

SCRIP Meeting Minutes
September 13, 2023 @ 3:08 PM
Chuck & Chuckies Pavilion

A SCRIP meeting was held on September 13, 2023 at Chuck & Chuckies Pavilion and called to order at 3:08 PM. The meeting was attended by SCRIP Board Members Adam Cotchen, Len Lichvar, Larry Hutchinson, Jeff Sarver, Dave Leiford, Malcom Crittenden, and Jackie Ritko.

The meeting was also attended by Dave Wright of Mountain Laurel Trout Unlimited, Dave Thomas and Sam Faith of DEP, Chuck George of Chuck & Chuckies Pavilion, Pete Mishko (resident of Windber and Lake Stony Creek), Phylis Picoulas (resident of Lake Stony Creek), and John Wenzel of Conemaugh Valley Conservancy.

Sarver/Leiford made a **Motion** to accept the July meeting minutes as submitted. All in favor. Motion Carried.

Treasurer's Report

Cotchen – No bills to pay or activity to report.

Partner Organizations

Conemaugh Valley Conservancy

Wenzel reported that Cotchen with WPC completed fish studies at 50 different locations on Two Lick and Blacklick Creeks, funded through CVC.

CVC has been able to hire AmeriCorps Thad Pajek as a part-time employee.

Western PA Conservancy

Cotchen discussed the South Fork Bens Creek habitat project that is planned for the Chuck & Chuckies site for which a Growing Greener grant has been submitted.

Stonycreek River Progress Report

Lichvar reported the Oven Run Trust fund is back up to around \$49,000 after recent donations. Lichvar has noticed fading interest in the fund, so he is looking for a way to increase interest and donations.

There was a train/tri-axle accident on August 23rd at Cottage Lane and Carpenters Park Road, spilling approximately 1500 gal of diesel fuel from the train into the Stonycreek River. The spill was in a very bad location with steep embankments making access to area very difficult. CSX has paid to cleanup about 1/3 of the damage and continues to look into remediation options.

Lower Kimberly mine pool treatment options being explored. Looking at a pump and treat option, they had three different options. Option one, the best option, was rejected by the

landowner. Option two, the landowner wants \$1M to participate, and Option 3 is being reviewed. Corsa is currently being assessed daily fines until the situation is resolved.

Sarah mine bond release is gaining public interest. Local landowners and sportsmen club members are asking DEP for a public hearing or an informal conference to discuss issues with the current AMD discharges into Card Machine Run and Roaring Run in Jenner Township. Thomas reported that the AMD was existing before recent mining activity started, as displayed in old ariel photos. Faith discussed the difference between public hearing vs. informal conference, DEP will entertain a meeting with locals.

Adam Cotchen, Len Lichvar and Greg Shustrick met with PFBC Fishery Management staff Nathan Walters and Dave Nihart and Area 8 Fisheries Management staff to discuss fish stocking activities. Cotchen, Lichvar, and Shustrick believe the PFBC fisheries management is not keeping up with the water quality changes; therefore, stocked fish are being placed into tributaries such as the South Fork of Bens Creek that are capable of producing native trout and neglecting areas that should be stocked. The team is asking for a full review of PFBC fisheries management in the Stonycreek River watershed.

Keystone Trails Association will be doing hiking events around the area October 20th-22th, collecting information about outdoor activities to report to the public. Lichvar has been invited to speak to the group on local water quality improvement initiatives.

Visit Johnstown - Lichvar discussed a local tourist promotion agency publication that does not properly reflect the angling opportunities or the local conservation initiatives of the region and suggested SCRIP work with them for more accurate interpretation and promotion.

Paint Creek Watershed Association

No progress made on merger with SCWA.

Shade Creek Watershed Association

Sarver reported that the approved amendment for the Gahagen passive treatment system will be in-hand soon. A suggestion was made to apply for another extension to the existing Growing Greener grant to complete the installation of the Coanda Screen intake.

Reitz#1 system is being refilled after months of keeping levels low. DEP emergency maintenance team removed limestone baffles between settling ponds in the spring.

SCWA is still waiting for grant application to be approved for BIG 4, plus Reitz #1 research grant.

Thomas/Faith said DEP is concerned with the validity of some recent water sample results from MD31, asking CVC for copies of sample data for a 3rd party comparison. Wenzel will share data with Faith.

Pete Mishko introduced himself as a concerned landowner of property along Rt 160 between Central City and Windber. There is an abandoned mine (Arrow Mine) and a spoil pile on his property. Both of them are producing AMD that drains under Rt160 into Shade Creek. Mishko has met with DEP (Matt Osborne, Mike Timcik, Jon Smoyer) previously with no success. Asking SCWA for help to cleanup.

Pete Mishko and Phylis Picoulas are property owners at Lake Stony Creek. They are aware of pre-77 mine seeps leaking water into the lake. A local landowner was drilling a well and hit old mine water near Boone Run. Looking to get assistance with cleanup of these seeps.

Little Conemaugh

Ritko reported bridge replacement completed on North Branch.

Public Relations

Submissions for next newsletter due to Karlice Makuchan by December 1st, 2023. Submit items to knmak1019@gmail.com.

Old Business

Cotchen shared a new option for the SCRIP logo for review. No objections.

New Business

Wenzel – Univ of Penn holding a “Small Community & Rural Water Issues” workshop on November 29th or 30th at the Johnstown Discovery Center. Looking for a local speaker to discuss local problems. Wenzel will share the date once finalized. Volunteers looking to speak, should contact John Wenzel , jwenzel@pacvc.org

Lichvar – Backcountry Hunters & Anglers opposition of HB1300.

https://www.backcountryhunters.org/pa_hb_1300 This bill, if passed, would transfer \$150M from the Game Fund. This transfer sets a dangerous precedent for future actions. Money paid into the Game Fund through license fees in the Pittman-Robertson fund are intended to be used to benefit wildlife habitat and administration. The Department of the Interior agrees this is a violation of the laws of the Pittman-Robertson Fund and puts the Game Fund at a huge risk of losing future funding. The Bill has passed the Senate and is going to the House next.

Lichvar/Sarver made a **Motion** for SCRIP to draft a letter in opposition to the House. All in Favor. Motion carried. Cotchen will write the letter and submit.

Next meeting – Nov 1st, 3:00 PM Location TBD

Meeting adjourn 4:40PM

Thanks to Chuck George for hosting the meeting and supplying refreshments and food.

Minutes by Sarver.