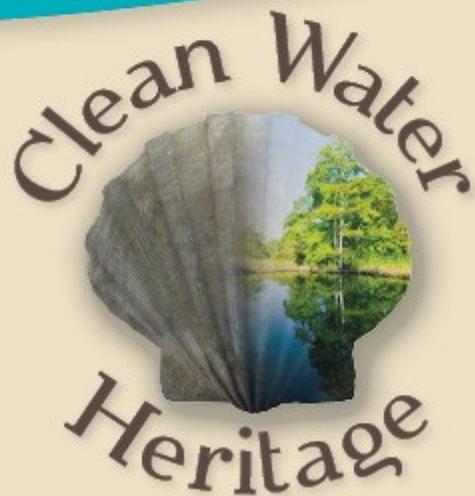


# 2015 Skiffes Creek Watershed



## Water Quality Report



## Restore & Protect

[www.jamescitycountyva.gov/857/Stormwater](http://www.jamescitycountyva.gov/857/Stormwater)

## **James City County Water Quality Strategies**

As part of a long term commitment to environmental stewardship, James City County volunteers and staff have been gathering information about stream health throughout the County since 2008. The goal of collecting water quality information is to be able to identify emerging water quality problems, target areas for restoration and preservation, document improvements from citizen and County actions and provide educational and volunteer opportunities for the public.

Volunteers and staff collect two types of data: one looks at the types of small creatures that live in streams and the other provides an indication of the amount of harmful bacteria present in a stream. Together, this information provides evidence of the overall health of the County's waterways.

The following information is a summary of known water quality conditions in the County, gleaned from data collected by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, from the County's volunteer water monitoring program and from completed James City County watershed management plans. As more information becomes available, this report will be updated.

## **Skiffes Creek Watershed**

Skiffes Creek Watershed consists of tidal, low-lying lands, and runs through York County, the Yorktown Naval Weapons Station, and forms the border between the City of Newport News and James City County. It serves as a drinking water resource for the City of Newport News. Habitat assessment ratings in most of the watershed are considered "excellent," indicating a healthy environment for wildlife. One third of the watershed located within James City County is forested or open water areas. Development in Skiffes Creek watershed primarily consists of industrial (Green Mount Industrial Park) and older residential neighborhoods with poor drainage systems and lack of stormwater treatment.

## Water Quality Conditions

Skiffes Creek is on the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality's (VADEQ) impaired waters list for fecal coliform bacteria, and dissolved oxygen. There are swimming, shellfish and fishing advisories in effect for Skiffes Creek due to the bacteria and PCBs present-pollutants that could make people sick if they swim in the water or eat aquatic organisms that live in the creek.

In 1998, VADEQ added Skiffes Creek to its list of impaired waters due to the high bacteria counts at their monitoring station. Virginia Department of Health's bacteria monitoring of Skiffes Creek caused it to be listed in 2005 for shellfish condemnation. In order for Skiffes Creek to come back to healthy bacteria levels, it has been estimated that there needs to be at least a 92% reduction in fecal coliforms within the stream.

Through the Stormwater Division's Water Quality Monitoring Program, and the efforts of County staff and citizen volunteers, monitoring results indicate that the overall water quality in the portion of Skiffes Creek located within James City County is good and supports a healthy environment.

## Problems in the Watershed

- Existing development contains very few stormwater treatment practices; the area has been subject to drainage problems due to flat topography and inadequate conveyance systems. This causes road, garage and yard flooding to occur in typical rainstorms.
- Stream channels in Skiffes Creek are highly eroded from uncontrolled stormwater runoff and aging infrastructure.

