

QUITTAPAHILLA WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

Meeting Minutes

Community Room, Annville Free Library, and remotely on Zoom

Tuesday, February 17, 2026

Present: Michael Schroeder (President), Alexis Biondi, Willie Bixler, Bob Connell, Joseph Connor, Tim Greene, Katie Hollen, Kara Lubold, Mark Magness (Common Ground Earth), Rocky Powell (Clear Creeks Consulting), Bryan Seipp (Ecosystem Planning & Restoration)

The meeting opened at 7:00 PM

1. Minutes. The minutes of the January 20, 2026, meeting were circulated electronically before the meeting and approved by consensus. They are housed with all other extant QWA meeting minutes on the Meetings & Minutes page of our QWA website, at <https://www.quittiecreek.org/calendar.html>

2. Monitoring Program

A. Fieldwork updates

- 1) Katie will be sending out a Doodle poll to determine the best days to conduct our routine fieldwork in March.
- 2) Bill Osburn's printed field safety cards with site addresses and information for monitoring volunteers have been distributed.

B. Equipment updates

- 1) **Solinst Sensors.** Bob reported that the Solinst sensors at BK1, BM1, and K1 are acting strangely, with data being transmitted intermittently, and that he is looking into it. The sensor at Q1 needs an antenna, purchased last month from Solinst at a cost of \$304, which Bob hopes to install once the sub-freezing temps abate.
- 2) **ISCO auto-samplers.** No updates.

C. Data management updates

- 1) **Workshops on using qGIS.** Bob reported the next qGIS workshop will be 6-8 PM Tues Feb 24 in the Community Room of the Annville Free Library. Be in touch with Bob for details.
- 2) **Macroinvertebrate Sampling Raw Data.** No update.

3. National Fish & Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) Grant

- A. Google Drive folder housing NFWF grant materials:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1QB5EM-7Hlh-2Ysp4n_Hxv4j3a_pVNg1H?usp=sharing

- B. “Report Card.”** The final set of deliverables – a template for a “report card” on the relative health of the Quittie, with an accompanying spreadsheet for the data used to determine the grade – was delivered at the end of January and is housed in Folder 08 of the above-linked Google Drive folder. Mike reported that he is drafting responses to a series of prompts submitted by Ryan Szuch of Grow Conservation on the quality of our experience with their organization and asked for feedback from QWA members who participated in the grant process.
 - C. Canva.** Mike reported that we need Canva Business to be able to edit the various templates developed by Grow Conservation, and that he will ask the Lebanon Valley Conservancy if we can use their account.
 - D. Special meeting.** Several dates were proposed for a special meeting on Grow Conservation’s “General Recommendations,” pasted below in these minutes in **Appendix 1**. The slot from 6-7 pm on Tues March 17, in the hour before our March QWA meeting, was selected as the best option. Mike reported that he would ask the Library if the Community Room is available during that hour.
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- 4. Acting Treasurer’s Report.** Mike, Acting Treasurer since 2020, and Alexis reported that a meeting was held on Thurs Feb 12 at the TLVC office in downtown Lebanon with QWA and TLVC representatives to discuss our existing bank account arrangement and the possible revision of our existing MOU. In attendance were Mike, Alexis, Ron Birch (TLVC Treasurer), Abigail Harvey (TLVC Executive Director), Dan Kreiser, and Ned Gibble (TLVC Board members). TLVC was receptive to formalizing our existing arrangement, but it was agreed that no action would be taken until the QWA decides whether it wants to formalize its institutional existence by becoming a 501c3 organization.
 - 5. Projects updates.** Rocky offered a crisp summary of past and ongoing projects on Snitz and Killinger creeks and his assessment of where we should go from here. Last month, on January 14, Rich Starr of EPR and Rocky led a 2-hour remote meeting focused on planning restoration work in 2026 in the Quittapahilla and neighboring watersheds. Materials from that meeting were included in the January 20 QWA meeting minutes .
 - 6. LCCD Watershed Action Team.** The minutes of the WAT’s meeting of February 5, 2026, are included below in these minutes in **Appendix 2**.
 - 7. Media & website updates.** Mike reported that he continues to update the website and post

on social media focusing on the QWA Monitoring Program.

8. Lebanon County Stormwater Consortium updates. Bryan Hoffman reported by email before the meeting that “there is nothing to report from the MS4 group. As I have reported previously, our proposed plan for 2026-2030 remains at DEP for review. We have received no information as to when we might receive a response. There is a rumor that EPA has become involved in this process, however, that is not confirmed. We are in the ‘don't hold your breath waiting’ mode.”

