



Great Swamp Watershed Association

Meeting of the Board of Trustees

December 7, 2023

5:30PM in person

Agenda

- Approval of Board Minutes from 9/6/2023 Meeting
- Finance Report
- Gala 2023 October 5, 2023 report
- Executive Director Report -Ferber update
- Development Report
- subcommittee report to review land acquisition criteria and discuss possibly adding prevention of development as a metric
- subcommittee report to review installation of fitness loop on one of the CMA trails

- Other Business
 - Please provide potential candidates for 2024 board of trustees
- Adjourn

GSWA Board of Trustees Meeting
09.18.2023
Minutes

Sally convened the board meeting at 9:05 a.m. via Zoom. Board members present included Michael and Marilyn Dee, Dot Stillinger, Todd Hyde, David Naidu, Jordan Glatt, Dave Robinson, Carolyn Sharaway, Carolyn Dempsey, Adam Psychos, Tony DellaPelle, Sue Kessel, Clark Wagner, Meisha Williams Bertels, Brett Williamson, Lisa Stevens, Kate Barry, Gerry-Jo Cranmer, and Reed Auerbach. Thelma Achenbach, Roger Jones, Jane Kendall (Advisory Council), Staff included Sally Rubin, Sue Levine, and Wade Kirby.

Sally called for a motion to approve the Board Meeting Minutes dated Monday, June 19th, 2023. The motion was approved by Clark and seconded by Todd. All in favor. None opposed. The motion carried.

Sue then delivered her Finance Report.

Auditor Selection - Our current auditor advised us in August that the fee would be increasing 30% and an additional increase for two additional years. Raising the audit fee from \$6400 to \$11,000. The current auditor, BKC, eventually countered with \$8,000 after we said we would move the business. Due to the increase, we reached out to accounting firms, both large and medium-sized. We received quotes back from the large auditors at significantly higher rates (\$15-\$25K). We received a lot of declines and some are only available beginning next year. We received a quote from P&K CPA via Goldsmith Platter recent merger. The quote was slightly higher than BKC at \$8,400. The process was reviewed with Sally and Clark, and given the short window, we are proposing the move to the new auditor. The audit will be conducted by a partner, John Patrizio, with 35 years of experience, and we have asked them to quote for a 3-year term. Going forward, we will ask the Finance Committee to approve a modification to the Financial Oversight Policy as noted below:

Financial Oversight Policy – Board Approved 05/16/23, (prev. Updated 11/22/21; 3/31/16; 3/27/15, 10/24/12)

Auditor:

Change auditor approximately every 3-5 years to ensure there is another perspective in the review process. Secure approval from the Finance Committee for a change in auditors. Prepare all financial records for the audit. Assist auditor as needed for the fiscal year-end audit. This policy is board approved and we should add this request for approval to the next board meeting agenda.

Year End Fiscal Year 2023:

Our fiscal year ended on June 30, 2023, and although we had a slow start at the annual gala, we successfully off set the short fall thanks to the fabulous individuals that support the organization, and in particular our Major Donors, an amazing Native Pollinator Plant Program and slightly better than budgeted support from a committed group of corporations and foundations.

We are grateful for the support which ended the year with operational revenues of \$1.1 million (M). Our operational expenses were also just over \$1.1M resulting in breakeven results, which were in line with our annual budget.

Actuals YTD v Budget and v Prior Year:

Preliminary actuals for Fiscal Year 2024 -July and August YTD, are tracking on or slightly ahead of budget. Versus prior year, we are tracking on or slightly ahead of Aug YTD 2023 vs 2022. With revenue at \$229k and expenses at \$137k. The 4% draw was based on a 12-month rolling average.

Our Board Designed Reserve was up for the year by \$0.3M. We have an incredible Finance Committee that oversees our investment portfolio and they have continued the trend to invest in funds that are ESG, provided the funds track with market. The Committee has also reviewed funds that are more mission based with the same investment strategy and requirements as other holdings. The team identified a fund at the end of the fiscal year and after considerable discussion and review, we have added to the investment portfolio First Trust Water ETF; FTW focuses on water and water infrastructure. We now have roughly 10% invested in mission/ESG funds.

The invested funds on 8/31/2023 were:

- Operational Reserve: \$516k
- Board Designated Endowment: \$1,298k with
- Total invested funds: \$1,814k

Sally said the Gala is less than three weeks away! Eleven trustees have bought tickets to date; two of whom are sponsors. We need Advisory Council members to please get involved. Buy your tickets now! Sally explained that the wine packages are a favorable option for advertisers to thank their clients or customers and enable GSWA to meet new people. Today Val will send a press release offering ten previously paid for tickets to individuals who have never attended our gala to encourage new people to get involved. Last year that was how we met now board member Charlie Apt. Simon Mandal the magician will approach small groups of people performing close magic during cocktails, and then go table to table during dinner as well. He will work with Wade to execute the "Call for Cash." \$75 is requested from each board member to sponsor the cork pull. Our Silent Auction will be available online if you cannot be there. We currently have received over 100 auction items, and we accept donations up until two days before the Gala. Sally spoke about a large and heavy cement table and chairs secured by David Budd from The Garden Cottage. We are not sure yet whether it will be moved to Brooklake for display the day of the event. Regarding solicitations for auction items, Sue Kessel and Meisha Williams asked about a list of those already committed so she doesn't ask for things we have already asked for or received. Sally will send them the list.

Sally then spoke on the status of the Ferber Property. She would like to hire Rob Simon, an attorney, to negotiate the Exchange Agreement with PSEG. Rob was recommended by Kevin Sullivan who is Chairman of the Planning Board in Chatham Township. We have also used Rob in the past to negotiate our easement with Anthony Sblendorio late in 2022. As an aside, Rob performs in **Not Enough Jeffs** at our music festival. *Sally then called for a motion to approve a Resolution to hire Rob Simon to negotiate the Exchange Agreement and authorize Sally to negotiate the terms of the transaction and perform due diligence. The Resolution was approved by Tony DellaPelle and seconded by Sue Kessel. All in favor. None opposed. The motion carried.*

Before conveying the property, PSE&G needs approval from the Board of Public Utilities for an even exchange of land and value. There is a cost savings for PSE&G if they don't take down buildings on the property which would offset part of any cash transaction. If they don't convey to us, they would have to pay to take down the two buildings. At this point, GSWA will owe PSE&G for the difference between the appraised value of the lot they are conveying to us minus the value of the two lots we are conveying to them minus the cost savings for not demolishing the buildings. It is all about the appraisals and PSEG is required to protect the rate payers' assets. There is an approximate six to nine month process with the Board of Public Utilities after the Exchange Agreement is signed to hopefully get BPU approval. Reed asked about whether the money will come from the endowment, or from a separate capital campaign? Sally said perhaps it will be a mini capital campaign although we can't really ask people to give to that and then to give again to a building fund shortly thereafter. We will also need zoning variances from both Harding and Chatham to convert from residential use to institutional use.

There were no questions from the board regarding Development.

Sally asked about a subcommittee to review the criteria for future land acquisition. GSWA may want to identify smaller individual lots to prevent development. We always have the ability to say no and each transaction is evaluated on a case by case basis. Tony, Dot, Gerry-Jo, and Todd will set up a Zoom Meeting to discuss whether or not to amend our current land acquisition criteria.

Should we install a Fitness Exercise Loop at the CMA? Carolyn Sharaway and Roger Jones will be happy to form a subcommittee to discuss this option. (After the meeting, John Neale also agreed to serve on this subcommittee.) Reed raised the issue of insurance which Sally will be sure to address with our insurance agent.

Sally then posed a question about revisiting a, " Board Give or Get Policy." There was unanimous agreement that no discussion was necessary at this time.

Michael Dee asked about the current status of the Rolling Knolls Superfund Site. There is an upcoming meeting with the refuge, the DEP, and the EPA. At least so far, the DEP is looking for a more comprehensive clean up than EPA has proposed and one which is more in line with what we and the refuge would like to see. Hopefully, there will be a facilitated cooperative meeting scheduled this fall. Michael suggested applying pressure to the EPA through an article, either in a newspaper or online. The EPA does not like this kind of publicity, and Sally said she would consider writing the article.

Sally added that at this time of year a discussion of new board members normally occurs. Who may be added? Who is rolling off? Please think about potential new trustees and let Sally know.

The next board meeting and Holiday Party will be on **Thursday, December 7th at the Office beginning at 5 p.m.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:58 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Wade Kirby
Director of Development

Executive Director's report for December 7, 2023

Hi everyone, I can't believe 2023 is over! Where does the time go?

As a follow up on a couple items from last meeting, our Advisory Council member Judith Hazlewood suggested we send an acquisition postcard to solicit donations from new people without necessarily asking them to become members. We sent a postcard to approximately 3000 people and have received two donations so far (one of them was for \$500 though so that's good!). We are planning two more "touches". One is the annual appeal and another note in January.

We are also sending a small personal mailing to about 40 people who aren't members in Harding who live near the Refuge.

I am thrilled to report that we heard back from the Land Trust Accreditation Commission which granted us unconditional re-accreditation. Thank you all for your participation in that process.

Hazel and I had a meeting with NJ Conservation Foundation to discuss the ongoing value of participating in the accreditation process. We will continue these discussions and come back with a recommendation.

Regarding Rolling Knolls, at our last meeting, I mentioned we hoped to participate in a collaborative discussion with the EPA, PRPs, the property owner, Chatham Township, and the Refuge. That meeting was held and about 15 people participated in person with an additional 15-20 people participating via zoom. The group is going to evaluate the possibility of a solar farm on part of the property.

I had a discussion with Refuge staff about safety concerns and I met with local EMTs to discuss how best to address the issue. The concern was that a couple of people had been recently seriously hurt or experienced a medical emergency (not with GSWA). We have provided the New Vernon EMTs with maps and will let them know when we are holding programs at the Refuge so they are aware of where we might be should the need arise. This also led to a discussion that we should have AEDs and we are applying for a grant to acquire two.

