

Annual Update

February 2011

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- Background information
- Related news articles
- Public presentations and
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For more information on litter prevention, recycling and environmental awareness, visit:

www.hrclean.org

www.elizabethriver.org

HRSD Reports Progress on Sanitary Sewer Overflow (SSO) Reduction Program

HRSD held its annual meeting to review the status of the Regional Wet Weather Management Plan on January 25, 2011. The public was invited to attend this session, which included information about the extensive cooperation between HRSD and the localities it serves.

HRSD is engaged in a multi-year effort to reduce sanitary sewer overflows (SSOs) in the Hampton Roads area. These overflows occur when the system is overloaded with excess flow that enters the system during rain events, or when pipes or pumps fail due to unexpected mechanical problems or pipe breaks.

The SSO reduction program includes wide-scale monitoring of wastewater flows, pressures and rainfall; development of a computer model of the pipe network; and inspection of the system's many assets (pipes and pumping stations).

The Flow, Pressure and Rainfall Monitoring Program involved installing hundreds of measuring devices in the sewer system from Suffolk to Virginia Beach and up to Williamsburg and Gloucester County. The monitoring period is concluding in March 2011 after 12 months of data collection. This

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Cease the Grease and the Use of Your Garbage Disposal

A garbage disposal can be a convenient tool for getting rid of food scraps. But some of the foods put down the sink disposal can contribute to household plumbing problems and blockages in local sewer pipelines. Large blockages can plug the sewer, sending raw sewage back into homes and businesses.

Since the advent of the in-sink disposal, many people have stuffed items down the disposal that previously were put in the garbage. Items such as banana peels; chicken bones; coffee grounds; egg shells; meat scraps; and leftovers full of fats, oils and

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HRSD Reports Progress on Sanitary Sewer Overflow (SSO) Reduction Program

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Tips to Protect Pipelines and the Environment

- **Never pour oil or grease down the drain. Allow fats, oil or grease to cool and pour them into a disposal container that can be tossed out with solid wastes.**
- **Thoroughly scrape plates, pots, pans and cooking equipment to remove leftover fat, oil, grease and food wastes before rinsing. Use paper towels, if needed, to wipe greasy dishes before washing.**
- **Use sink strainers to catch food waste during dishwashing.**

information is being used to develop the computer model of the system.

HRSD has worked closely with representatives from all the localities since early 2008 to develop a Regional Hydraulic Model that can simulate actual conditions in the sewer system. When the model is complete in July 2011, it will be used to measure the capacity of the sewer system to see how much flow can be accepted by the pipes and pump stations without creating a sanitary sewer overflow. Alternatives and solutions to the capacity limitations will be identified and compiled into a Regional Wet Weather Management Plan due to be completed in November 2013.

The other component of the SSO reduction program is assessment of the condition of the many parts of the wastewater collection system. HRSD has been performing these inspections on a routine basis.

The comprehensive assessment of the system that began in 2008 will continue through 2013. This has included inspection of all pumping facilities to identify worn equipment, as well as inspection of miles of pipe and 1,400 manholes in the system. The majority of this work will be completed in November 2011, with some of the more complicated pipe inspections extending into 2013.

Cease the Grease and the Use of Your Garbage Disposal

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grease (FOG) must not be placed in the disposal. The hot water from washing (and dishwashers) liquefies the FOG, but only until it reaches the sewer pipes. There it can solidify while mixing with the egg shells, coffee grounds and bones into

a cement-like material. If the sewer pipe becomes plugged, a costly sewer cleaning or repair is required.

To help our environment, if you must use your disposal, please limit the foods and especially the FOG that end up in the sewer. The disposal is a useful tool for the small bits of food from washing and cooking, but plates and pots should be scraped into the garbage can (or better yet, a backyard composting bin). This simple step can help keep our sewers flowing freely and prevent unexpected sewer back-ups.



How You Can Help Keep Our Waters Clean

For many residents, being surrounded by water is the best part of living in Hampton Roads. From our lakes and rivers to the Atlantic Ocean and Chesapeake Bay, our economy and happiness depend on water. But what would happen if the water was too dirty to swim in, fish from or surf on? HRSD and your local government work hard to operate the sanitary sewer system and treat the wastewater generated by your homes and businesses properly, but there are many steps you can take to help keep our waters clean.

