

## **SCRIP Meeting Minutes**

**May 15, 2024 @ 3:00 p.m.  
Windber Hotel, Windber PA**

A SCRIP meeting, held on May 15, 2024 at the Windber Hotel, was called to order at 3:08 p.m. The meeting was attended by SCRIP Board Members Adam Cotchen, Len Lichvar, Melissa Reckner, Joe Gorden, John Dryzal, Karlice Makuchan, and Malcolm Crittenden. Dave Leiford and Larry Hutchinson joined the meeting in progress.

The meeting was also attended by Sam Faith of the PA Department of Environmental Protection, Dina Cable and Tyler Crooks of the PA Fish and Boat Commission, Tom Clark of Kleinfelder, Dave Wright of Mountain Laurel Trout Unlimited, and Mike Maurer of Pheasants Forever. Dave Thomas of DEP and Nate Yingling of PFBC joined the meeting in progress.

Introductions were made.

Makuchan/Dryzal made a **MOTION** to accept the March meeting minutes as submitted. All in favor. Motion carried.

### **Treasurer's Report**

SCRIP has \$3,933.19 in its checking account. Cotchen detailed some of the recently cut checks.

### **Guests**

Maurer said he's been speaking with DEP and SCD regarding concerns of AMD in the Quemahoning Creek Watershed.

### **Partner Organizations**

#### ***Mountain Laurel Trout Unlimited***

Wright said their banquet was successful. Members completed four litter cleanups and have helped with some trout stockings. They installed a Laurel Highlands Fishing Trail sign and repaired a cross vein along Clear Shade. The Yellow Creek Coalition picnic is this Saturday.

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

Cable said the International Conservation Center in Fairhope is hosting summer camps and have asked for conservation activities. Camp dates for the 8-11 year olds are June 17-21 and July 8-12, while dates for the 12-14 y.o. are June 24-28 and July 15-19. More information and the contact email may be found here: [Class: ICC Camp | Pittsburgh Zoo & Aquarium](#).

Cable said trout stocking is pretty much over, and boating season is coming up. Registration for boats is now on a calendar year.

Crooks thanked those who helped at the recent school days at the Quemahoning. He said five or six schools helped install habitat structures in the Que and participated in some stations. The PFBC's website has the lat/long of the habitat structures. Kids really seemed to enjoy the day. Lichvar said he, Gorden, Leiford, and Crittenden participated on behalf of SCRIP and shared pictures.

Cable said a Rockwood teacher is looking for fly tying assistance this summer. Wright would be the guy!

### **Stonycreek River Progress Report**

Lichvar said the Oven Run Trust Fund has \$58,717.17. The District is working with the Community Foundation to raise notoriety and funds for Oven Run. He shared a copy of a new, draft brochure that will be mailed to several lists. Forbes Trail Brewery will do a special beer next year that will serve as a fundraiser, too.

Lichvar elaborated on the recent mine blowouts in Johnstown and Hollsopple that both affected the Stonycreek. The one in Johnstown was along Franklin Street on the first day of Trout and seemed to be episodic from heavy rains and subsidence. Dryzal said there appears to be a pipe there for a discharge that was blocked. The other, in Hollsopple, was above Butcher's Hole and the adjacent road is compromised. InnoH2O tested it and measured a 6.9-7 pH. The samples didn't have iron or manganese, just sediment. Lichvar elaborated on the agency response on a Saturday.

He said a blowout that didn't happen, but could have, was when the Conemaugh Township Water Authority was putting in a new water line, and Greg Shustrick noted that they weren't aware of the intake line for the Lion Mining Treatment System, since it was not marked. Had the Authority hit that, the South Fork Bens Creek and Stonycreek would have been severely affected.

Lichvar said they're still sampling the Gondar discharge, and Maurer is keeping tabs on the property ownership issues. Thanks to Maurer for doing that.

The Stonycreek Rendezvous is this weekend.

### **Little Conemaugh Progress Report**

Dryzal said they'll be doing a streambank stabilization project on Laurel Run with a Growing Greener grant. He listed other projects that are in the Bay watershed.

Dryzal expounded upon the AMD funds that are coming to the state. With 30% set aside for future endeavors, that means \$74 million / year is being squirreled away. Dryzal has questioned how those funds are invested and gaining interest to ensure the funds are there in the future. His quick calculations indicate that, at 5% interest, \$74 million will be \$18 Billion in 20 years. We need to make sure those funds are being invested - and invested wisely - so they're available in the future. Clark said Smoyer told him that DEP should have 20-30 years-worth of funds.

