



Wheatley River Nitrate Reduction Pilot Project Community Stakeholder Working Group

Session #3: Non-Agricultural Sources and Goal-Setting

Wheatley River Community Hall, March 9, 2011

In attendance:

Phillip VanNieuwenhuyzen, Shane Gillis, Jeremy Stead, Brian Stead, Travis Dykerman, John Sylvester, Eric Sylvester, Melvin Ling, Stewart MacRae, Randall Nieuwhof, Ann Wheatley, Vernon Rodd, John Anthony Langdale, Vicki Reddin-Gauthier (Community Stakeholder Working Group Members), Austin MacDonald, Eric Riordon, Andrew Lush (Public), Sean Ledgerwood, Morley Foy, Jennifer Roper, Erica MacDonald (resource guests), Tracy Gallant (WRIG Coordinator), Rob Reddin (Facilitator).

Overview:

The third meeting was aimed at learning more about non-agricultural sources of nitrates in the watershed, namely residential septic contributions. It was also the time to begin very necessary group discussions to move toward goals and strategies for the draft plan, beginning, during this meeting, with a discussion of the values of the group, and the community at large, that will provide a standard against which to measure any targets, goals, strategies, etc. as they develop.

After introductions around the room and a brief recap of the two previous sessions, Morley Foy was introduced and invited to present to the group on the topic of Septic Systems and Nitrate. He began by covering background information, such as nitrate load calculations and relative septic contributions. Importantly, Morley noted that all conventional septic systems discharge nitrate, not just those that are poorly maintained. In terms of options or solutions for reducing nitrate contributions from septic sources, four main categories were identified: larger lot sizes (reducing the number of septic contributors per unit area), central servicing (increasing the density of development and collecting septic outputs for centralized treatment and release), Nitrogen removal technology (on-site upgrades or installation of improved systems to prevent some percentage of nitrate loss through the septic system), and holding tanks (temporary storage of septic outputs for removal and off-site treatment and release). While each of these options had its associated costs and benefits (in some cases more balanced than others), the ultimate take-home point was that determining the best option for a given community (or group of communities in a watershed) needs to be done on a case-by-case basis, and would likely require a well-developed needs assessment. After Morley's presentation, questions were harvested on a flip chart, to be forwarded to him for answering by correspondence.

After a short break, Sean Ledgerwood gave a brief talk on what the elements of a draft plan might look like, and the remainder of the meeting was devoted to a discussion of group values, as a means of setting a sort of framework within which to consider various options for targets and strategies in the draft plan. Finally, evaluation sheets were completed at the end of the meeting.