Scuppernong Water Management Study
Phase 1 Community Engagement Summary
April 2024

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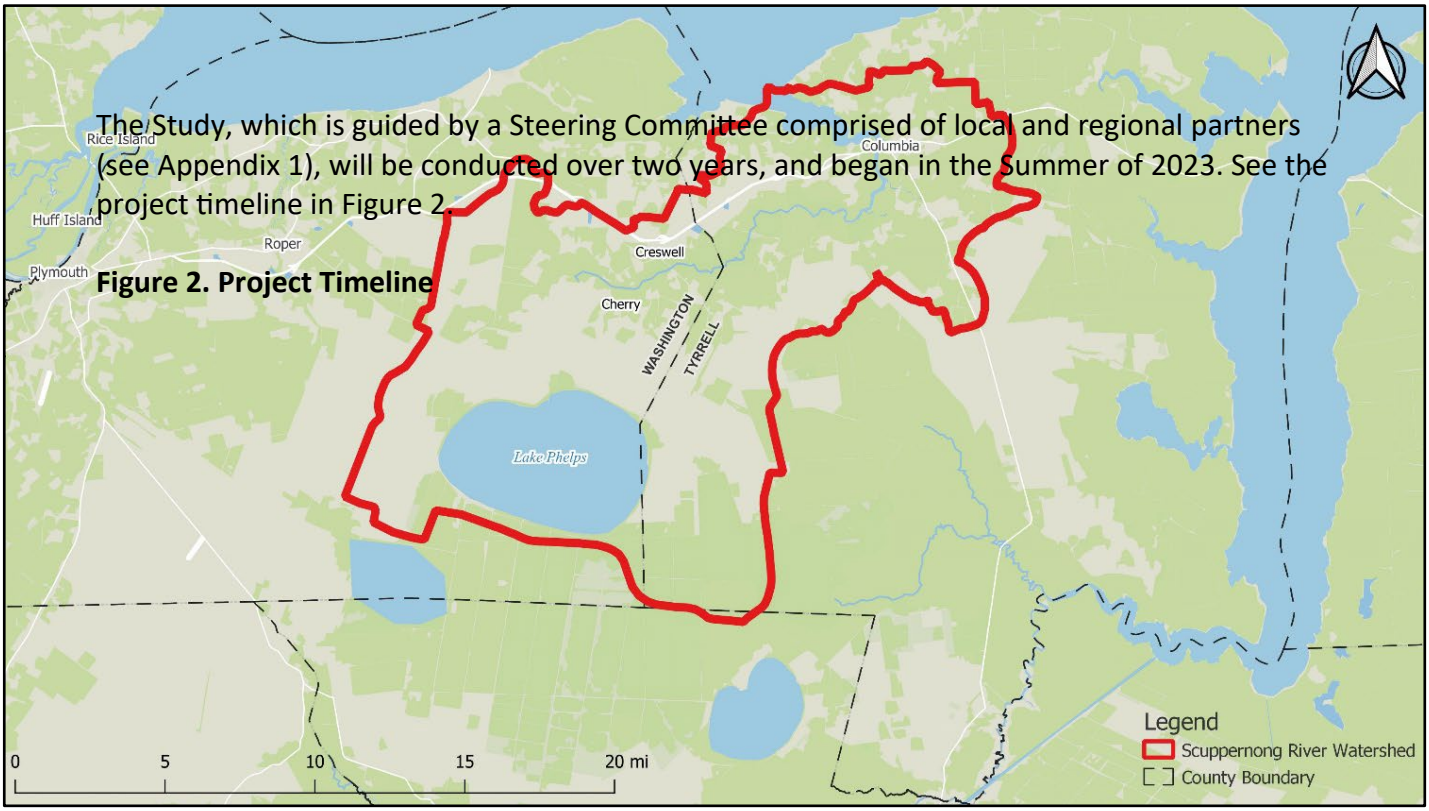
Scuppernong Water Management Study Web Page

