



WHITE CLAY WS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

March 16, 2022

Attendees:

Shane Morgan	Alivia Plump	Ed O'Donnell	Don Peters
Kate Raman	David Hawk	Melinda Daniels	Mike Harris
Sarah Bursky	Kelley Dinsmore	Laura Lee	Rick Mickowski
Martha Narvaez	Andrea Withers	Aileen Parrish	Cori Trice
Jenny Egan			

Ed O'Donnell chaired the meeting.

Approval of December minutes.

New Business/Discussion

Shane reviewed the new format of the FY23 Work Plan and Budget per new NPS guidance, then went into each detailed budget to show how the numbers were derived. All projects with known contractual costs will fall into the major category 'Contractual', all other projects which either do not fall under contractual or are where costs are likely to change fall under the major category 'Special Projects'. The committee voted to approve the Personnel request and Shane will continue to work with Sarah to get the final submitted plan and budget to NPS contracting in the new desired format. Of note- we will now have an annual contract with Natural Lands for their land preservation work to cover their outreach, acquisition/easement costs, and restoration planning. This is preferred by NPS so that funds do not sit in the Wild and Scenic account for more than 12 months.

David Hawk's retirement as treasurer for WCWA was announced. We will need to find a replacement, but Dave gave us advance notice to figure this out and will stay on until the end of our current 5-year agreement which ends on September 30, 2023. The committee discussed some options to consider for the program such as housing the program in another non-profit that could offer additional staff support such as book-keeping, grant tracking and other staff support. Shane will reach out to Tom to set up a meeting in the near future to discuss this with the existing WCWA board.

Ed O'Donnell's term as the DE co-chair is up in June. Ed is willing to do a third, three year term, but is open to letting anyone else who may be interested in serving. Anyone interested should reach out to Shane before the next meeting and we will take a vote then.

Old Business

Shane provided an update on the Avondale Community Led Research Project. This project is being funded by the National Park Foundation (\$75,000) with additional support and funding from River Network (\$6500). The scope of the proposal is to address the recurring flooding issues that are caused by stormwater in Avondale Borough. An important part of this work is to understand what is important to those who live and work in the community directly experiencing the impacts of flooding so that their needs and priorities can help guide the overall green stormwater infrastructure plan that the Wild and Scenic program will develop for the Avondale Borough. The idea, is to tap into the leadership, knowledge, and experience of the community to resolve the community challenges and maximize benefits to community members. Shane put an RFP out for the GSI plan and is hoping to get replies by March 18. In the mean time she has formed an advisory committee made up of four community members that has worked over the past two months to put together the community survey and develop a distribution and or data collection plan that will target a minimum of 100 community members. The survey will be administered in both English and Spanish and we will have interpretation services provided at each outreach event. We hope to complete the outreach by the end of June.

The other grant we have to support a restoration plan for the 12-square mile drainage area above Avondale Borough has not begun as we are still waiting to receive the awarded \$75,000 in NFWF funds. Shane asked Melinda to keep her in the loop on Loch Nairn as that is one of the larger parcels above the borough and there is a lot of interest in it already from groups providing emergency services to this community. Kate Raman noted that Natural Lands will be working on this in cooperation with Stroud and will keep me in the loop. Kate also noted that the final decision on what to do with the property lies with New Garden Township.

Shane reviewed the status of the Keen Farm Reforestation Project in Franklin Township. Phase one invasive removal occurred during the winter and is complete. Phase two the planting of the cleared 5.5 acres will occur in mid to late April. Shane also noted that Franklin Township has pledged \$20,000 towards post planting maintenance which will likely include annual (or twice a year) mowing. This is in addition to any remaining Wild and Scenic funds pledged towards the project. This project is being funded largely by a DCNR grant via the Chester County Conservation District in the amount of \$53,000.

NPS River Manager Report, Sarah Bursky

Sarah invited anyone who was interested in joining the Wild and Scenic Coalition Meeting coming up in late March. This is a virtual gathering of all the PWSRs and NPS that occurs quarterly. Shane will forward the invite to those that express interest.