As always, I have met with and spoken with a number of donors and board/advisory members.

I have had several discussions about the Ferber acquisition. We are currently negotiating the Exchange Agreement with PSEG. I have also received the appraisals for the three properties which I am reviewing and will discuss with Matt Krauser. The goal is to get the appraisal for the Ferber piece down and to possibly get the appraisals for our two properties up! I had a site meeting with AM Higley representative Conor Evans and an estimator named Gino. I showed them the barn and gave a vague idea of what we might like and they are going to come up with a construction price "order of magnitude" just so we have a ballpark idea. They think it's a great project and rather straightforward. They also recommended an architect (he did Park Avenue Club!) and he has offered to come out and look at the site.

Additionally... Lynne and I gave Liz Crowley, our program person at FM Kirby, a tour of the property. She is recommending that FMK provide \$100,000 toward the due diligence/acquisition costs for Ferber. She will work with us to add this to our general operating support grant in January. Probably half this year and half next year. I have also had a discussion with Jay Angeletti, our capital campaign consultant,

about potentially using this funding as a challenge grant opportunity for general membership. It's a soft way of introducing the ultimate capital campaign.

Obviously, a lot of my time this fall was spent on the gala preparation. This included silent auction and advertiser solicitations, working on attendance, and delivering wine packages.

I gave a presentation to Temple B'Nai Abraham in Livingston to about 60 congregants.

Dot Stillinger and I attended the lower Passaic CAG communications meeting in Newark.

I attended the Byrne Kean journalism dinner. I also attended the Valley Bank office opening in Morristown and the office opening for AON Insurance in Berkeley Heights. I would love to get them involved with us. Flooding and insurance seem to go hand in hand.

I met with the Morristown Mayor.

Staff held several strategic planning meetings for setting 2024 goals with more meetings to follow.

Hazel and I met with the Chatham Senior Center to discuss programming and I am going to make an intro to GSWA presentation to them in January.

Wade, Val, Lynne, and I met with Adam Psichos to discuss promoting Qualified Charitable Distributions and we have included a flyer about them in our annual appeal.

I attended and spoke at one of the Morris County Commissioner meetings in favor of funding to preserve Drew Forest. Additionally, we included information about these meetings in many e-news and social media posts. There is still no agreement on purchase price. The Commissioners approved \$5 million toward the acquisition, half of what was asked for.

Val and I drafted the annual appeal.

As discussed at the last board meeting, we held meetings to discuss land acquisition criteria and also whether to install a fitness trail at the CMA. See notes from those meetings attached.

Lynne and I attended a conference on green infrastructure at NJIT.

Lynne and I had a meeting with Trust for Public Land to discuss potential collaborations. Wade and I had a meeting with America's Grow a Row to discuss potential collaborations. Lynne and I also met with Project USE to discuss collaborating in Paterson.

I have had discussions with the new Rolling Knolls facilitator on next steps for the CAG.

Lynne and I had a zoom meeting with someone from the Taub Foundation to discuss our work in Paterson and possible funding opportunities.

We have upcoming staff initiatives on: additional strategic planning, music fest venue discussions, gala brainstorming, member benefits, and spring event planning.

Fyi, Sarah Hunt has given notice that she will be leaving at the end of January to pursue her career in landscaping. We will be posting for a new position shortly.

Great Swamp Watershed Association

Balance Sheet

As of October 31, 2023

	TOTAL	
	AS OF OCT 31, 2023	AS OF OCT 31, 2022 (PY)
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Bank Accounts	\$434,355.20	\$444,004.95
Accounts Receivable	\$0.00	\$0.00
Other Current Assets	\$1,884,124.60	\$1,633,679.80
Total Current Assets	\$2,318,479.80	\$2,077,684.75
Fixed Assets	\$440,369.52	\$448,861.52
Other Assets	\$247,024.30	\$267,126.11
TOTAL ASSETS	\$3,005,873.62	\$2,793,672.38
LIABILITIES AND EQUITY		
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable	\$3,599.00	\$0.00
Credit Cards	\$0.00	\$0.00
Other Current Liabilities	\$19,426.00	\$14,330.15
Total Current Liabilities	\$23,025.00	\$14,330.15
Long-Term Liabilities	\$237,643.59	\$263,901.33
Total Liabilities	\$260,668.59	\$278,231.48
Equity	\$2,745,205.03	\$2,515,440.90
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	\$3,005,873.62	\$2,793,672.38

Great Swamp Watershed Association

Budget vs. Actuals: FY_2023_2024 - FY24 P&L

July - October, 2023

	TOTAL			
	ACTUAL	BUDGET	OVER BUDGET	% OF BUDGET
Income				
3210 Deferred Income from Prior Year	38,067	36,000	2,067	106.00 %
4000 Annual Event	168,421	185,000	-16,580	91.00 %
4002 Advocacy Operational Reserve BD		6,667	-6,667	
4100 Individual - Membership	15,017	21,667	-6,650	69.00 %
4180 Individual Major Donors	19,920	23,000	-3,080	87.00 %
4190 Individual Trustee Giving	9,964	9,165	799	109.00 %
4200 Corporate	8,500	8,500	0	100.00 %
4330 Corporate Stewardship Restricted	5,635	6,000	-365	94.00 %
4400 Foundation Support	106,700	93,000	13,700	115.00 %
4600 Music Fest Event	897	0	897	
4700 Programs - Education & Outreach	10,659	11,500	-841	93.00 %
4799 Merchandise Misc	0		0	
4800 Native Plant Program		250	-250	
4900 Government Grants	4,980	0	4,980	
4990 Reimbursed Expenses	564		564	
4998 Other incomes misc	1,047	142	905	739.00 %
7111 4% Fund Transfer Draw	67,871	68,000	-129	100.00 %
Total Income	\$458,241	\$468,890	\$ -10,649	98.00 %
GROSS PROFIT	\$458,241	\$468,890	\$ -10,649	98.00 %
Expenses				
5000 Administrative Payroll Total	249,240	269,224	-19,983	93.00 %
5100 Development Expense	896	2,046	-1,149	44.00 %
5200 Education and Outreach	107	4,470	-4,363	2.00 %
5290 Native Plant Prog Expenses		0	0	
5300 Membership	8,502	9,175	-673	93.00 %
5400 Stewardship	2,648	3,667	-1,019	72.00 %
5500 Water Quality	1,662	12,733	-11,071	13.00 %
5700 Grant Specific Expense		733	-733	
5800 Advocacy		6,667	-6,667	
5805 Advocacy / CAGs / Other	44		44	
6100 Administrative Expense	31,352	37,971	-6,620	83.00 %
6150 Depreciation Expense		0	0	
6240 Miscellaneous	31		31	
6400 Annual Event Expenses	36,144	56,803	-20,659	64.00 %
6490 Music Fest	534	0	534	
6500 Mailing	1,724	1,663	62	104.00 %
Total Expenses	\$332,885	\$405,151	\$ -72,266	82.00 %
NET OPERATING INCOME	\$125,356	\$63,739	\$61,616	197.00 %
Other Income				
7011 Dividends Received	10,513	7,500	3,013	140.00 %
7040 in-Kind Donation	19,563		19,563	

Great Swamp Watershed Association

Budget vs. Actuals: FY_2023_2024 - FY24 P&L

July - October, 2023

			TOTAL	
	ACTUAL	BUDGET	OVER BUDGET	% OF BUDGET
Total Other Income	\$30,076	\$7,500	\$22,576	401.00 %
NET OTHER INCOME	\$30,076	\$7,500	\$22,576	401.00 %
NET INCOME	\$155,431	\$71,239	\$84,192	218.00 %

