

Beaufort County Stormwater Management Utility Board (SWMU Board) Meeting Minutes

December 11, 2019 at 2:00 p.m. in Executive Conference Room, Administration Building, Beaufort County Government Robert Smalls Complex, 100 Ribaut Road, Beaufort, South Carolina

Board Members

Present

William Bruggeman
Steven Andrews
James Fargher
Patrick Mitchell
Allyn Schneider
James Clark
Marc Feinberg

Absent

Ex-Officio Members

Present

Van Willis
Kim Jones
Nate Farrow

Absent

Scott Liggett

Beaufort County Staff

Daniel Rybak
Melissa Allen
Katie Herrera
Amber Woods
Carolyn Wallace
Brittany Ward
Kurt Taylor

Visitors

Alan Warren, USCB
Alice Howard, County Council
Ellen Sturup Comeau, Clemson Extension
Henry Porter, SCDHEC
Mike Marcus, SCHEC
Lamar Taylor, City of Beaufort

1. Meeting called to order – William Bruggeman

- A. Agenda – A motion was made and approved to move the Special Presentation by SCDHEC after Item #3, Public Comment(s) in the Agenda. Approved with amendment.
- B. November 13, 2019 Minutes – Approved.

2. Introductions – Completed.

3. Public Comment(s) – None.

* Special Presentation - Able Site, SCDHEC

1) Henry Porter, Chief of the Bureau of Land and Waste Management with SC Department of Environmental Control shared an update on the Able Site. [Presentation Attached](#). The site is being done under solid waste and superfund removal programs. Able Contracting began taking material on site in 2013. In 2014 they registered as a Recycled Material Processing Facility. They were required to recycle 75% (by weight) of the material that was brought on site. Most of the material on site is wood and plastic, primarily recycling concrete and metal. In 2018 the General Assembly changed the solid waste policy act and they were required to apply for a permit. Able Contracting met the deadline and applied in May 2019.

On June 3rd DHEC was notified that there was a fire at the site and on July 3rd DHEC issued Cease and Desist Letter to not allow more material to come onsite until they could extinguish the

fire. DHEC was monitoring air quality and eventually EPA was as well. Based on the particulate matter in the smoke an Emergency Order was issued on July 31st. The site operator said he was financially unable to continue fighting the fire; he lost business due to media attention. Under DHEC authority, they went in with their contract to begin firefighting activity. Jasper County evacuated a nearby trailer park.

The size of the site is a little over six acres and the pile was high as 60 feet in areas. The owner was moving hoses and applying water to the open flames. The water was running off the pile into drainage ditches and offsite. DHEC was concerned about the smoke and what kind of impact was the runoff from the pile was having. On August 12th DHEC's emergency response contractor began removal. DHEC had a limited amount of funds in an emergency fund, about a quarter of a million, and it was expended in about a week time frame. EPA found acrolein in the smoke and came in under their authority and began firefighting activities and debris removal. EPA was onsite until October 15th when it transitioned back to DHEC.

Mr. Porter shared aerial photography showing the amount of progress in debris removal. The runoff from the pile was being collected in sumps. The vac-truck sucked water out of them and through an agreement with BJWSA, the water was put into the sanitary sewer system to be treated. As of yesterday (December 10th), 94,515 ton had been removed from the site and estimate that the site will be complete about the second week of January. DHEC provides daily updates of the activities on their website. A drone flight done on December 10th of the site was shared.

Question and discussion followed the presentation:

Was it [the cause] spontaneous combustion? – DHEC thinks it was, as it is burning deep into the pile, almost down to the ground surface.

Regulations now to prevent this type of operation? - Wouldn't prevent an operation that was conducted appropriately, but would prevent a similar situation to this. 75% has to be recycled, but it is 75% along with the material that is currently on the site.

What is the definition of recycled? - There are streams that can be recycled that have value and some that may not. They were taking in mixed construction and demolition material (wood, paint cans, etc.). There is less demand for plastics and wood than there is for concrete, bricks and metal.

What happens when DHEC leaves the site? – All the debris on site should be removed, if there is future activity on the site, they are under a stormwater permit. It all depends on the future plans for the site.

What is under the pile? - Most of what DHEC has found is soil, but the owner has indicated that he had concrete pads in the area where material is [that hasn't been removed].

Has waterline treatment been conducted? - There is an onsite well and several wells associated with the trailer park and nearby residents. Didn't find anything that exceeded the safe drinking water standards in results.

See similar at other sites or is this unusual? – This is the worst of any of the sites with similar types of activities. There are about 90 material recycling facilities, but many are only one stream of material. There are between 6-9 facilities that are recycling mixed construction; think 4-5 may apply for permit to continue operations.

What force does DHEC have to enforce regulations? – The General Assembly will change a law/statute and then DHEC will change the regulations, have more detail how to ensure facilities meet the requirements in the law. One change, will have to have financial assurance, some money set aside to be able to clean up a site if they walked away from a site and complies that are viable to conduct that type of operation. Able site owner doesn't have money to fight the fire or remove

debris. DHEC will ask General Assembly to replenish funds and plan to do cost recovery that has been expended.

Where is the material going? It is going to Oakwood (Jasper), which is a class 2 landfill.

2) Mike Marcus, Chief of Bureau of Water with SC DHEC shared what the Bureau of Water has been doing in relation to the Able site. [Presentation Attached](#). The program administers the stormwater permit that this facility has, which they were not in compliance. They designed two studies for bacteriological and nutrients (nitrogen/phosphorous) and chemical contaminants. He showed the overall study area, near shellfish area 18.

For the bacteria and nutrient assessment the department has four rounds of sampling planned and they are being done during an ebbing tide. The dry weather sampling was completed in August and one wet weather was completed in October. The charts in the presentation show the results. DHEC will go in the direction the results take them. Ms. Kim Jones asked if they are doing microbial source tracking. He responded they are trying to get it honed into general areas.

