

WPP Final Reports

The Watershed Improvement Branch's NPS Program has provided funding for watershed group staff support since 2014. The original program, known as the Watershed Pilot Program (WPP) is now in Phase II. The intent of WPP is to assist in managing and implementing §319 projects and improve watershed organization sustainability. To qualify for this funding opportunity, the watershed organization must complete an application and meet eligibility requirements.

WPP details are available at: <https://dep.wv.gov/WWE/Programs/nonptsources/WBP/Pages/pilot.aspx>

Included here are the final reports from each WPP organization in 2021.

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NPS 1710 Watershed Pilot Program

Final Report

July 1st, 2020 – June 30th, 2021

Coal River Group

P.O. Box 363

Saint Albans, WV 25177

CoalRiverGroup@Gmail.com

(304) 722-3055

Narrative and General Administration

The Coal River Group (CRG) has now been a part of the WPP program for the past six years and remains a crucial component in the many achievements the group has accomplished. The WPP program has allowed the CRG to establish a project manager and has provided the important next step for the group to grow to become a financially sustainable river restoration entity. 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 the CRG, as well many other tasks and duties. As have many non-profit groups, the CRG has struggled in the past 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 past five years the CRG has taken on various projects and grants that could not be implemented before the WPP program. Seeing that the CRG is a non-profit organization fundraising is key to sustaining the life of the group, undoubtedly the WPP program has enhanced these efforts as the CRG is experiencing the highest success since established in 2004. The group 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, but the staff position has also

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 \$22,500.00 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 2021. Justin Hunt, who was in the position for five years, has moved on and has been replaced by Brody Brown as the Project manager. Justin Hunt stayed with the organization for two months to train the new Project Manager.

Project Updates

The Project Manager oversees NPS 319 grants for the CRG. The Brown's Creek/Angel Fork Septic Remediation Project has been a part of the WPP position since 2016. The goal of this project is to remediate failing septic systems in the Brown's Creek/Angel Fork area to reduce the high counts of fecal coliform that the stream. The current Project Manager has completed the first 319 grant, NPS1619, with sixteen repairs and replacements of failing septic tanks and four pump-outs for failing septic tanks within the WPP program. The success with NPS 1619 has made it possible for the CRG to be awarded with NPS 1724 for a Phase 2 grant within the Browns Creek and Angel Fork watershed area. This 319 Phase 2 grant is underway and to date the CRG has replaced 6 failing septic systems and one pump-out. The CRG has a list of residents and landowners that need septic replacements in the next few months.

Fig. 1: Images of complete Septic Replacement



Outside Engagement Activities

Due to the covid 19 virus, our outside engagements over the past year have been limited. Justin Hunt was able to acquire signage, artwork, and business cards with the purpose of promoting the 319 grant. The new WPP Staff member is in contact with several volunteer groups and anticipates coordinating efforts to educate the public by holding several types of events that include outreach to a local school. In 2019 Justin Hunt, along with Tomi Bergstrom and Klancey Burford hosted *The Coal River Group 2019 Water Festival* for Boone County schools, which took place on October 9th. Using this as inspiration, the new WPP Staff member is eager to continue this outreach effort.

Fundraising and Capacity Building

Due to the COVID 19 virus, limitations have been an issue on the typical outreach and education for the WPP Staff member. Fundraising events, Earth Day events, Tourism Day at the Capital, and career days were attended by Justin hunt in 2020 and will be attended by the WPP staff member next year. WPP staff member is continuing from the previous staff member to reach out by telephone and video conferences to different watershed groups, different non-profit organizations, and businesses for education and grant opportunities. Connections for various grants and fundraising techniques for the CRG will allow the group to become closer to sustaining a permanent position without administration grant funds.

Updates on Key Priorities

Further on the matter of sustaining the CRG Staff member position, the present Project Manager is working with multiple organizations for long term grant projects with administrative funds. CRG continued the 319 Browns Creek Remediation Project Phase 2 within the Browns Creek and Angel Fork are. This project, Browns Creek and Angel Fork Septic Remediation Project Phase 2, will create a permanent feel in the area and allow CRG to really impact the stream in a positive way by reducing the high amounts of fecal coliform. With two more years of the Phase 2 project the CRG Project Manager looks to expand the 319 projects into the Smith Creek watershed area. The Smith Creek watershed area will be the second major tributary that the CRG has implemented a remediation project. Project Manager will be pursuing this grant opportunity within the year.

Key Tasks

- A.** The Project Manager conducts monthly water sampling in the Brown Creek/ Angel Fork Area. There are nine locations where water samples are taken and sent to a lab to be analyzed 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.
- E.** The Project Manager will reach out to communities and speak on CRG's behalf about the impacts we have in our watershed and educate to help others do the same.