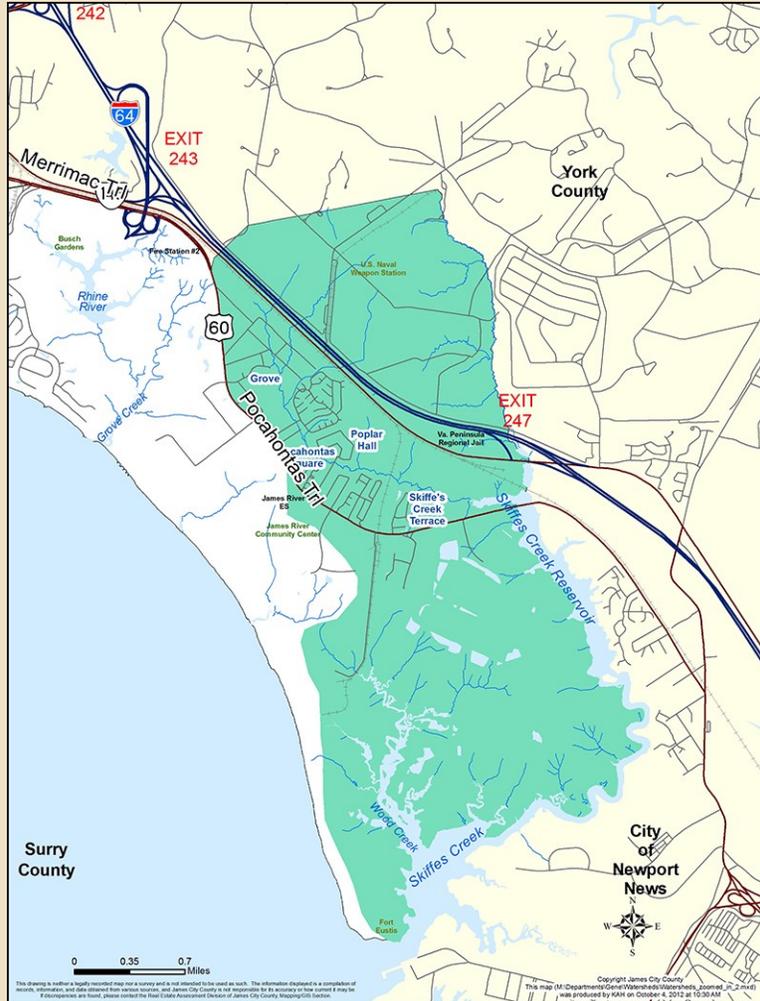
## Completed Studies and Plans

- Site Assessment and Conceptual Plan, James River Commerce Center (WEG, 2010)
- Fecal Bacteria Total Maximum Daily Load Development for Warwick River (VADEQ, 2007)
- Skiffes Creek Baseline Assessment and Conservation Plan (CWP, 2005)

## What Can Citizens Do?

- Clean up after your pet. Pet waste contains bacteria and viruses that are harmful to people and the environment.
- Fertilize properly. Learn about your soil and the type of grass in your yard to make a responsible fertilizing plan. Contact Turf Love at 757-564-2170 for help in identifying your yard needs.
- Leave a natural plant buffer around streams or stormwater ponds. Vegetation filters pollutants before they get to the water.
- Don't put fats and oils down the drain. Fatty deposits build up in the sewer system and can lead to sanitary sewer overflows, leaving harmful bacteria and viruses in the environment.
- Wash your car on grass, not on pavement. Soap and grease will be filtered through the grass and soil before getting into groundwater.
- Plant a rain garden. These beautiful landscaped areas can act as a trap for rain water and can prevent erosion in areas where there is a lot of stormwater run-off.
- Power-wash with care. Look for cleaning products with environmentally-friendly ingredients.
- Don't put leaves and yard clippings in road ditches or on top of storm-drain inlets. Collect leaves and clippings for compost or drop off at a County transfer station.
- Go to [askhrgreen.org](http://askhrgreen.org) for more helpful ideas.

## Skiffes Creek Watershed Map



## For More Information

If you are interested in more information, go to [jamescitycountyva.gov/cleanwater](http://jamescitycountyva.gov/cleanwater) or call 757-259-1446.

James City County continues to be proactive in the protection and preservation of natural resources in its commitment to create and sustain a quality community. Remember...caring for our natural resources requires a team effort. Together, we can make sure water quality in Skiffes Creek Watershed is protected for generations to come.