



## Step 2: Getting Organized

### FINDING POTENTIAL PARTNERS

The extensive problems of contaminated CMD from abandoned mines far outweigh the limited resources and regulatory authority that are available to agency staff to tackle this problem alone. Cleaning up CMD from abandoned mining sites requires citizens, business and industry representatives, agency staffs, and the research community to work cooperatively and collaboratively.

Where dedicated, committed citizens—and the local groups they represent—have joined with government researchers and commercial interests in battling CMD, real progress has been achieved.

#### ***What Is Happening in Your Watershed?***

If you can answer “not much,” maybe YOU should consider providing the spark. Chances are, others in your area feel the same way you do about the problems in your creeks and rivers. They are probably just like you—waiting for someone to take the lead. While government personnel can help to involve their agencies and leverage funding, the “spark” for many clean-up projects has come

### ***In This Chapter...***

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- ♦ Finding Potential Partners
  
- ♦ Outreach Is Important
  
- ♦ Forming a Watershed Partnership
  
- ♦ Resource Information

## **Where Do I Start?**

*How do I find others to help tackle the problem?*

*Should I try to educate the general public on the problem?*

*Who will test the water, identify contaminated CMD sources, check for clean-up options, investigate funding opportunities, hire the contractors, install the treatment technologies, and monitor the results?*

## **Potential Partners Are Everywhere**

- *State, county, and local offices of environmental protection (including conservation districts)*
- *Federal offices: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Surface Mining, National Park Service, National Resource Conservation Service, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Geological Survey*
- *Local businesses*
- *Environmental organizations*

from interested, motivated private citizens and businesspeople. Communities must voice their concerns and desires and initiate action to address the problems plaguing their localities.

## **Identify Partners**

Public agencies involved in abandoned mine lands, soil and water conservation, and water quality should be high on the list of potential partners. Glancing through the phone book "blue-page" listing of government agencies provides a good starting point. One or two good contacts in a public agency can often generate a list of a dozen or more potential public agency and university partners who will be valuable in providing background information, identifying available water quality and mining data, and developing links to public and private funding sources for project implementation.

Reaching out to other organizations with an interest in water quality, such as hunting clubs, fishing groups, civic clubs, youth organizations, and others will help establish a strong base and bring diverse perspectives to your efforts.

## **OUTREACH IS IMPORTANT!**

As you begin to publicize your efforts and develop your group membership, consider various outreach approaches including:

- ♦ posters;
- ♦ inexpensive brochures and newsletters;
- ♦ presentations to civic clubs and other organizations;
- ♦ newspaper articles;
- ♦ art contests;
- ♦ events like trash clean-ups and water quality fairs.



### **OVEN RUN**

*In order to address the very significant CMD problems in the watershed, a coalition of government and non-government organizations converged in the early 1990's to devise a unified strategy. The Somerset County Conservation District and the Stoneycreek Conemaugh River Improvement Project (SCRIP) is a coalition of agencies, organizations, and individuals interested in improving the water quality of Oven Run,*

*Pokeytown Run, and the four-mile stretch of Stoneycreek River from Oven Run to the Borough of Hooversville. SCRIP was formed in 1991 when U.S. Representative John Murtha realized that the developing remediation project lacked central authority, making it difficult to manage. Local sponsors of SCRIP are contributing 50 percent of CMD remediation costs, or about \$2,500,000.*

Messages can range from public education (e.g., the estimated impact CMD is having on recreational opportunities in the area) to solicitations for attendance and involvement at meetings or special events.

Keep the effort in the public eye to help keep your partners motivated and bring new members into the process. While you are promoting your project and related educational efforts to the public, keep in mind the old adage of advertising practitioners:

### **Reach x Frequency = Results**

You want to reach as many people with your information with as much frequency as possible to achieve the desired results, whether your objectives are increased attendance at your meetings, elevated knowledge of CMD and clean-up methods, or additional funding for your project. A well-conceived, carefully planned step-by-step approach to outreach in your watershed will generate interest and increase participation in your efforts.

