

Wastewater Infrastructure Policy Working Group (WWIWG)
Central Virginia Roundtable Discussions
September 15, 2021 – 10:00 to 12:00
Meeting Summary

Meeting Location: Perimeter Center
Conference Center, Board Room 1
9960 Mayland Drive, Suite 300
Henrico, Virginia 23233-1463

Virtual: Virtual meeting using Webex.

WWIWG Members

Karen Duran – Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)
Jay Grant – Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)
Stephanie Hamlett – Virginia Resource Authority (VRA)
Lance Gregory – Virginia Department of Health (VDH)

Attendees

Ann Jennings – Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources
Julie Henderson – VDH
Karri Atwood – VDH
Kenneth Smith – VDH
Megan Senseman - VDH
Billy Vaughn – City of Staunton
Pat Bradley – City of Richmond
Hope Cupit – Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project (SERCAP)
Jay Dillon - SERCAP
Amy Pemberton - SERCAP
Anne-Marie Leake – Henrico Soil and Water Conservation District
Brent Husinger – Friends of the Rappahannock
Greg Wichelns – Culpeper Soil and Water Conservation District
James Grandstaff – Henrico County
Jake Hooly - Deloitte
Jon Wixom - Deloitte
Patrick Fanning – Chesapeake Bay Foundation
Scott Fincham – Loudoun County
Perry Hickman – USDA Rural Development
Tanya Pettus – Department of Professional and Occupational Regulations
Steve Pennington

1. Call to Order, Welcome and Introductions by Policy Working Group Chair Designee, Karen Duran, Clean Water Financing and Assistance Program Manager, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)

Ms. Duran called the meeting to order and welcomed the participants. Workgroup members and participant then introduced themselves.

2. Overview of American Rescue Plan Act Funding.

a. Karen Duran, DEQ

Ms. Duran covered three different funding items provided to DEQ in the recently approved [budget bill](#) for the American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) funding. The three items are:

- \$75,000,000 for septic, straight pipe, and sewer collection system repairs, replacement and upgrades.
- \$125,000,000 for grants to the cities of Alexandria, Lynchburg, and Richmond to pay a portion of the cost of combined sewer overflow control projects.
- \$100,000,000 to reimburse eligible entities provided in the Enhanced Nutrient Removal Certainty Program, and to reimburse the Town of Pound and City of Petersburg for capital costs incurred for infrastructure improvements.

She noted that there are some priorities for certain projects, including need being based on a per household basis, and that all funds that are not dispersed must be returned.

Ms. Duran was asked if the \$100,000,000 ARPA allocation would be going to the Water Quality Improvement Fund or a separate fund. She noted it is a separate allocation.

b. Lance Gregory, Division of Onsite Sewage and Water Services Director, Environmental Engineering, and Marina Programs, Virginia Department of Health

Mr. Gregory then provided the attached presentation on ARPA funding provided to VDH. The budget bill provides VDH with \$11,500,000 in total for improvements for wells and septic system for homeowners at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty guidelines. Mr. Gregory noted that VDH would rely, in part, on the Virginia Wastewater Data Viewer to identify target areas for outreach on the ARPA funding program. He noted that VDH is still in the process of developing a plan for the funding program, and welcomed feedback and suggestions. The current draft plan includes providing at portion of available funding to partners that have experience with providing septic and well grant funds. Several participants commented as having interested as potentially partners.

3. Roundtable Discussion with Working Group Participants facilitated by Ann Jennings, Deputy Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources on the following issues:

a. How to promote public education about the importance of adequate wastewater treatment?

Deputy Secretary Jennings then opened the meeting to comments from participants on a number of goals for the WWIWG. She began by asking how the WWIWG could promote public education about the importance of adequate wastewater treatment. Participants provided the following comments and suggestions:

- There was support for continued and increased support of Septic Smart Week activities.
- Agencies should disseminate education materials regularly. The use of refrigerator magnets to reinforce septic health message was provided as a successful educational outreach strategy.
- Including public health in annual Envirothon was supported by attendees.
- SERCAP shared information about the septic training program they require for grant recipients prior to pump out. This approach was supported by attendees as was incorporating waste treatment education into existing training curriculum.
- Incorporate public education about septic health into existing clean water outreach and education.
- Develop marketing plan with emphasis on a core message that all partners across state, local and nonprofit agencies utilize.
- Provide regular media releases to a group newsletter over time at a regular interval.

b. How to encourage collaboration among local, state, and federal government entities, including consistent collaboration and coordination of grant requirements and timelines?

