

Starting a Watershed Plan for the Sparkill Creek



Piermont Marsh - Hudson River
National Estuarine Research Reserve.
Photo Credit: RossPilot

Watershed Characterization & Planning Workshop

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Sparkill Creek – where?

- **Small** (and mighty)
 - 11 sq. miles
 - New York and New Jersey
- **Suburban Watershed**
 - People and Nature Mix
 - Forested Headwaters
 - Stripmall and Mugwort Lowlands
- **Issues!!**
 - Water Quality
 - Flooding
 - Overdevelopment
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Sparkill Creek Watershed Alliance



An all-volunteer group dedicated to the Protection and Appreciation of the our Watershed

- Water Quality Monitoring
- Advocacy at local level
- Watershed Planning
- Invasive Plant Control
- Tree Plantings
- Outreach to neighbors
- Not all work all the time



Sparkill Creek – Problems

- Not unusual for urban streams



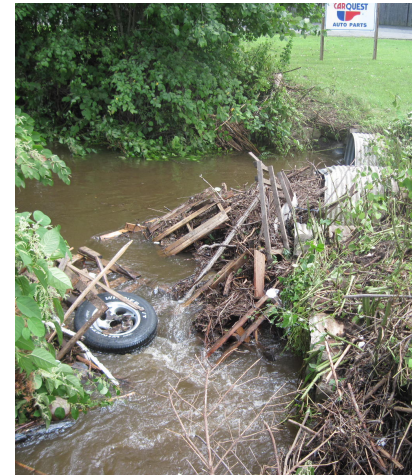
Problems are often addressed **Reactively**



- Flooding



- Riparian Damage



- Water Quality

Why a Plan for the Sparkill?



- The Usual Suspects
 - Decades of Appreciation and Concern for the Watershed though some are not aware
 - Recommendations come and go but - Development never stops
 - All watersheds are local (we are the cavalry)
 - No one seems to be in charge of water

Planning can



- Proactively make progress rather than reactive fixes.
- Identify players for specific actions
- Provide a path toward achieving a vision for the watershed

Inertia



- Getting Started was (is) a problem for years
 - Excellent training does not necessarily move us
 - Group Consensus
 - Who can partner? – Town, County, HRWA
 - Grants?
- HRWA provided an offer we could not pass up to create the first step of a plan: a Characterization

Advisory Committee



- I selected wide ranging list from government, education, environmental experts and other non-profits
- Look for people who might be helpful in next steps
- The committee may be more necessary in later phases

The Characterization Work



- HRWA did 95% of the work. We just dug up material, advised on structure and critiqued.
- Official sources can be good but it helps if you are a packrat.
- Helps to remind officials of the where, when and why from years past.
- My own goal was to make the report and data useful for subsequent planners.
- Report: 196 pages, >190 References, 93 supporting documents, 66 GIS database files

Finally



- We have a solid Characterization that will serve as a base for future planning.
 - Our community meeting was very successful.
- Wish List -
 - We intended to determine anything in the assessment that was left out. - Not done but not needed
 - Also intended to include next steps in the process
 - This and more interpretation would be a plus

Next Steps



- Break into small steps
 - We are looking a consultant to draft the path forward
- Challenge
 - Gaining sufficient municipal support for the ultimate plan

- Thank You -
Questions?



Sparkill Creek Watershed Alliance

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