

SCRIP Meeting Minutes
September 10, 2024 @ 3:00 p.m.
Greenhouse Park, Johnstown

The Sept. 10, 2024 meeting of the Stonycreek-Conemaugh River Improvement Project was called to order at Greenhouse Park by President Adam Cotchen with board members Joe Gorden, Len Lichvar, Karllice Makuchan, Larry Hutchinson, Jeff Sarver, John Dryzal and Jackie Ritko in attendance. Dave Leiford and Malcolm Crittenden joined the meeting in progress.

Also in attendance were Dave Wright of Mountain Laurel Trout Unlimited; Waterways Conservation Officer Tyler Crooks; Sam Faith of the state DEP; Sgt. Brendan Ryan of the Pa. Fish and Boat Commission Southwest Region office; Conemaugh Valley Conservancy Executive Director Dr. John Wenzel; Wendy Noe, Treatment Trust ADF Site Manager DEP's California District Office; and Mike Maurer of Pheasants Forever.

Introductions were made. Gorden kept the minutes.

The previous meeting's minutes were approved. Hutchinson/Dryzal

Wenzel said the CVC is updating its manual for volunteer water samplers because the day is coming when more of the burden of sampling will have to be borne by the public. He said the number of treatment facilities that have been built and are being built will eventually outstrip the conservancy's available manpower for sampling.

Cotchen said the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy and several partners planned a large wood habitat project on a mile and a half of Clear Shade Creek and a small portion of Mile Run. He said the project would be on state-owned land and would be funded by a Heritage grant.

Lichvar reported that distribution of fundraising brochures had brought new donations to the Stonycreek Trust Fund, which now totals \$59,191.21.

He also reported on electrofishing on Shingle Run, Coal Run and Dark Shade Creek that found evidence of wild, reproducing brook trout in Shingle and Dark Shade. He said no fish were found in Coal Run, but the sampling segment there was small.

He also reported on a fish survey held on Higgins Run to determine the effectiveness of the large wood habitat project built there earlier. He said the data indicated a marked improvement in young-of-the-year trout, and Cotchen reported that there had been an increase in both size and numbers of fish.

Lichvar added that another electrofishing survey would be conducted Sept. 19 on Oven Run, a section of the Stonycreek in Blough and the mouth of Beaverdam Creek on Sept. 19. He said anyone who cares to attend should meet at 9:30 a.m. at the Route 219 and 30 park-and-ride.

Lichvar said Somerset Conservation District Assistant Manager Greg Shustrick was supervising a project to install “rather large rocks” in the upper end of the Quemahoning Tailwater Fishery.

In a related matter, Lichvar said no headway has been made toward convincing the PFBC to adjust trout stocking allocations to put fish in the Stonycreek, so discussion was being held about seeking permission to capture wild brown trout from Higgins Run and Benscreek and stock them at the mouth of Quemahoning Creek in the hopes of establishing a fishery there.

Lichvar also said sampling has been expanded on Gonder Run, a weir has been added and there are still hopes of treatment of that discharge.

Faith said a permit had been issued for treating discharge into Wells Creek from the Kimberly Run Mine. He said pumping would begin in the next few months to lower the mine pool, which should improve the situation of four documented discharges and several private wells.

Sarver said the Shade Creek Watershed Association is expecting an OSM grant that will fund limestone dosing for the next several years on Shingle, Panther, Berkebile and Laurel runs. He said a contract should soon be awarded for work on Shade Creek and issued an open invitation to the SCWA 25th anniversary celebration from 1-5 p.m. on Sept. 21.

Makuchan announced that the fall newsletter deadline is Dec. 5. Makuchan has extended the original deadline for the Summer newsletter. Please send Save the Dates or articles to knmak1019@gmail.com by September 20.

Wright said the MLTU banquet would be held April 12 at The Willow.

The next SCRIP meeting is tentatively scheduled for 3 p.m. Nov. 13 at the Windber Hotel.

The meeting was adjourned. Sarver/Hutchinson