Pollution Has No Boundaries: Regional Cooperation for Restoring Water Quality

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Abstract:
Since pollution passes beyond political boundaries, a multi jurisdictional partnership made up of 13 public and private sector organizations (including the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control [DHEC], Beaufort and Jasper Counties, and the Coastal Plain Land-Grant Community) was organized to carry out the implementation of a project funded by a $319 grant through SCDHEC to improve water quality in the Okatie River and its tributary tidal creeks. This poster presentation aims to highlight the various roles and initiatives undertaken by each organization while also drawing lessons learned about the teamwork approach used throughout the project. Each part- ner brings a unique set of strengths and capabilities used to implement a plan that will help the most successful results to restore and preserve the ecological and economic integrity of the Okatie in the Lowcountry.

The Okatie River is a historic tidal estuary located within Beaufort and Jasper counties and includes portions of the Towns of Bluffton, and Hardeeville. The riverine part of the waterbody covers about 8.7 miles to its confluence with the Chechessee River and because of its ecological value, the Okatie has been classified as Outstanding Resource Waters in state regulation.

The waterbody faces unprecedented growth pressure that has contributed to an increase in non-point source pollution and chronic nutrient loading that in turn elevate levels of fecal coliform within the Okatie River. Primary sources of nutrient pollution include agriculture, livestock operations, runoff from impervious surfaces, pet waste, and boating activities. Sources of fecal coliform pollution include malfunctioning septic systems, stormwater runoff, and nonpoint source pollution and stormwater runoff that in turn elevate levels of fecal coliform.

The Okatie River Watershed is home to a number of equestrian facilities. Residents will be assisted by the experts at Clemson Extension for native plantings and buffering to protect the local waters. Communities in the watershed take pride in their landscapes. Rain Gardens and Vegetative Buffers... dialogs by Alan Glassberg. LLC

Partners:

Beaufort County
Boating Activities
EPA
Jasper County
Stormwater manual and ordinance
Town of Bluffon...