Project Overview

The Albemarle Commission in collaboration with Washington and Tyrrell Counties has partnered with various organizations to conduct a comprehensive study on flooding in the northern Albemarle-Pamlico peninsula for the Scuppernong River watershed (see Figure 1). The Water Management Study (Study) is intended to provide an understanding of how water moves within the region to help update existing plans, improve decision-making tools, and identify potential solutions to long-standing water management problems. The Study is funded by the N.C. Water Resources Development Grant Program. This Study will:

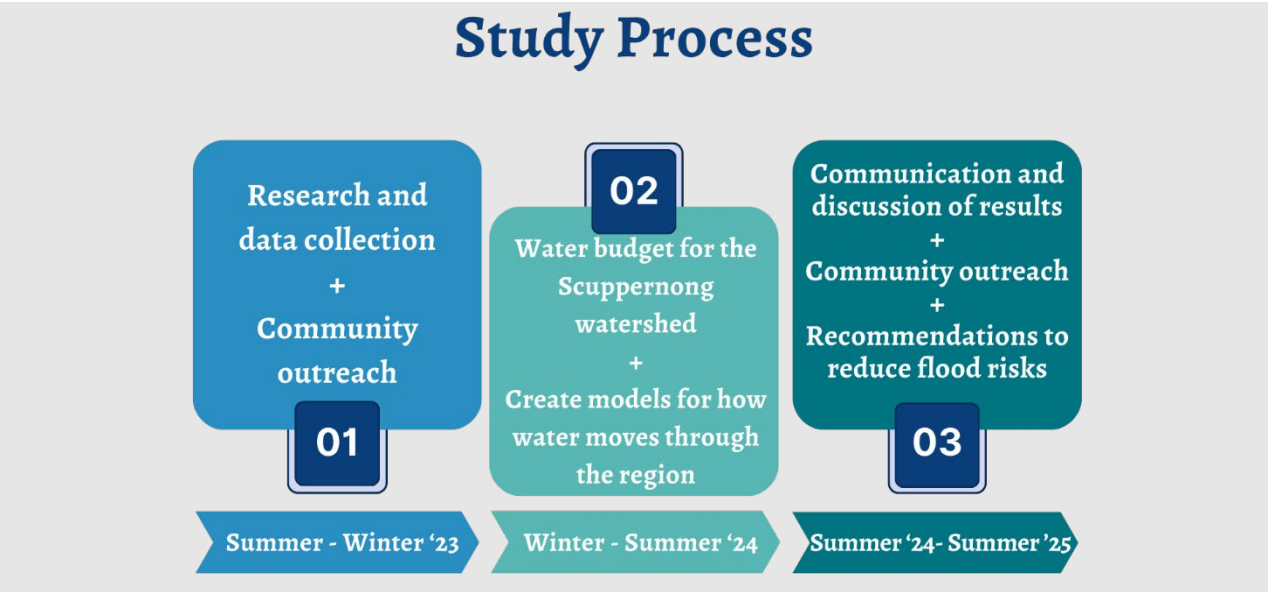
- Create a "water budget" to show how water moves through the Scuppernong watershed;
- Identify flood prone areas and develop models to simulate conditions during different storm events;
- Use the models to test possible water management actions to determine effective solutions; and
- Recommend short and long-term actions to reduce flood risk and water management issues.

