Fryingpan Creek, Pigg River, Poplar Branch and Beaverdam Creek IP First Public Meeting Summary

Franklin County Public Library, Rocky Mount VA

4:30 PM on 29 February 2024

Kim Romero kicked off the initial public meeting for the Fryingpan Creek, Pigg River, Poplar Branch, and Beaverdam Creek implementation plan process at 4:31 PM. She introduced herself as the Non-Point Source Coordinator for the Blue Ridge Region and Valley Region of Virginia's Department of Environmental Quality. She also made physical copies of the slideshow presentation, maps, and other supporting documents available for those in attendance.

After Kim's own introduction, the attendees to the meeting went around and introduced themselves as well. There were members of the community and a Ferrum College Professor present, as well as representatives from the Tri-County Lakes Administration, Smith Mountain Lake Association, Leesville Lake Association, Blue Ridge Soil and Water Conservation District, Franklin County Public Works, Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, University of Lynchburg, Virginia Department of Forestry, and various other Department of Environmental Quality staff. All attendees signed the attendance sheet at the door as well, that sheet is where specific names and contact information is recorded.

Following Introductions, Kim laid out meeting objectives and introduced the clean up study, implementation plan, she hopes to develop within this community to address bacteria and benthic impairments on the four referenced streams. Describing a total maximum daily load and the authorization to distribute funds, thanks to the Clean Water Act, Kim outlined Virginia's Water Quality Process and how it can help address Not-Point Sources of pollutants of concern within the community. The total maximum daily load equation and how it is used to establish reductions was displayed and explained to the room. Kim also covered water quality monitoring and how the Department of Environmental Quality gets the data they base these management strategies on.

In a displayed map, Kim showed the impaired stream segments and provided context for how many miles the impairments spanned and what year these segments were first listed as impaired in the biannual integrated report. The impairments included both bacteria and benthic. Kim explained that Virginia uses the Virginia Stream Condition Index to score streams ability to support aquatic life, as is necessary per the Clean Water Act. This aquatic life score is what determines benthic impairments.

Stressor analyses were used to help determine the sources for these impairments and concluded sediment and fecal coliform bacteria from humans, pets, livestock, and wildlife were the sources causing impairments.

Question: Was E. coli included in the bacteria TMDL on Beaverdam Creek?
*Answer: No, at the time of that TMDL and original impairment, the bacteria standard was much different than it is today. They only looked at fecal coliform at the time. **This will be addressed and revised at our first community engagement meeting**.*

Question: Are there a lot of pets in this area? 21% of the source of bacteria being from pets seems like a lot.

Following the previous discussion, Kim moved on to display the monitoring stations where data has been collected that is used for the studies and once again, the impaired segments. This moved the discussion on to land use. Breaking down each watershed, the land use, acquired from VGINs 2021 dataset and NLCDs 2019 dataset, was discussed and Kim highlighted how different land uses produced different quantities of sediment. Pasture, Hay, and cropland were the largest sources of sediment in each watershed, despite forest being the dominant land cover.

Next, Kim broke down how a computer model used that land use data to estimate the sediment loads to the streams. She also described the modelled necessary reductions in sediment for each stream, so they can meet water quality standards.

recommendations for how to stabilize the bank or to remove the deadwood that is gouging the banks?
*Answer: Yes, we can look at best management practices within the implementation plan that can address those specific issues. Streambank erosion kept coming up during the total maximum daily load development process as well. We recorded this as a major concern during the development side and **now with implementation side, we will be able to target those specific interests***.

Next, the presentation looked at the suggested reduction in bacteria loads needed to return Beaverdam Creek to meeting water quality standards. These numbers come from the 2006 study and will be reevaluated with updated modelling.

After establishing the base of information that has been curated to begin the implementation process, Kim switched the topic to looking more ahead. This implementation planning is what establishes the clean up for these watersheds for the foreseeable future. Kim laid out what an implementation plan is and how it helps generate funding for the previously mentioned best management practices. She again stressed that community participation is crucial. These practices can take 5-15 years to be implemented and are completely voluntary. Potential common best management practices for agricultural lands, residential lands, stormwater, and pet waste were outlined.

Question: Do agencies like Virginia Department of Transportation have any interest in this? One of their bridges over the Pigg River on Snow Creek Road was just washed out.
*Answer: Virginia Department of Transportation does not have a history of participating in implementation planning, however, **we can reach out to the local Virginia Department of Transportation Office to see if they are interested in this project***.

Question: Do the Army Corps of Engineers get included in this planning?
Answer: Their involvement depends on what lands we are working on. They tend to only participate in implementation plans that affect their land specifically. Blue Ridge Soil and Water Conservation District is involved though and has been a long-time partner to these projects. They are an entity that has managed funds and implementation for these practices in this area.

Question: Aren't there very few landowners in this section of the Pigg River?
Answer: There are not many landowners with riverfront property, but those landowners have been involved in different projects in the past. Headwaters work on smaller contributing streams is usually easier to accomplish. Less landowners does make outreach a little easier as well.

Question: Do you work with the best management practice database and is that database public?
*Answer: We do work with that database, and it is public. The public facing data is more so a summary of the best management practices in a hydrologic unit than specific details that could be used to identify a property or individual. This summary information is available on the Department of Conservation and Recreation's website. Information is also available on the Virginia Stormwater BMP Clearinghouse website. **We will have a summary of best management practices already present in the watershed at the first Community Engagement Meeting***.

After this discussion, Kim resumed explaining the "RFA" process and extra grant money that can help enact best management practices within the total maximum daily load areas. She

stressed that implementation plans are only as good at the information the Department of Environmental Quality receives. She invited the attendees to share information and future meetings with others in the community to solicit more involvement. Finally, she displayed a tentative timeline to the attendees could know what to expect next in this process and when future meetings may be held. Kim also shared that a 30-day public comment period begins with this meeting for comments on the coming implementation plan. She then took the remaining questions.

Question: Can you share the attendance sheet with us so we can get in contact with people we met here tonight?
*Answer: **Yes**, those in attendance and that sheet become part of the implementation plan.*

Question: Where should we send our comments?
Answer: Comments about the implementation plan should go to Kim.

Question: It seems like this implementation plan could require a lot of streambank restoration which is extremely expensive. Is there a plan to fund that? There has been interest from landowners in the county to do that.
*Answer: **We are going to try and determine how much streambank restoration is feasible with a cost-benefit-analysis during our modelling process**. With cost share going up, the water quality improvement fund, and 319 funding, there should be funding to try and tackle a large project like a streambank restoration. We are also going to be providing connections to other grant opportunities as well.*

This concluded the meeting.