Points of Contact

- 1. Bill Currey, Chairman, Coal River Group Board of Directors, bike1currey@gmail.com ; (304) 419-4417.
- 2. Kris Radford, Coal River Group President, Coal River Group Board of Directors, Texascrzd@yahoo.com; (304) 549-1348.

3. Tomi Bergstrom, WVDEP Western Basin Coordinator, Tomi.M.Bergstrom@wv.gov, (304) 926-0499 x 1098
4. Timothy Craddock, NPS Program Coordinator, Timothy.d.craddock@wv.gov; (304) 926-0499 x 1040



NPS 1712 Watershed Association Staff Support Pilot Program

Year 6

Annual Report: July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021



Woodrow Wilson High School April 7, 2021 during pond dewatering (left) and August 3, 2021 as wetland restoration is complete and vegetation is starting to grow (right)

Piney Creek Watershed Association
P.O. Box 672
Beckley, WV 25802

info@pineycreekwatershed.org

(304) 228-1680

Piney Creek Watershed Association
NPS 1712 Watershed Association Staff Support Pilot Program
Annual Report 2020-2021

Narrative

The Piney Creek Watershed Association (PCWA) completed the sixth year of the Watershed Association Staff Support Pilot Program during the 2020-2021 period. The benefits of this support are reflected in the tremendous progress that has been made on many 319 projects in the watershed that will be summarized below. Our successes are also reflected in the continued support received from local governments. We received continued funding of \$20,000 from the City of Beckley and \$5,000 from the Raleigh County Solid Waste Authority. The Raleigh County Commission increased their contribution to \$1,000 following our presentation which was well received. Businesses, individuals, and families continue to support the association with their time and monetary donations. A virtual on-line auction raised significant operational funds as did a giving Tuesday event during the 2019 holiday season.

Our board of directors remained stable, active, and committed to our mission despite the challenges of dealing with the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Funding from the Watershed Pilot Program allowed PCWA to continue support for multiple projects in our watershed. We assisted trail development at the YMCA soccer fields as a means of engaging the public in a way that will lead to increased awareness and appreciation of our natural heritage with a heightened understanding of the need to protect and preserve our local environment and waterways. PCWA managed ongoing renovation of wetlands at the Shady Spring Library. A contractor was utilized to dredge and reconstruct the wetland ponds and modify the inlet to provide more water during rain events. The pond banks were seeded with pollinator species and invasive plant control is underway. Walking bridges and a short trail around the wetlands are planned that will include a handicap accessible walkway between the parking lot and the first pond.

PCWA coordinated litter cleanups during the year with the help of numerous volunteers. We continue to have productive partnerships with the West Virginia University Institute of Technology (WVU Tech) and the Beckley Sanitary Board (BSB) in our efforts to monitor the health of our watershed. Monitoring teams composed of PCWA staff and volunteers, WVU Tech faculty and students, and BSB staff visit 20 sites in and around Beckley monthly. An AGO grant was awarded to allow expansion of our monitoring effort in the coming year to include some of the outlying areas of the watershed in the vicinities of Sullivan, Fireco, and Whitby.

PCWA participates in the New River Clean Water Alliance. This group of government, non-profit, and industry professionals has met to begin an effort to study and document water quality in the lower New River drainage with the goal of developing plans and projects to improve water quality in our area.

General administration and capacity building

Our overall capacity continued to increase over the reporting period. The work of staff and board members has resulted in increased public funding of our association. The executive director has personal ties with young and energetic, outdoor enthusiasts. These folks care about the environment and water quality issues as well as share a vision of Piney Creek as a recreational hub for hiking, trail running, kayaking, biking, rappelling, and rock climbing.

A new accountant has been hired to assist with financial management of the Association. This change became necessary as the activity of the organization has increased. Conversion of our accounting system is ongoing.

Piney Creek Watershed Association
NPS 1712 Watershed Association Staff Support Pilot Program
Annual Report 2020-2021

Project updates

NPS 1612 New River Drive. Much progress has been accomplished on the long-stalled revegetation project of barren areas along New River Dr in Beckley. Following completion of an MOU with the landowner in January, a revegetation plan was developed with the help of the Southern Soil Conservation District. A contractor was hired to bring in 30 loads of topsoil. This material was spread over the rocky exposed subsoil. Seed and straw were spread on the area that totaled approximately 0.92 acres. Exclusion fence was erected, and the area was gated and locked to hinder access to the site by off-road vehicles. Seeds are germinating and the site is turning green! Temporary signage has been put up to notify folks of the project goals. We plan to follow-up with planting some woody vegetation and continue monitoring the adjacent Little Whitestick Creek.

