

SCRIP Meeting Minutes
November 5, 2025 @ 3:30 p.m.
Windber Hotel

The November 5, 2025 meeting of the Stonycreek-Conemaugh River Improvement Project was called to order by President Adam Cotchen at the Windber Hotel at 3:42 PM. It was also attended by SCRIP Board Members Melissa Reckner, Karlice Makuchan, Len Lichvar, Jackie Ritko, Larry Hutchinson, Robb Piper, Jim Eckenrode, and Dave Leiford.

Other attendees were Dave Wright of Mountain Laurel Trout Unlimited, WPCAMR volunteer Tom Grote, Brad and Susan Clemenson of Conemaugh Valley Conservancy, and Tyler Crooks of PA Fish and Boat Commission.

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

Eckenrode reported that SCRIP has \$3,765.84 in its checking account at Somerset Trust. He reviewed SCRIP funds. The Southern Alleghenies Conservancy (SAC) sponsors SCRIP and serves as its 501(c)3. John Dryzal gets the quarterly summary of donations to SAC/SCRIP's fund at the Community Foundation. SCRIP can access all of its funds – not just the interest – at the Community Foundation, which is rare. SCRIP wants to make sure we're not missing anyone who joins as a member, so reviewing a copy of donations is important. Grote recommends SCRIP inquires to see who can access funds and ensure the correct names are on accounts. Piper/Reckner made a **MOTION** to approve treasurer's report. All in favor. Motion carried.

Guests

Clemenson introduced himself and his wife.

Partner Organizations

Bottomlands Conservancy

Lichvar said eight benches were added to Mallard's Rest AMD treatment system courtesy Alan Berkey.

Lichvar gave the Lutheran Advocacy group a tour of the Boswell treatment system.

Lichvar said CSX might be willing to budge on some of their criteria for the railroad crossing needed to remove waste coal along the Stonycreek River.

Lichvar said a BIL grant application that would allow the Gondar discharge to be piped to Boswell was not submitted, because landowner agreements were not secured in time. Instead, Bottomlands will pursue a TAG grant through TU. He said the Boswell treatment system spillway needs work, too.

Lichvar said Bottomlands Conservancy may complete work started by Malcolm Crittenden to submit a grant for the Menser property adjacent the Kimberly Run property.

Cambria Somerset Authority & Conemaugh Valley Conservancy

Clemenson said he is on the Stonycreek Quemahoning Initiative (SQI) board, which is pursuing funds to develop a guide and map for the trails around the Que. Both SQI and CVC may complete a new strategic plan. PEC and POWR are working with CVC to develop a project around river access throughout the Kiski Basin. Lichvar said PFBC is revising its 2010 rivers access plan.

Clemenson said CVC is working on a park adjacent the Incline Plane to support river access, mountain bike trails, and maybe a zip line.

Center for Watershed Research and Service

Eckenrode said they are making progress on the alternative electronics for agri-drain boxes. The manufacturer is not willing to make changes, but did not prohibit anyone else from modifying them.

Mountain Laurel Trout Unlimited

Wright said MLTU's spring banquet will be at the Sunnehanna Country Club on March 28.

Volunteers installed two benches along Stewarts Run where TIC Releases occur.

A few groups worked together to complete stream work on Yellow and Dunnings Creeks.

MLTU is selling 12 Days of Christmas tickets – see members to buy some.

Wright said the free fly-tying class dates are finalized. He had posters for the taking and appreciates the help promoting the classes.

Paint Creek Regional Watershed Association

No report.

PA Fish and Boat Commission

Crooks said High Point Lake is now completely drained.

Pheasants Forever

No report.

Western Pennsylvania Conservancy

Cotchen said he and others worked with a contractor at Chuck and Chuckies to repair some damage to stream habitat structures. They will do a riparian buffer planting there next autumn.

Cotchen and Greg Shustrick met with Somerset Co. Conservancy about completing a large wood project along Kimberly Run. The Conservancy is doing a Forest Management Plan, which should be presented at their annual meeting in December.

Reckner said a letter was sent to Jonathan Yoder, the new District Manager of the Somerset Conservation District informing him of today's meeting and inviting him to attend.