Finally, remember that your primary goal is to clean up the water. It is easy to find fault with what was done (or not done) in the past, but rehashing history often does not translate into positive action in the present or future. Keep the focus on the work necessary to accomplish your objectives.

## **FORMING A WATERSHED PARTNERSHIP**

As your group begins to analyze the problems, educate the public, and recruit interested agencies and organizations, involvement will grow. Building an organization takes awareness, planning, involvement, thought, and work. There will be early struggles, some setbacks and periodic pressures. It is helpful to recognize that these difficulties are normal, and that real progress can be achieved through a cooperative, inclusive process that focuses on the overall goal: cleaning up the watershed and keeping it clean.

### **Why Form a Partnership?**

Developing a watershed partnership to tackle your project ensures that no single entity will be seen as responsible for the work; all interested agencies, organizations, civic groups, elected officials, businesses, industries, and individuals will feel that they have a stake in the process and its outcome. This approach also creates an effort that is much more than the sum of its individual parts or members and it provides the organizational strength and maturity needed to weather the challenges and minor glitches that will surely come.

## **Building Blocks to Better Outreach**

*Effective outreach involves the following steps:*

- ♦ *Define your objective*
- ♦ *Identify and characterize the target audience*
- ♦ *Develop the desired message*
- ♦ *Select the delivery vehicle (medium) for the message*
- ♦ *Deliver the message*
- ♦ *Evaluate the results*

## **Partnerships are Forming**

*The Appalachian Clean Streams Initiative (ACSI), founded by OSM in 1994, is currently supporting coalition-based projects, lead by local citizens, to clean up tributaries of the Cheat River in West Virginia and Monday Creek in southeastern Ohio. Other alliance activity is sprouting up on Pennsylvania's Lackawanna River and Little Toby Creek, on the Tug Fork at the Kentucky-West Virginia border, and on dozens of other Appalachian waterways.*

## **Getting Organized in the Real World**

*The best advice on organizing and “getting the ball rolling” comes from citizen activists in the field. Rod Piper of the Stoneycreek-Conemaugh River Improvement Project (SCRIP) provides the following insights:*

- *People like to work on what affects them personally.*
- *Make your activities known to potential public and private-sector partners using an outreach program, including newspaper articles and other approaches.*
- *Success often means getting the ear of local elected officials, who can identify funding sources and interest them in supporting the project.*

*“Grassroots organizations are initially formed by environmentally conscious citizens whose goal is to clean up a . . . degraded watershed. As the partnership grows, its composition changes to include, in addition to the local and other citizen organizers, representatives from: federal, state and local government agencies; academic institutions ranging from grade schools to universities; foundations; environmental groups; local businesses and industry; public service organizations; and others. The final success of the effort depends upon the contributions that each person and group makes.”*

– Statement of Mutual Intent Strategic Plan

## **Roles of a Watershed Partnership**

The partnership’s role is many faceted. Momentum must be maintained through meetings and other forms of information transfer and new members should be recruited. Citizen members:

- ♦ help collect the information and data needed to define problems and secure funding for remediation projects;
- ♦ secure cooperation from local landowners whose land may be affected by a project and help get assistance from non-government people and groups as needed;
- ♦ ensure government agencies’ interest in the project to secure the necessary funding; and

- ♦ are key to the continued maintenance and effectiveness of the remedial measure after the project is completed.

Public agencies and some formal organizations that join the partnership like to develop specific lists of roles they will play in the effort. These can often be outlined in a memorandum of agreement, memorandum of understanding or other document. These documents serve to identify responsibilities, workloads, and participation.

## **Recruit Volunteers**

Volunteers form the backbone of many CMD and watershed protection coalitions. Since volunteers usually are able to work on only an intermittent basis, it is important to manage their efforts so they fit well into the overall scheme of activity.

