

2<sup>nd</sup> Place Middle Division

GA FPSP 2008-2009

Sparkle the Springs

Gordon Lee Middle School

Chickamauga, GA

Georgia FPSP

## Area of Concern

Crawfish Springs has been an important part of Chickamauga's history for over two hundred years. It was the main water supply for early settlements and the city in the 1900's. Today the springs serves as a place for local teenagers to congregate with friends and relax, among other things. Crawfish Springs is one of Chickamauga's major tourist attractions; however, the condition of the Springs is slowly declining due to the ill treatment by the citizens of the town.

The two gazebos located at the Springs have been vandalized by teenagers who live in the city. Crude remarks, couple's initials and phone numbers have all been found written in Sharpie on the wood. These comments are found disturbing by the tourists and several adults in the community. Not only are there profanities written but the gazebos, as well as the wooden trash cans and the railroad tracks, have also been torn apart by the youth of the city. This will surely lower the number of tourists that are attracted to the Springs.

If you take a walk down to the Springs you will more than likely come across countless empty bottles of alcohol. Distressing to say, these are left by children in the community. Students have several rather convenient ways of acquiring alcohol that need to be blocked pronto. There are also several containers of dip that will be found during a stroll through the Springs that are also left by the youth of this community. These students get the dip through older sources and that needs to stop as well. Apart from the beer bottles and tobacco containers you will find food wrappers, soft drink cans, and occasionally a sock or shoe. There are trash cans present but they are in terrible condition and apparently unnoticed by the visitors to the Springs.

Some people may have once found that sitting at the gazebos located near the water and just relaxing was pleasant. However, now if you look in the water you will spot a shopping cart, construction barrel, and several other things carelessly thrown into the Spring. These items are potentially dangerous to the wildlife living in the Springs and not exactly what you would like to see just thrown out in the middle of the water.

The fact that these offences have been occurring for several years and no action has been taken to put a stop to them is almost as disturbing as the fact that they are happening. The absence of proper supervision is one of the main setbacks in this situation because these problems won't just go away. These actions only further worsen the condition of the Springs making it not so much an addition to our community's beauty as it is an impediment.

## Challenges Identified

### 1. What causes the problems?

- Lack of supervision of teenagers who visit the springs.
- Lack of exposure in certain areas makes it hard to see what people are doing.
- Makes teenagers feel hidden, therefore, they do as they please.

### 2. What are related concerns?

- The bad behavior of teenagers makes an unsafe and unpleasant environment.
- While intoxicated the kids can cause danger to themselves or others.
- The Springs being an unpleasant place can decrease the amount of tourism brought to our city.

### 3. What challenges may arise from trying to address problems?

- It costs money to fix the problem and unfortunately, and our small 8<sup>th</sup> grade gifted class has a limited budget.

- Disagreement and anger among the people who partake in the unlawful acts of rebellious teenagers may be directed towards those trying to solve the problem.

#### 4. What are the different perspectives?

- The participants that take place in these unlawful activities think that it is their choice and they are free to do whatever they choose.
- The people who know about then unlawful problems but don't care think that it's not their responsibility to fix the participants' problem.
- The people who know about the problem and try to help think it's irresponsible for the teenagers to do the things that they do because, it's harmful to themselves, others, and the city.
- The people who don't know are oblivious to the problem and situation because they are not informed about the problem.

### **Underlying Problem**

At Crawfish Springs Amphitheater and park, the litter, water pollution, and vandalism are building up and becoming serious health hazards to the citizens and visitors of Chickamauga, Georgia. How can the Springs' appearance, image, and usage be improved in order to create a safe, healthy, environment for humans and wildlife?