Eckenrode said it would be nice to do additional work at Greenhouse Park, such as checking the viability of planted trees, the state of knotweed control, etc. to ensure efforts to date are not lost. He would also like to work on a small grant to establish sturdier parking at Greenhouse Park, which can get muddy, especially during the Stonycreek Rendezvous. Cotchen agreed it would be a good place to demonstrate stormwater management techniques. A C2P2 grant might be most appropriate. Planning now could lead to free or cheap tree seedlings. Perhaps First Waves could help plant them.

Western PA Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation

Grote said the statewide conference was held last month, and Hutchinson was presented with the Mayfly Award. Hutchinson received a round of applause. Grote found the conference to be reinvigorating. The next WPCAMR meeting is November 12 at 10 am at the DEP in Ebensburg.

Stonycreek River Progress Report

Wright said the meadow by the Beaverdam Run Dam in the Little Conemaugh watershed is orange for unknown reasons. Piper said that area was strip mined years ago.

Shade Creek

Hutchinson said he's still reeling from the conference.

The Cairnbrook Improvement Association (CIA) is angry about SCWA members reporting an iron slug in Dark Shade Creek. SCWA is seeking an organization to help fund CIA's engineering fees.

He said CVC is interested in studying the Reitz #1 and Cottagetown treatment systems.

Hutchinson said Phase I of the Big 4 project is nearly complete and that DEP approved the submission of the Phase II application.

SFU might sample 8 sites for macros this Saturday.

There was a discussion about monitoring Dark Shade for pollution episodes. SCWA is considering getting a drone to observe orange water in Dark Shade. Eckenrode said if water chemistry is changing during these episodes, then CWRS could place a sonde(s) in the stream to determine frequency. SCWA could consider placing a game camera. Would Stroud Water Research Center have a real-time monitoring device?

Little Conemaugh River Progress Report

Riko said the Krayn refuse pile removal design is done and TetraTech is working on the permit package. Piper said the treatment plant is on schedule.

Piper said the three sisters discharges in the North Branch of Blacklick Creek are to be capped this week.

Public Relations

Makuchan said she and Ritko tabled for SCRIP at the Ohio Water Network's Fall Confluence in Mount Pleasant on September 27. Makuchan bought two acrylic brochure holders and requested reimbursement. **ACTION ITEM:** Please send articles and upcoming events to her for the next newsletter by December 6. Makuchan reviewed the articles she intends to include.

Reckner passed around a sympathy card to send to Dick Mayer's family.

Reckner asked if SCRIP would sponsor NatureWorks again. NW will be held Saturday, March 14 at the Bottle Works in Johnstown from 10-2.

Piper/Hutchinson made a **MOTION** to pay the bill of \$59.32 from Makuchan and to make a \$200 donation to the Bottle Works Ethnic Arts Center for NatureWorks 2026. All in favor. Motion carried.

Old Business

None.

New Business

Congratulations again to Hutchinson for winning the Mayfly Award.

Lichvar said, through the Boswell Area Historical Society, he commissioned a painting of George Washington crossing Quemahoning Creek in 1758 at the Boswell Lions Community Park that also will be embossed on a historical sign. An event to unveil the painting and acknowledge the restoration of water quality to Quemahoning Creek will be held at the Community Park on June 28, 2026. SCRIP is invited to participate. The theme will be History, Conservation and Music, while the Crossings Concert will be led by Jeff Perigo and friends.

Cotchen said there is a new Healthy Waters Coalition focused on the Ohio Basin seeking to address pollution in the Basin, and they are seeking membership, which is free. It's similar to the successful Great Lakes Coalition. Learn more and sign up for the November 21 info session at www.healthywaterscoalition.org. Reckner/Makuchan made a **MOTION** to join the Healthy Waters Coalition for the Ohio. All in favor. Motion carried. Cotchen will follow up with that.

Clemenson said Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail will soon turn 50. Jim Mayer was a catalyst for that trail development, and he was advocating for environmental restoration decades ago, so you might see commemorative events for that.

Next Meeting

January 8, 2026 at Windber Hotel at 3:30 p.m.

Hutchinson made a motion to adjourn at 5:23 p.m.

Minutes kept by Reckner.