

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DEQ Announces Public Meeting on Stream Health Study for Woods Creek

Lexington, VA – October 3, 2016. The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) in cooperation with Virginia Tech's Biological Systems Engineering Department and numerous local partners will host a community meeting on **October 5, 2016** to begin a stream health study for Woods Creek in Lexington and Rockbridge County.

An introductory public meeting and local school watershed project showcase will be held on **Wednesday, October 5, 2016 at 6.30pm at Maury River Middle School**, 600 Waddell St., Lexington, VA 24450.

The purpose of this meeting is to present and discuss the study with community members, showcase local schools' current stream health studies on Woods Creek, and gather information regarding Woods Creek and its drainage area. All are welcome and encouraged to attend this meeting.

Virginia agencies are working with Virginia Tech to identify sources of bacteria and other pollution in this watershed. Increased levels of bacteria can be a human health risk for "primary contact" activities such as swimming and wading. In addition, Woods Creek does not host a diverse and healthy aquatic life population and so does not meet water quality standards. This study will identify the pollution impacting the diversity and abundance of organisms living on or near the bottom of the stream.

During the study, DEQ will develop a total maximum daily load, or a TMDL, for these streams. A TMDL sets a "pollution budget" for the stream which is the total amount of a pollutant a water body can contain and still meet water quality standards. To restore water quality and stream health, pollutant levels have to be reduced to the TMDL amount.

For more information, contact Tara Sieber, study coordinator in the DEQ Valley Regional Office in Harrisonburg, by phone at [\(540\) 574-7870](tel:5405747870), or by e-mail at tara.sieber@deq.virginia.gov. Additional information is also available on the DEQ web site at: <http://www.deq.virginia.gov/Programs/Water/WaterQualityInformationTMDLs/TMDL.aspx>.

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