

SCRIP Meeting Minutes

March 12, 2026 @ 3:30 p.m.

The Windber Hotel

The March 12, 2026 meeting of the Stonycreek-Conemaugh River Improvement Project was called to order by Chairman Adam Cotchen at The Windber Hotel at 3:43 PM. It was also attended by SCRIP Board Members Melissa Reckner, Karlice Makuchan, Len Lichvar, Jackie Ritko, Larry Hutchinson, Joe Gorden, John Dryzal, Jim Eckenrode, Robb Piper, Malcolm Crittenden, and Dave Leiford. Jeff Sarver joined the meeting in progress.

Other attendees were Greg Shustrick and Jonathan Yoder of Somerset Conservation District, Pete Mishko, Mike Maurer of Pheasants Forever, Dave Wright of Mountain Laurel Trout Unlimited, Tom Grote of Shade Creek Watershed Association, and Vinny Paczek of the Paint Creek Regional Watershed Association.

Introductions were made.

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

Per Piper's request, a motion and electronic vote were made after the January meeting to satisfy anticipated questions from the bank. Reckner/Piper made a **MOTION** that SCRIP's checks, regardless of amount, need to have two signatures and that the signatories be SCRIP's Chairman and Treasurer who are currently Cotchen and Piper. Seven board members replied yea, while two made comments but did not render a vote, and four members did not reply. The motion passed.

Treasurer's Report

Piper provided a written report to the SCRIP Board prior to the meeting and said he, Eckenrode, and Cambria County Conservation District staff performed an audit of SCRIP's books. SCRIP currently has \$3,456.63 in its checking account. Piper and Dryzal reviewed SCRIP's PA Invest account yesterday and explained that the interest earned on that account goes to SAC for their administration of that fund. Eckenrode said Recharge Web Design sent SCRIP a letter thanking SCRIP for its business and for being easy to work with. Dryzal/Hutchinson made a **MOTION** to accept the Treasurer's Report. All in favor. Motion passed.

Guests

Paczek said he is trying to find interested people to serve on the Paint Creek Regional Watershed Association board of directors and get some movement within that group again. **ACTION ITEM:** Please reach out to him if you're interested in this.

Partner Organizations

Bottomlands Conservancy

Lichvar said there has been no movement on the railroad agreement needed to remove some refuse near Oven Run.

He and Alan Berkey raised funds to stock Quemahoning Creek on March 25 at three locations. Help is needed to stock, and it only takes about an hour. **ACTION ITEM:** Volunteers should meet at 10 a.m. at the Lion's Community Park in Boswell.

He shared a copy of Bottomlands new logo that features a woodcock.

Cambria Somerset Authority

Reckner shared a *Tribune-Democrat* article from February 6, 2026 that indicates Joe Conti is CSA's new operations manager. It also stated that CSA is working with Penn State to study how their discharges are affecting aquatic life now that the receiving waters are no longer orange from mine drainage. Shustrick said Partners for Wildlife is looking to install some early successional habitat around the Quemahoning.

Center for Watershed Research and Service

Eckenrode said they have a new design for controlling Agri-Drain boxes and for replacing the internal components more economically. They'll deploy one this month and see how it works. They will be working with the Nanty Glo Water Authority on sediment issues.

Conemaugh Valley Conservancy

Shustrick said the Somerset Conservation District is working with CVC to rehabilitate the Weaver Run treatment systems.

Mountain Laurel Trout Unlimited

Wright said their spring banquet will be at the Sunnehanna Country Club on March 28. They are raffling chances on an e-bike. He said between now and Labor Day they have 16 educational programs and three litter cleanups in the Stonycreek River watershed.

Paint Creek Regional Watershed Association

Paczek had nothing to add to his earlier statements.

PA Fish and Boat Commission

Lichvar said PFBC did stock trout in a new section of Stonycreek below Glessner Covered Bridge.

Pheasants Forever

Maurer said they held their 27th banquet earlier this month with 120 people in attendance. [View pictures here](#). They did well. They are working with Shustrick on some projects and planning a project at Mensers Bottom in partnership with the Somerset County Conservancy. He has access to reasonably priced seed if you need any.

Western Pennsylvania Conservancy

Cotchen said they are working on permits for some strategic wood projects along Dark Shade Creek and Stewarts Run.

He and Shustrick met with the Greater Johnstown Water Authority about potential work in Bens Creek. DEP is mandating repairs on North Fork and later Dalton Run dams, so they are interested in projects that might reduce runoff into these reservoirs.

Western PA Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation

Grote said if you are waiting on your OSM Cooperative Agreement Program grant, please contact Andy McAllister or Anne Daymut at WPCAMR.

The AMR Conference is set for October 20-22, 2026 at the Harrisburg/Hershey Conference Center in Grantville, PA.

Other

Grote said there is a lawsuit against Mike Maurer for harassment for questioning the validity of DEP's findings on AMD from drill boreholes put in the higher elevations of Laurel Mountain above Mike and other landowners' property. There will be a hearing in Meyersdale on May 15 at 10:15 a.m. It would be nice for people to show up in support of Maurer.

Stonycreek River Progress Report

Yoder said the Oven Run Trust Fund is about the same.

