

# Media Release



**bluffton**  
HEART OF THE LOWCOUNTRY

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## Town Receives Third EPA Grant for Water Quality

The South Carolina Department of Health & Environmental Control (SCDHEC) has awarded the Town of Bluffton its third federal United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Clean Water Act-Section 319 grant to protect the May River's water quality. The latest \$231,350 grant pushes the Town's total of federal 319 grant funds past the million dollar mark. All of these grants have supported the implementation of projects, programs and policies within the Town's May River Watershed Action Plan.

"The Town is proud to have received federal dollars totaling \$1,004,850 to aid in our work to protect the May River," Mayor Lisa Sulka said. "While we are proud of these awards, our work on the River continues to demand our attention. The May River is the centerpiece of our town and culture, and its continual health is of utmost importance."

Each EPA grant is via Clean Water Act (CWA)-Section 319 funding, which is awarded and administered through the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control. This funding is designated for states and territories to help restore full use of their waterways as well as to protect and prevent pollution from water runoff and drainage.

The recent \$231,350 EPA Clean Water Act-Section 319 federal grant will be used to support the May River Preserve Project which is located in the Stoney Creek sub-basin. This project will provide stormwater treatment within a nine-acre, seasonal, shallow pond adjacent to the May River Preserve development. The Town will install a control structure which slows stormwater by holding it back and allowing it to temporarily accumulate behind an existing berm.

The Town's Director of Engineering Bryan McIlwee said, "Slowing down the flow of stormwater allows natural processes to remove pollutants and reduce water volume as the water soaks into the ground."

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The first EPA grant, worth \$483,500, was awarded in 2009. This funding was used to help complete the new Riverside Pond Project, update the Town's Unified Development Ordinance to include watershed standards, develop a community engagement program, initiate a septic system maintenance assistance program and distribute about 175 rain barrels throughout the watershed area.

The second EPA grant, worth \$290,000, was awarded in 2012. This funding helped complete the Pine Ridge Stormwater Retrofit Project which installed an irrigation system using lagoons in the Pine Ridge neighborhood as the water source to irrigate adjacent land. This decreased the volume of stormwater from nearby developments from reaching the May River.

"As with all programs, it is the partnership with the people of our Town and the greater Bluffton area which make them successful," Larry Toomer, mayor pro tempore and May River Watershed Action Plan vice-chair, said. "I ask each person who enjoys the river to always be mindful of their own personal responsibility to protect this incredible natural resource."