

ADEM UPDATE

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Nonpoint Source Conference Held in Montgomery

The Alabama Department of Environmental Management hosted its Nonpoint Source Conference on March 15 at the Renaissance Hotel & Spa Convention Center in downtown Montgomery. The event was attended by more than 200 environmental engineers, biologists, environmental consultants, municipal leaders, watershed stakeholders, and water quality specialists.

ADEM Director Lance LeFleur made opening remarks and presented a Departmental update at the conference and ADEM staff provided a report on the current assessment of Alabama's water quality and the basics of starting a 319 funded project. The event included more than a dozen exhibits with displays and handouts. The event offered

attendees updates on efforts to improve water quality in local watersheds, presentations on the importance of cooperative partnerships, green infrastructure, and the importance of stakeholder involvement in watershed planning to reduce nonpoint source pollution.

ADEM's Nonpoint Source Program uses a voluntary approach to address nonpoint source pollution. The program relies on best management practices, education and outreach, technology transfer, monitoring and assessments, and resource assistance using a balanced statewide and watershed-focused restoration approach. Local partnerships and citizen input are primary implementation components, and 319 grants are available to fund targeted, on-the-ground, implementation practices to restore impaired waterbodies.

A number of organizations and agencies participated in the conference including Region 4 of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Water Reuse and Recovery Program at the University of Alabama-Birmingham, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Alabama Soil and Water Conservation Committee, and the Alabama Cooperative Extension System.



More than 200 people attended ADEM's Nonpoint Source Conference



Exhibits and networking were a large part of this year's NPS Conference

Settlement Against Colonial Pipeline Announced

Attorney General Steve Marshall and the Alabama Department of Environmental Management announced on March 15 that they have entered into an agreement with Colonial Pipeline Company which resolves state environmental claims related to the company's September 9, 2016, and October 31, 2016, gasoline pipeline ruptures in Shelby County, and three small releases elsewhere in Alabama.

"This agreement first and foremost addresses the environmental damage to land and water caused by significant gasoline spills in Shelby County during 2016," said Attorney General Marshall. "I am pleased by the outstanding work of ADEM's legal team who worked closely with our lawyers to achieve a settlement which I believe is fair, reasonable and benefits the people of Alabama."

The settlement requirements include: an obligation for Colonial to complete the cleanup of petroleum products released into the soil and waters of the State, which will be overseen by ADEM; a \$1.3 million civil penalty; and, \$1.8 million in projects to benefit the State of Alabama. In addition, it provides \$200,000 to the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources as restitution for damages incurred by the closure of its Cahaba River Wildlife Management Area for nearly three months.

The September 9, 2016, incident involved the below ground release of approximately 7,370 barrels of gasoline in the proximity of County Road 91, near Pelham. A portion of the gasoline was recovered. Reports indicate the release was caused by pipe fatigue that resulted from improper compaction of soil below that portion of the pipeline. The October 31, 2016, incident involved the release of approximately 4,444 barrels of gasoline near County Road 251 in Shelby County. A portion of the gasoline was recovered. It was reported that the release was caused by an accidental strike to the pipeline by excavating equipment when a contractor was performing maintenance on the pipeline. The strike to the pipeline ignited gasoline, which resulted in releases into the environment.

The three remaining releases totaled approximately 21 barrels of petroleum products, a portion of which was recovered. Colonial is subject to regulatory oversight by the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, which is a U.S. Department of Transportation agency, and incident investigation by the National Transportation Safety Board.



ADEM Holds Loan Applicants Seminar



ADEM hosted its annual SRF seminar in March

ADEM has awarded more than \$1 billion over the last 25-years through the Clean Water State Revolving Fund loan program to finance improvements in wastewater treatment infrastructure systems. The SRF is a low interest loan program intended to pay for projects that ensure the proper treatment of wastewater across Alabama. It is funded in part with the proceeds of tax-exempt bonds issued by the Alabama Water Pollution Control Authority which is composed of the Governor, Lt. Governor, Speaker of the House, Finance Director, and ADEM Director.

On March 13, ADEM hosted a SRF Applicants Seminar to assist municipalities, counties, and other organizations that may be interested in applying for projects under the program. Those in attendance were given information on funds available, what projects are eligible, and specific requirements of the program. The seminar also focused on the submittal process, loan closing procedures, construction information, how to maintain project eligibility, and the reimbursement process.

Projects that strengthen compliance with environmental regulations and enhance protection of public health are eligible for consideration to receive loans under the program. In the event a project qualifies, the engineering, inspection, and construction costs are eligible for reimbursement.

Commission Receives Update on EJ Efforts



ADEM Director LeFleur updates Commission on EJ initiatives. developing new tools to advance EJ efforts.

The Alabama Environmental Management Commission has long expressed an ongoing interest in the Environmental Justice activities at ADEM. At the February 16 Commission meeting, ADEM Director Lance LeFleur reported on the numerous efforts made by the Department over the last decade.

ADEM has taken a number of voluntary actions in the past to reach out and educate those in the low income and minority communities. The Department has implemented several initiatives recommended by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The activities include encouraging community engagement in rulemaking and permitting, adopting community-based practices, working cooperatively with other state and federal agencies, and

Director LeFleur also recognized ADEM's Environmental Justice coordinators who have assisted these efforts. Lynn Battle, Sonja Favors, Barbara Kelly, Brandi Little, Jennifer McCord, and Claude McDonald were acknowledged at the Commission meeting for their work.

Along with the efforts of the EJ Coordinators, the Director pointed out Environmental Justice training offered to employees and noted that of the eleven program metrics tracked, between 65 and 100 percent of these efforts have been in or adjacent to EJ communities. Some of the tracked results include 67 percent of scrap tire cleanups, 72 percent of illegal dump cleanups for innocent landowners, 97 percent of the air monitoring sites.

A number of these EJ programs include focusing on brownfields redevelopment in low income and minority areas, special compliance assistance to local governments, targeted health and education initiatives, and extra efforts to recruit students in science and engineering fields.

Coastal Counties Benefit from No Till Grain Drill

A unique watershed management project is underway in Baldwin and Mobile counties. During implementation of a pilot 18-month no-till grain drill project, nonpoint source pollution is being targeted to reduce erosion in these coastal watersheds.

ADEM's Coastal Nonpoint Source Program has provided funding to both the Baldwin and Mobile County's Soil & Water Conservation Districts for the purchase of Grain Drill machines. The Gulf Coast Resource Conservation and Development Council also provided matching funds for the JD1590 no-till drill units.

The machines help reduce erosion for the planting of cover crops on pastures, and for cropland vegetative buffers near streams and farm land borders. The machines are now available to farmers surrounding the Eight Mile Creek watershed and throughout the two coastal counties.

No-till farming is defined as a process where the soil is left relatively undisturbed from harvest to planting. During the planting operation, a narrow seedbed is prepared or holes are drilled in which seeds are planted. Disc openers, coulters and other tools used to create the seedbed or slots leave most of the ground surface and previous crop residue largely undisturbed. No-till is considered a management tool under what is known as conservation tillage practices.



No-till drill machine

ADEM UPDATE Available Online

The Alabama Department of Environmental Management publishes the *ADEM UPDATE* quarterly to inform Alabamians on the latest news and activities of the Department. As a cost-savings measure, the *ADEM UPDATE* is no longer printed. It is distributed electronically and available online through the publications link on the ADEM website at adem.alabama.gov.



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