Volunteers can handle assignments ranging from writing letters to the editor to taking water samples (see next section), and they are indispensable in planning and executing public awareness projects like clean-ups, water quality fairs, and other events. Attracting volunteers from partner organizations and the general public is vital in establishing your partnership as a vibrant agent of action and change.

## **Establishing a Nonprofit Corporation**

To better organize a watershed partnership and establish eligibility for direct funding from governmental agencies, private foundations and individuals, partnerships can organize as nonprofit corporations under Section 501(c)(3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code. The benefits of this approach include:

- eligibility for grant funding;
- ◆ lower bulk mailing rates;
- ◆ limited liability for board members;
- tax exemptions; and,
- ◆ the ability to hire staff.

There is some paperwork in creating a nonprofit corporation and reporting income and expenses, but if your partnership has the membership resources to handle these tasks they are not too difficult. Filing fees are usually less than \$500.

If an established nonprofit organization ( i.e., Resource Conservation and Development Council, river protection organization, etc.) is available to serve as a funding vehicle for your partnership activities, consider working through that organization before creating a new one.

## **Tips for Working With Volunteers**

*Know their skills; try to fit task assignments to skill areas if possible.*

*Provide clear instruction and supervision to avoid confusion.*

*Make tasks self-contained, so responsibility assignments are evident.*

*Help volunteers understand how their tasks fit into the overall goals.*

*Put volunteers to work in teams to add a social dimension and fun to the work.*

*Thank them, invite them back, and publicly recognize their efforts.*

## **CMD Info on the Web**

*A good place to interact with new and established watershed partnerships is on the Internet.*

*The Stoneycreek-Conemaugh River Improvement Project (SCRIP) of Pennsylvania maintains a homepage on the Internet at <http://ctcnet.net/scrip>. This site contains a rich variety of information on CMD and links to other resources on the World Wide Web.*

*The U.S. Geological Survey has a CMD-related site at <http://water.wr.usgs.gov>.*

*Robertson GeoConsultants, Inc. hosts a technical discussion group on mining and related environmental issues that can be accessed by e-mailing [listproc@info-mine.com](mailto:listproc@info-mine.com). An informative web site hosted by the group can be accessed at <http://www.info-mine.com/technomine/enviromine/wetlands/welcome.htm>.*

*Another interactive discussion group is at <http://www.microserve.net/~doug/index.html>, with information on CMD from the same host located at <http://www.microserve.net/~doug/aciddra.html>.*

*The Office of Surface Mining's WWW Home Page is accessible through the internet at <http://www.osmre.gov/astart2.htm>.*

*The Friends of the Cheat web site can be found at <http://tipswww.osmre.gov/~lwindle/cheat2.htm>.*

*The Clean Streams listserv can be found at [cleanstream@osmre.gov](mailto:cleanstream@osmre.gov).*

## Tips for Productive Meetings

*Establish a clear agenda; allow time for each item and some indication of the desired outcome.*

*Sit in a circle or semi-circle so each person can see the others.*

*Appoint a timekeeper, and stick to the agenda. If additional time is needed on an item or other items arise, have the group decide how to proceed.*

*Encourage everyone to speak, and don't allow one or two individuals to monopolize the dialogue.*

*Sum up points that have been made to facilitate understanding and speed up the process.*

*The chair should help guide the group to achieve resolution of the action items by identifying important points and alternatives and clarifying decisions.*

*Identify tasks, responsible parties, and time frames for action specified.*

*Set the date, time, and place for the next meeting; and establish a process for updating those who could not attend.*

## Steps to Incorporation

- ♦ Identify the incorporator (often an attorney who helps with the legal paperwork for the corporation);
- Elect a board of directors and officers;
- ♦ Draw up the articles of incorporation and by-laws;
- File the documents with the secretary of state's office; and
- ♦ Apply to the IRS for a federal tax exemption.

