



# Fall 2024 Newsletter

It has been a busy “planning” summer for the SCWA Board of Directors, so we first want to recap the status of three financial grants we received this year and then discuss opportunities for your continued involvement in the coming year.

## **Chesapeake Bay Trust Grant Awarded to SCWA for Streambank Stabilization Design**

Execution of the Chesapeake Bay Trust grant awarded us to contract for assessment, design, and permitting of an approximate 400-foot-long streambank restoration project on the main stem of Sleepy Creek northeast of the Highland Road Bridge is nearing completion. Photo shows current streambank condition.



A contract was awarded to Greenway Engineering, Winchester, VA. Site assessment and design work began in May 2024. A “natural streambank restoration” design, utilizing mature trees and other natural resources on the property, followed. The design and property resource utilization has been accepted by the landowners, and permitting by local, state, and federal agencies is near completion. Our plan is to request implementation grant funding in January, 2025. More information about this project will be presented at our upcoming SCWA Annual Membership Meeting (see below).

## **Chesapeake Bay Small Watershed Grant Awarded for Streambank Stabilization Design and Implementation Project**

On November 1, 2024, the Cacapon Institute, Great Cacapon, WV, and Downstream Strategies, Morgantown, WV, were awarded a grant to design and implement a “natural streambank restoration” project at two locations in the watershed – one on the main stem and one on the middle branch of Sleepy Creek. The project will be administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. We are

working with them in the preliminary stages of this award and more information will be forthcoming at our Annual Membership Meeting in December. Photo below shows one of the areas that will benefit from this project.



### **NRCS Grant for Assessment and Planning Study of the Sleepy Creek Watershed**

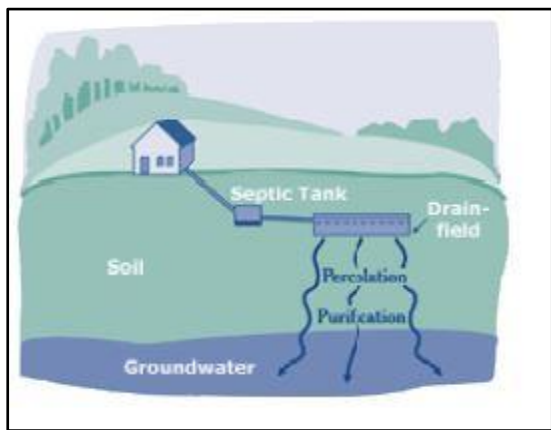
The Sleepy Creek Watershed comprises 145 square mile and includes acreage in Morgan and Berkeley Counties, WV, and in Frederick County, VA (see photo below – the green-bordered area is the watershed).



The Morgan County Commission determined that it needed assistance in planning for projects within the watershed. Therefore, beginning last Spring, we have been working with the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) West Virginia office, the Morgan County Commission, and the Eastern Panhandle Regional Planning and Development Council to create a Statement of Work, solicit and evaluate responses from interested contractors, and make an award for the study. It has

been a time-consuming process, but we have narrowed our selection to one contractor and are negotiating costs for contract award by year-end. The study, which will take approximately 18 months, will be comprehensive from an environmental assessment, land use, water quality and flow, and cultural resource perspective. Contract award and execution will be the responsibility of the Morgan County Commission staff, with assistance provided by SCWA and Eastern Panhandle Regional Planning and Development Council personnel. Additional information will be provided at our Annual Membership Meeting. Once the contract is awarded, there will be ample opportunity provided by the contractor for you and other community members and entities to provide input to the direction, findings, and recommendations of the planning study.

