

DEQ Report to the Thomas Jefferson SWCD
August 28, 2019

- The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has authorized \$88,000 in competitive grants to support citizen volunteer water quality monitoring in Virginia. The grants can be used to purchase monitoring equipment, perform laboratory services, and fund related expenses. Grant awards can range from less than \$1,000 to \$11,000 and applications are due Aug. 30, 2019. Applications are due by **Aug. 30**. More details, including the application form, are available on the DEQ website:
<https://www.deq.virginia.gov/Programs/Water/WaterQualityInformationTMDLs/WaterQualityMonitoring/CitizenMonitoring/GrantOpportunities.aspx>
- DEQ continues to receive complaints of excessive algae in the Shenandoah Basin. The bulk of the complaints have been on the North Fork, however, several were on the South Fork and Mainstem Shenandoah. All complaints are responded to according to established protocol: confirmation of visual observation (from the riverbank), then Surber substrate coverage observation, and finally, sample collection. DEQ sent samples to DCLS for Chlorophyll A, Chlorophyll B and Ash-Free Dry Mass (AFDM) analysis.
- On July 27, DEQ attended the annual meeting of the Lake Anna Civic Association. The meeting focused on a presentation led by the Department of Health (VDH) on the status of algae activity on Lake Anna, and the advisories issued by VDH for Harmful Algae Blooms on the lake. The citizens wanted to know the cause of the blooms, and DEQ and VDH indicated that the causes could be many, and they would continue to monitor and look for particular sources.
- On August 5 DEQ received a report of a potential Harmful Algal Bloom in Mint Springs Lake located in Crozet. Albemarle Parks and Recreation closed the lake for swimming.
- In the coming weeks, DEQ will be announcing an RFA for 319 funding to support implementation of BMPs (including education/outreach and water quality monitoring) identified in EPA-approved TMDL Implementation Plans. Approximately \$1-1.5 million will be available for projects starting October 1, 2020.
- DEQ hosted EPA Region III in Richmond on July 23-24 for the annual program review of the agency's 319(h) grant program. DEQ shared information on the implementation of the program, including data system upgrades, program management plan, and future initiatives. Staff from Department of Conservation and Recreation and Department of Mines, Minerals, and Energy also gave presentations
- DEQ hosted a partners' meeting on July 25 in Verona for existing grantees under the Section 319 (h) program. Attendees received updates to manuals, discussed successes and challenges in implementing their projects, and heard from speakers from Department of Health and DEQ. Attendees also participated in a breakout session to learn more about specific programs or processes.
- A joint site visit by DEQ and Albemarle County officials to the Hidden Fox Farm property on July 16 confirmed that the site received regulated construction and demolition debris wastes from the grounds of the University of Virginia. The wastes are no longer on the property and DEQ is investigating to determine the responsible party.
- On July 26, DEQ issued a Notice of Violation to the University of Virginia (UVA), citing several unpermitted discharges of concrete slurry to storm drains between July 3 and July 10. UVA operates a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) and is subject to the MS4 General Permit.
- In response to a citizen complaint on July 24, DEQ observed recent dumping of stumps and junk cars at site in Greene County. DEQ alleges that the site has operated as an illegal landfill for many years, including receiving demolition debris from the grounds of the University of Virginia. The site is an active enforcement referral to the Office of the Attorney General (OAG), and DEQ will provide an updated inspection report to the OAG

- The State Water Control Board approved final amendments to Virginia's Water Quality Standards Regulation for bacteria, cadmium and 94 human health criteria in August 2018. The amendments completed the Executive Review process in May 2019, and the public review period closed July 24 (no comments received). DEQ will submit the package to EPA for review, approval and effective date of the amended criteria.
- DEQ and the Department of Health (VDH) are reviewing results of DEQ's 2018 fish tissue monitoring program. As in 2017, the 2018 results again show elevated levels of mercury in several blue catfish samples collected in the Nottoway River. As a result, VDH is planning to modify the existing mercury advisory to add blue catfish to the species list. VDH expects the updated advisory in late August.
- DEQ issued a Permit By Rule (PBR) for a small renewable energy project to Apex Clean Energy Holdings, LLC/Dragonfly Solar, LLC on August 8 to be located in Campbell County. The project will provide a maximum 80 megawatts of nameplate capacity. DEQ has issued 37 solar PBRs totaling 1296.5MW. Two permits totaling an additional 100MW are in review.
- On August 2, DEQ issued a Stop Work Instruction (SWI) to the Mountain Valley Pipeline for approximately two miles of the construction right of way in Montgomery County. DEQ will lift the SWI once all erosion and sediment control measures in that area are in place and functioning in accordance with approved annual standards and specifications. On August 15 DEQ inspected the area noted in the August 2 Stop Work Instruction (SWI) issued to the MVP and lifted the SWI. As determined by the field inspection, MVP corrected erosion and sediment control (ESC) measures required to lift the SWI. DEQ will continue monitoring ESC controls in all areas of pipeline construction.
- On June 27, the State Water Control Board approved the revised guidelines for the Agricultural BMP Loan Program and the program began accepting applications on July 1. New program incentives include zero interest on all loans, no long-term loan requirement, potential for principal forgiveness, additional eligible conservation practices, and expanded list of eligible applicants. In the first month, the program authorized 12 applications for a total of \$3.1 million in assistance. These applications will now undergo credit review and, if approved, will fund 18 BMPs, including stream exclusion, riparian buffers, and animal waste control facilities, and one no-till drill. More information can be found at: <https://www.deq.virginia.gov/Programs/Water/CleanWaterFinancingAssistance/AgriculturalBMP.aspx>
- The Virginia Poultry Waste Management General Permit is up for renewal in November 2020. DEQ is conducting Technical Advisory Committee meetings of stakeholders this year to gather input on any changes that need to be made to the existing permit regulations.
- DEQ shared information and identified future opportunities to engage winter service and landscaping professionals at the "Green Professionals" forum hosted by American University in Washington, D.C. on July 18. On July 23 DEQ presented on ways Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permittees could draw from recommendations of the SaMS to address chloride pollutants associated with winter salt use in their future MS4 permits/Local Action Plans. On July 31 DEQ facilitated a meeting of the SaMS Government Coordination workgroup, where representatives from Virginia Department of Transportation, local governments, water utilities and Virginia State Police shared ideas to support future implementation of the SaMS. On August 8 DEQ facilitated the third and final meeting of the SaMS Traditional Best Management Practices (BMPs) workgroup. The workgroup decided on three recommendations: 1) a list of over 50 operational BMPs framed by their pros and cons, 2) a voluntary evaluation process for evaluating deicer application rates with example application rates, and 3) a BMP implementation and winter maintenance planning process.
- EPA announced a pre-rulemaking comment period to review Clean Water Act Section 404(c) procedures on August 13. Section 404(c) authorizes EPA to restrict, prohibit, deny, or withdraw the use of an area as a disposal site for dredged or fill material whenever the Administrator determines, after notice and opportunity for public comment, that the discharge will have unacceptable adverse effects on municipal water supplies, shellfish beds and fishery areas, wildlife, or recreational areas. DEQ will be reviewing the proposed options for rulemaking, and providing comment.