

**Water Quality Subcommittee
(St. Marys River Management Committee)**

MINUTES OF MEETING

January 15, 2013

6 p.m.

The Water Quality Subcommittee (of the St. Marys River Management Committee/SMRMC) held a meeting on January 15, 2013, to discuss the Horsepen/Temple Creek Section 319 grant.

Members in attendance:

Karen Chisholm, John Myers, Commissioner Tony Sheppard, Winifred Stephenson, Merrill Varn, Alice Vick

Guests: Rhonda Myers, Scott Pippin (by Skype)

Technical difficulties with Skype delayed the start of the meeting until 635 pm.

Scott Pippin, from the University of Georgia River Basin Center (UGA RBC), introduced the topics we needed to discuss and brought us up to date with what the River Basin Center was considering for the remainder of the grant (January-July, 2013): educational material to be distributed to Browntown residents, a pilot project event, and two meetings with county or four county officials. The total budget for these items is approximately \$5000. The remainder of the grant monies will be devoted to inspecting, pumping, and repairing area On Site Disposal Systems (OSDS, septic tanks).

The subcommittee's thoughts on the various topics were as follows:

Educational material

Educational efforts should focus not only on maintenance of OSDS but also on persistent community apprehension. The apprehension education needs to happen now, i.e., when the tanks are being inspected and pumped. The maintenance education should come in June as outlined in the timeline.

Apprehension Education - We propose using a pre-remediation "tankside classroom." The tank would belong to one of the 14 on the pumpout list who is willing to allow other residents to watch the inspection and pumping visit so that it is clear exactly what will and won't be done and who will and won't be present. This inspection should be advertised directly via phone call to others on list of 14 and indirectly to other community residents via yard sign. The visit should be videotaped for use with grant reporting (try to get local high school and community college involved). For all visits, the grant representative should call and ask for written or videotaped report/testimonial.

Maintenance Education - The material distributed toward the close of the grant should target multiple venues (mailer, poster and internet) but all should all be identical for brand recognition. Guidelines to follow for single page: assume you have 30-60 seconds to make your point, use several simple photographs of symptoms of failing OSDS, “get a face on it” not just photos of symptoms, highlight health and future generations. Scott’s points at BBQ were good (kids get diarrhea again and again). Most everyone in Browntown has internet access.

Online - Use progressive drill down screens to get deeper into each topic. Could also include visit video, testimonials/reports, MAREX PSA (contact Ray Bradbury), links to all handouts and videos from BBQ etc. The digital form could perhaps be hosted on Facebook page with links on a variety of websites including Browntown Watch (member only Facebook page focused on crime in Browntown), County Health Department, and St. Marys River Management Committee (SMRMC) among others.

Events

Pilot Event - The only way anyone will attend this event is if it is funny. We suggest calling the event “POOP-Stock, the one and only Temple Landing Septic Tank Festival.” Advertising would be by articles in the newspaper, radio station ads (several people had contacts at stations), and possibly by billboard. John Myers may be able to get an I-95 billboard donation. We need to check calendars because there is a lot going on in April but we thought it would be a good event for a Saturday near Earth Day April 22. On the day’s schedule would be ribbon cutting, giveaways, and demo and information tables. Giveaways could include a years worth of toilet paper, a variety of hardware, a padded toilet seat, a free septic pumpout, etc. Demo and info tables would include septic tank demo table (EPD-Alice Vick can supply), Health department demo table, handout table (brochures), pumper tables, new technology tables, CRD table, and SMRMC table.

Meetings with County Officials

General Points - Tony Sheppard, the new BOCC representative to SMRMC from Camden County was present at the meeting. He said it is hard enough to get the commissioners to a meeting will be impossible to get several BOCCs, health departments and other officials together. The important thing is to go after a single goal. He said county commissioners want short to the point contact not fancy meetings requiring a drive. Fifteen minutes MAXIMUM with preliminary material sent ahead of time. The preliminary material is the critical thing. BOCC members generally receive information packets the Tuesday before the meeting, and then discuss information with County Manager, constituents and each other before the meeting.

Interim Meeting - The meeting should be for Camden BOCC only, and held at regularly scheduled BOCC meeting with not much else on the agenda. We should report what has happened so far and stress the fact that following rain event the ditches had same level of human fecal coliform as a septic tank. That one observation has made a mammoth impact on everyone. Share testimonials and videos from pumpout. Our goal by end of grant

should be to get something similar to Charlton ordinance passed (OSDS inspection with each change in electric service). In the Browntown area, the large number of rental properties make this a really good way to track maintenance. While both Sheppard and Myers agreed with the necessity for the ordinance, both thought that it would be a tough fight... possibly doable. We may want to have officials from Charlton and or Brantley Counties present to discuss how the ordinance works in their counties. We definitely need to leverage the friendly competition between Camden and Charlton with Charlton usually being viewed as the country cousin. In this case, Charlton is a statewide leader. We require ongoing contact with BOCC to get any kind of ordinance passed.

Final Meeting - The meeting should be for Camden County BOCC only and held at a regularly scheduled BOCC meeting with not much else on the agenda. We should present project summary. We would like to say thank you for passing ordinance, however, in all likelihood BOCC will still be discussing an ordinance. We should also request that they apply for CIG or 319 grant on their own to continue the work of our grant.

Outreach to other counties - SMRMC members should make mid-year reports to the BOCCs of the other three counties at their regularly scheduled meetings. In the reports, SMRMC members should summarize the grant, promote application for grants to design implementation and remediation plans for contaminated segments with fecal coliform TMDLs, and supply information on the possible ordinances that each county could consider. EPD and UGA-RBC will need to supply SMRMC with materials for these meetings.

Consider producing video showing how one community approached their septic problems that could be used to export elsewhere. Need diary clips on an on-going basis. Whether or not video produced would likely depend on the success of the grant.

Continued Involvement by SMRMC with Browntown residents

We discussed the formation of a Browntown group that could continue with maintenance and repair outreach and decided that we needed to see what sorts of people were in the group of 14 who had agreed to have their tanks inspected/pumped. It may be possible that some of these people would be willing to meet and continue to promote the goals of the grant. It may also be that they simply wanted a free pumpout and could care less about impact on the neighborhood and the river.

We adjourned at 8:37pm.

(Thank you to Karen, for a delicious spaghetti dinner.)