Deputy Secretary Jennings then asked participants how the WWIWG could encourage collaboration among agencies and coordination of grants. Participants provided the following comments and suggestions:

- Coordination, collaboration and continued communication with stakeholders on the work of the WWIWG is key.
- Develop one grant application template for all funding sources for subsets of wastewater needs.
- Build and maintain a web portal dedicated to waste treatment outreach and education with a table, flow chart or questionnaire to guide users to specifically available funding sources.
- Offer trainings on how to apply for grant funding for local stakeholders.
- Connect with USDA Rural Development's funding and financing regional workshops for system operators and owners.
- At a local level need to provide funding for staff to stay abreast and seek funding opportunities.
- Local watershed groups can be an excellent source of grant information.

c. How to endorse community-based and regional projects as opposed to cumulative and repetitive site-by-site individual solutions and integrated solutions across sewer and onsite wastewater treatment systems.

Deputy Secretary Jennings then asked participants how the WWIWG could endorse community-based projects in favor of site-by-site solutions. Participants provided the following comments and suggestions:

- Attendees supported incentivizing regional projects with increased funding or through ranking process.
- Emphasize that underlying federal statutes state a preference for regional projects.
- Recommendation to establish by memorandum of understanding or similar mechanism for long-term oversight and maintenance of regional solutions through a local service authority.

d. How to support prioritized, focused, and innovative uses of state and federal funding to address needs determined pursuant to the wastewater infrastructure needs assessment required under § 62.1-223.3.

Lastly, Deputy Secretary Jennings asked participants how the WWIWG could support prioritized, focused, and innovative uses of available funding to address needs. Participants provided the following comments and suggestions:

- Provide planning grants to support local government-driven wastewater needs assessments.

4. Public comment.

Ms. Duran then opened the floor to any public comments. There were no further comments and the meeting was adjourned.

5. Adjournment.

American Recovery Plan Act for Well and Septic

Lance Gregory

Director

Division of Onsite Sewage and Water Services,
Environmental Engineering, and Marina Programs

Virginia Department of Health

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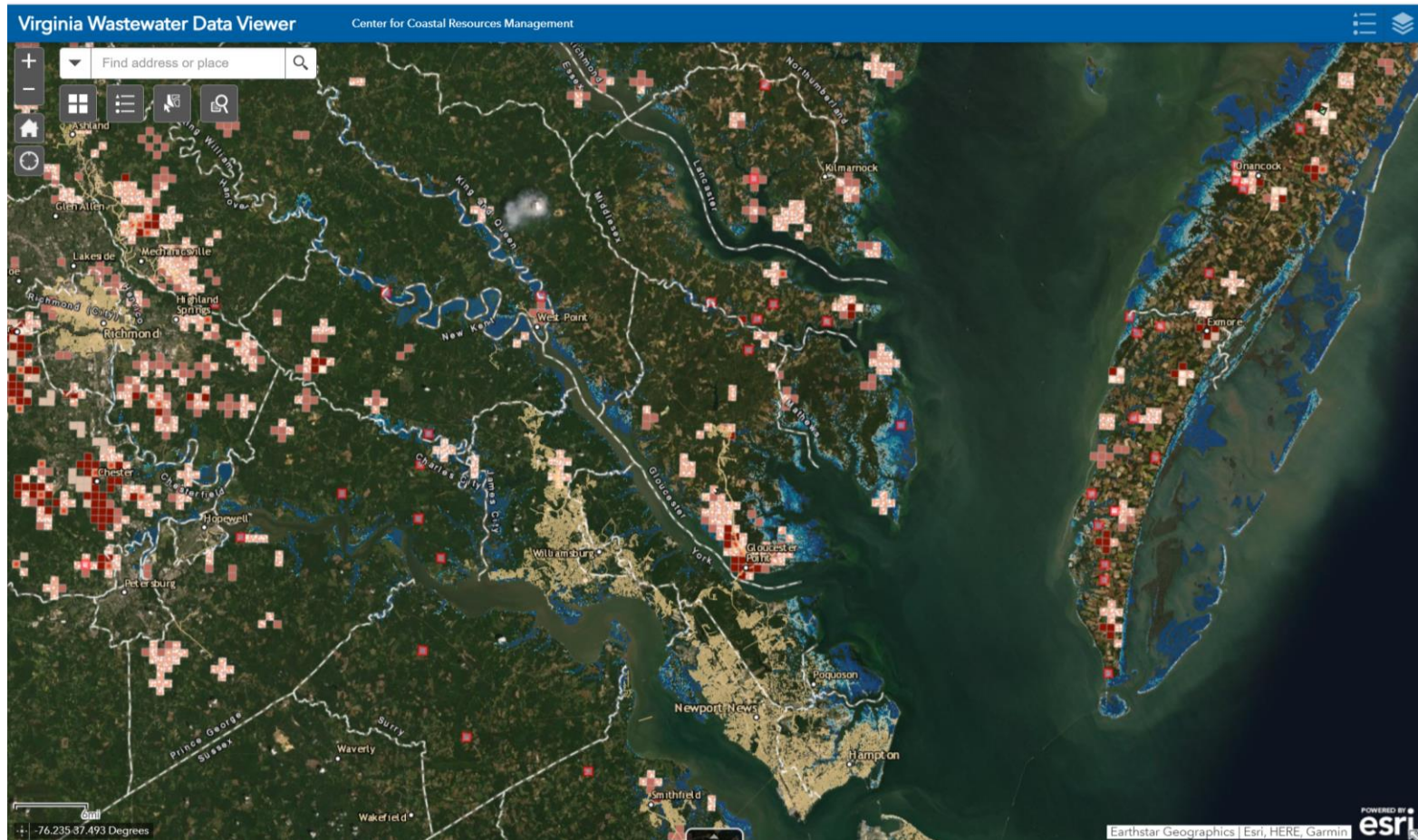
ARPA Funding For Well and Septic

