

Annual Update

February 2014

Volume 6, Issue 1

Visit the RWWMP
Web page at
www.HRSD.com
for:

- Background information
- Related news articles
- Public presentations and
- Other related information

Inside this issue:

Tips to Protect Area Waterways	2
Study Completed to Assess Benefits of Wastewater System Consolidation	3
How to Report SSOs	4
Locality Team Participants	4
HRSD Service Area Map	4

For information on everything green in Hampton Roads, visit:
www.askhrgreen.org

Go to:
www.elizabethriver.org
to learn how to make restoration a reality.

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

Chris Wilson, P.E.
Brown and Caldwell

HRSD held its annual meeting to review the status of the Regional Wet Weather Management Plan (RWWMP) on Tuesday, January 28, 2014. 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 storm water or groundwater 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; inspection of the system's many assets (pipes and pumping stations); and development of a RWWMP. The flow, pressure, and rainfall monitoring program and development of the computer model have been completed in previous years, although ongoing monitoring and

model maintenance continues. During 2013, HRSD completed the final components of its condition assessment program evaluating 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 was completed in October 2013. The majority of the condition assessment work was completed in 2011, with some of the more complicated pipe inspections extending into 2013. HRSD met a major milestone in February 2013, with the completion of a Rehabilitation Action Plan which defines the work necessary and schedule to complete it based on the condition assessment findings. An update to this plan was completed in February 2014, following completion of the condition assessment activities in 2013.

The deadline to complete the RWWMP has been extended pending the result of the consolidation study. Alternatives and solutions to the capacity limitations will be identified and compiled into this RWWMP following the ongoing consolidation study (please see article on Page 3).

Tips to Protect Area Waterways

Green Your Baby Routine With Cloth Diapers

Sarah Crawford
HRSD Community Educator

Every new mom is faced with a million decisions to make regarding which baby products to buy. Which crib is the best? Which car seat is the safest? Are all diapers created equal? These questions multiply when you're like me, and prefer eco-friendly products for your entire family. All of a sudden, everything you're bringing



My daughter at 8 months in one of my favorite cloth diapers.

into the house is under scrutiny. Most of us know that disposable diapers contribute an alarming amount to landfills and are manufactured with a lot of materials and chemicals that would not pass the eco-friendly test. According to the EPA, about 20 billion diapers/year amounting to more than 3.5 million tons of waste end up in landfills, where they take an estimated 500 years to decompose (yeah that's a long time). But most of us don't consider alternatives to the disposable diaper. Yes, there are more environmentally-friendly disposable diapers out there, ones that are made with more sustainable practices and less toxic materials, but they still ultimately end up in a landfill. So what's an environmentally-conscious mom supposed to do? Enter the cloth diaper! Now, don't stop reading just because you read

the word cloth – today's cloth diapers are not your mother's cloth diapers.

I used cloth diapers for about 2 years with my daughter and I'll be doing the same with Baby #2, who is due this May. Why? Well, I could talk about how much I love cloth for an hour, but to spare you I've condensed what could be a 10-page essay into 5 main points:

1. **LESS IN LANDFILLS.** Virginians generate about [14.8 million tons of solid waste](#) every year. Disposable diapers are the third largest single consumer item in landfills and about 1/2 of all household waste in a house with a child in diapers comes from disposable diapers, according to Real Diaper Association. I don't know of many other single ways to reduce household waste by 50%. It also gives you another way to recycle; since many moms out there sell/ swap their gently used cloth diapers, and you can do the same once your child is potty trained. You can also use cloth wipes to further reduce your landfill waste.
2. **POOP BELONGS AT A WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT, NOT A LANDFILL.** As the Community Educator at HRSD, I know how important it is for human waste (and the pathogens that go along with it) to be properly treated, and a landfill is not designed for this. In fact, check the fine print on your disposable diaper package – it will tell you to flush solids down the toilet before

putting the diaper in the trash. How many people do you know that rinse out disposable diapers? Yeah, me neither. Sending all this baby waste to landfills could spread disease.

3. **REDUCED CHEMICAL EXPOSURE FOR YOUR BABY AND THE ENVIRONMENT, AND REDUCED CONSUMPTION OF NATURAL RESOURCES.** A typical disposable diaper [contains chemicals](#) that are linked to asthma, allergic reactions, damage to the immune system, nervous system and endocrine system, and even cancer. The production of disposable diapers also uses 20 times more raw materials (like oil and tree pulp) and 2 times more water than cloth diapers ([more on environmental impacts](#)). If you chose cloth, you can opt for natural materials like organic cotton, bamboo, or wool that are sustainably harvested and have less of an impact on the environment. Plus you won't need to worry about what's coming into contact with that cute little baby bum. You can also [make your own baby wipe solution](#) without any chemicals.
4. **IT SAVES MONEY.** Parents spend about \$800/year on disposable diapers for one child, assuming 60 diapers/week at \$0.25/diaper. How much money you spend on cloth diapers depends on what type you buy, if you launder at home or pay for a

Continued on Page 3

Disposable diaper companies actually instruct you to flush solid waste.