### **Alternate Solutions**

1. Gazebos
  - Remove or cover graffiti
2. Landscaping
  - Clean off big rocks that are slippery with leaves
  - Flowers could be planted
  - Trim trees so area is more visible from street
  - Clean up dead trees
3. Water
  - Get shopping cart and construction barrel out
4. Litter
  - Fines for littering
  - Recycling bins needed
  - Need more trash cans in better locations
5. Fences
  - Repair holes
  - Fence off the Springs properly
6. Law Enforcement
  - Talk to police officers about patrolling
  - Talk to police chief and Mayor about adding surveillance cameras
  - "sting" operation on local merchants
7. Signs
  - "Do not litter" and "Recycle" signs

## 8. Fundraisers

- Pancake Breakfast at Melon Patch
  - Tickets
  - Tip jars
- Donation Boxes at local Restaurants

## 9. Sparkle the Springs Day

- a. Concert
- b. Bake Sale and Barbeque

## 10. Public Relations

- Article for Walker County Messenger
- Article for Chattanooga newspaper
- News coverage on local TV
- City Council Meeting
- School Board Meeting

### *Criteria used to evaluate possible solutions:*

1. Which solution will best improve the condition of Crawfish Springs?
2. Which solution would best include the community?
3. Which solution will have the longest lasting impact on Crawfish Springs?
4. Which solution will give the Springs a new, and better reputation throughout the community?

## **Plan of Action**

In our town of Chickamauga, Georgia, Crawfish Springs has become a place where teenagers go to have violent confrontations, underage drinking, do drugs, vandalize, and other unlawful activities. We plan to prevent these actions by having many adult figures monitor the springs, because we assume the teens will be slower to do wrong when authority is watching.

Much damage has been done to the springs, for instance, the gazebos have profound language written on them, litter is spread all over the area, fences are broken, along with trashcans, and many trees have fallen. All this together adds up to one thing, a monstrous problem. After considering many ideas and solutions, we've decided that the one that would best improve the Springs is a "Sparkle Day."

We are planning to have our "Sparkle the Springs Day" on a day that is convenient for peers and adults to come, along with our classroom team. With the help of the others, the task should be completed faster, and we believe that, with our community we can accomplish our goal. Also, if people work hard to clean up the Springs, they will think twice about littering and vandalizing. To have "Sparkle the Springs Day" we knew that we would need money.

To raise money, we considered many different fundraisers. After exploring these options, we decided that we would organize a pancake breakfast at the Melon Patch, a local restaurant. Our class would be selling tickets for five dollars each that would permit people to two large pancakes, two sausages links, and a drink. We will volunteer at the Melon Patch to serve the costumers on that day. We are hoping to raise around \$300 to cover all of the expenses on "Sparkle the Springs Day" including cost for food, landscaping, gardening tools, trash cans/ recycling containers, and supplies for our concert.

"Sparkle the Springs Day" will be held on Friday, April 3. We chose this day because the middle school gets out at 11:30, so we will attract more students to the event. On "Sparkle the Springs Day" we plan to clean

up the area by getting rid of litter and on the ground and in the water, also we plan to stain the gazebos to get rid of the vandalism problem. We want to improve the Springs and give it a new reputation. The Springs will be a friendly place, where families can come and not be afraid of disrupting unlawful teenage activities.

## **Actions and Outcomes to Date**

### December

- Began brainstorming for different community problems.
- By doing a class vote we decided that the best choice for a community problem is Crawfish Springs.

### January

- The class split up into four different groups that each has to perform different tasks based on the members' best qualities.
- We discussed the challenges that may arise while we are trying to accomplish our goal of making the springs a more beautiful place.
- The class discussed the underlying problem and what we want the springs to look like when we are done. We also talked about the outcomes we hope to achieve.
- As a class we completed our final sentence for the underlying problem.

### February

- The groups had their first meeting, and they discussed their ideas within their groups.
- The public relations group went to the school and made an appointment to meet with our principal, Mr. Ashley.
- The class met with Mr. Ashley and talked about what we want to do at the springs. The public relations group also presented possible solutions.
- We went to Crawfish Springs and looked for more "issues" that deal with the springs.
- The class talked about a fundraiser, and we finally came to the conclusion that our best option would be to have a pancake breakfast at the Melon Patch. We also designed our tickets that we will be selling for the pancake breakfast.
- The class later found out that everything we do must be approved by the school board.
- We wrote a brief summary about our project and created a power point.
- The class presented our ideas to the school superintendant, Mrs. Day.

