



MEETING MINUTES

April 18, 2023, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm (via Zoom)

Meeting Attendees:

Ed O'Donnell	Doug Janiec	Rick Mickowski	Kelley Dinsmore
Olivia Wilson	Lucy Dinsmore	Dave Hawk	Andrea Withers
Sierra Taylor	Kate Raman	Cori Trice	Aileen Parrish
April Schmitt	Rachael Griffith	Martha Narvaez	John Goodall
Jenny Egan	Shane Morgan		

Ed O'Donnell chaired the meeting.

Introductions

Approval of December Minutes

New Business

Shane reviewed the FY23 Work Plan and Budget and opened it for questions. She requested a spending increase for her salary (which includes a 4.6% Cost of Living Allowance and a 5% merit raise) for a total increase of \$4.70/hour for 1278 annual hours and an increase of \$2000 for the UD student assistance contract (from \$3000 to \$5000 total). The Catch the Rain, Stream Watch, and Outreach Programs would continue as usual under similar budgets based on previous years' spending. The only change was moving Lucy's contract from Admin to Catch the Rain. A more detailed explanation of the Watershed Improvement Projects section was provided. This is a catch-all budget line to cover multiple expected and/or potential watershed improvement projects, including water quality research projects, green infrastructure projects, land preservation, historical & cultural restoration, and land stewardship. Some of the expected outputs were described in more detail below.

New data from the Bogy Run microbial source tracking (human fecal bacteria) study was shared and appears to show that the improvements to the sewer lines are working. The committee agreed to commit to one more year of funding (\$4500) to continue this study to determine if these positive trends continue with the remaining sewer fixes scheduled for this year. The City of Newark is also committed to supporting another year (\$6000).

A few maps from the draft Greening Plan for Avondale Borough showing the projects Meliora prioritized for the borough, which largely consisted of rain gardens and tree trenches. She also notified the committee that we received \$262,000 from a PA DEP Growing Greener Grant to design and construct the demonstration project, which is a rain garden (basin) in Pomeroy Park that includes a gathering space for the community. It was noted that this funding can be used as a match for other larger potential projects down the pike that would have a bigger impact on flooding relief. Doug suggested talking to FEMA. While that is outside of the scope of the watershed management plan, it could be tied to improved habitat or a larger floodplain restoration if the buildings were no longer in the floodway and floodplain. Shane noted that the area's affordable housing shortage is the current barrier. Relocating was of interest to participants in the community-led research if affordable housing was nearby. Shane also noted that the other study funded by NFWF, looking at the larger drainage

area above Avondale, should be completed in June, and there could also be some projects in there worth pursuing.

Shane applied for a Dockstader grant (\$7500) to fund another rain garden identified in the Rutgers GSI Plan for West Grove Borough in Harmony Park. If we don't receive the grant, Shane suggested using our Wild and Scenic funds to cover it. John Goodall pointed out that it is good to continue working with the borough and building that relationship, so they come to you when bigger projects arise. Shane noted that the borough received funding to revitalize Memorial Park and that she will be pushing for more green infrastructure to be included in that plan as well.

Another potential watershed improvement project she is currently working on with Natural Lands along Egypt Run (a tributary to the East Branch) was shared. Kate Raman noted that Natural Lands has funding for a restoration plan for the property (formerly logged for timber). Shane has been in contact with Jesse Davis, the conservation manager for the landowner, and they have an interest in pursuing this, no written commitment has happened. Shane will put Kate in contact with their conservation manager to discuss the details. The goal is to have the landowner put down some commitment to costs in writing so that we could seek out grant funding (such as DCED) to implement the project with a known match. John Goodall mentioned adding a corridor or an agricultural easement on the southern parcel to protect it from future development. Shane is also working on getting the adjacent downstream landowner to agree to a buffer. Doug would like to see us add more WQ monitoring sites along this stretch of Egypt Run to show the benefits of restoration; the committee will revisit that if it looks like this project will move forward.

Shane noted that a new potential land preservation opportunity has arisen, involving adjacent parcels in both Avondale Borough and London Grove Township (@50 acres). The lawyer for the family reached out to Shane and indicated that the landowner might be interested in donating the land. Both Avondale Borough Council and the London Grove Township Open Space Board are interested. Kate noted that Jack Stefferud of Natural Lands is working on this. The land is mostly floodplain but may contain remnants or artifacts from a Native American settlement along the creek. Kate also mentioned that they began working on the restoration plan for the former Loch Nairn Golf Club property in New Garden Township.

The Committee approved the salary increase and FY23 work plan (including the projects above). Shane will submit it to Sarah for NPS processing.

Old Business

This spring, the Multifunctional Buffer work at the former Saint Anthony in the Hills property in New Garden Township was completed. A PACD grant funded this work, and Penn State Master Watershed Stewards will monitor it.