9. Education, outreach & special events.

- A.** Mike reported that at the prompting of Tali MacArthur at POWR, he has registered the QWA as a participant in the Choose Clean Water Conference, May 18-20, 2026, at Lancaster Marriott at Penn Square in Lancaster; see below in **Appendix 3** to these minutes.
- B.** Mike reported that he has registered the QWA for several upcoming tabling events, including Friends of Old Annville’s Historic Old Annville Day (9 am—2 pm Sat June 13, 2026,) and two weeks later, from 1 -5 pm on July 4, 2026, at the America250 Celebration at the Lebanon Valley Expo Center.
- C.** Clean Water Week Invitation. Mike reported that on Feb. 11 he received an invitation from Abigail Harvey of TLVC to participate in a meeting to help develop programs & initiatives for Clean Water Week scheduled for Sept. 12-19. Materials relating to Clean Water Week are included below in these minutes in **Appendix 4**.
- D.** Possible field trips to the City of Lebanon Authority’s (COLA’s) Wastewater Treatment Plant and the Cleona Pumping Station. No updates.

The meeting adjourned at 7:56 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Schroeder
Secretary Pro Tem

Appendix 1. Quittapahilla Watershed Association General Recommendations from Grow Conservation, December 2025

1. Liability Protection

With volunteers conducting fieldwork in flowing water and potentially dealing with chemicals in water sampling, there is the potential for a person to become injured while volunteering for QWA. This could expose the organization and/or its leadership to liability.

At a minimum, the Grow Conservation Consulting Team (GrowCon) recommends that QWA develop a liability waiver form that all volunteers must execute before commencing work on behalf of QWA. Ideally, this form would be prepared by or at least reviewed by a licensed attorney. QWA might seek example liability waiver forms from peer organizations.

If QWA eventually decided to become a nonprofit organization, then GrowCon recommends that it purchase an insurance policy to protect against such injury liability and potentially other forms of liability.

GrowCon and its subconsultants are not qualified to give legal or insurance advice, but we believe these are best practices for organizations involved in such volunteerism. QWA should seek the counsel of qualified professionals on this matter.

2. Stimulate Competitive Environment for Project Work

From GrowCon's understanding of the watershed assessment and restoration work being facilitated historically and presently by QWA, it appears that one or a couple consulting firms primarily guide and then execute the work. GrowCon recommends that QWA consider engaging a broader range of consulting professionals to generate an influx of fresh ideas and potential for new approaches. Creation of a competitive work environment for project implementation could result in cost savings, enhanced quality, and more options for the timing of projects. Implementing a competitive bidding process is also typically a requirement of granting entities.

3. Consider Alternatives to In-Stream Focus

The Quittie and its tributaries have impairments due to a variety of stressors, including nutrients, sediment, and pathogens. To date, QWA has largely focused its restoration of the watershed on in-stream or channel restoration projects. Such in-stream projects will primarily act to improve only one of these three stressor categories – that being sediment load. In-stream restoration is not an effective approach to reducing nutrient load or pathogens. In addition, in-stream restoration is an extremely costly form of watershed restoration due to the

very high engineering design, permitting and construction costs.

GrowCon recommends that QWA begin to integrate alternative watershed restoration practices into its initiatives, such as riparian buffer plantings and land use best management practices (BMPs) (e.g., cover crops, nutrient management plans, livestock fencing). For one, riparian buffer plantings and BMPs will more directly affect the nutrient and pathogen loads to the waterways. Additionally, these types of practices are far more cost-effective than in-stream restoration. Lastly, there are a variety of funding and outreach partners available for collaboration on these practices. QWA need only look to its neighbors, the Lancaster Clean Water Partners, to see a successful model of these approaches. A focus on these types of land-based measures should result in measurable improvements in the Quittie watershed, which in-stream restoration alone is unlikely to accomplish.

4. Consider Scalability of Present Business Model

The fifth Strategic Priority identified through the POWR project was Organizational Growth. GrowCon recommends that QWA's Core Team begin to consider the scalability of its present business model and mode of operations. In some respects, the mode of operations has served QWA well to date, but in order to grow its impact, we believe that QWA needs to evolve in several key ways – many of which are laid out in the Strategic Framework. Some key considerations are as follows.

QWA appears to be highly dependent on a single, dynamic, and very dedicated leader. However, leadership activity will need to begin to be distributed for the organization to grow. Administrative functions such as financial tracking, file management, and IT services will need to be accessible to more than one person, both to distribute workload and to plan for succession. A single person should not continue to be the face of the QWA in public settings, such as volunteer recruitment and township meetings.

To grow and diversify the volunteer base, GrowCon believes that QWA needs to diversify the activities it offers to volunteers. Volunteerism with QWA is presently driven by the monitoring program. The Strategic Framework and recommendations above offer a range of other support that volunteers could provide to QWA, and by embarking more strongly in some of these alternative directions, QWA will likely attract a different set of community members.

