

The March 17, 2016 meeting of the Stonycreek-Conemaugh River Improvement Project was called to order at 3:15 PM at the Windber Hotel by Len Lichvar, with Karlice Makuchan, Melissa Reckner, James Eckenrode, Jr., Adam Cotchen, Joe Gorden, John Vatauvuk, and Larry Hutchinson present. Kelsea Palmer was present for first half of the meeting.

The meeting was also attended by Malcolm Crittenden of the DEP, Brad Clemenson of the Pennsylvania Environmental Council, Frank Sojak, and Rob Smith. Holly Eckenrode joined the meeting in progress.

Introductions were quasi made.

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

Reckner reported that a 78 year-young woman from Johnstown contacted her through SCRIP to learn how the rivers became clean. Reckner spoke with her and sent her more info. Reckner shared a letter and resume of a student looking for an internship. So far, SCRIP's Facebook page has 214 likes. Reckner encouraged more interaction on the page so a greater audience could be reached. Lift Johnstown's Project Party is April 14th. SCRIP had 13 membership renewals since the last meeting.

Eckenrode is a new daddy! Congrats!

Reckner presented a bill for \$26.60 for postage. Eckenrode reported that SCRIP has \$1,608.24 in its checking and its Community Foundation and PA Invest accounts have not changed, so SCRIP has a total of \$18,749.64. Copies Plus hasn't cashed a check. Palmer/Cotchen mad a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report and pay the bill. All in favor. Motion carried.

Stonycreek River

Gorden said he was at the Benscreek Canoe Club last night and there was a discussion about the quality of Stonycreek up to Shade Creek and the process of getting it delisted, so Stony would be more protected. Clemenson said when a mining company dumped slag basically in the Little Conemaugh River, the penalty was minimal, given the condition of the river. A long discussion followed. The Stonycreek would need sampled once a week for the months of July, August and September, which the Stream Team could do through its Water Monitoring Program; however, macroinvertebrates are still key and several Directors present felt the sedimentation is still too great to get the numbers needed. The macros could be tested, though, to see if a better analysis would be beneficial. Crittenden said he could certify whoever does the macros. Lichvar will look into when it was last assessed. Cotchen recommended Shustrick list it as an Improving Water in his Watershed Specialist report. SCRIP was happy for the BCC interest.

Reckner said the Somerset Conservation District might hold a watershed tour later this year highlighting the Stonycreek and would invite members of CVC, BCC, and others.

Lichvar said the District received a Coldwater Heritage Grant to complete riparian work along the North Fork of Bens Creek at the North Fork County Club. The owners said the grounds are open to fishermen.

Lichvar distributed a summary by PACD about Rock Tunnel. Lichvar said the Jenners AMD Treatment System, built in 1997, may be rehabilitated. He spoke of the Que Tailwater Phase 2 habitat improvement project, which would include the placement of rock and woody debris. Lichvar distributed CVC's Quemahoning Creek Tailwater Fish Assessment report. Reckner/Eckenrode made a motion that SCRIP donate \$1,000 towards the Phase 2 project. Cotchen questioned what other sources of funding the District sought. Lichvar said just community group donations, no grants for Phase 2. Reckner suggested pursuing a Community Foundation grant or speaking with REI about their giving program. All in favor. Motion passed.

Center for Watershed Research and Service

Palmer said SFU professors and students will conduct a mass balance on Lambert's Run in the fall. Lichvar distributed the Catalyst newsletter, which featured a story on W. Strosnider and an AMD treatment system that will be constructed in Bolivia. Strosnider made tenure at SFU and will be on sabbatical from May through December.

Paint Creek

Reckner reminded that the Picking Up Paint Creek litter cleanup is slated for Saturday, March 26. Volunteers are asked to meet at 8:30 AM at the pull off between Elton and Windber where Little Paint Creek passes under the road.

Shade Creek

Hutchinson told a grand story about the 50'x15'x5' Geotube placed at the Reitz #1 treatment system and the many lessons learned. Sampling at the Big 4 continues in partnership with DEP and the Stream Team. The Coal Run project is in the midst of permitting.