NPS 1685 WWHS Stream Restoration. The initial plans for the project on the campus of Woodrow Wilson High School called for a contractor to dewater the existing pond and recreate the wetland and drainageway. Bids for this approach came in over budget. Additional funds were subsequently acquired from the DEP WQMF program. In addition, the Board of Education agreed to undertake the work of dewatering the pond. An NPDES permit was obtained along with a dewatering permit, a Corps of Engineers permit, and a construction permit from the Beckley Sanitary Board. The project was readvertised, and the low bidder was selected to complete the project. Earthmoving, structure installation, seeding, and strawing was completed in early July. The site is greening.

A component of this project is establishment of pollinator gardens. Seeds were acquired in the spring and biology students seeded pots in late May. These plants were maintained in a greenhouse on the campus of WVU Tech over the summer. Transferring nearly 600 plants into a 2500 square foot prepared bed adjacent to the wetland is scheduled for August. A Beckley Area Foundation community grant is helping to fund the pollinator establishment. Funds will also be used to construct walking bridges across the drainageway with the assistance of the carpentry class at the Academy of Careers and technology that shares a campus with Woodrow Wilson High School. BAF funds will be used to create and install two interpretive signs related to wetlands and pollinators.

NPS 1705 Crescent Elementary Refit. This project is still waiting on the completion of an MOU among PCWA, Raleigh County Board of Education, and Beckley Sanitary Board. The BSB has been delaying this process. We hope to move past this issue in the coming months so that plans can be developed, and the project conducted during the summer of 2022.

NPS 1718 Data Loggers AGO. The logger stations on Cranberry and Little Beaver Creeks have been installed and are running continuously although some issues have developed with some of the loggers that require periodic maintenance. Additional funds were utilized from a Beckley Area Foundation grant to establish a new logger station near Whitby on the upper reaches of Piney Creek. Data from the first year of installation was presented at the National Water Quality Monitoring Council 12th National Monitoring Conference the week of April 19, 2021.

NPS 1736 Little League Convention Center Stormwater Detention. No progress was made on this project this year due to time constraints related to so much other ongoing activity. With other projects wrapping up, it is anticipated that this project will gain attention in the coming year.

**Piney Creek Watershed Association
NPS 1712 Watershed Association Staff Support Pilot Program
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NPS 1756 Little Whitestick Plan Development AGO. A professor at WVU tech and an AmeriCorps Summer Associate were contracted to develop a sub-watershed plan for Little Whitestick Creek that flows through the city of Beckley. The summer was spent investigating the watershed and a report is expected in the coming weeks.

Expansion of Monitoring AGO. We recently learned that this grant was funded for the coming year. We look forward to monitoring the headwaters of Piney Creek as it flows through some of the outlying areas of /Raleigh County.

New 319 Proposal. PCWA submitted a new 319 proposal that would fund septic system repairs in the headwaters area of Piney Creek. Funding decisions are not expected until next summer.

Fundraising and other grants

We have recently applied for grants from the Beckley Area Foundation to support purchase of new laptops for the Executive and Associate Directors. A second BAF proposal requested funds to conduct a digital billboard campaign in the city of Beckley. We should be notified in the coming weeks if these requests have been funded.

Growth in the association’s online presence led to successful social media fundraisers and new community members joining our mission, specifically young adults, and outdoor recreation enthusiasts. In May, Executive Director, Corey Lilly, single-handedly raised \$590 through Facebook fundraising. In August, with the help of our summer associate, we raised \$290 online. Noting the success of the online fundraising efforts from the summer and the limiting in-person factors of COVID, the Fundraising Committee organized a significant, multifaceted, online fundraising effort in December. This work resulted in a Holiday Auction and Giving Tuesday Fundraiser that raised a total of \$8,864.82 in unrestricted funds.

We continue seeking funds from government and quasi-government agencies to fund our staff. As previously mentioned, the City of Beckley will continue their support in the amount of \$20,000 for FY2022 and the Raleigh County Solid Waste Authority for \$5,000. The Raleigh County Commission will support us with \$1,000 in the coming year.

Budget

PCWA used the entire \$22,500 provided by this grant for salary and FICA Match. None of the WPP funds were used this year for travel or training expenses.

Item	Budget Amount	Actual Amount
PCWA Salary	\$20,000.00	\$20,970
Employer FICA Match (7.65% of Salary)	\$1,530.00	\$1,530.00
Travel	\$470	0
Training	\$500	0
TOTAL	\$22,500	\$22,500

Piney Creek Watershed Association
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This grant provided 1048.5 hours of labor for the association.