	A	B	C	D	E	F
	Grant Recap December 2023		BUDGET	ACTUAL	VARIANCE	NOTES
1	Corporate Restricted					
2	PSEG	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 8,500.00	\$ 1,000.00		Environmental Education, awarded in August
3	Bristol Myers Squibb	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 5,000.00		Environmental Education, applied in September, award notification in Nov. awaiting funds
4	JCP/L/First Energy	\$ 4,500.00	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 3,000.00		Environmental Education, awarded in November
5	Corporate Unrestricted					
6						
7						
8	Foundation Restricted					
9	Marta Hefflin Foundation	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 6,700.00	\$ 1,700.00		CMA Stewardship, awarded in August
10	Meerwarth Foundation	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 5,000.00		Environmental Education, awarded in October
11	Glasser Foundation		\$ 14,852.00			CMA Shed and Tools, received award notification in November, awaiting funds. In and out.
12	Hyde and Watson Foundation		\$ 20,000.00			WQ Equipment, Computers, Tables, Chairs, Tents, Received in Nov. In and out.
13	Unrestricted Foundation Support					
14	Thrivent Charitable/Edith Hahn Animal and Wildlife Preservation Fund	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ -		General Operating Support - Awarded in August. Second payment, renewable for 3 years with a possibility of going to 5 years
15	Bauer Foundation	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 5,000.00		General Operating Support - awarded in July.
16	Mary Reinhart Stackhouse Foundation	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ -		General Operating Support, awarded in November
17	Victoria Foundation	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00	\$ -		General Operating Support, awarded in September *Final Year*
18	Fred Fatzler Foundation	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 1,000.00		General Operating Support, awarded in November
19	Cestone Family Foundation	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00	\$ -		General Operating Support, applied in August, received award notification in Nov. awaiting funds
20	Guilford Foundation	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ -		General Operating Support - awarded in July
21	SUBTOTAL FOUNDATIONS/CORPORATIONS YTD	\$ 146,000.00	\$ 202,552.00	\$ 21,700.00		
22	TBD - Budgeted \$76,000 for New Corporate and Foundation Funding					
23	Blue Foundry Bank Charitable Foundation		\$ 10,000.00			Environmental Education. Awarded in July. *New corporation* (Goes toward Budgeted Other Corp Total \$5000)
24	Whole Foods		\$ 2,000.00			General Operating Support, received award notification in November, awaiting funds (Goes towards Budgeted Other Corp Total \$5000)
25	John Ben Snow Memorial Trust		\$ 10,000.00			Environmental Education and bussing to CMA for Outdoor Experiential Learning Opportunities, awarded in August. *New foundation*(Goes towards Budgeted Other\$71K)
26	Mimi Washington Starrett Foundation		\$ 10,000.00			General Operating Support, awarded in November. First \$10,000 of \$20,000 commitment over 2 years *New foundation* (Goes towards Budgeted Other\$71K)
27	William L. Gibson Foundation		\$ 10,000.00			General Operating Support, awarded in Nov(Goes towards Budgeted Other\$71K)
28			\$ 42,000.00			
29	TOTAL FOUNDATIONS/CORPORATIONS YTD		\$ 244,552.00			
30	Government Grants					
31	Workforce Development Board of Morris, Sussex, Warren	\$ 4,980.00	\$ 4,980.00	\$ -		Reimbursement for Spanish language lessons. Received in October.
32	Applied/Pending					
33	Lillian Schenck Foundation		\$ 5,000.00			Environmental Education, applied in July, pending
34	E.I. Grassmann Fndtn/Union Fndcton		\$ 7,636.00			WQ Equipment, Computers, Tables, Chairs, Tents, Applied in August. Anticipated balance in addition to H&W grant.
35	Tyler Foundation		\$ 25,000.00			General Operating Support, applied in September, pending
36	Lowell Johnson Foundation		\$ 5,000.00			Environmental Education, applied in September, pending
37	Metlife Foundation		\$ 10,000.00			Environmental Education, applied in October, pending
38	State Farm Foundation		\$ 10,000.00			Environmental Education, applied in October, pending
39	Geico Philanthropic Foundation		\$ 10,000.00			Environmental Education, applied in October, pending
40	Mohawk Canoe Club		\$ 10,000.00			Environmental Education, applied in October, pending
41	JetBlue Foundation		\$ 5,000.00			Environmental Education, applied in October, pending
42	George Ohl Jr. Trust		\$ 10,000.00			General Operating Support, applied in October, pending
43	BASF		\$ 7,500.00			General Operating Support, applied in November, pending
44	Kearny Bank		\$ 7,500.00			Environmental Education, applied in August, pending
45	Columbia Bank Foundation		\$ 7,500.00			General Operating Support, applied in November, pending
46	TOTAL		\$ 154,536.00			

Grants and Institutional Relations Update December 2023

- It's been a very busy year so far. Sally and I have been meeting with a number of people from different organizations already engaged in Paterson to see what GSWA can bring to the table. We are exploring a number of exciting ideas and partnerships. The EPA Environmental Justice Collaborative grant that we spent a lot of time on went to Ironbound Community Corporation in Newark, New Jersey and New Jersey Environmental Justice Alliance in Newark, New Jersey. You may know that our project was based in Paterson, which seems to get short shrift when it comes to funding. We are seeking new funding sources to provide mission-based support where it is most needed. Additionally, we are cultivating a partnership with the Taub Foundation, who has deep roots in Paterson and has expressed interest in working with us on the right project.
- We are doing well with the overall grants so far, well ahead of budget YTD.
- Wade and I have been attending a number of Morris County Chamber of Commerce events, including Business Connections and Non-Profit Roundtable. I have found the Chamber to be a great resource for event support for silent auction items and some sponsorships.
- We have completed the first round of funding that we received from the Morris-Sussex-Warren Workforce Development Board. This was used for Spanish language lessons, which our program staff has been using in the field with students who speak Spanish as a first language. We hope to apply again for additional training funding, which can be used for a number of things.
- We have been working on strategies for increasing membership, such as offering different benefits depending on what the financial level of membership is. We have also discussed leveraging storytelling as a tool for membership recruitment.

Wade's Development Board Report
11.28.2023

Gala Solicitations continued...

1. Secured Sponsorships
2. Secured Silent Auction Items
3. Advertisements
4. Made Wine Package Deliveries prior to event

Assisted with set-up and preparation for Gala at the Brooklake Country Club. Attended Gala. Assisted with load out - items returned to the office same day.

Followed-up Gala attendance with all pertinent gift acknowledgment letters

Attended Gala debrief and Strategic Plan Review Meeting with full staff

Attended Bernards Area Networking Group Meeting in October and acknowledged members' Gala Silent Auction contributions

Lynne and I attended the Chatham Sustainability Fair w. GSWA table presentation

Toured the Turtle Back Zoo with Executive Director Adam Kerins and staff members. (They were a Gala Silent Auction contributor.)

Attended the Morris County Chamber's Business Connections networking event in October and November.

Meeting with Adam Psychos re. solicitation for year-end qualified charitable distributions

Obtained names and addresses of select Harding residents per Sally for acquisition mailing to include means of support for QCD's (qualified charitable distributions) from personal IRA accounts

Via Zoom, I viewed The Watershed Institute's Enhanced Stormwater Management Ordinances

Attended two hearings to "Save the Drew Forest" with the Morris County Commissioners in Morristown.

Trusteeship Meeting with Sally.

Attended a luncheon at The Morristown Club with a financial advisor re. potential contacts/referrals

Meeting with Sally and Lynne re. new ideas for a Development Strategic Plan

Sally and I traveled to America's Grow a Row in Pittstown, N.J. to tour their facility and discuss a collaboration in 2024 with students through our mutual education programs.

Attended a Communications and Development Strategic Planning Meeting w. Val, Sally and Lynne

Attended the Morris County Chamber's Nonprofit Round Table via Zoom

Attended a m HIGLEY's Holiday Cocktail Party (a former GSWA sponsor)

One to One Meeting with a financial advisor from Allied Wealth Partners re. potential contacts/referrals

Sally and I will meet with new major donors William and Spencer Richardson, Owners of The Raritan Group: Raritan Valve and Automation, a family-owned business since 1943.

Subcommittee to discuss expanding land acquisition criteria to include prevention of development

Todd Hyde, Dot Stillinger, Sally, Hazel, and Ginger met on October 31, 2023

We reviewed our existing criteria from our project selection criteria checklist and discussed various projects that we have evaluated and either taken or rejected and why.

For example, we discussed the Wolkowitz easement in Madison and that we probably would not take that easement if presented with the opportunity today. That property is a dell and nothing can be done with it and it doesn't further our mission or meet any of the current project selection criteria.

We reviewed a fee simple donation opportunity where the property was the hole in a donut of other developed parcels and again determined that we probably would not take that project. We also need to be cognizant of our resources, both financial and human capacity.

We also discussed that there might be a negative perception if we expand our criteria to include "prevention of development". We specifically say that we are not anti-development, we are pro-intelligent development. We considered adding a criteria to "prevent increased impervious cover", but ultimately determined that we already evaluate any potential acquisition on a case by case basis and if we come across an opportunity that doesn't fit one of the existing criteria, we can discuss and make an exception for specific reasons.

Subcommittee on fitness trail: Sally, Lynne, Hazel, John Neale, Roger Jones

Met on November 2, 2023

- We discussed and opted not to pursue an active fitness structure. More active fitness doesn't seem appropriate at this location.
- Active fitness could be a part of what we do when we are at the Ferber property, and we could incorporate a meditation and/or sensory garden.
- We would like to explore meditation as a possible activity that could be incorporated into regular programming and signage at the CMA.
- We will write a grant for trail counters to gauge how many people are using the CMA (and AEDs).
- We will try marketing to promote to people that they can use the CMA as a resource in their wellness journey/toolkit.
- Perhaps we can try holding a yoga program at the CMA

Board Report: Membership and Social Media Overview

Nancy Rago, November 29, 2023

In reflecting on the recent 2023 Gala Celebration, it is with great pleasure that I share the highlights of our successful event. The 2023 Gala Celebration had close to 300 in attendance, with Silent Auction featuring over 200 items up for bid, raising over \$39,000—the highest in the last seven years. We utilized a new system; Gives Smart, and Magician, Simon Mandal, entertainment was also new this year. Distinguished guests included Congresswoman Mikie Sherrill, who delivered an impactful address, family & friends of the late John J. DeLaney, Senator Anthony M. Bucco & Assemblywoman Aura K. Dunn who brought a memorial proclamation, and Morristown Mayor, Tim Dougherty, and his wife. I helped coordinate fifteen volunteers for Invitation Stuffing and Day of Tasks. A total of 611 gift records were meticulously imported, capturing the generosity of our supporters across various channels like Advertising, Underwriting, Auction Donations & Purchases, Donations, Ticket Purchases, and Trustee Giving.

Our second fiscal year appeal, the Year-end Appeal, reached out to a carefully curated list of 1,567 constituents. Gifts have started to be returned and will be entered through the end of the year.

Looking ahead, our organization is engaged in strategic planning for 2024. This involves a comprehensive review of the 2021-2026 Plan, aligning our efforts with our overarching goals. Each department, from Water Quality and Stewardship to Education, Donor Development (both Institutional and Individual), Membership, Communications, and Administration, is actively contributing to this collective vision.

I initiated contact with my Board Adoptees, Reed Auerbach & Brett Williamson, in early November. The Development I provided them with the Gala Recap and a sneak peak about the forthcoming 2023 Fall Thank-a-Thon.

Membership FY2024 Q2 - 10/01/2023 to 12/31/2023

- Q4 Member Count and Individual Giving Spreadsheets (See pages 4 & 5)
- Q3 2024 Member Mailings consist of monthly mailed reminders of upcoming renewals and a final reminder to lapsed member mailings.

