

QUITTAPAHILLA WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

Meeting Minutes

Community Room, Annville Free Library, and remotely on Zoom

Tuesday, April 21, 2026

Present: Michael Schroeder (President), Bob Connell, Karen Feather, Tim Greene, Bryan Hoffman, Katie Hollen (LCCD), Kara Lubold (LCCD), Bill Osburn

The meeting opened at 7:00 PM

1. Minutes. The minutes of the March 17, 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. Katie reported that she expect to schedule our routine fieldwork in May.

B. Equipment updates

1) Solinst Sensors. Bob reported that four of our five Solinst sensors are working well, but the sensor at Q1 is still transmitting intermittently despite installing an antenna. He will contact Solinst tech support.

2) YSI Sondes. Katie reported that the pH sensor on our sonde needs replacing. Mike said we have sufficient funds in our bank account to purchase a new one. Katie will send the product info to Mike for purchase.

3) ISCO auto-samplers. No updates.

C. Data management updates

1) Workshops on using qGIS. Bob reported that we will hold our fourth qGIS workshop on Tuesday, April 28 from 6-8 pm at the Annville Free Library, with a focus on geoprocessing. Bob also reported that expect to hold our fifth workshop in the fall, focusing on using qGIS to build a webpage. All the study materials can be found at <https://www.quittiedata.org/GIS/> > Training. Be in touch with Bob for details.

2) Field Data. Bob reported that all data produced in our routine March monitoring fieldwork have been added to our Water Quality Portal, at <https://quittiedata.org>

3) Macroinvertebrate Sampling Raw Data. No update.

3. National Fish & Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) Grant (concluded in Feb. 2026)

- A. Google Drive folder housing NFWF grant materials:
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1QB5EM-7HIh-2Ysp4n_Hxv4j3a_pVNg1H?usp=sharing
- B. **Special meeting** on Grow Conservation’s “General Recommendations” is still pending (see **Appendix 1** to these minutes).

4. Projects updates

- A. **Priority projects for 2026.** Mike reiterated that both the QWA and Russ Collins of DFTU have agreed with the suggestion of Rich Starr of EPR to focus on Lower Snitz 4 and Snitz 5-7 in this 2026 round of Growing Greener and EPA 319 funding. As noted, Russ also agreed that DFTU is willing and able to administer the grants. Rich also suggested a follow-up meeting in August to develop plans for restoration projects in the watershed for 2027.
- B. **Updates from partners.** For details, see the LCCD’s Watershed Action Team minutes of April 2, 2026, included below in these minutes in **Appendix 2**.

5. LCCD Watershed Action Team. See **Appendix 2** below.

6. Media & website updates. Mike reported that he continues to update the website and post on social media focusing on the QWA Monitoring Program.

7. Lebanon County Stormwater Consortium updates. On April 1, Bryan Hoffman emailed Mike as follows: “I received the attached update on the potential new MS4 requirements. As you will see the likely new effective date will not be before the end of 2026. In addition, as anticipated, the focus will be on volume reduction. We have previously discussed how challenging this will be for largely built out areas, such as Cleona and Annville. I don't see any scenario in which volume reduction does not lead to increased project costs and intrusion onto private property.” For the referenced update, see **Appendix 3**, below.

8. Education, outreach & special events.

- A. Mike and Bob reported that they presented on the QWA’s work at the LVC Environmental Club Luncheon on Tues April 14, and that their presentation was well received.
- B. Mike reported that he will be presenting at Choose Clean Water Conference, 1:15-2:00 on Tues. May 19 at Lancaster Marriott at Penn Square in Lancaster, focusing on the main outcomes of the NFWF capacity building grant; see **Appendix 4**, below, and the conference website, at <https://www.choosecleanwater.org/our-conference>

- C. Tabling events: Friends of Old Annville’s Historic Old Annville Day (9 am—2 pm Sat June 13, 2026,) and 1 -5 pm on July 4, 2026, at the America250 Celebration at the Lebanon Valley Expo Center.
- D. Lebanon Valley Clean Water Week, Sept. 12-19, sponsored by TLVC – lots of opportunities to get involved; Mike proposed: (1) a garbage cleanup day in the area excavated upstream of the 22nd St bridge, (2) a guided tour of Quittie Creek Nature Park. See the materials in **Appendix 5**, below.
- E. Possible field trips to the City of Lebanon Authority’s (COLA’s) Wastewater Treatment Plant and the Cleona Pumping Station

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, April 2, 2026



Lebanon CAP Watershed Action Team

Thursday, April 2, 2026 at 9:00 a.m.