For the chemical contaminant assessment they designed a study and the field work has been complete. They looked at the water column, sediment and tissue of oysters and crabs. Started at 170 and moved out. Mr. Marcus shared the parametric coverage used. They like oysters since they stay in place; crabs have a home range of 6 to 8 miles. Two ecological assessments done for oysters: oyster standing stock and oyster health.

Once they get the data from water, sediment and tissue and pair it up with ecological work, they will see where and when supplemental work will need to be done. Sediment samples were collected from ditches near the Able site. He commented it would be great if there was a particular compound or two that was a signal for the site, but based on experience unlikely.

In reference to ground water, they haven't done a targeted assessment, but with the wells they took the superfund approach and analyzed a target compound list and target list for metals. They went a second time and sampled under the drinking water methods. They also analyzed for p.phos compounds and they were all non-detect. DHEC was glad that the ground water was not affected.

Question:

Is the sampling in addition to area 18 regular sampling? - The only sampling that is done in regular sampling is bacteria. Where they can, they will make a comparison for bacteria.

4. Reports – Mr. Daniel Rybak provided a written report which is included in the posted agenda and can be accessed at:

<https://www.beaufortcountysc.gov/stormwater-management-utility-board/agendas/2019/121119.pdf>

A. Utility Update – Daniel Rybak

In reference to item #1, the committee met on November 18th and December 4th to continue going through comments and are 3/4 of the way through the design manual. The draft is due to be finalized at the first of the year, posting for public comment around January 2, 2020 and close after six weeks. The public stakeholder meetings are planned for January 21-23.

In reference to delinquent accounts, County Council voted to move forward with an investigation phase with Gentry Locke Attorneys with a \$75,000 cap. Ms. Brittany Ward, Beaufort County Deputy Attorney, gave an update on the delinquent fees for the federal government. She provided a packet with a breakdown of delinquent stormwater fees and penalties. The penalties are not sent to the individual municipalities. There is over \$7 million in stormwater fees owed from the federal government. Each of these individual entities has

been contacted by Ms. Ward and she has reached out to House of Representatives and Senators as well. County Council support will allow a pre-litigation phase for the law firm to work with the County to review documents and advise of the likelihood of winning a lawsuit, any potential negotiations and what the County should do about it. There is one similar pending lawsuit in Wilmington DE and a hearing is set for Spring 2020.

Questions and Discussion:

Why is the County not handling this? - It is not a small task, County legal is a staff of three and cannot handle. The law firm also has expertise in this field that our department does not.

Has the firm had a stormwater case? - Yes, they have successfully litigated a similar case, but it was against a railroad corporation rather than the federal government. The only case that is similar to our situation being litigated is coming out of Delaware and is still pending. Any potential law suits can only assume to have been negotiated out of the courtroom.

Discussion about how the County is specifically set up as fees and not taxes. Ms. Ward indicated the law firm the County would be hiring has reviewed them and feels confident they are fees and not taxes.

Ms. Ward explained that the fee proposal for Phase 1 Investigations with Gentry Locke is not to exceed the \$75,000. They are willing to work with the County and the goal is not to exceed it. If the County moves forward with negotiations or litigation, the \$75,000 would go toward the overall payment to the law firm.

A motion was made to approve the \$75,000 to move forward with the investigation phase to recoup the stormwater fees from the Federal government.

Discussion –

What goes into the investigative aspect? – They will review ordinance, applicable state and federal laws (Clean Water Act), collecting data that is necessary.

Distinction between taxes and fees hasn't been addressed.

Mr. Patrick Mitchell expressed that he opposes, due to relationship with the military.

Mr. Van Willis asked if there has been a federal law passed to pay stormwater fees. Ms. Ward said yes, the Clean Water Act. She explained in regards to the relationship that the County has with the Federal Government located in Beaufort County, that the legal department recognizes the long standing, and beneficial, relationship, which is why over the last nine months the County has made such a great effort over to discuss this issue with them. Specifically contacting them on six occasions and had two meetings and three conference calls with different individuals representing the federal government. They left two of the meetings, indicating they weren't paying.

In response to a question, Ms. Alice Howard shared that Council decisions [to support] was not unanimous, but was a majority. She expressed (from the other side) it is definitely a question of fee versus tax.

Mr. James Clark expressed concern of fairness as they bases don't get the money back. They pay for all their own engineering, maintenance design, etc.

Ms. Ward expressed the ordinance is put in place and fees are assessed and included on the tax bill. They are required per ordinance, like any other citizen, to pay in full, at which point they can submit to the department an appeal. If they provide the correct documentation, they can receive a credit if inaccurate. They are refusing to pay.

Question about if it is on a total contingency basis.

Mr. Clark commented there is a difference between discharge directly to ocean and rivers of the state and county inland areas.

Ms. Ward expressed her position is from a legal standpoint, that they should pay it and then they have the right to dispute it like any other citizen.

The motion passed 5-2. YAYS – Mr. Schneider, Mr. Bruggeman, Mr. Andrews, Mr. Feinberg, and Mr. Fargher. NAYS – Mr. Mitchell and Mr. Clark.

Mr. Rybak reminded municipalities of the annual financial report.

B. Monitoring Update – Daniel Rybak

Dr. Allen Warren commented that the lab is busy. He shared about a recent opportunity to help analyze stormwater for a science project.

Mr. Rybak shared that Dr. Eric Montie’s report on May River was delivered; link included in the packet. This report ties into the regional ordinance and stormwater design manual. He shared two articles, one from the Bluffton Today ([article](#)) and one from the Bluffton Packet ([article](#)). These caused quite a stir and discussion within the community. He expressed that the stressors are greater than the efforts to mitigate them. With public comment period, have the opportunity to address some of the concerns from the community. Timing of the completion of the regional ordinance and design manual is appropriate.

In response to a comment, Mr. Rybak shared that it will adopt a new process that is equivalent and stricter than what is currently in place. It will be watershed based instead of by jurisdiction.

Comments and discussion about developments and its impact.

Ms. Jones suggested the board may want to hear Dr. Montie’s presentation Discussion about considering doing similar study of other rivers.