Note: The WPP funds paid for salary expenses for the associate director as well as some of the salary expenses for the executive director. We began charging the associate director's salary to the WPP funds as the tasks of the position were specific to 319 projects and water monitoring.

Education and Outreach

The covid pandemic limited our ability to hold educational and outreach activities this past year.

Points of Contact.

Tom Lemke, Chairman, Board of Directors for Piney Creek Watershed Association,
tlemke@suddenlink.net; (304) 763-3260.

Phyllis Farley, Vice-Chairman, Board of Directors for Piney Creek Watershed Association,
phyll.farley@gmail.com; (304) 255-4002.

Teresa Sopher, Secretary/Acting Treasurer, Board of Directors for Piney Creek Watershed Association, fruitpancakes@gmail.com; (304) 222-9444.

Corey Lilly, Executive Director, Piney Creek Watershed Association,
coreylilly@pineycreekwatershed.org ; (304) 228-1680.

Jim Fedders, Associate Director, Piney Creek Watershed Association,
jimfedders@pineycreekwatershed.org (304) 228-1680

Jennifer Liddle, Southern Basin Coordinator, Jennifer.D.Liddle@wv.gov ; (304) 574-4471

Tim Craddock, NPS Program Coordinator, timothy.d.craddock@wv.gov; (304) 926-0499 x 1040.



Save the Tygart Watershed Association
Watershed Pilot Program
Annual Report 2020-2021
savethetygartwatershed@gmail.com

A. Summary

In the third year of the Watershed Pilot Program funding, the Save the Tygart Watershed Association Inc. (STTWA) has built upon its first year efforts and seen additional growth despite setbacks from the Covid-19 pandemic. Employees have continued to develop projects surrounding water quality from the Barlow and North portals. We have also obtained funding for work in the Beaver Creek watershed along the Barbour-Randolph county line. We have published an annual newsletter and developed a trash-a-thon public outreach and fundraising opportunity. While the pandemic has prevented many of the outreach activities for the end of 2020 and beginning of 2021, STTWA personnel and volunteers have spent the time making plans.

B. Major Accomplishments

1. We have obtained and AGO grant for additional metals sampling to support the Watershed Based Plan for Beaver Creek Watershed in Barbour County and have begun sampling within the watershed.
2. We have obtained WCAP funding to support a previously obtained 319 grant for passive remediation at the North portal site on Roaring Creek and have secured the necessary permits for construction.
3. We have worked with DEP personnel to develop plans for a WCAP for the Barlow portal flowing into the Left Fork of Little Sandy Creek.
4. We participated in trainings conducted by the Appalachian Regional Commission regarding financial response to Covid-19.
5. We have conducted two research projects involving Alderson Broaddus University students to conduct a water quality studies on Beaver Creek watershed as well as an evaluation of soil erosion models in Tygart Valley River subwatersheds.
6. We carried obtained AGO funding to expand equipment available for the expansion of their water quality education and water quality monitoring programs.
7. We have published one issue of an organizational newsletter to inform our membership and the public of accomplishments and future activities as well as to increase future membership. The newsletter is available in hard copy and electronic formats.
8. We have used a \$200,000 grant from the U.S. EPA to enter the WVDEP VRP program. This was a major step toward the cleanup of the site and the construction of an office, laboratory, and education center.

9. We organized two trash-a-thon events as a public relations and fundraising opportunities.

C. Routine Activities and Accomplishments.

1. We attend monthly STTWA meetings. As of March 2020, meetings have been held virtually via Zoom due to the Covid-19 Pandemic and health concerns. We also attend meetings and/or maintain contact with other local organizations including:
 - All Aboard Grafton
 - WV DEP
 - WV DNR
 - Northern Brownfields Assistance Center
 - Greater Morgantown Convention and Visitors Bureau
 - WVU School of Public Health
 - WVU Reed College of Media
 - WVU Service and Learning
 - Grafton City Council
 - Taylor County Economic Development Authority
 - Taylor County Commission.
 - WVU Water Research Institute
2. We participate in and maintain a database for water quality sampling in the Tygart Valley River watershed.
3. We maintain the STTWA website and Social Media (Facebook Pages).
4. We research and apply for appropriate grants for education, cleanup and sampling in the Tygart Valley River watershed.
5. We have continued a relationship with the STM program at Alderson Broaddus University and are worked to develop and execute two student research projects in the Tygart River Watershed.

D. Milestone Accomplishments

The following WPP milestones for 2020-2021 were addressed by the following activities. The Covid-19 Pandemic prevented some of the activities related to these goals.

