



Chincoteague

WASTEWATER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Newsletter #1 October 2012

Town Council

John H. Tarr, Mayor
J. Arthur Leonard, Vice Mayor
Terry Howard
John N. Jester, Jr.
Tripp Muth
Ellen W. Richardson
Gene W. Taylor

Wastewater Advisory Committee

Spiro Papadopoulos, Chairman
Scott Chesson
Tommy Clark
Kelly Conklin
Mike Tolbert

Town Staff

Robert Ritter, Town Manager
Harvey Spurlock, Dir. Public Works
William Neville, Dir. Planning
(757) 336-6519
www.chincoteague-va.gov

Neighbors and Members of the Business Community:

The Town of Chincoteague is in the process of conducting a comprehensive review of wastewater treatment alternatives for the future. Engineering studies were done in 1976, 1988, and 2008. With each review the Town decided that the time was not right for a wastewater treatment system. Why are we looking at this idea again?

- 1) Virginia has changed the Health Code to require expensive individual lot septic systems that meet advanced technology standards
- 2) Chincoteague Bay water quality is critical to our local seafood/shellfish industry and tourism industry
- 3) Opportunities to encourage private investment that will benefit the entire Town have been presented

In order to address these issues, the Town Council participated with Accomack County in the preparation of a grant funded regional wastewater study, and appointed five (5) representatives to a Town Wastewater Advisory Committee with the following goals to be completed by June 2013

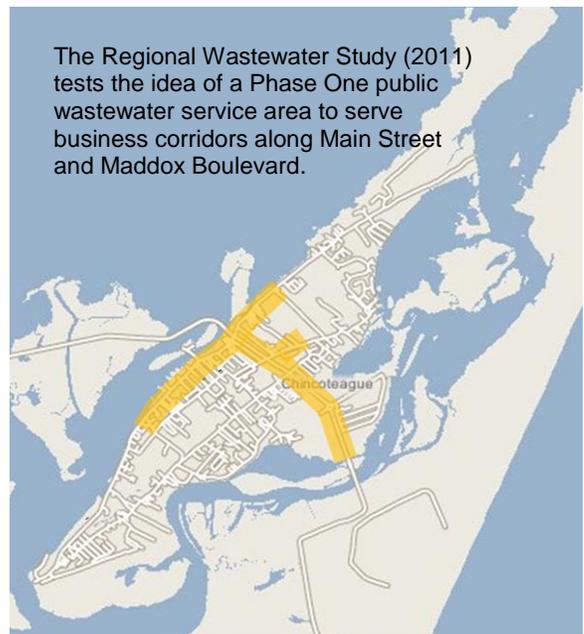
Wastewater Committee Goals

- o Complete a 2 year study/work plan by June 2013
- o Review wastewater needs for the community;
- o Review the regional wastewater study dated March 2011, along with other studies or alternatives, and to present recommendations for action to the Town Council;
- o Review and make recommendations on alternatives for wastewater treatment and disposal, a collection system and force main routing;
- o Provide ideas and suggestions to the Town Council on areas to be provided with wastewater sewer service;
- o Provide suggestions for acquisition of new properties for possible treatment plant or pump station site;
- o Serve as a liaison to the Public and Town Council.

Public Information

The Wastewater Advisory Committee meets on the 3rd Thursday of each month at 9 am in the Town Council Chambers. All meetings are open to the public and participation is welcome.

This newsletter is the first of a series to share the information collected by the Committee and to present its recommendations to the Town Council and the Chincoteague Island community.



The Regional Wastewater Study (2011) tests the idea of a Phase One public wastewater service area to serve business corridors along Main Street and Maddox Boulevard.

CONCEPTUAL Phase One Public Sewer Infrastructure/Service Area
(Preliminary Engineering Report, Clark Nexsen, 2011)

Town of Chincoteague Water and Sewer Facts

The Town currently serves approximately 3,550 lots with public water (2,500 residential, 1,000 commercial, 50 civic)

Groundwater from wells on the mainland is treated and pumped to Chincoteague along the Route 175 causeway
Between 300,000 and 1.3 million gallons per day are delivered to our year round population/businesses (4,000) and peak-season visitors (25,000)

In 2012, Sunset Bay Utilities extended a force main from their private treatment plant to help remove as much as 7,800 gallons per day from failing septic fields and to support existing downtown businesses and civic buildings

In the last 5 years, over 150 property owners on Chincoteague Island installed advanced treatment septic systems



Chincoteague

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Newsletter #2/February 2013

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Water Quality is Important to Chincoteague Island

Chincoteague Island, Virginia is home to 4,000 people and water-based tourism is its primary industry. Seasonal residents and visitors swell this number to more than 25,000 during the summer months. Our town is a place that values its history, culture, and natural resources.

The Town of Chincoteague is faced with public service responsibilities beyond the everyday needs of a small community. Our year-round management must look for alternative wastewater treatment methods in order to support local industry and the tourism based economy. The future well-being of all residents, visitors and businesses will be determined by working together on public service issues such a new wastewater treatment utility system.

Similar coastal communities have been forced to develop 'state of the art' wastewater treatment facilities by federal regulations. In the future, Chincoteague could face similar potential issues that would require immediate action and could have a negative impact to the economy if we do not plan ahead.

Clean Water Act regulations impact Chincoteague Island...call for a pro-active plan

Surrounded by water that is managed by Federal and State agencies, Chincoteague Island must be well informed about the Clean Water Act. The CWA establishes a basic structure for regulating discharges of pollutants into the waters of the United States and regulating quality standards for surface waters. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) implements pollution control programs under CWA authority and can place a community under a compliance order subject to fines. Chincoteague Bay water quality is currently being measured and managed with several tools:

- **NPDES** – The National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit program controls discharges. It is unlawful to discharge any pollutant from a point source into navigable waters, unless a permit is first obtained. Point sources are usually concentrated flows such as pipes or man-made ditches.
- **TMDL** - The EPA has also set water quality standards for all contaminants in surface waters as measured by Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) of nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus. Virginia Institute of Marine Sciences (VIMS) is currently establishing TMDL standards for Chincoteague Bay. Failing septic drainfields and poor soils because of high water tables will not be up to the task of meeting modern TMDL standards.
- **CCMP** - The National Estuary Program (NEP) was established in 1987 by amendments to the Clean Water Act to identify, restore, and protect nationally significant estuaries of the United States. The NEP is designed to encourage local communities to take responsibility for managing their own coastal waters by implementing a formal management plan (Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP)) to restore and protect the estuary. The Maryland Coastal Bays Program is currently developing a CCMP for Chincoteague Bay and requesting participation by Virginia.

Federal regulations of the CWA are administered by two agencies of the Commonwealth of Virginia:

- Department of Environmental Health (VDH) for on-site septic drainfield and well approvals; and
- Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) for waste water treatment facilities and discharge permits

The CWA also guides the actions of the Department of Interior agencies who manage public lands on Assateague Island. Studies of water quality have been completed by the National Park Service and the Maryland Coastal Bays Program that provide extensive data over the last 10 years.