C. Stormwater Implementation Committee (SWIC) Report – Daniel Rybak

Please reference the report, no additional updates.

D. Stormwater Related Projects – Daniel Rybak

In reference to the Graves Property (Item #6), there is a planned meeting to take place in January. Brief discussion took place about the joint agreement. Ms. Howard shared her concerns with the project, as she voted against it as did the stormwater board. Not sure where the money is coming from. Mr. Rybak will be monitoring and based on the agreement get a system in place to account for the money involved and keep them within the lines of the agreement.

Item #9, Lady’s Island Plan/Sea Level Rise, the committee met on November 21st to discuss comments on the draft ordinance.

E. Professional Contracts Report – Daniel Rybak

In reference Salt Creek and Shanklin Road, 30% design submittal is under review. Brewer Memorial project, successful in getting a notice of intent to grant easement from the property owner. Evergreen project, 90% design submittal under review.

F. Regional Coordination – Daniel Rybak

Ms. Jones provided a modeling update; there is a data gap and transfer issue, so they are about a month behind schedule completing the model. The Joint Councils Meeting will be following the February SOLOCO meeting, regional sewer extension at Rotary Community Center.

G. Municipal Reports – Daniel Rybak

Ms. Jones shared that the Town of Bluffton's report is on their website under Consent Agenda

Mr. Farrow indicated that the piping project at Twin Lakes is completed. Battery Shores is another in house piping project that is in the beginning phases.

Mr. Willis shared that the Town of Port Royal just finished up the 12th Street piping project. The Town is getting in bids for the Cypress Wetlands restoration project.

H. Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4 Update) – Daniel Rybak

Mr. Rybak briefly went over the MS4 activity comparisons and weather station charts. The Pond Conference on November 14th had 75 participants. Ms. Ellen Sturup Comeau shared that 40 participants filled out feedback and it was overwhelming positive response. She is working with Abby with DNR to get Healthy Pond workshops going. They will be hosting LID workshops in May 2020. [LSP Report Attached](#).

Ms. Jones shared that the Town of Bluffton is changing enforcement response procedure starting the first of the year; no longer will be issuing Notice to Comply. Will have two to five days to rectify the issue.

Beaufort County's annual MS4 report was submitted to DHEC on November 26th.

I. Maintenance Projects Report – Daniel Rybak

Please reference the report, no additional updates.

5. Unfinished Business –

Mr. Bruggeman asked if there was an update on the RV park that the concerned citizens were at the board about. Mr. Rybak will check into this and follow up.

6. New Business –

A. Special Presentation – Able Site, SCDHEC – (see above *Special Presentation)

7. Public Comment(s) – Mr. Mitchell commented that Dr. Warren brought up a good question about do we know what the government has for stormwater on the facilities in question. In regards with sediment and erosion control, he shared that he has done some large projects on base and their inspectors were out on the site once or twice a week. They were very strict and ensured violations were repaired immediately.

8. Next Meeting Agenda – Approved.

9. Meeting Adjourned



South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control

Able Contracting Site Update

December 11, 2019

History

- Registered as a Recycled Material Processing Facility - February 2014
- Submitted Permit Application for a Construction & Demolition Recycling Facility – May 2019

History

- DHEC notified of Fire – June 3, 2019
- DHEC issues a Cease & Desist Letter requiring the fire to be extinguished – July 3, 2019
- DHEC issues an Emergency Order – July 31, 2019
- DHEC monitoring shows potential health impacts to nearby residents from smoke - Jasper County evacuates mobile home park – August 2, 2019



South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control







SECURITY
ALERT

POSTED



07/25/2019 11:15



07/25/2019 13:17

History

- DHEC's emergency response contractor begins firefighting and debris removal – August 12, 2019
- EPA assumes firefighting and debris removal – August 16, 2019
- Transition to DHEC lead for firefighting and debris removal – October 15, 2019











Quantities of Debris

- 130,000 – 135,000 cubic yards when DHEC began removal
- Removed –
 - 94,515 tons (~111,000 cubic yards)
 - 10,239 truckloads

Estimated completion by the 2nd week of January

Daily Updates

- <https://www.scdhec.gov/environment/ongoing-projects-updates/able-contracting-fire>

CONTACT US

Henry Porter, Chief

Bureau of Land and Waste Management

(803) 898-1411

porterhj@dhec.sc.gov

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South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control

