



# WSWA Newsletter

Volume 2, Issue 4

## More Insults to Warm Springs Run

Just when we thought it was safe to get back in the water after the gas spill and dredging operation at the high school last year, Warm Springs Run has endured another double whammy of insults this year. This time the northern end of the Run was hard hit by both an inadvertent event and a deliberate act.

On July 18<sup>th</sup> the WSWA stream monitoring team met at the end of Airport Road to collect data from the Run. This spot, which sits adjacent to a corn field and is close to the CSX railroad yard, is less than a mile from where it flows into the Potomac River. As we gathered on the bridge and looked down, the Run was so murky it gave us all pause about entering the Run until we knew what the cause of the discoloration was.

The Team transitioned into investigation mode to track where the discoloration began. The water viewed from the bridge on Fairview Drive, which is immediately before Airport Road, was also murky. However, water seen from the bridges on Sandmine and Jimstown Road, both of which are further south, were not murky. We checked with officials from the waste water treatment plant and US Silica, both of which have permits to discharge water into the Run. When officials at both facilities indicated nothing was amiss, we contacted Alma Gorse, County Planner, to see if she knew of activity taking place in the watershed which might cause such discoloration. Ms. Gorse was not aware of anything happening in the area.



As is required by law, Ms. Gorse then contacted DEP to inform them of the problem and to turn over any further investigation to them.

Then, on August 15<sup>th</sup>, several WSWA members met to conduct spraying for purple loosestrife on the banks of the Run. Kate Lehman and Stan Oaks started at Airport Road and worked north toward the Potomac. In the process, Kate and Stan came across a spot where the banks of the Run had been bulldozed away. It appears this work was done to allow the farmer to take farm machinery from one field to another without having to go back to Airport Road where there is access to fields on both sides of the Run.



While the farmer had the right to log the trees up to the stream bank, he did not have the right to bulldoze the banks. Investigation into this incident is still underway, but it shows how, at best, people are unfamiliar with what they can do at a stream or, at worst, don't care about the impact of their actions.

Mat Ault of DEP has been investigating the first incident, which turned out to be a leak from one of the overflow ponds at US Silica. Stan provided copies of the photographs he took of the bulldozed banks to Brent Walls of Potomac RiverKeepers who will follow up with the Corps of Engineers for further action.

## Quarterly Highlights

- ✚ **Grant applications** – WSWA has prepared a Stream Partners Grant and a Two Rivers Giving Foundation grant. The former will provide funds to improve the riparian buffer on two adjacent lots of privately owned land located in the floodplain of the Run. The second grant will fund two educational kiosks in and around the Widmyer wetlands area. These awards will be announced later this year.
- ✚ **Widmyer Wetlands Project Update** – WSWA members and BSHS students in classes taught by Jamie Chenoweth, Jeff Hankey and Leigh Jenkins weeded the path through the wetlands.
- ✚ **Purple Loosestrife Spraying** -- WSWA members sprayed for purple loosestrife along the Run on August 15<sup>th</sup>. Members noted that spraying efforts from previous years seem to have been effective as the numbers of new plants have declined. There was, however, a new concern that the invasive plant is spreading into the Potomac River.

## Welcome: Tyler Orr

My want ad paid off handsomely! It is my pleasure to introduce Tyler to the association as the WSWA Web Master and Facebook Administrator. Tyler has hit the ground running and already has us on Facebook, as well as keeping our website up to date.

Tyler is a senior at BSHS and intends to study chemistry and/or exercise physiology at Northwestern University, University of Virginia, or West Virginia University. Additionally, upon obtaining his bachelor's degree in one of these fields, he intends to attend medical school at West Virginia University for preventative medicine and cardiology. He is in the process of founding the Science National Honor Society at the high school and is involved in the West Virginia Envirothon. And he has joined the WSWA Stream Monitoring Team.

See Tyler's report on our Facebook outreach efforts on page 3.

## President's Perspective *by Kate Lehman*

On October 11, Susan Jones and I drove to Charleston to participate in a WVDEP-sponsored workshop entitled *Performance Improvement for our Watershed Associations*. As the name implies, the goal of the workshop was to teach watershed associations improved ways to achieve their mission.

An exercise called the Medicine Wheel Analysis helped participants understand the skills and limitations each person on a team brings to any endeavor. The most important message of this exercise was that recognition of and appreciation for other styles will help a team to experience diversity as strength rather than an impediment. We also learned how to distinguish between helpful differences of opinion that strengthen our outcome and "squirrels," differences of opinion that divert us from our goals.

We were then taken from the board room into the watershed to identify broad aspirations – what we want to change, improve, or make better, as well as why we want that change, why it's important, and how we will know when we've been successful.

Back in the boardroom, we transformed these broad challenges into SMART goals, goals that are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-based. We also explored how we can network with other individuals and organizations whose interests intersect with ours in this particular area.

An opportunity to use this new process arose at our most recent Board meeting. While discussing a potential project designed to protect the headwaters of Warm Springs Run, a major goal listed in the Comprehensive Plan, Susan suggested we could learn more about this issue and be more successful at achieving our goals with it, by actually using the SMART approach to work the issues involved.

