



NPS 1622 Watershed Pilot Program

Final Report

July 1st, 2017 – June 30th, 2018



Coal River Group

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1.) The Coal River Group believes that the WPP program is a crucial component and has provided the important next step for the group to grow and become a financially sustainable river restoration entity. The addition of a staff member has expanded capacity building for the Coal River Group. This position's duties include coordinating public outreach events, coordinating volunteer events, such as tire clean-ups, managing the 319 Septic Repair Grant, applying for and administering grants that are crucial to the funding and ability of Coal River Group, as well many other tasks and duties. The group struggled for over 12 years to create permanence with all the programs it has taken on. The WPP Program provided the missing link in terms of being able to coordinate and legitimize the group's efforts to grow environmental awareness in the 840 square miles of the mostly rural and coal dependent Coal River Watershed.

The CRG is a non-profit organization that has a great base of reliable volunteers, but with many volunteers there needs to be direction. The WPP program allows the CRG to have someone there to accomplish more projects and manage more of the river issues in the Coal River Watershed. Not only helping with managing different volunteer events, the staff position has helped grow the number of volunteers that have joined the CRG Team. This position has granted the ability to help keep up a clean watershed and get the community involved more than ever.

The CRG has used the full amount of \$30,000 and supplied an additional \$2,000 for staff training and travel. The WPP Program position has been filled by the CRG the full Fiscal year of 2018. Project Manager, Dane Franz, filled the position from December 2017 to August 2017, then Project Manager, Justin Hunt, assumed the responsibilities in August 2017 and still occupies this position.

Accomplishments

2.)

- A.** The Project Manager oversees NPS 1583, which is The Brown's Creek/Angel Fork Septic Remediation Project. The goal of this project is to remediate failing septic systems in the Brown's Creek/Angel Fork area in order to reduce the high counts of fecal coliform that the streams have consistently shown. The CRG also recruits home owners to use the pump-out program. To date, CRG has replaced 7 failing septic systems completely, 6 of which have been replaced since November 2017. The Project Manager also has one pump-out complete and 3 in line for the end of summer. The Project Manager continues to recruit for more Septic Replacement Applicants and promoting the 319 program, with the extension into year 2020 the project is currently ongoing.



Images of Completed Septic Replacement Projects.



- B.** With the help of the WVDEP the Project Manager planned and coordinated *The Coal River Group 2018 Water Festival*, which took place this year on May 9th. This annual event is hosted by CRG at the CRG headquarters in Meadowood Park. Three different grade schools attended the water festival this year: Alban Elementary, St. Francis Elementary, and Andrews Heights Elementary. The grade levels were students in the 4th and 5th grade; all around attendance was about 115 students. The event's purpose is to teach the students the importance of how to sustain a clean watershed. With personnel from American Water, Coal River Group, WVDEP, WV Forestry and St. Albans MS4, the Water Festival was a successful event for CRG and a successful field trip for all schools involved.



The support of many great agencies and groups showing the importance of a clean watershed and the effects it has on biology within the watershed to students from local elementary schools at The Coal River Group 2018 Water Festival.

3.)

- A. Due to the participation of the WPP Staff member in fundraising events, Earth Day Events, Tourism Day at the Capital and Career days, the awareness of the programs and achievements of the CRG have been promoted immensely. With the successful outreach a greater number of participation in the CRG Events and more volunteers have been established. This allows the CRG to become closer to sustaining a permanent position without administration grant funds.

- B. Further on the matter of sustaining the CRG Staff member position, the present Project Manager is working with the WVDEP on expanding into another 319 Grant program remediation project in a different target area. This expansion, Smith Creek Remediation Project, along with the existing 319 Grant project, Browns Creek/ Angel Fork Remediation, will provide administration funding and projects three to five years in the future. With the expansion project, the CRG will be providing services to most landowners in and around the whole Lower Coal River region in hopes to reduce the fecal coliform counts.

4.) Routine Activities

- A. The Project Manager conducts monthly water sampling in the Brown Creek/ Angel Fork Area. There are 9 locations that water samples are taken and sent to a lab for fecal coliform counts. This water sampling allows the Project Manager to pinpoint locations to target the Septic Replacement projects for success of the program. The goal is to reduce the fecal coliform counts at each sampling location.
- B. The Project Manager continues to help CRG volunteers in developing new fundraising ideas and opportunities.
- C. The Project Manager is present at monthly board meetings of Coal River Group where he/she informs the board members of upcoming plans, the results of current or past projects, and addresses any questions the board may have.
- D. The Project Manager is constantly searching for grant opportunities that align with Coal River Group's mission of cleaning up The Coal River Watershed.