Lichvar said John Pile of the Wells Creek Watershed Association (WCWA) emailed him stating that their liability insurance will expire in April and they're looking for recommendations. Brett Insurance was recommended.

Shustrick is helping WCWA get an application into TU TAG to redo the Adams 7 AMD treatment system. BioMost was awarded that contract and sampling should begin this spring.

Shustrick said he is utilizing an Eastern Brook Trout Venture grant to do culvert work and large wood additions along the North Fork Bens Creek.

He said they also have a Coldwater Heritage Partnership grant to do large wood addition on Windber Water Authority (WWA) property adjacent Piney Run.

The District was encouraged to resubmit a Growing Greener grant application to remove the Piney Run dam. Paczek said the WWA hasn't pulled water from it since about 1990.

The District also has an app in to redo and expand the Rock Tunnel AMD treatment system.

Lichvar said Phil Wilson, who worked for PACD, is now working for DEP BAMR, and Lichvar sang his praises. They are looking to fill his position.

Shade Creek

Hutchinson said SCWA will hold a fishing rodeo for kids on May 2 along Laurel Run at the Reitz #1 AMD treatment system.

Shade Township asked SCWA to relocate due to the municipality's creation of a police force. The Grace Lutheran Church is allowing the watershed to store some of its equipment, but SCWA is looking for a permanent office. SCWA is raising funds for a shipping container that will be placed at the Reitz #1 treatment system for storage.

Sarver said the final draft report from the Research and Development project was sent to DEP, which had six pages of corrections. SCWA is conceding to some changes, but not all. The Phase 2 application is due in April.

SCWA is planning a community event this summer to inform the public about its projects.

Hutchinson said Shade-Central City High School is interested in creating a 3D image of the Big 4 mapping.

Sarver asked for input regarding funding sources to provide water to residences that pull drinking water from the #4 mine pool. AMLER funds should pay for water. Paczek suggested DCED, and Yoder suggested speaking with the PA Association of Municipalities.

Little Conemaugh River Progress Report

Ritko said there is no update on the active treatment system.

She said the Krayn project design is done and that they are working through DEP comments and permits. DEP will be responsible for the refuse removal.

DEP should take over the Little Conemaugh active treatment plant along Topper Run once Rosebud closes that mine. Moving the Sulfur Run borehole to it would be a good start to restoring the Sulfur Creek watershed.

Ritko said the District is meeting with the new CSA operations manager and Lisa Hollingsworth Segedy about removal of an in-stream dam in the South Fork of the Little Conemaugh River.

The District has several streambank improvement projects planned this summer.

Public Relations

Makuchan said the next newsletter will go out next week. Hutchinson and Makuchan will represent SCRIP at Nature Works on Saturday. **ACTION ITEM:** Please send articles and upcoming events to Makuchan for the third quarter newsletter by June 5.

Yoder said the Somerset Conservation District is holding a tree sale. He will share information with Makuchan.

Ritko shared flyers for the [PA Master Naturalist](#) training program that the Conservation District is hosting at Disaster's Edge this fall. The early bird deadline is April 3.

Reckner said SCRIP received an invite to participate in the Somerset Earth Day on April 25 from 10 AM – 2 PM. **ACTION ITEM:** Sarver will represent SCRIP. Contact him if you can help.

SCRIP was also invited to the PFBC's school days at the Que on May 5 & 6 from 9 AM – 2 PM. Lichvar and Gorden will represent SCRIP if we can provide them macroinvertebrates. **ACTION ITEM:** Additional help is welcomed. Reckner said they can provide some after the Richland TIC Release Day.

Old Business

Eckenrode said there are five signatories on SCRIP's account. Gordon/Leiford made a **MOTION** to remove Eckenrode, Gorden, and Lichvar from the account. All in favor. Motion carried.

Lichvar reminded that the *Crossing the Que* event will be June 28, 2026 at the Boswell Lion's Club community park. Cotchen will speak. SCRIP is invited to set up a table. There will be a concert followed by fireworks that evening.

Cotchen said at the last meeting SCRIP discussed drafting a letter asking that AML funds not be redirected elsewhere as proposed by SB2431, but Cotchen said that bill was already approved.

Gorden said UPJ has an archive of SCRIP documents from its founding. Uldis Katkins probably helped establish this. **ACTION ITEM:** Hutchinson volunteered to dig into that.

New Business

Reckner said Jackie Ritko is this year's recipient of the YWCA's Tribute to Women's STEM award and will be recognized at an event on May 21. Congratulations to Ritko, who received a round of applause! Reckner/Sarver made a **MOTION** to pay the YCWA \$100 for a ¼ page ad and \$100 for two scholarship tickets that allow young women to attend. All in favor. Motion carried.

Eckenrode/Hutchinson made a **MOTION** to reimburse Reckner for envelopes. All in favor. Motion carried. Eckenrode reminded that the website is a recurring and pre-approved bill.

Next Meeting

May 7, 2026 at Crittenden's new place in Foustwell between Hollsopple and Seanor along the Stonycreek River at 3:30 p.m. Reckner will share the lat/long in the reminder email in May.

Sarver/Makuchan made a **MOTION** to adjourn at 5:45 p.m. All in favor. Motion carried.

Minutes kept by Reckner.