

NEWS RELEASE
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Public Input Sought on Birch Creek and Dan River Watersheds Clean-up Plan

(Danville, VA) – The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is developing a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) cleanup plan to improve bacteria impairments in the Birch Creek and Dan River watersheds of Halifax County, Pittsylvania County, parts of Henry and Patrick counties, as well as the city of Danville and town of South Boston. A public meeting was held Tuesday, August 29, 2017 to kick off the cleanup plan process.

The first working group meetings will be held on Tuesday, October 3, 2017, at the Danville Regional Airport Eastern Conference Room located at 424 Airport Drive, Danville, VA 24540. Working group meetings are held as part of the cleanup plan process to facilitate public comment. These groups are more focused and offer the public the opportunity to join a group of interest and provide comment. Public comment is invaluable as citizens have insight of the watersheds.

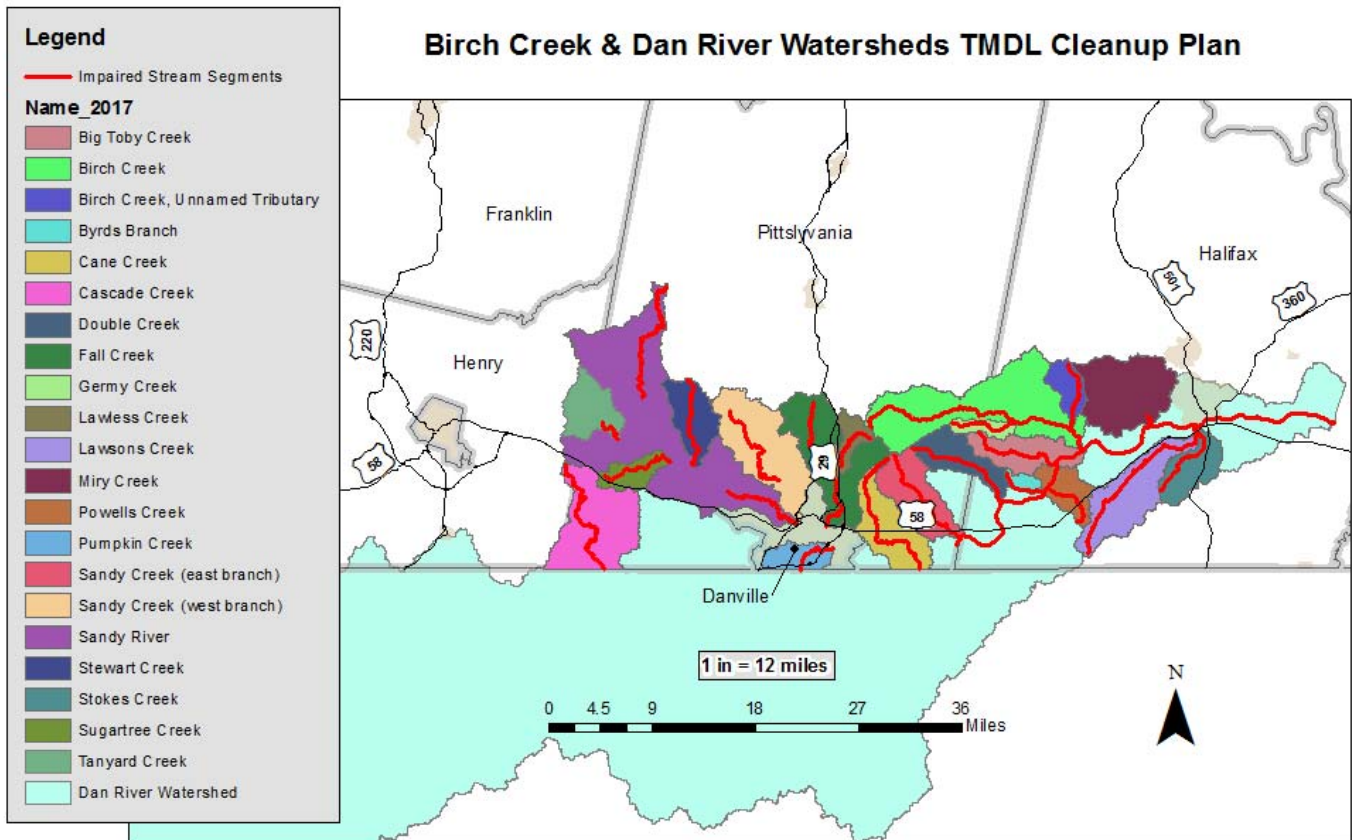
On October 3, 2017, the government working group will be held from 1:30 – 3:30. This is an opportunity for local governments and other agency partners to provide feedback during cleanup plan development. Also on that day, the agricultural and residential working groups will be held from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. The residential working group will focus on ways to reduce bacteria from human sources and pet sources while the agricultural working group will discuss agricultural issues such as constraints to best management practice (BMP) implementation, effective and affordable BMPs, funding sources, etc.

This cleanup plan process is occurring because Birch Creek and Dan River watersheds were listed as impaired on Virginia's 303(d) Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Priority List and Report due to high levels of fecal coliform bacteria. Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act and the Code of Virginia require DEQ to develop TMDLs for pollutants responsible for each impaired waterbody in Virginia.

A TMDL is a calculation for the maximum amount of a pollutant that a waterbody can receive and still meet water quality standards. A TMDL study for Birch Creek was completed and approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the State Water Control Board in 2005. The Dan

River TMDL study was completed and approved by EPA in 2008 and the State Water Control Board in 2009.

Once the TMDL, or pollution budget, is established, The Code of Virginia also requires implementation of TMDLs, when appropriate. To satisfy this provision, DEQ prepares TMDL cleanup plans with measurable goals and the date that water quality objectives are expected to be achieved; the corrective actions needed; and their associated costs, benefits and environmental impacts. The cleanup plan will include practical ways to prevent and/or reduce pollution through the installation of best management practices. Citizens are encouraged to participate in a working group as we work together to reduce bacteria levels in the Birch Creek and Dan River watersheds.



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