Thank you to WVDEP for this opportunity to learn better ways to achieve our mission as a watershed association. There are many challenges to volunteers engaged in work requiring complex knowledge and expertise. How to work together most effectively as a group does not need to be one of those challenges.

## Warm Springs Watershed Association Rolls Out New Facebook Page to Increase Communication and Engagement with Community

By: Tyler S. Orr, WSWA Webmaster and Facebook Administrator

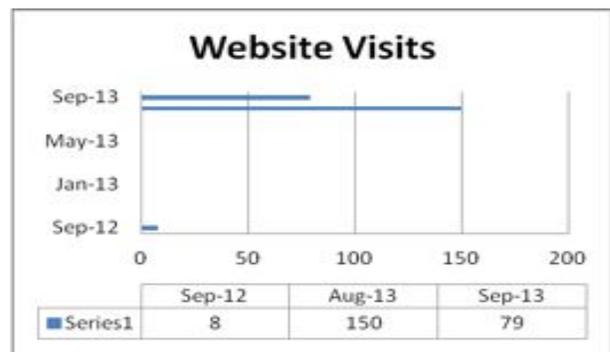
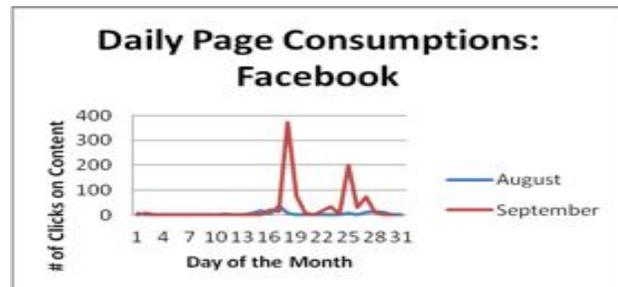
On August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013, the WSWA rolled out a brand new Facebook page designed to help provide better content to members in the community and to assist in directing community members to our website, [wswawv.wordpress.com](http://wswawv.wordpress.com). The page, located at [www.facebook.com/WarmSpringsWatershedAssociation](http://www.facebook.com/WarmSpringsWatershedAssociation), is now completely functional, but it will be undergoing changes in the next couple of months to make it more useful.

The goals of the page are to learn what supporters are saying and sharing about our organization, to drive traffic to our website, to improve results on search engine report pages, and to humanize our organization. Most importantly, the use of the Facebook page will allow us to take advantage of the *multiplier effect*. That is, Facebook empowers supporters to help share information to both their professional and personal social circles, amplifying our goals and missions as a nonprofit organization.

In case you're just now learning about the Facebook page, here's what we're doing with it:

- **Posting events:** Events in which we wish to have high participation rates are being posted on the page. For example, we have posted events regarding board meetings, weeding the trail through the wetlands, and Watershed Celebration Day.
- **Sharing information:** The page is an excellent place to share information that can help us protect our watershed. For instance, we have shared information on how how maintaining your car, not mowing all the way to the stream bank, and disposing of household chemicals properly can help protect the watershed.
- **Posting pictures:** Everyone loves to see photos of the work that we are doing. In fact, one of the most successful posts on our page was a picture of students from Berkeley Springs High School working in the Wetlands.

The results so far:



**What are we concluding?** Since the implementation of the Facebook page, the number of visits to our website has declined. While the Facebook page is becoming more and more popular each month, it is not successfully directing viewers to the website.

**What are we changing?** Instead of posting content directly on the Facebook page, we are hoping to create a type of running blog on the website. Therefore, after an event, we will post pictures and an article describing it on the website, followed by a post on Facebook with a link containing a tiny bit of information, known as a "soundbite." This, in turn, will direct people to the website. In addition, we hope to implement a calendar feature on the website that will run in coordination with the events posted on Facebook.

### Calendar of Events

- November 2 Watershed Celebration Day, Cacapon State Park
- November 4 Stream Monitoring for Gasoline Spill Sites, 9:00am
- December 4 Nov-Dec Board of Directors Meeting, 5:00pm Extension Office

### Thank You to Stan Oaks...

for his many photographs of Warm Springs Run and for his unofficial position as WSWA Photographer. Stan has taken many beautiful photographs of the Run but he also has been instrumental in capturing images of the Run to document the bad things that have happened. Thanks to Stan for allowing us to use his photographs in this publication.



8/15/13 Photo of bulldozed bank near Airport Road

**THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS GENERALLY MEETS EVERY 4<sup>TH</sup> WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH AT 5:00PM AT THE EXTENSION OFFICE. ALL MEMBERS ARE URGED TO ATTEND AND PARTICIPATE.**

**IT IS A GOOD IDEA TO CHECK FACEBOOK FOR ANY CHANGES IN DATE, TIME OR LOCATION!**

### WATERSHED CELEBRATION DAY

**NOVEMBER 2, 2013**

**CACAPON STATE PARK**

**NOON – 3:30**

### 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 Swaim .....304-258-0418
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