

The **November 15, 2017** meeting of the Stonycreek-Conemaugh River Improvement Project was called to order at 3:21 PM at Morris' Tavern in St. Michael by Len Lichvar, with Karlice Makuchan, Robb Piper, Melissa Reckner, James Eckenrode, Jr., Bill Strosnider, Adam Cotchen, and Larry Hutchinson present.

John Dryzel of the Cambria County Conservation District, Dave Steele of USDA, and Justin Goodlin of Shade Creek Watershed Association also joined the meeting.

Hutchinson/Cotchen made a motion to accept the September meeting minutes as submitted. All in favor. Motion carried.

Eckenrode reported that SCRIP has \$161.41 in its checking account, \$10,840.32 in its Community Foundation account, and \$7,719.45 in its PA Invest. Piper/Makuchan made motion to accept the Treasurer's Report. All in favor. Motion carried.

Reckner said that as of today SCRIP has 54 dues-paying members in 2017, which is SCRIP's average, and that 11 renewal reminders were sent out for the remainder of the year.

Stonycreek River

Lichvar reported that the planting along the North Fork Bens Creek was completed last week. Live stakes will be planted this month along the South Fork Bens Creek. A small, old dam on the South Fork Bens Creek, above the Ferndale Sportsmen's Club, may be removed; options are being explored.

The rehabilitation of Oven Run Site E is underway, and the design for Oven Run A is about 90% complete.

He said Saint Francis University presented a Mass Balance for Quemahoning Creek that will help plan future restoration projects.

Paint Creek

Reckner reported that Tom Clark will present the Red Eyes Feasibility Study results at the January Paint Creek Regional Watershed Association meeting and that they are kicking around a potential project for the extreme headwaters of Paint Creek.

Shade Creek

Hutchinson said Saint Francis University students were doing maintenance at the Reitz #1 site this fall. They also did some flow and chemical sampling. He said Dr. Lane Loya collected macroinvertebrates from five sites.

Hutchinson said Gahagen's water line was relocated. White Horse Excavating won the bid for construction of the SGL 228 limestone bed. DEP did grant SCWA a one-year extension on their Growing Greener grant.

Earlier this month, DEP and OSM officials toured the Dark Shade Creek watershed. OSM will be doing mine pool mapping on the Big 4 discharges. Strosnider said the DEP asked SFU to do some tests to determine the likelihood of co-treating sewage and AMD. Here, the volume of AMD is 20x more than the sewage. He suspects treatment is possible but that the regulatory authorities won't go for it.

Center for Watershed Research and Service

Strosnider said they are doing more intensive sampling on a similar issue with the Incline Plane discharge at Dornick Point. Here, the volume of sewage is 10x more than AMD.

He elaborated on the Que Creek Mass Balance and said they suspect the Boswell treatment system could retain more iron.

Strosnider said students will be presenting about the Reitz #1 system work at next year's ASMR Conference.

He said SFU is monitoring the Puritan discharge.

He said USGS, SFU, and St. Vincent College are collaborating on a Colcom-funded project to explore sewage and AMD treatment in Westmoreland County.

Strosnider said he'll be in France from January through June, but available by email. Morgan Whited and Julie LaBar are contacts in his place.

He said the SFU Environmental Engineering program does not have the number of students it would like, so send students their way.

Cambria Somerset Authority

Lichvar said some fish from the Somerset Lake salvage were put in the Quemahoning Reservoir and elsewhere. Bowfin and carp were "recycled."

Little Conemaugh River

Reckner heard the land agreement for the active system was signed and that the system should be constructed by 2022, but Cotchen said at the WPCAMR meeting, it was reported that DEP hit mine sludge on Seam E, which could muck up their plans. Reckner will ask DEP for clarification. Cresson is under construction. Dryzel said the District has some Quick Response work to complete on a few sites.

The following is an update provided after the SCRIP meeting by DEP's Dave Leiford.

Cresson AMD Treatment Plant Project AMD 11(2724)102.1 – the Vampire Road waterline replacement for 24 supplies has been completed. Sterilization and decontamination of the line is in process with the hook-ups to the residences and one business schedule to be completed in December. Construction of the collection system and pipeline conveyance for the Gallitzin Shaft

mine discharge has been initiated and will continue through December and January. Excavation for the main plant location on Cresson Shaft Road is nearly complete. Concrete work will begin in late winter/early spring. Construction for the project is still scheduled to be completed by January 2019.

Little Conemaugh AMD Treatment Plant Project AMD 11(0623,2473)101.1 – exploratory drilling for the first phase was completed on November 15th. Work included a monitoring well for the Hughes Mine Pool, two monitoring wells for the Sonman “E” mine pool and one monitoring well for the Sonman “B” mine pool. Additionally, geotechnical drilling was completed on a proposed treatment plant location which included shallow monitoring wells for the local water table. Coal fines from the Amfire Sonman Cleaning Plant were encountered on one of the Sonman “E” monitoring wells. A treatability test of coal fines from the Rosebud Cleaning Plant was performed in August which confirmed coal fines could be treated in the proposed treatment plant. A draw-down/pump-down test was performed on the Sonman “E” mine pool from the D13 Relief Borehole located near the Portage Sewage Treatment Plant for almost four days. The test confirmed connectivity between the Relief Borehole and the newly drilled Sonman “E” mine pool monitoring wells. The drawdown test also proved the Sonman “E” and “B” mines are communicating as pumping activity also caused a drawdown of the Sonman “B” mine pool. A meeting of the Technical Committee will be scheduled for late January/early February to discuss the results of the drilling and testing and provide recommendations for the Steering Committee on potential courses of action for construction of the treatment plant including the viability of the current preferred plant location.