Goal 5B of the Strategic Framework calls for QWA to “evaluate potentially new organizational structure or relationships.” GrowCon recommends that the Core Team make this a priority in the near term, as there seem to be some significant drawbacks to the QWA not actually existing as an entity. There are several partners and existing nonprofits that might, at least temporarily, consider embracing QWA as a subcommittee or other subpart (e.g., The Lebanon Valley Conservancy, Swatara Watershed Association). We feel that continuing with the status quo will hinder the QWA's ability to grow as it wishes.

Appendix 2. LCCD Watershed Action Team Meeting Minutes, Feb. 5, 2026



Lebanon CAP Watershed Action Team

Thursday, February 5, 2025 at 9:00 a.m.

Members Present: Bethany Canner, Russ Collins, Abigail Harvey, Darren Heisey, Katie Hollen, Kara Lubold, Bryan Seipp, Maranda Smith and Rich Starr

1. In-Process Projects

- Hammer Creek Estates: \$250,000 of ACAP funding for construction-related expenses
- Wengert Memorial Park Seeded Slope: \$27,313.92 of CAP funding
- Gingrich Run 1: \$204,325 of CAP funding for streambank restoration and stabilization, concrete dam removal. In permitting phase.

2. Completed Projects

- Syner Rd. Phase II: \$213,950 of CAP funding for construction-related expenses.
- Snitz 2: \$241,385.50 for streambank protection, constructed wetland and riparian buffer.
- Heisey: \$241,065 for HUA, cattle walkway & fencing.
- Hess: \$10,000 for a non-federal match commitment for NFWF INSR grant.
- Gerald Horst bridge replacement: \$23,600 of ACAP funding for design and permitting.

3. Partner Updates

- Clear Creeks Consulting, Rocky Powell
 - See Appendix 1.
- Lebanon Consortium/MS4, Darren Heisey
 - Still waiting for the next MS4 permit.
 - SQ6: In permitting.
 - SQ1 Phase 2: Construction likely in 2027.
 - Lions Lake Shoreline Stabilization: Some livestakes to be replaced in early spring.
- Lebanon Valley Conservancy, Abigail Harvey
 - Water Week tentatively planned for September 12-19. Will be sending information to partners soon.
 - Killinger Creek: Sent out invitation to bid. Walkthrough Feb 18.
 - Wengert Park: Abigail meeting with John today to discuss LandStudies proposal.
- Quittapahilla Watershed Association, Mike Schroeder
 - See Appendix 2.
- Swatara Watershed Association, Bethany Canner
 - Participated in salt snapshot on January 30 throughout Swatara Watershed as part of Stroud's Winter Salt Week. Data is available in a map from Stroud: [Salt Snapshot Data - Results Map v.2.0.](#)
 - May 2: Sojourn. Will need to plan a new route because of work at Boathouse Park.
 - Livestake planting at Swatara Watershed Park in early spring.



Lebanon CAP Watershed Action Team

- Trout Unlimited, Russ Collins
 - Working on invoicing issues on current and completed projects.
 - Barry Farm: Have not heard from DEP yet about revised plans.
 - EPR, Bryan Seipp/ Rich Starr
 - Hammer Creek Estates: Mobilization was delayed because of the snow and will start the week of February 16.
 - Heisey Farm: The pre-app meeting went well, and the design is moving forward. Some construction money is lined up. Worked with DFTU and Common Ground Earth to apply for approximately \$840,000 of additional funding.
 - Historic Schaefferstown Farm: Will schedule pre-app meeting when conditions allow, likely at the end of February or early March. Pursuing NFWF funding.
 - Musser Farm: Not included in any grant applications because the adjacent landowner is not interested at this time. Maranda said Martin – downstream of Musser – is still interested. EPR will set up a meeting with LCCD about the potential to do a smaller CAP project there.
 - Fisher, Wine, & Klein: Potential for design and permitting application to Growing Greener or 319.
 - Will be working with Rocky to apply for construction funding for Killinger & Bachman, which are permitted. Doing design work on Snitz 4.
- 4. Lebanon County Conservation District Update**
- Ironmaster Rd: Worked with Spring Hill Partners to apply for SRBC funding.
 - Hoffman Farm: Getting state ACAP approval.
 - CAP 2025 stream projects
 - Gingrich 1: Snag in permitting, will likely be pushed into a later CAP funding window.
 - CAP 2026 Award
 - Total award: \$624,483 (\$114,269 allocated for projects within the Hammer Creek Watershed. The remaining \$510,214 can be used anywhere in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.)
 - The performance period for the 2026 funding is 2 years.
 - Hammer Creek Watershed project deadline, July 2027
 - Chesapeake Bay Watershed project deadline, December 2027
 - Two ag projects are Board-approved for CAP funding.
 - Two projects were approved by the Action Team to send to the LCCD Board:
 - Ironmaster Rd: 600 linear feet of stream restoration and stabilization along a tributary to Snitz Creek. Requesting \$60,000 of CAP funding.
 - Sollenberger Meadow Conversion: 0.55 acres of land adjacent to current farmland to be converted to meadow. Requesting \$1,285 of CAP funding.