- FY 2022 - \$5,750,000
- FY 2023 and 2024: \$5,750,000

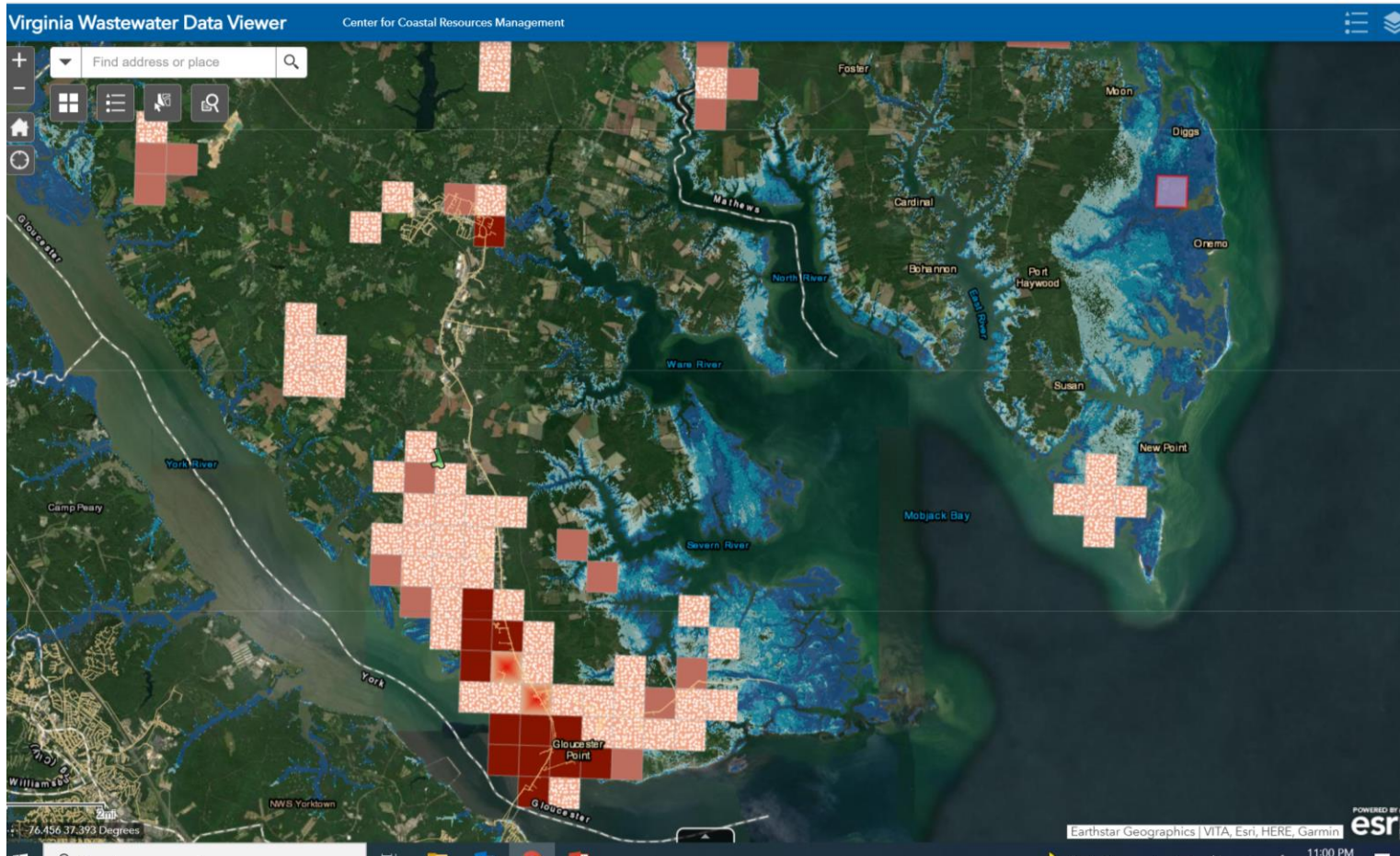
\$5,750,000 to the Department of Health (601) to provide improvement funds for well and septic systems for homeowners at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty guidelines.

