

2nd Community Engagement Meeting for the development of a Clean Up Plan (Implementation Plan) for the Pigg River, Poplar Branch, Fryingpan Creek, and Beaverdam Creek Watersheds Summary

Franklin County Public Library, Rocky Mount, VA

4:30 PM on June 25, 2024

Kimberly Romero kicked off the second community engagement meeting (CEM) for the developing implementation plan (IP) for the Pigg River, Poplar Branch, Fryingpan Creek, and Beaverdam Creek watersheds. She introduced herself as the Non-Point Source (NPS) Coordinator for the Department of Environmental Quality's Blue Ridge Regional Office in Salem, Virginia. Kim provided physical copies of the slideshow presentation, BMP cost table summary and timeline, and had handouts provided by the Department of Forestry (DOF) for the new Riparian Forest for Landowners Program. All attendees signed the attendance sheet at the door. This sheet detailed the attendee's names and email addresses. There were 12 meeting attendees present.

Following Kim's introduction and expression of gratitude for those in attendance, she provided an agenda overview which included: outlining the meeting goals, a reminder of where we are in the process, proposed Best Management Practice (BMP) discussion with the associated costs and timeline, discussion of priority areas to reduce sediment and bacteria in the watersheds, and next steps regarding the Implementation Plan (IP) timeline. Kim also introduced meeting takeaways which were as follows: to understand what the proposed BMPs are for this IP, including understanding the costs and timelines associated with them, and to gather input and feedback from today's meeting and do any remaining adjustments to the data. There will be one more final meeting which will discuss the draft. Following this step, a finalized draft will be sent to EPA for approval in hopes of hearing back by winter 2025 to begin applying for the 319 (h) grant.

Kim displayed the slides to review the water quality process and the previous TMDLs as she provided a brief summary of what was discussed at the first community engagement meeting. This consisted of indicating where we were in the process, reminding the group of what stream segments are impaired, brief overview of 2022 TMDL study pie charts indicating focus is on the sediment impairments in the project area with the exception of Beaverdam Creek which also will be addressing a bacteria impairment. From there, she went on to display the updated best management practices (BMP) tables which reflected updated costs and timeline based on the last meeting discussion. Kim met with the districts to discuss this proposed staged implementation goals and costs table prior to the current meeting. Discussion focused popularity of each practice in each watershed and whether it would be a beneficial practice to include in the project area. The costs of agricultural best management practices included in the Implementation Plan come from data from the: Average Annual Cost List for BMP components, and NRCS Cost list. Each stage is set to five years. In total both stages and implementation should be completed in 10 years. For Pigg River, Poplar Branch, and Fryingpan Creek both stages must be completed in order to meet TMDL sediment reduction goals. Kim walked through the table explaining each section and the totals of how many systems would be needed to meet reduction goals.

To further explain the justification of the reductions needed in the Pigg River watershed, Kim referred to Karen Kline, the TMDL Modeler, to explain the balance of costs amongst the stages.

Statement: (Karen) For the first stage we try to focus on getting half of the reductions needed, Pigg River we need 21% reductions, we want half of that in stage one and we focus on practices that are popular, talked to SWCD to understand demand in area, focused on that, then monitoring, then stage 2 is less popular practices that may be needed to reach full reductions.

Question: (Attendee) So is this come up randomly or how are these numbers determined?

Statement: (Karen) So we have number of acres and estimated load per acre and can look at on a watershed scale, if you get the right people in the first half, you might meet the reductions because e these are based on averages, based on practices, we may get it done in stage one,

Question: (Attendee) Is this voluntary? I farmed there for decades.

Answer- (Kim) Yes, it is voluntary. We did take into consideration the note from previous meetings, there aren't many landowners over there so getting participation from a few landowners could make a large impact. 319h funding goes towards BMPs included in the IP so that's why I've stressed to put all BMPs there is interest in now, this more so based on allocation of district time as well.

Statement: (Attendee) You need a giant fund raiser.

Statement: (Kim) I'm happy to hear your ideas!

Kim moved the meeting forward by continuing the updated BMP table discussion. The sections focused on Stream Exclusion, Pasture, Cropland and Hayland, Urban and Residential, and Streambank.

Question: (Ashley) Is this just for AG (agricultural) lands code?

Answer: (Karen) No it can address any.

Statement: (Ashley) I think we should add most cost share codes, like the VCAP ones then.

Statement: (Attendee) Trees for clean water can also help fund that on public land the handout pays for this on private lands, grants pay 100% cost share.

Kim took adequate notes of the suggestion and transitioned to the slides focused on the Poplar Branch watershed. These had the same practices as Pigg River tables, but with different values.

Statement: (Karen) This also accounts for what practices have been put into this watershed when looking at these numbers, one BMP practice was already there.

Kim paused to ask for any questions before she continued the discussion for the Fryingpan Creek watershed.