Sarah informed the committee that Jason Fischel, who has championed the dam removals in White Clay will be moving to California to take a new position. There are three dams currently slated for potential removal and Kevin Donnelley (NCCD) has agreed to manage the projects in Jason's absence. NPS has a meeting set up with Kevin and Jason to determine if there are pieces of the projects that NPS can take off his hands, such as community engagement especially in regards to Dam 7 where there are multiple interests at stake. Sarah also mentioned that NPS, as well as some of the other federal agencies, are interested in learning why there seem to be no Shad moving above Dam 1 (which was removed in 2014). Mike Stangl (DNREC) is conducting an eDNA study and this study could be complemented by a habitat study of the area below Dam 2 to the mouth. Ed O'Donnell mentioned that they definitely catch Shad, but very few and all Hickory Shad just below the golf course, but have not had any reported sightings above the form Dam 1. Jenny Egan mentioned that Ed Hale (Delaware Sea Grant/Fisheries) may be doing a study as well and suggested connected with him (and maybe Jerry Kauffman).

Sarah also noted that the NPS team supporting the master planning for the White Clay Creek Preserve has been meeting regularly with PA DCNR and members of the Friends Group. The goal is to provide DCNR with the foundation documents needed to move forward with their master planning efforts. More information on the process should be coming soon on the DCNR website.

Wild & Scenic River Program Updates

- Kate R. noted that the Hiles property closed.
- Shane and Kelley D. are working on a plan with Stroud to include more testing of Bogy Run this year due to the preliminary report indicating the presence of human fecal indicator bacteria.
- Martha noted that there is a very rough draft of the State of the Watershed Report put together, that UD, Stroud and Shane are meeting to go over the water quality data assembled by Charlie Dow (Stroud) next week, and that she hopes the report will be ready for review by summer. Jenny Egan volunteered to be a reviewer.
- Shane mentioned that she is hosting an in person meeting with Pennsylvania MS4 engineers and staff on April 7. This is a chance for all the municipalities to touch base again, review permit progress, and discuss new funding available to implement these projects. Ellen Kohler will be there to provide the overview of funding options available.
- Shane mentioned that the school programs are starting up again after a long two year hiatus caused by COVID concerns. Avon Grove Intermediate School, Newark High School, and Assumption BVM all have field trips scheduled for this spring. We are also working on new connections with The Garage and El Futuro as a means to bring learning to communities either after school or during the summer.

- Shane also participated in an online webinar with Stroud geared toward educators to provide them with an overview of climate change impacts both generally for our region, as well as the impacts seen in White Clay. This was part of the current NPS Cost Share Grant which is up in June. We are planning to reapply to this program to build/expand upon what we accomplished this year.
- Shane mentioned she will be the guest presenter for the Octoraro Watershed Association Annual Meeting on March 31. She was asked to do this after giving a presentation on the Catch the Rain Program at the Chester County Watersheds Roundtable in December.
- A lawn to meadow workshop is being planned in coordination with the Christina Watersheds Municipal Partnership for this summer (likely June)
- Planning for Creek Fest is well underway. It will be live again after a three year hiatus due to Covid. It will take place Saturday, May 7
- There have been 7 new applicants and 1 repeat applicant to the Catch the Rain Program since January. 2 were just outside of the white clay and five new reports were completed.

Shane noted that \$395 of the Delaware Tax Payer/Restoration Fund were spend down to reprint the tax mailer postcards and mail them out before tax season. She also noted that Michael Bard in the new Communications Person for SUEZ since Tom Hubbard retired. Michael said SUEZ will continue to support creek fest and our watershed work and SUEZ will be donating \$4000 of unrestricted funds to cover both Creek Fest expenses and any other project expenses that would support watershed restoration. There were no other questions on the Statement of Financials.

White Clay Related Updates/Announcements

Aileen Parrish mentioned there would be a volunteer tree planting at the Mason Dixon Greenway sometime this spring (the date is TBD). Since this is within the Christina watershed Aileen asked that Martha put it out to the Brandywine-Christina List Serve when she has more information on it.

Future White Clay Quarterly Meetings

June 8, 10-noon (Shane will take another poll in May to see if we are ready to meeting in person otherwise all future meetings are still to be on Zoom)

September 14, 10-noon

December 14, 10-noon