### **Public Relations**

Makuchan said June 7 is the deadline for the next newsletter, and she invited submissions and save-the-dates. She reviewed what she has so far. **Action Item:** Send items to [knmak1019@gmail.com](mailto:knmak1019@gmail.com). Since the deadline to apply for the Cambria County Master Naturalist training has passed, she will not include it. Dryzal noted that there are at least 10 applicants for this training.

Dryzal said Blacklick Valley students helped with a tree planting. He said someone from Berkley, CA was exploring the ash at a refuse pile along Blacklick for Rare Earth Elements.

Lichvar said Forbes Trail Brewery is having a function on June 15 from 12-5, the day before Father's Day, as an open house and invited SCRIP to participate. We would be set up outside. No one expressed interest or availability.

Reckner shared the Tribune-Democrat's article in which Makuchan was recognized for the YWCA's STEM award for her work in the community. She received a round of applause.

### **Shade Creek**

Hutchinson said he was at an awards ceremony with the Community Foundation for the Alleghenies. He shared that the Coanda screen and pipe were installed at the SGL228 and are bringing about 300 GPM into the first basin. There are fish in the ponds now, too, from the locals. About 20 children participated in their recent fish rodeo. Shade-Central City High School's TIC Release Day was modified due to weather and an early release. SCWA is still planning its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration that will be in August. Saint Francis University students will collect macros in the watershed in early June.

Lichvar noted that the Gahagen project that started in 2008 is finally finished and highlighted the tenacity of SCWA for sticking with the project. Lichvar said PACD TAG shepherded that system from start to finish. He commented that it shouldn't take 14 years to get a system up and running.

He brought up SRI/POWR's survey and said the District is really trying to impress that permitting is terribly difficult. There should be a DEP AMD permit, since we're not installing a Walmart.

Lichvar lamented how local landowners are dredging Coal Run in Boynton and ruining wetlands, but asked what kind of penalty the landowners will see. Conservation groups try to do it the right way and meet a ton of hurdles. A discussion followed. Gorden suggested conservation groups write a letter to representatives and leaders of state agencies expressing the difficulties in restoration, asking for a more streamline process. Each group could add its own experience with the process. Gorden would like to make a motion that SCRIP write such a letter. Thomas cautioned to be careful of what we wish for. Lichvar made a **MOTION** that we follow up on the AMD survey to solicit info on AMD specific permits for conservation and similar groups. The discussion continued. POWR is spearheading this survey, but it's unclear how the results will be used. Lichvar withdrew the motion. Cotchen said following up with POWR/SRI on the survey is a good idea.

### **New Business**

Clark said Branden Diehl recently told him that he heard the RFP for the Little Conemaugh plant will be released in 45 days.

Faith said DEP is starting to fill vacancies. The California office is the underground mine map repository for the state, and they've added a lot of non-coal underground workings to their files. Faith said to contact his office if you need that information. In the California office, one of the issues has been that NPDES permitting is taking so long, but they are hiring a section chief to focus on that. It's all Title V stuff (post-1977) but could still help groups. DMO created a new trust management section, which, in the end, with long term water treatment funds, will allow them to manage \$510 million in funds specifically earmarked for treating certain discharges.

Faith said MD31's latest numbers show that the chemistry is still tracking as they expected. There are occasional blurps above baseline, but that discharge always had them. They are considering the discharge to be at baseline and said they will support the statement.

Faith said the permit review is completed for the Kimberly Run Mine on Wells Creek and is ready to be bonded. That will stop discharges that are popping up in backyards and affecting water sources.

He said Rox Coal requested a bond release for the Sarah Mine by Camp Sequanota but some discharges were found and are being reviewed. It looks like Rox will be held responsible for those discharges.

Crittenden said he'll be breaking ground on his cabin in Foustwell and would like to host a summer SCRIP meeting in the future.

Gorden said Mandy Smith of the PFBC asked if SCRIP was going to host a boating or fishing event this summer. He questioned the state of Joey's Jackets, noting that we thought a coordinated event would be appropriate. Reckner said Jeff Sarver, through SCWA, received a Sea Tow Foundation grant for jackets, but the Community Foundation for the Alleghenies denied their grant application for a shed to house the jackets. Several places are still collecting PFDs. It's unclear who is coordinating the project as a whole.

**Next Meeting Date**

July 10, 2024 at 3 p.m. at Greenhouse Park

Reckner/Hutchinson made a **MOTION** to adjourn at 4:46 pm. All in favor. Motion carried.

Minutes by Reckner.