



## Spring 2023 Newsletter

We, like most of you, are looking forward to warmer spring weather and the opportunity to become more active outdoors. For now, however, we have a few upcoming opportunities and activities we want to share with you.

**WV Make-It-Shine:** Our first outdoor activity this season will on Saturday, April 1st. We will once again participate with other state-wide organizations in the annual WV “Make-It-Shine” litter clean-up campaign. This year we’ll be working on Spohrs Road, between Rte. 9 East and Ridersville Road. We will meet at the corner of Spohrs Rd. and Eckerd Ln. at 10 AM and work until noon. All family members are welcome to participate. Litter bags will be provided for collection, but bringing a pail and lawn rake, to facilitate collection, would also be helpful. Dress for the weather and bring along personal refreshments, if desired. Bottled water will be available. No advanced registration required and, as always, your help is sincerely appreciated.

**Water Quality Monitoring:** We will soon be initiating our annual water quality monitoring consisting of two separate activities. Training will be provided for both efforts. The first, weather permitting, is a twice-a-month stream quality evaluation using the WV Department of Environmental Protection (WVDEP) Save our Streams (SOS) protocol. Team participants, wearing appropriate footwear, will enter the stream to assist in collecting macroinvertebrates, classifying and summarizing their collection in accordance with the protocol, and reporting the team’s findings to WVDEP. This bi-month effort generally takes about 2 hours, including travel time.

The second is a controlled scientific monitoring, conducted once a month, in conjunction with the Cacapon Institute, in Great Cacapon. Trained team participants will collect and document water samples at several locations throughout the Sleepy Creek watershed and deliver the samples to the Cacapon Institute's licensed laboratory for testing and documentation. This activity generally starts in the early morning and may take up to 4 hours.

If you are interested in learning about and helping out with either of these monitoring activities, please provide your email and phone contact information to us at [info@sleepycreekwatershed.org](mailto:info@sleepycreekwatershed.org). We'll contact you when the monitoring dates are set up.

**Septic Pumping and Repair:** The association and the Eastern Panhandle Conservation District (EPCD) continue to offer an opportunity for Sleepy Creek Watershed homeowners to apply for financial reimbursement of 50% (up to \$150) of the cost of having their home septic system pumped. Limited additional funding is also available to assist with septic system repairs, when needed. The applicant's property must be within the Sleepy Creek Watershed and all applications must be approved before the septic system is pumped or repaired. Contact Kristen Bisom at the EPCD to determine your eligibility and receive your formal application. She can be reached at 681-247-3011 or email [kbisom@wvca.us](mailto:kbisom@wvca.us). Mail-in application forms are also available at the Morgan County Health Department – 137 War Memorial Dr., Berkeley Springs – or on the SCWA website ([www.sleepycreekwatershed.org](http://www.sleepycreekwatershed.org); scroll down to 'News & Events' on the home page). Don't delay in submitting your request, as funding is limited. Please follow the instructions carefully. Submitted applications are approved on a first-come, first-served basis and must be approved by the EPCD before any pumping or repair work is initiated.

**Master Gardeners' Plant Fair:** The Morgan County Master Gardeners are holding their annual plant fair at the Berkeley Springs State Park on May 12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup> this year. We plan on being there both days. We can provide you and other attendees information about our organization and handouts on environmental projects you can accomplish on your property, as well as other low-cost share programs available to watershed residents. These projects will improve the property value and the natural environment of the watershed for you and future generations, as well as for the wildlife. We hope to see you there!

**Morgan County EXPO:** Similar to the plant fair, this community event is scheduled for July 29<sup>th</sup> at the Berkeley Springs State Park. It is a great opportunity to interact with numerous community organizations. Mark your calendars. We plan on being there as well.

**Other Activities in Planning Stages:** In conjunction with the EPCD, we are currently working with the Greenwood School Community Center and the Morgan County Observatory to evaluate the site for a potential porous paving project to prevent sediment and motor vehicle pollutants from running off into a tributary of Sleepy Creek. We are also working with several landowners in assessing their locations for riparian buffer tree planting this coming fall. If you have potential sites for similar activities, please email us with your proposed location and contact information at [info@sleepycreekwatershed.org](mailto:info@sleepycreekwatershed.org). We'll be in touch.

**Spring 2023 Cacapon Institute YourBMP Semiannual Tree Sales:** Although it is now too late to participate for this spring, we want to acknowledge the participation of 11 members who purchased 78 trees and/or shrubs (a maximum of 8/member) from 19 different species! We bring this to your attention now to encourage you to watch for information from us on a repeat opportunity this fall. Different than past year's tree sales, Cacapon Institute now offers over 40 different species and sizes of trees/shrubs, ranging in cost from \$10 to \$30. It's a great opportunity to enhance the value and beauty of your property, as well as the water and air quality in the watershed. Look for a detailed announcement via email in the summer.

## **PARTING THOUGHTS**

As many of you may be aware, an on-going controversy in our watershed is the RV campground proposed for Cacapon Resort and State Park. I want to assure you that we are very familiar with the issue, have been working with the local Park Foundation, and have expressed our concerns in writing to the Chief of Parks, WV Department of Natural Resources. Unfortunately, like many of the other involved local organizations, we currently have no further word or insight to share with you at this time. However, we will continue following the issue and let you know about any forthcoming decisions or opportunities for input.

In the meantime, please enjoy the forthcoming spring and summer season and pursue all opportunities to improve the natural environment and quality of life in the Sleepy Creek Watershed. And we thank you for your continued membership and financial support.

Chuck Marsh, President