

I. INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Goals and Objectives

The Canonsburg Lake Master Site Plan is a long – range plan for the development of future potential recreational uses of Canonsburg Lake. Future development of the property for public recreational use as well as conservation and environmental education will be the main goals of this Master Plan. Canonsburg Lake is a unique recreational area due to its proximity to significant residential and commercial areas, major transportation systems, and ever- encroaching pressures of land development. Utilizing this Master Plan as a guide for future development and improvements to the lake and its surrounding property should include proper planning for recreational uses, environmental conservation, and environmental education. The long-term intent of this Master Plan is to encourage those recreational uses determined by this Plan, which will serve to enhance the site's natural features as well as the residential / commercial properties which surround a significant portion of the portion of the lake. By utilizing the natural features of Canonsburg Lake in concert with the proposed recreational and educational potential, this area can serve the surrounding communities well into the future while recognizing the regulatory and financial limitations which will also be addressed in the Master Plan.

The major goals for this Master Plan are as follows:

- Conserve the integrity of the Canonsburg Lake and surrounding property.
- Enhance the recreational opportunities of the lake for area residents and visitors.
- Reduce the amount of silt and sediment entering Canonsburg Lake from Little Chartiers Creek.
- Develop conservation and educational opportunities for the lake and surrounding property.
- Develop public awareness and support for Canonsburg Lake as a community and regional resource.

This Master Site Development Plan for Canonsburg Lake is an effort to develop a long-range plan for future recreational use of the lake, as well as environmental education, due to the diverse natural features currently found at the lake. By collecting data on existing conditions of the lake and surrounding property and by an in-depth analysis of the surrounding municipalities who currently utilize the lake, thoughtful decisions can be made in the future to better improve this regional resource known as Canonsburg Lake.

Process

The process involving the planning and development of the Master Plan required a partnership of local residents, community organizations and local agencies with an interest in the future integrity of Canonsburg Lake and the improvement of the existing facility for future recreational uses. The Washington County Watershed Alliance developed informational brochures, collected surveys, organized public meetings, met with local law- makers and generated an overall public awareness of the existing condition of Canonsburg Lake and surrounding property. These organizations participated in the planning process, presented their concerns and ideas, and aided in developing a plan for the future of Canonsburg Lake, as well as for future public recreational opportunities. The Steering Committee played an active role in developing public awareness for the project. In addition, the Committee as solicited input, information and assistance from various agencies including the Washington County Conservation District, the Washington County Department of Recreation, the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, Pennsylvania Department of Natural Resources, the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Public Participation

The consultants and Steering Committee assembled data and developed alternatives for future recreational planning for Canonsburg Lake. Public participation was encouraged in the process as an important aspect in the final decision making process. Surveys and questionnaires were developed and distributed at various public events throughout the year. A series of press releases concerning the project were issued providing details of the public process to the general public. A series of three (3) public meetings were conducted to solicit further input from those interested residents of the area as well as to give the Steering Committee an opportunity to keep the public involved in the Master Planning process. These public meetings also provided an opportunity to present the plan and receive comments regarding the proposed alternatives from interested parties. These public meetings were held at the Little Lake Theater, which is a small regional theater located directly on the west bank of Canonsburg Lake directly off of McDowell Lane in North Strabane Township.

The Steering Committee members and the Consultant presented the draft Master Plan to the members of the Washington County Board of Commissioners, and the Township Supervisors of Peters and North Strabane Townships. In addition, officials from the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and consultants for the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission were kept informed as to the progress of the Master Plan and the recommendations associated with it.

Public Participation (continued)

The input of the various local governments, governmental agencies as well as general public input and awareness was determined as vital to the successful development of the Canonsburg Lake Master Site Plan.

The ultimate conclusions and recommendations for the Canonsburg Lake Master Site Plan will be implemented over time, with particular phases completed based on availability of funds and the ultimate determination of priorities. The full realization of the Master Plan will require a commitment from the Steering Committee as well as public and private cooperation. Ultimately, available funding will determine the development of many of the recommendations. In the stage of the process, building public awareness, support and concern has been the main priority of the Steering Committee. In this regard, the public awareness of the plight of Canonsburg Lake has been expanded from those residents and fisherman most familiar with the lake and its history, to the general public, and policy makers throughout the region and the Commonwealth.

