



## WHITE CLAY WS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

June 8, 2022

### Attendees:

Shane Morgan	Laura Lee	Ed O'Donnell	Jenny Egan
Kate Raman	David Hawk	Melinda Daniels	Mike Harris
Sarah Bursky (at end)	Kelley Dinsmore	Martha Narvaez	Aileen Parrish
April Schmitt	Tom Zawislak		

Ed O'Donnell chaired the meeting.

Approval of March minutes.

### New Business/Discussion

Ed O'Donnell was elected to another term as DE Co-chair.

Shane provided an update to the FY23 Workplan and Budget. The budget was increased to \$210,000 (+45,000) since our last meeting. Shane proposed using the additional funding to hire a part time staff person and support the fish study that Sarah is working on for the White Clay Creek below dam2 (draft proposal in meeting materials online). Martha will assist Shane with putting together the staff description and determining if there are any pieces that the current UD interns could support. Shane asked Melinda to review the draft proposal that Sarah put together.

### Old Business (10:20-10:40)

Shane reviewed the Avondale Projects. The National Park Foundation/River Network funding Community Led Research and GSI plan/demo project for the borough. Since the last meeting outreach was conducted and 105 responses from the Avondale community survey were received by the end of May. Data from the survey is being analyzed with assistance from River Network (and will be shared out at the next meeting). The winning bid for the GSI planning and demonstration project went to Meliora Design (and ThinkGreen as subcontractor). The borough approved the demonstration project at the last council meeting and Shane is applying to Growing Greener for additional funding to implement a rain basin in Pomeroy Park. The remaining NPF funds will be used to create a gathering space with shade trees adjacent to the garden. Shane also mentioned she was asked to present at the DOI Urban Waters Team Meeting (with Sarah) on the Community Led Research Component on June 9<sup>th</sup>.

Work has begun on the NFWF funded upper east branch watershed study and restoration plan. Initial water quality and macro data was collected in May and the next step is to conduct a visual study of the tributaries and adjacent lands. Melinda noted concern from Stroud about approaching landowners that they have already done work with or are in the process of conducting outreach to. Shane asked Melinda for a list of landowners/properties we should remove from the field study. Shane will reach out to all

other landowners for permission to access property before conducting any field research. Shane will contact Aaron Clauser and reassess the scope of the project and what makes the most sense given the amount of funding we have, the amount of work that has already been done by the BC Cluster, and focus on the areas that have not and are not on the list of property owners provided by Stroud.

Shane noted that Keen Farm Reforestation has been completed. The buffer maintenance will begin soon (next two weeks) and will be supported by the matching funds provided by the WS program and Franklin Township. The PACD grant is spent down and closed. There were about 260 extra trees from the project that were planted at Franklin Preserve with volunteers on May 21. The new trees replaced trees that did not survive the last planting and the tubes were marked with blue paint.

#### Wild & Scenic River Program Updates

Kate Raman provided some open space updates. She noted that the Smedley (Loch Nairn) is still moving along and the \$15000 in Wild and Scenic funds have been paid to New Garden Township. Hiles has also been closed and the \$10,000 from the WS program has been paid out. She noted that the Homsey project is still moving forward, but hasn't closed just yet. She also noted that Robyn Jenny is working on a new project (or two) which Natural Lands will present on at the September meeting when it is further along.

Shane noted that the recreational bacteria sampling will take place in July. That Stroud has agreed to do all the sampling sites (including Delaware) due to Kristin Travers new position with DelNature. Two additional sites were added in Newark for a total of 32 sites. The City of Newark is funding the additional sites as part of a more intensive look at Bogy Run. Kelley Dinsmore helped push this forward and suggested we use it as an opportunity to educate others on using stream sampling for bacteria to detect and identify potential areas of impairment in sewer infrastructure. Sampling will occur during the month of July.

Shane noted that while Creek Fest was cancelled due to poor weather, most of the funds were already expended.

Shane mentioned that schools are starting to go on field trips again! Both Assumption BVM and Newark High School scheduled spring visits.

Shane noted that another NPS Cost Challenge Grant (\$25,000 ) was awarded to Stroud to expand upon outreach to DIEJ communities, and will also focus on educator workshops catering to GSI as a tool to mitigate climate change impacts to the White Clay watershed.

