

Road to Recovery Littered with Obstacles for James River

The James River Association (JRA) has released a report and analysis that gives the James River mixed health reviews, acknowledging that some progress had been made over the years, but also noted that the river still has a long way to go.

The JRA director, Bill Street, emphasized that “agricultural” runoff is now the “predominate source of pollution” in the river.

Street noted the 2007 federal farm bill needs to be a key element in these conservation efforts. JRA and state government officials identified five key agricultural practices to improve river health. They are: conservation tillage, protecting streams from livestock, growing winter cover crops, implementing nutrient management plans and restoring streamside buffers and forest. Street said if implemented these changes will help restore the river and decline of its oyster numbers, American shad and brook trout populations as well as the underwater grass.

It was noted that a variety of strategies is necessary to reduce agricultural runoff because it comes from many different sources including storm drains, parking lots, agricultural fields and people's lawns.