



WSWA Newsletter

Volume 2, Issue 1

President's Perspective *by Kate Lehman*

Whenever I am faced with a seemingly daunting task, I am reminded of these words: *"In dreams begin responsibility."*

In a short story with this title, Delmore Schwartz tells of an unnamed young man who has a dream that he is in an old-fashioned movie theater in 1909. As he sits down to watch the film, he starts to realize that it is a motion picture documenting his parents' courtship. The black-and-white silent film is of very poor quality, and the camera is shaky, but nonetheless he is engrossed. Soon, though, the young man starts to get upset. He yells things at the screen, trying to influence the outcome of his parents' evolving relationship. As his parents' marriage moves closer and closer to dissolution and the young man becomes more and more upset, he is removed from the theater. In the end, the character wakes up from his dream and notes that it is the snowy morning of his twenty-first birthday.

In the case of the Warm Springs Watershed Association, the connection between dreams and responsibility is less romantic, and probably less heart-breaking. Indeed, one could say that for the WSWA it is in the *Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan* wherein begins responsibility." I could be accused of stretching the analogy. However, I think the principle for the WSWA is the same as what is revealed in Schwartz' story.

The WSWA has a "dream," or rather, a mission, which is to restore, protect and preserve Warm Springs Run. In an effort to realize this mission, we engaged in a "courtship" or rather a process, by which a watershed implementation plan was established to address various sources of impairment

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Gas Spill Impacts WSR

On November 12, 2012, a gasoline spill occurred at the Sheetz gas station, dumping 350 gallons of gasoline into Warm Springs Run. Once notified of the spill the next morning, the WSWA quickly jumped into action to evaluate the damage. Kate Lehman, Norman Dean and Stan Oaks walked the Run from the spill site down to the Board of Education noting the extent of the gas sheen and any dead fish. The smell of gasoline was evident beyond Jimstown Road. Additionally, approximately 50 dead minnow were seen, mostly between the spill site and the Board of Education.

As a follow-up to the cleanup actions by the emergency response teams that night, Tim Craddock and Glenn Nelson of the West Virginia DEP recommended that WSWA implement a monitoring program to assess the state of the Run over time. The program would include monitoring sites both above and below the spill site. A team of WSWA members conducted an initial stream monitoring on November 20th, and other monitoring activities will be held in the spring and fall until the area has recovered. The control site, which is located above the spill site, was selected at Whisner Avenue; the below spill sites are at Rt. 522 across from Sheetz, behind the Coldwell Banker building, and at Yellow Run, where the spill initially entered.

Gasoline sheen in the Run at the Country Inn the morning after the spill



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Annual Meeting Scheduled for April 24th

The WSWA annual meeting will be held at the Board of Education building at 7:00 PM. Activities being planned include a presentation of our overall organizational and financial status, election of two board members, and a presentation by a guest speaker. Please reserve this date on your calendars now and join us for this very important meeting.

2013 Dues are Due



The \$10 WSWA membership dues run the calendar year and are now due. It is important to maintain your membership, not only from our treasury perspective, but also as it entitles you to vote at the annual meeting. Please give your check/cash to Andy Swaim, Treasurer, either in person or send to: WSWA, P.O.Box 757, Berkeley Springs, WV 25411. ***We have just been granted 501c3 status so dues are now tax deductible!***

WSWA Website...Coming Soon!

The WSWA website will be up and running by the end of January. Stay tuned for further details.



Widmyer Wetlands Update

The wetland area was re-established in 2009 with a \$19,000 grant from 319 funds. Technically, a wetlands area does not need to be "maintained." However, there have been issues of overgrowth of cattails in the ponds, weeds growing along the paths, and disputes about what areas should be mowed when. While the school district has full power to maintain the area, there has been no formal understanding about who will do what when. Heather has been working with school personnel, WSWA members and Kieran O'Malley to determine

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in the Run. Unlike the young man's parents in their responsibility to themselves and their son, we need to build strong relationships if we want to take responsibility for the realization of our dream. As I see it, there are two separate but interdependent types of relationships we need to nurture.

We need to form ever stronger partnerships with other stakeholders in the watershed. We have already begun this process through various educational programs designed to inform people about the Run and how it has been negatively impacted by human beings. Now we have actual projects that can make a difference, not only to the Run itself, but to residents in the Town of Bath and Morgan County. We need to work together to determine how and what we will do.

We also need to strengthen how the WSWA Board functions. Last year after the Annual Meeting we decided it was too early in our growth and development to form committees to undertake various aspects of the work of the association. I am now of the opinion that the only way we can implement various projects with various partners is to establish strong committees whose members will work with and oversee our many projects.

To me, the idea of waking up on a snowy morning with the realization that "someone" could have taken more responsibility for the WSWA's dreams is at best depressing and at worst heartbreaking. Rather, I hope we will collectively move toward our majority by nurturing stronger relationships, both with stakeholders and among members of the watershed association. *In dreams begin responsibility.*

how this area can best become an asset to all. Heather has worked hard to determine more definitively the nature of the partnership between the schools, the EPCD and WSWA. It has been determined that the school has no short- or long-term plans to expand the track and field into the wetlands area. This being the case, we are exploring ways to enhance the value to the school and community.

One suggestion is to hold wildflower identification events in the spring and fall. Another idea is to establish a trail of educational kiosks informing students and members of the larger community about the importance of wetlands.

