### Origin of the SW PA Water Network

In late 2018, Heinz Endowments funded an initiative to work with local stakeholders in exploring challenges and opportunities related to the Three Rivers Watershed Regions.

This very broad remit focused on talking to many people from a variety of sectors, reviewing many reports and prior efforts, and based on that, making a range of recommendations for a path forward.

### Context for the SW PA Water Network development process

A network approach is being taken to form the SW PA Water Network, progressing through the following areas:

- People - those who are involved in these efforts
- Purpose - establishing a guiding vision and goals for the network
- Process - who guides and who decides within this network

In line with the second point - Purpose - the Strategic Working Group and the broader group of leaders in the SW PA Water Network recently developed a [Vision/Purpose/Goals guiding document](#) in 2021, detailing the ideal direction for the future network.

This document focuses on the final point - Process - in outlining a proposed leadership structure for the SW PA Water Network. A recommendation for the leadership structure of the network is being developed to help support these recently developed vision, purpose, and goals.

### Leadership framed within a network mindset

Within a network mindset there is an emphasis on co-creating a vision which evolves based on who is involved. Priorities, roadmaps and end points are not finite and have space to change over time. That said, decisions are made collectively with distributed leadership rather than a hierarchical structure.

### Overview of leadership roles within the network

Some roles within the SW PA Water Network can include, but are not limited to:

- **Strategic Working Group.** A group of 12-20 leaders from a broad range of backgrounds and demographics who help co-create the vision for the larger network, soliciting and organizing feedback and input from the broader group of leaders for decision-making.

- **Broader group of leaders.** An unlimited number of individuals participating in the water network. Involvement is flexible and can include participating with all-network meetings, or helping organize peer-led initiatives.

- **Coordinator.** A servant-leader position that supports the Strategic Working Group and broader group of leaders in pursuing the network’s vision, purpose, and goals.
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<tr>
<th>General description</th>
<th>Expectations</th>
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| ● Made up of 12-20 individuals  
● Minimum commitment of two years, with some variety across members to ensure transfer of knowledge with turnover  
● Selected through a nomination, or self-nomination process (see next section)  
● Representative of different backgrounds and demographics, with experience from a broad array of the following stakeholder categories, such as:  
  ○ Academia/research institutes/thought leaders  
  ○ Agricultural/farming representatives  
  ○ Community groups/advocates  
  ○ Conservation districts  
  ○ Elected officials  
  ○ Environmental justice advocates  
  ○ Non-profit organizations  
  ○ Government (federal, state, regional, county, municipal)  
  ○ Private sector/industry representatives  
  ○ Professional organizations  
  ○ Water and wastewater utilities  
  ○ Watershed groups | Desired Outcome – Use the recommendations created by the Strategic Working Group, based on feedback from the broader group of water leaders, to continue to support the strategies and approaches that will best sustain or even accelerate the vision of the SW PA Water Network. |

**VISION STATEMENT**
Southwestern Pennsylvanians 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.

**Role** – Support the Strategic Working Group in its strategic work, including considering changes to the Network’s theory of change, purpose and goals, and long-term trajectory. Support engagement with important entities in the Three Rivers watershed (collaborative coalitions, government agencies, utilities and business, and others) who want to better connect and align with the work of the SW PA Water Network.

**Posture** – Acting for the benefit of the SW PA Water Network’s vision to create a safe space for collaboration, not for self-interest or organizational interests. Bringing your own unique expertise and
background to the discussions on the Strategic Working Group, understanding and believing that a stronger water network brings a greater value to each of its members.

**Tenure/Commitment** – A 2-3 year time of service, beginning in August 2021; Roughly 75-100 hours per year needed to participate in Strategic Working Group meetings and SW PA all-network meetings.

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<th>Eligibility + characteristics</th>
<th>Eligibility</th>
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<td>● Local - working (not necessarily based) within the Southwestern Pennsylvania region</td>
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<td>● Engaged with work that intersects with water-related issues</td>
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<td>● Capacity to actively fulfill the characteristics of the Strategic Working Group members (see below)</td>
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**Ideal Characteristics of Participants** –

- Action-oriented, big picture thinkers – ability to think strategically and/or beyond their own perspective, ability to experiment & take action, motivated to learn
- Collaborates well with others – good listening, thinking, capacity to work well with others in a team
- Highly regarded by peers
- Knowledgeable in core strategy subject areas and curious to learn about all aspects of the work work and strategies within the SW PA Water Network
- Will elevate the efforts to increase the scale and sustainability of the SW PA Water Network’s impact above seeking to represent the interests of their organization or personal motivations

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<th>Selection criteria</th>
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<td>In the selection process, the task force will review nominations with the intention of finding individuals that reflect a balance of the general description of the Strategic Working Group (see section above), including:</td>
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<td>● Geographic representation across the Southwestern Pennsylvania region</td>
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<td>● Perspectives from a wide variety of life experiences and awarenesses</td>
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<td>● Experience with the strategic tools and expertise used within the SW PA Water Network – strategic targeting, land conservation, restoration, stewardship, stormwater management, scientific rigor and data, and collaboration</td>
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<td>● Professional and career experiences</td>
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<td>● A demographic representation reflective of what comprises the Southwestern Pennsylvania region (e.g. rural, urban, sectoral, racial, gender-based, etc.)</td>
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<td>● People who can help create a culture of open mindedness, a willingness to learn from others, embrace different perspectives,</td>
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and center the priorities of the network in their position as a member.

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<th>Nomination process + timeline</th>
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<td>● Encourage all who are interested to nominate themselves or other leaders using this simple form to express their interest in serving. It is especially encouraged to nominate people from diverse geographical areas and different relationships to the water sector.</td>
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<td>● An independent task group will choose leaders based on the defined criteria. Those who have submitted nominations will not participate in the selection process to ensure transparency and fairness for the network.</td>
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<tr>
<td>● The selection process will identify 12-20 new SW PA Strategic Working Group members who bring a wide range of perspectives and create a group that provides a balanced representation of the geographies, people, and strategies in the region. Flexibility with the number of Strategic Working Group members allows for ensuring representation of the group.</td>
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**Timeline:**
- June 25 - Open invitation for nominations
- July 9 - Nominations due
- July 19 - Selection by a 3-4 person task group to review nominations
- July 28 - Strategic Working Group selections announced
- August 4 - First Strategic Working group meeting