

Five Year Plan of Action on Water Quality Restoration

June 28, 2011 draft

Background:

Final prevention measures have been taken with adoption of on-lot controls for lots of record but not built. Remaining prevention efforts will now focus on having municipalities adopt appropriate volume controls. The 2006 Stormwater Management Plan recommended a level of effort to address water quality impairments from existing development that has not been achieved to date. There is now a need to focus our efforts on water quality retrofits to restore impaired waters. This focus will generally be taken on a watershed basis. The Town of Bluffton has taken the lead on the May River and this plan will focus on two of the County's other impaired watersheds.

References:

1. 1994 – 2010 SC DHEC Shellfish Monitoring Station Data 1994-2010
2. 2006 Stormwater Management Plan
3. 2010 Okatie TMDL
4. 2010 SC DHEC 303 d list
5. 2011 Regional Stormwater Quality BMP Retrofit Project

Discussion:

The 2010 303d list has a total of 47 listed impairments in Beaufort County of which 28 are impairments to Shellfish Harvesting due to elevated Fecal Coliform levels. The other impairments are difficult to link to stormwater runoff with the possible exception of 5 copper violations.

The Stormwater Management Plan links impairments to areas that had been developed before adoption of water quality controls. The recent acknowledgement of the importance of stormwater runoff volume lead to a relook of the management plan's retrofit projects. This 2011 relook identified 5 priority projects – 3 in Battery Creek and 2 in the Okatie River. These priority regional retrofits and the fact that there is a TMDL developed for the Okatie River suggests that these two watersheds should have their impairments addressed first.

Restoring impaired watersheds is considered a public cost as opposed to new and redevelopment which is expected to install protection as part of the development. Therefore impairments should be addressed on a comprehensive watershed basis with the following components:

1. Regional Retrofits
2. Incentives for voluntary upgrades
3. Multi-jurisdictional cost sharing
4. Public-private partnerships
5. Fee in lieu of options for redevelopment for developing public solutions

Plan:**Year One – FY2012 – Starts July 1, 2011**

1. Set up County/Municipal Watershed Committees for Battery Creek and Okatie River to develop plans and IGAs
2. Jointly define and select technical support services
3. Develop proposed homeowner/commercial incentive program
4. Initiate pilot regional retrofits – Okatie East and Admin Center Parking Lot
5. Pilot a large ditch detention retrofit to see if feasible and beneficial

Year Two – FY2013

1. Develop Watershed Plans
2. Finalize IGAs on cost Sharing
3. Secure regional retrofit sites
4. Finalize potential Public/Private initiatives (ex Shopping center retrofit)
5. Finalize proposed incentive program and identifying revenue impact

Year Three – FY2014

1. Request for Stormwater Fee increase to fund restoration (would be linked to EOS expansion) and incentives
2. Implement two regional retrofits
3. Implement targeted incentives

Year Four – FY 2015

1. Implement final two regional retrofits

Year Five – FY 2016

1. Monitor impacts of restoration program
2. Evaluate impacts of incentive program
3. If improvements documented, identify two other watersheds for targeted efforts