

SCRIP Meeting Minutes

July 24, 2023 @ 3:19 p.m.

Greenhouse Park

A SCRIP meeting was held on July 24, 2023 at Greenhouse Park called to order at 3:19 pm. The meeting was attended by SCRIP Board Members Adam Cotchen, Len Lichvar, Jim Eckenrode, Melissa Reckner, Joe Gorden, Larry Hutchinson, John Dryzal, Dave Leiford, Malcolm Crittenden, Jackie Ritko, Robb Piper, and Karlice Makuchan.

The meeting was also attended by Richard (Rick) Ames of Cambria Somerset Authority, while Eric Oliver and Tom Clark of Kleinfelder, Branden Diehl of the Foundation for Pennsylvania Watersheds, and Dave Wright of Mountain Laurel Trout Unlimited joined the meeting in progress.

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

Treasurer's Report

Eckenrode reported that SCRIP has \$3,653.19 in its checking account.

Partner Organizations

Center for Watershed Research and Service

Eckenrode said they were busy doing sites for SRI's Snapshot and noted the Hinemyer site needs some maintenance. He had questions about Cottagetown and a removed pipe that is lessening the amount of water in a VFR. They are still studying the Puritan system. Eckenrode had a tour of Oven Run B and the Cresson plant. He explained work they are doing outside SCRIP's focus area.

Conemaugh Valley Conservancy

Cotchen said on behalf of SCRIP, he wrote a letter of support for CVC's grant proposal.

Cotchen said WPC completed electrofishing in the Blacklick Creek watershed and found wild trout in Rummel Run near Wehrum and a small UNT to the North Branch of Blacklick near Rexis.

Cambria Somerset Authority

Ames said there is spillway overage at all their dams, and flows are looking good. The reservoirs' water chemistry is good, and some really nice fish are coming out of the Que.

Western PA Conservancy

Cotchen said WPC is helping the Somerset Conservation District do more large structure work on Higgins Run. They submitted a Growing Greener grant application to do 2K feet of streambank improvement work along the South Fork of Bens Creek. A pre-project electrofishing survey was recently completed.

Stonycreek River Progress Report

Lichvar said MLTU is giving \$3K to the Oven Run trust fund.

The Oven Run Site F (Hawk View) system was offline for several months because of wildlife. Several groups worked together to de-sludge and repair the site. The system was turned back on about two weeks ago, so all Oven Run systems are currently online. Shade Township will be doing the mowing at Sites E and A. This Saturday, the District will be installing some anti-beaver fencing at Site D. Ridge Energy is operating near Site F and will test some refuse for potential removal. Officials from the Government Accountability Office (GAO) toured Oven Run and spoke with local conservation representatives.

Lichvar elaborated on the work of their interns.

He said Biomost is trying to fix the Trompes at Rock Tunnel, and the Jenner Twp supervisors are looking to extend a trail to the Boswell passive treatment system site, which is owned by Somerset County Conservancy.

Lichvar said the electrofishing survey on Bens Creek was also to limit stocking over wild trout populations. He shared pictures.

He said he's boiled down the Stonycreek's 30 years of restoration to a few pages and shared a copy.

Dryzal noted we need to do a better job of marketing ourselves.

Somerset Lake is full of water, but not fish yet, and it is open to boating. Some stocking of fingerlings has occurred, but it is not an established fishery yet.

Cotchen said he saw on the news that a teen drowned while tubing in the Stonycreek River, near the area known as "The Showers." It is very sad, and as water quality improves and river usage increases, more accidents are likely.

Paint Creek

Reckner said she submitted the final report and reimbursement request for the Babcock Creek project. Crittenden will be sampling the sites, which will inform next steps.

Clark said he received data on the Stefanko project and is working with BAMR to adding the site to Abandoned Mine Lands Inventory.

