



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION III
1650 Arch Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103-2029
3/15/2010

Richard Eskin, Ph.D., Director
Technical and Regulatory Services Administration
Maryland Department of the Environment
1800 Washington Blvd., Suite 540
Baltimore, Maryland 21230-1718

Dear Dr. Eskin:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Region III, has reviewed the report *Water Quality Analysis of Eutrophication for Wills Creek Basin in Allegany and Garrett Counties, Maryland*, which was submitted by the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) for final review on September 8, 2009.

EPA agrees with MDE that current data show that a nutrient Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) is not necessary for the Wills Creek watershed (MD 02141003). Wills Creek watershed was listed by Maryland on the Section 303(d) List as impaired by cyanide (1996), nutrients (1996), sediment (1996), pH (1998, 2002, 2004, and 2006), fecal bacteria (2002), and impacts to biological communities (2002). The listing for cyanide and the 1998 and 2004 pH listings have been addressed by Water Quality Analyses completed in 2005 and 2006, respectively, showing no impairment. The listings for sediment and fecal bacteria have been addressed via TMDLs completed in 2006, and the 2002 and 2006 pH listings were addressed via TMDLs completed in 2008. The listings for impacts to biological communities will be addressed separately at a future date.

The monitoring data collected demonstrated that the Wills Creek watershed has met all water quality standards for nutrient loadings. The data presented clearly shows that chlorophyll *a* levels and Dissolved Oxygen concentrations are meeting water quality criteria. Also, results of a Wills Creek Biological Stressor Identification analysis did not identify nutrients as a potential stressor or indicate any significant association between current nutrient levels and the degraded biological conditions.

Thank you for the opportunity to review the Water Quality Analysis. If you should have any questions, please contact Ms. Helene Drago, TMDL Program Manager, at 215-814-5796.

Sincerely,

John Armstead for

Jon M. Capacasa, Director
Water Protection Division

cc: Melissa Chatham, MDE-TARSA