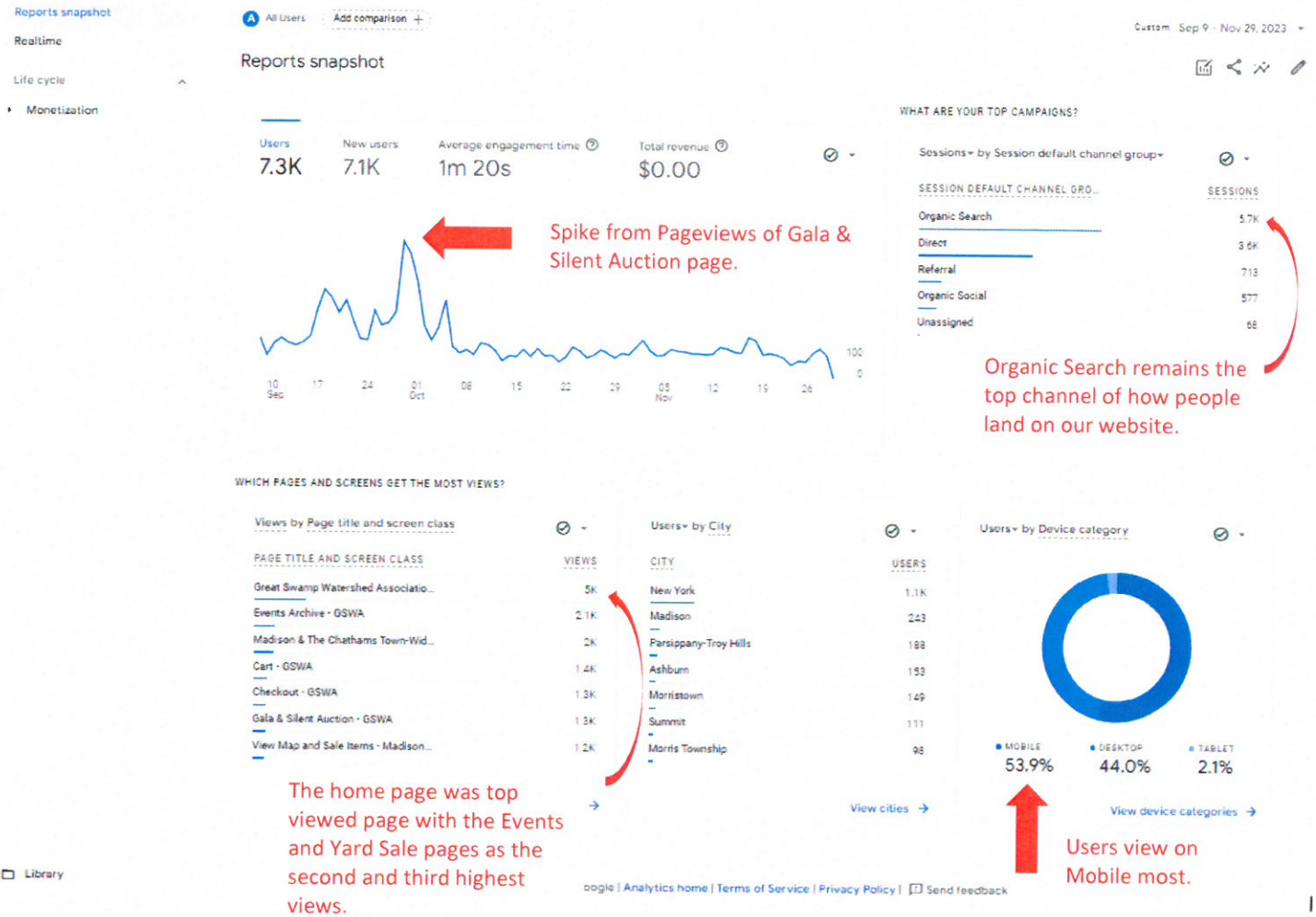
Social Media as of 09/09/2023 to 11/29/2023:

- Audience Analytics – Audience growth and Demographics (06/10/2023 to 09/08/2023):
 - Facebook.com/GreatSwamp: 4,007 followers (+1.6%/64 of new followers).
 - Instagram.com/greatswampnj: 3,054 followers (+.3%/109 new followers)
 - Twitter.com/greatswampnj: 2,377 Followers (19%/442 new followers). Hootsuite reports Twitter usage numbers have grown.
 - LinkedIn.com/company/great-swamp-watershed-association: 313 Followers (+3.6%/11 new Followers).
 - Gender: Women 67%, Men 33%. (Remains the same)
 - Top Five Cities: Chatham, Morristown, Madison, New York, NY, Basking Ridge. (Remains the same)

- Content Analytics – Top Three Content that yielded the best reach, like and replies:
 - 📺 Exciting News! AMERICAN RIVER is coming to Public Television this November! Get ready for an incredible journey with #AmericanRiverFilm 🌊 and the captivating exploration of the 4-day, 80-mile kayak journey down New Jersey's Passaic River... (Tue Nov 28, 7:00pm Facebook Post)
 - The Friends of Drew Forest also wanted to share this video that Madison created as part of its open space application—it shows the bipartisan support behind a conservation sale. VIDEO LINK: bit.ly/3Sphxnh (Sat Nov 4, 5:40pm Instagram Post)
 - ❄️ Step outside on a crisp, December morning and enjoy some fresh air on this winter wander through South Mountain Reservation ❄️ As we hike, you will learn about how the Lenape braved the cold winters as well as some geologic history. (Fri Nov 10, 6:30pm Facebook Post)
- Looking Ahead to Social Media Post Content:
 - ONGOING POSTS
 - Sustainable Sunday, Water Wednesday, Charity Navigator/GuideStar, Volunteer, PayPal Giving Fund, Email List Signup, Native Plant Gardens.
 - DECEMBER POSTS
 - Nov 20, 2023 - Feb 10, 2024: Shotgun Season. Hunting occurs in this area. Trails CLOSED Mon - Fri from Dawn – Noon. Dec 4 - Dec 9, 2023: 6-Day Firearm Season. All GSWA trails CLOSED.
 - Dec 5 - International Volunteers Day: 2023 Theme #TogetherActNow
 - Dec 7 - Annual Meeting
 - Dec 14 - Jan 5 - Audubon Christmas Bird Count
 - Dec 17 - 29 - Year-end Appeal Post
 - Dec 21 – First Day of Winter and Solstice Hike Members Only Hike.
 - Dec 28 - Endangered Species Act 50
 - JANUARY POSTS
 - Jan 5 - National Bird Day
 - Jan 15 - MLK Day of Service
 - Jan 28 - National Seed Swap Day
 - FEBRUARY POSTS
 - Black History and National Bird Feeding Month
 - Feb 2 - World Wetlands Day
 - Feb 11 - International Day of Women and Girls in Science
 - Feb 14 - Valentine's Day
 - Feb 17 -20 - Great Backyard Bird Count
 - Feb 17 - Random Acts of Kindness Day
 - Feb 25 - National Skip the Straw Day

Website Analytics, Updated to GA4 Reporting – Date Range 09/09/2023 to 11/29/2023.

Details including metrics like page views, unique visitors, and user engagement.



**Great Swamp Watershed Association
Member Count Fiscal Year by Quarters***

	30-Sep	31-Dec	31-Mar	30-Jun
FY Ending	Q-1	Q-2	Q-3	Q-4
2024	2148	2179**		
2023	2017	2144	2108	2431
2022	1999	2017	2000	2081
2021	1370	1350	1413	1916
2020	1547	1487	1421	1389
2019	1639	1633	1599	1585
2018	1687	1726	1659	1673
2017	1767	1734	1738	1778
2016	1686	1783	1732	1792
2015	1668	1727	1664	1771
2014	1514	1561	1500	1682

* Count Records based on all donors who have given in the 14 months prior to the end of the quarter.

