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Healthy ecology, healthy community

UpstreamPgh Announces Departure of Executive Director Brenda Smith
Search underway for next leader with transition planned for end of 2021

Pittsburgh, PA (*July 6, 2021*) – Today, the UpstreamPgh Board of Directors announces a planned succession process. Executive Director Brenda Lynn Smith will depart at the end of December 2021, after having led the organization for 14 years. A new Executive Director will be appointed by November 30, 2021, to lead the organization through its next phase of growth.

"During Brenda's tenure as Executive Director, she has not only led in stewarding the Nine Mile Run stream restoration and improving the watershed's water quality, but also expanded the impact of what UpstreamPgh could achieve. Leading the organization's efforts in advocacy, education, and outreach within the community and working towards environmental justice has underlined the absolute necessity of clean water for all," said Heather Dodson, UpstreamPgh Board President. "We are grateful for her visionary leadership and look forward to the next chapter for the organization."

Under Ms. Smith's leadership, UpstreamPgh has:

- Completed the grant-funded Rain Barrel Initiative, which installed 1,500 high-capacity rain barrels in the Nine Mile Run watershed between 2004 and 2011;
- Planted more than 900 street and park trees in the watershed, including 500 between 2010 and 2013 as the primary contractor for the Wilkinsburg TreeVitalize Project, a Rooted in Wilkinsburg initiative. Care was also provided for these trees during their two-year establishment period, resulting in a higher-than-average survival rate;
- Established the StormWorks fee-for-service program in 2011 to provide sustainable stormwater management solutions to property owners throughout Allegheny County while generating a stream of revenue for the organization;
- As a founding member of the Clean Rivers Campaign in 2011, advocated for a more sustainable approach to reducing sewer overflows in the region, resulting in $100 million for source reduction and green infrastructure being included in the Consent Decree signed by ALCOSAN in 2019;
- As a founding member of the Our Water Campaign, advocated for and won the creation of customer assistance programs at both ALCOSAN and PWSA, a moratorium on winter water shutoffs at PWSA, and the creation of a lead-line replacement program at PWSA that replaces the full line at no cost to the homeowner;

- Demonstrated the effectiveness of large-scale green stormwater infrastructure through the Rosedale Runoff Reduction Program and related projects;
- Rebranded the Nine Mile Run Watershed Association and its affiliated StormWorks program as UpstreamPgh in May 2021.

All these activities combined have contributed to UpstreamPgh's emergence as a leader in the critical local, regional, and national conversations about sustainable stormwater management and urban environmental restoration.

UpstreamPgh is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year. Since its inception in 2001 as the Nine Mile Run Watershed Association, The Heinz Endowments have provided consistent and generous grant support to the organization. Asked about Ms. Smith's tenure as Executive Director, Matthew Barron, Senior Program Officer at The Heinz Endowments said, "Brenda's passionate but humble leadership has helped to transform the Nine Mile Run Watershed and the communities that are part of it and improved the lives of countless residents in the watershed and beyond. While there is much work still to be done, Brenda has left an indelible mark on our region."

Consistent support has also been provided by the Richard King Mellon Foundation, Laurel Foundation, the Henry C. Frick Educational Fund of the Buhl Foundation, several donor-advised funds of The Pittsburgh Foundation, and many others.

The Executive Director position is posted at UpstreamPgh.org/job-announcements. Applications are being accepted on a rolling basis, but must be received no later than August 31, 2021.

Post-departure, Ms. Smith plans to do project management on a contracted basis, as well as pursue a long-standing interest in voice-over work.

About UpstreamPgh

MISSION
UpstreamPgh restores and protects our watershed ecosystem, while working regionally to support and implement resilient solutions for a healthy urban environment.

VISION
UpstreamPgh envisions a region with clean water accessible to all, healthy and resilient communities, and ecosystems restored to their natural functions.

More at UpstreamPgh.org

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