

Regional Update

A Monthly Report of Activities on the Eastern Shore of Virginia

September 2004

Funding Approved for Parksley Business District Sewer System

Early this month, USDA offered a \$639,000 grant and \$214,000 loan to the Town of Parksley to build a sewer system for its commercial business district on Dunne Avenue and Bennett Street. The new wastewater collection system could also accommodate several residences on Adelaide Street.

Parksley's businesses and building owners have been struggling with individual septic systems, many of which are failing. Replacement systems cost \$15,000, and most of the buildings lack the room needed to install them. In fact, several buildings have septic tanks under their floors, and some septic tanks are shared by multiple businesses.

Lack of an adequate septic system resulted in the closure of Parksley Pizza. A new restaurant, the Taqueria, moved into the old Parksley Pizza building but without restrooms, restricting its operating hours to the time when the town's public restrooms across the street are open. In addition, the Lunch Box has been unable to use its upper room because of the limited capacity of its septic system. Septic systems have had to be pumped out frequently as well, an added expense for many businesses.

Inadequate septic systems and the restrictions that come with them have

also made it difficult to sell and reuse vacant buildings in town. However, now that a sewer system is planned, several buildings have changed hands. New owners are planning a school (Parksley Apparel Building), a bakery and upscale restaurant (old Bayshore Market),

and a restaurant in the old ABC store.

The Town of Parksley has contracted with the A-NPDC to administer the project and develop needed documents to close on the grant and loan in the shortest possible timeframe. Construction is planned for 2005.



Thomas A. Young, Mayor of Parksley and Mary Jones, USDA review the letter of conditions for the Business District Sewer System grant and loan

ESVPSA Considers Land Application of Treated Wastewater

The Eastern Shore of Virginia Public Service Authority (ESVPSA) is currently wrestling with two major projects which are vital to the future of the Eastern Shore. They are the Central Accomack Project and the Northern Northampton Project. Both projects involve waste treatment facilities which may treat up to one million gallons of wastewater per day. What is the best way to dispose of the treated wastewater?

Up to now, treated wastewater has been disposed by discharge to a local waterway. This has not been without consequences. The traditional treatment method for large discharges has been to physically remove the larger floating and sinking solid material (primary treatment), biologically remove the smaller particles by letting air breathing bacteria consume them as food (secondary treatment), and then disinfecting the rest to kill disease causing bacteria. The remainder is a clear effluent which is rich in nutrients, mainly nitrogen and phosphorus. These are the components which cause excessive algal growth which upon decomposition leads to reduction in dissolved oxygen making life difficult for the fish, crabs, clams, oysters and other marine life that needs this to breathe. Tertiary treatment can remove most of the nutrients. The ESVPSA is striving to design the new facilities to accomplish this level of treatment which is called treating to the Limits of Technology (LOT).

Unfortunately, even at such a stringent level of treatment, discharge will still have an effect on the receiving stream. Increased freshwater discharge in saltwater environments can cause continuations or expansions of shellfish

condemnation areas. Limit of Technology treatment does not completely remove all nutrients so a waterway will still have increased nutrient loads.

Land disposal offers another potential disposal method. Highly treated water that resembles slightly nitrified rainwater could be used to irrigate plants that will not be used for human consumption. The ideal situation would be silviculture (treefarming). Although other crops could also be irrigated in this way, including animal feed or ornamental plant (nursery) operations. The downside of land disposal is its high cost. However, this disposal method has other benefits.

The Eastern Shore is served by a sole source drinking water aquifer. Our only source of recharge to this aquifer is rainwater. Though we get an average of 43 inches of rain per year, only a very small percentage of that actually is available to recharge our drinking water reserve. Most of it drains off into waterways or is taken up by plants before it becomes available in our deeper, more protected wells. So, it makes sense to conserve what we have and protect it from future contamination. This forces us to think about recycling/reuse of our highly treated wastewater.

Land disposal can be looked on as water banking. Our water supply is finite, and is being recharged at a very slow rate. Why not use this available and highly treated water which we have removed from the aquifer, as recharge water, thereby conserving our resource and extending and protecting our use of it? By doing so, we are also protecting our waterways by removing all or part of the unneeded nutrients and the excess freshwater.

HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE COLLECTION A SUCCESS

Fifty-four vehicles lined up at the ESO Arts Center on August 18th to drop off over two tons of household hazardous waste. Care Environmental of Landing, New Jersey collected the materials and will safely process the waste. The Food Bank of the Eastern Shore collected useable paint for sale at its Tasley Thrift shop.

The Eastern Shore of Virginia Ground Water Committee would like to thank all those who participated in the collection and appreciate the effort to protect our water resources.

The Committee hopes to make the collection an annual event, and would like to thank the project sponsors including Accomack County, Northampton County, the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, and the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation. Special thanks to the ESO Arts Center and Aydelotte & Engler.



Citizens Dispose of Hazardous Materials at the ESO Arts Center

Miles Attends WVU Small Wastewater Systems Training

Arthur Miles attended one of West Virginia University's National Environmental Training Center for Small Communities courses and received instruction in wastewater treatment options for communities with 10,000 or fewer people.

The course addressed regulatory requirements, assessing community needs, choosing appropriate wastewater technologies and ensuing ongoing system viability. Specific information was presented on small treatment plants, cluster systems, conventional systems and alternative onsite systems.

McGowan Serves on DLITE Board

The Delmarva Low Impact Tourism Experiences Board (DLITE) encourages nature-based tourism that can meet the needs of weary vacationers while still maintaining the Delmarva Peninsula's 400-year old way of life.

Recent activities have included offering canoe and bike trips on Assateague.

James McGowan, AICP, serves on the Board of DLITE along with many federal, state and local authorities from all over the peninsula.



How to Contact the A-NPDC

If you have questions or comments about anything in this publication, please don't hesitate to contact the Planning District Commission.

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