**Q2 numbers as of 11/29/23.

**Great Swamp Watershed Association
Individual Giving (GL: General Member + Major Donor + Trustee Giving)**

Quarter Ended	New	No. Donors	No. Gifts	Renew (From Std. Mgr)	No. Donors	No. Gifts	Appeal	No. Donors	No. Gifts	Donation	No. Donors	No. Gifts	Total General Membership	Major Gifts	No. Donors	No. Gifts	Trustee Giving**	No. Donors	No. Gifts	Total Membership	
Q4 6/30/2024																					
Q3 3/31/2024																					
Q2 12/31/2023†	\$ 639	11	11	\$ 7,951	110	77	\$ 445	3	3	\$ 2,187	25	25	\$ 11,222	\$ 13,780	7	7	\$ -	0	0	\$ 25,002	
Q1 9/30/2023	\$ 190	3	3	\$ 8,296	101	135	\$ 2,095	26	26	\$ 992	16	16	\$ 11,573	\$ 10,700	6	0	\$ 9,964	6	9	\$ 32,236	
FY 2023 Total	\$ 829	14	14	\$ 16,247	211	212	\$ 2,540	29	29	\$ 3,179	41	41	\$ 22,795	\$ 24,480	13	7	\$ 9,964	6	9	\$ 57,238	
Q4 6/30/2023	\$ 1,151	25	25	\$ 13,628	157	188	\$ 2,226	23	23	\$ 4,346	59	59	\$ 21,351	\$ 56,250	38	40	\$ 2,545	6	9	\$ 80,146	
Q3 3/31/2023	\$ 1,839	29	29	\$ 9,374	139	165	\$ 160	4	4	\$ 1,547	41	45	\$ 12,921	\$ 77,388	13	14	\$ 2,064	3	6	\$ 92,367	
Q2 12/31/2022	\$ 1,985	29	29	\$ 23,263	283	289	\$ 6,664	64	64	\$ 3,000	35	35	\$ 34,931	\$ 87,401	57	59	\$ 16,137	9	7	\$ 138,469	
Q1 9/30/2022	\$ 694	12	12	\$ 12,319	155	180	\$ 3,095	13	13	\$ 816	14	14	\$ 16,924	\$ 31,628	14	14	\$ 7,135	8	13	\$ 55,687	
FY 2023 Total	\$ 5,670	95	95	\$ 58,584	714	822	\$ 12,164	104	104	\$ 9,709	135	139	\$ 86,127	\$ 252,662	122	127	\$ 27,880	26	35	\$ 366,669	
Q4 6/30/2022	\$ 893	21	21	\$ 8,013	92	117	\$ 3,782	52	52	\$ 3,816	76	78	\$ 16,504	\$ 28,560	21	22	\$ 5,120	12	20	\$ 50,183	
Q3 3/31/2022	\$ 1,843	41	41	\$ 11,577	107	132	\$ 94	3	3	\$ 4,090	72	80	\$ 17,604	\$ 76,780	15	16	\$ 625	4	6	\$ 95,008	
Q2 12/31/2021	\$ 1,289	20	20	\$ 22,544	224	250	\$ 4,903	52	53	\$ 3,340	35	36	\$ 32,075	\$ 71,365	51	56	\$ 15,048	12	19	\$ 118,488	
Q1 9/30/2021	\$ 492	9	9	\$ 6,164	77	92	\$ 4,850	56	56	\$ 2,027	16	16	\$ 13,533	\$ 35,330	19	19	\$ 11,090	5	13	\$ 59,953	
FY 2022 Total	\$ 4,516	91	91	\$ 48,298	500	591	\$ 13,628	163	164	\$ 13,273	199	210	\$ 79,716	\$ 212,035	106	113	\$ 31,882	33	58	\$ 323,633	
Q4 6/30/2021	\$ 1,909	32	32	\$ 14,163	175	187	\$ 4,180	48	48	\$ 2,349	70	72	\$ 22,601	\$ 35,365	23	23	\$ 14,111	12	21	\$ 72,077	
Q3 3/31/2021	\$ 2,200	45	45	\$ 12,708	155	168	\$ 426	6	6	\$ 3,027	45	48	\$ 18,961	\$ 93,240	26	28	\$ 13,745	17	30	\$ 125,945	
Q2 12/31/2020	\$ 2,168	24	24	\$ 20,829	217	234	\$ 5,387	66	66	\$ 2,404	22	22	\$ 30,788	\$ 64,083	51	53	\$ 8,841	9	14	\$ 103,712	
Q1 9/30/2020	\$ 1,247	14	14	\$ 8,968	105	116	\$ 1,050	12	12	\$ 883	21	21	\$ 12,148	\$ 26,000	17	17	\$ 621	3	5	\$ 38,769	
FY 2021 Total	\$ 7,523	115	115	\$ 56,668	652	705	\$ 11,043	132	132	\$ 8,664	158	163	\$ 83,898	\$ 218,688	117	121	\$ 37,317	41	70	\$ 339,903	
Q4 6/30/2020	\$ 309	7	7	\$ 16,615	201	209	\$ 6,939	82	82	\$ 122	7	7	\$ 23,984	\$ 29,500	18	19	\$ 19,370	18	26	\$ 72,854	
Q3 3/31/2020	\$ 957	22	22	\$ 10,324	137	148	\$ 250	2	2	\$ 16	17	17	\$ 11,531	\$ 66,015	12	12	\$ 6,786	9	13	\$ 84,332	
Q2 12/31/2019	\$ 2,130	30	30	\$ 18,535	218	231	\$ 6,025	72	73	\$ 1,365	15	16	\$ 28,055	\$ 73,400	45	46	\$ 2,450	3	5	\$ 103,905	
Q1 9/30/2019	\$ 745	15	16	\$ 8,356	94	103	\$ 1,097	16	16	\$ 1,268	22	22	\$ 11,466	\$ 25,500	10	11	\$ 1,150	4	6	\$ 38,116	
FY 2020 Total	\$ 4,140	74	75	\$ 53,831	650	691	\$ 14,311	172	173	\$ 2,755	60	62	\$ 75,037	\$ 194,415	85	88	\$ 29,756	34	50	\$ 299,207	

Notes: Donors may appear in multiple columns if they've given in different quarters and for multiple purposes.
*Renew plus Sustaining Members and Workplace Matching Gift
**Does not include Music Fest & Gala Giving.

†General Ledger Analysis of Q2 numbers as of 11/29/23.

Communications Board Report – Val Thorpe

December 2023

Great Swamp Gala Celebration and Silent Auction – October 5, 2023

This year's Gala was a double success - we exceeded our budget and, by all accounts, attendees had a great time!

Quick stats

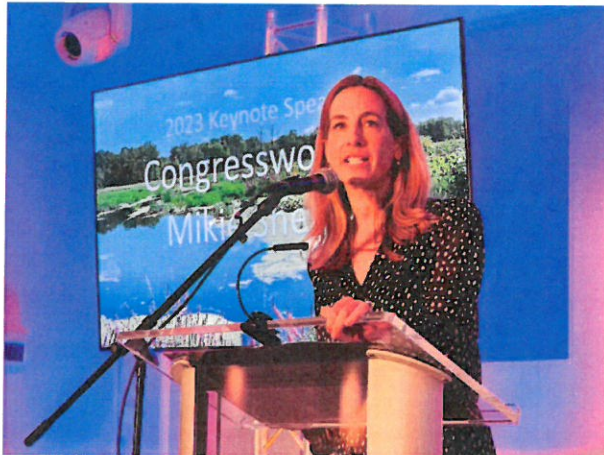
- Despite lower than anticipated attendance, we exceeded our net revenue by over \$11,000!
- Silent auction: with 200 items the silent auction brought in over \$39K - this was our largest and most profitable silent auction to date. Items included gift cards, sporting events, home decor, vacation homes, and more.
- Attendees: 265 (as stated, lower than anticipated but 85 more than 2022)
- VIP tickets: 33 people attended the VIP cocktail hour: 22 tickets were purchased at \$250 apiece totaling \$5500. This was also a perk for certain underwriters, of which 11 attended. Overall, this generated nearly \$4500 in additional revenue. This elite cocktail hour continues to be revenue generating and we believe it is a valuable component of the event.
- Advertising: We netted \$7850 in advertising revenue, of which \$5100 came from 8 people purchasing wine packages. We believe these wine package offer several benefits: It's a fairly easy heavy of a lift, it's a decent money-maker, businesses appreciate this special opportunity to thank their clients, and it's great exposure for GSWA that typically sparks good interactions when we deliver these packages.
- Cork pull: We sold out again this year. Although not a big money-maker, people seem to still enjoy it.
- Call for cash: was not successful this year, but it did bring in an additional \$2700.



It was a beautiful evening, so the VIP cocktail hour was held on the patio of the Brooklake Country Club in Florham Park. The professional magician/mentalist we hired added a fun element to the evening as he entertained our guests with up-close magic and captivating illusions from start to finish. The feedback was positive!

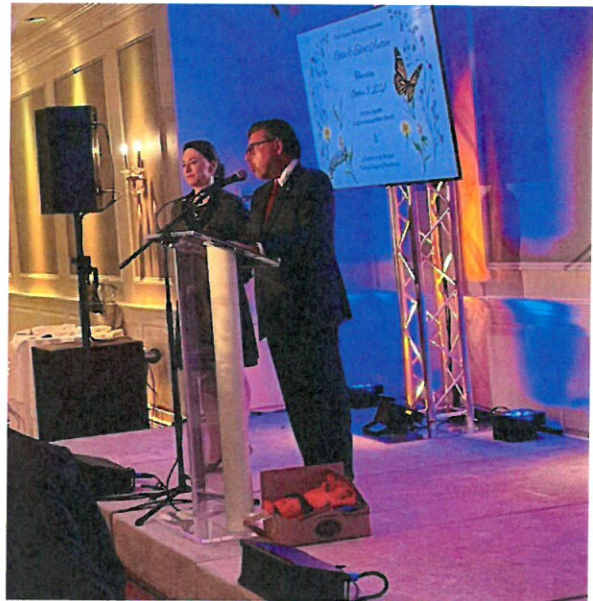
The keynote speaker, Congresswoman Mikie Sherrill (NJ-11) engaged the audience, emphasizing the importance of protecting New Jersey's resources and highlighting GSWA's efforts and goals.

In a memorial to former GSWA board member, Jay DeLaney, his family and friends were treated to a touching tribute led by Sally, dressed in clothing that reflected his personality. She shared personal memories and stories of his commitment to our work as images of his life-moments were displayed behind her.



Also in attendance, Senator Anthony M. Bucco (NJ's 25th Legislative District) and Assemblywoman Aura K. Dunn, (NJ's 25th Legislative District) presented the DeLaney family with a memorial proclamation.

We conducted a debrief the following week and the staff agreed we should try something different next year. Although this year's was a success, it's possible galas are getting a bit stale. We are putting a planning committee in place to investigate other options. More to follow on that. Please email mhertgen@greatswamp.org if you would like to be on this committee.



I refreshed the 11 acknowledgement letters for underwriters, advertisers, auction item donors, etc. and Nancy and her volunteer team got them out quickly. As our largest fundraiser of the year, the Gala is a big and important undertaking. Previously, the office manager, Debbie Rice, owned this event. With her departure in early-2020, I took it over until a replacement could be found. Due to some employee turnover, I have continued to manage the Gala and have trained several people to run the silent auction piece. Now that our very competent new office manager, Melanie Hertgen, has experienced her first Gala, the goal is to hand over the responsibility of whatever this fundraising event may be, and to assist her as needed. We are in excellent hands with Melanie!