- **Report Sanitary Sewer Overflows (SSOs).** HRSD and the localities strive to operate a superior wastewater collection and treatment system. However, sometimes sewers can overflow from manholes or at pumping facilities because of pipe or pump failures, or high flows after a rain event. Please call your local utility department as soon as possible to report a SSO so it can be promptly addressed.
- **Inspect home, yard and sewer pipes to ensure separation between storm water drainage and sanitary sewer systems.** Our sanitary sewer systems were not designed to remove ponding water from rain storms or to capture runoff from roof downspouts. Sanitary sewers must be kept separate from storm water drainage to prevent overloading the pipes and creating SSOs.
- **Reduce storm water runoff by using rain barrels, planting rain gardens and establishing a buffer zone.** Runoff from homes and

businesses into rivers, lakes and the ocean is the largest contributor to water quality problems following a rain event. The amount of runoff can be limited through landscape design and collection devices such as rain barrels. This win-win situation also reduces the need for watering between rainfalls.

- **Practice proper disposal of unused pharmaceuticals, food wastes and kitchen grease.** Although HRSD utilizes some the best technology in the industry for wastewater treatment, the system is not designed to treat pharmaceuticals and high levels of food waste or fats, oils or grease (FOG). To learn how to dispose of unused medications properly, please visit www.hrsd.com and click on MyFlushCounts. The “Cease the Grease and the Use of Your Garbage Disposal” article on page 1 of this newsletter offers helpful tips on that subject.
- **Improve water quality by raising oysters.** Oyster farming was one of the original industries in Hampton Roads and is still important today. These creatures are nature’s filters and help clean the water in which they live. Consider becoming an oyster gardener.
- **Limit synthetic fertilizer and other lawn chemical applications.** Fertilizer is one of the most significant culprits in damaging water quality. Any fertilizer that is accidently spread



onto sidewalks or excess on the grass can quickly wash down the storm drains into our rivers and lakes. The high levels of nutrients in the fertilizer can cause algal blooms and reduce the oxygen in the water available to other plants and fish. You can help by carefully using fertilizers and by using natural products like Nutri-Green® Compost.

- **“Scoop the Poop.”** Animal waste contains bacteria that can wash into our waters, making them unsafe for recreational use.
- **Avoid feeding wildlife.** Geese, gulls and other wildlife go where the food is. Unfortunately, they leave their waste where they eat. By not feeding wildlife, you can minimize the amount of waste created and reduce its impact on our waters.
- **“Pump Out, Don’t Dump Out.”** Recreational boaters should pump out their sanitary holding tanks using approved pump out facilities at local marinas. Dumping sewage pollutes our waterways. To locate a convenient pump out facility, visit <http://www.vdh.state.va.us/EnvironmentalHealth/Wastewater/MARINA/pumpoutdata>.

Regional Wet Weather Management Plan

Annual Update

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Help Protect Our Waterways by Reporting Suspected Sanitary Sewer Overflows (SSOs)

Please call the number listed for your locality if you observe an SSO.

Locality	During Business Hours	After Business Hours
Chesapeake Public Utilities	757-382-CITY	757-382-3550
Gloucester Public Utilities	804-693-4044	804-693-3890
Hampton Public Works	757-727-8311	757-727-8311
Isle of Wight Public Utilities	757-365-6284	757-357-2151
James City Service Authority	757-229-7421	757-566-0112
Newport News Public Works	757-269-2750	757-247-2500
Norfolk Public Utilities	757-823-1000	757-823-1000
Poquoson Public Works	757-868-3590	757-868-3501
Portsmouth Public Utilities	757-393-8524	757-393-8561
Suffolk Public Utilities	757-514-7000	757-514-7000
Town of Smithfield	757-365-4200	757-357-2151
Virginia Beach Public Utilities	757-385-1400	757-385-3111
Williamsburg Public Works	757-220-6140	757-220-6196
York Environmental & Development Services	757-890-3773	757-890-3773

WE'RE ON THE WEB

www.HRSD.com/EPAWWCD.HTML

Capacity Team Participants

- Chesapeake
- Gloucester
- Hampton
- Hampton Roads Planning District Commission
- HRSD
- Isle of Wight
- James City Service Authority
- Newport News
- Norfolk
- Smithfield
- Suffolk
- Virginia Beach