Lebanon CAP Watershed Action Team

- The Cost Share Policy has been updated to state that watershed improvement projects submitted by third party applicants must obtain required permits prior to submitting applications. Projects that do not require permits must provide documentation that permits are not required.

5. Next Meetings 2026

- March 5 — 9:00 am
- April 2 — 9:00 am
- May 7 — 9:00 am
- June 4 — 9:00 am
- July 2 — 9:00 am
- August 6 — 9:00 am
- September 3 — 9:00 am
- October 1 — 9:00 am
- November 5 — 9:00 am
- December 3 — 9:00 am



Lebanon CAP Watershed Action Team

Appendix 1. February 5, 2026 Watershed Action Team Projects Update – Quittapahilla Creek Projects, provided by Rocky Powell, via email on 2/5/2026

Beck Creek 6

Channel Construction – Completed

Wetlands Construction – Completed

Wetland Water Quality Impoundment - Completed.

Grading and stabilization of Upland Habitat Areas - Completed.

LCCD Final Construction Inspection – 9/30/2025

Container Grown Plant Installation - Completed

Live Stake and Live Branch Installation – February 2026

Currently Addressing LCCD Concerns

Wetland Outlet Pipe clogging with debris (e.g. straw, corn husks).causing overflow

Potential for erosion along Outfall Channel

Lack of grass and aquatic vegetation establishment due to goose damage

As-Built Survey and Plans – Pending

Pollutant Reduction Model – Pending

Snitz Creek 2

Channel Construction – Completed

Wetland Construction – Completed

LCCD Final Construction Inspection – 9/30/2025

Container Grown Plant Installation – Completed

Live Stake Installation – Completed

As-Built Survey and Plans – Pending

Pollutant Reduction Model – Pending

Bachman Run – Gary and Gerald Horst Properties (Permitted 1/27/2026)

- Finalizing Construction Bid Documents
- Scheduling Pre-Bid Site Walk for Mid-March
- Contractor Bid Proposals due Mid-April
- GGP/319 applications Deadline June 5 2026

Project Cost and Funding

- GGP/319
 - Stream Channel and Floodplain Construction Cost Estimate – Pending Bid Proposals
 - Culvert Installation and Steckbeck Engineering Services – \$144,764.00 (Estimate)
 - Equipment Crossing – 1, Fencing – Gary Horst Farm
- ACAP – Ag BMPs – LCCD (Match for GGP)
 - Livestock Crossing – 1
 - Fencing – 1,000 LF
 - Heavy Use Area Stabilized Walk Way – 5,600 Sq Ft
- LCCD In-House (Match for GGP)
 - Riparian Buffer Seeding, Tree and Shrubs Planting



Lebanon CAP Watershed Action Team

Snitz Creek 3 (Permitted 6/14/2023)

319 Construction Grant Application Submitted – 6/06/2024
GGP Construction Grant Application Submitted – 6/06/2025
319 – . \$457,727.00 (Approved – 10/20/2025)
GG – \$330,408.00 (Approved – 1/21/2026)
Cost – \$788,135.00
Construction Scheduled to Start – May 2026

Killinger Creek – Huber and Burkholder Properties (Permitted 4/06/2024)

- Construction Bid Documents for Phase 1 - Completed
 - 100% Design Plans
 - Construction Specifications
 - Bid Invitation with Qualifications and Schedule
 - Bid Form
- Advertising RFP – February 4, 2026
- Distributing Bid Documents to Interested Bidders – Upon Request
- Scheduled Pre-Bid Site Walk for February 18, 2026
- Contractor Bid Proposals due March 13, 2026

Project Funding Phase 1 Only

- NFWF 2026 Small Watershed Grant – Stream Restoration, Wetland Creation, Post-Construction Monitoring - \$750,000.00
- Growing Greener Grant Request – Stream Restoration, Construction Mgmt Services - \$186,024.00
- Project Cost - \$936,024.00 (Based on ARRC 2024 Cost Estimate) to be revised with winning bid cost
- Planned Construction Summer – Fall 2027 – Spring 2028

Snitz Creek 4

Conducted Site Walk on 12/23/2025 to Introduce EPR's new Engineer to Project
Existing Conditions Hydraulic Analysis received from EPR
Preliminary Design in Progress
Scheduling Landowner Meeting for Late February – Early March

Gingrich Run 1 – Reiner Property Gully Restoration

- CAP Funding Approved for \$204,325.00
- Resource Restoration Group (RRG) to complete Project by June 30, 2026
- PADEP comments on GP-3 Permit - DEP indicates Project must go through Individual Permit Permitting cost and timing a problem.
- Teams Meeting with PADEP and LCCD 2/4/2026
 - No permit required for Upper 239 LF Ephemeral channel section
 - Permitting of remaining 201 LF – Ok to use Waiver 16 - \$500 fee, 90 working day review, minor revisions to proposed design