#GivingTuesday/Year-end Appeal 2023

By now, you should have received GSWA's year-end appeal in the mail which was sent to ~1600 residents. This year's theme focused on the benefits of open spaces for our health and New Jersey. Preceding the appeal was our #GivingTuesday electronic campaign (email and social media). #GivingTuesday is a "Global Day of Generosity" which takes place the Tuesday after Thanksgiving, Black Friday, Small Business Saturday, and Cyber Monday. I designed four graphics with corresponding messaging that incorporated the appeal theme into the four prongs of our mission: advocacy, environmental education, water quality, and land preservation and stewardship. They were sent throughout November along with Nancy's social media posts mirrored the emails. We received a decent response to this and to these efforts – numbers are not yet calculated. Appeal donations are now rolling in as well. More to follow in the next board report.



Strategic Plan

My team (communication, membership, and administrative) met several times to craft our 2024 strategic plan based off the overarching GSWA strategic plan. We also created a 2024 workflow spreadsheet (using the template created by the program team) which was a great see when we are busiest, and how we can better distribute our workload. We have reviewed our plan with Sally and the development team to confirm our goals and strategies are aligned and will do the same with the program team in early December. We will continue to review and update as necessary.

GSWA in the News

I composed four separate press releases that were published in some or all local news media outlets including New Jersey Hills Media (14 local newspapers), The Daily Record, InsiderNJ.com, The Patch, TapInto, and more:

- October 23, 2023: [Great Swamp Gala – A Win for the Environment!](#)
- October 2, 2023: [Great Swamp Gala Silent Auction is Live!](#)
- September 18, 2023: [Great Swamp Offers Free Gala Tickets](#)
- August 21, 2023: [Great Swamp Brings Magic to their Gala](#)

Acquisition Mailings

Follow-up to our first mid-September mailing: we mailed a postcard to 3,000 non-member Chatham and Summit residents. It focused on climate change-related weather events in New Jersey while promoting GSWA's mission (see next page). From this, we received two donations, one for \$500(!) and another for \$25. Industry standards state a minimum of two follow-up contacts are needed to capture someone's attention. In December, we will send these same residents a second postcard.

New mailing: We targeted and acquired names/addresses of 40 Harding Twp. residents for another mailing in early December, themed as a holiday card from their neighbor in Harding.

GSWA takes action to counteract increasing climate change impacts in the Passaic River Region.



FIRE

- 1,500 wildfires damage or destroy 2023, over 35,000 forest fires burned over 1.6



FLOOD/STORMS

- The most devastating storms in NJ on record have all occurred since 1999: Hurricanes Floyd, Irene, Sandy, and Ida



EXTREME HEAT

- This past July was the hottest July in NJ on record
- June - parts of Morris County received over 5-inches of rain in less than 24 hours
- May was one of the driest Mays in NJ on record

Chatham, Madison & Summit residents . . .

let's work on solutions together! Your support helps GSWA protect and improve the health of the Passaic River through science, education, land preservation and stewardship, and advocacy.

Great Swamp Watershed Association
PO Box 300, New Vernon, NJ 07976

Visit us at:
568 Tempe Wick Rd., Morristown, NJ 07960

GreatSwamp.org | 973-538-3500

It has become alarmingly clear that the time to sharpen our focus on our planet is now. A great place to start is locally. Donations to GSWA support our water quality monitoring programs, environmental education to students and the public, the preservation of open space, stewarding our 73-acre Conservation Management Area (CMA) in Harding Twp. (open to the public for passive recreation) and advocating for the health of our watershed and beyond.

Your donation today allows us to continue our vital work now and for future generations. Learn more about us at GreatSwamp.org.



Scan to donate

Save the Date...

Why We Love NJ's Open Spaces

January 16, 2024, 6-7:30 pm @ GSWA Headquarters, Morristown, NJ

Join Dave Robinson, NJ State Climatologist & GSWA Board Member and discover why we are fortunate to live in the great state of New Jersey, thanks in part to our many scenic open spaces.

GSWA Board co-Chairs: David Naidu of Summit & Jordan Glatt of Springfield





PS28 students from Paterson readying for their day at the CMA

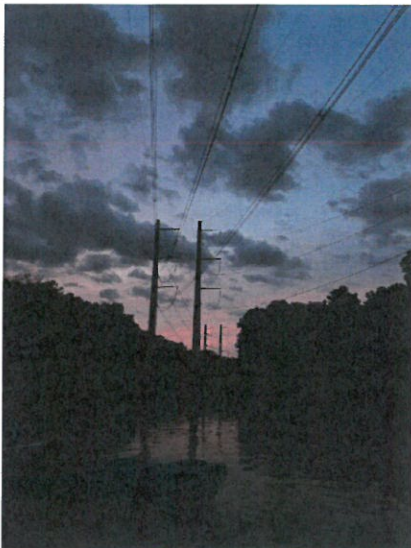
Overview

Our fall outdoor field programming has wrapped, and despite rain every weekend this fall, our school programs went off without a hitch. New trails and boardwalks gave us new areas to teach, new schools and communities gave us new students to teach, and Spanish students even gave us new languages to teach in! It's been an intensive few months! We will now switch over to indoor programming over the winter months and will continue to teach in Paterson, Newark, Madison and more presenting our water quality program to prepare students for spring field trips and for Green Infrastructure education. We have offered a range of new public programs this fall and will continue to bring hikes, workshops, and informational programs throughout the winter. We just finished planning for the first half of 2024, and we'll have many new programs next spring.

Sadly, Sarah Hunt will be leaving us at the end of January, to concentrate on landscaping full time. We have taken the opportunity to revise the job description for the education and water quality associate position to more accurately reflect the proportions of the job that will be spent on education and involve evening and weekend work. We are hoping to hire the new position so that there will be no gap in our staffing. This will mean that our winter and spring programming load will fall more heavily on Ginger and myself as we train the new person, and they get up to speed through training and observation.



We continue to try and make new links in our urban underserved communities - especially in Paterson. Our strategic planning for 2024 highlights Paterson as an area to focus on, expanding educational programming with community outreach in the city. We continue to believe that focusing on the depth of education rather than the number of students taught is a more effective metric however our numbers for the period since the last board report show that we are reaching large numbers in each segment we count, namely K-12 students, colleges, and the general public. In just the 2 months from mid-September to mid-November we taught almost 500 students for in class programs, 220 S2S all day field programs, 230 other school field trips and served over 260 members and the public in walks and talks. We conducted 3 of our 10 funded busing grant trips and have scheduled 4 more already for the spring.



School Programs

The numbers of students taught since the last board report are impressive, but we are mostly excited to be active again in some schools we have not worked with since before the pandemic. There are new young, enthusiastic science teachers at PS4 and PS28 in Paterson, and we took advantage of this to plan work for the spring with PS4, and to teach in school and host PS28. These long-term relationships are important to nurture, as we build capacity in Paterson and begin to understand the issues in the neighborhoods of the schools we work with. Sadly, several of the trees planted as part of the green infrastructure improvements at PS28 back in 2017 were cut and removed. If we are not present in these schools, we cannot observe problems or assess the long-term success of the GI installed at these sites or help schools maintain the rain gardens we were involved with creating. We are focused on improving maintenance plans for all the rain gardens we have been part of and have spoken to Rutgers to assess the best way to accomplish this.



Proposed site of the new rain garden at PS25

We have had several successful planning meetings with PS25 and are moving forward with Rutgers to design the long-awaited rain garden that will utilize our funds from the Garden Club of America. It is a pleasure to work with an enthusiastic and willing administration after receiving little encouragement at our previously targeted school. We will be in class to prepare the students in January and February, they will be attending field trips at the CMA in April, and the hope is that the rain garden will be planted in May 2024.



Our 8 field days of field programs with students2science is full for the spring, and after refining our target schools with them, we are receiving students from target communities of Patterson, orange, and Newark. This is giving us ample opportunity to practice our nascent Spanish and we taught several field trips bilingually this field season. Having our student worksheets in both Creole and Spanish allows all students present on a field trip to be involved in the learning, we hope to continue

learning Spanish through Babel this winter to improve our ability to teach. We continue to see some issues with staffing and drastically changing numbers of students attending these field programs, and we were more successful in schools that we visited to teach prior to the field trip. We will continue to try and visit S2S schools for lessons ahead of spring field trips to meet teachers, more candidly explain expectations for students on field trips and build student knowledge ahead of the field trips.

Public Programs

We have had a busy couple of months of public programming, including a sold-out Halloween hike across our brand-new trail, where our participants dressed up and trick-or-treated by candlelight around the trails of the CMA, a UV light night hike, and several paddles! We have a sold-out wreath





making workshop, winter solstice hike and daytime hike all slated for December. During our planning meeting for the first half of 2024, we proposed several new programs at downstream locations, and expanding our current slate of offerings for both virtual and in person programming. We are being requested frequently to give programs at libraries, garden clubs, and for January the Chatham Senior Center, and this expands the groups of people exposed to our programming and allows us to cross promote our offerings.

Several attendees at the September Climate proof your yard program have asked us to talk to their groups, and we are actively trying to template programs so that we can prepare them once and deliver them to multiple group.

March is when our school programming begins in earnest again and we will hopefully also have a new member of staff, who will need to be trained, so we must carefully balance these competing needs. School programs take place weekdays and public programs by necessity occur on evenings and weekends and we can't cover both to the degree we would like, especially with limited staff.

We plan to offer more kayaking programs in new locations for 2024 since these offer great opportunities to engage deeply with members about water quality issues while we paddle the very rivers we test. We have offered programs through the refuge, at Essex environmental center, through Great peace meadows and are actively planning for adding new locations next paddling year. Three of our upstream paddles have been impacted by beaver dams constructed across the entire river in the refuge, and this necessities getting into the water to remove a portion of the dam to allow passage of the boats. This was fine in September, but tough at the November Veterans Day paddle! We will need to fold in this step of preparation for future upstream trips.



