

SCRIP Meeting Minutes
April 17, 2019

A SCRIP meeting was held on Wednesday, April 17, 2019 beginning at 10:34 AM at the Gander Outdoors in Richland. The meeting was attended by SCRIP Board Members Len Lichvar, Tom Clark, Joe Gorden, Jim Eckenrode, Adam Cotchen, Melissa Reckner, Karlice Makuchan, and John Dryzal.

The meeting was also attended by Jay Winter, Troy Williams, and Dan Sammarco of DEP; Chris Garbark of Conemaugh Valley Conservancy; Doug Beri, Jr. of Indiana County Conservation District; Phil Wilson of NRCS; Jim Moses of Somerset County Conservancy; Greg Shustrick of Somerset Conservation District; Jeff Sarver of Shade Creek Watershed Association; Daniel Ryan of PA Fish and Boat Commission; and Travis Tasker of Saint Francis University. Joan Hawke of Bedford Fine Art Gallery joined the meeting in progress.

Introductions were made.

Lichvar passed around a retirement card for Malcolm Crittenden.

Clark elaborated on the requested Letter of Support for a reforestation project on which SCRIP Board Members voted electronically. Reckner said of the seven board members who voted, all were in favor, so the motion passed.

Makuchan/Cotchen made a motion to approve the March meeting minutes. All in favor. Motion carried.

Eckenrode reported that SCRIP has \$1,708.89 in its checking account, \$6,054.78 in its PA Invest account; and \$10,449.47 in its Community Foundation account for a total of \$18,213.14. Makuchan/Reckner made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report. All in favor. Motion carried.

Lichvar would like the by-laws added to the website, which Reckner will ask SCRIP's webmaster to do.

Stonycreek River

Shustrick reported on the progress of the Oven Run rehabilitation. Site E is just about done. Site F is next and then two others after that. Wilson commented on the limestone test pits at Oven Run Site F to see how plugged it is. Lichvar said a meeting was held to discuss funding for Oven Run and some other work in the region.

Shustrick said there are streambank stabilization projects planned for South Fork of Bens Creek and Soap Hollow Run. Rock Tunnel will see some upgrades this year to manage the water level.

Paint Creek

Reckner reported that the Paint Creek Regional Watershed Association (PCRWA) and Mountain Laurel Trout Unlimited held its annual litter cleanup with 15 volunteers picking up 28 tires and 1.5 tons of trash from along 2.1 miles of roads in the Little Paint Creek watershed.

Shustrick said there was a litter cleanup along the South Fork of Bens Creek too.

Shade Creek

Sarver said the permit is still pending for SGL228. He said baffles will be returning to Swallow Farms and that, over winter, parts froze at the Cottage town treatment system, so they are evaluating that system.

Lichvar thanked DEP's representatives for coming and said there are concerns regarding the proposed Shade Creek Active Treatment System Plant. Sammarco stated that he understands the commitment SCRIP and its volunteers have to maintaining systems.

Sammarco said the Reitz #4 discharge, aka MD31, is a Sub-F permit point, and was a point of contention with Corsa Coal for iron, as DEP saw an increase in iron loading in 2018. Unless a permittee (Corsa) can clearly demonstrate something contributed to loading, they'd be liable for that discharge. Corsa hired John Foreman to do a study of the discharge and related sites, and he attributes the loading to high precipitation. Sammarco noted that is not a "free ticket" for compliance moving forward for the permittee and that DEP has yet to accept that finding. Sammarco had nothing to add to what was discussed at the last SCRIP meeting for the Title IV side of things.

Williams said the Sub F points from early 2000s establish a baseline for loading. The CRDP permit shows four categories to monitor, including iron. He's not sure the source of all the data used to establish the baseline. Monthly water quality data are reviewed quarterly. If tripped, sampling must be done weekly with results being above baseline or showing that the quality is coming back into baseline.

With MD31, iron tripped and brought the Foreman report, which states a precipitation driven event made the iron spike and they (Corsa and DEP) are waiting for the quality to return to the previous levels to come back into compliance.

Corsa's permit for this project expired in 2016. DEP is currently reviewing Corsa's permit renewal request now.

Winter said the Foreman report suggests increased infiltration from the Joelen (spelling?) and Hoffman strip mines contributed to increase flows and metals in the mine pool.

Clark said he and Dr. Bill Strosnider believe the report is flawed. Look at the iron. The Foreman report's Executive Summary says iron decreased slightly from 1988-present, but Clark

said you can't draw a linear trend line on data because its changing over time. Clark elaborated. In short, iron decreases with the natural decay of pyrite over time, but here, it's increasing. That's not normal. Also, Foreman's scale on his graphs is not practical for viewing data. The scale on the iron graph tops at 1000 mg/L, when the highest level of iron is 250 mg/L. Change can't be seen at that scale. Clark took the same data and capped the scale at 250 mg/L and shared copies of those graphs. Iron increased by 57%. Also, precipitation doesn't correlate with high iron. The Foreman report has no data for 2016, which had the most iron ever, but not the most precipitation.