Shane is still working with the HOA on Emerald Ash Borer affected tree replacements. She noted that HOA had Mike Leventry out to look at all their street trees of which 26 ash trees were dead or not worth saving. The HOA getting estimates on how to remove and replace all 26 trees at once and are still working on getting buy in from the affected property owners.

Shane also noted that she has spent some of her time assisting other groups within the watershed obtaining grants. She assisted a member of the Franklin Township Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Board with securing a Dockstader grant for tree plantings at Crossan Park and Franklin Preserve (@ 2 acres worth). She is also working with a master watershed steward from New Garden Township on a plan to treat existing invasive species and expand an existing tree buffer to 100' along a tributary to broad run in the Saint Anthony's property that the township recently acquired.

Shane noted that the Catch the Rain program has had 13 total applicants this year (7 new since the March meeting, 1 rebate issued for @1 acre tree planting on private property in Newark, and lots of potential projects waiting to inspect including 3 rain gardens - 2 complete, 1 in progress.

Shane asked for feedback on the Newark Country Club and Golf Course. She visited this site on recommendation from Tracy Surles. The course needs a lot of work dealing with erosion and invasive species in naturalized areas. She suggested that this could be a larger restoration project (grant funded) and potential in partnership with the City of Newark as they could get some MS4 credit. Kelley pointed out that there is already an agreement in place for the golf course with a land developer, but Shane noted this is about 20 years off (according to the board member she toured with). Melinda mentioned that regardless of it being converted to housing in the future any stormwater improvements would be worth it and that some lower cost solutions may be applicable, like graduated vegetated swales. Even if the BMPs are destroyed for future development they would provide benefit now and over the next two decades, and would need to be replaced by the new development regardless. Kelley mentioned she is interested in pursuing this if it helps with their storm water permit.

Financial statements were reviewed.

April provided an update on the successful invasive removal projects that she and the Friends of the Preserve have been working on in the London Britain Township.

Shane noted that the bridge crossing on the PennDel trail in the preserve has been replaced. (April provide a picture) Shane noted that there are several bridges that need to be replaced or fixed included another bridge very near the South Bank Road entrance, the zig-zag bridge near the Delaware Park nature center, the Charles Bailey bridge near the Yeatmans Station Road entrance, and the main pedestrian bridge across the East branch. Shane, Sarah, Lexi Rose, and a few members of the PA Friends group took a tour of the bridges in April/May. The Charles Bailey bridge is currently in the design phase.

Shane mentioned two projects that Sarah is currently reviewing permits for, the Chestnut Valley Stream Restoration (which was presented to the committee by New Castle County back in 2019) and just downstream on Pike Creek, the Independence School Stream Restoration. Both projects were designed by ForeSite Associates and are under NPS review.

Shane gave a quick update on dam removals. Dams 2, 4, and 7 are slated for removal. Sarah is working with Kevin Donnelly (NCCCD) on Dam 7 to provide more community engagement since it is a popular fishing area in the state park. Ed O. suggested there be outreach to the White Clay Fly Fisherman as well as other less organized fishing outfits who utilize the area year round for more warm water type species like small mouth bass.

Shane asked for members of the WCWA to remain in the meeting as well as anyone else interested in the future planning for the WCWA. April S., Aileen P., Tom Z., Dave H. Martha N, Ed O., and Laura L. remained on the call. Sarah B. joined in at this time.

The priorities/next steps were determined as follows:

- Everyone agreed keeping the WS program in the White Clay (with a renewed WCWA) is the best option.
- A plan for recruitment should be in place and we should host an annual meeting this fall and have a membership drive.
- It was suggested that we bring in new people first before defining our niche as their interests will drive this.
- Tom will call a meeting for July/August with the existing WCWA board
- Tom and Dave will work on finding a CPA/book-keeper. Tom is going through this process now with his Robotics nonprofit. Dave will need to help onboard the new CPA.
- A job description should be developed and provided to potential new members and officers (we may be able to pull something from the bylaws)

- Members will be recruited by word of mouth (Shane will put together a list of prospects), advertisements placed in municipal (and other) newsletters, and the Wild and Scenic website, and at the annual meeting
- Dave will remain as treasurer until the end of the current Contract Agreement with NPS (Sept. 30, 2023). The new treasurer should be in place by February/March before signing the new Contract Agreement with NPS.

Meeting adjourned at noon.

#### Future White Clay Quarterly Meetings

September 14, 10-noon - Plan for this to be IN PERSON

December 14, 10-noon - TBD