

The **May 5, 2016** meeting of the Stonycreek-Conemaugh River Improvement Project was called to order at 1:09 PM at the Windber Hotel by Len Lichvar, with Karlice Makuchan, Melissa Reckner, James Eckenrode, Jr., Adam Cotchen, Joe Gorden, Herb Wilson, Bill Strosnider, Robb Piper, and Larry Hutchinson present.

The meeting was also attended by Linda Yuhnke of Shade Creek Watershed Association and Frank Sojak, a SCRIP member. Malcolm Crittenden of DEP joined the meeting in progress.

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

Reckner said there were four renewing members since last meeting, and she presented a donation request letter from Somerset Lake Action Committee.

Eckenrode said SCRIP has \$8,974.36 in its Community Foundation account, \$8,167.04 in its PA Invest, and \$1,838.64 in its checking account. He explained the checks he wrote last month. Piper/Cotchen made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report. All in favor. Motion carried.

Stonycreek River

Gorden said he participated in the Benscreek Canoe Club litter cleanup day and thought the Stonycreek looked rather orange in Foustwell. Lichvar said the Stony is fishing well, at least in its upper reaches, and there have been good mayfly hatches. He said the District and TU will be doing some habitat work on tribs to the Stonycreek this summer. Rehabilitation of Oven Run systems will begin this summer. Gorden and Reckner reported heavy sediment from Beaverdam Creek flowing into Stonycreek River near Route 30 this past week. Lichvar tracked the sediment into its headwaters and commented that heavy, concentrated rain in the area swept dirt into the stream from every plowed field in the heavily farmed area. He said this example highlights that sedimentation and nutrients are more of a problem now in the Stony watershed than AMD, not counting Shade and Paint Creeks. Voice of Ag is a District initiative working with the Farm Bureau to implement BMP. Strosnider commented that we'll likely see more agricultural problems as AMD is remediated. Piper said every farm is mandated to have a Farm Conservation Plan and, if they have manure, then they should have a Nutrient Management Plan. Lack of inspections and enforcement is a problem. Cotchen said weather has been a problem too. Phosphorous and Nitrogen are the biggest problems. Algal blooms deplete oxygen and sediment smothers aquatic habitat. Cotchen suggested asking DEP to make the headwaters a Regional Priority, pursuing Growing Greener for BMP implementation, and promoting more cover crops. Eckenrode said WPC staff helps write conservation plans for his county. SCRIP discussed increasing its focus on sedimentation, at least in the Stonycreek Watershed. The BMPs need to be economically incentivized and more education has to happen. Reckner suggested bringing Vinny Paczek of the EADS Group into the discussion, as they are seeking ways to help municipalities provide education. Eckenrode advocated planting more riparian buffers. Trees are cheap and very effective. We need a pilot project.

Strosnider reported how he and students have completed mass balances (flow/chems/loading) on Lambert's Run to gauge the impact of treatment systems. He said the Center for Watershed Research and Service is out of funds and is now focusing on contract work, which they can do at deeply discounted prices compared to private companies.

Lichvar said he and others followed up with BCC about delisting the Stonycreek to Carpenter's Park.

Paint Creek

Reckner said 19 volunteers helped with the Paint Creek litter cleanup on March 26. Thirty-six tires, 58 bags of trash, and several items too big for a bag were removed from three miles of roadway.

Shade Creek

Hutchinson commented on his struggles with the Geotubes. Data collection on the Big 4 continues. Eric Robertson is still working on the design for the SGL228 system. Excavation should start in July. Reckner said DEP officials hope to visit some discharges next week.

Center for Watershed Research and Service

Strosnider said 12-13 students are presenting at the ASMRE conference soon and that most of their presentations focus on AMD. He said a SFU post-doctorate and SCRIP Member, Peter Smyntek, was hired by St. Vincent College. Strosnider said the Center helped Trout Run Watershed Association submit and receive a \$638K Growing Greener grant to redo the Puritan Discharge Treatment System. SFU professors are looking to quantify the macroinvertebrates inhabiting treatment system wetlands. Strosnider will be out of state from May 15 – December 31, but available via email to assist with technical assistance, such as design ideas.

Cambria Somerset Authority

Piper reported that long-serving Bill Hoppel resigned from the board. A five-acre food plot was installed at Wilmore.

