

## **SCRIP Meeting Minutes**

**September 18, 2025 @ 3:30 p.m.**

**Chuck & Chuckies Pavilion**

The September 18, 2025 meeting of the Stonycreek-Conemaugh River Improvement Project was called to order by President Adam Cotchen at Chuck & Chuckies at 3:45 PM. It was also attended by SCRIP Board Members Melissa Reckner, Karlice Makuchan, Len Lichvar, Jackie Ritko, Larry Hutchinson, John Dryzal, Malcolm Crittenden, Robb Piper, Joe Gorden, Jim Eckenrode, Jeff Sarver, and Dave Leiford.

Other attendees were Mike Maurer of Pheasants Forever, John Wenzel of Conemaugh Valley Conservancy, Butch Kerchenske of Mountain Laurel Trout Unlimited, Christine Phillips of PA Dept. of Environmental Protection, and WPCAMR volunteer Tom Grote.

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

Eckenrode reported that SCRIP has \$3,775.84 in its checking. Makuchan shared a list of SCRIP related expenses pertaining to educational activities and the newsletter, including a dicot flower model that anyone may borrow, and she requested a reimbursement of \$274.89. Piper/Dryzal made a **MOTION** to pay Makuchan's expenses. All in favor. Motion carried.

Eckenrode said he would like to resign his position as Treasurer at the end of this year. Cotchen thanked him for his 10+ years of service as Treasurer.

### **Guests**

Phillips said they just finished reviewing Growing Greener grant apps and will be meeting next week to score them before sending them to the central office. The next application round should open around Earth Day. She was recently appointed to serve on ORSANCO's technical committee.

### **Partner Organizations**

#### ***Bottomlands Conservancy***

Lichvar reminded that he gave a presentation and tour of the Oven Run treatment systems for the PACD conference that was at Seven Springs. He has another tour coming up in October. Bottomlands is replacing Somerset County Conservancy signs at the treatment systems to indicate the new ownership. The group is installing benches at Mallards Rest, and it planted native grasses. Lichvar reiterated the desire for a railroad crossing near the Oven Run F system for multiple reasons and reminded that costs and liability would be on local groups, not CNX.

#### ***Cambria Somerset Authority***

Lichvar said the PFBC Habitat Division felled 13 trees at the Quemahoning for habitat. Dryzal said the Cambria Co. Conservation District was awarded a Growing Greener grant to do work in the Little Conemaugh watershed, including streambank stabilization along Hinckston Run.

### ***Center for Watershed Research and Service***

Eckenrode elaborated on the work they are doing, utilizing OSMRE grants, to study the recovery of Rare Earth Elements from AMD. CWRS will be presenting this at the AMR Conference, which is October 14-16 in State College. They are also tweaking the Puritan treatment system.

### ***Conemaugh Valley Conservancy***

Wenzel said he will be the lead on PEC's / POWR's convening meeting on October 30<sup>th</sup> in Johnstown where input is sought from stakeholders to ensure the region is adequately preparing for public river access now that the water quality is improving. Contact him if you'd like to participate.

### ***Mountain Laurel Trout Unlimited***

Kerchenske asked how many people have seen Spotted Lanternflies, which precipitated a discussion about them and tree-of-heaven. ([This article](#) about tree-of-heaven control popped up in my feed after the meeting.) Kerchenske said he heard a native wasp might help control lanternfly populations. [Read more about that here.](#)

### ***Paint Creek Regional Watershed Association***

No report.

### ***PA Fish and Boat Commission***

Lichvar said the commission will vote in October as to whether or not it will modify special regulations to stock Class A Wild Trout Waters. Read more on that at [www.patrou.org](http://www.patrou.org).

### ***Pheasants Forever***

Maurer said DEP granted Stone Creek Land Company, LLC an exploratory permit to drill 11 boreholes for coal near Wonderland Forest Trail Road. He explained the timeline of acidic mine drainage in the area and the response by local and state agencies, which has been underwhelming. Crittenden said complaints to the District Mining Office will result in a site visit within two days, and DEP will send a letter of their findings within a week after that. If the complainant disagrees with the findings, they have to counter the letter.