Bureau of Water

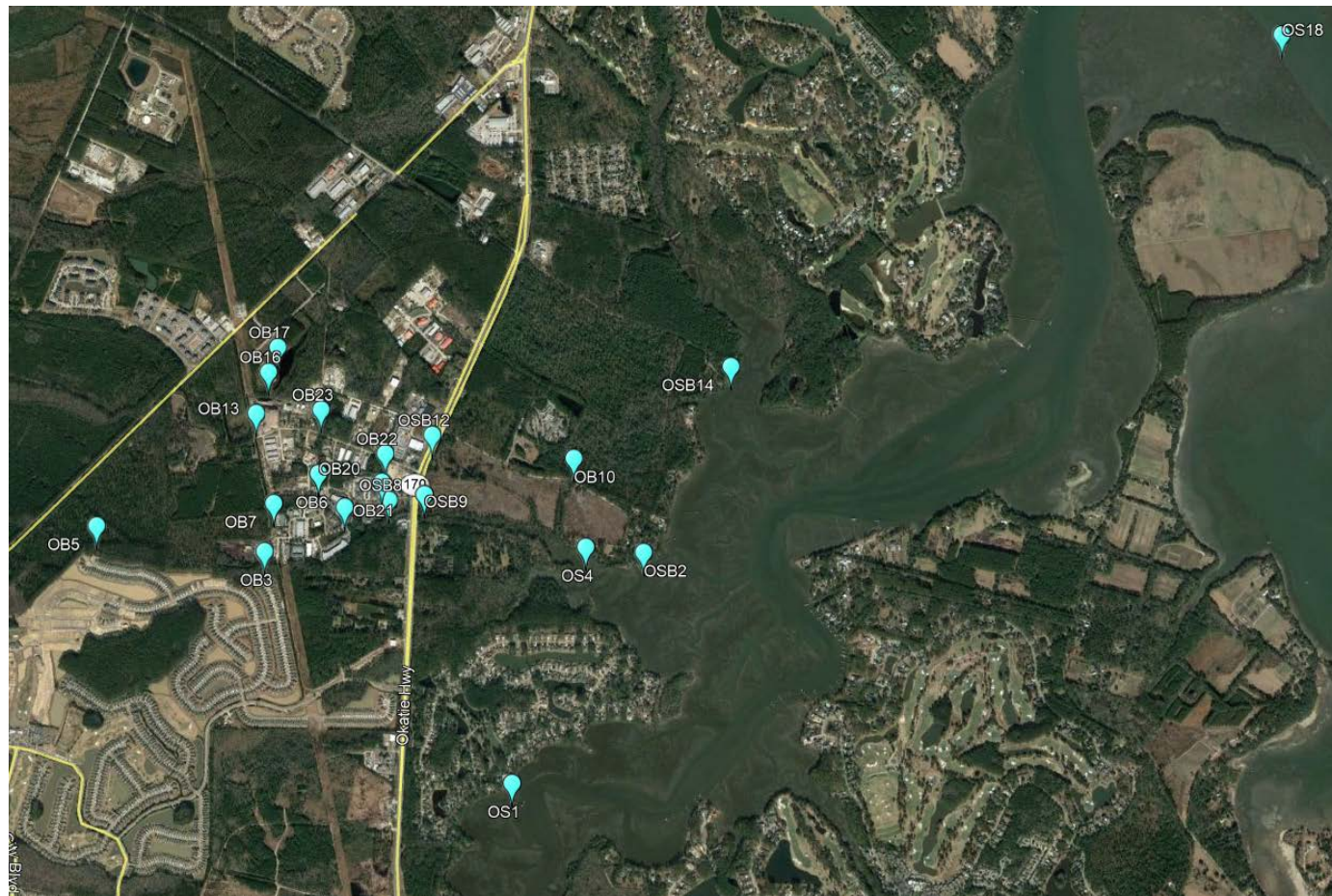
Okatie River

Water Quality Assessment

Okatie River WQ Assessment

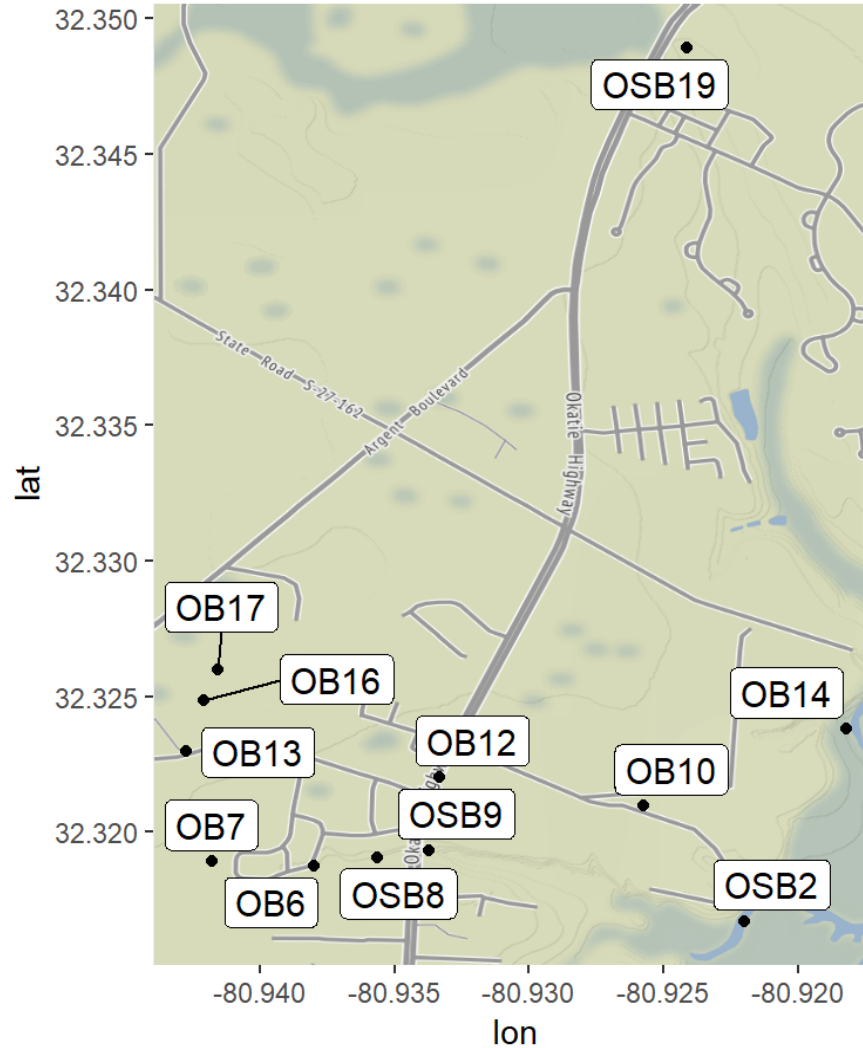
- Two distinct studies
 - Bacteriological and Nutrients
 - Chemical Contaminants

Overall Study Area



Bacteriological & Nutrient Assessment

- Initial focus on area draining the industrial park
- Four Rounds Planned
 - 1 dry weather event (completed)
 - 3 post-wet weather event (1 event completed)
- Parametric Coverage
 - Fecal Coliform A-1, *E. Coli*, Enterococcus
 - Nutrients – NO₂-3, TKN, NH₃, TP