5.) Points of Contact

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- Kris Radford, Coal River Group President, Coal River Group Board of Directors, Texascrzd@yahoo.com; (304) 549-1348.
- Tomi Bergstrom, WVDEP Western Basin Coordinator, Tomi.M.Bergstrom@wv.gov, (304) 926-0499 x 1098
- Timothy Craddock, NPS Program Coordinator, Timothy.d.craddock@wv.gov; (304) 926-0499 x 1040



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Piney Creek Watershed Association

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Summary

This is the final report for the three year pilot program and incorporates information from this past year (FY 2018 – NPS 1623) as well as the previous two years (FY 2017 – NPS 1579 and FY16 – NPS 1539).

Overall, the Watershed Association Staff Support Pilot Program (WPP) was indispensable to the ability of the Piney Creek Watershed Association (PCWA) to take actions necessary to improve the watershed. PCWA used the funding to support a part-time Executive Director (ED) to manage the daily operations of the association and manage projects that improve the watershed. PCWA was able to propose, accept, and manage almost \$200,000 in grants over the three years of the program. In addition, the association increased visibility in the community and became an important partner in improving the community as a whole.

In FY18, the association used the full allotment of \$30,000 and supplied an additional \$2,400 in funds to cover other employee expenses including salary, travel, employer FICA taxes, and workers compensation insurance. The association employed an Executive Director for all 12 months of the fiscal year who worked 1454 hours for the association.

Grant (Year)	Funding Allotted	Funding Used	Hours Worked
NPS 1539 (FY16)	\$30,000	\$17,000	935
NPS 1579 (FY17)	\$30,000	\$30,000+	1423.5
NPS 1623 (FY18)	\$30,000	\$30,000+	1454

Note: The association did not have an Executive Director from July to September 2015 as the association was going through the initial hiring process. The association did not have an Executive Director from November 2015 through February 2016 after the resignation of the first Executive Director and the search for a replacement.

Over the three years of the program, PCWA has increased members, overall income, and grants when compared to the two years before the grant:

State FY (July-June)	Members	Income	Grants Under Management
2014	26	\$ 27,147.86	3
2015	28	\$ 32,103.23	2
2016	20	\$ 20,378.21	3
2017	22	\$ 53,107.36	5
2018	35	\$ 98,922.27	7

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Successes and challenges

a. Membership

1) Successes: The association increased its membership by 66% over the three years of the program. The association maintained ~80% of its members while replacing every lost member with two new members.

2) Challenges: Member recruitment is a time consuming activity with limited financial benefits. New member recruitment required around 10 hours of work per new member. The money brought in from memberships did not fund the time and resource expenditures used to recruit and maintain members. The overall membership model is insufficient to sustain a paid position in a watershed association.

b. Grants.

1) Successes: PCWA secured almost \$200,000 in grants from both government and private entities, a 200% increase over the highest year before the staff support program existed.

2) Challenges: There are many grant opportunities available but two issues present themselves. First, the grants are very specific in their uses. These restrictions make it difficult to fund day-to-day operations of the association – the back room operations that are required in order to manage the grants. Without the WPP program, PCWA would not have been able to propose, receive, and manage the number of grants it received over the last three years. The second issue is that grants for staff funding are scarce across the board. There are numerous sources of private and public funding for projects but funding for personnel costs is practically non-existent. Some grants allow up to 10% for administration costs but those are typically insufficient to fund a position in all but the largest of grants.

c. Project Management.

1) Successes: The Executive Director, with help from government and non-profit entities, successfully managed projects throughout this period. The Board of Directors or volunteers would have had a difficult time managing projects without a director due to the number and scope of the projects.

2) Challenges: The technical aspects of some of the projects meant the association had to seek outside expertise to assist with project management. The community as a whole but especially the Beckley Sanitary Board (MS4 permit holder in the watershed) committed to assisting the Executive Director with the more technical aspects of projects.

d. Outreach and Education.

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1) Successes: Outreach has been a "home run" for the association primarily because of the time and effort of the Executive Director. The director represents PCWA at public events 2-3 times a month. In addition, the association typically resources and hosts one event per month (typically cleanup events), coordinated by the director. PCWA also coordinated and resourced the Raleigh County Earth Day Cleanup and Celebration for the last two years, which completed over 25 projects with more than 250 volunteers each year. The director also works closely with WVU Tech to sponsor projects in support of the community as a whole. The director is frequently cited and interviewed for local news stories involving the watershed and the environment in general.