### ***Western Pennsylvania Conservancy***

Cotchen said we're at the "Lucky Chuckies" project at which habitat improvement work was done. He will provide a tour afterwards. The site flooded just days after work finished, and all but one structure held. Tomorrow, they'll be replacing some stone that washed out. They will be working to control knotweed on site and then planting native species. This was funded by Growing Greener in partnership with MLTU.

Cotchen said the construction season is wrapping up for the year. WPC has some tree plantings yet to do. He said several large wood additions are planned locally next year. Sarver said he

recalls watching a video about a blue foamy surfactant that allowed targeted herbicidal treatment. (Reckner found [this presentation](#) post meeting.)

### ***Western PA Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation***

Grote reiterated that the AMR Conference is October 14-16 at Toftrees Resort in State College. They have a lot of new sponsorships, which support the scholarships, which cover lodging. Tuesday includes a tour of the Moshannon Watershed. Wednesday night is the Mayfly Award during dinner and then there will be a corn hole tournament and an impromptu music session. Details and registration at <https://2025.treatminewater.com/>.

### **Stonycreek River Progress Report**

Lichvar reported that the Oven Run Trust Fund now has \$70,727 in it. He said Kleinfelder is submitting a BIL grant application this month for the Gondar discharge and a discharge upstream of Rock Tunnel.

Dryzal said the Cambria Co. Conservation District provided a basket for the PACD conference, and in it there were gift certificates for Coal Tubin and local breweries. When he was picking up the Coal Tubin gift card, a couple from Southern California was getting off the river and expressed their delight with the outing. While we know it does, it's always nice to hear that our work does have economic impacts.

### **Shade Creek**

Sarver said the Research and Development grant for the Central City discharges is 90% utilized. Shade Creek Watershed Association received approval from DEP to submit a proposal for the design phase, which they will do in partnership with the Foundation for PA Watersheds. SCWA representatives met with Berwind, one of the landowners whose consent would be needed for this project, and Sarver said it was a very good meeting.

Sarver asked for a contact with the DEP's Clean Water division. He explained that the Cairnbrook Improvement Association provides drinking water for the area and that they claim to be "grandfathered" when it comes to flushing their system into Dark Shade Creek, which turns orange with iron during these flushes. Recently, DEP issued a finding to the association, which may now need to build settling ponds to keep this iron out of the stream. Residents are not happy, as their water rates will increase. Perhaps the backflush water, which is alkaline, could be added to the mine pool of the Big 4 discharges for which an active treatment plant is proposed. Sarver wants to present this as a possible alternative to the settling ponds.

### **Little Conemaugh River Progress Report**

Riko said TetraTech is doing the design and permit work for the Krayn refuse project. The District may turn implementation over to DEP because that will cost about \$5 million. Ritko noted that the Foundation for PA Watersheds has a capital fund now to help cover upfront costs, since BIL money is reimbursable. She said the Foundation is planning an update meeting this

fall to bring everyone up to speed on the L. Conemaugh active treatment plant. Let her know if you'd like to attend.

### **Public Relations**

Makuchan said the latest newsletter went out last week. The format is a little different since Microsoft is discontinuing Publisher. She used Word. **ACTION ITEM:** Please send articles and upcoming events to her for the next newsletter by December 5.

Cotchen said there has not been any news on the Beaverdam Run dam removal.

Makuchan said she would like to go to the Fall 2025 Confluence on September 27 from 10-4 at Laurelville Retreat Center in Mount Pleasant, and she would be willing to set up a table on behalf of SCRIP. Ritko agreed to go with her. Piper/Sarver made a **MOTION** that SCRIP be represented at this event and that the ladies keep receipts for reimbursement at a future meeting. All in favor. Motion carried. There was a discussion about materials. Lichvar has watershed fact sheets, which are also available on SCRIP's website, and acrylic stands. Thanks to Makuchan and Ritko for representing SCRIP.

### **Old Business**

None.

### **New Business**

Lichvar said a new book "Johnstown Waters" details the steel industry in Johnstown and the water reservoirs that supported it. He noted that some information about the acquisition of the Manufacture Water Authority reservoirs is lacking.

### **Next Meeting**

November 5 at Windber Hotel at 3:30 p.m.

Reckner made a motion to adjourn at 5:30 p.m.

Minutes kept by Reckner.