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## Grants Given to Help Clean Up Moores Creek

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State and federal grants totaling more than \$250,000 are on the way to help clean up one of the area's dirtiest streams. The impact is projected to be larger than you might think.



A number of groups looking out for the quality of your water got some good news this week. They'll have access to hundreds of thousands of dollars in funds to clean up Moores Creek.

It will make the water safer for people who live near the creek, but the first step is raising more awareness about the problem.

At first glance, you might not notice anything wrong. But don't be too quick to judge.

Leslie Middleton with the Rivanna River Basin Commission said, "It is a problem because it means it's not really safe for us to be swimming and doing a lot of recreational contact without taking protective measures."

Moores Creek is a six and a half mile long stream that cuts right through Charlottesville. It's also near the top of the state's list of streams that fall below health standards.

"It's what we call impaired for bacteria - too high a level of bacteria in the water," said Middleton.

This is a big problem, but still so small that you can't even really see it. The bacteria polluting the creek is called fecal coliform. As for where you find it, well that's not a very pretty story.

Middleton said, "Some of it is coming from human waste that is coming from leaky septic systems or overflowing septic systems."

But a new \$267,000 grant is aiming to change that by reforming livestock operations, honing in on pet waste, and assessing septic problems.

Rivanna Water and Sewer Authority Executive Director Tom Frederick said, "When you're talking about pollution sources though, you have to look at how people use their land."

Frederick says part of the solution will be raising awareness of the problem. "Think about our environment as we are living our lives, and make sure that we are all good stewards," he said.

Middleton stated, "Reaching out to homeowners, trying to engage people who may not know that there are resources there to help them along to do right."

There are a number of different groups involved with this including the Rivanna River Basin Commission and the Thomas Jefferson Soil and Water Conservation District.

The grant will be applied over the course of the next two and a half years to turn around the health of Moores Creek.



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