



Wild & Scenic White Clay Creek

Ours to enjoy. Ours to protect.

Steering Committee Meeting Minutes

March 7, 2013, 1:00p.m. - 3:00p.m, London Britain Township Building

Attendees:

Kyle Sonnenberg	Jessie Benjamin	April Schmitt
Bob Kane	Kristen Travers	Jenny Egan
Ed O'Donnell	Catherine Cruz-Ortiz	Gary Bell
Julie Bell	Wes Horner	Tom Hubbard
Phil Geoghegan	Dorothy Miller	John Goodall
John Theilacker	Jack Stefferud	Shane Morgan

Approval of December 2012 Minutes with one correction made by John T. regarding the Moore easement (at that time it was pending).

Next meeting will be scheduled for early June.

After a review of the changes made to the Conflict of Interest section, the final draft of the Policies and Procedures was approved. This will be posted on the new website under Resources/Administrative Resources tab along with the final draft of the Strategic Planning Document.

Fourth Quarter 2012 Statement of Financials reviewed.

John Theilacker, Wes Horner, and John Goodall of Brandywine Conservancy and Jack Stefferud of Natural Lands Trust presented their proposed projects and budget for FY2013 (\$39,000) Jack noted that White Clay are vital for initiating projects, as well as in the final weeks when additional funds are often needed to close projects. John Goodall agreed that land transactions start with a long process of cultivation before ending in acquisition, and the availability of White Clay funds are extremely beneficial to this process.

John Goodall briefly discussed the Armstrong property and how and why it was selected for easement. It includes 3,000 linear feet of the Middle Branch in LGT and the current owners have implemented a conservation plan. Additionally, the neighboring properties to the east and the west are under preservation. Jessie inquired if there was any chance in getting the Armstrong property reforested. John G. is working on it, doing preservation first; stream is fenced off, but could definitely use some trees.

Wes Horner discussed the reforestation component of the proposed budget. Brandywine Conservancy has been focusing on the ecologically valuable waters along the East Branch

above Stroud. There is one obvious area (noticeable on aerial maps) without riparian buffers. The Nolan property was one property in this 'missing link', and the landowners agreed last year to join our reforestation efforts with a planting that occurred in Fall 2012. The remaining property (Weymouth) is being targeted in the current proposal and it will be the last piece of the puzzle. BC is currently in negotiations with the landowners. There is a steeplechase racecourse that runs through this property and the owners were concerned that reforestation efforts would create a problem. After several discussions between BC, the owner, and outside parties, it was determined that our reforestation efforts would not pose any inconvenience to the path of the racecourse.

It was also noted that John and Wes have spent a good deal of time developing relationships with EAC's throughout the PA municipalities, and even though they did not turn into projects, these initial efforts lay the groundwork for future projects.

Jessie inquired about whether BC had a planting plan, and whether the property owners are provided with a management plan. Wes replied that a species list can be provided, and that a management plan is provided, but it is more of a task list consistent with the Treevitalize program.

Kyle asked how many different species are planted on these sites. Wes replied that it depends on the soil conditions, but in general 10 and 15 species are selected. It was also noted that tree shelters are the largest cost of reforestation expenditures, but they require the least amount of maintenance. BC has done research on alternatives to tree shelters. Other options such as wire cages often require herbicide applications to keep the invasives from taking over the new saplings, and so it has been determined for now, that to cover a lot of ground next to a stream that tree shelters are the best alternative. Jessie concurred. It was also noted that the most effective solution is a property owner who remains involved in the maintenance.

Wes also noted that they are planting 1050 trees in the Franklin Preserve on Saturday April 13. The funding for this project was through a PHS Treevitalize grant. Volunteers are welcome.

John T. noted that all the funds allocated to reforestation in the current proposal would likely go towards the one project along the upper East Branch.

The Committee voted to approve the NLT budget proposal for FY2013 pending the final budget received from NPS.

Shane noted that accounting for the expected 5% slash in funding, that would leave the NPS/WCWA FY2013 funds at ~\$55,000 for administration, restoration and education/community outreach activities.

Shane mentioned the need for a fundraising committee and asked for interested participants. Kyle was willing to help with fundraising efforts. It was also decided that a donate button could be added to the website to solicit small donations from the public. Funds would funnel through WCWA for WCWS projects.

