



**WHITE CLAY CREEK**  
**National Wild & Scenic River**  
*Ours to Enjoy. Ours to Protect.*

Meeting Minutes

December 12, 2017, 10:00am - noon

New Garden Township Building, 299 Starr Road, Landenberg, PA 19350

Attendees

Shane Morgan	Don Peters	Ed O'Donnell	Jillian Young
Cora Sparling	Wayne Sparling	Doug Janiec	Robert Calehuff
Stan Lukoff	Paul Kenney	Dave Hawk	Rachael Griffith
Bill Ward	Tom Lewis	Tracy Surles	Alan Hill
Tom Coleman	John Goodall	Erin McCormick	Vincent Porcellini
Martha Narvaez	Mike Zuk	Aileen Parrish	April Schmitt
Andrea Withers	Marian Wagoner	Bill Ward	Chris Robinson

Approval of August Minutes

Ed O'Donnell introduced Tracy Surles. Tracy is the General Manager of Special Services at New Castle County and has agreed to represent the County by serving on the White Clay Wild and Scenic Steering Committee.

Presentation

Stan Lukoff gave an overview of Somerset Lake, the challenges facing the lake (sedimentation and high nutrients), including sources of pollutants both within and outside of the immediate Somerset Lake catchment area. The Lake Committee would like to maintain communications with the Steering Committee and look for ways to work together on potential watershed improvement projects. The Lake Committee is doing some experimental work with beneficial algae, as well as some water quality monitoring and educational outreach to community members. They will share this data with the Committee as requested.

New Business (20 minutes)

Alan Hill (President Hillcrest Associates) provided an overview of a proposed 18 lot residential subdivision that the landowner would like to annex into the City of Newark located at 419 Paper Mill Road. This is considered Low Density Development. The design complies with Newark's ordinances which in general are less restrictive than those of New Castle County. Specifically, the County requires a 100' buffer along intermittent streams and the City only requires a 50' buffer. Additionally, woodlands are given stronger protections under County code. The owner is willing to donate @ 4-6 acres of existing woodland down to the White Clay Creek to the State Park (and or City of Newark). The stormwater facilities were designed to state standards and consist of 2 infiltration basins. The City of Newark would look at whether the annexation would be cost effective The County generally has

concerns with annexation, and although the plan would not go through the PLUS system, the County would like to provide comment on the plan as the process moves forward.

Shane shared photos of the deteriorating culvert DeIDOT plans to repair on Paper Mill Road between the State Park and Middle Run. DeIDOT plans to put a liner in the existing culvert as well as a second steel culvert parallel to the existing culvert that would allow for a bike trail connection. This second culvert will address safety concerns the Park has with cyclists either using the stream culvert or trying to cross the road. Shane noted that at the Open house in October, there were plans for a wetland restoration on the Park side of the culvert. Vincent P. (WCCSP) said that the State Park Environmental Steward has sat in on design meetings regarding this restoration feature. Paul K. (NPS) said the Park Service would likely review the project to ensure that the tunnel will be built to handle stresses of a flood event, and if the proposed floodplain would be built to hold water back before reaching the bike the tunnel. They are still in the design process and construction would likely occur in Spring or Summer of 2019 with a two week road closure.

The December 14, 7:30pm zoning hearing regarding the proposed EcoSite cell tower in New Garden Township was postponed until January (no date provided). The Zoning Board will review the proposal using the new zoning ordinance. EcoSite is requesting a variance in height (130' tower) and location. Shane will attend the hearing and provide a statement on negative aesthetic impact a tower of this size adjacent to the Preserve would have on the scenic part of watershed.

