



MEETING MINUTES

July 18, 2023, 10:00 am, Avondale Borough Hall

Meeting Attendees:

| | | | |
|---------------|------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Ed O'Donnell | Doug Janiec | Mike Harris | Kelley Dinsmore |
| Olivia Wilson | Sarah Bursky | Dave Hawk | Shane Morgan |
| Don Peters | Laura Lee | Cori Trice | Aileen Parrish |
| Emily Kaplan | Rachael Griffith | Martha Narvaez | Michael Bard |

Don Peters chaired the meeting.

Approval of April Minutes

New Business

Shane reminded everyone to use her new email address: smorgan@whiteclay.org

Shane notified the committee that they received a new Dockstader Grant in the amount of \$7500 for the construction of another rain garden in West Grove Borough.

Old Business

Dave Hawk provided an overview of historic preservation considerations in dam removal projects. He is concerned that historical considerations are not given equal consideration to restoration objectives by the committee. He believes the Section 106 process is not being implemented correctly and that local historians need to be brought into the discussion sooner. He also suggested that a stream gage be installed in the mill race at Red Mill Dam (Dam 2) if a removal happens to see how that might impact the possibility of a fully functioning mill.

David Hawk expressed his concern that the dam removal projects are proceeding out of the public eye and that more public involvement is needed. He feels that our Management Plan encourages the preservation of historic and cultural resources and that mill sites and their dams are an important part of our White Clay Creek heritage. He believes the parties leading the dam removals have misidentified and undervalued several of our historic mill sites due to poor historical research. He pointed out that participation by the local historical community as consulting parties (as required under Section 106) is long overdue and would help prevent these kinds of oversights. He believes these consulting parties would provide a better balance between restoration objectives and historic preservation. He believes that a full dam removal at the England / Red Mill dam site will drain the remaining millrace and that a redesign is needed to accomplish fish passage and preserve the existing impoundment level. He suggested that a stream gauge be installed in the millrace a year before any construction to provide data that will help show if this redesign works as intended. He also recommended the following publication about reconciling the dual objectives of dam removal and historic preservation: https://dnr.maryland.gov/fisheries/documents/FINAL_BOOK_LAYOUT.pdf

NPS River Manager Report

Sarah led an open discussion on all current dam removal projects and reviewed how the different agencies work together under section 106 to determine if dam removal will impact historic dams and, if so, how they look at alternatives after weighing both restoration and historic preservation goals. Sarah noted that Dam 1 (Byrnes Mill) was a compromise between historic preservation and ecological

restoration because it was a partial dam removal. Dams 2 (Red Mill) and 4 (Dean Woolen Mill) have not gone through the SHPO process yet (or are at the very beginning of it). A consulting firm is leading the removal of Dam 7 (Tweeds Mill) and will lead the public outreach. Laura Lee noted that the Park had UD CHAD conduct a historical study on Dam 7 (Tweeds Mill Dam), and that report noted that features of this dam near the banks date back to the 1700s. Dam 8 (Evans Fulling Mill) is a state (PA) project that moved quickly through the permitting process. PHMC initially found no adverse effects, but after sharing new information from Dave H., they updated their database to reflect the national historic district eligibility and issued a new letter to PADEP citing that part of the dam was colonial and requested more information on potential options to avoid or minimize adverse effects to the stone portion of the dam. Sarah is working on gathering representatives from both states to discuss the broad range of ecological benefits (dam removals are not just about fish passage). The meeting is open to committee members interested in having a broader discussion on how the various agencies weigh in and balance restoration objectives with historic preservation. Doug J. mentioned the importance of understanding the purpose and drivers of dam removal, which is often tied to the funding source.

Shane clarified that the Wild and Scenic Program has not been the lead on any of the past nor any of the current removals and that none of our federal funds were expended for any dam removals. Funding for Dam 4 (Dean Woolen Mill) and funding committed (not spent) for Dam 7 (Tweeds Mill) was voted on and came from our White Clay Restoration Fund (aka DE Tax Check-off). No funds were committed to Dam 2 (Red Mill Dam) or Dam 8 (Evans Fulling Mill) removals.

Wild & Scenic Committee Updates

Fish Passage Study – no updates; the report should be ready in December.

