



SUGARLOAF CITIZENS' ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER January 2014

"Protecting our rural legacy"

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DO WE NEED CLEAN DRINKING WATER?

Normally, we do not need to reflect on an answer to this question. We who live in the AgReserve use fresh and clean well water every day and how often do we think about our regional neighbors down-county? A grim reminder to all of us has been the West Virginia chemical spill that contaminated the drinking water for some 300,000 people and which made a journalist ask the question **"whether local communities have a firm grasp on potential threats to drinking water."**

So what is this to us? You may have read Sugarloaf's newsletters in the recent past on the importance of the Ten Mile Creek and the Little Seneca Reservoir that is an important backup drinking water supply for the down-county. We have mentioned that the Montgomery Planning Commission has neglected to carry out a scientific study of the pollution of Ten Mile Creek that would certainly result from the massive building projects proposed by several companies for the Clarksburg area.

The recommendations by the Planning Board have now been submitted to the County Council and a Council vote may come as early as February this year. The outcome is still uncertain (because it is an election year?) despite the testimony by a Coalition of 23 organizations and individual residents on the importance of preventing a degradation of Ten Mile Creek.

Recently, the County Executive has taken a step in the right direction to support efforts to save the drinking water supply. In a letter January 9, 2014 the County Executive wrote "protecting the environment is a priority of mine" and "I am committed to protecting Ten Mile Creek" and as a contribution in this sense he has decided not to build on two County properties which would reduce the impervious surface resulting from building and thus "protecting the environmental resources in this watershed."

The Coalition, including Sugarloaf Citizens Association, is urging the members of the County Council "to follow the Executive's example" which would include not approving the Planning Board's recommendations and thus forego development that would degrade Ten Mile Creek.

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