Statement: (Kim) This [watershed] was one that has some systems already, livestock exclusions. Again, these values are based on discussions with the district.

Question: (Ashley)- Those acres seem like a lot, would that be one retention basin, how many systems would that look like?

Answer: (Attendee) That would be a big one there, that's not a common one.

Statement (Kim) That's more of a last-ditch effort when we still need reductions. That's how a lot of the stages are, we hope to meet those goals while the second stage helps give that cushion in case, we aren't meeting those goals.

Kim moved on to Beaverdam Creek watershed and displayed the Residential Overview table that was presented at the last meeting. There were no changes on this table based on the updated information that Kim had received from VDH. It was also noted that for Beaverdam Creek, sediment reduction goals will be met with stage 1 practices. These changes were updated based on the conversation that Kim had with Peaks of Otter SWCD and the information they were able to provide. Before continuing, Kim asked the group if anyone was from the Beaverdam Creek watershed area. After confirming there was no one, Kim quickly walked through the tables and figures. She mentioned the reduction from three stages to two stages to help meet reduction goals. Beaverdam Creek is the only watershed that will have septic practices as it primarily in function to reduce the bacteria impairments that were identified in the TMDL.

Kim then focused on to the priority map discussion.

Statement: (Kim) This is what I was explaining earlier, we looked at priority areas to help meet those reductions goals, due to the size of the watersheds and applications received, different districts for each of the priority one areas, this is based on previous discussions, poplar branch has lowest amount of BMPs needed? Pigg river only has a few areas, but they require a lot more projects areas, we can change the focus though, we could delist poplar branch sooner.

Question: (Attendee) Is this just the mainstem?

Answer: (Attendee) Yes if you look at this section it is (describes location).

Question: (Attendee) Can't we do them simultaneous because they are two small areas?

Answer: (Ashley) The Implementation Plan requires priority areas, you could include it in the application, to include multiple IPs to get more funding? The way this is so pocketed is not how we typically have done this; This is not the average layout for a plan.

Question: (Attendee) Ours are sediment here, we don't offer anything for tree replanting but DOF may, what do you do? Should those be included?

Answer: (Attendee) If there is any sedimentation coming from harvested sited, DOF should be included, that can be limited by acres per years and how many acres are signed up, code is RT, that is a good one to add there.

Statement: (Attendee) I haven't looked at Pigg recently, Poplar Branch has had a lot of harvesting over there.

Statement: (Attendee) We haven't seen the same rains since 2018, and our practices have been, I will send you the parameters.

Statement: (Karen) Fryingpan Creek may have some recent harvesting that could benefit from that as well

Question: (Attendee) FR4 practice that provides funding for someone who harvest timber, BMPs blew out, there's money to revegetate skid trails and such in harvested areas do y'all do much with that?

Answer: (Attendee) There is a new practice, but not much, no.

Statement: (Attendee) Yeah, it's not common but if we have another 2018/19 then we may need there.

Question: (Kim) Do you think we're good to move on?

Kim touched on the end goals of implementation while walking through the overall cost summary table for all of the watershed. She then moved on to the Technical Assistance section of the presentation.

Statement: (Karen) This is for one per district, I like the idea of putting ips together

Question: (Attendee) Would you be mandated to hire somebody?

Answer: (Ashley) No you can adjust funding for staff, up to three years. TA will be included as a portion of the 319(h) fund.

Statement: (Kim) TA cap is 30% of total budget of project.

Question: (Attendee) How long is the grant?

Answer: (Ashley) 3 years but up to 5 years. We have to move money sometimes if it takes too long, so five years is not common.

Statement: (Attendee) I think one full time employee could cover most of those things.

Statement: (Kim) I have noted that down. If you have additional thoughts, please contact me and we can work that in before the final public meeting.

Kim walked through a few additional funding sources as 319(h) funding only covers a small portion of the costs. She made note of the DOF Financial Assistance Programs tool: <https://dof.virginia.gov/financial-assistance-programs/> which allows people to look up based on issues and has a breakdown of the program, eligibility, and deadline.

Statement: (Kim) 319 does NOT only provide money to SWCD. Local governments, county health departments, SWCDs, Virginia institutes of higher education, Planning District Commissions, Regional Commissions, nonprofits, and other agencies/departments of the Commonwealth.

Kim also touched on identification of education and outreach strategies. Before moving on to review additional information provided to her. Kim walked through the DOF Riparian Forest for Landowner Program and briefly discussed the Pigg River Debris Diversion Device that is under review.

To wrap up the meeting, Kim detailed what the next steps would be following the meeting. The final public meeting is anticipated to be the second week of September. This meeting will provide a brief

overview of what had been discussed throughout all of the meetings and present the finalized draft. This meeting will mark the start of the 30-day public comment period.

Kim asked the group for any final questions or comments before thanking the meeting attendees for coming to the meeting.

This concluded the meeting.