



MEETING MINUTES

December 14, 2021

Attendees:

Shane Morgan	April Schmitt	Ed O'Donnell	Don Peters
Kate Raman	David Hawk	Melinda Daniels	Mike Harris
Sarah Bursky	Kelley Dinsmore	Doug Janiec	Rick Mickowski
Andrew Homsey	Andrea Withers	Aileen Parish	Cori Trice
Robyn Jeney	Rick Tralies	Rachael Griffith	Jenny Egan
Laura Lee	Thomas Zawislak		

Don Peters chaired the meeting.

Approval of September minutes.

New Business

The committee voted unanimously to appoint Melinda Daniels to the Steering Committee.

Robyn Jeney from Natural Lands gave a presentation on the Homsey Property in Franklin Township. The committee voted to commit \$5000 towards the acquisition of this property. The anticipated closing date is January 2022. Kate Raman provided updates on the Hiles and Smedley properties in New Garden Township. The Hiles property will close in January 2022 and \$10000 was committed towards this acquisition. The fishing shack and barn will remain on the property, but 0.719 acres had to be cut out of the original grant proposal submitted to DCNR which increased the costs incurred by the township. The committee voted unanimously to release the \$5000 in reserve for this property since the historical features were cut out and will remain, the total committed is \$10000 this property should close before the new year. The first closing for the Smedley property occurred and the committee provided \$7500 towards the acquisition. The second closing should happen in November 2022 once the subdivision and recombination is completed to preserve the farmhouse restaurant and remove it from the deed, the remaining \$7500 will be applied towards this second closing. Aileen Parish noted that the property adjacent to the Preserve in London Britain Township is being appraised soon. The committee awarded \$3000 towards the appraisal via an email vote in November. Shane brought up the 20 acre Mcaneny property in Franklin Township again and will send the information she has on it to Kate and Robyn for their review.

The committee decided to move forward with an update to the 2013 strategic plan. Jenny Egan volunteered to lead this process, Sarah Bursky will assist as well. Don Peters and Ed

O'Donnell also expressed interested in helping to move this forward. Shane and Jenny will meet to determine what questions need to be asked and then solicit input from the committee this next quarter.

Shane solicited advice from committee members on how to improve agricultural leases on public lands per an early request put out by Tracy Surles. Melinda noted that agricultural lands can be a big contaminant to water quality. Some of this can be remedied by requiring a 100 foot buffer between the cultivated fields and any water body. She also noted that most leases don't specify how farming is to be conducted and that cover cropping can reduce soil loss and improve yields as well making it a win-win for the farmer. Ed O'Donnell asked Laura Lee about the lease for Kranz Farm and whether that might be a good example to provide to Tracy. Laura noted the importance of getting it right before you sign the leases because after you sign you are locking in for 5 years (or whatever timeline you specify). Ed also suggested that Tracy take a look back at the Middle Run Natural Area. The area used to be farmed (it is no longer) and he recalled that the leases had stringent practices listed for the areas where agriculture was allowed. Doug J. mentioned that it would be good to know how certain practices like liquid manure application were being monitored to ensure that they aren't being over applied and impacting water quality. He also suggested that there may be certain areas where certain practices should not be allowed and that they should be specified in the lease. Shane mentioned that the PA Preserve should also be thinking about this and how to better manage their agricultural lands. She is going to put Tracy Surles, Laura Lee, and Lexi Rose in contact with each other so they can share ideas, experience, and questions with one another as they are all in the process of renewing leases in the near future.

Old Business

Shane provided an update on the grants and proposals received to address the Avondale Borough flooding issues. The National Park Foundation funding in the amount of \$75,000 was awarded and received. However, the same proposal was also awarded \$75,000 from NFWF. During the past quarter Shane worked with Sarah to revise the initial proposal to NPF into a community engagement proposal with the output of at least one greening project within the borough limits selected by the residents. This proposal was approved by NPF and we will be moving forward with assistance (and \$6500 additional funding match) from River Network. River Network developed a community engagement tool kit and Diana Toledo (River Network) will be helping to facilitate the process in Avondale Borough. Melinda D. mentioned that she was at a meeting at the first street apartments with some state representatives and community groups and that she would provide me the contact information for the woman from United Way who is planning on leading a similar effort as we should probably coordinate efforts.

Shane also provided an update on the \$2500 reserved for an HOA mini grant project in New Garden Township. Shane met with the HOA in November to go over the details and explain the issue with Emerald Ash Borer. The HOA agreed to reach out to the community members to explain the situation and offer a rebate to those homeowners who move forward with either treating healthy trees or replacing diseased ones with trees from a list provided by the WCWSP. The HOA will be solely responsible for any dead tree removals and will award \$100 of their HOA funds to each household that replaces trees in addition to the funding that we are providing. The cost share would help cover the cost of replacement trees up to \$2500 max for all properties combined.

The committee tabled the proposal for a watershed wide botanical study (pitched initially by John Goodall) until there is a specific reason to do so.

NPS River Manager Update

Sarah provided an update on the RTCA planning and mentioned that there will be a public meeting on December 15th in which Shane will provide an overview of the Wild and Scenic Program and the extra layer of protections the state has to keep in mind when planning. The RTCA team will be soliciting feedback from attendees during the meeting on the topics of natural resources, historic/cultural resources, and recreation. This is the first major public input meeting.

