

The **September 14, 2017** meeting of the Stonycreek-Conemaugh River Improvement Project was called to order at 3:14 PM at Greenhouse Park by Len Lichvar, with Robb Piper, Pam Milavec, Melissa Reckner, Bill Strosnider, Karlice Makuchan, Adam Cotchen, John Vatauk, and Larry Hutchinson present. Stefan Long joined the meeting in progress.

Jessica Clifford of Vision 2025's Rivers Capture Team also attended.

Piper/Cotchen made a motion to approve the May and July meeting minutes. All in favor. Motion carried.

Reckner reviewed motions emailed to the board after the last meeting. We need to follow up on our support of HB790 and SB567 regarding the noxious weeds list.

### **Stonycreek River**

Lichvar said the Somerset Conservation District (SCD) completed a streambank stabilization and kayak launch at Orenda Park. He shared related media. Lichvar said the SCD and MLTU completed a stream improvement project on Bens Creek. Work continues on the riparian buffer along the North Fork of Bens Creek and on habitat work in the Que tailwater. The SCD is overseeing a knotweed control/riparian restoration project along Soap Hollow Run in Greenhouse Park and a PennDOT mitigation streambank stabilization project along South Fork Bens Creek. The Oven Run E rehabilitation should begin in October, depending on the state budget situation. Rosebud Mining is going to rehab the Jenner AMD treatment system as part of a mitigation decree. Lichvar spoke of an orange flocculent that occurs periodically along Quemahoning Creek. He tried to find the source and has been in contact with the DEP.

### **Paint Creek**

Reckner said another limestone dose was added to Babcock Creek.

### **Shade Creek**

Hutchinson reported that work continues on the Gahagen SGL228 project.

Saint Francis University might be doing some work at the Reitz #1 AMD treatment system. Strosnider said they'll do some minor O&M, increase flow to the bioreactor to eliminate the smell, knock out some boards and clean the Agri-drains, and plant some vegetation to fill in dead spots. They are currently flushing the vertical flow reactor.

### **Center for Watershed Research and Service**

Strosnider said the several organizations and agencies met on June 30 to discuss the possibility of co-treating the massive AMD in Central City and sewage. St. Francis University is going to do some laboratory analysis and experimentation of the Big 4 water and sewage to see if they could be co-treated. Here, there is far more AMD than sewage.

Strosnider just met with the Greater Johnstown Water Authority to discuss potentially treating the Incline Plane discharge at the Dornick Point sewage treatment facility. Here, there is 15 times more sewage than AMD. There are concerns over the makeup of the sludge, effluent limits, operations, and how existing infrastructure could be retrofitted to make it work. It's all in the very early stages.

Strosnider said the Lambert's Run pollution loading study is complete and gave Lichvar a copy. SFU is nearing the end of a pollutant loading / mass balance study on Que Creek. Strosnider said their capstone students are looking to remove more iron at Mallard's Rest, the Boswell AMD treatment system.

Green resigned from the SCRIP Board due to the fact that she's relocating to DuBois.

### **Cambria Somerset Authority**

Vatavuk said an individual requested a port-a-potty at the Quemahoning Birdman Access. CSA will discuss it this winter. He said there is a problem with vibration in the 100-year old tower, so there has not been any white water releases for a while. They're not sure what the problem is. Divers are investigating. Clifford said there is interest in restoring the valve and said a fundraiser could probably be organized in support of it.

Vatavuk thanked Lichvar for helping to get Somerset Lake fish to the Que. The PA Fish and Boat Commission will be removing fish around October 23-25.

Lichvar said 40 habitat structures were built and placed in the Que in late August.

### **Little Conemaugh River**

Piper said a low-flow channel and fish habitat were installed on the South Branch Blacklick Creek in Nanty Glo and it's been well received by the community.

He said the Vintondale section is designed.

### **Education Committee**

Makuchan said the newsletter went out last week. The next deadline is December 1. It will include info on the next scholarship.

### **Events**

Lichvar provided an update on Joe Gorden, who is still at the Richland Rehabilitation Center.

Reckner said SCRIP could likely partner with the Cambria County Conservation District to do an intro to kayaking event. The one the CCCD did at Hinckston Dam went really well.

## **Kiski-Conemaugh Stream Team**

Reckner said she's been busy with the State of the Watershed update to the Kiski-Conemaugh River Basin Conservation Plan. She said they were not awarded a DEP EE grant, so they must fundraise to support her involvement with Trout in the Classroom. She reached out to area rotaries; Conemaugh Township is the only one that responded.

## **Website**

Reckner sent a list of updates to the webmaster.

## **Old Business**

Clifford and Reckner reported on the recent Refresh our Rivers public meeting. There are three focus groups: River-themed Events and Activities, Marketing and Awareness, and Improving Connectivity and Access, which will be meeting more in the future to develop ideas. These are open to the public. Clifford said there is a lot of interest in developing the trails and area around the Incline Plane.

Cotchen said the Allegheny Ridge Corporation recently sent a nice newsletter that highlighted Johnstown activities.

## **New Business**

Piper said the Federation of Sportsmen's Club poster theme this year is "My PA Watershed" and submissions are due around January 1. Please encourage teachers and students to participate.

Piper/Cotchen made a motion to accept, with regret, Green's resignation. All in favor. Motion carried.

Reckner said results from Allegheny Ahead's recent survey were out and may be accessed here: <http://allegheniesahead.com/calendar/>. She said, in Somerset County, the Natural Environment ranked second only to Public Safety among most important topics and Outdoor Recreation Opportunities ranked fourth. In Cambria County, the Natural Environment ranked third and Outdoor Recreation Opportunities ranked fourth. We need to use this info to our advantage when fighting the proposed raid of environmental funds.

Lichvar led a discussion on the state budget that the PA House of Representatives' Republican Caucus wants to balance by taking allocated funds from the Keystone and Environmental Stewardship Funds (Growing Greener) and others. If these funds are raided, many projects are in jeopardy as is the state of our waterways. Why are the funds not shown as encumbered? Gerrymandering is a big problem. There are a lot of moving parts that are moving quickly. The proposal passed in the House last night by a vote of 103 to 91. Farmland Preservation has been taken off the proposal. Still, if you care about AMD restoration work and

enjoy cleaner rivers, you have to contact your state senator and ask them to vote this proposal down. Lichvar shared an interesting thought shared by a friend of his who suggests using Unclaimed Property funds. The PA Treasury's website says this totals \$2.3 billion. Piper/Strosnider made a motion to write a letter to state senators indicating that SCRIP is against raiding the environmental funds. All in favor. Motion carried.

Long re-introduced himself and said he'll have more time to help out.

**Next meeting**

Next meeting: Wednesday, November 15 at 3:00 PM at Morris' Tavern in St. Michael.

Meeting adjourned at 5:09 PM.

Minutes by Reckner.