### Do we have to?

Although incorporating has some benefits, many partnerships are able to operate quite successfully without pursuing this option. CMD restoration projects funded by public agencies can often proceed under the jurisdiction of the agency itself. Sometimes partnership member organizations are able to serve as funding conduits for grant funds on behalf of the watershed partnership. It will be up to your group to decide which path is best. The key point is not to get bogged down in organizational detail unless it is essential to the project's success. ***People want to spend their time cleaning up the creek, not attending endless meetings on bureaucracy and paperwork!***



## MILL CREEK

*In the spring of 1990, representatives from private and governmental organizations met to discuss ways to improve the quality of water in Mill Creek. Attendees at that first meeting included members of community groups, environmental organizations, environmental consulting firms, biology professors from Clarion University, representatives from the PA Game Commission and Fish and Boat Commission, U.S. Soil Conservation Service and Conservation District personnel, and elected officials from the region. The initial discussions led to organization of a conference to discuss the feasibility of improving the quality of water in Mill Creek, and the formation of a watershed coalition to achieve this goal.*

*As a result of the initial meetings and subsequent conference, the Mill Creek Coalition was formed by the following partners: The Alliance for Wetlands and Wildlife, Damariscotta Environmental Consultants, Clarion County Conservation District, Jefferson County Conservation District, Clarion County Federation of Sportsmen, Jefferson County Federation of Sportsmen, Iron Furnace Chapter of Trout Unlimited, Magic Forest of West-Central Pennsylvania, League of Women Voters of Clarion County, Seneca Rocks Audubon Society, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service.*

## RESOURCE INFORMATION

### *Watershed Partnerships*

*Building Local Partnerships.* CTIC. An overview and explanation of teamwork among groups, challenges and benefits, how partnerships develop, obstacles, selecting technical advisors, conducting effective meetings, and team building exercises. Contact CTIC at (765) 494-9555.

*A Citizen's Action Guide to River Conservation.* The Conservation Foundation. A "how-to" book to encourage concerned citizens. Emphasizes building multi-interest citizen coalitions through community involvement and stream conservation efforts.

*Clean Water in Your Watershed: A Citizen's Guide to Watershed Protection.* Terrene Institute. 1993. Washington, DC. Guide designed to help citizen groups work with local, state, and federal government agencies to design and complete a successful watershed protection or restoration project. (202) 833-8317.

*Environmental Partnerships: A Field Guide for Nonprofit Organizations and Community Interests.* Management Institute for Environment and Business. Available from the Management Institute for Environment and Business at (202) 833-6556.

*How to Save A River: A Handbook for Citizen Action.* Contains information on forming a watershed group, developing an outreach campaign and identifying problems that rivers face. River Network. Contact River Network at (202) 364-2550.

*Know Your Watershed Campaign.* CTIC. A series of fact sheets designed for people who want to organize a local partnership to protect their watershed. Contact CTIC at (765) 494-9555.

*Little Nescopeck Creek-Jeddo Tunnel Rivers Conservation Planning Project List of Partners.* Wildlands Conservancy. Listing of project partners includes members from several groups, including: colleges and universities, citizens' groups, conservation organizations, government, and private industry.



## **Outreach**

*Getting the Word in the Fight to Save the Earth.* Richard Beamish. This book provides tips on communicating with your members to keep them involved, designing outreach materials, and fundraising strategies. Available from Johns Hopkins University Press, 2715 North Charles Street, Baltimore, MD 21218-4319.

*How To Handbook (Draft).* U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. A guide for developing materials, developing your message, and identifying appropriate communication channels.

## **Incorporation**

*Starting Up.* River Network. It contains information on developing a mission statement, recruiting a board of directors, fundraising, creating a budget, working with the media, producing a newsletter, as well as tips on using the watershed protection approach for river conservation. The handbook is \$25 for non-members and \$10 for members. The River Network's eastern office is located at 4000 Albemarle Street, N.W., Suite 303, Washington, DC 20016, phone: (202) 364-2550. Their internet home page can be found at: <http://www.teleport.com/~rivernet/index.htm>