Master Plan Accomplishment

Accomplishing the Master Plan will be phased over a number of years, although several small steps have already begun including existing trail renovations, bench placements and kiosks. The realization of this Master Plan will require both public and private cooperation and commitment. Certainly, the more ambitious elements of this Master Plan will take considerable time, effort and funding to realize the completion of the Master Plan recommendations. In addition, the Master Plan may, over time, require changes to meet changing conditions of the surrounding areas depending on actual future development, as well as the changing conditions and level of public expectations and support.

Canonsburg Lake Master Plan Steering Committee

Debra Valentino, Project Manager	Southside Lake Corporation Homeowners Association
Gary Stokum, President	Washington County Watershed Alliance
Susan Carmichael	Washington County Conservation District
Jeff Donahue	Washington County Parks and Recreation
Vira Doughton	Cranmoor Townhomes Condominium
Joan Jessen	Chartiers Creek Watershed Association
Wallace J. Klein	Peters Township Planning Commission
Eric Large, Land Development Coord.	Washington County Planning Commission
Carole Milas	Waters Edge homeowners Association
Paulette Moyer, Assistant Twp. Mgr.	North Strabane Township
Tracy Stack	Pa Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources
Mike Piaskowski	Pa Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources
Tom Ford	Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission
Mark Fickley	Consultant

Section I – Introduction

Washington County Watershed Alliance

Gary Stokum, President
Kitty Gardner, Vice-President
Sheila Burcin, Secretary
Joan R. Jessen, Treasurer
Dan Derber
Daria Nikitina, PhD
Robert East, PhD
Tim Schumann
Ted Flickinger
Attilia Shumaker
Vicki Michaels

Board of Directors

Washington County Conservation District
Cross Creek Watershed Association
Penn State Cooperative extension
Chartiers Creek Watershed Association
Ten Mile Creek Watershed Conservancy
Pike/Pigeon/Maple Watershed Association
Washington and Jefferson College
Peters Creek Watershed Association
Buffalo Creek Watershed Association
Wheeling Creek Watershed Conservancy
Raccoon Creek Watershed Association

Washington County Watershed Alliance

The Alliance is an I.R.S. – approved 501 (c) (3) organization, Fed. ID # 25-1815293; it is an umbrella organization for watershed associations in Washington County, Pennsylvania. The Alliance maintains a mission to enhance, protect, and develop the natural resources of watersheds with their headwaters in Washington County. This mission will be accomplished through scientific investigations, research, education and outreach and by supporting activities, encouraging sustainable land use and providing assistance to local watershed associations.

The Alliance is governed by a board of directors that includes representatives for Buffalo Creek, Cross Creek, Chartiers Creek, Mingo Creek, Peter Creek, Pike Run, Pigeon Creek, Maple Creek, Raccoon Creek, Ten Mile Creek, Wheeling Watersheds, Penn State Cooperative Extension, Washington County Conservation District and Washington and Jefferson College. The Alliance is membership-based, all-volunteer and open to any individual that resides within the boundaries of Washington County.

Activities of the Alliance include educational programs for schools and community groups, outreach to the community through WATERSHED CONNECTIONS, a quarterly newsletter, programs on topics of general public interest, and displays at the Washington County Fair, Washington County's Ag Days and occasionally at other festivals and community days, assistance and support for watershed groups that belong to the alliance and maintenance of a resource library, including information about federal and state programs and sources of funds for watershed projects. One of the Alliance's most significant projects to date is the Washington County Children's Groundwater Festival. Currently in its eleventh year, the festival is a project of the Alliance's Groundwater Coalition Education Committee and provides groundwater education to participating sixth graders. The Alliance also regularly conducts monthly meetings, water quality monitoring, public education programs and training workshops for volunteer groups. Washington County has also been a Groundwater Guardian Community since 1995.