

The **March 17, 2017** meeting of the Stonycreek-Conemaugh River Improvement Project was called to order at 11:45 AM at Windber Hotel by Len Lichvar, with Karlice Makuchan, Melissa Reckner, Joe Gorden, Larry Hutchinson, Adam Cotchen, Bill Strosnider, Jim Eckenrode, and Robb Piper present. Director John Vataavuk joined the meeting in progress.

The meeting was also attended by Vincent Pazcek of the EADS Group; Luke Jensen, Mike Timcik, and Dave Leiford of the PA DEP; Randy and Pat Buchanan and Dave Wright of Mountain Laurel TU; Earl Waddell of Cambria Somerset Authority; Greg Shustrick of Somerset Conservation District; and Pam Piper and Yvonne May, SCRIP Members. John Gustkey of Skelly and Loy joined the meeting in progress.

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

### **Secretary's Report**

Reckner presented correspondence from Etta Albright, who offered to cover the \$10 registration fee for someone from SCRIP to attend the Sustainability Conference in April, in Indiana. Cotchen said he would go. Reckner presented Albright's emails regarding the Sunoco Mariner East pipeline and coal mining. Gorden/Reckner made a motion that SCRIP table those topics until our next meeting, given our full agenda. All in favor. Motion carried.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Eckenrode said SCRIP has \$131.97 in its checking account, \$9,647.61 in its Community Foundation fund, and \$8,608.02 in its PA Invest account for a total of \$18,387.60. Makuchan presented some bills for the NatureWorks event and newsletter labels. SCRIP provided some appetizers at this meeting, but the bill has yet to be submitted. Piper/Strosnider made a motion to pay the bills and accept the Treasurer's Report. All in favor. Motion carried.

### **Stonycreek River**

Shustrick reported that the Conservation District is looking for funds to improve the Cottagetown AMD treatment system. They are exploring extending the Lambert's Run system into a bermed wetland to assist with treatment. Oven Run's rehab work is under design and the bid packages are being prepared. The systems will be done in this order: E, A&D together, then F.

Lichvar said the District holds a trust fund that the DEP mandated Commonwealth Stone create for use in the Quemahoning Creek Watershed. The District will use part of their annual \$5K allotment to further enhance fish habitat in the tailwater. He said the PFBC puts in about 8K fingerling trout here, but there is high mortality, due to the lack of cover and the number of predators, so they oversaw the stocking of 500 advanced fingerling trout. The tailwater will be stocked with a mix of 200 adult trout by Jenner Rod and Gun Club on April 1.

The remaining 2017 Que Trust Fund dollars will be used to do some bank stabilization and in-stream fish habitat work in Que Creek adjacent Orenda Park. This work will include the addition of a canoe/kayak stream access. It will be about a \$7K project, so a balance of about \$2K is needed. Already committed are \$500 each from the Somerset Co. Sportsmen's League and Jenner Rod and Gun Club. Piper/Makuchan made a motion to donate \$500 to the Somerset Conservation District to support this project. All in favor. Motion carried.

Lichvar said the source of an oil spill that affected Que Creek near Acosta around Christmas is still unknown.

### **Paint Creek**

Reckner reported that Stream Restoration, Inc. would be doing some work at the D10 Weaver Run AMD system to improve its performance. She said a treatment plan is, for the most part, in place for the Red Eyes discharges along Babcock Creek. It will be a phased approach, and they are waiting for some permissions to proceed. The PCRWA/Stream Team annual litter clean up in the Little Paint Creek Watershed will be April 8 with volunteers meeting at 8:30 AM at the pull-off along Route 160 between Elton and Windber. She introduced Pazcek as a new PCRWA Board Member.

### **Shade Creek**

Hutchinson said the SGL 228 project design is done and that the bid package needs to be completed. He reiterated that Cottagetown needs some work and that Shustrick is seeking funds for that. Reckner suggested contacting SRI, which does some system TLC at no cost through their Technical Assistance program.

Leiford introduced Jensen as Project Manager for Dark Shade restoration project. He noted that it is currently an unfunded project, but is hopeful that it will become a viable active treatment system. Jensen led an excellent presentation on the topic and answered questions.

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

Strosnider gave an overview of his sabbatical work at Clemson. He noted CWRS received some Colcom Foundation funding to continue their work. The landowner agreement for Trout Run was finally signed, so BioMost's work there should start soon. They have a logger on that discharge. He said they have a new post-doctorate, Julie LaBar. Strosnider summarized the USFWS and Mellon Foundation meeting. They are targeting specific species. Saint Francis University is starting an Environmental Community Service award named after Margaret Dunn for a SFU student.