The Mushroom Farm BMP design by Adam Mowery is completed, but construction has yet to be scheduled.

NPS River Manager Report, Sarah Bursky

The new NPS fellow, Olivia Wilson, introduced herself and provided an overview of the projects she would assist with throughout the year.

Sarah was absent, so Shane updated White Clay dam removals—dams 2, 4, and 7 are still in process. Interfluve was selected as the contractor for Dam 7 and will be responsible for outreach. She also noted that PA DCNR is moving forward with removing Dam 8 (in the preserve). The federal and state agencies have all completed their reviews with no adverse impacts expected. Dave Hawk had concerns regarding the historic nature of this dam being overlooked. Sarah put Dave in contact with PHMC to share additional information with them. In doing so, PHMC revised their initial review letter to include the information he shared but still determined that the dam does not carry any significant historical significance precluding it from removal. PHMC also stated that removing it would not affect the Welsh-Baptist historic district eligibility. Dave shared his concerns about Dam 8 with the committee, adding that he thinks we need more historical representation on the committee. Other committee members had concerns about a full removal and whether a partial removal might make more sense both from an ecological and historical perspective. Some of the concerns included how a full removal would affect existing fisheries (spinning fishermen and fly fishermen use this stretch of creek, a highly fished location), how full removal might affect the upstream and downstream portions of the stream, and whether removal of the concrete area might undermine the adjacent London Tract Road. The committee is specifically seeking the following answers: 1.) reasons for the dam removal (Shane thought they were safety concerns), 2.) what is DCNR trying to accomplish with a full removal (is there a list of ecological benefits), and 3.) if there are other solutions short of removing the entire dam. Site access was also of concern. The Committee requested a meeting with the other agencies and would like to invite members of the London Britain Historical Commission and White Clay Fly Fishers to attend. Shane will work on this with Sarah.

Wild & Scenic River Program Updates

Lucy Dinsmore provided an update on the Catch the Rain Program. Eleven applicants have applied so far in 2023, and she is currently busy doing site visits. During the winter, she provided CTR presentations to New Castle County Master Gardeners, a Stroud Educator Program, and she cohosted a virtual CTR workshop with Shane. She also set up an exhibit for World Water Day at Stroud. She noted that several people who attended the CTR workshop were from outside our watershed and were strongly interested in this program expanding to those areas. We had about @25 attendees via zoom (@45 registered and

received a video recording). Shane also noted that two former applicants are progressing with projects but will not seek rebates. A large landowner (28 acres) is in the process of installing a native meadow and riparian buffer via grant funding, and another residential applicant had Master Watershed Stewards install live stakes along her stream bank in March.

Martha told the committee that a draft of the State of the Watershed Report will be circulating soon among contributing partners (mainly DRWI partners who helped fund the project). The report differs from past reports in that it will contain a more robust analysis of available data with an accompanying methodology report. We will be able to replicate this methodology for future reports.

Rachael provided an update on county initiatives. The county will be reaching out to HOAs to learn more from them about what they need while also developing tools to help them move forward with sustainability projects. This will involve some assistance from local watershed organizations. The

initial work will not be completed until 2024. The other initiative is a municipal outreach program in partnership with local land trusts. The county will set up an inventory of what land is preserved and what land could be preserved and provide a pathway forward involving planning and policy assistance to interested municipalities. This work should be completed in May.

Shane provided a brief update on school programs. Stroud provided watershed field trips and in-school programming for Avon Grove Intermediate students in both 4th and 6th grades.

Shane also noted that Creek Fest planning is largely completed, and the event will occur on May 6th.

Shane also noted that she presented the Avondale Community-Led Research project at the Chester County Planners Summit on March 29, she will also be presenting this project at the Chester County Watersheds Round Table on May 19. On May 25, she was asked to site on a panel and present on the West Grove GSI projects at the Chester County Association of Township Officials.

There were no questions about the statement of financials.

Shane reminded the committee of her new email: smorgan@whiteclay.org

White Clay Related Updates/Announcements

Cori T. noted that they have extra trees from the Keystone 10 million tree program funded

by the Chesapeake Bay Program. Anyone who knows of interested landowners should contact her.

April S. noted a few volunteer projects coming up:

1. Invasive Plant Removal in the Preserve. This Saturday, 4/22 at 9 am-noon, meeting in the Office Lot. We have 51 volunteers committed, mostly from the Wilmington Trail Club
2. Newark Arts Alliance Garden Tour including my native property, Saturday, 6/3 at 10 am – 3 pm (rain date next day), 17 Laetitia Lane, Landenberg
More info: april.schmitt27@gmail.com

Upcoming W&S Quarterly Meetings

Tuesday, July 18, 10am-noon, in person.

Tuesday, October 17, 10am-noon, TBD