

SW PA Water Network Vision/Purpose/Goals - February 2021 Version

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| <p>1) Genesis of this particular effort</p> | <p>In late 2018, Heinz Endowments asked the Water Center at Penn to work with local stakeholders to explore challenges and opportunities related to the Three River Watershed Regions.</p> <p>This very broad remit allowed the Water Center to talk to many people, review many reports and prior efforts, and based on that, make a range of recommendations for a path forward.</p> |
| <p>2) The challenges we are trying to address</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There is a clear need for significant investment to address Southwestern Pennsylvania’s many water related challenges. ● Identified water challenges include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Water quality (e.g. legacy pollutants, acid mine drainage, emerging contaminants, fracking waste management, contaminated groundwater, lead, wastewater challenges, source water protection), ○ Water quantity (e.g flooding, combined sewer overflows, basement back ups, landslides, climate change impacts) ○ Water affordability ○ Water accessibility (e.g. inclusive of access to recreational opportunities) ● Progress in confronting these challenges is hampered by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The region’s rich legacy of local governance resulting in significant decision-making fragmentation ○ The absence of a regional entity mandated to lead on integrated water resource management ○ Insufficient political engagement/interest in integrated water management ○ Fragmented and siloed water systems ○ Perceived conflicts between economic, social and environmental goals for the region ○ Insufficient investment in water related public education (including K-12) ○ Lack of comprehensive, watershed-wide long term monitoring ○ Perceived weak regulatory and policy oversight ○ Insufficient attention to water-related environmental justice concerns ○ Inadequate mechanisms for sharing the wealth of institutional knowledge of the existing water sector workforce with future water leaders. This relates to a need for succession planning. |
| <p>3) Regional assets</p> | <p>The region is well positioned to tackle many of these challenges thanks to a solid foundation of assets that include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Building on the significant progress that has already been made over the past decades to improve water quality. ● A highly energized, diverse and passionate group of stakeholders working on all aspects of water all across the region, whose efforts are |

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| | <p>highly amenable to scaling and leveraging.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recent regulatory updates to the Water Infrastructure Improvement Act that codifies the concept of integrated planning and green infrastructure and optimizes municipalities' abilities to develop flexible, affordable and adaptable programs. ● Growing recognition of the centrality of 'equity' considerations in developing and implementing water resource management strategies. |
| <p>4) Recommended approach</p> | <p>Support the building of trust between diverse water stakeholders across the region in order to develop a shared, long term regional vision and plan for integrated water resource management. <i>Facilitating the development of a regional water network is the centerpiece of this effort.</i></p> |

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| <p>5) Network Vision</p> | <p>Current Vision Statement: Southwestern Pennsylvania water resources are sustainably, equitably and collaboratively managed to protect public health and the environment, enhance community and system resilience, and deliver economic, ecological and social benefits for all people of the region.</p> <p><i>Good vision statements are future-oriented, and generally describe the improved state that the particular effort/project aspires to contribute to. Generally not something that any one organization or project alone can achieve.</i></p> |
| <p>6) Network Purpose and Goals</p> | <p>Current Purpose Statement: The Southwestern Pennsylvania Water Network connects diverse water stakeholders to develop and pursue a shared vision and attract increased resources, for improved integrated water management.</p> <p>Proposed Goals:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Build a regional identity for the headwaters of the Ohio River Basin. 2. Create a safe, open and productive space for all regional water stakeholders to share water challenges and solutions, highlight and socialize good practices, listen to diverse and historically underrepresented perspectives and identify common ground on contentious issues. 3. Create formal and informal forums and working groups to inform, leverage and amplify existing and future efforts, develop and implement a regional vision, and attract additional resources. 4. Be a central hub that connects people to water focused education, knowledge and resources, and that creates and maintains mechanisms for improved information and data sharing to support science-based decision making, prioritization of efforts, and shaping of the public narrative. |

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| | <p><i>Purpose/Mission statements are more concrete, present-day oriented, describing what the organization/project will do on a daily basis in pursuit of the vision. Goals are even more concrete and specific.</i></p> |
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| <p>7) Network people</p> | <p>There is consensus around the fact that this network should be co-created and implemented by a broad base of stakeholders including (and not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Government (federal, regional, county, municipal), ● Environmental NGOs, ● Watershed groups, ● Community groups, economic development groups, ● Water recreational advocates, ● Academia/thought leaders, ● Agricultural/farming representatives, ● Elected officials, ● Private sector/industry representatives, ● Water utilities, and ● Environmental justice advocates. <p>Important note on geographic coverage of this network:</p> <p>There is strong consensus around the value and importance of expanding an eventual regional water network to include all Ohio River Watershed headwater stakeholders. This would be consistent with one of the network goals of creating an Ohio River Watershed Headwater's Identity.</p> <p>The question now is more about the pace of this expansion, keeping in mind the need to continue the momentum around getting a network launched, building on all the work and inputs to date, understanding the interests/views of the current funder of this work and taking into consideration the capacity of the process facilitator and strategic WG members to undertake targeted outreach to stakeholders in another 15+ counties.</p> <p>Given this, the consensus of working group members is to continue moving the current process along, but opportunistically engage stakeholders in other headwater communities. For example, such stakeholders would be encouraged to attend a set of 'all network engagement meetings' planned for April/May 2021 (details forthcoming). Over time and as capacity allows, this more opportunistic approach can be replaced with more deliberate outreach.</p> |
| <p>8) Key stakeholder input points up to Feb 2021</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Interviews with more than 45 people for phase 1 study, in addition to having consulted range of previous studies/reports ● December 2019 day-long workshop involving 20 organizations ● 2 sets (3 meetings per set) of May 2020 stakeholder virtual meetings with over 65 participating organizations ● Bi-weekly network strategic working group meetings from Aug 20-Apr |

21, involving 22 organizations

- Stakeholder survey on vision/purpose/goals viewed by over 250 people and completed by 45
- Extensive one-on-one or small group stakeholder outreach undertaken by strategic working group members
- Monthly project newsletter to over 400 people in the region