Figure 1. Project Area



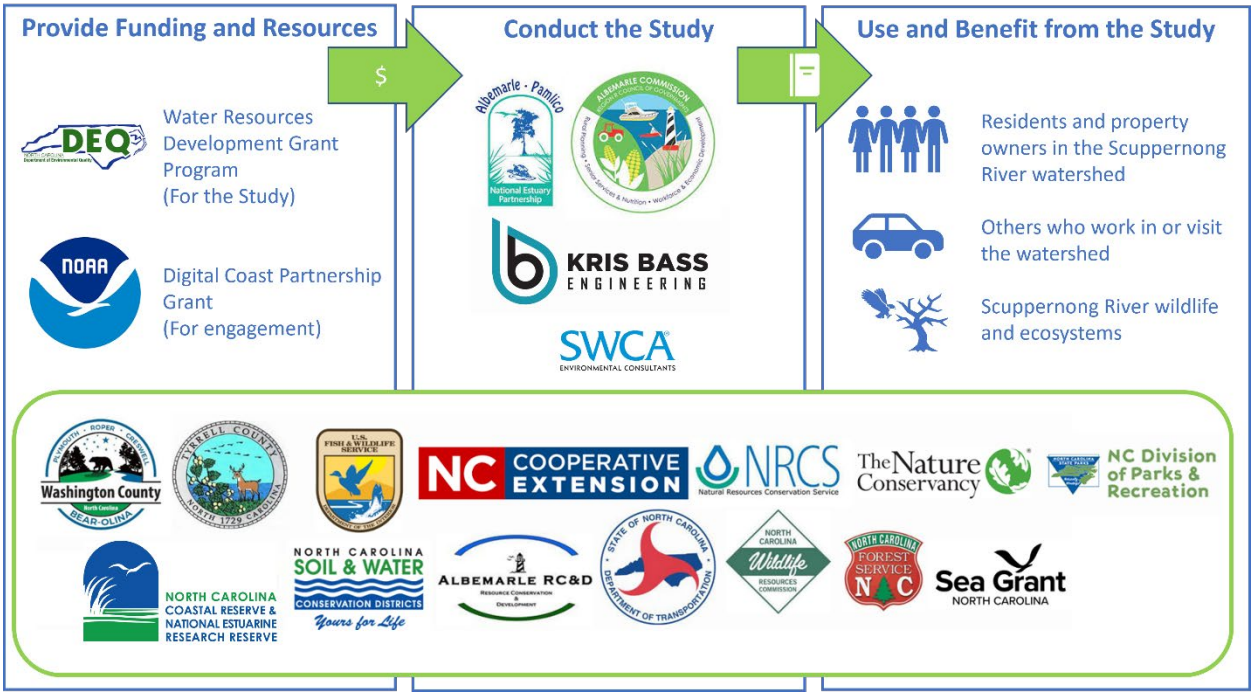
The Study, which is guided by a Steering Committee comprised of local and regional partners (see Appendix 1), will be conducted over two years, and began in the Summer of 2023. See the project timeline in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Project Timeline



To ensure the Study incorporates local knowledge and is useful to project partners (see Figure 3), additional funding was granted from the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Digital Coast Partnership to engage the local community around flooding issues. Local knowledge will help identify flood prone areas in the watershed to help inform solutions.

Figure 3. Project Partners & Flow of Resources. The project is guided by a Steering Committee, those organizations' logos are in the green box at the bottom of the image. See Appendix 1 for the full list of project partners.



Engagement efforts with partners and the community have been conducted to align with the N.C. Resilient Coastal Communities Program (RCCP). Washington County and the Town of Creswell are participating in the program in 2023-2024. Several members of the Steering Committee served on the Community Action Team for Washington County RCCP and have helped to align the RCCP planning efforts with the Study.

Learn more about this project at the Scuppernong Water Management Study Web Page.

Summary of Phase 1 Engagement Efforts

The following is a summary of engagement efforts conducted in Phase 1 of the process, which is focused on collecting information from partners and the local community to inform the Water Management Study.

