

Addressing Community's Water Quality Needs

Workshop Exercise

This is an interactive exercise that allows participants to share their experiences and opinions on how to customize funding strategies in a way that maximizes results.

***Instructions:** Participants have been assigned to small groups of 3-4 participants. Each group will be assigned one of the following communities to study. The groups will use the very limited information below to identify potential funding options and partnerships. Each group will have 20 minutes to review the community information and answer the discussion questions listed after the community descriptions. Please identify a note taker and "spokesperson" for each of the groups. After 20 minutes, the whole class will reconvene to discuss and share findings.*

1. Little Whinging, GA

Little Whinging in Surrey County currently has about 800 residents. But, that may be about to change! The town is located about 30 minutes from Atlanta. In recent years, it has become a bedroom community for the big city, where most of Little Whinging's residents commute to the city daily. The only significant commercial entity that calls this town home is "Weasleys' Bait and Tackle Shop." There is also a private high school in Whinging which receives students from all across the county.

The town developed among the many poplar trees on the banks of the Blue River. Though most of the poplars are now gone, the town still feels very connected to the river. In fact, the site where the river flows through the old mill is the hub of civic activity in the town.

Little Whinging's proximity to the city is causing a lot of growth recently, with developers clearing large tracks of land to build new subdivisions. The town has an energetic and dedicated City Manager, and a City Council that takes its duties very seriously. Many council members have lived in the community for their whole lives and have noticed negative changes in the Blue River. They recently learnt about the issue of stormwater management. The idea of setting up a stormwater utility and having a predictable funding stream dedicated to the health of their beloved river is very appealing to the Council. In fact, the Council has charged the Manager with investigating the steps involved in establishing a stormwater utility for the Town. The Manager has approached you for advice on developing a utility and protecting the town's water quality in general.

2. Hogsmeade, NC

Despite its name, there are actually few hogs in this town! The town is located on the fringe of a very dense, old forest. The forest is home to the famous, but highly

endangered, species of Whomping Willow tree. In fact, there is a growing number of tourists who come to Hogsmeade every year to see these trees.

Some Hogsmeade citizens are very concerned about the rate of removal of the forest and how it affects water quality in the community. One concerned citizen who owns land on the very edge of the forest and has a deep concern for the forest's wild creatures, has been particularly vocal. In fact, Mr. Hagrid often states that he is willing to somehow "donate" his property so that it reverts to forest. The municipality's leaders also want to balance the growth of their town with preserving their natural resources. They are therefore seeking funds to develop a green infrastructure plan. This type of plan has cost similar communities about \$100,000 to develop.

Hogsmeade is a fairly affluent community and its average household income makes it ineligible for most major public water funding assistance. However, the local Council of Government organization has informed the town that it may qualify for funds from the state's Clean Water Management Trust Fund in the amount of about \$40,000.

Hogsmeade is now faced with the question of how it can generate the rest of the money for this Plan. They are also adamant that the Plan should not end up sitting on a shelf unimplemented. (The town's "strategic plan" from 5 years ago has never been revisited after it was developed!) Therefore, they want upfront ideas on how they can realistically fund some of the land acquisition etc. that will undoubtedly be called for in the Plan.

Group Discussion Questions:

- *What actions would you recommend to this community?*
- *Which of the funding tools that we have discussed during the workshop do you think hold the most promise in this community, and why?*
- *What are the potential drawbacks with the funding options that you have suggested above?*
- *Identify potential partners for this project?*