#### NPS River Manager Report

Paul Kenney was present and covering for Jamie Fosburgh. Paul noted NPS is most concerned with the financials of the WCWA. Currently there is \$114,000 in the account that needs to be spend down by September 30, 2018. Paul is telling his rivers to spend down by Sept. 1 to be safe. He noted that Jamie received a final package for the Jennersville Loop and is currently reviewing it. He also reviewed the Hillcrest project and determined it would not be reviewable under section 7 or 7a. The deadline for the Federal Budget has been pushed back to December 22 and they are expecting a 12% cut overall, but they didn't think this would affect the White Clay and that we should expect about the same budget again for this new contract. Paul also noted that we should start working on the scope of work for the next contract and assume the same budget as last year. Currently, there is no future permanent River Manager coming soon for the White Clay as the Parks Service is unsure of the amount of their final operating budget.

#### Financials

Shane reviewed the December 2017 Statement of Financials and ensured the Committee that they would be able to spend down all the funds by September. Most of the funds are reserved for current projects that haven't been billed and the funds that are marked for specific projects can be used to support existing programs/projects. Doug suggested including billing requirements with a timeline in any new contracts so that organizations/contracts bill us regularly.

Shane provided an update on the White Clay Restoration Fund. This year the fund brought in \$11,000 our most successful year yet. She also noted that she provided a funding support letter to City of Newark for the Preston Park fountain and signage.

### Subcommittee Reports

#### Land Preservation

Erin M. reviewed the status of the Natural Lands Trust Projects. The Christie property is on schedule for settlement in early 2018. The New Garden Township Board of Supervisors are voting on a resolution at the next Board of Supervisors meeting regarding the Reynolds Easement. They are voting on an end of year closing deadline for the easement or they will pull out of negotiations and look to apply their open space funds elsewhere. She also noted that there were some changes to the St. Anthony's project. The church is looking to sell the camp as it is a financial burden to the church, but they would still like to see it continue and are working through some options. Erin is aware of the deadline to spend down funds and has a few other potential projects in New Garden Township, A 45-acre farm that she just started working on, but would likely not close before the September deadline, and a 2-parcel 15-acre piece of land along Walnut Run that she feels could close quickly if it were to move forward. She will send out more information on each new project to the committee as they progress. Erin understands the close out deadline with NPS and is also willing to apply NLT budgeted funds for Brandywine Conservancy projects if needed.

John Goodall gave an update on the 180-acre Hutchinson Farm Project. London Grove Township use their open space funds to purchase the development rights of the 38-acre woodlot. The family decided to give up the single house option which would have lowered the per acre price from \$4000/acre to \$2000/acre. The entire woodland is protected and can only be logged for personal use. On the Penn Township side, Chester County Agricultural Preservation Program utilizing both county and state funds, provided \$5500/acre to protect class 1 and 2 agricultural soils (@\$867,000). Penn Township has no open space funds and did not contribute to project. The City of Newark provided \$20,000 from their source water protection funds and \$5200 of White Clay Wild and Scenic funds went towards trees (\$1400 credit at Octorara Nursery) and \$3800 will be applied to BMP implementation support of the grassed waterways. The conservation plan for the farm includes updated grassed waterways which will be completed this winter/spring, and a riparian planting which was completed in fall 2017. Additional funds are needed for biannual maintenance of the newly planted area estimated at \$2000/year for three years. This will involve invasive control and checking on tree tubes. A motion was made and approved to support year one of maintenance which will start in spring 2018. The committee will revisit the issue and if funds are available will consider supporting the remaining 2 years of maintenance.

Shane gave a brief update on the Franklin Preserve Land Management. She met on site with Greg Gagliano (Red Tail Restoration, Rob Daniels (Brandywine Conservancy) and Jeff Eastman (Park Manager, Franklin Township) in November. The new planting is doing well and the forest edges are being managed for invasive species. We are waiting to see if it needs to be mowed, but are leaning towards a no mow strategy and the meadow fills in nicely.

### Research and Restoration

Shane gave a brief update on the Water Quality Monitoring effort. The MST analysis will be completed this winter and we are collecting samples every other week at the three mayfly sensor sites throughout the year in addition to collecting at least six grab samples to be analyzed from each site for total suspended solids, nutrients, and chlorides. The Mill Creek sensor is also live and can be viewed online. Shane is working with Andrew Homsey to put together an ARCGIS map of the watershed with all monitoring sites and interchangeable layers. This will help track what we are doing in the White Clay and be accessible to the public.

