



## Great Swamp Watershed Association

The Passaic River WATERKEEPER® ALLIANCE Affiliate

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### Great Swamp Watershed Association Board of Trustee Case for Support June, 2024

The Great Swamp Watershed Association is excited about the future. We are poised to purchase a new property and move our headquarters to a better, more accessible location. This will enable us to expand our program offerings, broaden our reach, and integrate more expansively into our communities. This is a time for self-reflection and an opportunity to analyze our financial health and formulate a strategic approach to financial sustainability.

#### Purpose:

With an imminent capital campaign and a small projected deficit for 2024-2025, we must successfully manage these challenges through a combination of broad contributions from board members and strategic fundraising initiatives. Understanding this landscape and our current statistics, we recognize the importance of bolstering board member engagement in fundraising efforts to secure the financial health of our association.

#### Goals:

1. **Financial Health:** Establishing a fiscally healthy organization with demonstrated support from board members.
2. **Board Engagement:** Encouraging active participation from board members in both giving and fundraising, as well as contributing time and talent.
3. **Cultural Shift:** Creating a culture that fosters generosity without alienating board members.
4. **Clear Expectations:** Setting transparent expectations for current and prospective board members.
5. **Long-term Strategic Planning:** Over the next five years, aim to increase board giving to constitute a significant percentage of our operating budget.
6. **Tailored Recruitment:** By clearly identifying our goals and strategic benchmarks, we can more accurately identify and assess additions to our board of trustees and advisory board going forward.

#### Proposal:

1. **Suggested Minimum Give/Get:** Recommend a minimum annual give/get contribution of \$3,000 for each board member in 2024-2025, with incremental increases of \$500 annually thereafter until reaching a suggested minimum of \$5,000 by 2028.
2. **Transparency and Recognition:** Publicly disclose the average annual giving by board members, while highlighting the top three contributions (anonymously). Additionally, showcase innovative fundraising strategies employed by board members (such as hosting



*Protecting our water and land for 40 years*



a dinner party for friends and colleagues, or simply asking a friend to make a contribution).

3. **Exceptions Policy:** Acknowledge that certain board members may bring unique skill sets or resources to the table, warranting flexibility in meeting the suggested minimums. However, cap the number of board positions held by such individuals and establish clear parameters for exceptions. These parameters will be developed by the trusteeship committee and disclosed to the board during the trustee election process.

#### **Next Steps:**

1. **Discussion and Feedback:** Open the floor for discussion and feedback on the proposed measures.
2. **Vote:** Call for a formal vote to approve the implementation of board giving requirements and policies.
3. **Implementation:** Once approved, initiate the implementation process, including communication of expectations to current and prospective board members.
4. **Evaluation:** Regularly evaluate the effectiveness of these measures in achieving our financial goals and adjust as necessary.

By adopting these measures, we aim to cultivate a more robust culture of giving, as well as valued contributions of time and talent, within our board while ensuring the continued success and sustainability of the Great Swamp Watershed Association.

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This proposal lays out a comprehensive plan to foster a culture of philanthropy among board members.