

SCRIP Meeting Minutes

July 10, 2025 @ 3:00 p.m.

Greenhouse Park

The July 10, 2025 meeting of the Stonycreek-Conemaugh River Improvement Project was called to order by President Adam Cotchen at Greenhouse Park in Tire Hill at 3:11 PM. It was attended by SCRIP Board Members Melissa Reckner, Karlice Makuchan, Len Lichvar, Larry Hutchinson, John Dryzal, Robb Piper, Joe Gorden, Jim Eckenrode, Jeff Sarver, and Dave Leiford. Malcolm Crittenden joined the meeting in progress.

Other attendees were Dave Wright of Mountain Laurel Trout Unlimited, Mike Maurer of Pheasants Forever, John Wenzel of Conemaugh Valley Conservancy, and WPCAMR volunteer Tom Grote.

Makuchan/Sarver made a **MOTION** to approve the previous meeting minutes. All in favor. Motion carried.

Eckenrode reported an expense from Recharge Web Design for SCRIP's website and updates. Reckner shared a receipt for two books of stamps totaling \$29.20, and SCRIP's post office box rental, which is \$84 for a year if we renew by July 13.

Partner Organizations

Bottomlands Conservancy

Lichvar reported that the group oversaw a pipe replacement at Oven Run Site F. Even though they are treating more water now than ever before, even more water is being bypassed now, too, as flows have generally increased. They have been doing some wildlife plantings, primarily at Hawk View, with support from Pheasants Forever. They continue to sample water throughout the systems. Their new website is www.bottomlandsconservancy.org. Lichvar said they have approached CNX about crossing the rail line to remove refuse. A crossing would benefit the sewer authority, too, and they're willing to pay for the crossing; however, the landowner – Bottomlands – would be liable for any incidents at that crossing.

Bottomlands is providing a tour of the Oven Run treatment systems for PACD's annual meeting next week on July 16, beginning at 2:30 p.m. at Oven Run Site D. All are invited to attend.

Cambria Somerset Authority

Lichvar said, in cooperation with PA Fish and Boat Commission, some trees will be felled into the lake this August to provide habitat. Dryzal said habitat work will happen next year at Hinckston Dam.

Center for Watershed Research and Service

Eckenrode said they're still doing Rare Earth Elements research for OSM. He redeployed a sonde in Elk Run just this week. Stackhouse Park said they could use some help with bridges there, so he'll look into that.

Conemaugh Valley Conservancy

Wenzel said they've been flushing the Weaver Run systems to see if that restores functionality. Eckenrode suggested asking BioMost to review the site and to possibly get them to do some work.

Mountain Laurel Trout Unlimited

Wright said members have done youth education at the Windber Sportsmen's Club, Windber Recreation Park, Blue Knob State Park, and Quemahoning Rod and Gun, and they will be at the New Baltimore Sportsmen's this weekend. MLTU provided Western PA Conservancy help on the South Fork of Bens Creek. MLTU recently made donations to the Oven Run Trust Fund and Bottomlands Conservancy. MLTU's annual banquet will be March 28, 2026 at the Sunnehanna Country Club. Cotchen explained the Bens Creek work, and Lichvar shared press covering some projects.

PA Fish and Boat Commission

Lichvar said a letter was submitted requesting a stocking of adult trout in the lower end of Stonycreek, after Don Anderson asked if at least two miles of public access could be secured, which it could.

Pheasants Forever

Maurer said they're still working to protect Card Machine and Roaring Runs, which have had E&S issues due to work in the area. A mine is proposed, too. Troy Williams replaced Sam Faith at DEP, and Maurer has spoken with him. Maurer's brother caught a wild rainbow trout on Shaffer Run, a tributary to Laurel Hill Creek. Cotchen said there are plans to remove the old hatchery. Cotchen said above the hatchery is currently a Class A wild brook trout fishery, but that will change when the brown trout move in after the hatchery is removed.

Western PA Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation

WPCAMR and EPCAMR will begin a new podcast series featuring guests from the AMR community.

Stonycreek River Progress Report

Lichvar said, visually, it seems the DEP finished its work near the Rock Tunnel system, where a discharge blew out and caused road issues. He said last week DEP surveyed fish in Bens Creek above and below Rock Tunnel and found a few more trout below than above.

Cotchen said he caught two 10-inch smallmouth bass in the Stonycreek at Greenhouse Park before the meeting.

Little Conemaugh River Progress Report

Dryzal said TetraTech has 30% of the design work done for the L. Conemaugh plant. At the Krayn coal refuse removal project, wetland delineation is done and work boundaries are defined. The District will be meeting with DEP to ensure all is well before moving forward.

Dryzal said on the North Branch of Little Conemaugh next year, they'll be doing more fish habitat and streambank stabilization above Hinkston. CEC is the engineering firm for Rosebud, which needs design help and technical assistance to complete habitat work in the area.

Shade Creek

Sarver said they are still collecting water data for the Big 4 project. The group has a meeting with the Community Foundation for the Alleghenies next week to discuss fundraising. The Community Foundation also has a program that would allow them to be a fiscal sponsor for future Infrastructure Bill money, which SCWA may explore for the Big 4, Phase II.

SCWA had a work day at Gahagan to remove overgrown vegetation.

Hutchison said, at Reitz #1, that someone talked to a landowner and fixed a pipe that gets clogged with iron.

The Coanda screen took a direct hit from an 8" tree and was not affected.

Public Relations

Makuchan said September 5 is the deadline for the next newsletter. She received notice that Publisher is not going to be part of the Microsoft suite in the future. Dryzal suggested Canva, which his staff feels is more user-friendly. **ACTION ITEM:** Please send articles and upcoming events to her.

Lichvar shared a *Tribune-Democrat* article in which Dryzal was featured on the front page (above the fold) speaking about how federal cuts will affect the conservation community. The article was published beyond the region, even into Mercer County.

Grote reminded that the PA Abandoned Mine Reclamation conference will be held October 14-16 at Toftrees Resort in State College. Register and find details at <https://2025.treatminewater.com/>. Scholarships are available for lodging. Non-profits can register at a reduced rate.

Old Business

Eckenrode said the Center for Watershed Research and Service is evaluating self-flushing agri-drain boxes. **ACTION ITEM:** If you have worked with them or modified them, please reach out to him. They are trying to find a way to make them operate on flow or chemistry instead of time and to improve their motherboard.

New Business

Piper/Dryzal made a **MOTION** to pay the bills. All in favor. Motion carried.

Next Meeting

Thursday, September 18, 3:30 PM at Chuck and Chuckie's along Route 985 and Bens Creek. Cotchen will confirm with Chuck and supply an address before the meeting. We'll make it a pot-luck and invite other groups to highlight the project. It has a full kitchen, restrooms, and electricity.

Reckner made a motion to adjourn at 4:15 p.m.

Minutes kept by Melissa Reckner.