Members Present: Bethany Canner, Russ Collins, Hannah Hartman, Abigail Harvey, Darren Heisey, Katie Hollen, Dan Kreiser, and Kara Lubold

1. Applications

- Snitz Trib at Ironmaster Rd: \$240,000 (SRBC grant \$180,000 (pending), \$60,000 CAP match)

2. In-Process Projects

- Hammer Creek Estates: \$250,000 of ACAP funding for construction-related expenses.
- Gerald Horst bridge replacement: \$23,600 of ACAP funding for design and permitting.
- Gingrich Run 1: \$204,325 of CAP funding for streambank restoration and stabilization, concrete dam removal. In permitting phase.
- Sollenberger Meadow Conversion: \$1,285 of 2026 CAP funding. Landowner agreements signed. Project will start this summer with seeding in the fall.

3. Future Projects

- Musser Ag BMPs (HUA, Animal Walkway, Deep Pit Manure Storage): \$298,648.17
 - o Project will close out 2025 CAP funds

4. Partner Updates

- Lebanon Consortium/MS4, Darren Heisey
 - o Still waiting for the next MS4 permit.
 - o SQ1 Phase 2: Construction likely in 2027.
 - o SQ6: In permitting. The project will not go to construction until the new MS4 permit is released.
 - o Lions Lake Shoreline Stabilization: Live stakes have been replanted. Maintenance bond in place.
- Lebanon Valley Conservancy, Abigail Harvey & Dan Kreiser
 - o Submitted NFWF grant application for Killinger.
 - o Continuing planning for Water Week.
 - o Dan is submitting a C2P2 grant application for lawn conversion. If awarded, TLVC will run it as a mini-grant program. Projects will replace upland turfgrass with warm season meadows.
- Quittapahilla Watershed Association, Mike Schroeder
 - o See Appendix 1.
- Swatara Watershed Association, Bethany Canner
 - o Sojourn: Saturday, May 2. Partnering with Manada Conservancy for a Swatara Creek Collaborative kickoff event.



Lebanon CAP Watershed Action Team

- Received Marcellus Shale grant to do improvements at Swatara Watershed Park, including culvert repair and trail building.
- Received a mini-grant to do outreach to non-boating creek users to encourage safety and environmental awareness.
- Trout Unlimited, Russ Collins
 - Bachman Run: Bridge design is complete.
 - Snitz 3: Received \$330,408 in Growing Greener funds for construction.
- EPR, Rich Starr (provided via email 3/30/2026)
 - Heisey Farm: 60% design on schedule.
 - Historic Schaefferstown Farm: Pre-app meeting is set for Apr 29, at 9:30 am. It will be on site.
 - Hammer Creek Estates: Construction moving along well.
 - Barry Farm: PADEP did not accept the design changes the Barrys wanted. Hammer Creek Core Planning team agreed that a meeting with Jeff is needed. Hannah sent an email to Jeff requesting a meeting during the week of Apr 20. Reid, Jim and Rich will meet beforehand to prepare the information we need to demonstrate the difference between the current design and what the Barrys requested.
- Cleare Creeks Consulting, Rocky Powell
 - See Appendix 2.

5. Lebanon County Conservation District Update

- 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.)
- Upcoming Events
 - LCCD Tree & Plant Sale: Leftover stock will be for sale on Friday, April 17, from 9am-6pm at the Expo Center.
 - LCCD Tire Collection: Wednesday, April 29th from 8am-4pm at the Expo Center. (Registration is open until April 13: <https://s.surveypal.com/5ojux3sz>)

6. Next Meetings 2026

- 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. QWA Monthly Update for the LCCD Watershed Action Team, provided by Michael Schroeder, QWA President, via email on 4/2/2026

