



# SPRING CREEK WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

*A grassroots stakeholder initiative*

## Meeting Summary

Spring Creek Watershed Association – Tue, May 21, 2013

7:30 AM Start Time

- I. ATTENDING: Leah Weaver, Mike Schmidt, Dave Smith, Gaye Dunn, Bob Carline, Judi Sittler, Bob Vierck, Kristen Saacke Blunk, Nick Schipanski, Bill Sharpe, Paul Bartley, Barb Fisher, Todd Giddings, Jen Shuey, Ann Donovan, Bob Donaldson
- II. Discussion of FUTURE role of SCWA based on re-visit of strategic initiatives 2009 – present. Based on a review of Paul Bartley’s “SCWA Evolve” summary of meeting minutes – and strategic initiatives, the following four ‘threads’ were identified as primary areas of focus for the SCWA during the 2009-2013 timeframe. Attendees reviewed where the Association had been – and discussed current status and needs for the future: **(NOTE: *in italics* – Association responses/input to each component of this thread’s history)**

- a. **Thread 1: 2009 - 2010: The Sustainability Initiative (SI)**

- **Winter 2009 - Introduced SI plan**
- **ID’d partners, participants, and component projects:** *Noted that national and local initiatives aligned for building a community-wide sustainability vision. With the New Leaf Initiative – mapped that nearly 200 organizations are working on aspects of sustainability for holistic environmental and community efforts. To this end – “All roads lead back to ClearWater – a prime meridian” for the community.*
- **Devoted 6 meetings to “models” for the SI with High interest in “model ordinances” for SI:** *There is a continued need for presenting and advocating for “model ordinances” that will help the municipalities have the tools for improving environmental stewardship that is balanced with community well-being.*
- **Model well/geothermal borehole ordinance developed:** *Noted that this “success” was largely attributable to the work of the League of WV.*
- **Winter 2010 - Achieving Sustainability in the Spring Creek WS Workshop Held:** *With grants from the PA Association of Conservation District – workshop was held and radio messages were formulated. Association served as a catalyst – and many others took the role of implementing.*
- **Nov 2010 - SCWA SI focus seems to diminish.** *Inviting other organizations in has been a critical component of what the Assoc does – and needs to continue to do. Many examples exist of where the Assoc has been a catalyst to efforts for which the Assoc may not claim direct credit but can show it’s value in influencing start of important efforts.*

- b. **Thread 2: 2010-2013: Recharge Map**

- **4/09 Under SI - this activity ID'd**
- **9/09 WRMP reported that they had done a course-scale effort - but thought it would be important to do this following USGS model availability**
- **2010 - Recharge project started and stalled.**
- **10/11 Recharge focus needed according to SCWA**
- **3/12 USGS presentation made on water budget**
- **6/12 Giddings re-presented Recharge Map proposal - Assoc agreed to propose to Commission.**
  1. Obtain use of GIS (geographic information system) data layers for current slope, land use, soil series, and bed rock formation
  2. Assemble the scientific and technical panel to make necessary science-based decisions on consideration of these components and their relative contributions to facilitating recharge.
  3. Create the Spring Creek Watershed Recharge Map.
  4. Develop a user-friendly guide to understanding and utilizing the Spring Creek Watershed
  5. Recharge Map.
  6. Invite scientific and technical review of the product by other area experts prior to product
  7. release.
- **9/12 Commission agreed to move forward. Six month timeframe suggested.**
- **10/12 Last report: Committee being established.** *Watershed Recharge Map is now under Watershed Commission's Purview. Association responsibility was to catalyze – and Todd Giddings and team is now reporting to the Watershed Commission on the development and completion of this product. Recharge Map is expected to be completed within 6 months from now (approx. Nov/Dec 2013). Halfmoon Township – at the May 15 Commission meeting affirmed the value of the product to the municipalities – stating that it will be highly informative towards Halfmoon's Open Space Protection Plan efforts. Association agreed that this initiative would be an important component of an OVERALL Watershed Management Plan – a product for which future efforts should be directed.*

**c. Thread 3: 2011-2012: Source Water Protection**

- **Winter 2011: Source water plan presentation to Assoc.** *It was noted that where whole community Source Water Protection Plans had been most successful – was in the Northern Tier of the State – where Marcellus exploration had created community level concern for drinking water protection – not in areas like the Spring Creek WS. An urgent need was not recognized within the Spring Creek WS – however, there was a sense that having the entire watershed under source water protection – would provide a valuable tool for the community – and would ensure that the entire population had some level of protection of drinking water source – regardless of supplier.*
- **Established subcommittee** *Approach may have been flawed in that it targeted specific systems – Halfmoon, Rock Springs, and Ridgemont. The latter was being pulled into the SCBWA service area. Rock Springs was being*

*serviced by M. Genchur/PA Rural Water Assoc – but there were some problems given recent violations making them ineligible for the State program, and Halfmoon Water was interested – but not proactive in pursuing despite willingness to discuss.*

