

Sleepy Creek Watershed Association

The mission of the Sleepy Creek Watershed Association (SCWA) is *to protect the Sleepy Creek Watershed and to educate and assist community members to improve this irreplaceable natural resource for current and future generations*. Since its inception in 1998, the Association has been active with landowners, West Virginia government agencies, and local civic organizations in educating people on the criticality of having clean water and supporting corresponding actions. SCWA is a 501c(3) not-for-profit corporation, is led by a 6-person board of directors, and has 150 members. Its jointly developed Sleepy Creek Watershed Assessment and Watershed Based Plan: Sleepy Creek, Potomac Direct Drains Watershed, continue to be the Association's guides for on-going activities and financial resource obtainment. Its volunteers participate in local community fairs and festivals to provide education opportunities and provide informative brochures that promote best practices for landowners and homeowners. In coordination with the WV Department of Environmental Protection and the Cacapon Institute, a trained team of SCWA volunteers annually perform and report Save Our Stream (SOS) water quality assessments at numerous locations within the watershed.

Sleepy Creek is impaired "relative to numeric water quality criteria for fecal coliform bacteria" (TMDL, 2007). Its watershed is comprised of approximately 93,000 acres. The main branch of the river begins near the unincorporated town of Good on Route 127 in northern Frederick County, Virginia (14,000 acres), flows north for 42 miles through Morgan County (69,000 acres) and empties into the Potomac River southeast of Hancock, Maryland. A primary tributary drains another 10,000 acres in Berkeley County, WV. The watershed contains four main branches of Sleepy Creek and 194 smaller feeder streams for a total of around 320 miles of streambed. The topography of the watershed includes varying mountain heights and associated valleys. Roughly one-half of the watershed is forest, one-third is farmland, and the remaining one-sixth is single family dwellings or small businesses scattered throughout the area or contained in large-lot subdivisions. There are no incorporated cities, towns, or villages within the watershed.

In addition to the awards received from the WV Rivers Coalition, a significant recognition of SCWA and other agency combined efforts was the WV Department of Environmental Protection's delisting of Indian Run in the Sleepy Creek Watershed as impaired due to previously high fecal coliform levels. This delisting was in great part the result of actions to identify and provide financial assistance to pump and upgrade failing septic systems and to plant riparian tree buffers in this sub-watershed.

SCWA continues to partner with the Eastern Panhandle Conservation District, the WV Conservation Agency, and the WV Chesapeake Bay Forester in assisting landowners with planting riparian buffers along the branches of Sleepy Creek, as well as implementing other best-management practices. This year, for example, the Association assisted in coordinating the construction of a permeable paving demonstration project in a watershed homeowners' subdivision (see picture). In conjunction with the Morgan County Health Department, SCWA continues to promote a watershed-wide EPA Section 319-funded septic system pumping and repair program, and works with other partners to obtain Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Funding for significant streambank stabilization and sediment reduction. In addition, two riparian buffer plantings are scheduled for this fall – one in Cacapon State Park and another on private property

bordering Sleepy Creek. More detailed information about the Sleepy Creek Watershed can be found at their website: <http://www.sleepycreekwatershed.org>.



SCWA assisted in coordinating the construction of a permeable paving demonstration project in a watershed homeowners' subdivision



Sleepy Creek volunteers participating in a Save Our Streams Workshop



Sleepy Creek assisting in a buffer planting.