Events

Makuchan said December 1 is the deadline for the newsletter.

Reckner said NatureWorks will be held March 3, 2018 from 10 – 2 at the Bottleworks. She said SCRIP will be invited to the event again. Makuchan/Cotchen made a motion to sponsor the event for \$100. All in favor. Reckner abstained. Motion carried. Reckner thanked the group.

Lichvar read the section about SCRIP in UPJ’s rebuttal to the Politico article. It’s nice water quality was mentioned as a positive to the region.

Lichvar reported that Joe Gorden is home and recovering.

Kiski-Conemaugh Stream Team

Reckner reported that the Stream Team just finished its fall sampling round, but continues to monitor some sites, especially in the Shade Creek watershed, monthly. She thanked those who reviewed the State of the Kiski document. She plans to have that done by the end of the year.

Makuchan/Hutchinson made a motion to sponsor two sites (Little Conemaugh at Johns Street and Stonycreek River in Riverside) through the Stream Team's Adopt-a-Site monitoring fundraiser. All in favor. Reckner abstained. Motion carried. Reckner thanked the group.

Website

Reckner said the website is up to date.

Mariner Sunoco Pipeline

Some areas are under construction, but some have been put on hold. Dryzel said they're re-evaluating sites before they do any more boring.

Old Business

Reckner reported that committees in the Vision 2025 Rivers Capture Team are still meeting to plan river-related events and increase signage for existing river access.

Piper said Bob Ritchey could host a SCRIP meeting at Laurelwood. SCRIP will explore this for its next meeting.

Cotchen said HB970 and SB567 regarding the noxious weeds list passed the house and senate.

Regarding the state budget, Eckenrode said the legislators have put it on the Governor to come up with \$300 million to fill the budget gap, so special funds could be raided yet. Cotchen said there was a transfer from Oil and Gas to the Environmental Stewardship fund.

The new noxious weed law could impact EQIP. Steele said USDA encourages eradication of invasive and noxious weeds, so if that's part of the plan, then applicants score higher. It could be an opportunity to host educational workshops.

Lichvar said there is now HB 1401 that proposes to adopt a severance fee in addition to the impact fee, but some legislators don't like that and are adding amendments that could take away the impact fee, which helps fund the conservation districts.

New Business

It seems there are two or three SCRIP board vacancies. Perhaps someone from a recreational organization would be interested.

Lichvar said he and Piper are helping with an environmental economic study spearheaded by the Laurel Highlands Conservation Landscape Initiative to show the benefits, in dollars, of environmental restoration and preservation. They hired a group out of Virginia to do it. There will be public meetings. It will include the Kiski-Conemaugh and Yough River Basins.

Eckenrode said the Southern Alleghenies Conservancy would like an annual donation for managing our financial accounts, which are audited through SAC. Plus there are costs to filing the 990. Piper made a motion to donate \$50 to SAC for 2017. It was unknown if we make more than \$100/year in interest. After discussion, Reckner seconded the motion. SCRIP will revisit this topic in 2018, after the Treasurer pulls together some figures. All in favor. Motion carried.

Eckenrode said last year's Growing Greener grants haven't been announced yet and that WPCAMR is out of Quick Response funds.

Eckenrode said there is a good group of people involved with the Vision 2025 Rivers Capture Team. A discussion about past and future activities followed. There are lots of ideas, but someone has to lead each effort. Does SCRIP want to do more projects, like river sweeps?

Reckner said a group of UPJ students recently revealed that, through survey work, they discovered that young people, especially, believe that the rivers are still "dirty."

Lichvar said UPJ Professor, Dr. John McGrath, asked about Johnstown fisheries. In short, the PFBC says that, within 45 miles of Johnstown, there are 1,030.2 miles of stocked trout streams; 241.8 miles of Class A wild trout streams; and 16 stocked trout lakes. These figures don't include warm water fisheries, which are really what flow through town. Conservation groups need to do a better job conveying what's in our streams.

Strosnider said D. Beri is no longer with Nature Abounds. Reckner said he moved out west.

Steele said they have a volunteer group called the Earth Team, but all their work has to be tied to their focus like natural resource protection, crop land, and private forest landowners.

Next meeting

Next meeting: January 11, 2018 10 AM – Noon
tentatively at Laurelwood Care Center's Amber Lounge
100 Woodmont Road, Johnstown (Westmont)

This is the care center at which Bob Ritchey is staying. Meeting attendees will have to enter through the main entrance and sign in. If Bob is in the hospital, an alternate meeting location will be secured. Thanks to Piper for setting this up.

Meeting adjourned at 5:25 PM.

Minutes by Reckner.