- **Invited Commission to participate.**
- **Commission convened meeting for water suppliers.** *Few suppliers/managers showed up for meeting despite targeted mailings inviting them to attend a special session with DEP/Mark Stephens at the Commission meeting.*
- **Assoc conducted outreach to local Community systems.** *Overall – discussion showed that we didn't view this as a failure. There were good efforts made – but the interest waned in part due to there not being a clear role for the Assoc and Commission to pursue together.*

**d. Thread 4: 2012-2013: The State of the Association**

- **Outstanding speakers on a VARIETY of topics: Invitations to the public to attend special presentations and offerings.**
- **Public participation beyond dedicated, core group is low.** *It was noted that this is very common among many watershed associations – in our County as well as statewide. It was noted that when organizations cease to exist – it doesn't mean they haven't been successful – it simply means new things/systems/approaches are needed. But it was also noted that having a specific MISSION in mind – would build the energy and continuity needed for carrying forward. Two specific missions for which there was MUCH enthusiasm:*
  - **Remove impairments on streams of the Spring Creek Watershed: Be a 100% attaining designated use watershed. (currently 4-10 miles of the watershed's streams are considered impaired)**
  - **Build a Watershed Management Plan for which the Commission, municipalities, Association and other watershed efforts could use to guide their efforts.**
- **Capacity to fulfill stated objectives has been low.** *Strong support for the fact that the Assoc has played an important role in initiating actions. We've brought things to the attention of the commission. We've pursued public education on a number of topics/issues.*
  - *A NEW model for the Assoc is needed – and the idea of moving from a volunteer organization to having some form of a professional staff who is helping to build sustainability of the organization and more specifically – its mission – between meetings was well received. The question of whether ClearWater would take responsibility for providing a part-time staff person who would serve a coordinating and support role o the efforts of local watershed initiatives – namely the Association and Commission (and TU was also mentioned) was suggested. There was broad interest and support for this – and most felt that having this level of staffing would help us be “unstuck” in the places where we feel as if we've being spinning wheels. The possibility of building this with the Commission – and inviting their consideration*

*of utilizing some of their access to resources to support was well received. Further – the idea of building a matching support/grant for this type of position was of interest. It was noted that Nick Schipanski will be leaving his position and the community later in 2013 – and that this time of transition could provide a window for re-configuring staffing options.*

- *Fear as an important motivator – and it's clear that our community is overall very complacent about water. Recognizing that the need for an urgent topic/issue is part of what motivates communities to action.*

- **Bringing on a NEW chair.**

**e. MOVE to a Conversation about WHAT's NEXT?** Define and refine our mission based on the things we're excited about:

- 0 miles of impaired streams
  - Watershed Management Plan (including model environmental ordinances that will support municipalities in their work)
- I. Invite the SC WS Commission to meet with the Association in an informal work session – outside of our regular meetings to find areas of consensus including: Assoc areas of enthusiasm (bullets above), staffing opportunities for building continuity for BOTH the Assoc and the Commission and reinvigorating our core groups towards these ends. Discussion ensued about doing this in a possible picnic environment – Talleyrand or a wonderful location along headwaters, Mackey Run ☺
  - II. Identify next steps between the Assoc and the Commission for moving forward – including the idea of convening with other critical watershed interests – e.g. TU, Conservation District, others.
  - III. Kristen and Jen will construct an invitation to the WS Commission towards convening this work session – with the language/approach suggested by the WS Association.

### III. Other Business

- **Judi Sittler – TU reported that it's "Return the Roots"** campaign to improve riparian lands in urban segments of the Spring Creek watershed has been successfully funded by the Water Resources Education Network (WREN) an initiative of the PA League of Women Voters. She and Bob Vierck will be attending the 2-day workshop that WREN holds in Jun at Dickinson College – specifically to learn improved techniques for inviting landowners to change behaviors and adopt riparian practices that will enhance stream health.
- **Jennifer Shuey – announced that the Spring Creek Festival and 5K would take place on Jun 1.** She also announced that Kristen Saacke Blunk will be honored with the George Harvey Memorial Spring Creek Heritage Award which is given each year by ClearWater and the Spring Creek Chapter of TU.
- **Spring Creek Watershed Commission meets: Jun 19 – 7 PM** – at the Spring Township Municipal Building. Commission will hear from the Penns Valley Conservation Association. It is important to note that this group was one held up as a strong example of a vibrant watershed association – for which there is continued energy and growth across all demographic groups. Gaye Dunn

invited all to attend.

- **Spring Creek Watershed Association – NEXT MEETING: Jun 18 – 7:30 AM** at the Patton Township Municipal Building. Ann Donovan, who has worked extensively with watershed initiatives across many groups, associations, and partners – will present to the Association on watershed initiatives and projects underway across Centre County – and her work as the County Conservation District’s watershed specialist.