Climate Proof Your Yard

How to live, and garden, effectively in a changing New Jersey Climate.



We are happy that our educational outreach for the Paterson Catch basin program is off to a great start and we have tabled at several Paterson events and handed out many catch basin maintenance kits. We recently received communication from ANJEC that they have some catch basin related funds they will handover to us to allow us to continue in this work.

Plant For Pollinators Program and Sale

We have ordered the plants and confirmed the speakers for our 2024 plant sale and are now working on detailed logistics for the sale. 2024 will involve a 15% increase in the number of plants over the 2023 numbers, and we have a couple of new partners, although we will try and maintain only 14 pickup sites. We strive every year to improve the ordering experience and think that we may have cracked this by using our event partner for the gala to host the e-commerce sale portion. This will allow us to avoid capacity issues that have plagued the kickoff of the sale each year as folks all attempt to purchase plants in the initial hours to ensure the species they want. We had a great meeting with the event planning company, and they will work with us through training as we upload the inventory. We are also collaborating with Morris Twp EC to more broadly promote a pledge to avoid planting invasive species. This ties in perfectly with the mission of the plants for pollinators sale, as we know that invasive garden plants simply do not support any diversity of pollinator species compared to native species. We will produce a social media campaign that ties into the substantive changes to the GSWA website to avoid the slowdowns and crashes that accompanied the plant sale kick off this year.

If you have a group or organization you belong to that would enjoy a talk from our education staff on one of our many Watershed Friendly Living topics, we'd be happy to come and speak to your group. Please reach out to Hazel and we can let you know our topics and arrange a talk.

Enjoy a sampling of the many hundreds of photos that we have taken while conducting our programming over the last months. The photos show:

Orange high school students learning about non-point source pollution, and again, in the field learning through observation about food chains. Students from PS28 learning about their watershed from our 3D model, and out weeding their rain garden,





Overview

Our 2023 field season is wrapping up an eventful and productive year for our stewardship efforts. We've engaged with new corporate partners such as Columbia Bank, Wells Fargo, Blue Foundry, Delta Dental and Enbridge, and enjoyed the continued support of longtime partners such as Goldman Sachs, Teva, and our many school and community groups. Through this influx of volunteer labour, we have accomplished a tremendous amount this year in often difficult working conditions. We are excited to have received a \$15,000 grant from the Thomas Glasser foundation that will finally allow us to purchase a new larger storage shed and create a better storage area for all of our growing stewardship tools and supplies. We will try to install this before the end of the year, which will also mean moving our old smaller shed to a new location.



Through the creation of ¾ mile of new trails, our walkable mileage is now a shade under 4 miles. We've created around 700 feet of new tread boardwalk and restored around 200 feet more- a task that will only take up more time as our wooden boardwalks age in the wet and humid conditions they are placed. We've spread mulch on more than 1.6 miles of trail this year, and there is no number to represent how many wheelbarrow loads that represents- certainly in the thousands! Three new benches and two new teaching and gathering platform areas were built, and we treated 23 acres for invasive stilt grass and knotweed control along with continuing the battle to remove multiflora rose, burning bush, honeysuckle, and privet from the understory of the forest. We planted more than 1000 shrubs, and herbaceous native plants into the site, created four new rocky riffles in the silver brook to enhance macroinvertebrate (and therefore teaching) habitat and continued to repair and maintain an



aging 30-acre perimeter fence that is well into its wayward teenage years!

These are impressive numbers and represent many hundreds of hours of work.

We are conducting our annual easement monitoring program of the parcels of land we own or have easements on. Two of these properties, Hoag and Kent will eventually be conveyed as part of the complex transaction for the Ferber property. We also completed the herculean task of final Land Trust Association accreditation approval, which occurs every five years. We are now accredited until February 2028.

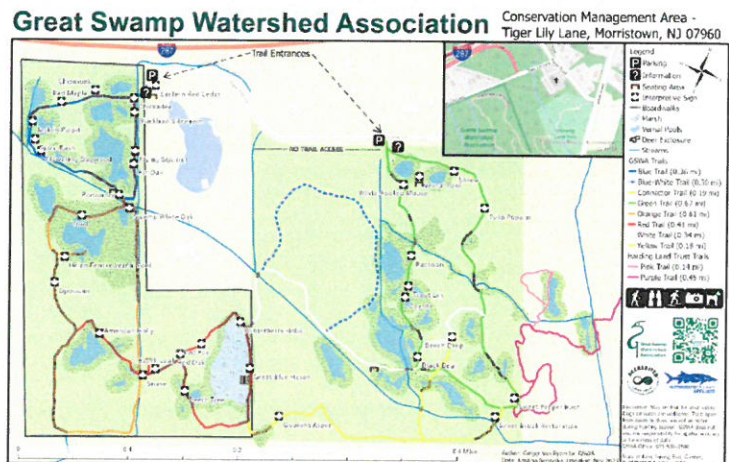
It was a challenging and expensive process and has opened some discussion as to whether LTA accreditation is worth continuing. While the implementation of best practices that GSWA land program now utilizes gave us a valuable foundation by which to enact both our land transactions and organization wide best practices, all of the parcels donated, or easements given since 2016 would have occurred absent GSWA being an accredited organization. We continue to assess whether continued membership in the LTA is merited.

As we reflect on the year's accomplishments and prepare our work plans for 2024, a participant on a recent hike asked 'when will you be finished all the work on the trails'? The answer is that active management will never be completed- it is an ongoing task to steward land, especially land that has undergone such a huge and hydrologically changing transformation as the CMA did in 2020, and that is used so intensively for teaching and education. To maintain safe trails, grow biodiversity at the site and manage the site's existing infrastructure, there will always be a need for stewardship, though its nature changes as the habitat changes. We also need to intentionally work to increase our invaluable pool of internal volunteers who continue to be the backbone of our maintenance at the property. Our stalwarts as we call them are almost all approaching 80, and whilst we are blown away by their amazing work ethic, it is essential that we continue to recruit new active volunteers to aid us in stewarding the CMA year-round. We are considering creating a high school invasive strike team that will meet regularly after school and help with invasive species work.



Trails at the CMA

There are now two new trails at the CMA, 1/3-mile white trail and 1/3 mile blue-white trail. Having used all the readily available trail blaze colors, we are now having to use multicolored trails! These two trails more fully utilize the acreage of the Lamorgese tract and allow hikers to cross a wildlife rich area of marsh, pass newly created vernal pools, see the invasive understory of the forest, and compare it to an almost pristine beech oak section, all within a third of a mile! The new trail connects to the silver brook bridge built last fall and allows us to walk a loop more easily with our ecology field trips. Our fall community groups cleared and chipped the trail, and the volunteers from Teva created benches on their October workday that were used by school groups immediately the following day.



Deer Management Program

Our deer management program is underway across the CMA, and the trails will be closed totally December 4-9th.

CAUTION

HUNTING OCCURS IN THIS AREA.

TRAILS ARE **OPEN** EXCEPT AS NOTED BELOW.

PLEASE PROCEED WITH CAUTION AND DRESS APPROPRIATELY

September 9, 2023 - February 17, 2024:
Bow Hunting Occurs in Vicinity. **All GSWA trails OPEN.**

November 20, 2023 - February 10, 2024:
Shotgun Season. Hunting occurs in this area.
Trails CLOSED Mon - Fri from Dawn - Noon.

December 4 - December 9, 2023
6-Day Firearm Season. **All GSWA trails CLOSED.**

NO HUNTING WITHOUT EXPRESS WRITTEN PERMISSION FROM:

GREAT SWAMP WATERSHED ASSOCIATION
PO BOX 300, NEW VERNON, NJ 07976
(973) 538 3500

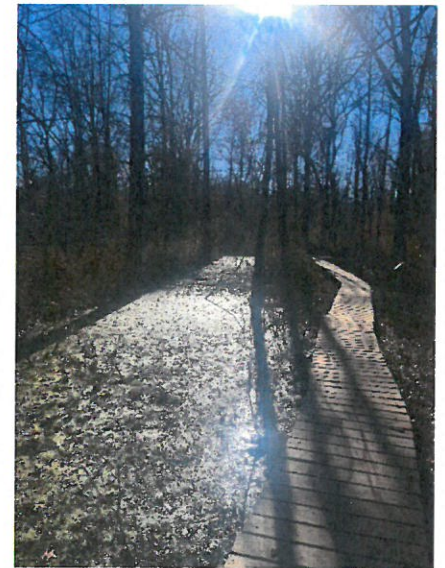


As a reminder, GSWA has crafted a herd reduction policy which allows hunters with insurance and our explicit permission to hunt the property, both during bow and shotgun season. We encourage reduction in the over-population of deer in the area to protect the biodiversity of plants at the site, reduce plant damage in restorations and minimize water quality impacts that high deer numbers can cause. Through creation of trails in the Lamorgese parcel, hunter stands are now visible from a couple trails, leading to occasional questions from hikers and students on field trips. We welcome the chance to engage with people on our rationale for allowing hunting in the property, as it allows us to clear up any misconceptions about deer damage, local deer population size and the negative impacts high deer numbers cause across all species at the site. All entrances and our website carry information about hunting dates and access.

If you would ever like to take a walk around the property with one of our staff to get to know what we do there, please let us know, we are always happy to show off the work that we have done.

Land Acquisitions

A meeting took place to discuss amending the language used in our project selection criteria checklist to include protection from development as possible additional criteria for our public Criteria checklist- (see below for excerpted document). Essentially this checklist is the document used to initially assess whether any land offered to GSWA meets our defined needs and priorities consistent with mission. After some interesting discussion about possible scenarios where properties might be offered to us it was determined that the existing criteria language was sufficient, and if ever a situation arose where a property fell outside our existing.



Public Benefit Criteria: To qualify for selection, property must meet AT LEAST ONE of the following criteria with preference given to projects meeting multiple public benefit criteria [with the highest prioritization beginning with item i. to the least of item vii].