1. Monitoring Program
 - a. Routine fieldwork. Katie Hollen led two fieldwork days for water quality monitoring on Tuesday, March 10, with Bob Connell, Lydia Mohn, and Mike Schroeder at Q1, K1, and Q2, and on Thursday, March 26 with Bob Connell, Lydia Mohn, Bill Osburn, Mike Schroeder, Gary Zelinske, and Palmyra High School student Alex Irwin at S1, BK1, and BM1.
 - b. Equipment. Bob Connell continues to monitor, change the batteries, and, as necessary, oversee the repair of the Solinst sensors at five of our monitoring sites. The antenna ordered for Q1 is in hand but not yet installed.
 - c. Data management: On Tuesday, March 24, Bob Connell led a third qGIS workshop 6-8 PM in the Annville Free Library, with participants, Katie Hollen, Mike Schroeder, and Gary Zelinske. Bob will schedule a fourth workshop for April. Study materials, downloads, and other helpful items are accessible at <https://quittiedata.org/GIS/> Those interested in participating should contact Bob ahead of time for instructions on downloading qGIS into their computer before the workshop.
2. Stream Restoration Projects
 - a. Mid-March communications with Rich Starr, Vice President and Senior Water Resources Scientist at Ecological Planning & Restoration (EPR) resulted in Mike for the QWA and Russ Collins of Doc Fritchey Trout Unlimited agreeing with Rich's recommendation that we apply for PA-DEP Growing Greener and EPA 319 funding for projects on Lower Snitz 4 and Snitz 5-7. Russ confirmed that DFTU would be able to apply for and administer these grants should they be approved.
3. Education & Outreach
 - a. On Wednesday, March 18, Mike and Bob attended the annual meeting of the Lower Susquehanna Riverkeeper Association (LSRA) in Wrightsville and made some valuable contacts with our bigger sister organization. Among other things, we discussed collaborating bacterial monitoring in the Quittie watershed by establishing a kind of satellite lab here in Lebanon County for our own work and to feed data to the LSRA.
 - b. On Tuesday, April 14, from 11:30 AM to 1:00 PM, Mike and Bob will serve as guest speakers at the annual luncheon of the Environmental Club at Lebanon Valley College, focusing on the work of the QWA.
 - c. Mike has placed an order for the printing of 500 new QWA trifold brochures and other outreach materials at a cost of \$320.
 - d. Choose Clean Water Conference. The QWA will be presenting on its NFWF capacity-building grant at the Choose Clean Water Conference on May 19-20 at the Lancaster Marriott at Penn Square in Lancaster – the conference website is here:



Lebanon CAP Watershed Action Team

<https://www.choosecleanwater.org/our-conference>. Thanks to Tali MacArthur at POWR for facilitating our proposal.

- e. Space reserved at Historic Old Annville Day, 9 AM-2 PM Sat June 13.
 - f. The Lebanon Valley Conservancy organizing Lebanon Valley Clean Water Week, Sept. 12-19. The QWA is planning several activities, including a Plastic Garbage Artifact Hunt in collaboration with the Quittapahilla Creek Garbage Museum. Details are forthcoming.
4. The next QWA meeting will be at 7 PM Tues April 21 in the Community Room of the Annville Free Library and on Zoom.



Lebanon CAP Watershed Action Team

Appendix 2. Quittapahilla Creek Projects update provided for the LCCD Watershed Action Team, provided by Rocky Powell, Clear Creeks Consulting, via email on 4/6/2026.

Beck Creek 6

Live Stake and Live Branch Installation – RRG completed March 2026
Currently Addressing LCCD Concerns – April 2026
Wetland Outlet Pipe clogging with debris – Install Debris Fence at Outlet Pipe – RRG Completed March 2026
Potential for erosion along Outfall Channel – Armor channel bottom with stone – RRG Pending.
Goose damage – Install goose netting along aquatic bench – RRG Pending.
Reseed aquatic bench and surrounding bare areas – RRG Pending
As-Built Survey and Plans – RRG Pending
Pollutant Reduction Model – EPR Completed March 2026
Final Report – Clear Creeks Completed pending As-Built Plans from RRG
PracticeKeeper – Clear Creeks Data Input complete pending As-Built Plans from RRG

Snitz Creek 2

As-Built Survey and Plans – Kinsley/EPR Completed March 2026
Pollutant Reduction Model – EPR Completed March 2026
Final Report – Clear Creeks Completed March 2026
PracticeKeeper – Clear Creeks Data Input Completed March 2026

