



HEADWATERS LLC GOOD WORK FLOWS DOWNSTREAM

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July 20, 2015

Trout Unlimited – National Office
1777 N. Kent Street, Suite 100
Arlington, VA 22209

RE: Support for the Nomination of the Spring Creek Chapter of Trout Unlimited for the National Chapter of the Year

Dear Review Team:

Please accept this correspondence as a strong recommendation in support of the nomination of the Spring Creek Chapter of Trout Unlimited for the “National Chapter of the Year” Gold Award.

I have worked in Central Pennsylvania in the environmental field for over 20 years, including with local organizations like ClearWater Conservancy, Penns Valley Conservation Association, and with Penn State’s Agriculture and Environment Center, a statewide Extension initiative. I am currently the principle and field liaison for Headwaters LLC, working under contract to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) and in support of NFWF’s Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund and Delaware River Restoration Fund. In this capacity, I’ve had the opportunity and pleasure of visiting and working with a number of local watershed restoration initiatives, helping grantees to evaluate their plans, approach, outcomes, and overall project performance. In some cases, these grantees are staffed and in others, they are directed and staffed by local volunteers who are committed to ensuring the health and resilience of local waters, fisheries, habitat, and overall community well-being.

In the case of the Spring Creek Chapter of Trout Unlimited, a 100% volunteer-led initiative, the commitment and continued eye towards maintaining and building capacity for protecting, conserving, and improving local streams has been, bar none, fait accompli. Their leadership and membership have continued to raise the bar across the Spring Watershed in respect to leveraging dollars, building partnerships, prioritizing and restoring key stream reaches, and educating the community on the value and importance of the local waters, habitat, and trout populations. To this end, NFWF has supported SCCTU’s restoration efforts through its competitive grants program, the Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund’s Small Watershed Grants initiative. SCCTU under promises and over delivers in the environmental outcomes that it pursues, which is a funder’s best case scenario for seeing public and private dollars well-invested and resulting in the highest return on investment for conservation work.

I've had the privilege of witnessing SCCTU restoration projects in action along the mainstem of Spring Creek and have been really impressed with the diversity of people (age, gender, social-economic backgrounds) that their hands-on events bring as volunteers and participants in their work. SCCTU has created a culture of collaboration for conservation that the entire community appreciates and values, increasing the numbers of people impacted by and personally vested in the conservation.

Without question, my interactions with TU chapters across PA, VA, MD, WV, and DE have been very positive, and the work these chapters have undertaken so critical to community's conservation and restoration potential. The SCCTU, however, is one that performs incredibly well – and has saturated the community in a manner that will ensure the protection and improvement of Spring Creek for many years to come. I hope that you will give the nomination of SCCTU as "Chapter of the Year" a highly favorable review.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Kristen Saacke Blunk". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kristen Saacke Blunk
Principle and Field Liaison
Headwaters LLC

Cc: Amanda Bassow, Director, NFWF, Eastern Partnership Office
Jake Reilly, Director, NFWF, Chesapeake Bay Program