IMPORTANT: Shake soil into toilet. Wrap diaper inside its back sheet before discarding.
DO NOT FLUSH DIAPER. PLEASE DO NOT LITTER.

Continued from Page 2

diaper cleaning service, etc. However, you will still end up saving money over disposables, especially if you use them up through potty training and for subsequent children. Yes, you will be using more water if you wash them at home like I did, but if you have an efficient washing machine and you do full loads of diapers every 2-3 days you can minimize your water usage. And of course, line dry to save on energy costs.



Some examples from my cloth diaper stash.

5. **THEY ARE FUN!** Today's cloth diapers come in different styles, colors, and patterns, which makes them fun accessories to your baby's wardrobe. Forget the pins, you can choose snap or Velcro closures that make changes super easy. Even though I have plenty of cloth diapers to use on Baby #2, I will probably end up buying a few more fun prints – I just can't help myself.

And yes, they work. Even at night, they work. Your baby's bum will look a little "fluffier" than his or her cohorts in disposables, but it adds to the cuteness factor.

Since I haven't lost you yet, let me tell you a little bit about my preferred types of cloth diapers. My favorite is the pocket diaper – it's a waterproof cover with a pocket that you stuff with removable inserts that do the absorbing. I prefer the Velcro

closures because they are quicker than snaps during changes. Also, I wanted a diaper that my family members and day care provider would use, and they all liked the pocket diapers the best for ease of use. With Baby #2 I'm planning on using fitted diapers with wool covers at night. A fitted diaper "fits" and closes around baby just like any other diaper, but it's not waterproof, so you need a separate diaper cover. I love the idea of wool because it's natural, antifungal, breathable, and it can absorb over 1/3 of its weight in moisture before it feels wet. You can even buy [upcycled wool diaper covers](#) made locally from wool sweaters – it doesn't get any greener than that! And don't forget about reusable swim diapers. They can be worn under a swimsuit, but the patterns are so cute you will probably want them worn on their own.

There are also products to help ease your transition to cloth. Diaper liners make it easier to dispose of solid waste, or you can get a diaper sprayer that attaches to your toilet to wash off solids before you put the diaper in a wet bag or pail until laundry day. Some products like liners and disposable inserts made for cloth diaper covers may be labeled "flushable", but PLEASE don't flush these down your toilet! These ["flushable" items](#) and others wreak havoc throughout the sanitary sewer system, and your attempt to be green may cause a sewage spill into the environment (refer to #2 above for why this is bad).

The bottom line is (pun intended), if you talk green and live green – don't distress over diapers. Cloth diapering is an easy way to make a big difference in your environmental impact. If you think you are ready to green your baby routine with cloth, I recommend visiting [Diaper Junction](#), a great local resource to get you started.

Read more of Sarah's blogs on: [Let's Talk Green](#)

Study Completed to Assess Benefits of Wastewater System Consolidation

Chris Wilson, P.E.
Brown and Caldwell

The wastewater system in the Hampton Roads region includes city and county owned local sewer collection systems and pumping stations, as well as HRSD owned regional pipelines, pumping stations, and treatment plants. This requires fourteen different utility departments, billing systems, equipment fleets, and management organizations, and leads to fourteen different approaches to wastewater management. Neither the localities nor HRSD are in control of their own destiny with localities dependent on HRSD to maintain low system pressures to handle their flows and HRSD dependent on reduced wet weather flows from localities to keep pressures low.

In 2013, HRSD and the localities assisted in the development of a regionalization study implemented by the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission.

Based on the results of the evaluation, the study consultant recommended that regionalization would benefit the ratepayers of the Hampton Roads; however, the localities decided not to pursue full asset transfer to HRSD. In place of this consolidation, HRSD proposed an alternative where the full cost and responsibility of implementing the Regional Wet Weather Management Plan would be borne by HRSD with the localities maintaining control and ownership of their systems. This approach is being evaluated by the localities with a decision expected by the end of February 2014.

Regional Wet Weather Management Plan

Annual Update

This newsletter is published by:
 HRSD
 Communications Division
 P.O. Box 5911
 Virginia Beach, VA 23471-0911

For additional information, contact:
 Amy Seron, Editor
 (757) 460-7286
aseron@hrsd.com

FIND US ON THE WEB



Locality Team Participants

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

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	757-382-6352	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	757-933-2311	757-926-8195
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	757-890-3752	757-890-3773