Water Study Booth at the Scuppernong River Festival – October 14, 2023



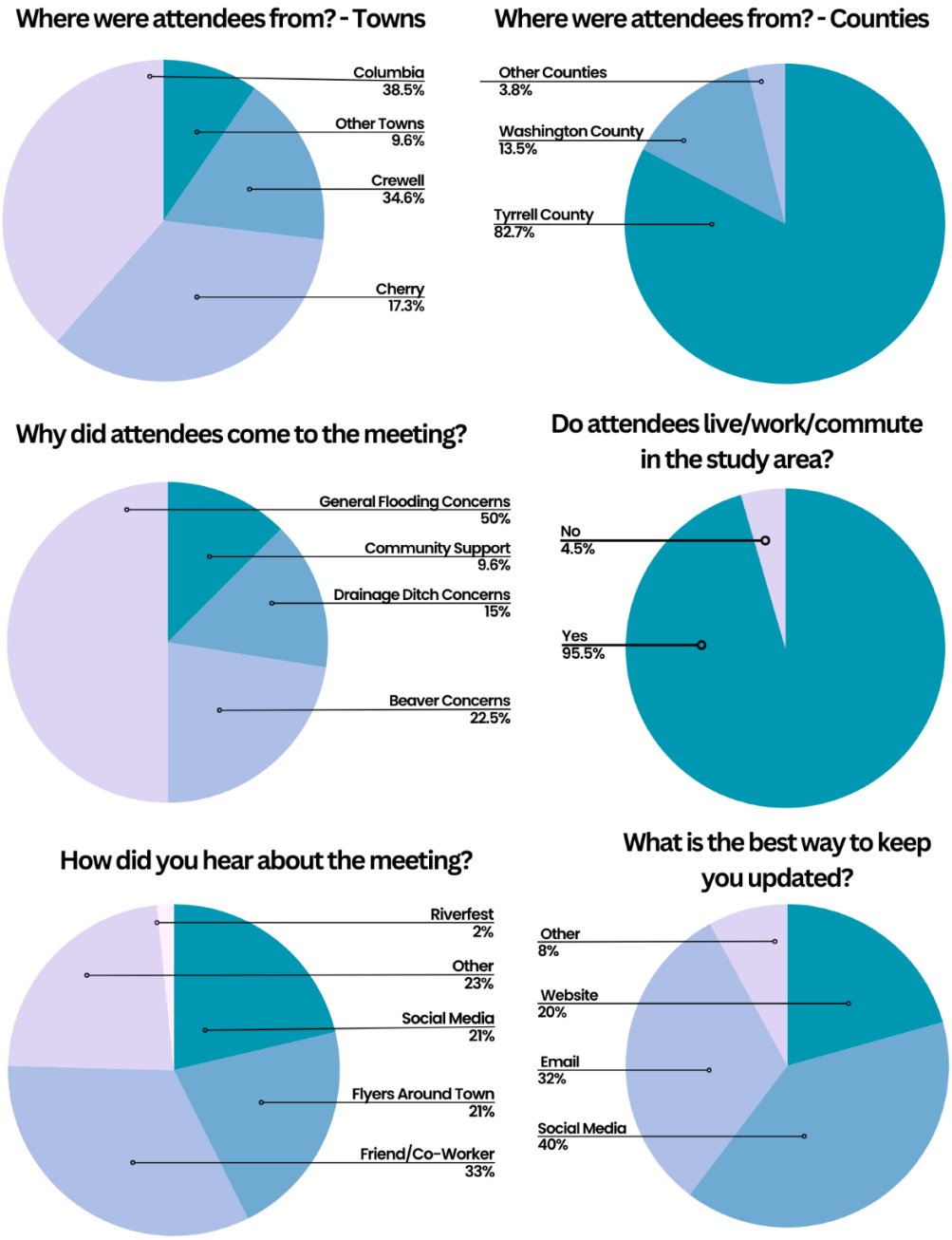
- **Purpose:** Inform festival attendees about the Study process and timeline; engage around the watershed map to identify areas of concern; and share information about the October 23, 2023 community meeting at the Eastern 4-H Center.
- **Metrics:** Approximately 25 festival attendees who live or work in the study area provided feedback on areas of concern on the watershed map. Approximately 20 children were engaged with the marsh mystery box and received a prize for playing. Approximately 100 flyers advertising the October 23 community meeting were handed out.
- **Information captured** from the watershed map engagement was digitized and incorporated into the Areas of Concern Map (see Figure 6).

Community Meeting at the Eastern 4-H Center – October 23, 2023



- **Purpose**: Inform participants about the Study goals, process, and timeline; engage around watershed maps to understand where flooding happens, conditions that lead to flooding, and other water-related concerns; and identify and discuss community assets in Washington County for the N.C. Resilient Coastal Community Program process.
- **Accommodations provided** included free transportation provided by the Gator Line; kid fun zone for ages 4 - 13 with educational activities so that parents could participate without having to supervise their children or hire childcare; gift card raffle; and a free supper from Captain Bob's catering.
- **A video booth** was provided for interested attendees to share their stories about the region, what they value, and how flooding impacts their lives. The videos are currently being reviewed and will be published later.
- **Metrics:** Approximately 100 community members attended the event, 15 children attended the kid fun zone, and 12 community members participated in the video booth. See Figure 4 for additional metrics captured at the meeting.
- **Information captured** from the watershed map engagement was digitized and incorporated into the Areas of Concern Map (see Figure 6).

