

SCRIP Meeting Minutes

March 9, 2023 @ 3 p.m.

Windber Hotel

A SCRIP meeting was held on March 9, 2023 at the Windber Hotel and called to order at 3:15 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, Jeff Sarver, and Karlice Makuchan.

The meeting was also attended by Tom Malesky, Jon Smoyer, and Pat Webb from DEP; Dave Wright of Mountain Laurel Trout Unlimited; Tom Clark and Sami Pretzel of Kleinfelder; Brandon Backus; and Linda Yunke.

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

Treasurer's Report

Eckenrode reported that SCRIP has \$3,750.26 in its checking account. Hutchinson/Reckner made a **MOTION** to accept the report. All in favor. Motion carried.

Guests

Smoyer said the state will receive a huge influx of AML/AMD money from the Infrastructure Bill and STREAM Act, including \$244.9 million a year for 15 years with \$74 million each year available to set aside for OM&R. Of course, this opens lots of new project possibilities including the South Fork Little Conemaugh and Reitz 4, which is not yet back to baseline but should be in the next 6 months. DEP is still sampling it. OSM will do an eligibility evaluation, but no problems are expected. Funds will allow the state to look at all passive systems, as well.

Webb shared a PowerPoint on the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), also known as the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and AML Fee Reauthorization status, as of March 2023. DEP will apply for \$244.9 million each year and each application will be valid for 5 years, so lots of funds will roll over. The STREAM Act is more of a set aside of 30% for P3 AMD, P1/P2 mine fires, and P1/P2 mine subsidence. BIL funds are “use or lose” after 20 years, and can be used for AMD treatment, system OM&R, and water supply issues. The STREAM Act funds are a line-item expenditure and stay in state funds, and so there is no deadline to spend them; it’s basically a long term savings account. The state is expecting:

- ◆ \$26.5 million coal fee based (variable, based on coal production; 13 years)
- ◆ \$244.9 BIL/IIJAA (annual for 15 years)
- ◆ \$26.63 mil AMLER (extra)

The DEP is adding staff and ramping up grant opportunities. There are three grant rounds this year with the current round set to close on April 28. (Subsequent rounds run July 3 – August 25, and October 2 to December 2, 2023.)

DEP representatives explained that there is a Problem Area Description (PAD) list in the grant app and on the DEP website to encourage public engagement to appease the Biden administration. DEP is always adding AML/AMD sites to the system. Sites must be pre-SMCRA (1977) and created by coal mining. Coal refuse piles are eligible under BIL/IIJA. Haulage could be subsidized, but are there enough facilities to take refuse and in a timely manner?

Smoyer clarified that a grant is called a “subaward” since it’s federal dollars. They are working with 15 firms and reviewing 29 others for the short list of project bidders. To get BIL funds, companies need:

- ◆ Compliance with Justice 40 initiatives.
- ◆ To encourage unionized labor agreements.
- ◆ To track the number of and incentivize the employment of current or former employees of coal industry.
- ◆ Davis – Bacon construction labor wage rates.
- ◆ Follow Build America, Buy American (BABA) Act.

Smoyer said developmental, design, and construction grants may be combined, but it is not recommended due to grant time constraints. Organizations can get a grant to do anything BAMR would be doing, but will have just 3 years to do it. The landowner has to be onboard before design – Consent right of entry. Those are secured in development. Federal dollars won’t be used to buy property; it’s too complicated.

There is an Economic Single Application online, similar to Growing Greener. A discussion on permitting and review ensued. Smoyer noted that contingencies can’t be funded by federal dollars.