Announcements

- Middle Run Tree Planting – full and closed!!!!
- White Clay Clean Up April 6 contact Tara Cote for specifics Tara.Cote@state.de.us or April Schmitt at april.schmitt27@gmail.com if you are interested in a clean up. She is heading up north of the Wedgewood bridge.
- Christina River Cleanup Saturday April 6, 8am – 12pm. Register online <http://www.christinarivercleanup.org>
- Creek Fest May 4, 12-4pm
- PDE Mussel Survey Training DNS (May 18) TBD
- Invasive Removal Curtis Mill Park (May): Check back with website under “get involved” tab for updates, or contact Tom Zaleski at the City of Newark if interested in helping out. (April S. expressed interest in helping with this project.)

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Subcommittee Reports

Education/Outreach (Shane)

- **Children in Nature/Interpretive Hike** (Goddard Park, LGT) June 8, 10a.m. 30 person limit (Jessie, Christina, and Shane will run the hike.). This is an effort to pilot a program encouraging people to get outside and learn about the watershed, as well as an outreach opportunity to the PA municipalities. London Grove Township is very supportive and the event will be publicized on the township website, FB page, and in their spring newsletter.
- **Stream Adoption Workshop** (location/date TBD)– We are also working on providing this workshop in July to Delaware residents.
- Three schools were awarded scholarships for fieldtrips to **Educational Programs at Stroud** this spring totaling ~\$2300. Bus transport was included in one scholarship as it was a barrier to the schools’ participation.
- **Watershed Passport** is being developed to use at Creek Fest as an educational giveaway and for the summer programs. This is an effort to get more of the community (including families and children) out and about in the watershed, and as a learning tool to promote watershed stewardship. Matt Slap Subaru expressed interest in sponsoring this or another watershed initiative.

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Research and Restoration

- **Mussel Survey** Update (Shane) - In early spring, survey(s) will occur in the White Clay in selected areas that have yet to be surveyed for mussels. PDE will also be looking for good locations for placement of test populations. Once the WCC surveying is complete, the PDE plans to prepare a report that will be shared with W&S Steering Committee and will include surveys of both the Brandywine and White Clay creeks.
- **Dam removal/Shad restoration** update (Jerry) – Still waiting for a few things to be completed to finalize the MOA with SHPO and get the dam listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Once that is finalized the dam will be scheduled for removal. It can not be removed during fish migration (March 15- June 15) Jerry also noted that they received an American Rivers Grant for around half a million to do planning and removal of dams two and three. This is a large grant and it includes funding for the Musconetcong (a National Wild & Scenic River) and the Lehigh River as well. Dam 1 removal on the White Clay should take 3-5 days to remove. Only the middle 50' (out of 100' total) of the dam will be removed.
- **Stream Monitoring for Bacteria** (Shane) – No results yet. Missing one sample that is needed to do a statistical analysis of the data. PADEP would like to do more sampling this spring. Shane will follow up with PADEP again. Kristen noted that bacteria sampling conducted by DNS showed no pattern of correlation with samples collected by DNREC. They still are unsure of where the bacteria is originating.
- **Fairfield Crest Community Habitat Garden** –Shane noted that planning is underway for installation of a Community Wildlife Garden in the Fairfield Crest neighborhood of Newark. WCWS will help by purchasing signage and publicizing the event on the website. The installation should take place this May.

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Open Space (Land Preservation and Recreation) (Jack and John G)

- Hendrickson update – closed in Dec 2012 – Important trailhead and link in the White Clay trail loop.
- 41 Valley/Moore Family easement update – Closed in February 2013
- Armstrong update –As noted earlier, the 34-acre easement area includes 3,000 linear feet of the Middle Branch of the White Clay Creek in LGT in which the owners have implemented a conservation plan. The neighboring farms to the west and east are already under preservation. Open Space Committee of WCWS voted to allocate ~\$10,000 in (pre-NLT) funds towards this acquisition in December 2012.
- Parker-Graham – Expected to close soon. Eleven acres adjacent to the Preserve. (pre-NLT funds)

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Management Plan Coordinator Report (Shane)