Little Conemaugh River

Piper said Cliff Denholm is to visit the Beavertdale systems soon. The District is helping with 8 planned fish habitat structures for the North Branch of the Little Conemaugh along Route 53. The Little Conemaugh Work Group has not met recently. The OSM Mine Pool study is not quite finished.

Education Committee

Makuchan said the next newsletter deadline is June 2. She reviewed the SCRIP Scholarship and said the Committee met, reviewed and scored the three submissions, and decided to award Stefan Long the \$500 scholarship.

Reckner said the annual Abandoned Mine Reclamation Conference is June 22-23 at the Kovalchick Conference Center in Indiana, with a tour planned on the 22nd and presentations on the 23rd. It's a very economical conference to attend. Details at www.treatminewater.com.

Events

Lichvar reviewed the latest for the Outdoor Night at PNC Park in Pittsburgh on May 25th. There is now a limit on the number of free exhibitor tables available and so groups will need to share. There will be a pre-game ceremony on the field. Contact Lichvar for details. To purchase game tickets: <http://m.mlb.com/pirates/tickets/info/pa-fish?partnerId=1D914Y1I21-L1P2>. Sojak and Palmer will be representing SCRIP. Eckenrode/Piper made a motion that SCRIP pays for two tickets and the parking for the SCRIP representatives. All in favor. Motion carried.

Gorden reviewed the paddling event planned in partnership with the PFBC on June 11 at Wilmore Dam. Please see the attached poster for details. To reserve your spot at either the 1, 2, or 3:00 time slot, contact Gorden before June 4. Two or three more volunteers are also needed to help with the event. Again, contact Gorden at 814-479-4902. Gorden will prepare a press release for local media.

A flyer announcing Lake Fest on June 4 from 11 AM – 4 PM at Somerset Lake was shared. The 150th anniversary of the PFBC will be commemorated at 2 PM at the event. Gorden was chosen to speak on behalf of SCRIP. Makuchan/Reckner made a motion to donate \$100 to the Somerset Action Lake Fest's Give a Dam Fundraiser. All in favor. Motion carried.

Kiski-Conemaugh Stream Team

Reckner said the Stream Team is in the midst of its spring sampling and Trout in the Classroom Release Days. Volunteers are needed to help with the following schools' fishing activities – Berlin (May 11), Shade (May 24), and Shanksville (June 1). Contact Reckner for details. A few fish surveys in the Laurel Highlands are planned in partnership with the California University of PA. CVC's Annual Membership meeting is May 11 in Blairsville. The Kiski-Conemaugh River Sojourn is June 2-5. Registration must be completed by May 23 and may be done online: <http://www.conemaughvalleyconservancy.org/recreation/skcs.html>.

Natural Biodiversity

Strosnider reported that NB helped install a rain garden at Everett School and is still involved with the Conemaugh Gap trailhead development project.

Website

Gorden shared the website statistics. Reckner will email SCRIP's webmaster to see if we can determine from where people are who use the website.

Marcellus Shale

Lichvar said the wastewater treatment plant on which construction began in Somerset is not going to happen.

Old Business

Lichvar said he sent SCRIP's letter supporting the SENSE Act to our senators. Cotchen noted that Casey and Toomey both support the bill.

Reckner said the Johnstown Vision 2025 Riverwall/Watershed Capture Team will have its first meeting at JAHA on May 19 at 5:30 PM.

SQI's status was questioned. Reckner said they continue to work on Phase II at White Water Park and that the board does meet, albeit infrequently.

New Business

Piper said an Environmental Education Center is planned in Ebensburg. He said trail connectivity with the Path of the Flood and Saint Francis University has also been discussed.

Congratulations to Piper on his retirement! He served with the Cambria Co. Conservation District for 32 years, 20 as manager. He'll continue to serve on SCRIP's Board of Directors.

It was noted that DEP has a good outlook on larger restoration projects and is encouraging the development of more QUPs.

Eckenrode encouraged participation in a Cal U survey of outdoor tourism.
http://surveys.calu.edu/Tourism/Wildlife/Wildlife_Tourist_March_26_HTML.asp?P1=0j4f-2h3r-hwn

Next meeting

Next meeting: JULY 14 at Noon at Greenhouse Park. Covered dish.

Meeting adjourned at 3:34 PM.

Minutes by Reckner.