Persons in Household	200% Federal Poverty Guidelines
1	\$25,760
2	\$34,840
3	\$43,920
4	\$53,000
5	\$62,080
6	\$71,160
7	\$80,240
8	\$89,320

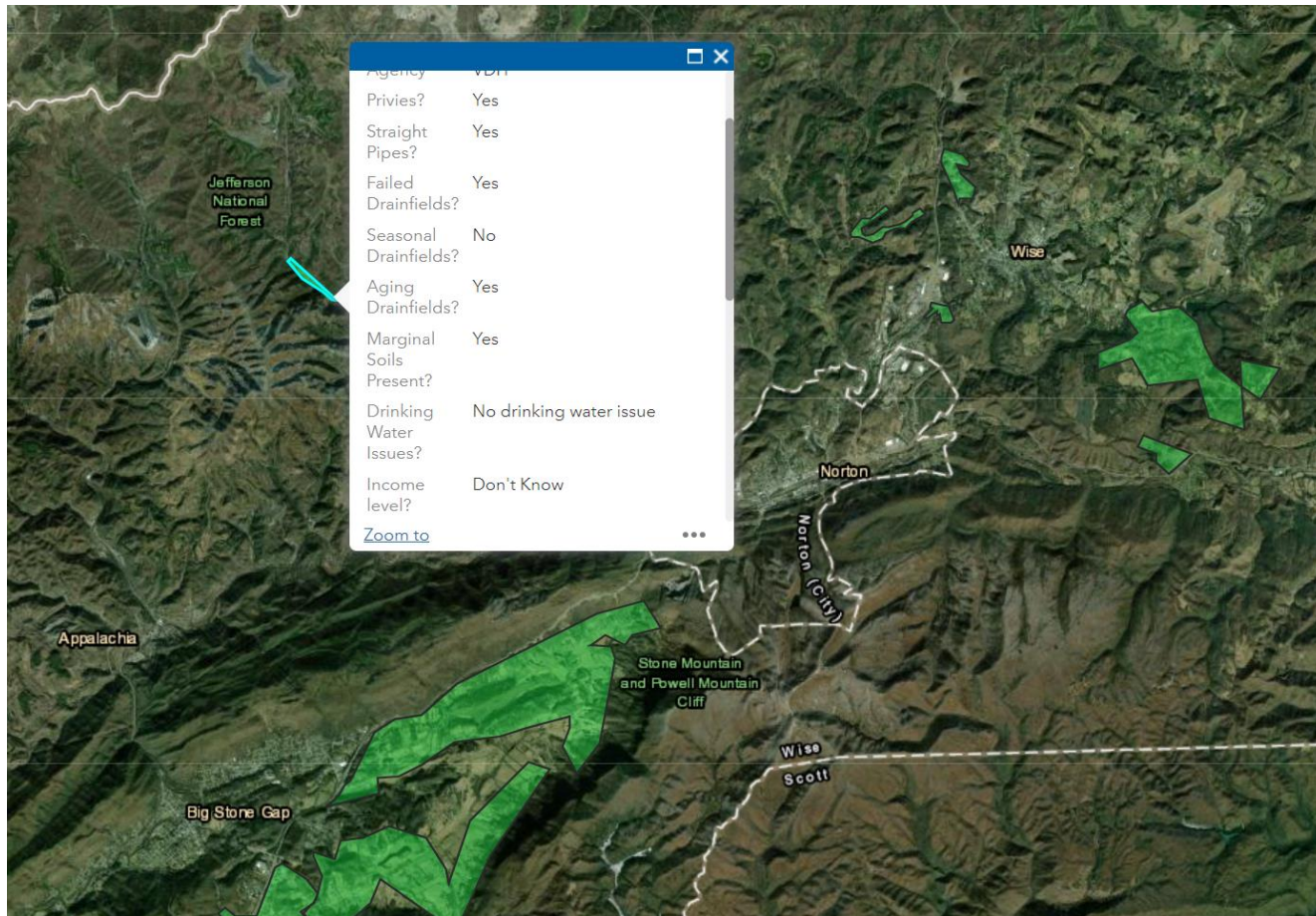
Assessing At Risk Septic Systems



Assessing At Risk Septic Systems



Assessing At Risk Septic Systems



Key Points of Consideration

- VDH processing vs. external partners.
- Need to build trust in assistance process.
 - Addressing septic shame.
 - Fear of coming forward for help.
- Individual vs. community based needs.
- Inclusion of operation and maintenance cost.
- Prioritizing outreach.
 - Public service connected vs. on-site solution.
 - Historic inequities.
 - Multiple benefits, e.g. within impaired watersheds.

Please feel free to contact me with thoughts or questions.

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