Snitz Creek 3 (Permitted 6/14/2023)

319 – . \$457,727.00 (Approved – 10/20/2025)
GG – \$330,408.00 (Approved – 1/21/2026)
Cost – \$788,135.00
Construction Scheduled to Start – Mid – Late May 2026

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

Project Timeline

TLVC Selected Contractor - Flyway Excavating	March 20, 2026
TLVC submitted NFWF Grant Application	April 2, 2026
GGP Grant Application	June 5, 2026



Lebanon CAP Watershed Action Team

NFWF Grant Award Notification:	September 2026
GGP Grant Award Notification:	January 2027
NRCS Landowner Cost Share Agreement	February - March 2027
Project Start Date:	Summer - Fall 2027
Project Completion Date:	Fall 2027 - Spring 2028

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

Project Timeline

Bid Invitations Sent to Contractors	March 16, 2026
Bidding Contractors Mandatory Site Visit:	April 7, 2026 at 10 am
All Contractors Questions Due:	April 17, 2026 by 4 pm
Project Manager Response to Questions:	April 24, 2026
Contractors Bid Due Date:	April 30, 2026 by 4 pm
Award Notification:	May 8, 2026
LCCD Letter of Support:	May 15, 2026
NRCS Letter of Support:	May 15, 2026
GGP Grant Application	June 5, 2026
319 Grant Application	June 5, 2026
GGP Grant Award Notification:	January 2027
319 Grant Award Notification:	October 2027
LCCD ACAP Cost Share Agreement	February - March 2028
NRCS Landowner Cost Share Agreement	February - March 2028
Project Start Date:	Spring – Summer 2028
Project Completion Date:	Fall 2028

Snitz Creek 4

Preliminary Design in Progress
Scheduling Landowner Meeting for Late-April

Appendix 3. “MS4 Program Update – What Municipal Officials Need to Know”

MS4 Program Update – What Municipal Officials Need to Know

Current Status

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP) is updating the statewide MS4 permit (PAG-13).

- A draft permit was released in early 2025
- The public comment period has ended
- PADEP is currently reviewing comments
- No final permit has been issued yet

👉 There are no new requirements in effect at this time.

Municipalities should continue to follow their current MS4 permit and Pollutant Reduction Plan (PRP). As you are aware, the Consortium has satisfied the initial PRP and MS4 requirements so we are under no obligation to do anymore work at this time.

When Will Changes Occur?

- The updated MS4 permit is expected sometime towards the latter part of 2026 but there are no guarantees that will happen. We would not be surprised if additional delays are encountered.
 - Municipalities will likely need to reapply under the new permit
 - New requirements would begin after permit issuance
-

What Changes Are Being Proposed?

Current System (PRP)

- Focus: Reducing pollutants (like sediment)
- Typically achieved through larger stormwater projects

Proposed Future System

- Focus: Managing stormwater volume
- Goal: Reduce runoff before it reaches streams
- Emphasis on:
 - Infiltration (soaking water into the ground)
 - Green infrastructure (rain gardens, permeable pavement, etc.)

👉 Simple explanation:

Instead of only improving water quality, the new approach focuses on reducing how much stormwater leaves developed areas.

What Could This Mean for Municipalities?

While details are still being finalized, municipalities may see:

- More smaller, distributed projects instead of one large project
 - Increased use of:
 - Rain gardens
 - Infiltration systems
 - Permeable pavement
 - More work in existing developed areas (retrofits)
 - Potential for higher costs and maintenance needs
-

What About Current PRP Requirements?

- All current MS4 obligations remain in effect
 - Deadlines are not extended
 - PADEP has not finalized how existing PRP work will count under the new permit
-

What Should We Do Now?

- Continue implementing current MS4 requirements
 - Stay informed as PADEP finalizes the new permit
 - Begin identifying opportunities for:
 - Green infrastructure
 - Stormwater infiltration projects
 - Avoid major program changes until final rules are issued
-

Key Takeaways

- ✓ No immediate changes are required
- ✓ New regulations are coming, likely in towards latter part of 2026

- ✓ Future focus will shift toward managing stormwater volume
- ✓ Current permit requirements still apply

Appendix 4. 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 5. 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