

## **SCRIP Meeting Minutes**

**March 10, 2025 @ 2:00 p.m.**

**The Crow's Nest**

The March 10, 2025 meeting of the Stonycreek-Conemaugh River Improvement Project was called to order by President Adam Cotchen at the Crow's Nest in Tire Hill.

It was also attended by Joe Gorden, Lenny Lichvar, John Dryzal, Jackie Ritko, Robb Piper, Jeff Sarver, Larry Hutchinson, and Malcolm Crittendon. Dave Leiford joined the meeting in progress.

Other attendees were WCOs Tyler Crooks and Dina Cable of the PA Fish and Boat Commission, Pete Mishko Jr., Dave Wright of Trout Unlimited, Mike Maurer of Pheasants Forever, and WPCAMR volunteer Tom Grote.

Hutchinson/Dryzal made a **MOTION** to approve previous meeting minutes. Unanimous approval.

In an email action, Gorden/Jim Eckenrode made a **MOTION** to donate \$200 to the Bottle Works for screen-printed bags to be used at the NatureWorks event on March 15. The motion was approved by an email vote.

### **Financial Report**

Dryzal reported SCRIP's checking account balance is \$4,347.21; the PA Invest account is \$8,527.48 as of Feb. 28; the account with SAC is \$600; and the Community Foundation account, as of Dec. 31, is at \$18,010.76.

### **Partner Organizations**

#### ***PA Fish and Boat Commission***

Crooks reported that the Somerset County FFA had received grants to obtain equipment for float-stocking trout and had been using it extensively. Cable emphasized the importance of getting youth involved, noting that many of the volunteers the Fish Commission has relied on for years have been forced to quit because of age.

Lichvar noted that Quemahoning Creek had been stocked with co-op fish on Feb. 27, and the Jenner Rod & Gun Club would stock trout on March 21, including at Orenda Park and the Quemahoning tailwater.

### **Stonycreek River Progress Report**

Lichvar reported a balance of \$66,000 in the Stonycreek Trust Fund. He distributed copies of the Somerset Conservation District's 2024 annual report. He said the Conservation District is working with Tom Clark on a discharge on the South Fork of Benscreek upstream of the Rock Tunnel site. He also said a year's worth of data is now complete on the Gonder discharge.

Lichvar reported that the Somerset County Conservancy had transferred ownership of its AMD sites to the newly formed Bottomlands Conservancy. He said the properties would remain open to the public. He said the new conservancy was created through the efforts of InnoH2O Solutions LLC as a non-profit arm of its regular business of building and operating water systems. Lichvar and his son, Logan, are officers of the Bottomlands Conservancy, which hopes to do additional work on some of the untreated discharges at Oven Run Site F. Piper/Crittenden made a **MOTION** to contribute \$500 toward data collection at the site. The motion passed, with Lichvar abstaining.

### ***Pheasants Forever***

Maurer reported that the Somerset County Chapter of Pheasants Forever had recently held another of its annual banquets and has now raised more than \$900,000 and created more than 14,000 acres of small game habitat.

### **Shade Creek**

Sarver reported that data loggers have been installed with grants for the Big Five discharges. He said a youth fishing event is planned for May 10 and the Shade Creek Watershed Association could use volunteer help.

The group has gone back to monthly meetings held at 6:30 p.m. each third Friday monthly. He also said there is a board opening.

### **Little Conemaugh River Progress Report**

Ritko reported that design work on the Krayn project would begin soon, and a Growing Greener grant had been obtained for stream stabilization along the Little Conemaugh River.

Piper commented that a 15-month contract had been awarded for design on the Little Conemaugh Treatment Plant and the design should be completed by June 2026.

### **Public Relations**

Crooks and Cable noted that this year's Que Days observance is scheduled for 9 a.m.-2:30 p.m. May 6 and 7 at the Quemahoning Family Recreation Area. As previously, it will involve groups of high school students rotating between stations and activities that will include boating safety, fish stocking, and building and installing habitat. **VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY:** As SCRIP is a participant, we have been asked to provide volunteers to help. Lichvar is the contact.

Maurer distributed a report on data from the Sarah Mine discharge and said he doesn't believe it is being properly monitored.

Lichvar described at length changes in environmental organizations and agencies wrought by federal efforts to reduce costs. He noted that several offices have closed, agencies have been eliminated, and many long-time employees have lost their jobs. In addition, he said, once-secure funding sources have been rescinded or are in question for the future.

He distributed material from the National Associated of Conservation Districts describing the situation as well as a sample letter from Trout Unlimited to members of Congress asking for a continuation of TU funds for pollution work. He named several outdoor writers who were preparing articles subject and its potential impact on outdoor recreation and environmental restoration.

**Next Meeting**

Thursday, May 15, 3:00 PM at Greenhouse Park

Sarver moved to adjourn.

Minutes kept by Joe Gorden.