

LAKE JAMES ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

February 4, 2014

The Lake James Environmental Committee engaged in the following activities from January to December 2013:

1. continued to attend all Centerville SGA meetings, attended the Planning Commission Public hearing, the Regent University Town Hall meeting and the City Council public hearing to express our concerns of water pollution into Lake James and seek remedies to better manage stormwater runoff in the Centerville SGA. The Centerville SGA plan was accepted by the Virginia Beach City Council in March 2013 with many of the proposed stormwater management practices included. (swales, filterra type storm drains, etc...)
2. met with the city and approved a special grant project to be installed in the Lake James inlet weir. This project includes the installation of a new, impermeable weir and the creation of a wetlands between the new and old weir structures. The first phase of the new inlet weir has been completed. The second phase of creating the wetland ran into problems when it was discovered the subsoil in the canal between the two weirs was unsuitable for the wetlands project. After planning and conferring with experts the Dept of Public Works has proposed a new project to solve the problem. A “forebay” will be created. A forebay is an artificial body of water created to act as a sediment pond or filtering body of water. This will be accomplished at Lake James by building a new weir west of the old stone weir (towards the bypass canal). The water inside the forebay will be lowered and a geogrid will be placed on the soft subsoil in the inlet canal to stabilize it. This process will take approximately 9 – 12 months. Once that is accomplished, the city contractors will begin preparing the inlet canal for the wetland. The city has asked the Lake James community to assist in this planting project. Construction on the forebay will begin in the late spring 2014.
3. attended all meetings regarding the Indian River & Kempsville Rd. intersection redesign project. Met several time with Mr. Ataya, city engineer for the project to express our concerns about the need to upgrade the current outdated stormwater drains. Currently, the plans now include an in-line filtration system to filter all storm water runoff from the intersection area. The intersection project is slated to begin in fall 2015.

4. Contacted James Spore, City Manager and Dr. Amelia Hammond City Council Representative regarding the need for street sweeping in the Lake James community. As we are a part of the Eastern Elizabeth River watershed we should be eligible for the same treatment as the neighborhoods in the Lynnhaven basin watershed. Regular street sweeping (60 – 90 days) is conducted on Indian River Rd and Centerville Turnpike. We will continue to pursue our request for inclusion into the residential street sweeping program.
5. May 3, 2013, I attended a floating island webinar to learn more about passive (islands w/ plants) and active (circulation & aeration) systems that can be utilized in Lake James to help filter excessive nutrients in the water. I gained information about “in ditch” bioswale treatments for filtering pollutants. This can be proposed to the city to help with the pollution problems coming from the bypass canal.
6. authorized 1 professional water analysis of Lake James June 2013. Results revealed while our water quality was safe to swim in (better quality than the ocean) our phosphorous levels were extremely high and highly conducive for a cyanobacteria (blue/green algae) bloom. This prediction came true in the fall and most recently last month. Application of algaecide in the warm fall months had little to no effect. Algaecide cannot be applied when the water temperature is below 60 degrees. A new water analysis has been authorized.
7. contacted the Sepro Co. and conferred with their biologists on the Lake James problem. Their recommendation is to use a new product that will bind the excess phosphorous in the water and keep it trapped at the bottom of the lake, while also trapping phosphorous released from bottom sediment.
8. Don Davis and Tom Randolph applied algaecide treatments to the lake three times during the warm season.
9. Don Davis cleaned out the culvert behind Lake James park, several times, to allow the bypass canal water to flow away from the Lake James inlet canal.
10. applied for and received a grant awarding the Lake James community a pet waste station to be installed at the park.
11. at our request a service request has been generated to inspect the weirs, the culvert behind Lake James and the bypass canal downstream. We have also requested to “walk along” with this inspection. This has been delayed by two weeks of bad weather.

12. Registered the Lake James community with the Virginia Lakes and Waters organization. Through this we have access to the authorities and their water and stormwater management projects throughout the state of VA.
13. Continued our memberships in the Lynnhaven NOW Organization and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation.
14. Continued to educate the community on “everyone’s role” of being good stewards to the lake through newsletters, emails and reports. It is very important for all of us to “do our part”, through careful use of lawn products, sweep your gutters, scoop the poop, etc... The city constantly reminds us that much of our lake pollution is our own fault. We need to challenge that perception by demonstrating we do NOT contribute to the lake’s problems.

GOALS FOR 2014:

1. continue our strong community effort to request from city officials effective and upgraded stormwater treatment systems.
2. seek out economically feasible methods to help keep the lake clean (passive & active floating islands).
3. seek out grant monies to help fund water treatments or other filtering devices.
4. approach the city about the use of in- ditch bioswales in the bypass canal
5. research new algaecide treatments for summer 2014
6. identify and pursue other problem sources of lake pollution and propose recommendations for correction.

Respectfully submitted,

Peggy P. Sansone

Lake James Environmental Committee Chair