasture (example graveyards, open space, parks etc). In addition to outdated land use used in the TMDLs, there has been considerable residential development within the county portions of the study area. MapTech adjusted the 1992 land use with updated 2001 land use data [reference the source] and this resulted in a considerable reduction in pasture acreage in the Blackwater and Fishing Creeks watersheds.

Bodkin referred the group to Table 1, “Changes in the amount of pasture, based on land use analysis, since development of the TMDLs. [This paragraph is awkward.]

Bodkin then referred the group to Table 2, “Allocation scenarios for achieving fecal bacteria standards in impaired drainages of the James River near Lynchburg, VA.

It was agreed by the participants that there were considerable land use adjustments between the 1992 land use and current land use estimates and that it is was important to accurately account for the increase in residential and the decrease of pasture within the watersheds.

3. Agricultural Best Management Practices [Font sized changed below.]

The Working Group reviewed the control measure tables provided by Map Tech. Bodkin provided an overview of the material presented in the tables and lead discussion. It was noted that discussion and comments on the information from the handout is important to ensure proper representation of BMPs used within the study area watersheds.

Table 2 – Fencing Requirements:

To assist in understanding the handout and practice reference, Dave Sandman provided an overview of the various practices including:

- SL-6 – this practice is to enhance vegetated cover to pasture land and provide stream exclusion. Within this practice there can be fencing along a stream or pond, there can be cross-fencing and installation of pressurized water systems. The fence must be at least 35 feet from the stream or water source. Must have a stream or pond that is accessible by cattle to qualify for this cost sharepractice. Dave noted this is the most popular and most often used practice in the area.
- WP-2T – this practice is essentially the SL-6 program without the inclusion of a water system. Dave and Don noted that this practice is not used as much in this watershed because the SL-6 is the most often used practice.

Charles Lunsford, DCR, noted there are some additional practices that are coming along within DCR in the future. Lunsford also noted the importance of adequately utilizing and accounting for USDA programs such as Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) and the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) that are used alone or in combination with state cost share activities and other current programs.

Recently adopted DCR stream exclusion practices:

LE 1T – similar to SL-6 activities but provides 85% cost share with assistance to TMDL areas only.

LE 2T – similar to SL-6 but allows a minimum 10-foot buffer with only 50% of cost share provided.

Both new practices are only available in TMDL watersheds with implementation plans.

Terri Bollinger, Peaks Otter SWCD, noted that some farmers were able to obtain 115% of costs by combining state and USDA program funds.

Ann-Marie Clark, R. E. Lee SWCD, noted the Amherst County has provisions for an additional 25% cost share payment for practices within Harris and Graham creeks as components of the County’s drinking water protection program.

Table 3. Agricultural Land-based BMPs

Discussion of information provided in Table 3 included:

- It was agreed there is a reduction in the livestock numbers within the watershed, especially Fishing Creek;
- It is believed there are two dairy farms on 221 and one other near Popular Forest. One of the dairies does have a loafing barn and manure storage;
- Don Yancey noted that NRCS does have a prescribed grazing practice (529) through EQIP that provides a \$25/acre payment. However it was noted that the program requires very accurate accounting and documentation. Don noted that practice is not used very often locally but has been used;
- It was noted that there is no known confined beef operation in the watershed;
- Lunsford noted there may be some interest into looking at possible needs to assist farmers in relocating feeding locations away from streams. There may be some interest in looking at the use of the SL-6 to assist in moving feeding operations and utilizing funding to build a feeding pad with water and possible covered shelter to move livestock from the stream corridor. The state cost-share program has a practice called "Relocation of Confined Feeding Area", but it is a tax credit only practice. EQIP funds the relocation of feeding areas. It was suggested that NRCS and the Robert E. Lee District provide an estimate of the number of sites in the IP area where this type of practice may be applicable to reduce the bacteria loading in the stream corridor area.

Table 4. Agricultural control measure costs

Discussion of table information included:

- Bodkin noted that the costs estimates were based on those used from an earlier Falling River IP;
 - There was some discussion on the costs of the Improved Pasture Management estimate being a bit low. Yancey noted that costs in the \$150 range were more in line with the costs given fertilizer, seed, etc. Lunsford noted the cost estimate was high considering a likely fundable amount that cost-share could sustain as an incentive payment for farmers to practice pasture management. There was discussion that the EQIP practice 512, Pasture and Hayland Replanting at \$200/acre could be applicable to a portion of the improved pasture management acres as well as 529, Prescribed Grazing.
4. Residential Control Measures

There was a brief overview of residential control measures and control costs. It was noted by Kelly that a number of the current residential activities were discussed at an earlier TAC meeting.

Tables 5, Estimated residential waste treatment systems and Table 6, Residential control costs were reviewed and discussed. Some key points noted in the review included:

- The group questioned if the numbers in Table 5 reflected old 1992 land use data or more current residential makeup of the watersheds. The numbers are based on the 2000 census data. There was some concern that the estimated septic numbers were low. It was agreed that the health department should confirm these numbers.

- It was agreed that the estimated costs for alternative waste treatment system installation was too low and there was general belief that all the costs should be confirmed by the local health department officials.
- It was noted that Bedford and Campbell Counties had considered pump out program but did not approve one.
- It was noted that having accurate cost comparisons of pump out programs versus the costs of traditional sewage programs is an important cost comparison to provide to the localities.

6. Other Issues

Some additional items discussed concerned the increase in the number of horse farms in the watershed and what BMPs or practices could be associated with this increased land use potential in the watershed. It was noted by Lunsford this has become an issue in TMDL areas and TMDL funds can be used to cost-share on stream fencing of equine. However, in the state cost-share program this is not allowable because equine is not considered an agricultural production activity, with the exception of breeders. Lunsford noted that Map Tech may want to see what is being done in Prince William County as a model to address water quality issues associated with equine.

Scott Baker, Bedford County Extension, noted given the limited availability of cost share, if equine would be considered as a potential activity within the program it should be limited to large operations to ensure that funds would not be used to reduce availability to production agriculture.

7. Action Items

The following summarize follow up Action Items

- Kelly Hitchcock obtains information on existing practices from area localities and organizations and provide to Map Tech.
- Kelly Hitchcock submit Residential Control Measure Costs estimates to Health Department Officials for comment
- Kelly Hitchcock provide meeting minutes and follow up information to Workgroup Members.

8. Steering Committee representation

Hitchcock noted it was important to have a representative from the Ag/Res Group on the Steering Committee to be able to respond to any questions related specifically to this groups discussions and recommendations. It was agreed that Don Yancey would serve as the Agricultural/Residential Working Group Steering Committee representative. [Kelly – What about presenting the working group report to the Steering Committee?]