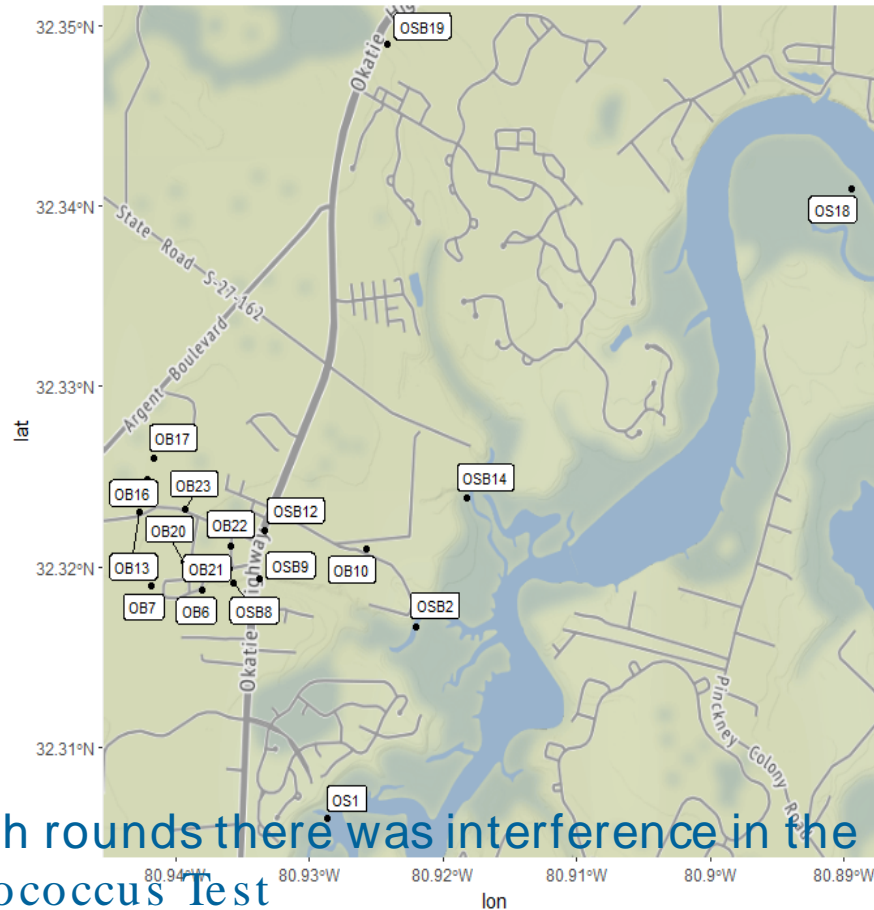
Bacteria Data from Schinger Avenue, Ridgeland, SC Area ^a			
Station	Bacterial Density		
	Fecal Coliform ^b	Enterococcus ^c	<i>E. Coli</i> ^d
	(MPN/100ml)	(MPN/100ml)	(MPN/100ml)
Standard	43	104	349
OB16	1600	364	113.7
OB17	180	97	29.9
OB13	>1600		43320
OB14	17	20	52
OB7	>1600	3654	4611
OB6	34	29.2	25.6
OSB8	1600	1483	2382
OSB2	23	20	20
OSB9	>1600	1333	2613
OB12	130	69.3	3.1
OB10	540	2755	1483
OSB19	79	2613	31.3

^aSamples collected 2019-08-29; dry weather event

^bby method A-1 Fecal Coliform

^cby method Enterococci by Quanti-Tray

^dby method Quanti-tray E.Coli Analysis



In both rounds there was interference in the Enterococcus Test

Bacteria Data from Schinger Avenue, Ridgeland, SC Area ^a			
Station	Bacterial Density		
	Fecal Coliform ^b (MPN/100ml)	Enterococcus ^c (MPN/100ml)	<i>E. Coli</i> ^d (MPN/100ml)
Standard	43	104	349
OB10	920	1299.7	686.7
OB13	13000		275.5
OB16	2400		387.3
OB17	>1600		488.4
OB20	1600	12033	866.4
OB21	>1600	613.1	139.6
OB22	>1600	686.7	67.6
OB23	>1600	1017	980.4
OB6	>1600	301	152.9
OB7	35000	4884	7701
OS1	46	10	41
OS18	2.0	<10	41
OSB12	920	248.9	137.6
OSB14	6.8	41	41
OSB19	1600	1553.1	186.0
OSB2	23	10	52
OSB8	2400	686.7	248.1
OSB9	920	210.5	96.0

^aSamples collected 2019-10-21; wet weather event

^bby method A-1 Fecal Coliform

^cby method 15000 Enterococcus

^dby method 15000 Enterococcus

Chemical Contaminant Assessment

- Matrices
 - Water column
 - Sediment
 - Tissue
 - Oyster
 - Crab



Chemical Contaminant Assessment

- Parametric coverage
 - Volatile Organic Compounds (not in tissue)
 - Semi – Volatile Organic Compounds
 - Pesticides
 - Polychlorinated Biphenyls
 - Metals

Chemical Contamination Assessment -- Ecology

- Oyster Standing Stock
 - Size Frequency Distribution
 - SCDNR Method
- Oyster Health
 - Condition Index
 - USC Method (Lawrence & Scott)

CONTACT US

Mike Marcus, Ph.D., Chief
Bureau of Water

S.C. Dept. of Health & Environmental Control

Office: (803) 898-4210

Mobile: (803) 683-6809

marcusjm@dhec.sc.gov

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Study: Fecal coliform bacteria levels are rising in May River

By **Dan Hunt**

Posted Oct 25, 2019 at 2:53 PM

A new study shows that fecal coliform bacteria levels in the May River have gradually increased over the past two decades.

Scientists with the Marine Sensory and NeuroLab at the University of South Carolina Beaufort analyzed long-term data collected from 11 shellfish monitoring stations along the May River by the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control. Seven of the stations collected data from 1999 to 2017, the other four from 2009-17.

USCB associate professor Eric W. Montie introduced his team's findings Thursday to the town of Bluffton's May River Watershed Action Plan advisory committee.

Montie, who is a member of the committee, said his primary conclusion is that fecal coliform levels in the May River are gradually increasing while salinity levels are gradually decreasing.

The salinity decrease is worrisome, Montie said, because fecal bacteria can more easily thrive in fresh water than salt. He said the salinity decrease is being caused by two primary factors: increased rainfall and population growth.

