



WSWA Newsletter

WSWA Selected Watershed of the Year!

President's Perspective *by Kate Lehman*

I doubt that many of us who were here for the September 1, 2012, flood of Warm Springs Run will soon forget it. Fortunately, the eight flood dams in the watershed, which were constructed between 1955 and 1961, protected the area from even worse devastation.

Now more than a month after the area received 6 inches of rain in 4 hours, I am reminded of a Chinese character that means both "crisis" and "opportunity."

Without making light of the crises wrought by the flood – there was significant damage done, and many experienced significant financial losses – the flood did provide an opportunity to talk to the larger community in general and local leadership in particular about proactive measures that might be enacted now to make future flooding less severe.

While nothing will prevent any stream from flooding when conditions are right, various stormwater best management practices (BMPs) such as rain barrels and rain gardens can capture the first inch of rain, preventing it from ending up in the Run. BMPs such as vegetative filter strips, permeable paving, and adequate riparian buffers help in two ways: during precipitation such practices reduce both the volume and velocity of water entering the Run. Further, measures such as these prevent erosion and a buildup of sedimentation on the bottom of the Run, thus leaving more room for flood waters during heavy precipitation. These BMPs may seem less dramatic than the 8 flood dams, but they can also reduce the devastation of another 100-year storm such as that of September 1st.

What a perfect ending to the Watershed Celebration Day held this past September 7th & 8th. At the conclusion of the meeting, the Warm Springs Watershed Association was recognized as the Watershed of the Year. This honor was bestowed on WSWA for all the work we have done the past year, including completion of the Comprehensive Plan. We should all give ourselves a pat on the back for a job well done. A special note of thanks must be given to President Kate Lehman who has worked tirelessly on behalf of the WSWA. From her presentations throughout the county on "Why Good Streams Go Bad" to her leadership on getting the Comprehensive Plan underway and completed, Kate has been a dedicated voice for the Run and an activist committed to restoring, protecting and preserving the Run.

The recognition comes with a check for \$5,000.00 and a sign noting our award. Discussions are ongoing for placement of the sign within the watershed. The first choice is to place the sign in the Park near the Run; the second choice is at the bridge across the street from Tari's. It is likely the sign will be placed in the Park due to ease of placement.

The WSWA is a young organization but the hard work of everyone is proof that we are making a difference. Thank you to everyone for the many contributions you made to helping our organization achieve our mission and for the resulting recognition.

**THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETS
EVERY 4TH WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH
AT 7:00PM AT THE EXTENSION OFFICE.
ALL MEMBERS ARE URGED TO ATTEND
AND PARTICIPATE.**

Quarterly Highlights

- ❖ Follow-up on Comprehensive Plan – shorter versions of the Comp Plan have been completed and can be found in our cubby hole at the Extension Office. A sub-committee was formed to propose which short- and long-term projects recommended in the Plan should be undertaken at what point in time. That report was presented at the September Board meeting. More information regarding these projects will be highlighted in the next newsletter. Stay tuned for more information and more opportunities to volunteer.
- ❖ 501(c)(3) Status Update – Norman Dean has completed and mailed in the paperwork and check for our 501(c)(3) designation. Once the 501(c)(3) status has been recognized, the next step is to apply for a Permanent Business Registration Certificate. A big thank you to Norman Dean, Kate Lehman, Rebecca MacLeod, and Elise Wood for work done on our effort to be designated as a not-for-profit organization.
- ❖ Website Update – At the September Board meeting, the Directors moved that the WSWA work with Johnna Armstrong of **Business Technology Source** in Shepherdstown to create our website and that we partner with PHRC&D for our training session. PHRC&D has agreed to pay half of the \$600 fee. A training session is currently being scheduled.
- ❖ Tree planting on September 29th – approximately 25 people, representing organizations such as the WSWA, the Lions Club and the Master Gardeners participated in a tree planting day along the Run at Nationwide Lane on Debbie Dhayer's property. Herb Peddicord taught us the finer points of tree planting and, by noon, 160 trees and shrubs, including oaks, sycamores, dogwoods, button bushes, chokecherry bushes, were in the ground. Thanks to the volunteers, the instructors, Debbie Dhayer, and to Tony's Butcher Block, who provided lunch at cost.
- ❖ Heather Ishman, Education and Outreach Specialist for the EPCD, has been working with school personnel at Widmyer Elementary on issues of concern with the wetlands area south of the school. It has been suggested that an inventory of plants be conducted in the wetlands during the Spring and Fall of next year. Norman will organize and lead that effort.

