

Local News

## ***Bluffton stormwater department pitches solutions to restore May River***

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Four projects aimed at repairing damage to the May River were presented to Bluffton Town Council this week.

Before stormwater director Ron Bullman presented the plans, City Manager Anthony Barrett reminded those in the room that, yes, they're "getting ready to pull the trigger on some projects," but results might be two to three years away.

A breakdown of the proposed projects:

### **NEW RIVERSIDE STORMWATER POND**

A stormwater pond south of May River Road and west of Old Palmetto Bluff Road would be installed. Bullman said it could be multi-phased and expand to other places in the future. It would help reduce fecal coliform -- one of the contaminants that has damaged the river -- on about 279 acres of the watershed.

Cost: \$466,000, including design and construction. If chosen, it would be complete in spring of 2013.

### **HAMPTON LAKE LAGOON RETROFIT**

This plan would modify lagoons within a 2,500-acre section of the watershed surrounding Hampton Lakes, extending just south of May River Road. The lagoons would hold rain longer and allow the ground to naturally filter fecal coliform.

Cost: \$125,000, including design and construction. The design, Bullman said, could be paid for through the 2012 town budget and could be complete in spring 2013. Bullman said funding for construction has not yet been planned.

### **HAMPTON HALL LAGOON RETROFIT**

The lagoon next to the Hampton Hall clubhouse would be altered to filter fecal coliform, much as the Hampton Lake lagoon project would. The project could be replicated elsewhere, the stormwater department advised. The lagoon serves about 2,700 acres of the watershed.

Cost: \$85,000 for design and construction. The design could be paid for through the town's 2012 budget. Bullman said if the project is chosen it could be completed in spring of 2013. Bullman said funding for construction has not yet been planned.

### **STONEY CREEK WETLAND RESTORATION**

This project would plug or fill ditches that degrade the wetlands around Stoney Creek. Bullman said Wednesday that officials are "particularly excited" about this project. It would affect about 4,900 acres of the watershed and would filter more fecal coliform per year than any of the other plans.

Cost: \$500,000 for design and construction. Bullman said the project is being reviewed and is not budgeted or scheduled. It's also in an unincorporated area, so it could proceed only with Beaufort County's permission.

As of Wednesday, the projects had not been approved by any regulatory committee, and property-owner agreements have not been signed.

Council asked during its November meeting that the list be reduced from 14 projects; those remaining are the most feasible and most likely to be effective, Bullman said.

The town received a \$805,000 federal grant in 2009 to clean up the river. The pilot projects have a \$545,000 chunk of that for design and construction, according to a December progress report. Bullman said they'll seek more funding for other sources if the grant can't cover all the costs.