Montie said climate change is leading to increased frequency of the weather phenomenon El Niño, which warms waters and leads to more rainfall in climates relatively close to the equator, including the Lowcountry.

Montie said population growth has led to more development and more impervious surfaces, such as roads and driveways, near the river. Increased rainfall and impervious surfaces create more stormwater runoff, Montie said, which contributes to lower salinity levels, allowing fecal bacteria to thrive.

"Sorry for all the bad news," Montie told the committee after he revealed the findings.

Bluffton watershed management division manager Kim Jones said Montie's study is significant not only because of its findings, but because it represents one of the largest sample sizes of local shellfish station monitoring.

DHEC will restrict shellfish harvesting if a location exceeds a fecal coliform geometric mean of 14 MPN (most probable number) per 100 milliliters for the 30 most recent samples analyzed. The agency's protocol is to close shellfish harvesting at both the non-compliant stations and at the next compliant station to provide an additional safety margin.

Four Bluffton-area stations are non-compliant and five are currently closed in accordance with the policy, but most of the river is open to shellfish harvesting.

"The takeaway from Dr. Montie's presentation on the long-term trend of increasing fecal coliform in SCDHEC's data is that we — the town of Bluffton, Beaufort County and our citizens — must continue to work together to decrease the sources of fecal coliform, such as septic tanks, pet waste, horse manure, as well as the amount of stormwater runoff that reach the May River," Jones said.

The advisory committee has developed several town policy changes in recent years in an effort to decrease fecal coliform levels, including a sewer extension and connection policy to eliminate septic systems.

The committee also has recommended regular reviews and updates of the town's stormwater ordinance, which eventually led to the Regional Lowcountry Stormwater Ordinance and Design Manual, which is based on watersheds instead of jurisdictional boundaries. The manual includes Bluffton, Beaufort County, the city of Hardeeville, Jasper County, the city of Beaufort and the town of Port Royal.

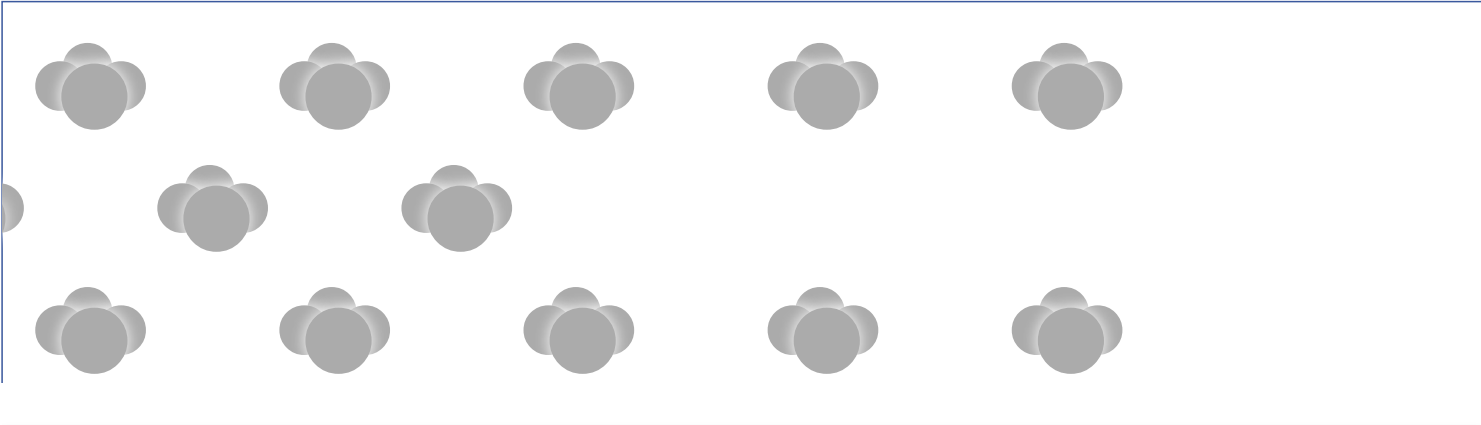
Jones said continued regional coordination will be key moving forward.

Speaking to the committee after Montie's presentation, she said in the months ahead it will need to lead the charge in bringing more policy changes to the town.

"There's climate change that's changing rainfall and weather patterns. We know we have an increase in population. We know we have increased impervious surface. We know we're changing our stormwater design standards on a regional level," she said.

“How do we begin to meld this data into policy recommendations that go into the May River Watershed Action Plan update, the town of Bluffton’s two-year strategic plan, our division’s work plan and budget requests to support that ultimate goal of restoring and protecting shellfish harvesting throughout the May River?”

The committee voted unanimously for Montie’s presentation be repeated before Town Council next month.