Winter said the scale on one axis was of concern to him too. Foreman did it to keep scale the same with other metals, but that shouldn't be done, and it doesn't accurately show data. Winter said his information has a few data points for 2016 and show between 100-200 parts of iron.

Sammarco said he is open to other comments. Corsa's NPDES is under review now and it's not about forcing compliance or not. Clark, on behalf of SCRIP, said he just believes Foreman's summary is wrong and should not be the only factor in determining if the permit is renewed. Sammarco said BAMR looked at a subset of data that showed an iron increase; Foreman looked at a longer time series. Clark said iron levels should be reviewed pre and post permit. Data from the 1980s would not accurately show iron levels in the years closest to the permit approval. Clark will submit a report to SCRIP for review, which can then be shared with DEP. Williams said a pre/post review can't be done, as the Sub-chapter F permit was approved using the 1980s data and so Corsa's iron limit per day is within regulatory threshold. Clark pointed out that water quality shows pyritic decay to early 2000. Sammarco said the point is taken and reiterated that there is not a compliance issue at this time. Water quality data are reviewed every quarter. Sammarco said the time period to request a public meeting has passed, but DEP can host an informational meeting if necessary.

If DEP is shown compliance, SCRIP can't do anything. DEP can't force Corsa to do anything more than permit requires.

Ryan asked what drives the location of the borehole – their injection point. Winters said it must be outlined on the permit and contained within the permitted area. Ryan noted that if the injection point was relocated, the retention time of discharged water into the mine pool could be increased, allowing for more iron to settle in the mine pool. The increase in pH in the mine pool and MD31 discharge could be increasing iron precipitate in Dark Shade Creek. Williams explained the background of the mine pool injection.

Reprocessing coal could extend the life of this mine permit. The California office doesn't know if the Hoffman and Jardin Surface Mining Permits are related.

Corsa does have other options for sludge management. Prior to injection, they used sludge drying beds. The permit renewal includes asking Corsa to outline alternatives, as a backup. Once Corsa submits that information to DEP, it becomes public record, and SCRIP may obtain a copy of it from Williams.

Williams said there will be no formal action on the permit in the next few months, so SCRIP has

time to submit comments and/or data.

Lichvar said the economic driver that is clean water can't be forgotten. OSM told Lichvar the door is still open for Title IV funds, but not forever.

Center for Watershed Research and Service

Tasker said they dug test pits at Oven Run B to look at the system. A re-design may be in the works.

Cambria Somerset Authority

Lichvar said 48 fish habitat structures will be placed in the Que on May 10 at 9 AM at the Public Recreation Area. Berlin-Brothersvalley High School students are constructing them at the school, but block will need added at the Launch. Volunteers welcomed. More structures will be placed on August 15 at 5 PM at the same location.

Little Conemaugh River

Dryzal said several appliance and tire collections are planned through Keep PA Beautiful. Check the District's new website for details: www.cambriaconservationdistrict.org.

Education Committee

Makuchan said June 7 is the deadline for the next newsletter. Send items to her at karlice@atlanticbb.net. The next three issues will state that SCRIP is going to an electronic newsletter starting in 2020. If people want to receive a print version, their membership will be \$5.00 more a year to cover the costs of printing and mailing.

Johnstown Magazine did an article on natural resource conservation and the benefits it brings.

Event / Fundraising Committee

Gorden said we'll be partnering with PA Fish and Boat Commission to host an Intro to Kayak Fishing from 5-9 PM on July 23. When registration opens online, via the PFBC's website, he'll send out press releases to advertise the event. Some volunteers will be needed that evening, so save-the-date!

Kiski-Conemaugh Stream Team

Garbark said they could use volunteers to help with sampling. Contact him for details.

Website

Gorden said he doesn't have access to SCRIP's web stats anymore. Reckner asked the webmaster to make some updates with the minutes and newsletters.

Old Business

Lichvar reminded that there will be three public meetings in May at which the draft document that discusses the economic value of water in the Conemaugh, Loyalhanna, and Youghiogheny watersheds will be shared. More info about these meetings may be found at <https://www.keylogeconomics.com/laurel-highlands.html>.

SCRIP was invited to participate in the Rec the Alleghenies and Lift Johnstown Project Party, but no one is available to represent SCRIP.

New Business

Eckenrode/Makuchan made a motion that SCRIP donate \$100 to SAC for hosting our funds. Dryzal abstained from the vote. All others in favor. Motion passed.

Gorden recommends publishing Stream Team sites within SCRIP's focus area that need a volunteer to sample them in SCRIP's newsletter.

Next Meeting

SCRIP will host a meeting and picnic at Greenhouse Park on June 19 at 3 PM. Folks should bring some food or drink to share.

Dryzal said WPCAMR is coordinating a meeting with Senator Casey's staff at the end of April to discuss SMCRA reauthorization.

Hawk said the Scalp Level art project is still in the works. They are doing property owner searches.

A discussion followed on how to address the Reitz #4 situation.

The Meeting adjourned at 12:31 PM. Minutes by Reckner.