- **Goal 1: Continue Partnerships on existing §319 Projects: Barlow Project**
 - STTWA WPP staff participated in planning with WV DEP personnel to develop a new alternative to treatment of the Barlow Portal outflow. Unfortunately, this latest project fell through due to landowner conflict. STTWA continues to maintain contact with DEP to pursue the treatment.
- **Goal 2: Continue Partnerships on existing and future §319 Projects: Roaring Creek**
 - WPP staff have continued to work with the WV DEP, WV WRI and Penn Virginia on §319 grant for remediation of the North Portal of Roaring Creek.
 - WFF staff have obtained WCAP funding to assist in the remediation of the North Portal on Roaring Creek and have worked with WV WRI on the submission of an additional §319 grant for work on this portal.
 - WPP staff have begun discussion with Penn Virginia about a future §319 grant submission for the remediation of the Mars Portals on Roaring Creek.
- **Goal 3: Develop a Watershed-Based Plan for Beaver Creek Watershed (additional actions depend on the result of §319 Project Funding)**

- WPP staff has obtained an AGO grant to obtain funding for additional chemical testing of Beaver Creek and tributaries. In 2020-2022, WPP staff coordinated 4 of 6 sampling events toward the fulfillment of the AGO grant.
- WPP staff have continued participating in volunteer monitoring efforts and maintaining a database of water quality data.
- STTWA has continued its support of treatment of Beaver Creek outflows with line sands.
- WPP staff met with WV DEP environmental personnel and WV DNR personnel in the planning of potential changes to the current treatment program on Beaver Creek.
- **Goal 4: Increase opportunities for educational outreach in K-12 and adult populations**
 - WPP Staff applied for and obtained AGO funding to expand equipment available for educational opportunities.
 - WPP Staff developed and presented a poster about utilizing undergraduate research at the 2021 National Monitoring Conference.
 - WPP staff obtained \$3,650 in external funding to support a university student project on the water quality parameters (chemical and biological) within Beaver Creek watershed. The student collected macroinvertebrate samples above and below lime sand treatment locations. Results were presented virtually at the annual Ledford Summit of the Appalachian College Association.
 - WPP staff supported a university student research project that examined the correlation between soil erosion models and turbidity measurements in subwatersheds of the Tygart Valley River.
 - WPP personnel participated in an educational event with the Taylor County 4-h summer camp.
- **Goal 5: Expand organizational sustainability through increased membership and community awareness of STTWA mission and activities and funding opportunities.**
 - WPP personnel participated in trainings conducted by the Appalachian Regional Commission regarding financial response to Covid-19. These personnel developed new practices for financial management and reporting.
 - WPP staff organized two trash-a-thon events as a public relations and fundraising opportunity.
 - WPP staff have published an annual newsletter to inform membership and the general public about its activities.
 - WPP staff have worked in cooperation with a licensed remediation specialist to enroll the Carr China site into the WVDEP VRP program. WPP staff has worked to obtain additional funding for redevelopment of the Carr China site.
- **Goal 6: Maintain and enhance the watershed monitoring program.**
 - WPP staff have continued participating in volunteer monitoring efforts and maintaining a database of water quality data.
 - WPP Staff applied for and obtained AGO funding to expand equipment available for the expansion of their water quality monitoring program.

E. Points of Contact

Name	Title	Phone Number
Dr. Kelley Flaherty	Executive Director	724-562-7074
Mr. Stan Jennings	President	304 892 3270
Mr. Jeff Kresch	Vice President	304 940 1106
Mrs. Bryan Smith	Treasurer	304 709 0164
Dr. Kelley Flaherty	Interim Secretary	724-562-7074
Mr. Bryan Smith	Media and Outreach Coordinator	304 709 0164

F. Final thoughts on the 2020-2021 WPP funding period

Like many other watershed organizations, the STTWA experienced a period of slow activity due to the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions and concerns. The difficulties posed by the pandemic have led to a variety of creative solutions that STTWA employees plan to build on in the future. However, WPP employees were able to continue work on several key goals. These included obtaining additional funding for water quality monitoring and education as well as training in financial management. We anticipate that, in the next year, this funding and training will allow the organization to accomplish more of its goals.



STTWA President Stan Jennings teaches 4-h campers about dragonflies.



STTWA members display the latest public outreach project at their Carr China property in Grafton, WV



STTWA members measuring discharge on Beaver Creek.



STTWA member Paul Baker teaching 4-h campers about water chemistry.



Alderson Broaddus University students learning about water quality issues, monitoring and treatment on Beaver Creek.