Ellen Kohler is maintaining communications with engineers/managers and BOS to keep the momentum going and continue discussions on future work/collaboration opportunities with both BMP implementation and maintenance, and to help navigate questions to and from DEP. Additionally, she will be attending BOS meetings in January and February to update elected officials in the pilot area. The Christina Watersheds Municipal Partnership continues to meet regularly and is considering how to formalize the partnership.

Shane updated the Committee on the Catch the Rain program. Below is the summary of stats to date.

- 37 total contacts about the program in year 1 (October 2016-2017)
- 26 site visits and site reports developed, 3 others purchased rain barrels at a discounted rate, but did not sign up for a site visit.
- 3 outside of WCC
- 5 did not follow up with me
- 8 rain barrels installed, 1 tree planting (5 trees)
- 2 others did work without seeking rebates (invasive management and creek side and road side plantings)
- 2 pending projects (met with contractors)
- OF the 29 applicants who followed through 10 applied in 2016 (they were targeted via letters), 19 applied in 2017

Tom Coleman mentioned that the City of Newark is working on a similar program for its residents. They are planning to use their Storm Water Utility to fund a grant program where city residents can apply for up to \$5000 to implement green storm water practices on their properties. Shane will meet with Kelley Dinsmore to determine how we can support each other with these initiatives.

Mike Zuk gave a presentation on two projects that the Chester County Conservation District worked on in White Clay. The Hoopes project which was completed in the fall and included a 5.7-acre riparian buffer planting and an updated grassed waterway on the farm. Funding for the project was through NRCS. The buffer needs to be maintained for three years at an estimated \$2000/year. SUEZ has indicated that they would support \$1000/yr. and Mike asked the Committee if we would commit to the remaining \$1000/yr. A motion was made to support the initial year of maintenance and then review and support additional years as needed and funds permit.

Mike also presented a project that just finished on a mushroom farming operation in New Garden Township along the East Branch where a new composting pad was installed with a cover. This will protect the compost from the weather and any leachate will be collected and directed to a cement holding tank. This is an expensive project and was funded by NRCS (@ \$750,000). Mike is looking into experimenting with farmer to reuse the collected water, currently it goes to a hayfield which is planted and harvested 2-3 times per year, but there may be ways to collect the roof runoff and use to wash the compost.

### Education/Outreach

UD Intern, Jillian Young published an article about the Environmental Education Awards via White Clay Wild and Scenic Program. She interviewed the assistant principal at Avon Grove Intermediate School, and Tara Muenz (Stroud) and it was published in the London Grove Township Newsletter. She will be working on another article for the spring editions of both London Grove and New Garden Township Newsletters. Shane noted that letters went out in late September to all watershed schools and that both Avon Grove Intermediate School is continuing to use the awards for 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders at the school, and Newark High School has also signed up for a Spring field trip to Stroud.

Shane mentioned that Creek Fest as well as other outreach projects would be a larger focus this quarter. She will be working on the water fountain sign for Preston's Park in City of Newark, the annual report, the White Clay Restoration Fund postcard, and potential WCWA membership drive. She plans to wrap the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Wild and Scenic Rivers into this outreach, including this year's White Clay Creek Fest.

The WCWA Capacity Building Grant Application was submitted in September and we should hear back by early 2018. The main objectives set forth in the grant proposal submitted to Chester County Community Foundation involved updating the board, updating the bylaws, developing a 3-yr vision plan, and conducting one membership mailing/drive during the first year.

### Announcements

2018 Delaware Wetlands Conference, Jan 31/Feb 1 in Wilmington, Delaware.

Delaware Association for Environmental Education Annual Conference, February 24, Camden, DE

Brandywine Christina Watershed Conference to be held at the Mendenhall Inn on May 3 (hosted by UDWRC) more details to come.