



Comprehensive Watershed Based Management Plan for Warm Springs Run

A Potomac Direct Drains Watershed

Morgan County, WV

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Cover photo - Warm Springs Run as it passes through Berkeley Springs State Park. (Note well-developed limestone gravel point bar just upstream from the foot bridge.) Credits - Robert K. Denton Jr., April 2012

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Preface

The Warm Springs Run is the outfall channel of the largest thermal spring in the Potomac Highlands Region, a unique environmental feature of both historic and natural significance. The reputed therapeutic quality of the spring waters attracted the Native American people to the site. Subsequently, the first spa in the American colonies sprang up around the springs named after the town of Bath, England.

Although the springs were highly valued, and thus conserved and protected from contamination, the Warm Springs Run itself did not merit such regard. Used as an open sewer and waste dump for various historic industries in the Town of Bath, the stream became significantly polluted. Thankfully, in recent decades there has been a concerted effort to reverse the environmental impacts to the Run. The historic industries closed down many years ago. The construction of a sanitary sewer main, installed from 1976 – 1979, extending the length of the stream, now prevents the discharge of waste directly into the channel. However, despite these improvements, the stretch of the Warm Springs Run south of the Town of Bath, upstream from the historic springs, is still utilized by many as little more than a drainage ditch. Currently, this upstream section of the Run still suffers the greatest number of impacts from contemporary development, while the section downstream from the Town of Bath to near the confluence with the Potomac River remains in a relatively undisturbed, natural state.

It is our hope that this management plan will aid the Warm Springs Run Watershed Association, Morgan County, and the State of West Virginia to manage the negative impacts to this important little stream. In doing so, the larger goal of protecting the Chesapeake Bay will be contributed to as well.