



STONES RIVER
watershed association
P.O. BOX 2336
MURFREESBORO, TN 37133

Annual Report 2007-2008

As our organizational year concludes, we look back at plentiful opportunities and notable successes tempered by a failure to fully engage our members and constituents. The need for an effective community watershed group continues to grow; our list of activities remains long but we need to build our critical mass and bring new voices to our work. Even so, as we reach our five-year milestone, we can be proud of what we have accomplished in the last twelve months.

Training, Education and Outreach.

Watershed Summit on Short Mountain (September). This inaugural event was so successful in drawing both mid-state watershed activists and local landowners to the top of Short Mountain that we will hold it again in 2008 -- a steering committee representing six organizations has been formed. From Friday evening through Sunday noon we engaged in intense discussions about how to work together for the protection of streams throughout Tennessee. The Summit was made possible through generous support of the World Wildlife Fund Southeast Rivers Program.

Earth Day on the Civic Plaza, Murfreesboro (April). We returned for the third year with our popular Enviroscape model. SRWA volunteers talked with children and parents throughout the day and distributed information about water quality in our watershed.

Visual Stream Assessment training (July). We provided a second session of technical training on how to assess the health of streams through visual evaluation.

Lytle Creek Stakeholders Meeting (October). In partnership with the City of Murfreesboro and Rutherford County, and with funding from the Tennessee Dept. of Agriculture, we convened a meeting of landowners along Lytle Creek, seeking to identify opportunities for specific improvements and remediation work to move Lytle Creek away from its status as an impaired stream.

Meeting with Corps of Engineers. (January). We hosted Sue Ferguson, planner with the Nashville District, to hear about plans for a COE study of the Cumberland River basin, including tributary systems like the Stones.

Project W.E.T. (Water Education for Teachers). We attended training ourselves during the year, and will support the first Project W.E.T. training in Cannon County in June.

GLOBE (Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment) Training. We have been building our ability to do stream monitoring for several years, working in cooperation with area schools. That effort will move forward in the next year through two funding sources secured at the end of this one. The City of Murfreesboro will sponsor our "train the trainers" session on July 28, and the World Wildlife Fund Southeast Rivers Project has notified us of support for our continuing work with teachers in 2008-2009.

River Access, Activities and Cleanups

Boat Day 2007 (July). We were nearly overwhelmed by almost 300 people who turned out to take a spin in one of the canoes and kayaks made available at the Manson Pike trailhead of the Murfreesboro Greenway. SRWA again provided volunteer support for this event hosted by Murfreesboro Parks and Recreation. We would have been lost without the boats provided by Jackson Kayak of Rock Island, TN. We described this event at the Watershed Summit, and as a result there will be seven Boat Days held by watershed groups in Middle Tennessee during 2008, including a second event for us in Smyrna.

Fall Color Float (Oct.). This was our second fall float held jointly with the Tennessee Scenic Rivers Association. We were afraid it would be the Fall Color Drag because of low water caused by our record-setting drought, but were able to float from the Walter Hill dam to the Mona Boat ramp.

Cleanups: We organized and hosted cleanups at Readyville Mill on the East Fork (with help from Cannon County H.S. students) and Elam Mill on the Middle Fork (with help from Riverdale H.S. FADE club). We worked on the West Fork and Lytle Creek during the Stones Throw Away cleanup of Murfreesboro Parks and Recreation and concluded our 2007 year by hauling trash out of Stewart Creek in Smyrna.

Land Protection and Restoration.

Native Plants Restoration on the Murfreesboro Greenway. We worked during the year with a coalition of organizations and agencies on a project to remove invasive plants, reintroduce native grasses and shrubs, and stabilize stream banks along Lytle Creek and the Stones River on the Greenway. This is an ongoing project.

Bank Stabilization and Riparian Buffers at the Cannon County Arts Center. In March of 2007, with support from the World Wildlife Fund, we purchased native plants for a beautification and stabilization project at the Arts Center. Then the drought settled in with a vengeance, and much of our energy over the summer spent irrigating to keep our plants alive. We returned to the site in the fall and, with invaluable help from MTSU Agriculture students, we installed erosion controls and additional plants.

Partnerships and Collaborations.

Met quarterly with the Cumberland River Basin Council, a regional coalition coordinated by the Cumberland River Compact.

Attended meetings of the Murfreesboro Stormwater Advisory Committee and participated in discussions about the City's new stormwater ordinance.

Lytle Creek Study. Beth Chesson served as technical manager for our grant from the Tennessee Dept. of Agriculture, and oversaw a contract with Murfreesboro and Rutherford County to do a professional assessment of all reaches of Lytle Creek, seeking opportunities to remedy its problems with siltation and fecal contamination.

In-Stream Flow Study. We've worked closely this year with Kim Elkins of the Environmental Services office of the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency to study flow levels and conditions on area streams. Randle Branch worked field days throughout the year, helping to log critical data.

Summit for a Sustainable Tennessee. Several members attended the statewide gathering organized by the Tennessee Environmental Council. TEC also partnered with us in funding some of our native plants for restoration work.

Funding. During the year we received funding from the Tn. Dept. of Agriculture, Tn. Wildlife Resources Agency, World Wildlife Fund, and Tennessee Environmental Council. Grants are pending from the Greater Nashville Regional Council and World Wildlife Fund. Applications are pending with the Tenn. Dept. of Environment and Conservation and the Vulcan Foundation. Badly Needed: additional member support.

Leadership 2007-2008

Officers:

President: Jim Barden
Vice President: Randle Branch
Secretary: Gib Backlund
Treasurer: Mayo Taylor

Directors:

Richard Baines
Beth Chesson
Toby Francis
Bob Higman
Greg Upham

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