Sediment Removal from Warm Springs Run

by Stan Oaks

On November 19, 2012, one of our members reported that there was heavy equipment in the Run at the high school. The equipment (see photo) was being used to remove sediment from the section of Warm Spring Run adjacent to the school. The contractor had placed several bales of hay in a riffle below the work site (see photo). The purpose of the bales was to stop displaced sediment from moving downstream; however, they did not appear to be very effective, as muddy water was flowing under the bales and going downstream. The Run was a murky brown color as far down as the point where Yellow Run comes into Warm Springs Run.



After a phone call and a couple of emails, it was determined that the firm doing the excavation had a permit to do the work, and that the use of hay bales was in compliance with permit requirements. A West Virginia DEP official later noted that the bales work fine if properly placed, but that they should not have been placed in a riffle.

The contractor worked in the stream for two days; however, in addition to removing sediment, the work also removed a significant amount of vegetation along the northwest side of the streambed, denuding a large portion of the bank. Of concern to the Association is that the denuded area was not covered with straw or matting, to prevent soil from the bank being washed into the run.



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The results from that initial monitoring at the site below the spill indicated the smell of gas was still persistent a week later and that many macroinvertebrates (macros) were killed or adversely impacted by the gasoline.

Specifically, the control site located between Whisner Avenue and Earth Dog Café showed good numbers and diversity of macros. Many sensitive macros were found.

At the sites affected by the gasoline spill, there were large numbers of dead macro. While we cannot prove that these critters were killed by the gasoline spill, never before have our stream monitors come across such a large number of dead macros.

Many thanks to the team members who participated in the initial post-spill stream monitoring on a chilly November day: Norman Dean, Glory Houck, Susan Jones, Kate Lehman, Suzy Lucas, Stan Oaks and Andy Swaim.



Evidence of dead minnows seen in the Run at the Country Inn the morning after the spill.

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.

Calendar of Events

January 23	Board of Directors Meeting, 7:00pm Extension Office
February 27	Board of Directors Meeting, 7:00pm Extension Office
March 27	Board of Directors Meeting, 7:00pm Extension Office

WSWA Grants and Associated Projects

It is important for the membership to know and understand what money, in the form of grants, has been awarded to the association and how we spend that money. The following paragraphs list the grants we have been awarded since 2011 and the associated projects that are funded by this money.

In 2011 we were awarded various grants (a \$5000.00 grant from Stream Partners and a \$2000.00 grant from the Eastern Panhandle Conservation District) to control a thick stand of knotweed that grew on the Winchester Grade tributary. Before we began this project the knotweed grew to heights of over six feet and totally blocked the stream in some areas. While not totally eradicated, this past year there were only a few spots where knotweed grew, and those specimens that dared to show themselves were no more than two or three inches high.

To further control the knotweed WSWA planned to establish a good riparian buffer along the banks of the tributary. However, once the knotweed was under control, damage done to the banks was fully revealed. A \$7000.00 319 grant was obtained to do streambank restoration before planting a riparian buffer. It is anticipated that the restoration project will be completed by September of 2013. Funds from the 2011 Stream Partners grant were used to plant 20 chokeberry bushes on the shoulders of a newly installed culvert through which the Winchester Grade Tributary passes under the driveway leading up to Berkeley Baptist Church. The road was washed out by the September 1st flood; the bushes planted in a partnership between WSWA and Berkeley Baptist Church will help to control erosion of that area, and will not be disturbed by further work to stabilize the stream banks. The remaining funds from the 2011 Stream Partners grant were used to purchase 200 trees

and shrubs to be planted along the banks of the Run as it passes through property owned by the Eddie Stotler family.

In 2012 the WSWA was awarded a \$20,000.00 grant from the Chesapeake Bay Regulatory and Accountability Program to create a Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan. This document, which was completed in June of 2012, outlines sources of impairment in the watershed, potential projects to address these issues, and the order in which various projects should be undertaken.

One of the first tasks recommended in the management plan is testing by a state-regulated laboratory to establish a baseline from which to judge the efficacy of various projects in terms of reducing nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment. A 2013 Stream Partners grant of \$5000.00 will pay for the testing of total nitrogen, total phosphorus, total suspended solids, fecal coliform, dissolved nitrate, dissolved orthophosphate and total suspended sediment. As part of this project, it will be necessary for the WSWA to establish a Quality Assurance Project Plan.

Finally, the WSWA has been awarded a \$2500 grant to capture the first inch of rainfall by installing hybrid rain barrels/rain gardens at 10 locations in the Town of Bath. We will also explore with participating businesses other ways in which they can be good stewards to the Run. Businesses which adopt various best management practices will receive a plaque recognizing their efforts.

WSWA Officers and Board Members

- President: Kate Lehman 304-279-0717.....goldfairy39@gmail.com
- Vice President: Betty Harmison.....304-258-1088
- Secretary: Susan Jones.304-258-6122.....wvbagend@frontier.com
- Treasurer: Andy Swaim304-258-0418
- Norman Dean.....deannorm@frontier.com
- Stacy Dugan.....sdugan@stacydugan.org
- Larry Lower.....larrylower@yahoo.com
- Rebecca MacLeod.....pendle35@gmail.com
- Jim Price.....jfprice@netzero.net