### March

- We began typing our report rough draft.
- Sara Clayton, Katie Barger, and Kassidy Blevins presented the Crawfish Springs problem to the entire school board, and got it approved.
- Pancake Breakfast (fundraiser)

### April

- Sparkle the Springs Day
- Evaluate our outcomes and archive materials for next year.

## **Team Organization**

All of these groups work together, interact and relate with each other to get everything organized and completed. They all create one big team. The committee groups are:

- **Public Relations Committee-** Public image of the class and they contact all the people that involve our project. The members are Landon O'Neal, Kassidy Blevins, Hunter Daugherty, and Shan Pace.

- **Publications Committee-** They help finalize all of our documents and type them. The members are Clare Thomas, Sara Clayton, Nick Cooley, and Caroline Hood.
- **Scrapbook Committee-** They make a scrapbook of all the events and things we have done throughout the project using pictures and write-ups. The members are Katie Barger, Kaleigh Witt, and Kaitie Hensley.
- **Service Committee-** They get ideas for fundraisers and help finalize all of our events. The members are Ashley Bankston, Lindsey Neal, Brandon Murphy, Alex Blaes, and Zach Burchfield.

## Resource Identification

Mr. Ashley- School Principal

Ms. Day- School System Superintendent

D. A. Jewell V. - Chairman of School Board

Grant Parrish- Vice Chairman of School Board

P. Chambers, B. Ellis, J. Landers – School Board

Ray Crowder- Mayor

William M. Askew III- Planning & Development

Steve Tarvin- Streets & Grounds

John Culpepper- Utilities Manager

Michael R. Haney- Chief of Police

Karen & Trey Deck- Co-owners of Melon Patch

Connie Ritchey- Manager of Melon Patch

## Accomplishments

During the four months that we have been working on this community issue, we have accomplished several tasks that will benefit us in our overall goal. Some of these tasks include getting permission from the school board, our principal, and the superintendent, plus members of the city board. Many of the people we've talked to and things we have done will greatly improve our chances of affecting the community in a positive way.

We have met with Mr. Ashley, our school's principal, to get permission for several different things. The things we have gotten permission for from him are to leave school campus for various reasons such as assessing the condition of the springs and setting up for "Sparkle the Springs Day." We have met with our superintendent Mrs. Day to discuss the issue and the outcome of our work. She said she would be there to support us in whatever we had to do for this project. We also had a few of our students go to a Chickamauga City Schools board meeting to get permission for fund raisers that we have prepared. Our students also went over the importance of the board's involvement in our project. City councilman, John Cullpepper, has agreed to provide the rakes and trash bags for our clean up day.

We have set up a day with a local restaurant to have a pancake breakfast to raise money for "Sparkle the Springs Day." We hope to raise at least \$300 for the supplies to restore the springs. We also hope to bring more tourists and help the Chickamauga Restoration Program. The Springs should become a family oriented environment where families can come, and actually feel safe. We are thinking about possibly making "Sparkle the Springs day" an annual event to keep the Springs looking clean and refreshed. Citizens will have a new outlook on The Springs and the city of Chickamauga when this project is over.

## Reflection on Outcomes

This was not just some school project we "had" to do. This was an opportunity to help make the community we live in and love a better place for everyone. Our underlying problem has been properly addressed and will be resolved in April. We have done a large amount of preparation for our initial fundraiser and "Sparkle the Springs Day" event and they are expected to run very smoothly. After four months of working

on this project, we have found new respect for the environment as well as certain authority figures in our community.

This was more than a project. It was something that made us feel better about ourselves and the condition of our local gathering place. We hope we will never be completely finished with this. We would love for it to be an annual event and grow larger each and every year. When the first “Sparkle the Springs Day” is over with, we can take pride in the fact that we helped make the Springs a more beautiful place.

Throughout this project, we have learned new strategies, such as helping. We have used teamwork and community involvement to solve even the biggest of our problems. We have discovered ways to prevent problems before they get started, and how to stop them quick. We all have learned lessons that will help us throughout our entire lives and that will make us more experienced than before.