- i. ____ Project contains important hydrologic features necessary for protecting water supply, water resources, wetland habitat or for providing natural flood control.
- ii. ____ Project borders or affects the integrity of the Passaic River or a tributary.
- iii. ____ Project contains land that buffers or is contiguous with existing protected open land.
- iv. ____ Project contains natural features of educational or scientific value including land used, or likely to be used, for education in land stewardship.
- v. ____ Project contributes to the scenic or passive enjoyment of the general public and is readily accessible by the general public.
- vi. ____ Project contributes to protection of lands in furtherance of federal, state, regional or local conservation plans.
- vii. ____ Project requirements:
 - a. Project can convey a clear, unencumbered title.

- b. Project contains no known prohibitive liabilities – hazardous substances, unsafe structures.
- c. Landowner will convey an interest that meets the conservation purposes test.
- d. Conservation management costs are reasonable and justified for the scope of the project and sourcing of stewardship funds have been identified.
- e. The image of GSWA is benefited.
- f. Alternative conservation tools have been discussed with the landowner and GSWA is the best suited.

We would appreciate any board help to connect us with other potential funding or volunteer sources for our corporate workday program. We have FAQ and informational documents prepared to hand off to potential corporate partners and would just need an email or phone introduction to the correct person at the potential partner company and can take it from there. If you have any links or helpful suggestions for potential partners, please reach out to Hazel at hazele@greatswamp.org

GSWA Water Quality Programs

Board Meeting Report

November 2023

Water Quality Monitoring

2023 –

Chemistry –

As of this report, we have completed our quarterly chemistry data collections. Our final round of sampling in mid-November saw cold water temperatures across the sampling sites. One anomaly was the headwater region of Loantaka Brook where the temperature was abnormally elevated for the time of year and compared to the other sites in the area. A number of sites, including along Loantaka Brook had Total Dissolved Solid (TDS) levels well above the NJDEP standard. TDS is a measurement used to monitor the levels of road salt contaminant in freshwater. Elevated levels at this time of the year are an indication of a growing issue of rising salinity in our region's streams. When you take into consideration that there had not been any significant icing or snowfall for almost eight months the TDS levels in November should be at their lowest.

In September we completed working with Montclair University Labs on the cyanobacteria toxin sampling program. This program is studying the toxins released by harmful algal blooms (HABs) in local streams and lakes. GSWA is supplying samples from Kitchell Pond, as well as Branta Pond and Essox Pond (located at the Somerset Environmental Center) for the project. All three of these basins have had HABs in the past. The final results of the study have been posted to a data base available to all participants. We will be including this data in our 2023 Water Quality Report Card.

Visual Assessments -

We have completed the majority of visual assessments for the fall at this time. Our visual assessment sites now include a number of our downstream sampling locations along the Passaic River through Dundee Dam in Garfield.

Bacterial Monitoring –

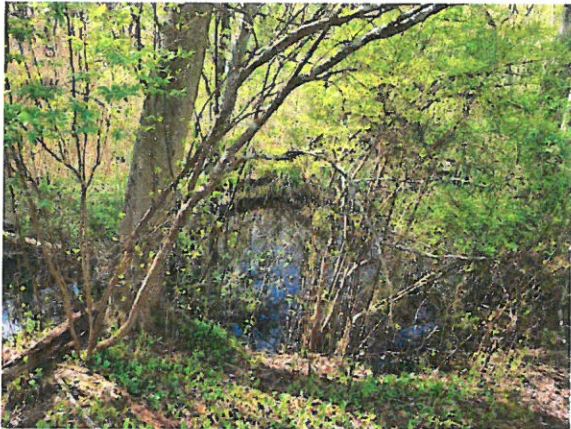
Through this yearly project, GSWA collects data on potentially harmful bacteria present in the surface waters of our area. These bacteria, *E. coli*, are most commonly introduced into our waterways through fecal matter from pet waste that isn't properly cleaned up, leaking sewage from septic or sewage pipes, or from wildlife. One common issue is Canada geese who prefer open lawn adjacent to water bodies. Their fecal matter accumulates in the area and when it rains gets carried into the nearby stream or lake. Once present in the water body, the bacteria can quickly multiply to unsafe levels, especially in areas where there is a high nutrient level present. We use our data to alert local communities of any areas of concern.

Bacterial sampling occurred over a five-week period with samples being collected weekly on Tuesday mornings. This year we will be sampling took place from July 11th and run through August 8th. We are currently working on compiling the data collected in preparation for our Report Card.

Macroinvertebrate sampling –

We completed our annual macroinvertebrate sampling at the end of June/ early July. As always the weather played a role in our sampling. The high temperatures at the end of June caused a slight delay as we monitored safety for our volunteers and staff. Macroinvertebrate data helps GSWA to analyze the long-term health of our river ecosystems. The samples have been transported to Normandeau Inc for identification and data on the NJHDMI macroinvertebrate scale.

PFAS –



Our PFAS follow-up sampling was completed earlier this month. Four samples were collected on the Rolling Knolls property including two within Black Brook and two from seepage pools within the superfund area.

We also re-sampled the up and downstream sites that are in the sub-watershed surrounding the superfund site. These sites all included the main stem or tributaries of Black Brook. We expect to receive the results sometime in early January and will include them in our WQ Report Card.

Education

We finished up a very busy season of educational programming this fall. Working with both new school districts as well as GSWA's historic educational partners in the SWaMP program such as Chatham and Madison.

Loantaka Brook Restoration Project –



Loantaka is our most impaired stream within the Great Swamp Sub-watershed. This stretch of the stream has elevated levels of bacteria during the summer months, it is impacted by road salt, runoff and effluent discharges, and doesn't have a good diversity of habitat for macroinvertebrates. The picture to the left is where Loantaka Brook headwaters start, coming out of a culvert under Parsons Village in Morristown.

Since my last board report I have met with many of the community members as well as the Morris Township EC and Morris County Parks employees.

We have done a number of walk-throughs of the area along Loantaka Brook which we would like to target for restoration. One of these included being accompanied by Steve Souza formerly of Princeton Hydro and Roy Messaros from Rutgers University Environmental Engineering. These two gentleman

brought some needed insight into what restoration efforts would be possible and the most successful at addressing the issues facing the stream.

While examining the headwaters region of Loantaka Brook we also reviewed the restoration that GSWA helped to conduct Seaton Hackney Stables. The restoration area adjacent to the stream was in relatively good shape with the native trees which had been planted all doing well and with minimal deer browse, the understory is once again dominated by invasive plants. However, of greatest concern was the fact that we observed dumping of horse manure from the Seaton Hackney paddocks on the stream side of the fencing. These piles of fresh and older manure being placed within the restoration area and along the stream side of the fencing allow stormwater to carry the nutrients and bacterial contamination more directly into Loantaka Brook. Both the stables and Morris County Parks were notified of the violation and we will follow up in the coming weeks to ensure that this is dealt with.



Dr. Messaros is now pulling together a bid to present to GSWA on the cost of writing a formal restoration plan. This plan would include all recommendations and discrete projects that will be weighted in terms of efficacy. In this way our GSWA grant team can begin to look at sources for funding the different projects. This is the next step in the process of seeing the project come to life and restoring the water quality to the Loantaka Brook headwaters.

Office Manager and Event Coordinator Board Report
Melanie Hertgen
December 2023

The Gala- Beginning in July, I had begun the silent auction solicitations for the gala. Many of the places we asked were the same as previous years, but quite a few were new establishments. I walked around the downtowns of several towns- Madison, Summit, New Providence, Morristown- and found that people were more willing to donate an item if you asked in person. With the help of staff and Board/Advisory Council members, we obtained over 200 auction items and raised \$39,000- a great success! We were able to acquire sporting tickets, golf outings, many restaurant gift cards (which all went above FMV), jewelry, wine, and much more. The event itself was a success as well- everyone enjoyed Simon the magician as well as the set up/décor, speakers, and food. With the experience I've gained from this event, I hope to be more prepared and organized for the next one. Thankfully with staff help, we were able to finish all tasks on time and allowed for a smooth set up at the venue.

Post-gala, I made sure to organize all auction items by bid winner and we sent out all certificates within a week of the gala to ensure the winners received their items. Everyone was able to pick up their items within a month after the gala which was great.

As we are exploring new fundraising ideas for next year, I began researching other kinds of events, themes, venues, and entertainment options that will be sure to draw a bigger crowd. We will begin discussing these ideas at our upcoming gala planning meeting, where we will have a better idea of the direction we are taking. Some new ideas include a casino night, a barn dance, a costume party, food tastings, a "Green Acres" theme and many more. If anyone has any new and fun ideas, please feel free to let me know (mhertgen@greatswamp.org)!

Events- I have taken on a new task in the past month using constant contact to schedule monthly "events" social media posts. As I already create the events graphics, post them on the website, add them to electronic calendars/facebook pages, and manage the attendee lists, I can now promote it on our social media to try and increase attendance. We have also decided to send out a "thank you for attending" post event email to the attendees. We include links on how they can further support us by attending events, donating, or becoming a member. In addition, I am working on a survey monkey survey to send along with the email to inquire of any comments or suggestions for future events. We hope this email keeps attendees further engaged with GSWA and will allow for even better events/programs!

Admin/Etc.- I am continuing to use donor perfect to update contacts, and constant contact to update email lists. As I began utilizing the social media scheduling feature recently, I am becoming a lot more familiar and comfortable using these database platforms. I hope to

continue learning all of the different aspects these platforms have to offer so I can execute harder tasks such as pulling reports.

Val, Nancy and I (communications and membership) worked on the strategic plan for 2024- we have discussed our tasks and goals for the following year in detail, which has helped us better visualize our busiest times and the ways in which we can accomplish those set goals.