

## **State is Looking at Pollution Limits in Frederick County**

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You may have read the front-page article in the Frederick News-Post on August 23, "State seeks input on river pollution limits," that states that the Monocacy River is polluted with fecal coliform bacteria. The state has developed a draft "Total Maximum Daily Load" (or TMDL) for fecal bacteria that drains from the watershed into the water body. TMDLs set regulatory limits on the amount of a particular kind of pollution that a water body is able to handle before becoming impaired. The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) is assigned the job of creating TMDLs. MDE's draft TMDL for bacteria in the Monocacy is broken into two parts, the Upper and Lower. The Upper and Lower Monocacy Watersheds cover most of Frederick County east of the ridgeline of the Catoctin Mountains.

Fecal bacteria comes from human and animal feces. For a TMDL, MDE tries to determine how much bacteria is coming from each different source like wastewater treatment plants, agriculture, septic systems, pets, and wildlife. Different sources of feces carry different strains of bacteria that have different resistances to antibiotics. MDE figures out what source is causing which bacteria by testing to see what kinds of antibiotics the bacteria are resistant to.

MDE does not believe that the draft TMDL for the Monocacy is possible to meet using maximum practical reductions. This poses an implementation problem to Frederick County Government, and will be part of the comments that the Watershed Management Section of DPW sends to MDE. The draft TMDL also tries to make Frederick County Government's urban stormwater program responsible for fecal coliform from wildlife, which makes no sense.

There are many ways to reduce fecal coliform bacteria (and other kinds of pollution) depending on the source. Many septic systems leak in Frederick County; most of the time, the homeowner is not aware. Frederick County recently received \$700,000 from the State Flush Tax to upgrade septic systems and treat for nitrogen pollution; the upgrades are free to homeowners and include some maintenance. If you are interested to find out if you can get a free septic upgrade, contact Dave Gatrell at x13157. DUSWM has been working to upgrade wastewater treatment plants in Frederick County and has been working on an expansion of its Ballenger facility. You can reduce pet waste by picking it up in a bag and throwing it in a trash can; this is especially important if you live near a waterway. Wildlife like deer and Canada geese are hard to control, and this is

part of why MDE believes the fecal coliform TMDL can not be met.

Frederick County currently has TMDLs for the watershed to Lake Linganore above the dam for phosphorus and sediment. The Watershed Management Section has been working in that area to educate the public and to install practices that reduce those pollutants. MDE is currently evaluating the watersheds to Catoctin Creek (almost everything west of the Catoctin Mountain ridgeline) and the Monocacy River for a TMDL for sediment. MDE will later be looking at nutrients. Below is the status of TMDLs currently in development in Frederick County:

<b>Water Body</b>	<b>Impairing Substance</b>	<b>TMDL Status</b>
Lower Monocacy River	Fecal Coliform Bacteria	Draft issued July 2007, comments due to MDE September 4, 2007.
Lower Monocacy River	Sediment	Undergoing Agency review prior to release of draft in September 2007.
Lower Monocacy River	Nutrients	Under development with completion expected in September 2007.
Upper Monocacy River	Fecal Coliform Bacteria	Draft issued July 2007, comments due to MDE September 4, 2007.
Upper Monocacy River	Sediment	Undergoing Agency review prior to release of draft in September 2007.
Upper Monocacy River	Nutrients	Under development with completion expected in September 2007.
Catoctin Creek	Sediment	Undergoing Agency review prior to release of draft in September 2007.