

The September 22, 2016 meeting of the Stonycreek-Conemaugh River Improvement Project was called to order by Chairman Len Lichvar at the Mirage Room of Asiago's Restaurant at the top of Johnstown's Inclined Plane.

The meeting was held prior to the Green Drinks sponsored by SCRIP to observe its 25th anniversary and was also attended by Larry Hutchinson, Robb Piper, Karlice Makuchan, Jim Eckenrode, John Vatauvuk and Joe Gorden. Kelsea Palmer and Stefan Long joined the meeting in progress.

Piper/Hutchinson moved to approve the August minutes. Unanimous approval.

Eckenrode reported that \$859.97 remained in the checking account, with a total of \$18,635 in our investment accounts. He reported bills for the newsletter of \$28.65 for postage, \$25 to Cambria Mailing Service and \$126 to Copies Plus. A bill for \$17.50 for web hosting was included. Piper/Makuchan to approve the report and pay the bills, including the cost of hosting Green Drinks. Unanimous approval.

The August meeting did not have a quorum. Piper/Makuchan moved to ratify actions taken at the meeting. Unanimous approval.

A number of reports were submitted prior to the meeting in an effort to save time.

Submitted by Melissa Reckner – 2 membership renewals since the newsletter went out; I mailed 10 postcard reminders out to past members whose dues are due!

SCRIP received the email I forwarded to board members asking for support of the Growing Greener III program.

I just learned that DCNR is piloting a new grant for its Riparian Forest Buffer Program. Eligible activities include landowner outreach, buffer design, site prep, buffer installation, materials and short-term maintenance. The grant round will open in January and close in April. Grants are for 4 years. They would like to see the bulk of funds used to install new riparian zones, though expanding existing zones would be allowed, just scored lower. Some funds could be used for outreach, but in the end, they want to see buffers put in. I thought about the Stonycreek and thought it's something to consider.

Eckenrode said he had spoken to the woman running this program and he didn't feel it was a good fit for SCRIP at this time because of a \$50,000 minimum, which requires a match. He said he thought a \$100,000 project was too big for SCRIP to handle.

Hutchinson reported on the previous day's Benscreek Canoe Club meeting, which he attended along with Gorden and Reckner to solicit volunteers for monitoring sites in the Shade Creek watershed. He said he was gratified by the interest shown by canoe club members, and that seven volunteers had signed up to cover approximately 40 sites. He said Reckner had scheduled a training day, at which monitors and sites will be paired.

Piper said CSA had reported that iron concentrations seem to be on the increase at Border Dam. Lichvar said that Oven Run Site E had malfunctioned and water was bypassing the pond. He said a contractor has been called and believes a clogged pipe is causing the

problem. He said the contractor estimates it will cost \$1,500-\$2,000 to correct the problem. Lichvar said there are also problems with some other Oven Run sites. Hutchinson said he had visited Site D and found the last pond dry.

Lichvar said rock and deep-water structures had been added to the Quemahoning Tailwater Project and passed around photos of the work.

Lichvar said a new anoxic drain was working well to remove iron from Lamberts Run and, by extension, the Stonycreek. He said water quality has improved, but landowners have expressed alarm over the appearance of the stream, which now has become more orange as a result of the iron falling out. He said the Somerset Conservation District would work with Malcom Crittenden of DEP to address the problem.

Lichvar said the Mountain Laurel Chapter, Trout Unlimited, would dedicate a monument on Oct. 2 at 1:30 p.m. to volunteers who had worked to protect and promote the Clear Shade watershed. He said the ceremony would be open to the public.

Hutchison said representatives from DEP would walk Shade Creek from Seanor to Central City on Oct. 3 and 4 to look for any discharges that had not been previously charted. Gorden suggested that he invite interested members of the Benscreek Canoe Club to participate.

Vatavuk said that the Quemahoning Reservoir had been drawn down an estimated five feet to allow for construction of the boat launch on Birdman Road. He also said some pipes are being replaced at Border Dam.

Piper said scuba divers were scheduled to take a camera into the Wilmore Reservoir to check the outflow pipe.

Lichvar said the Pa. Fish and Boat Commission and volunteers had placed fish habitat structures in the Quemahoning Reservoir. He said Berlin High School students were building 17 more structures that would be added to the reservoir at some time in the next few weeks.

Piper reported that the Cambria County Conservation District had obtained a \$16,000 grant to purchase kayaks, paddle boards and a trailer for environmental education purposes. He said the Benscreek Canoe Club would help with the project.