2) Challenges: The increase in exposure and outreach efforts increased the time demands on the association and the director. Most weekends from spring through fall are filled with outreach activities; these continuous activities require time and resources to support. PCWA received numerous benefits from the increased exposure, which is paying off in increased membership and participation, but it has detracted from the ability of the director to manage all the projects.

Lessons learned

a. You must pick the right person for the position. PCWA was fortunate to have one Executive Director for 28 of the 36 months of the program. However, this was the second hire for the position. The first director only served three months but was not a good fit for the association and resigned. The director prior to the program's start left the association because of a lack of funding for a salary and the lack of benefits.

The skill set required for the position is extensive, but the compensation is not commensurate for someone with those required skills. The relatively low salary and lack of benefits narrows the candidate field to someone looking for a second career (retirees), college educated-entry level individuals, or individuals whose spouse/partner provides primary income and benefits. The applicant pool is further reduced by the ideal amount of skills the applicant should have to fill the required rolls. Project management, accounting, and grant writing are just some of the skills an ideal applicant should have for the position but the greatest skill required is the ability to work with limited supervision. The director has a wide range of responsibilities and expectations and while the board provides strategic guidance, the director must turn the guidance into action.

b. The board members must maintain involvement for the director to be effective. The director can run the association's day-to-day operations, under the supervision of the board. However, the board members have roles they must fulfill to make the association grow and to relieve time pressures from the director. Member recruitment and fundraising are two specific areas that board members can address that sometimes distract directors from managing projects and conducting outreach activities.

c. The source of funds can direct association actions. By accepting a grant from the state (or from other sources), the association is obligated to abide by the rules governing that grant.

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In regards to this program, the association is accepting the rules as established by WVDEP for the execution of the WPP. This has not caused any issues as the association maintains a great working relationship with WVDEP. However, should an issue arise where WVDEP funding would not be available it would be difficult for the association to maintain operations at the current level. This dependence for funding could prevent PCWA from acting in the best interest of the association or the watershed. The relationship is a trade-off the association makes to protect and improve the watershed.

Major accomplishments

a. The Executive Director oversaw the YMCA Soccer Complex Barren Land Restoration and Enhancement Project (NPS 1535) which included the completion of the design, selection of a contractor, and supervision of construction. **PROJECT IS ONGOING.**



b. The Executive Director oversaw the green infrastructure project (NPS 1586) at the Beckley-Raleigh County Convention Center. The project saw the construction of a rain garden by boy scouts attending the National Boy Scout Jamboree 2017. **PROJECT IS ONGOING.**

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c. The Executive Director coordinated, publicized, and executed a countywide cleanup and beautification effort in support of Earth Day in 2017 and 2018. Each event involved over 300 volunteers from 25 different organizations conducting cleanups in Raleigh County. Overall, the event resulted in the cleanup of over 4,000 pounds of trash and materials in 2017 and over 10,000 pounds of trash and materials in 2018. **COMPLETE.**



d. The Executive Director initiated, coordinated, and implemented a monthly stream cleanup program in the watershed. The association has hosted more than 20 cleanups in the watershed over the last three years, not including the cleanups during Earth Day. **ONGOING.**

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e. The Executive Director served on a community committee to conduct a Household Hazardous Waste collection in Raleigh County in October 2016. The combined effort resulted in the removal of over \$66,000 worth of household hazardous waste (including paint, automotive fluids, batteries, and lawn chemicals) from areas in the watershed. **COMPLETE.**



Milestone Accomplishments (IAW PCWA WPP Workplan)

Green indicates the milestone was accomplished or is ongoing and on schedule

Yellow indicates the milestone was partially met

Red indicates the milestone was not met

Status	Task	Frequency/ Measure	Remarks
	Public Presentations (any age)	1 per month or 3 per quarter	The ED spoke to several community groups including the Rotary Club of Beckley, Shady Spring Women's Club, Beckley Women's Club, and the First Baptist Church Golden Mountaineers. Other outreach activities have achieved the goal of increasing the public profile of the association as well. The ED was available to present to targeted audiences
	Newsletters compiled and distributed	1 per quarter	6 of 8 newsletters published.