Lebanon CAP Watershed Action Team

Appendix 2. QWA Monthly Update for the LCCD Watershed Action Team, provided by Mike Schroeder, QWA President, via email on 2/1/2026

1. Monitoring Program
 - A. Routine fieldwork. Snow and cold interfered with our routine monitoring program in January. Katie Hollen organized one day of routine fieldwork on Wed. Jan. 20 at Q1, Q2, and K1. We were to continue the following week with S1, BK1, and BM1, but the big snowstorm prevented it. We expect to return to the field in February or March.
 - B. Salt Watch. On Friday, Jan. 30, two crews headed out of the LCCD office to take water samples to measure salt concentrations at seven monitoring stations each, with Katie Hollen and Mike Schroeder in one crew and Bethany Canner and Hannah Hartman in another. Katie and Mike were able to collect samples at only four of the seven sites because three of the streams were frozen over. The date was selected by Stroud Water Research Center.
 - C. Equipment updates. Ordered & received an antenna for the Solinst sensor at Q1 in Cleona, total cost \$304.56. Bob Connell will install. Also, the sensor at BM1 stopped working. It was sent back to Solinst for repair or replacement and returned, with no charge (under warranty). Bob will install sometime in February.
 - D. Data management: Bob Connell led a qGIS workshop at his home on January 13 with Katie Hollen, Mike Schroeder, Gary Zelinske that included detailed handouts on the necessary steps. A second workshop is scheduled for 6-8 PM Thurs Feb 24 at the Annville Free Library. Those interested in participating should contact Bob ahead of time for instructions on downloading qGIS into their computer before the workshop.
2. NFWF Small Watershed Planning and Technical Assistance Grant. All relevant materials are housed in this shared Google Drive folder: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1QB5EM-7Hlh-2Ysp4n_Hxv4j3a_pVNg1H?usp=sharing. You are invited to review and offer any suggested edits or changes to any of this material. The grant was extended into January with an additional \$2,000, with a focus in this final segment on developing a "report card" for the watershed. The NFWF grant process is now complete.
3. Education & Outreach
 - A. On Fri Jan 23, Alyssa Bellucci participated in a second visit to the PA Geologic Survey headquarters in Middletown, courtesy of Al Guiseppe, Geoscience Manager of the Geologic & Geographic Information Services Division at the PA Geological Survey.
 - B. QWA will participate in a capacity-building effort at the Choose Clean Water Conference in May in Lancaster thanks to Tali MacArthur at POWR; more details are forthcoming.
4. 2026 projects. For 2.5 hours on Wed Jan 14, Rich Starr of EPR and Rocky Powell of CCC led a remote meeting to map out grant applications & projects for 2026. Notes from that meeting will be included in an appendix to the QWA's January meeting minutes.
5. Next QWA meeting: 7 pm Tues Feb 17, Community Room, Annville Free Library

Appendix 3. QWA Presentation at Choose Clean Water Conference in Lancaster

Tuesday, May 19, 1:15-2:00 pm

Conference website: <https://www.choosecleanwater.org/our-conference>

This session will highlight the outcomes of a pilot capacity-building initiative for community-based watershed organizations. We will explore how organizations have enhanced their ability to implement impactful habitat and watershed restoration through strategic communication, community and stakeholder assessments, and tailored volunteer recruitment strategies.

Join us to learn about tools and resources that you can use to:

- better understand stakeholder values and awareness of your organization,
- enhance collaboration and partnership,
- recruit volunteers to meet your organization's needs, and
- focus and prioritize your efforts on projects that advance your mission.

This session will present the outcomes of a pilot capacity-building initiative for community-based watershed organizations (CWOs) in the Pennsylvania portion of the Chesapeake Bay watershed funded in part by the NFWF Small Watershed Grant program.

The goal of the project was to enhance the capacity of community-based watershed organizations (CWOs) to implement future on-the-ground restoration projects through organizational and community assessments, strategic planning, communication and social marketing initiatives, and other technical and organization assistance-oriented activities. Specific objectives and activities were co-defined and co-designed between the leaders of the CWOs and their consultant partner. The objectives included identifying, assessing, and addressing specific and localized issues and needs that, when met will lead to an increase in support for and implementation of on-the-ground projects that serve diverse communities while improving riparian habitat, reconnecting streams and their floodplains, and restoring waterway health. This session will present the process, challenges, outcomes, and success of two of those CWO/consultant partnerships. The first is Elk Creeks Watershed Association who worked with Merrill Communication Consulting and the second is the Quittapahilla Watershed Association who worked with Grow Conservation, Inc. The story, including watershed organization histories, challenges, transformations and lessons learned, as well as next steps for greater watershed and waterway improvement projects, will be told from both the consultant and the watershed association leadership perspectives.