Sarah also mentioned that the Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed (CDRW) is pushing for additional wild and scenic studies in the state of Delaware. She noted that both the Red Clay and the Brandywine have risen to the top of list. Largely because of the local support for both rivers and the potential for ORVs. Sarah noted this is a long process and they are only at the beginning. Doug suggested that the CDRW team reach out to Steve Williams (DNREC) or maybe Kevin Donnelly (NCCCD) to see if they have the information on a study that Duffield performed in which they walked the Red Clay to identify outfall pipes and categorized this information in GIS format after a major flooding event years ago.

Sarah also mentioned the push by the Biden administration to pay more attention to environmental justice, equity, and inclusion. She suggested we consider this as we update the strategic plan. She also mentioned that the RTCA group is very interested in including those who lived on the land in White Clay in the planning process and have been reaching out to both the Lenape nation of Pennsylvania and the known Delaware tribes. She asked if anyone had any connections to these groups in the room, but no one did directly. Scott Crowder (president of the friends of WCC Preserve PA), and Jerry Kauffman (via the Brandywine Shad Program) were suggested to reach out to as they both may have some connections. Doug J. suggested they look into doing an archeological study of the White Clay as they have done in other state parks.

Sarah also stated that the upcoming budget is expected to remain flat with no changes.

Sarah noted that there has been a cluster of section 7 reviews in the Mill Creek area. The committee commented on how this is developed area with frequent stormwater issues.

Wild and Scenic Updates

Shane shared some Catch the Rain projects in progress as well as a general program overview. She also shared that Harmony Park rain garden in West Grove Borough was completed this past October. Additional information on the program was uploaded to the meeting materials.

The Keen Farm reforestation project is also moving forward. The PA DCNR Buffer Grant in the amount of \$53000 came through this fall. The grant program is through the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts (PACD) and the funding is going through the Chester County Conservation District. Teti farms is lined up to do the site prep in January 2022 and 1700 trees will be installed with rock mulch during the spring 2022 (likely in April). Franklin Township has pledged \$20000 cash and \$10000 in-kind to buffer management post implementation and Shane is meeting with them next week to review the project which was included in there PADEP stormwater permit plan.

Shane submitted the past 5 years of data to PADEP for inclusion in their integrated water report. She also submitted data to DNREC for inclusion in their integrated water report. Both reports were uploaded to the website under meeting materials. In general the same trends remained. All sites continue to be impaired for bacteria and nutrients. Nitrate levels averaged around 5ppm for most sites with the exception of Egypt Run which still remains > 10ppm and seems to be increasing. Orthophosphate seems to be steady at most sites, averaging between 0.06-1ppm. Chloride levels vary, but tend to be between 20-35ppm at most sites. Shane also noted that since the last meeting she met with Kelley Dinsmore and Jinjun Kan at Bogy Run (a tributary in the City of Newark). Kelley wanted to learn more about the data coming from that location since it exhibits high bacteria concentrations and since the city is conducting a sanitary sewer survey. The initial MST data from this site also showed a human impact. A mini study for Bogy Run was proposed and the City of Newark contributed \$2000 in funding towards a deeper investigation. Two samples were collected in October and one in November, one at the original downstream location and another just below New London Road, while the students were still in session and brought to Stroud to be analyzed for bacteria concentrations and also conduct qPCR testing to see if the bacteria are coming from human sources which would elevate this sewer line for a deeper investigation. Shane also noted that Dr. Kan hired a postdoc to help write the paper on the 5 year bacteria study conducted in White Clay Creek. This will hopefully be completed in 2022.

Shane shared the results from the Visual Resource Inventory conducted on 10 sites with 16 volunteers over the past year. The volunteers completing the scenic ratings this past spring/summer and met this fall to complete the importance ratings which include historic and cultural resources in the area as well as the visitor experience at the sites. These results will be weighted by sub basin and included in the White Clay State of the Watershed Report. A draft of the report should be ready this Spring. This was a popular activity for the volunteers so it is likely we will continue doing this the following year to gather more information.

Shane noted that there were several outreach activities this past quarter including the Christina Watersheds Municipal Partnership's Road BMP workshop held on October 8th, the Penn Township Community Day in which she participated with Stroud for their NPS Cost Share Grant on Oct 23. Shane also presented at the Chester County Watershed Roundtable on the Catch the Rain Program on December 10th and will be presenting on the Wild and Scenic program at the Public Meeting on December 15th as well. She also noted that Creek Fest will very likely be live again this year and that the first planning meeting is occurring on December 20th.

There were no historic committee updates, but Dave Hawk did mention that part of the John Evans house needs immediate attention as a portion of the structure appears to be collapsing fast.

Financials

Shane reviewed the current budget status and the status of the White Clay Restoration Funds. No questions were asked.

Other White Clay Announcements:

Shane will send out a doodle poll to select 2022 meeting dates and also a survey to determine how people would like to meet going forward (virtual, in person or hybrid).

Doug Janiec mentioned that TNC PA/DE just finished their strategic planning and are looking to make more partnerships. He suggested reaching out to them to see if there is any interest in appointing someone to our committee.

Kelley Dinsmore noted that the Paper Mill Park Project in the City of Newark looks to be moving forward this spring. There is interest in a public overlook or access to the creek and wanted us to be aware of that.

Meeting adjourned at 11:45 am.