- \$1200 DE tax checkoff received in January towards the White Clay Restoration Funds
- 2012 Annual Report finished, just waiting for printed copies. A pdf version will be put on the website and sent to the management list.
- Web Site and Social Media Outreach. It's LIVE! Go check it out. WRA was of great assistance to this new and improved look. Jonathon Barton worked on the technical part of the project and will be preparing a manual for both the WRA and the WCWSP to use, and Kate Miller, UD graduate student, helped with organizing and transferring the content. It is still a work in progress and feedback is welcome!
- Restoration Subcommittee finalized: Jenny and Greg are the new co-chairs and will be setting a date in the near future for our next meeting.
- **Stormwater Basin Retrofits** at the Hunt at Louviers update (Restoration Committee voted to allocate ~\$7000 funds for additional plants/seeds) Two meetings were held with members of the Hunt at Louviers Community to present the project and its water quality benefits. Volunteers have been lined up for the planting events on April 26 1-4 p .m. and April 27 9-12a.m. You can sign up online to help out.
- **Swift Park Planting** scheduled for April 20 9-12a.m. – Matt Slap Subaru is interested in volunteering for this event and has an additional interest in sponsoring some of our programs. Claudia West and Shane Morgan are also planning a pilot municipal program (lecture and hands-on workshop at Swift) for New Castle County workers in June.
- Creek Fest Update – We have new vendors, sponsors and exhibitors this year.
- STOPYRA (Newark Town Center at Capital Trail and Possum Park Road) REJECTED Dorothy inquired about this property as a possible reforestation/land acquisition for BC/NLT. If anyone has contacts, please provide them to Jack or John G. They will need an introduction as most transactions occur through personal contacts.
- **WCCWS Expansion Update** – DE senators Coons and Carney, DE Congressman Carper, and PA Congressman Pitts are co-sponsoring the bill (Toomey is considering co-sponsorship and would be a new supporter if so). Casey, who supported expansion legislation in the past, has not signed on and would like to hear from his constituents. It will be reintroduced this March to the House Energy & Natural Resources Committee for a markup vote. Letters of support are appreciated. PA political leaders need to hear from their constituents.
- Professional Leadership Institute at DNS – Shane received a full scholarship to attend the program (valued at \$420). She attended it in January 2013.
- New Garden Township adopted a Natural Resources Protection Ordinance as an amendment to their current code (voted in 3-1 at BOS on 2/25/13). The ordinance gives added protection for woodlands, wetlands, riparian buffers, and steep slopes. On another note: There are two seats on the Board of Open Space up for

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re-election this May. If you know of anyone interested, please let Shane Morgan know ASAP. Petition has to be in by next Tuesday, March 12.

- **Wild and Scenic 101 Update** – April 10, 2 – 6p.m., Carvel Building in Wilmington – White Clay WS will be providing and setting up food and drinks – Shane would appreciate any help with this from planning to set up.

River Manager Report (Julie)

- **FY2013 Cooperative Agreement** – WCWS has a revised scope of work, but will need to do more once the budget is known, hopefully by the end of March. NPS will need a detailed budget with cost categories once the budget is known, but sole source justification can be worked on now. Sequestration has impacted NPS in terms of limiting travel and equipment purchase, but not furloughing employees.
- **Wild & Scenic 101 workshop** – Municipalities are the major focus of this workshop. Forty-one attendees are confirmed for the April 10th White Clay session. Other organizations represented include USACE, PA DEP, PennDOT, DelDOT, PA and DE SHPOs, DNREC, CCCD, USFWS, and Senator Coons' office. Two other sessions are also being offered for the Southern and Northern end of the Lower Delaware National Wild & Scenic River. The White Clay session includes two New Jersey Wild & Scenic rivers (Great Egg Harbor and Maurice rivers).
- **Inniscrone Phase III update** – Julie hasn't heard back from London Grove Township or the developer regarding this and is not aware of any arrangements or discussions that have occurred.
- **Jenney's Run Culvert Site (city of Newark)** – Julie is working with Mike Sitek (City of Newark) on repairing a debris-blocked culvert along an impaired stretch of Jenney's Run behind an apartment complex. The stream bank is in need of restoration. The owner may be interested but does not have the necessary funds.
- **Radio monopole in White Clay Creek Preserve update** – An agreement has been reached and a proposal was submitted for the meadow planting and reforestation work, but more details are needed and were requested by NPS.
- **No cost time extension** is in the hands of NPS for review. It would give us one more year to spend down the remaining \$93,000 of WCWA funds.

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