Submitted by Makuchan - The last newsletter was mailed at end of August. Deadline for next newsletter is Thursday, Dec 1.

Are we doing \$1,000 SCRIP scholarship again this year? If so, application information will be published in December newsletter.

Piper/Eckenrode moved to continue the scholarship program at the same level.
Unanimous approval.

Submitted by Reckner – Sue Konvolinka is reinvigorating the former Wildlife Day, so save the date of Saturday, March 4. The new event, called NatureWorks, will be held at the ArtWorks building in Cambria City from 10 – 2. Details will be coming, but

conservation groups will be invited to set up a table at the event. Interactive activities for people of all ages are encouraged. [Michael Reimer](#), an artist who does real fish printing with specimens caught from local waterways, will be the featured artist at a reception the evening before, at the event itself, and during the month of March.

Submitted by Reckner – We’ve been busy working on the KC Rivers Conservation Plan update, which we still hope to have done by the end of the year. I started monitoring the Incline Plane discharge monthly at the request of DEP, as they are working with numerous groups, including EADS, to potentially do a pilot project treating the mine water at the Dornick Point sewage plant. Our fall sampling round is set for October 11-27. And finally, it’s that time of year that we really promote our Adopt-a-Site fundraiser. We missed SCRIP’s support last year. Recall, for \$100 / site / year, a person, business or group may “Adopt” or sponsor the monitoring of one of our 225+ water sampling sites throughout the KC Basin.

Details here: <http://www.conemaughvalleyconservancy.org/conservation/supportus.html> (Our website is a little out of date, as we are hopeful a grant will come through this fall that will allow us to revamp it.)

Makuchan/Hutchinson moved to donate \$200 to the Stream Team’s Adopt-A-Site program. Unanimous approval.

SCRIP had received a letter asking for support from the Pennsylvania Growing Greener Coalition, and State Sen. Tom Killion (R-Delaware) was to hold a press conference on Sept. 28 in Harrisburg to introduce Growing Greener III. Piper noted that there is no funding mechanism in place at present for the program. Hutchinson/Piper moved to add SCRIP’s name to the list of organizations supporting the proposal. Unanimous approval.

Submitted by Gorden – I attended the Sept. 14 Greater Johnstown/Cambria County Convention and Visitors Bureau rollout of the Greater Johnstown/Cambria County Geotrail. This is a series of 40 geocaching sites, most of them in Cambria County. It occurred to me that SCRIP might want to look into something like this to call attention to its various treatment sites and increase awareness of our accomplishments.

Geocaching is becoming more popular, probably because of an app that now allows use of a smart phone to locate caches. I was surprised at the number of people who participate, and how many geocaches are located in our region.

This link describes the visitors’ bureau trail:

<https://grayto01.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapTour/index.html?appid=92d06afb77e4a29b7d76dc1bf780890>

This video cover the basics of geocaching:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IYTqitVK-Ts&list=PL939C3CBDC2F2F385>

An early arrival for Green Drinks added that he is an avid geocacher and attested to the sport’s popularity and potential to bring people to the area to showcase sites. He was supportive of the idea.

Lichvar charged the Fundraiser/Event Committee with investigating the idea and making a presentation at the November meeting.

Submitted by Reckner - I attended part of the Riverwall Charrette a couple weeks ago and promoted support of conservation work, especially upstream of the Point, among

other things. Ryan Keita, a facilitator of Johnstown 2025, would like to attend our next meeting to discuss the project and answer any questions.

A point of discussion at the Charrette was the low-head dam at the mouth of the Little Conemaugh. I contacted Lisa Hollingsworth-Segedy of American Rivers to introduce her to Ryan with the hope that she could assist with that. She was agreeable. Lisa also mentioned that over the past year, she's fielded a couple requests to do something about Border Dam. She recognized CSA isn't willing to let go of it right now, but added that "there are some great alternatives for water supply intakes that don't require dams." She asked if we could get her an appointment with CSA to discuss it, hoping they would "agree to allow American Rivers to do a feasibility study for a river-friendly water intake that would meet their backup water supply needs AND provide free-flowing access for recreation." Recognizing some SCRIP directors are more connected with CSA than I, I said I'd bring it up at a SCRIP meeting.

Makuchan said a documentary about fracking would be shown at 7 p.m. Oct. 21 at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Ligonier Valley. She said the director would be on hand to discuss the film and ask questions, and recommended that anyone interested in the subject arrange to attend.

The next meeting will be held at 9 a.m. Nov. 10 at the Gander Mountain Lodge, Johnstown.

Minutes by Gorden.