

MINUTES
Cedar Run, Mine Run, Mountain Run, and Lower Rapidan River Implementation Plan
1st Public Meeting

WHEN: February 21st, 2024; 6:30-8:30 pm
WHERE: George Washington Carver Agricultural Research Center

ATTENDEES:

- Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)
 - Madison Whitehurst – NPS Data Coordinator – Central Office/PRO, VRO
 - Kaitlin King – NPS Coordinator – Central Office/NRO
 - Ashley Wendt – Technical Reviewer
 - Melissa Secor – NPS Projects Coordinator
 - Karen Kline – Watershed Modeler
 - Kayla Stanley
- Greg Wichelns, Culpeper Soil and Water Conservation District
- Luke Bellow VCE Extension Agent
- Bryan Hoffman, Friends of the Rappahannock
- Harrison Premen, Culpeper Planning and Zoning
- Susan Gugino, Board of Supervisors
- Vy Truong, Virginia Dept of Health
- Don McCown, Piedmont Environmental Council
- Emily Bourdon, Virginia Dept of Health
- Dwayne Dixon, Virginia Dept of Health
- Caleb Pellmann, American Climate Partners
- Patricia Reed, Resident
- Jennifer Bierhuzon, Resident
- Sue Platts, Resident
- Michelle Edwards, Rappahannock Rapidan Regional Commission

Meeting purpose: To kick start the development of a cleanup plan for the Cedar Run, Mine Run, Mountain Run and Lower Rapidan River in Orange, Culpeper, and Spotsylvania counties; Engage the public in this process with their participation.

Meeting goal: Answer questions and identify stakeholders to help develop the Implementation Plan (IP) (also known as a Water Quality Improvement Plan or Clean Up Plan).

Kaitlin King (DEQ) gave a brief introduction of the meeting purpose, gave an overview of Virginia's water quality process, both the bacteria Mountain Run and Mine Run TMDL (approved in 2005) and the bacteria Rapidan River Basin (approved in 2007), what a Clean Up Plan is/is not and next steps/timeline to complete the plan.

A 30-day public comment period starts February, and goes until March 22, 2024, to comment on the development of the IP.

There will be at least two Community Engagement meetings starting in April 2024 to go into more detail about the local needs/interests, types of practices, potential partners, and funding sources so that a draft plan can be developed by August/September 2024. The final public

meeting (with the draft plan) is tentatively planned for August/September 2024. It is anticipated that the plan will be approved by EPA Winter 2024/Spring 2025 allowing potential applicants to apply to the RFA in Summer 2025 and accepted applicants receiving funds in Fall/Winter 2026.

Meeting Notes:

Slide 2:

Concerns were raised about failing septic systems in the area. The soil in portions of the IP area are non-permeable. Lower income homeowners may need up to 100% assistance to repair or replace their failing septic systems.

Slide 7:

Meeting participants discussed the idea of level 3 water monitoring data points at being a possible option to fill in gaps with water monitoring where there is not enough data to determine an existing impairment. Ashley Wendt, DEQ, explained that the bacteria standard has changed recently and the process of delisting an impairment is intensive for staff because of the high frequency monitoring requirements. It was also discussed that sometimes there is not a need for additional sampling along a waterbody with multiple impairments because it can almost be assumed that in between the upstream and downstream impairments is also an impairment. Once best management practices are put into place near impaired waterbodies then the streams can be monitored and reassessed to determine if there has been any improvement.

Slide 9:

The question was raised if there is a way for a citizen to apply to have a water monitoring station at a specific location? Is there a way for citizen monitoring to take place along the waterbodies? There are citizen monitoring programs in Virginia and if they choose the option to submit and meet the requirements for level 3 data by DEQ this data can be used in the assessment process to determine waterbody impairments. There is also more information about citizen monitoring and nominating water quality stations on DEQ's website. <https://www.deq.virginia.gov/our-programs/water/water-quality/monitoring/citizen-monitoring>

Slide 11:

The question was raised if DEQ looks at chemicals in the water as a result of fertilizer runoff? DEQ staff explained that those parameters are assessed, however this implementation plan for the Lower Rapidan River basin will only be focusing on fecal coliform exceedance levels in the waterbodies since there is not enough sufficient data on other parameters in the area. The only TMDL in the Lower Rapidan River Basin that exists are for bacteria impairments.

Slide 13:

The question was raised about if DEQ will be providing numbers of failing septs and unprotected streams from livestock etc. The response is yes, throughout this process DEQ will be providing these data points during the community engagement meetings however the data DEQ provides is using what is readily available to them.