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## THE CITY OF OPELIKA PEPPERELL BRANCH WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN SPRINGS INTO ACTION

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**PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**September 18, 2018**

OPELIKA, Ala – The City of Opelika is partnering with the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, Auburn University, the Alabama Department of Environmental Management, Keep Opelika Beautiful, Alabama Water Watch and other stakeholders on a grant to develop a Pepperell Branch Watershed Management Plan. The grant will run for 12 months through mid-August 2019 with the goals of developing a watershed management plan to reduce pollutant specific to Pepperell Branch Watershed.

There are several ways that the public can participate in this planning process including: attending meetings, being a member of topical work groups and as steering committee member. The Steering Committee will guide the process that will be facilitated by the grant partners. We are currently working to put together a Steering Committee of local stakeholders that will represent groups or individuals with responsibility for implementing a decision; those who are affected by the decision; assist with problem identification; promote awareness, education and action; and facilitate implementation of solutions.

**Project Goals:**

- a) Facilitate stakeholder involvement and input to develop a watershed-based management plan that will identify ways to help restore Pepperell Branch to meet state water quality standards.
- b) Engage stakeholders, build strong partnerships and conduct public outreach on nonpoint source (NPS) pollution issues and the planning process.
- c) Identify critical areas and potential management measures that can be implemented to reduce nonpoint source pollutant loadings to the impaired waterbody as identified by the Pepperell Branch TMDLs.
- d) Determine pollutant load reduction estimates based on implementation of best management practices in critical areas to improve water quality.

**Major Tasks of this planning process includes:**

- Help identify potential sources of bacteria and pollutant loads
- Set goals and objectives
- Identify measures to address bacteria and pollutant issues
- determine a reasonable level of implementation
- Identify outreach and education that is needed
- Guide development of an implementation plan and schedule

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This plan also includes funding for conducting outreach efforts within Pepperell Branch Watershed:

- New 4-H Alabama Water Watch Program
- (2) Alabama Water Watch Volunteer Water Quality Trainings
- Storm Drain Marker Program
- Creek Cleanup and Environmental Fair
- Watershed Signs
- Pet Waste Stations

This project is funded by the Alabama Department of Environmental Management through a Clean Water Act Section 319(h) nonpoint source grant by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency – Region 4. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact John Harris, City of Opelika Storm Water Coordinator at 334-705-5450 or Nikki Dictson with Alabama Cooperative Extension System at 979-575-4424.

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