Future Activities

- ❖ Kate submitted the **2013 Stream Partners Grant** proposal prior to the September 15th deadline. If awarded the grant, we will implement a monitoring program to sample, measure and track the TMDL variables of total nitrogen, total phosphorus and total suspended solids as well as fecal coliform and sediment loads. This project was recommended in the Comp Plan. **Note:** in the next newsletter, we will include a description of the grants that WSWA has been awarded, how much money was given with each grant, and the activities associated with each grant.
- ❖ **Problems on the Winchester Grade tributary** were exacerbated with the recent flood. WSWA is seeking ways to remediate the problems on this tributary. In the meantime, a cover crop of oats and rye grass was planted in the area where there once was extensive knotweed. Twenty chokeberry bushes will be planted on the shoulders of the new culvert that was installed under the driveway at Berkeley Baptist Church. This is an area that should not be disturbed in the event that stream bank restoration is done at a future point. WSWA will work with Berkeley Baptist members to plant the bushes.
- ❖ A meeting was held August 30th among several civic groups interested in addressing problems in the Run between Widmyer and BSWS. Matt Pennington and Kate have developed a template for a **partnership letter** to be sent to the WSWA by various organizations. Potential sources of funding are being explored. The next meeting will take place in January 2013.
- ❖ Joyce Altomare, WSWA member as well as a member of the WSPSD Board, suggested that the WSWA **tour the WSPSD sewage plant**. There is still room for the "adults only" version of the tour, which will take place on October 25. On October 26, 10 students from BSWS will take the tour, under the supervision of science teacher Elizabeth Spring. The treatment process is interesting, state of the art, and the operators diligent and knowledgeable. Please let Kate know if you are interested in the tour. Also, keep in mind there is some walking and climbing during the tour.

Calendar of Events

- October 24 Board of Directors Meeting, 7:00pm Extension Office
- October 25 Tour of Sewage Treatment Plant, 10:00am
- October 25 EPCD program to update local watershed associations on Agency/District programs at the WVU Health Science Center in Martinsburg. Contact Kate if you are interested in attending this program.
- October 26 Student Tour of Sewage Treatment Plant, 10:00am
- Nov/Dec Board of Directors Meeting, 7:00pm Extension Office (one meeting, date TBD)

2012 Stream Monitoring Conclusion

Stream monitoring is now finished for the season. The final monitoring events were performed at the Country Inn, Widmyer Elementary School, and at the intersection of Routes 522 & 13.

The overall results of the monitoring show that the condition of the Run ranges from suboptimal to poor. At the Widmyer site we found the greatest number and diversity of macros; however, the banks there are badly degraded and there is a great deal of sediment on the bottom of the Run. Most of the monitoring sites we visited had poor numbers and variety of macros. If you are interested in reviewing the monitoring results, copies of the results are stored with other WSWA documentation at the Extension Office. It is also our intent to place the results on our website once that is up and running.



Matt and Annabelle demonstrate how to plant a tree during the WSWA tree planting day on September 29th.

KUDOS

Jack Soronen completed the Executive Summary of the Comprehensive Plan (see page 4). Thank you to Jack for turning a 200-page technical document into an excellent one page summary.

Andy Jurick has stepped down as a member of the Board of Directors. Thanks to Andy for all his contributions to the WSWA.

WSWA Officers and Board Members

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Executive Summary

Warm Springs Run, in central Morgan County, West Virginia, is approximately 11.8 miles in length and flows from south to north, emptying into the Potomac River at Hancock, MD. It is non-navigable, with a catchment watershed estimated to be about 7,178 acres. Its five tributaries lie to the east.

The stream originates with a headspring at an elevation of 818 feet above mean sea level and gradually declines in elevation to 397 feet at its terminus at the Potomac River. Much of the Run has a modest perennial base flow deriving from a series of springs in the Warm Springs Ridge. However, the Warm Springs in Berkeley Springs State Park contribute a much greater discharge to the Run. The Run is prone to severe flash flooding after major rainfall events and/or rapid snowmelt.

The Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan was developed in 2012 to provide guidance for stream bank restoration and contaminant mitigation activities with the goal of helping West Virginia meet mandated Chesapeake Bay improvement standards.

Relying on previously completed research and data, as well as field work, a consultant analyzed soils, geology, hydrology, and geomorphology to determine non-point and point sources of pollution in the watershed. Recommendations with cost-benefit analyses were developed to address pollution sources.

Collected data reveal that actual nitrogen and phosphorus levels in the Run are lower than projected in the Bay Model. However, the Run is impaired due to elevated levels of fecal coliform bacteria and sedimentation. By establishing Best Management Practices for the latter impairments, reductions in nitrogen and phosphorus levels will also be achieved.

A USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Soil Resource Report revealed that most of the soil in the watershed is very limited for absorption, raising the possibility that failing septic systems are contributing to nutrient loading and fecal coliform counts. Practices are presented for addressing contamination from private systems, pastures, croplands, wetlands, and improper disposal of animal fecal waste and carcasses. The soils report also classifies most of the watershed as “severe” for erosion hazard.

Identified sources of sedimentation are:

- 1) stream bank erosion;
- 2) uncontrolled stormwater runoff;
- 3) land disturbance; and
- 4) gravel and dirt roads.

Practices for re-design, management, remediation, and landscaping of erosion sources are presented.

In order to improve the quality of the Run, the WSWA proposes to continue working with an extensive array of local groups to educate stakeholders, establish monitoring programs, and seek funding to implement corrective measures.