Participants will learn about tools and resources created for the CWOs by their consultant partners that they, too, can use to:

- better understand stakeholder values and awareness of your organization,
- enhance collaboration and partnership,
- recruit volunteers to meet their organization's needs, and

- focus and prioritize their efforts on projects that advance their mission,

Examples and templates of volunteer job descriptions, intake forms, and recruitment fliers as well as sponsorship guides, and more will be made available to attendees for their use. The audience will be invited to share their own capacity building needs, challenges, and successes. There will be at least one interactive activity led by the presenters such as a relationship mapping exercise or a “Forces Against/Forces Supporting” activity.

Community watershed organizations in PA are critical partners in local, regional, and statewide efforts to restore, conserve, and protect the water resources of the commonwealth. However, as all volunteer organizations they face many capacity challenges to advancing project implementation, community engagement and outreach, and environmental education. This project and this session will highlight an effort coordinated by the Pennsylvania Organization for Watershed and Rivers to demonstrate our commitment to supporting their efforts to “pursue clean water for the benefit of all people and future generations” by providing access to expert strategic planning consultants through a sort of “fiscal and project sponsorship” approach. The pursuit of federal funding for projects can be a barrier to small, all volunteer led entities. They are often not at ‘liberty’ to secure and manage such resources. But under the fiscal and project management leadership of POWR, this initiative provided a unique opportunity for these organizations to embark bolding on new paths that will ultimately lead to improved water quality and watershed health within PA portions of the Chesapeake Bay.

The audience will be asked to share their organization's origin story, their capacity-based challenges, and steps that they have taken to overcome and address those challenges. They will be asked to participate in one interactive activity that was also used by the strategic planning consultants and the CWO partners to address roadblocks and challenges they are facing. This could include something called Relationship Mapping or an activity the challenges participants to be more "asset focused" as they consider all the forces working against their success AND all the, sometimes less obvious, forces working in thier favor to support their success.

Although there are, at this time, various funders supporting "capacity building" initiatives, it can still be difficult to really wrap one's head around what that means and how it can ultimately help advance the Chesapeake Bay Program goals. This presentation is timely because it showcases a capacity building effort that, according to its beneficiaries (the watershed organizations themselves), has truly put them on a path to being more effective, more strategic in their work, communications, and recruitment efforts and ultimately more likely to accelerate their waterway and watershed restoration and conservation efforts.

This project overall featured organizations who are quietly and without fanfare doing the critical, locally focused work that is necessary to realize Bay restoration outcomes. They are not looking for accolades, press, awards, or highlight reels. Their voices not typically represented at CCW conferences. They do not have the financial resources to support member attendance at conferences held in locations outside of PA, even outside their own county or watershed boundaries. However, the location of the 2026 CCW conference makes it possible for them to

finally attend this year and the timing of this project is also perfect as it allows not only for a recap of what was accomplished during the development stage, but also in the first few months of implementing and using the new tools and resources developed.

Bios

Nancy Merrill has a wealth of experience in communications, outreach, and nonprofit leadership and a deep-rooted passion for environmental conservation and historic preservation. She holds a Master's in Nonprofit Management from George Mason University and earned her History degree from Cornell University. She served as the Communications and Marketing Coordinator for Historic London Town & Gardens in Edgewater, MD, and was the Outreach Program Manager for the Arundel Rivers Federation. At the Conservation Fund in Arlington, VA, she played a key role in establishing the Captain John Smith National Historic Trail with the National Park Service. Her background includes work as an environmental educator for the Chesapeake Bay Foundation and Friends of the Rappahannock.

Michael Schroeder is the president of the Quittapahilla Watershed Association. He is also President of the Friends of Old Annsville and the Executive Director of the Quittapahilla Creek Garbage Museum, devoted to raising public awareness about the endless flows of rogue plastic garbage contaminating local waterways. An avid gardener & woodworker, Mike is the QWA website's author and administrator, which he pays for out of pocket, at <https://www.quittiecreek.org/>. He is Professor Emeritus of History at Lebanon Valley College.

Appendix 4. Invitation to participate in Clean Water Week, Sept. 12-19, with related materials

from: Abigail Harvey
to: Michael Schroeder
date: Feb 11, 2026
subject: Invitation to Join Lebanon Valley Clean Water Week — Partner Info Sessions

Hello!

The Lebanon Valley Conservancy is excited to share an emerging initiative we hope you'll consider joining: Lebanon Valley Clean Water Week, a new county-wide celebration designed to amplify our partners and deepen public understanding of watershed health and the interconnected nature of our local waterways.

This week-long program will take place September 12th - 19th and will bring together environmental organizations, schools, municipalities, and community groups to offer hands-on learning experiences across Lebanon County. Our goal is to create a unified, collaborative effort

that elevates the visibility of water issues, strengthens community stewardship, and expands access to high-quality environmental education.