### **Financial Assistance Continues to be Available for Septic Pumping**



Septic pumping reimbursement for 50% of the cost of pumping (up to \$150) is still available to homeowners in the Sleepy Creek Watershed. Reimbursement is only available if your application is approved by the Eastern Panhandle Conservation District before you arrange for pumping. You and other Sleepy Creek Watershed residents received a postcard in the mail in July inviting you to submit an application form. Forty residents responded so far, but it's not too late for you and your neighbors. **Attached for your use is the septic pumping application** to be sent to the

Eastern Panhandle Conservation District either by mail (EPCD, 151 Aikens Center, Suite 2, Martinsburg, WV 25404); fax (304-264-4986); or email [epcd@wvca.gov](mailto:epcd@wvca.gov). Don't delay to take advantage of this environmental saving and financial opportunity!

### **Riparian Buffer and Canopy Tree Plantings in the Sleepy Creek Watershed**

A BIG THANK YOU to the 31 volunteer Boy Scouts, Future Farmers of America, and other Morgan County residents who assisted us and the Eastern Panhandle Conservation District in planting a 200-tree riparian buffer along the main stem of Sleepy Creek, on Crone Lane, on April 4, 2024. Thanks, too, to those that assisted in planting a canopy tree covering of 50 trees on June 12 and 13 off of Highland Ridge Road. Neither of these plantings would have happened without volunteer help. We have two more plantings scheduled for Spring 2025 and will let you know about the opportunity to help when the dates and tree quantities are finalized. If you would be interested in riparian buffer or canopy tree plantings on your property, please email your name, address, and phone number to [info@sleepycreekwatershed.org](mailto:info@sleepycreekwatershed.org) and we'll get in touch with you.

### **Association Volunteers Sought**

**Board of Directors:** The bylaws of our not-for-profit corporation allow for a maximum of 10 directors and no fewer than three, with individual terms of office for two years, with no term limits. The current board has four members and we are seeking additional volunteers to increase this number and expand board member background, experience, and involvement. The board generally meets once a month at

the convenience of the majority of its members. If you are interested in exploring the option of joining our board and helping improve the quality of life in the watershed, please contact Chuck Marsh at (304)-258-2605 or via email at [marshbc@aol.com](mailto:marshbc@aol.com). He will provide you more information about the board's opportunities and involvement.

**Water Quality Monitors:** The WV Department of Environmental Protection (WVDEP) is in the process of revising and standardizing the volunteer Save Our Streams (SOS) water quality monitoring program, to engage and be part of the greater Chesapeake Bay water quality monitoring program. Starting in the Spring of 2025, we likewise will be revising our SOS monitoring process and documentation. If you are interested in being part of this monthly activity from April through September, please let us know via an email with your name, address, and phone number to [info@sleepycreekwatershed.org](mailto:info@sleepycreekwatershed.org) and we'll be in touch with you.

### **SCWA 2024 Annual Membership Meeting**

Mark your calendars! As mentioned above, our Annual Membership Meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 4, 2024, starting at 6:30 PM. The location will be the Morgan County Schools Administration Building, 247 Harrison Avenue, Berkeley Springs, WV. In addition to the foregoing topics in this newsletter, financial information, voting for Board of Director membership and other current topics of interest will be presented. Light refreshments will be served. Please plan on attending, as we need your input about the watershed.

### **Parting Thoughts**

In closing, I want to thank all you for your continued financial and other support to the mission of the Sleepy Creek Watershed Association. The coming year is offering unparalleled challenges, but at the same time there are opportunities to make immediate and to plan for long-term improvements to the physical infrastructure of the watershed and the well-being of its residents. The Board of Directors and I look forward to working with all of you as we progress through these upcoming challenges.

And as a final note, I would be remiss to not recognize and thank two West Virginia Conservation Agency Conservation Specialists assigned to the Eastern Panhandle Conservation District – Kristen Bisom and Erin Krieger. Kristen has been a kingpin in our programs for the last six years and Erin for the last year. Both are moving on to new opportunities in conservation services and I sincerely want to thank them for their past support to the Sleepy Creek Watershed Association and wish them the best in their future endeavors. THANK YOU!

Chuck Marsh, President

1 Attachment: Sleepy Creek Watershed Septic Pumping Application