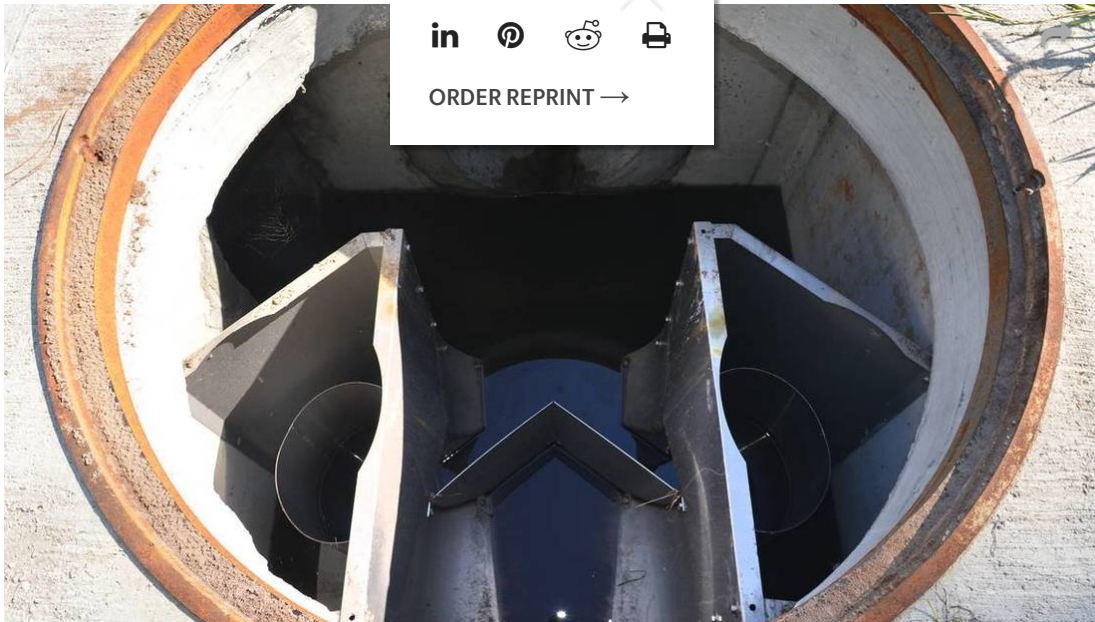


LOCAL

Bluffton's population boom caused rising bacteria levels in May River, study says

BY KACEN BAYLESS

NOVEMBER 14, 2019 07:30 AM



Called a dual vortex separator, this storm water treatment device recently installed by Bluffton along May River Road should help keep pollutants from reaching the May River. Here, Bluffton's director of engineering, Bryan McIlwee, describes how i BY JAY KARR

Fecal coliform bacteria levels have been rising in the May River for the past two decades and, in some parts, are above what is considered safe for shellfish harvesting, according to a new study at the University of South Carolina-Beaufort.

The bacteria levels near the headwaters of the May River were 15 to 16 times greater in 2017 than in 1999, according to the study.

The study, commissioned by Bluffton and Beaufort County and led by Eric Montie, an associate professor of biology at USCB, and graduate student Jamileh Soueidan, looked at water quality data collected by the S.C. Department of Environment Health and Control from shellfish monitoring stations along the May River. The study found that Bluffton's building and population boom over the past 20 years has led to increased stormwater runoff, lowering the salinity in the May River and causing fecal coliform to thrive.

TOP ARTICLES



Look inside: Brother Shuckers raw bar opens on Hilton Head in former Jump and Phil's

Heavy rainfall due to increased El Niño events — complex weather patterns caused by the warming of ocean currents — was also a contributing factor to the rise in bacteria levels in the May River, according to the study. DHEC collected water quality samples at seven monitoring stations in the river from 1999 to 2017 and four additional stations from 2009 to 2017.

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Montie said he plans to present his findings to Bluffton Town Council on Dec. 10.

Fecal coliform bacteria — typically originating from the intestines of warm-blooded animals — are analyzed by agencies like DHEC to determine whether disease-causing organisms are present in water bodies. Although not all coliform bacteria may cause illness, their presence indicates that

disease-causing organisms could be in water bodies. Bacteria levels directly impact oyster harvesting. If fecal coliform levels exceed a certain number, shellfish harvesting beds are restricted or closed. According to DHEC's shellfish monitoring map, a large portion of the May River's headwaters are closed for shellfish harvesting.

"This is what DHEC has to do because, otherwise, people can get really sick or die from oysters contaminated with pathogenic organisms," Montie said.

The town of Bluffton and Beaufort County each contributed \$15,000 last November to pay for the USCB study. Montie presented his team's findings to Bluffton's May River Watershed Action Plan advisory committee in late October and said he will continue his research by comparing the data from the May River to other watersheds like the Okatie River if he receives funding. He expects the study to cost \$30,000 per year for the next two years.

Montie said there could be several solutions to the high fecal coliform levels. One source of the bacteria could be human waste from septic tanks. In an ideal world, Montie said, all septic systems would be converted to sewer systems.

"We need to come up with ways to limit development and impervious surfaces like paved roads," he said. "We also need to keep the forested land in our watershed."

He said charging developers higher impact fees for studies on the May River and creating natural wetlands near developments could help alleviate some of the problems.

If development in the May River watershed isn't controlled, "you're going to have deterioration in water quality," he said. "You've got to have some sort of control."

Alan Warren, Environmental Health Science program director at USCB, said the origins of the problem aren't in the river, but in the upland areas surrounding the river. He said Bluffton and Beaufort County have been trying to solve the issue of poor water quality in nearby watersheds, but the problem is getting worse.

Kim Jones, watershed management division manager for the town of Bluffton, did not return a call for comment Wednesday.

Bluffton's population has increased 874% since 2000, according to the U.S. Census, and developers continue to build. The increase in impervious surfaces, such as roads and parking lots, has led to a decrease in water quality of nearby waterways.

The USCB study was released as residents in Bluffton and Beaufort County [have complained publicly about rampant development](#). In recent months, developers have proposed building hundreds more homes.

In many cases, developers whose plans were approved years ago have asked to change their original agreements and increase density. Residents who live along Cherry Point Road, for example, worry about a plan to build [more than 600 homes and a mix of commercial developments](#). They say the plan, called River Oaks, would hurt the water quality of the Okatie River.



