

South Branch Watershed Association

Strategic Plan: 2005-2008



Volunteers at the 2005 Spring River Clean Up

Executive Summary

June 2005

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In fall 2004, Trustees and staff of the South Branch Watershed Association embarked on a strategic planning process to map out the steps necessary for both our Association's stability and our growth. Founded in 1959 by Hermia Lechner, our Association was shaped by a strong and visionary leader. ***Our Mission*** is as relevant today as it was at our founding:

To protect the water resources of the South Branch of the Raritan River and its Watershed.

The strategic plan that is summarized below is the result of an intensive six-month planning process. The plan provides us with a road map for the next three and one-half years (2005-2008) as we build our capacity and move our Association into the future.

The Goal

The plan that has been adopted by the Board of Trustees sets forth an ambitious ***goal*** for the impact that we hope to have within our watershed:

Our programs will inspire citizens, businesses, schools and government to become stewards of the watershed who will, in turn, take action to sustain the watershed's natural resources and enhance ecological systems.

The Vision

The planning process was launched at an all-day Board and staff retreat on October 30, 2004. In addition to establishing the above goal, we also ***envisioned*** what our Association will look like as we move forward and implement the plan. We see our Association as one that:

- Focuses on activities that increase citizen awareness and action for cleaner water;
- Has support and visibility throughout the watershed;
- Is recognized for its work;
- Reaches a varied audience of business, government, landowners, and citizens;
- Collaborates with others to achieve results; and
- Has the resources to achieve its mission.

The Strategic Issues

At the all-day planning retreat, we identified ***three strategic issues***. These three issues were then used to form the framework of the plan:

- Financial Stability/Adequate Infrastructure
- Board Engagement
- Branding and Action

The Plan Development Process

Following the all-day planning retreat, Board and staff members were organized into three Task Forces which corresponded to the three strategic issues. Every member of the Board and staff was assigned to a Task Force. The Board President and the Executive Director served *ex officio* on all three Task Forces. The groups were charged with developing goals and strategies that addressed the three strategic issues. There was very high participation by both Board and staff members in the Task Forces.

The plan development process was guided by a Steering Committee whose membership consisted of the Task Force Chairs, the Board President and the Executive Director. The two outside consultants who facilitated the planning retreat, Jane Silverman and Leslie Jones Sauer, also facilitated the plan development process.

The Plan

The plan covers the years 2005-2008. Since the plan is being launched midway through 2005, this year will be devoted to review and mini-plans, such as a development plan, staffing analysis and by-laws review. The following three years see the launch of specific capacity building initiatives and activities recommended in the plan. Additionally, there are ongoing strategies that run through all four years.

The plan will guide us as we accomplish specific tasks that advance the following overall themes:

- Clear and ambitious targets for unrestricted funds for operations.
- Improved systems for recruiting, tracking and stewarding both existing and potential members and supporters.
- Concrete steps for creating a Board that is engaged around important strategic issues, willing to support development and fund raising through specific tasks and assignments, and representative of the watershed both geographically and demographically.
- Proactive steps to expand awareness of the watershed and recognition of the South Branch Watershed Association.
- Broadening of education programs to wider audiences, including adults and families.
- Establishing the South Branch Watershed Association as the “water portal” for information on watershed issues.

The plan calls for an ambitious but achievable timetable and goals. The plan and the process which created it show that all of these things can happen. It offers us a clear path as we build the capacity needed to move our Association into the next stage of our development. The following is an outline of the plan.

The Plan Outline

Issue I: Financial Stability/Organizational Resources

Goal A: Expand Annual Operating Support of the organization

- *Increase the Annual Fund (excluding major gifts) to \$20,000 by 2008*
- *Increase members by 100 new members a year (2006-2008)*
- *Recruit ten major givers (\$1000+) who will support the organization on an annual basis by 2008*
- *Achieve five corporate gifts of \$5,000 annually (not including in-kind) by 2008*

Goal B: Expand Grant-funding for watershed management and educational programs

Goal C: Expand Capacity in Finance and Development

Goal D: Create and retain a strong core staff that will enable the organization to grow

Goal E: Determine optimal location for our headquarters

Issue II: Board Development

Goal A: Create a Board that represents the diversity of the community, both demographically and geographically

Goal B: Create a structure that regenerates and renews the Board

Goal C: Promote an engaged, active Board with clear responsibilities

Issue III: Branding and Action

Goal A: Establish a strong regional identity that links our organization to the health of the watershed

Goal B: Establish our identity as the place to go first for watershed issues.

Goal C: Broaden education programs so that they extend awareness of the watershed and its issues to all age groups

Goal D: Expand watershed management programs

Task Forces, Steering Committee and Others Who Assisted

“There can be no present without a past, no future without both. That which is is only comprehensible in terms of what was. That which was may explain that which is, but cannot predict that which will be.”

*– Ian L. McHarg, **Design with Nature***

The following individuals and supporters are gratefully recognized for their assistance, dedication and efforts in developing this Strategic Plan and guiding us into our future.

Task Force 1: Financial Stability/Adequate Infrastructure

Patricia Stover, Chair

Karen Elbert, Ken Jagel, Ray Drake, Sam Stothoff, Mary Licetti and Dee Ely
Ex officio, Jim Hill, Don Einhorn

Task Force 2: Board Engagement

Johannah Weinhofer, Chair

Kay Serebrakian, John Williamson, Dennis Kephart and Tish Plum
Ex officio, Jim Hill, Don Einhorn

Task Force 3: Branding and Action

Fred Puelle, Chair

Amy Greene, Oliver Elbert, Peter Kwiatek, Ken Fisher, Nicole Rahman and Michael Rehman
Ex officio, Jim Hill, Don Einhorn

Steering Committee:

Jim Hill, Don Einhorn, Patricia Stover, Johannah Weinhoff and Fred Puelle

Consultants:

Jane Silverman and Leslie Jones Sauer

Supporters:

The Watershed Institute and The Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation; Merck & Co., Inc., Whitehouse Station, New Jersey (October 30, 2004 Retreat Host)

October 30, 2004 Retreat Guests:

Teresa Martin, Dr. Stephen Souza, John Kellogg and George Hawkins