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	Media Contacts	1 per month or 3 per quarter	PCWA received significant media coverage from the newspaper, television stations, and radio stations
	Live interviews (Radio or Television)	2 per year	The ED conducted one radio interview and 10-15 television interviews over the project period
	Updates to Board of Directors	Monthly	ED supported 12 monthly board meetings
	Updates to General Members	Quarterly	The ED coordinated 5 of 8 general meetings during this project.
	PCWA events planned and executed	3 per year	ED planned and executed Earth Day 2017 and 2018, monthly stream cleanups, Household Hazardous Waste Collection, BSB plant tour, RCSWA tour
	Participation in non-PCWA public events	2 per year	Ed represented the association at the Friends of Coal Auto Fair, NPS Outdoor Adventure Fest, Taste of Beckley, Beckley Kids Classic, Beckley Chili Night, NPS West Virginia Water Festival, Three River Avian Center Migration Celebration, Beckley Founder's Day, Beckley Rhodo-Boogie, Family Art Festival, and Beckley Car Show
	Represent PCWA with other organizations	2 organizations	Ed represents PCWA with in the Raleigh County Make-it-Shine committee, Beckley Events Committee, and Grist Mill Committee
	Non-319 related projects implemented	2 per year	ED planned and supported the Household Hazardous Waste collection and Earth Day 2017 and 2018
	Increase in general members as assessed by dues	10% increase	Membership increased from 18 to 35 over the period of performance
	Increase in individuals attending general meetings and events	10% increase	General meeting were not well attended
	Increase in grants or funds from grants (year over year)	10% increase in funds or overall increase in number of grants	The association now manages almost \$200,000 in grants; an increase of over \$150,000 over the period.
	Increase in projects implemented (year over year)	1 more project completed than in previous year	No construction projects were completed during this period, but more projects were funded and started.

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Funding Sustainability

PCWA is only marginally closer to being able to sustain funding for the position. The Beckley Sanitary Board previously provided limited funding for a position with PCWA, but that funding has not been available for several years; it is unclear if that funding may be available in the future. Even so, that funding is significantly less than what WVDEP provides through this program. PCWA has reached out to the Raleigh County Solid Waste Authority and the City of Beckley for funding assistance but we have not received a response. The potential exists for funding outside of WVDEP support in our watershed but without support from WVDEP the association would be forced to significantly reduce operations in the watershed.

Sustainment funding through donations and memberships is not feasible. The effort spent to recruit and maintain the number of members/donors would consume the time of the director to the point that the director would be unable to manage projects.

The association continues to look for other grant opportunities that will pay for all or part of a salary for a director, but those opportunities are rare. PCWA is adding in administrative costs to grant requests to offset some salary loss but this effort alone will not sustain the position.

Way Ahead: The association will continue efforts to solicit support from other government and non-government organizations to fund the position. In addition, the association will add administrative costs to contracts as allowed to capture the costs associated with the supervision of the grant.

Board member comments

a. Matthew Wade, Chair: "Being able to fund an executive director allows our community to grow. It not only provides a means to propose and receive grants to accomplish projects in our community, it also helps build working relationships that ensures future collaborations that only come with this history of interaction."

b. Tom Lemke, Vice-Chair: "Not only did the director play a major role in the DEP award winning Household Hazardous Waste Collection project, PCWA dedicated all the organizational proceeds from the Friends of Coal Auto Fair to support the cleanup effort. PCWA also contributed to and supported the Thunder Brains middle school robotics team project for monitoring pH on Piney Creek; a project that earned honors in the statewide competition. Under the director, PCWA incorporated new volunteers, from high school and college students to individuals in rehabilitation programs, in projects throughout the watershed. The association is an active participant in improving the community, as shown through our support for the trail network in the watershed and the numerous beautification projects-all made possible because we are able to employ an Executive Director."

c. Phyllis Farley, Board Member: "The value of this grant has been phenomenal in that our watershed association has been able to reach out into the community with our water quality awareness education and hands-on projects! A dedicated director, devoted to our mission, has

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expanded knowledge throughout the area by organizing stream cleanups, Earth Day trash clean-ups, participation in many community-led events with displays and or speaking opportunities and so forth. None of these time-consuming activities were possible through volunteer leadership nor the several part-time directors of the past. As we begin the next phase of PCWA growth, we plan to evaluate where we have been, and what/how to move forward to increased membership, director funding, and new outreaches!"

d. Ellen Taylor, Treasurer: "The Executive Director has been invaluable to the success of Piney Creek Watershed Association. The director brought a level of expertise that we have needed to advance our goals. The director guided Piney Creek through some good projects and I hope will continue working for Piney Creek in the future."

e. Teresa Sopher, Secretary: "The WPP program has been, I believe, of incalculable benefit to our organization. The fact that its monies may only be used for staffing is a blessing since so many grants preclude the use of any funds for staff. Our organization's value to our community has been greatly increased over the past several years and can be directly attributed to the fact that we are now able to better afford more hours for an Executive Director. I believe PCWA is much closer to managing, restoring and protecting the ecological integrity of Piney Creek, her tributaries and her surrounding area than we could possibly be without the funding of WPP."

Points of contact

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