Gorden said at the BCC meeting, members expressed interest in helping to improve that watershed. Reckner said DEP will be doing a watershed-wide assessment later this fall that will certainly need volunteers.

Cambria Somerset Authority

Vatavuk said CSA has been busy working with the operators of the new, proposed gas power plant in Jackson Twp. He said they're still working to secure enough funds to do the Birdman boat launch at the Que.

Little Conemaugh River

Clemenson noted that the Ehrenfeld coal refuse pile was successfully bid and removal should start this year. He also reminded that DEP is working on a plan that would treat three big AMD from the Portage area. The GenOn penalty settlement would help fund that system.

Clemenson said he would like input for a Little Conemaugh Recreation Plan he proposes to complete.

Education Committee

Makuchan said the latest newsletter was issued in early March. She reminded that March 30th is the deadline for scholarship applications. June 2 is the deadline for the next newsletter.

Events

Lichvar reminded that May 25th is the Outdoor Night at PNC Park in Pittsburgh in partnership with the Pittsburgh Pirates and PA Fish and Boat Commission. He doesn't have a lot of info yet. Sojak shared examples of some wooden fish key chains as give-aways that he's been working on. Reckner gave Palmer a tri-fold display to enhance about SCRIP.

Gorden said SCRIP and PFBC will host a kayak introduction event on June 11 at Wilmore Dam. PFBC will only provide 1 staffer (Mandy Smith), so volunteers will be needed, and Smith will only be able to bring kayaks or canoes, unless someone with a hitch could bring the others. Pat Ferko may be able to transport them. CSA requires \$25 for SCRIP to reserve a pavilion, though PFBC could get it for free, which they've done. Gorden reminded that Somerset Lakefest will have a similar program, albeit with less instruction, the week before on June 4. Gorden noted that Lakefest conflicts with the KC River Sojourn.

Kiski-Conemaugh Stream Team

Reckner reminded that the KC River Sojourn is June 2-5. Details will soon be available at www.conemaughvalleyconservancy.org.

Reckner still needs a workshop leader for Bishop McCort's TIC Release Day on April 19. Please contact her if you can help.

She said the Stonycreek Rendezvous is May 20-22.

Website

Gorden shared the website statistics and indicated that February was a good month.

New Business

Reckner said Strosnider thought it would be good if a UPJ Professor served on the SCRIP Board of Directors. Several are aware of SCRIP, but have not been involved. Sojak still declines a nomination to the board.

Vatavuk said he serves on the DEP's Solid Waste Advisory Committee and there is a renewed concern about TV dumping. A discussion on proper disposal locations followed. A good resource for electronics recycling is www.eWastePA.org.

Gorden said Westmoreland Earth Day's Outdoor Adventure Fest is open to organizations outside of Westmoreland County, but must have an environmental aspect. It's April 23 at the Winnie Palmer Nature Reserve. Reckner will distribute the form to complete if anyone is interested in participating.

Clemenson mentioned that some folks are interested in developing an Environmental Education Center called Nathan's Divide in Ebensburg.

Clemenson reiterated the Capture Teams forming as a result of the Johnstown Vision 2025 initiative. He said it may be beneficial to combine a few of the capture teams.

Cotchen said Representative Rothfus is sponsoring HR 3797 for the SENSE Act, which would help waste-coal generation plants with their emission standards. He reiterated the benefit these power plants provide with the removal and reclamation of coal refuse piles. Lichvar shared examples of letters of support other organizations have written. Cotchen/Gorden made a motion that SCRIP support the SENSE Act in the form of a letter, noting that we'll hold waste-coal fired power plants to strict environmental standards while allowing them to continue operating. Cotchen will prepare it and Reckner will share a draft with the board before it is sent to our Senators. All in favor. Motion carried.

Next meeting

Next meeting: MAY 5 at 1 PM at the Windber Hotel. Hutchinson reserved the front room.

Meeting adjourned at 5:17 PM.

Minutes by Reckner.