Land Preservation – Loch Nairn Open House tonight, no other updates

Martha noted that the State of the Watershed Report is complete and will be sent to the editors to review soon. The product is a rather large technical report explaining the methodology behind the grades issued for 20 indicators across 5 categories. We will be working on how to roll this out in a simplified manner to the public. The intent is to repeat this with the Red Clay and Brandywine. Shane noted that they developed the methodology to be objective so that it could be used for future reports.

Lucy conducted 13 site visits and assessment reports for Catch the Rain applicants from April through June. (19 total applicants this year). Lucy participated in a June Stroud Teachers Workshop on Outdoor Learning Spaces by leading workshops on conservation practices and native plants for schoolyards. At Creek Fest this year, she engaged the public and provided information about the Catch the Rain program. In April, she delivered free native trees and shrubs leftover from the Brandywine Red Clay Alliance for several CTR applicants. Lucy and Shane are offering an in-person CTR workshop on August 15th with Tara Muenz at Stroud. Shane also noted that there are a few projects in progress, and she hopes to issue those rebates before the end of the fiscal year.

Shane noted that the estimated attendance at Creek Fest was 1350. She presented to the Chester County Association of Township Officials (June 26) on the West Grove GSI Projects along with other

members of CWMP. She also gave a presentation on green infrastructure and the White Clay Watershed to students in the migrant ed program at the Chester County Intermediate Unit at the Technical Highschool on July 13. She attended the open house on June 26 for the West Grove Comprehensive Park Planning Effort. This is being led by ENLP (Philadelphia firm). The borough would like to ensure that GSI is included in the overall planning efforts for their parks. Finally, she and Ellen Kohler have been meeting with Avondale Borough staff regularly to assist with drinking and wastewater planning (specifically helping them to fund the work to update their maps and do some cost analysis on current and future needs).

Shane noted that she submitted data to both PADEP and DNREC for their 2024 integrated water reports. These reports can be found on our website. Shane noted that the recreational season bacteria sampling started in July.

Shane noted that the Avondale Borough Greening Plan is complete, but we had one setback with the NPF project. The selected demo project site was a former PECO substation with a deed restriction prohibiting digging due to contaminated soils. We are now looking at The Garage Youth Center as an alternative location. This will mainly be an impermeable surface retrofit but will be combined with an outdoor classroom and potentially a green roof. The design team met on-site last week to discuss the project, and Shane is waiting for some cost estimates to determine what is feasible with our grant funding.

Shane noted that Adam Mowery completed the design for the Mushroom Farm BMP. The construction estimate came in \$4000 higher than expected. Shane noted that we could cover these expenses, and construction should conclude by September.

Shane noted that the NFWF-funded Upper East Branch Basin Restoration Plan should be completed by August. Aaron Causer completed the watershed assessment report, which Shane will send out to the committee once she has a chance to read through it.

Shane noted that several riparian buffers needed stewardship (mowing and string trimming around tree tubes). Work was performed at Keen and Pierson Buffers in Franklin Township.

Statement of Financials (11:40-11:50)

Shane reviewed the new financial reports done in QuickBooks. She noted that she had taken a few webinars with a group called Quick Books Made Easy (an accounting firm specializing in QuickBooks for nonprofits, which has been extremely helpful). She noted that our books are very complicated with lots of restricted funds but that she thinks she has things set up correctly for next year where we can see estimates versus actuals on our reports, and she believes that this will be much easier than using Excel.

White Clay Related Updates/Announcements

July 18, 630-830 pm, Loch Nairn open house at New Garden Township Building

September 28-29th, 11th Annual Delaware River Watershed Forum, Chase Center Wilmington, DE

Upcoming W&S Quarterly Meetings

Tuesday, October 17, 10am-noon

Shane asked if anyone attended the Big Elk Meetings. Sarah, Oliva, Aileen, Ed, and Laura all attended. Laura believes there will be more communication between WCCSP (DE), The WCC Preserve (PA), and Fair Hill (MD). Aileen would like better communication with London Britain Township since the Preserve is a third of their municipality. Sarah wants to ensure they don't lose sight of the Preserve planning that just concluded (RTCA work) while focusing on the new state park. One of the bigger concerns is how to define what being a Preserve means instead of a State Park. How does it differ, and how will they enforce that specifically regarding trail uses and trail etiquette? Shane noted that she is planning a meeting with the new Preserve employees in the coming weeks. Sarah would like to attend.

Shane announced (sadly) that Don Peters is retiring from his role as the PA co-chair (an important role he had for at least 12 years). We will need to look for a replacement.

Meeting adjourned 11:30am.