Figure 4: Additional Metrics from the October 23 Community Meeting



Community Survey, Online and Mail-in – October 2023 - January 2024

- **Purpose:** Engage community members who were unable to attend the October 23 community meeting to collect information about areas of concern in the Scuppernong River Watershed. The survey mirrored the information collected on October 23 and feedback was collected through mid-January 2024.
- **Metrics:** Nine online forms and one mail-in form were completed.
- **Information captured** from the watershed map engagement was digitized and incorporated into the Areas of Concern Map (see Figure 6).

Creswell Christmas Parade Booth – December 9, 2023



- **Purpose:** To encourage participation in the Community Survey, identify areas of concern in the Creswell area, and share information about the Study as well as the N.C. Resilient Coastal Communities Program process occurring in Creswell.
- **Metrics:** The engagement team interacted with about 50 parade attendees.
- **Information captured** from the watershed map engagement was digitized and incorporated into the Areas of Concern Map (see Figure 6).

Farmer Engagement





- **Purpose:** To ensure that farmers were engaged in this process and provide feedback on areas of concern, as their harvest season overlapped with fall 2023 outreach events.
- **Metrics:** The engagement team presented on the Study at the Washington County Drainage Board Meeting on February 8, 2024 reaching nine farmers, county commissioners, and county staff; and the Blackland Farm Manager Association Annual Business Meeting on February 26, 2024, reaching 22 landowners, farmers, and N.C. State Cooperative Extension staff.
- **Information captured** from the watershed map engagement was digitized and incorporated into the Areas of Concern Map (see Figure 6).

Knowledge Captured To-Date

Community Values

The word collage in Figure 5 shows the responses to what participants value about the Study area. This underscores the importance of the Study and highlights that the area has a passionate community of people that want flooding issues addressed.

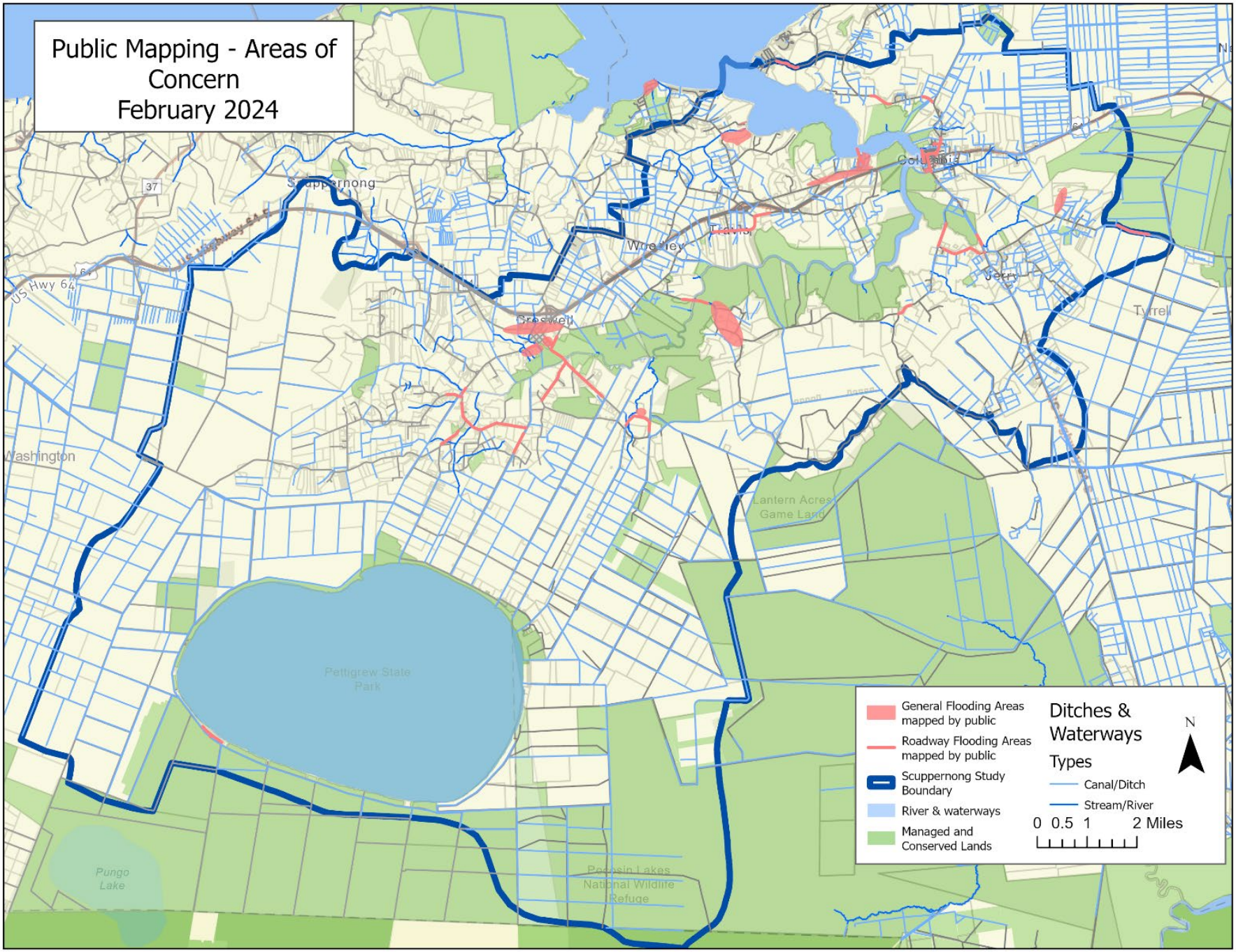
Figure 5: Word collage from October 23 Community Meeting