KACEN BAYLESS



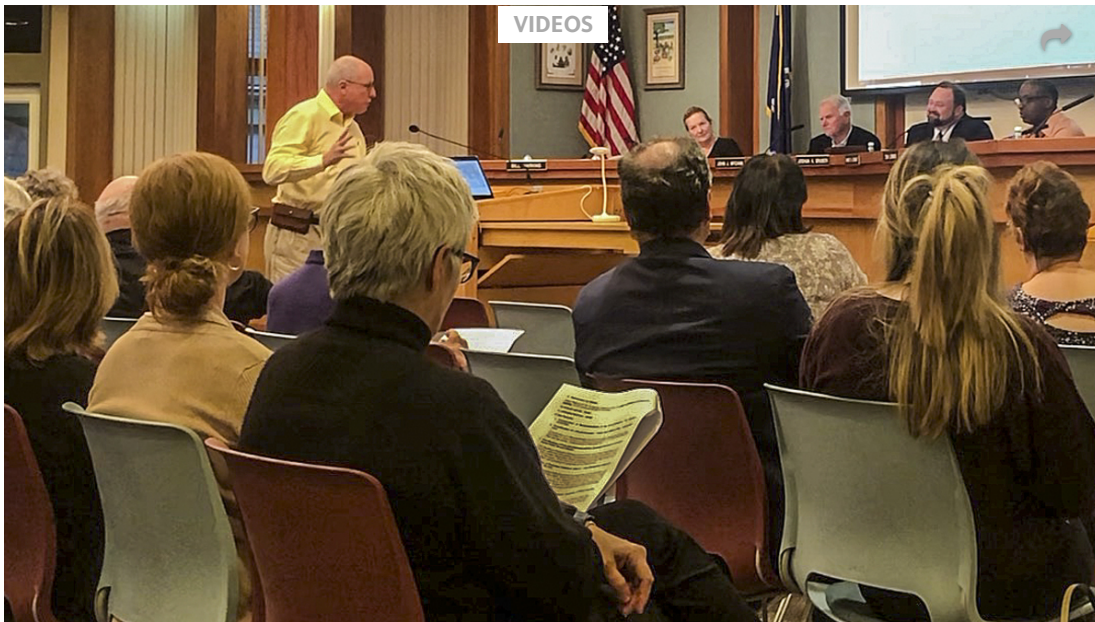
A reporter for The Island Packet covering local government and development, Kacen Bayless is a native of St. Louis,

Missouri. In the past, he's worked for St. Louis Magazine, the Columbia Missourian, KGBA and the Columbia Business Times. He graduated with a Bachelor of Journalism degree with an emphasis in Investigative Reporting from the University of Missouri in 2019.

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Councilman attempts to humiliate public speaker. He responds, "You're corrupt"



Lowcountry Stormwater Partners (LSP) Stormwater Utility Board Monthly Report
11/12/19 - 12/2/19

Stormwater outreach/involvement activities completed:

- 2019 Beaufort Area Stormwater Pond Conference
 - The 2019 Beaufort Area Stormwater Pond Management Conference provided a forum to give the latest information, resources, and tools on stormwater pond management for the Lowcountry community. Topics include a plenary session, the current state of the knowledge on stormwater ponds, integrated pest management, aquatic weed management, wildlife habitat, sea level rise, and upland management. The conference is a partnership between Clemson Extension, S.C. SeaGrant Consortium, SC Dept. of Natural Resources, and the ACE Basin NERR Coastal Training Program.
 - 11/14/19, Beaufort, 75
- LSP Consortium Meeting
 - The LSP met with its partners and discuss current and upcoming events.
 - 11/19/19, Okatie, 8
- Stormwater and the Saltmarsh presentation
 - Ellen Sturup Comeau gave this presentation to the Lowcountry Master Gardener Association on how stormwater works and how it affects the environment in Beaufort County as well as actions that homeowners can take to reduce their stormwater footprint.
 - 11/21/19, Beaufort, 38

Stormwater outreach/involvement activities planned to take place:

- LSP Newsletter
 - An informative publication for the general public with a small article on a stormwater topic and information on past, current, and future events.
 - 11/28/19, online, 90
- Meeting with the Bluffton Boys and Girls Club to discuss planting a bog garden
 - 12/4/19, Bluffton
- LSP Newsletter
 - An informative publication for the general public with a small article on a stormwater topic and information on past, current, and future events.
 - 12/13/19, online, 90
- Meeting to discuss planning a pervious paver workshop
 - Okatie, 12/16/19
- Cultivating a Carolina Yard Workshop
 - Ellen Sturup Comeau will present an overview of the Clemson Extension Carolina Yards program. The Carolina Yards program teaches homeowners sustainable landscaping practices with a watershed-friendly focus. This workshop will take place at Port Royal Plantation.
 - 1/10/19, Hilton Head
- LSP Consortium Meeting
 - The LSP met with its partners and discuss current and upcoming events.
 - 1/21/19, Okatie
- LSP Newsletter
 - An informative publication for the general public with a small article on a stormwater topic and information on past, current, and future events.
 - 1/24/19, online, 90
- Cultivating a Carolina Yard Workshop Part 1
 - Ellen Sturup Comeau will give the first part of her Carolina Yard workshop, which teaches homeowners sustainable landscaping practices with a

watershed-friendly focus. This offering will focus on building healthy soil, nutrient management, and stormwater runoff. This workshop will be given as part of an OLLI series.

- 1/30/19, Hilton Head
- Cultivating a Carolina Yard Workshop Part 2
 - Ellen Sturup Comeau will give the second part of her Carolina Yard workshop, which teaches homeowners sustainable landscaping practices with a watershed-friendly focus. This presentation will focus upon yard waste management and irrigation practices. This workshop will be given as part of an OLLI series.
 - 2/6/19, Hilton Head
- Buffer Workshop
 - TBD
 - 2/10/19, Hilton Head
- Cultivating a Carolina Yard Workshop Part 3
 - Ellen Sturup Comeau will give the third part of her Carolina Yard workshop, which teaches homeowners sustainable landscaping practices with a watershed-friendly focus. This presentation will focus upon pest management and harvesting rainwater. This workshop will be given as part of an OLLI series.
 - 2/13/19, Hilton Head
- Cultivating a Carolina Yard Workshop Part 4
 - Ellen Sturup Comeau will give the fourth part of her Carolina Yard workshop, which teaches homeowners sustainable landscaping practices with a watershed-friendly focus. This offering will focus upon native plants and waterwise garden planning. This workshop will be given as part of an OLLI series.
 - 2/20/19, Hilton Head
- LSP Newsletter
 - An informative publication for the general public with a small article on a stormwater topic and information on past, current, and future events.
 - 2/21/19, online, 90

Other related activities performed/considered:

- LSP 2019-2023 Strategic Plan writing (complete)
- 2019 Beaufort Area Stormwater Pond Conference planning (complete)
- Planning for 2020 based on LSP Strategic Plan (ongoing)