



Can't cut calories? Try a pollution diet instead.

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Resting along the banks of the White Clay Creek © Stewart Whisenant

By the time March rolls around most of us have long forgotten about our New Years Resolutions. Exercise more, eat better, or quit a bad habit... Perhaps a different approach is warranted. Why not make a simple pledge to reduce pollutants that reach our waterways. Collectively, by taking smaller, more attainable steps, we can help our community to achieve a larger goal – clean water for all.

Have you ever wondered how the streams in the township are regulated in respect to different types of pollutants? Have you considered how regulators decide how much of all the different pollutants out there are allowed in our waterbodies, and the White and Red Clay in particular?

The Clean Water Act (CWA) is the principal piece of federal legislation that governs water pollution. The main objective is to make sure all of the nation's waters are clean enough to support recreation and aquatic life. To meet this goal, the CWA created programs designed to regulate and reduce the amount of pollution entering waterways. One of these programs requires that states monitor their waterbodies and report those not meeting water quality standards. Once a waterbody is listed as impaired the state must develop what are known as Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) for the pollutant(s) of concern.

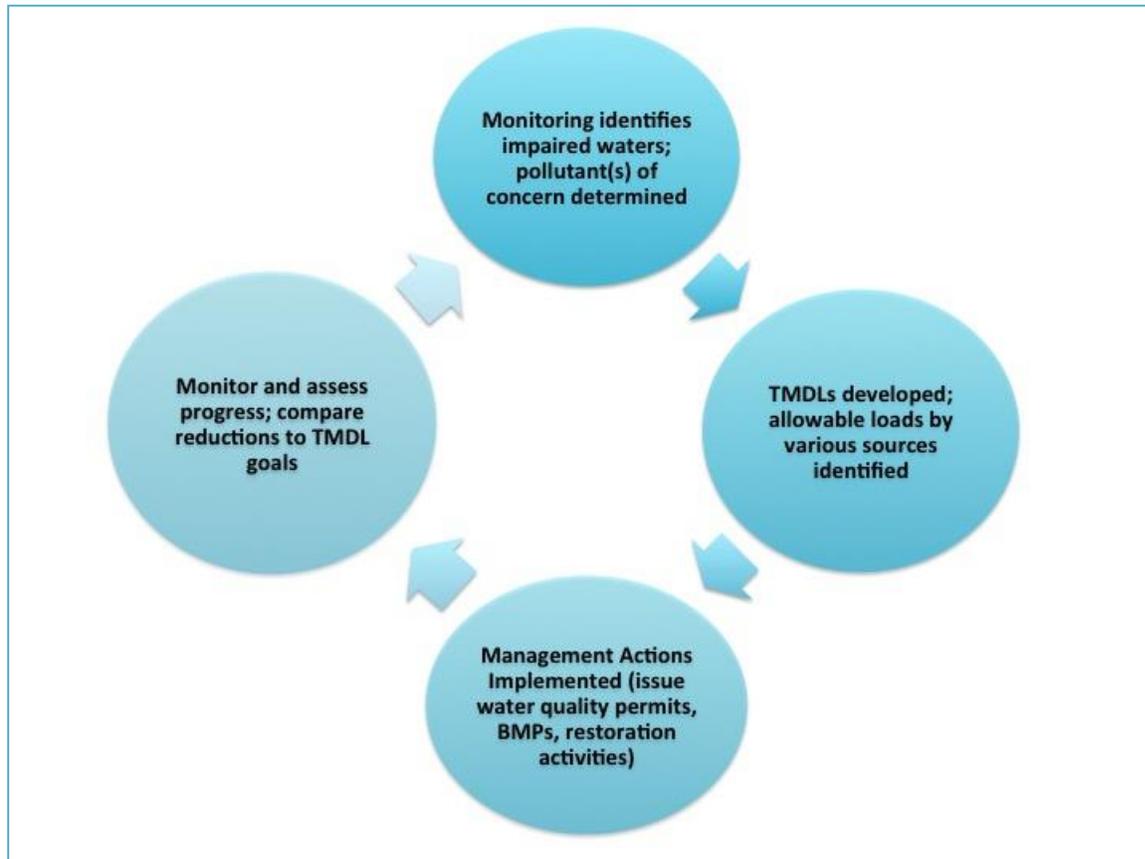


Diagram of the TMDL Implementation Process

More than two-thirds of White and Red Clay stream miles are listed as impaired for various pollutants, such as sediment, nutrients and bacteria. Rain, running over the land, picks up and carries these pollutants (and others) into the creek during storm events. The best way to keep them out of the water is to eliminate or reduce them at the source, or capture and treat them before they reach the creek.

A Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) calculates the maximum amount of a specific pollutant that a waterbody can receive and still meet water quality standards. So for instance, if you were on a diet you would have a goal to reach a specific daily caloric intake in order to reach or maintain a healthy weight. Similarly, the municipality has a goal to meet specific pollutant load reductions to reach or maintain healthy water quality standards.

Setting pollution limits (TMDLs) is the first step towards improving water quality. Once pollution limits are established further efforts must be identified to reduce the pollutant loads (sources). Management through grants, partnerships, and voluntary actions by citizens are integral in the successful implementation of TMDLs (pollution diets). Local governments rely on the efforts of watershed residents, businesses, and agricultural operations to help them meet their clean water requirements.

Let's make 2016 the year of clean water for all and pledge to help the White Clay with its pollution diet. However small the action, collectively we can make a positive impact.

[Click here](#) to learn more about New Garden Township's TMDL Plan.

Try these simple steps to help your community reach its pollution diet goals and attain cleaner water.

1. Keep litter off the streets so it doesn't wash into storm drains and then into local creeks.
2. Dispose of hazardous household wastes and prescription drugs at designated collection sites.
3. Only apply fertilizers and pesticides sparingly and responsibly. ☐
4. Install a rain barrel or rain garden to capture and soak in stormwater. ☐
5. Scoop the poop, then trash it. Pet waste carries with it bacteria that is harmful to human health.
6. Plant more native trees, especially along the creek instead of mowing up to the banks. Trees shade the water for aquatic life, hold stream banks together, and provide habitat.
7. Create wildlife habitat by planting a low maintenance landscape using native plants.
8. Wash your vehicle at a car wash or on the grass and service your vehicle regularly to prevent oils and other fluids from leaking into storm drains. ☐
9. Pump your septic at least every three years to prevent bacterial contamination of water.
10. Only drain pool water that has been tested as chlorine free over grass. Untested water should never be drained over grass or pumped to storm drains. ☐
11. Support your municipality in its efforts to curb pollution. It's up to all of us to achieve clean water standards.