

7.0 PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

7.1 Plan Implementation Roles and Coordination/Responsibilities

Identification of responsible entities for implementation of Management Measure recommendations was first mentioned in the Action Plan section of this report. These entities are key stakeholders that will be responsible in some way for sharing the responsibility required to implement the watershed plan. However, no single stakeholder has the financial or technical resources to implement the plan alone. Rather, it will require working together and using the strengths of individual stakeholders to successfully implement this plan. Key stakeholders are listed in Table 41. Appendix E includes additional information about each stakeholder and possible roles.

There are several important first steps that Spring Creek Watershed partnership (SCW) will need to accomplish prior to plan implementation:

- 1) Meet with each applicable entity to encourage adoption of the Spring Creek Watershed-Based Plan.
- 2) Recruit “Champions” within each municipality and other stakeholder groups to assemble and form a Watershed Council (Plan Implementation Committee) that actively implements the Watershed-Based Plan and conducts progress evaluations.
- 3) Hire a Watershed Implementation Coordinator to follow through on plan implementation.

Table 41. Key Spring Creek Watershed Stakeholders/Partners.

Watershed Stakeholder/Partner	Acronym/Abbreviation
Audubon-Chicago Region	Audubon
Barrington Area Council of Governments	BACOG
Barrington Hills Conservation Trust	BHCT
Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning	CMAP
Citizens for Conservation	CFC
County	County
Ecological Consultants	Consultant
Forest Preserve District of Cook & Kane County	FPDCC & FPDKC
Fox River Ecosystem Partnership	FREP
Friends of Spring Creek Forest Preserves	Friends of Spring Creek
Illinois, Kane, Lake, McHenry, and Cook County Dept. of Transportation	DOTs
Illinois Environmental Protection Agency	Illinois EPA
Illinois Nature Preserves Commission	INPC
Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago	MWRD
Municipalities	Municipality
Natural Resource Conservation Service (Kane, Lake, McHenry, and Cook County)	SWCD/NRCS
Residents or Owner	Residents/ Owner
Riding Club of Barrington Hills	RCBH
Spring Creek Watershed partnership	SCW
Townships	TWP
US Army Corps of Engineers	USACE
US Fish & Wildlife Service	USFWS

7.2 Implementation Schedule

The development of an implementation schedule is important in the watershed planning process because it provides a time frame for when each recommended Management Measure should be implemented in relation to others. Critical Area and High priority projects are generally scheduled for implementation in the short term. A schedule also helps organize project implementation evenly over a given time period, allowing time for developing funding sources and opportunities.

For this plan, each site specific Management Measure recommendation located in the Site Specific Action Plan contains a column with a recommended implementation schedule based on short term (1-5 years), medium term (5-10 years), and long term (10+ years) objectives that generally relate to the implementation priority (i.e. Critical Area/high priority = 1-5 years, medium priority = 5-10, low priority = 10+ years). Other recommendations that involve maintenance have ongoing schedules. However, some projects that are high priority could be recommended for long term implementation based on selected practices, available funds, technical assistance needs, and time frame.

7.3 Funding Sources

Opportunities to secure funds for watershed improvement projects are widespread due to the variety and diversity of Management Measure recommendations found in the Action Plan. Public and private organizations that administer various conservation and environmental programs are often eager to form partnerships and leverage funds for land preservation, restoration, and environmental education. In this way, funds invested by partners in the Spring Creek watershed can be doubled or tripled, although actual dollar amounts are difficult to measure. A list of potential funding programs and opportunities is included in Appendix F. The list was developed by Applied Ecological Services, Inc. (AES) through involvement in other watershed and biodiversity studies.

Funds generally fall into two relatively distinct categories. The first includes existing grant programs, funded by a public agency or by other sources. These funds are granted following an application process. The Division of Wildlife Resources Special Funds program is an example: an applicant will submit a grant application to the program, and, if the proposed project meets the required criteria and if the funds appropriated have not been exhausted, a grant will be awarded.

A challenge with developing funds from several state and federal grant programs is the lag time between application and award of the grant. A granting system where a “pot” of funding is applied for and allocated to the watershed over a 2+year period to implement projects recommended by the watershed plan should be developed for Spring Creek watershed. Projects are proposed, reviewed and recommended to Illinois EPA by Spring Creek Watershed partnership or Watershed Implementation Coordinator Creek several times a year. This process takes a matter of a few months rather than the typical year for projects submitted through the regular annual Section 319 grant program.

The second category, one that can provide greater leverage, might be called “money to be found.” The key to this money is to recognize that any given project may have multiple benefits. A good example might include road improvement projects. The DOT’s goal will be to widen or extend a road but this work may be recognized by a partner organization as an opportunity to provide other benefits such as water quality improvement, flood reduction, or habitat improvement at nearby

parcels. It is important to note and explore all of the potential project benefits from the perspective of potential partners and to then engage those partners. Partners may wish to become involved because they believe the project will achieve their objectives, even if they have little interest in the specific objectives of the Watershed Plan.

It is not uncommon for an exciting and innovative project to attract funds that can be allocated at the discretion of project partners. When representatives of interested organizations gather to talk about a proposed project, they are often willing to commit discretionary funds simply because the proposed project is attractive, is a priority for the agency, is a networking opportunity, or will help the agency achieve its mission. In this way, a new partnership is assembled.

Leveraging and Partnerships

It is critically important to recognize that no one program has been identified that will simply match the overall investment of the Spring Creek watershed partners in implementing the Watershed-based Plan. Rather, partnerships are most likely to be developed in the context of individual and specific land preservation, restoration, or education projects that are recommended in the Plan. Partners attracted to one acquisition may not have an interest in another located elsewhere for jurisdictional, programmatic, or fiscal reasons.

Almost any land or water conservation project ultimately requires the support of those who live nearby if it is to be successful over the long run. Local neighborhood associations, homeowner associations, and similar groups interested in protecting water resources, open space, preventing sprawl or protecting wildlife habitat and scenic vistas, make the best partners for specific projects. Those organizations ought to be contacted in the context of specific individual projects.

It is equally important to note that the development of partnerships that will leverage funding or goodwill can be, and typically is, a time-consuming process. In many cases, it takes more time and effort to develop partnerships that will leverage support for a project than it does to negotiate with the landowners for use or acquisition of the property. Each protection or restoration project will be different; each will raise different ecological, political and financial issues, and each will in all likelihood attract different partners. It is also likely that the process will not be fully replicable. That is, each jurisdiction or partner will have a different process and different requirements.

In short, a key task in leveraging additional funds is to assign responsibility to specific staff for developing relationships with individual agencies and organizations, recognizing that the funding opportunities might not be readily apparent. With some exceptions, it will not be adequate simply to write a proposal or submit an application; more often, funding will follow a concerted effort to seek out and engage specific partners for specific projects, fitting those projects to the interests of the agencies and organizations. Successful partnerships are almost always the result of one or two enthusiastic individuals or “champions” who believe that engagement in this process is in the interests of their agency. There is an old adage in private fundraising: people give to other people, not to causes. The same thing is true with partnerships using public funds.

Partnerships are also possible, and probably necessary, that will leverage assets other than money. By entering into partnerships with some agencies, organizations, or even neighborhood groups, a stakeholder will leverage valuable goodwill, and relationships that have the potential to lead to funds and other support, including political support, from secondary sources.