Areas of Concern Mapping

The map in Figure 6 below shows areas of concern that have been identified through this engagement effort. Priority areas selected for detailed study following this feedback include Cherry, the Town of Creswell, the Town of Columbia, and portions of U.S. 64 and Newlands Road. The Study contractors are using this data to inform their modeling efforts and to assess the effectiveness of potential flood reducing solutions.

Figure 6. Areas of Concern Map



Next Steps

When the Study is complete in late 2024, the project partners will reach back out to the community to share these results and potential solutions. This includes participating in special events, such as the Blackland Farm Managers Association Tour in August 2024. Study deliverables include a report describing study results, recommended actions, and informational materials on the project web page.

An initial outcome is placement of water level gauges to address needs identified by county staff and the community, through a partnership with the Southeast Water Level Monitoring Network. The Engagement Team will work with local partners and the Steering Committee to identify suitable locations in Spring/Summer 2024.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the community members that have engaged with the project, your insights on the areas of concern are invaluable and will inform future solutions. Thank you to the members of the Steering Committee and project partners for their dedication and expertise, which have been instrumental in shaping the direction of the engagement process. The insights, recommendations, and wealth of knowledge shared are invaluable. We look forward to continuing this collaborative journey and achieving meaningful outcomes together.

Appendix 1. Project Partners

Organization	Interests Represented
Albemarle Commission	Tyrrell, Washington, Hyde Counties
Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Partnership	Project Leader, Engagement Team
Albemarle Resource Conservation & Development Council (RC&D)	
Kris Bass Engineering	Contractor for Water Management Study
N.C. Coastal Reserve	Buckridge Coastal Reserve, Engagement Team
N.C. Department of Transportation	
N.C. Cooperative Extension	
N.C. Division of Soil and Water Conservation	Statewide soil and water conservation coordination
N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation	Pettigrew State Park, Lake Phelps
N.C. Forest Service	
N.C. Sea Grant	Engagement Team
N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission	
Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)	
SWCA Environmental Consultants	Resilient Coastal Communities Program contractor for Washington County and Town of Creswell
The Nature Conservancy	Engagement Team
Tyrrell County	
Tyrrell Soil and Water Conservation District	
U.S Fish & Wildlife Service	Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge
Washington County	
Washington Soil and Water Conservation District	