

Person County Staff Review of Upper Neuse Watershed Management Plan June 18, 2003 Meeting Summary

Prepared June 19, 2003

UNRBA mission: To preserve and protect the water quality in the Upper Neuse River Basin through innovative, cost effective and environmentally sound strategies and to create a coalition of local governments and stakeholders in a water resources partnership.

On June 18, 2003, Chris Dreps of the Upper Neuse River Basin Association (UNRBA) met with members of Person County's Planning Board and key staff in Roxboro. The objectives of the meeting were to:

- Review the Upper Neuse Watershed Management Plan;
- Discuss the management strategies proposed for Granville County; and,
- Receive staff guidance for proceeding with the introduction of the Plan to Person County elected officials.

Meeting attendees are listed below:

| Name | Department/Program |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| Doug Robinson | Planning Board |
| Phil Hall | Planning Board |
| Ronnie Money | Planning Board |
| Bill Brooks | Planning Board |
| Helen Slaughter | Planning Board |
| Sam Kennington | Planning Board |
| Ernie Wood | Planning Board |
| Steve Carpenter | County Manager |
| Paula Murphy | Planning Director |
| Chris Dreps | UNRBA |

Presentation

Chris Dreps summarized the Plan's analysis and the general recommendations. He then presented the recommendations specific to Person County:

- Density Limits or nitrogen & phosphorous performance standards
- Ordinance revisions for 100-foot buffers (conservation zone only)
- Enhanced peak flow management
- Upper Neuse long-term monitoring program

- Septic System Recommendations
- Enhanced construction site inspections and enforcement
- Enhanced animal operations inspections*
- Stormwater quality BMP inspections and enforcement
- Education for "Low-Impact Development" and buffer maintenance
- Targeted lands acquisition
- Forestry/Agriculture BMPs
- General watershed education and Adopt-a-Stream program
- NPDES Program Requirements
- Stream, riparian, and wetland restoration projects
- Stormwater retrofits

(* - County is already meeting these recommendations)

A general estimate of the additional costs to the local government of implementing the Plan in Person County is \$2,365 per year in year 1. The cost of a septic system inspection and maintenance program would be \$250,000 per year in year 1 (this cost could be borne by the system owners at about \$75 per system per year). Costs for all programs will increase with inflation and growth. (The cost estimates come from CH2MHill's analysis done specifically for the Upper Neuse Watershed Management Plan).

Discussion

The following is a list of technical questions and topics of discussion posed by the meeting attendees:

Questions

- Why are northern Durham County's subwatersheds below 10% total impervious cover even at buildout?

Response--In Little River in northern Durham County, there is a critical water supply watershed protection area and a water supply watershed II. In the Flat River watershed in northern Durham County, there is a critical water supply watershed protection area.

- There were questions about why Roxboro's growth is not reflected in the map of conservation zones.

Response--Despite requests by the previous UNRBA Executive Director, Roxboro has never sent information about their expected future growth.

- What is the effect of farming on future nitrogen and phosphorous loading in the Flat River watershed?

Response--The analysis in the Plan assumes that because there are no ordinances explicitly protecting farmland, there will be no farmland once the watershed is built out (built to the full extent allowed under Person County's zoning). For this reason, it is assumed that there are fewer and fewer future sources of pollution from farming.

Concerns

- The Board members expressed concern that a major portion of the costs (lost development opportunities) are being borne by the communities in the proposed conservation zones. Since all of Person County outside Roxboro is in the proposed conservation zone, the effect would be costly in Person County. The group feels the zoning recommendations are very unlikely for this and other reasons, including the fact that current water (and sewer?) infrastructure extends from Roxboro south around 501 Highway almost to where the road crosses the Flat River.
- Board concern--There is also a major concern about equity. Are Durham and Raleigh, which are causing much more pollution loading, being asked to do as much as Person County? An associated concern is the perception that Person would be paying to save Durham money on water treatment. Is Durham willing to pay more to protect Lake Michie?
- Mr. Hall asked if the UNRBA would recognize Person County's current efforts to protect water quality (a proposed Planned Unit Development Ordinance and a water quality ordinance)? Chris' reply is that the goal of the plan is to meet the management targets. If Person County can take steps that are as protective as those recommended in the plan, the target in Lake Michie would be met. There would need to be an effort to model the effectiveness of these management measures, and Tetra Tech could likely run the scenarios in a model. Chris would have to explore the costs of this action and make a proposal to the Board. The group did not reach agreement on this issue.
- Mr. Robinson is concerned that the analysis doesn't justify the septic system recommendations. Chris Dreps verified that the analysis is a surface runoff and nutrient loading analysis which does not consider groundwater sources of nutrient (groundwater is the route for nutrient contributions from septic systems).
- Mr. Hall asked if it is perceived that the state's chlorophyll *a* standards for water supply reservoirs (40 micrograms/liter) is not sufficient to protect water quality in our reservoirs. Chris Dreps replied that the UNRBA Technical Advisory Committee members (made up primarily of local government staff) felt that the current standards are not sufficient to protect water quality in the reservoirs and set planning targets in the range of 15-25 micrograms/liter for the purposes of this plan. These targets are more stringent than the state standards.

- Mr. Robinson requested that Chris show relative contributions of pollution by each jurisdiction per water supply watershed.

Next steps

Chris Dreps agreed to further explore the issues of concern raised by the Person County Planning Board. Chris suggested to Board members and the County Manager opening a dialogue with their counterparts in Durham County and City.

Chris will follow up with Steve Carpenter and Jimmy Clayton, as well as their Durham City/County counterparts to check on their progress regarding the dialogue that Chris recommends. Chris has offered to facilitate a meeting to open the dialogue.

Chris will contact Paula Murphy and Steve Carpenter to discuss next steps.