### **Cambria Somerset Authority**

Waddell said the Birdman Road boat launch was constructed last fall. To launch, you'll need a pass from SB2Ws. CSA is ordering docks that should be in place in April. LHORBA is

working with SQI to build a trail around the Que. They have about 4 miles of trails built and about 13 more to go. Volunteers are welcomed to assist! Waddell noted that there is a strip mine proposed near the Green Bridge. Whitewater Releases start April 8-9. He said the gas-fired power plant in Jackson Township looks like a sure thing; the Que will provide water.

Lichvar said the next Que Habitat Work Day will be August 31 at 5:00 PM.

### **Little Conemaugh River**

Piper said the USFWS is targeting headwaters, especially in Western PA, for enhancement work, so that's good.

Vatavuk commented on how conservation is cut in PA's budget.

Timcik, who is the Project Manager for the development side of the Little Conemaugh Treatment Plant project, and Leiford gave a great presentation on the status of the project.

### **Education Committee**

Makuchan said the NatureWorks event went well. She and Kelsea Palmer made iron oxide colored chalk. Save the date for next year's event - March 3, 2018!

She said the newsletter went out in March and that the deadline for the next one is June 2.

She reminded that March 30<sup>th</sup> is the deadline for SCRIP's scholarship. Reckner said she shared news of SCRIP's scholarship with numerous professors, department heads, and financial aid offices of local and regional colleges.

Lichvar noted the MetLife Earth Day event for their employees is April 21. SCRIP and some other groups will be present from 10-12.

Lichvar said on April 27, the Somerset Conservation District, which celebrates its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year, will host a "Conversation on Conservation" event at the Daily American to coincide with PA Conservation District Week.

### **Events Committee**

SCRIP hopes to hold a Family Fishing Activity at Que Dam, but Gorden hasn't heard back from PFBC yet regarding a date.

### **Kiski-Conemaugh Stream Team**

Reckner reported that she has eight Trout in the Classroom Release Days planned this spring and that the Stream Team's spring sampling round will be completed in April. The Stream Team is currently responsible for the routine monitoring of 45 AMD treatment systems. The Kiski-Conemaugh-Stony Sojourn is June 1-4. Check [www.conemaughvalleyconservancy.org](http://www.conemaughvalleyconservancy.org) for details. Reckner said the Stream Team will have a

booth at the Stonycreek Rendezvous on May 19-21 to share info about local streams' water quality. She welcomed assistance at the event.

### **Website**

Gorden shared usage data for the website. Monthly usage seems about normal.

### **Old Business**

#### **Geocache Trail**

Gorden shared a list of the sites SCRIP recommended to the Visitor's Bureau, but the Bureau has not taken action yet, so development of additional SCRIP sites is on hold.

#### **Johnstown Riverwalls**

Eckenrode attended the meeting at Sunnehanna Country Club at which many federal and state government agencies were present and discussed potential funding they could lend to the project. They are open-minded and considering many things. He said the presentations were "top-notch."

Gustkey said last night's meeting summarized the meeting Eckenrode referenced and the results of the Riverwall Charrette. The Army Corps of Engineers hydrologic study is ongoing thru 2018. He said other, more immediate ideas were discussed.

### **New Business**

Vatavuk said a comprehensive study for the Southern Alleghenies region is being completed and encouraged everyone to complete the survey at: <http://allegheniesahead.com>.

Reckner said the Stream Team is hosting a Painting Party fundraiser on March 23 from 6:30 – 8:30 PM at the BottleWorks. RSVPs needed by March 21.

R. Buchanan said there will be a tire cleanup along the Ghost Town Trail along Beulah Road at 8:00 AM next Saturday.

Lichvar reminded that the annual Quemahoning Creek trout stocking will be April 14. Volunteers should meet at 8 AM at the Jenner Sportsmen's Club or at 7:30 AM at the Burger King in Ferrelton.

Lichvar shared a spreadsheet WPCAMR provided about the proposed federal budget cuts.

Gustkey said Vision 2025 is planning an Earth Day event.

Shustrick said a litter cleanup along the South Fork of Bens Creek is planned for April 9. Volunteers should meet at Jim & Jimmies at 8 or 8:30 AM.

Buchanan said MLTU's annual banquet will be April 8. They raised over \$18K last year and all their funds stay local.

**Next meeting**

Next meeting: May 5 at 3:00 PM at location to be determined.

Meeting adjourned at 2:00 PM.

Minutes by Reckner.