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Spring Creek Watershed Action Plan Update from David Roberts

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Nittany Valley Environmental Coalition

State College, PA, United States

Aug 28, 2018 —

David Roberts, Chair of the Nittany Valley Environmental Coalition Working Group for the Spring Creek Watershed Action Plan, attended the first meeting of a **new technical work group** established by the Spring Creek Watershed Commission, on Thursday, August 23.

Links to David Roberts' meeting notes, SCWC meeting notes, a participants list, and project funding data are at the NVEC post:

<http://nittanyvalley-eco.org/index.php/2018/08/28/spring-creek-watershed-action-plan-scwap-update-from-david-roberts/>

Key excerpts from David Roberts' report:

The overall goal is for Restoration, Protection, and Sustainable Usage of the water in the Spring Creek Watershed through an “integrated, one-water plan.”

- Phase 1 was completed in 2003.
- The current project is Phase 2, focused on project identification and implementation. The timeframe for completion of Phase 2 is within months, not years.
- Phase 3 will be tracking new data and evaluating success of Phase 2 plan implementation.

Brief Overview of Spring Creek Watershed

The watershed includes Spring Creek, five major tributaries, and numerous smaller tributaries. The watershed covers an area of 146 square miles (approximately 43,000 acres) and touches 14 local municipalities.

Watershed population has increased rapidly since 2000, from 106,006 people to 130,748 as of 2017. Population data does not appear to include PSU University Park population.

Some streams are designated as high quality cold water fisheries.

Twenty-five (25) miles of streams and tributaries are classified as degraded and impaired including Slab Cabin Run and the main stem of Spring Creek, suffering impairments such as sedimentation and siltation; low dissolved oxygen levels; thermal modifications from agriculture, golf course, and stormwater runoff; heavy metals; organics; point source discharges; nitrogen; and total dissolved solids.

The Phase 1 Plan (completed in 2003) identified issues and concerns about the health of the watershed. Many of those same issues still remain.

NVEC requested current data on the amount of impervious surfaces in the watershed. Available estimates are a few years old and place impervious surfaces at approximately 15%. Other watershed studies have shown that over 10% impervious surfaces are deadly to native trout populations. The Spring Creek trout population persists due to the karst geological formations that provide cold water spring habitats.

Next Steps

At the technical work group meeting August 23, Janie French, Executive Director of Headwaters Charitable Trust and facilitator of the SCWAP Phase II project, presented an overview of the steps needed, including:

- Determining the current health status of the watershed
- Bringing together existing data and ideas in a useable format.
- Identifying and filling data gaps

The technical work groups will meet several more times in September and early October to collate available data, ahead of a **public outreach/public education meeting October 18.**

[Spring Creek Watershed Action Plan \(SCWAP\) Update from David Roberts](#)

[David Roberts, Chair of the Nittany Valley Environmental Coalition Working Group for the Spring Creek Watershed Action Plan, attended the first meeting of a new technical work...](#)
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