An update of Active Treatment Plants (ATP):

- ◆ Little Conemaugh – Smoyer said it’s close; not exact. The design should be started in a year. It’s probably the most complicated one to date. DEP sunk another monitoring well on FPW land. Sonman has an obstruction that is not allowing it to draw down, and it fluctuates dramatically, so Hughes can’t be dropped into it. The Miller Shaft will be separate in a phase 2 or 3. The Sulfur Creek discharge is easy to move, and DEP and Rosebud are discussing moving it sooner. Naturally, Rosebud wants to make sure they don’t sacrifice their plant capacity and have room to pull down Mine 78 more, if necessary, to access reserves.
- ◆ Shade – BAMR will do some of the development work, but they will probably turn it over to another entity. They won’t do design.
- ◆ South Fork / Beavertdale – It is down the line, but not forgotten. It would be an ATP and include the Logan discharge.
- ◆ Blacklick – It’s under construction and should be up and running in 2024. It’s going to be OSM’s poster child. There are two DEP inspectors on site daily. Robindale is taking the refuse pile.

Partner Organizations

Center for Watershed Research and Service

Eckenrode shared info on work outside the watershed. He said the Incline Plane project is moving forward. Deitz needs more water quality data and has started development of an ATP.

Cambria Somerset Authority

Reckner shared an article announcing that Earl Waddell will be retiring this summer. Lichvar said CSA is doing a new video on the recreational opportunities at all the reservoirs.

CVC

Crittenden said Pajak has taken over Stream Team sampling. Crittenden will start sampling Babcock sites.

Western PA Conservancy

Cotchen said they'll be doing some biological surveys in the Blacklick Creek drainage. The Higgins Run large wood project was covered by the *Tribune Democrat*. The next large wood project will be in the Clear Shade Wild Area. The Somerset Conservation District is looking into a Coldwater Heritage Partnership app to do a little under 2 miles there. Cotchen said the PA Game Commission is starting to meet with land managers and prioritize AML on these public lands, and they will be working with WPC to address the issues.

Stonycreek River Progress Report

Lichvar said the Oven Run trust fund received a \$1K contribution from the Concert for Conservation. Oven Run Site E's 1800' pipeline is obstructed, so they'll be applying for a grant to replace that line. Hawk View needs TLC, too, so two Oven Run systems are currently offline.

Lichvar said the Lambert's Run saga is still ongoing. The project's permits will need re-done and that's if the new system location is even feasible.

Paint Creek

VOLUNTEER OPP: Reckner said the annual litter cleanup in the L. Paint Creek watershed is slated for Saturday, April 29. Volunteers should meet at 8 AM along Berwick Road.

Shade Creek

Sarver said they are preparing a few grant applications and a letter of support for the Clear Shade project. He said 228's intake was modified to bring in more water, and he flushed the system this past weekend.

The SCWA/PCRWA merger still under discussion.

Public Relations

Makuchan said Yunke and Hutchinson will be helping at SCRIP's table at NatureWorks.

She reviewed the articles for the upcoming newsletter. Send items to knmak1019@gmail.com.

A video about the Oven Run re-dedication did not win in a PACD contest, but Lichvar will share the link = **Action Item**.

Action Item: Makuchan said the deadline for the next newsletter is June 1.

Old Business

Reckner did write a thank you letter to Senator Casey on behalf of SCRIP as directed at the last meeting.

New Business

Eckenrode/Gorden made a **MOTION** to add Jackie Ritko to the SCRIP Board of Directors. All in favor. Motion carried.

Eckenrode/Reckner made a **MOTION** for Cotchen to ask Emblems Plus to provide SCRIP with a few new logo options. Reckner said more static stickers are needed for members.

Lichvar said the District's summer intern will be Grace Leiford.

Backus said he's present to learn more about what SCRIP does. His background is business administration, and he's now into real estate. He and his family moved to the area for its natural beauty, and he is interested in helping to improve it.

Eckenrode said Cliff Denholm wants to do another sampling Snapshot. Eckenrode noted that SRI split from BioMost.

Next Meeting Date

May 24 at 3 PM at Jim & Jimmies.

Leiford/Reckner made a **MOTION** to adjourn at 5:05 pm. All in favor. Motion carried.

Minutes by Reckner.