To introduce the concept, answer questions, and explore partnership opportunities, we are hosting several informational meetings. You are welcome to attend any of the following sessions:

- In-person at TLVC Office
 - Wednesday, February 25 at 5:00 PM
 - Tuesday, March 3 at 5:00 PM
- Virtual Session
 - Thursday, March 5 at 12:00 PM (Zoom link will be provided upon RSVP)

During these sessions, we will review:

- The vision and goals of Lebanon Valley Clean Water Week
- Event structure, themes, and county-wide branding
- Event Proposal Forms for partner-hosted programs
- Support TLVC will provide (marketing, scheduling, materials)
- Partner Hosted Programs FAQ

Lebanon Valley Clean Water Week is designed to fill a real need: while many of our organizations work on water-related issues, efforts often happen independently. By creating a shared platform with cohesive messaging and coordinated outreach, we can collectively reach more residents and inspire long-term engagement in watershed protection.

We would be thrilled to have your organization involved in shaping this first-year effort. Please RSVP by replying to this email with the session you plan to attend. If none of the listed times work for you, we're happy to schedule a brief one-on-one conversation.

Thank you for your continued commitment to conservation and community education. We look forward to building a lasting event together.

Abigail Harvey
Executive Director
Lebanon Valley Conservancy

Lebanon Valley Clean Water Week – Partner Overview

PRESENTED BY THE LEBANON VALLEY
CONSERVANCY

770 CUMBERLAND ST, LEBANON,
PA

About Lebanon Valley Clean Water Week

Lebanon Valley Clean Water Week is a new county-wide initiative designed to deepen public understanding of clean water, watershed health, and the interconnected nature of our local waterways.

Taking place **September 12-19, 2026**, the week features hands-on educational experiences hosted by environmental organizations, schools, municipalities, and community groups across Lebanon County.

By uniting partners under a shared identity and coordinated outreach effort, the week strengthens community stewardship, expands environmental literacy, and inspires long-term engagement in conservation.

Why Clean Water Week?

Local waterways face increasing pressures from pollution, development, and climate-related impacts.

Clean Water Week provides:

- A shared platform for education and engagement
- County-wide visibility for partners
- Collaborative opportunities that strengthen relationships
- Accessible learning experiences for youth, families, and community members

Goals

- Increase public understanding of watershed systems
- Highlight local conservation partners
- Provide diverse, place-based educational opportunities
- Encourage long-term stewardship behaviors

Evaluation & Impact

TLVC will track program reach through:

- Attendance at kickoff, closing, and partner events
- Participant surveys measuring knowledge gained and satisfaction
- Partner feedback on collaboration and delivery

What TLVC Provides

- Event organization & scheduling support
- Kickoff and closing celebration events
- Reusable bags for participants
- Printed schedules and event maps
- Shared marketing materials (graphics, templates, messaging)
- Promotion through TLVC channels
- Partner T-shirts
- Participant surveys

Community Partner Role

- Plan, staff, and host their own event(s)
- Manage event registration
- Secure required permits
- Hold liability insurance
- Provide event-specific liability waivers (template available)
- Coordinate with TLVC on scheduling and marketing deadlines

Event types may include:

Walks • Workshops • Cleanups • Demonstrations • Tours • Educational programs • Art activities • Water-focused experiences

Next Steps

Informational Sessions

In-Person at TLVC Office

- February 25 at 5:00 PM

- March 3 at 5:00 PM

Virtual Session

- March 5 at 12:00 PM (Zoom link upon RSVP)

Contact

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The Lebanon Valley Conservancy

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Lebanon Valley Clean Water Week Partner FAQ

What is Lebanon Water Week?

Lebanon Water Week is a county-wide celebration taking place September 12th - 19th, 2026. It brings together environmental organizations, schools, municipalities, and community groups to offer hands-on educational experiences focused on watershed health, and the interconnected nature of our local waterways.

Why should my organization participate?

Participating gives your organization the opportunity to:

- Reach new audiences
- Highlight your programs, mission, and expertise
- Strengthen partnerships with other conservation groups
- Contribute to a unified, county-wide initiative
- Benefit from shared marketing, materials, and visibility

Water Week is designed to amplify your work, not add unnecessary burden.

What kinds of events can partners host?

Events can be as simple or creative as you'd like. Examples include:

- Stream walks or watershed tours
- Cleanups or restoration activities
- Demonstrations (stormwater, soil health, native plants)
- School or youth programs
- Art, photography, or nature-based workshops
- Community science activities
- Paddles, hikes, or guided nature experiences

Indoor, outdoor, small-scale, or large-scale events are all welcome.

What support does TLVC provide?

TLVC will offer:

- Event organization and scheduling support
- Kickoff and closing celebration events
- Reusable bags for participants
- Printed schedules and county-wide event maps
- Shared marketing materials and templates
- Promotion through TLVC channels
- Branded T-shirts for partners
- Participant surveys and evaluation tools

Our goal is to make participation easy and cohesive.