Shade Creek

Hutchinson said there was a blow out at the Reitz #1 site three months ago, but it's still not right. They will be asking if SRI/Biomost would be willing to de-sludge the site and use the on-site geotube. A Technical Assistance Grant will pay for the work. In the end, the #1 system needs re-worked. Hutchinson said they still do not have a permit for site 228.

Little Conemaugh Progress Report

Cotchen thanked Diehl for coming. Diehl said the Foundation hoped the Little Conemaugh project would have moved faster, but the properties needed for the treatment plant were acquired and are owned by the Foundation. They have access to Sonman and secured highway access permits. DEP installed monitoring wells on the property. Diehl said they submitted a grant proposal for design and engineering considerations. They expect award announcements in September, and then it'll be four months to get that executed. RFPs will be out next year and will be by invite only. Sludge injection is desired at the plant location, but the viability of that is to be determined. DEP has caused delays with the Jamestown Rod Gun Club to explore connecting the Hughes and Sonman mine pools. There are a lot of new attorneys at DEP, so it takes time to educate them, but they're coming on board. An easement was a concern. Diehl said Portage Municipal Authority will need to extend water and sewer lines, but that might work well with a larger project they are proposing. Diehl would like 18 months for design considerations. The Foundation was going to do some geotech work with their own funds, but decided consultants will likely want their own data anyways, so they are skipping that. The Miller Mine Shaft inclusion is still on the drawing board, but it will be a separate, future phase. The focus is on Sonman and Hughes now.

There was a short discussion on the procurement guidelines that allow for invite-only. Professional services can be named by municipalities. Some think NGOs should be allowed to do the same. With less bidders, companies are more likely to prepare a good proposal.

Diehl expanded upon what Lichvar said, stating GAO representatives from Colorado, Texas and Georgia toured Oven Run. The GAO is one of five or seven independent agencies within the federal government that reports to Congress. They didn't think of regional work as a watershed community. They were more interested in procedure, not the technical aspects of projects. Diehl said they weren't familiar with AMD at all, but they asked really good questions including the efficiency of OSMRE and how to monitor economic impact. (Qualitatively might be sufficient.)

Ritko listed several projects that are in the works or for which funding has been requested including several in the Blacklick and Little Conemaugh watersheds like a stream restoration

project where refuse was removed in Vintondale, Laurel Run Phase 2 with the Dunlo Rod and Gun Club, and refuse removal in headwaters of the South Fork L. Conemaugh and Sulfur Creek.

Public Relations

Makuchan said September 1 is the deadline for the next newsletter, and she invited even short article submissions and save-the-dates. **Action Item:** Send items to knmak1019@gmail.com.

Gorden said there is an **Intro to Kayaking** event in partnership with PFBC on **August 11 at the Quemahoning**. Four board members are available that day: Reckner, Lichvar, Sarver, and Crittenden, and maybe Cotchen. The PFBC is handling registration, but SCRIP will have a chance to say a few words. There are two sessions, **4:00 and 6:00 p.m.** Lichvar will bring newsletters which have membership forms. Gorden shared the flyer and asked for help distributing it. **Additional volunteers are welcomed to help at the event.**

Old Business

Reckner/Piper made a **MOTION** to spend up to \$250 for 200 SCRIP static stickers, like the 30th anniversary ones, but without the dates. All in favor. Motion carried.

Reckner said NatureWorks will be held at the BottleWorks in March and that a separate event, geared towards adults, will be held at the Pasquerilla Performing Arts Center (PPAC) at UPJ in February, before a concert. Groups that expressed interest in the PPAC event will be invited to see the space at an hour-long meeting in November.

New Business

Crittenden said PA Woods and Forest is hosting Frog Week next week. See details on Facebook or their website.

Next Meeting Date

September 13 at 3 PM at Chuck and Chuckie's pavilion located at 4318 Somerset Pike, HOLLISOPPLE. There is a sign with the address on site. Bring food and drink to share after the meeting, and your fishing rod!

Reckner/Hutchinson made a **MOTION** to adjourn at 4:41 pm. All in favor. Motion carried.

Minutes by Reckner.