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- Ben Miller
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July 29, 2017

Statement of importance of the Swatara Creek to our Community

The 72-mile-long Swatara Creek is an **historic navigable waterway** explored by Conrad Weiser and William Penn as early as the 1690s, and played an important role in commerce by moving timber and coal to market. Further, the Swatara supplied food such as American eels, salmon, trout, and bass to early settlers. Also, the Union Canal paralleled much of the Swatara Creek.

Today, the Swatara Creek is **part of a national and statewide water trail system**, providing outdoor recreation and wellness activities for canoeing and kayaking the 60-mile segment from Pine Grove in Schuylkill County to Middletown in Dauphin County where it connects to both the Susquehanna River and Captain John Smith Water Trails. Approximately every seven miles, the Swatara Creek has a public access, which also accommodates first responder search and rescue efforts.

Further, **three water companies**—United Water, Pennsylvania American Water, and the Lebanon Water Authority draw drinking water for several hundred thousand residents of the Swatara Watershed.

Next, **farmers and businesses** rely upon water from the Swatara Creek for day-to-day operations and manufacturing processes. Two notable examples are The Hershey Company and Swiss Premium Dairy.

Moreover, the constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania guarantees the right of its citizens to have clean water. In the interest of health and public safety, municipalities are charged with providing that clean water.

Therefore, to maintain the integrity of the Swatara Creek, municipalities have wisely created **conservation areas** and riparian buffers, which help to protect the Swatara Creek as a valuable asset. These areas function to control erosion, provide areas for wildlife, and cool the Swatara Creek's waters during their ultimate journey to the Chesapeake Bay.

Together, our citizens, elected leaders, farmers, and business owners share in the responsibility for protecting the Swatara Creek for this and future generations.

Sincerely,
Swatara Watershed Association

Jo Ellen Litz, president