What are partner responsibilities?

Partner organizations are responsible for:

- Planning, staffing, and hosting their event(s)
- Securing any required permits
- Holding liability insurance for their event
- Providing event-specific liability waivers as needed
- Communicating with TLVC about event details and deadlines

You maintain full ownership and control of your event.

Does my event need to be free to the public?

We strongly encourage free or low-cost (\$10 - \$15) events to ensure accessibility. If your event requires a fee to cover materials or staffing, please discuss this with TLVC so we can communicate it clearly in the schedule.

Can multiple organizations collaborate on a single event?

Absolutely. Co-hosted events are encouraged and can help share staffing, expertise, and resources.

How will events be promoted?

TLVC will promote Water Week through:

- Social media campaigns
- Email newsletters
- Printed schedules and maps
- Press releases and media outreach
- Partner networks and community channels

Partners are encouraged to promote their own events as well.

How will attendance and impact be measured?

TLVC will track:

- Attendance at kickoff, closing, and partner events
- Participant surveys (knowledge gained, satisfaction, interest in future engagement)
- Partner feedback

A summary report will be shared with all partners after the event.

What if my organization has limited capacity?

Every contribution strengthens the initiative. Options include:

- Providing volunteers
- Offering space or equipment
- Sharing expertise or educational materials
- Helping promote Water Week

How to Plan a Water Week Event

A Guide for Lebanon Valley Clean Water Week Partners

The Lebanon Valley Conservancy

1. Start With Your Strengths

Think about what your organization already does well. Your program or event should highlight your mission, expertise, and connection to local waterways.

Questions to consider:

- What programs or activities do we already offer that could be adapted for Water Week?
- What topics or skills do we want to share with the community?
- What locations or facilities do we have access to?

Examples:

- A nature center might host a stream ecology walk.
- A municipality could offer a stormwater demonstration.
- A school group might lead a student art exhibit about water.
- A nonprofit could run a cleanup or restoration activity.

2. What Do You Want To Achieve With Your Event?

Think about the impact you want your event to have after water week.

Questions to consider:

- What do we want attendees to know after they leave our event?
- Is there a program we offer that we want to highlight?
- Is there a fundraiser or event we are looking for donors or volunteers for?

3. Choose Your Event Type

Water Week events can be educational, hands-on, recreational, artistic, or scientific. Pick a format that fits your capacity and audience.

Popular event formats:

- Guided walks or hikes
- Paddles or boating activities
- Cleanups or volunteer projects
- Workshops or demonstrations
- Youth or family programs
- Art, photography, or storytelling activities
- Community science (macroinvertebrate sampling, water testing, bird counts)
- Open houses or facility tours

4. Select a Location

Choose a site that supports your event goals and is safe and accessible for participants.

Consider:

- Parking and accessibility
- Safety and supervision needs
- Restrooms or nearby facilities
- Shade, seating, or shelter
- Proximity to water features
- Whether permits are required

If you're unsure about permitting, TLVC can help point you in the right direction.

5. Determine Your Audience

Who is this event for? Tailoring your program to a specific audience helps with planning and promotion. Who are you trying to reach?

Possible audiences:

- Families with children
- Teens or school groups
- Adults or lifelong learners
- Volunteers
- Outdoor recreation enthusiasts
- Local residents or neighborhood groups

6. Plan the Logistics

Key logistics to finalize:

- Date and time (during Water Week)
- Event duration
- Maximum capacity
- Staffing and volunteer needs
- Materials or equipment required
- Safety considerations
- Accessibility accommodations
- Registration requirements (if any) Please Provide links to TLVC for promotion

7. Address Permits & Liability

Partners are responsible for securing any necessary permits and ensuring proper liability coverage.

You will need to:

- Confirm whether your location requires a permit
- Hold liability insurance for your event
- Provide event-specific waivers if needed
- Ensure staff/volunteers are trained for safety

TLVC can help answer questions but cannot secure permits on your behalf.

8. Submit Your Event Information to TLVC

Once your event is planned, TLVC will collect details for the county-wide schedule.

You'll be asked to provide:

- Event title
- Host organization
- Date, time, and location
- Short description
- Registration link (if applicable)
- Accessibility notes
- Contact information
- Any fees or materials participants should bring

This ensures your event is included in all promotional materials.

8. Promote Your Event

TLVC will provide:

- Shared branding and graphics
- Social media templates for week before and week of.
- Printed schedules and yard signs
- Reusable bags and partner tee shirts

Partners are encouraged to promote their events through:

- Social media
- Email newsletters
- Website calendars
- Community bulletin boards
- Local schools, libraries, and municipal offices

The more visibility, the better the turnout.

Need Help?

TLVC is here to support you throughout the planning process.

Contact us anytime to brainstorm ideas, discuss logistics, or explore collaboration opportunities