



MEETING MINUTES

September 17, 2020

Attendees:

Shane Morgan	Doug Janiec	Ed O'Donnell	Don Peters
John Goodall	Aileen Parish	Sophie (new UD Intern)	Cori Trice
Sarah Bursky	Kelley Dinsmore	Martha Narvaez	Rick Mickowski
Scotty Crowder	Andrea Withers	David Hawk	April Schmitt

Ed O'Donnell chaired the meeting.

Approval of June minutes.

Video Presentation on the John Evans House Stabilization Effort and Funding Request, by David Hawk and Martin Wells (not present). Dave requested \$5000 in funding to support the hiring of a historical properties structural engineer to put together an emergency stabilization plan for the property (required for to do the report needed for stabilization work to move forward). Total cost of the study is about \$17000. London Britain Township was awarded \$10000 from the state (DCED grant) for the work and the White Clay Watershed Association is providing \$2000. A unanimous vote was taken to support this project using \$5000 of Wild and Scenic Funding from the historical projects budget line.

Sarah Bursky gave an overview of the National Park Service Rails Trails and Conservation Assistance Program. She noted that the application for assistance submitted by DCNR for assistance in developing a master plan for the White Clay Preserve (including the Big Elk section) was favorably reviewed and that letters should be going out soon notifying those who were awarded assistance. Sarah also mentioned that NPS and DCNR had an agency wide meeting. She noted that DCNR is focusing on their five-year recreation plan and that water activities were given high priority.

Sarah also shared that NPS will be putting together a Partnership Wild and Scenic Newsletter this October dedicated to the White Clay. October 2020 is our 20th anniversary as a Wild and Scenic River and this newsletter will share our designation story, as well as some of the work we are doing in the White Clay. Shane noted that she selected a few people to be interviewed on different topics by NPS, but that anyone who wanted to participate, in particular the designation story, could contact her and she would put them in contact with NPS. Sarah will look into whether committee members can directly subscribe to the PWSR newsletter. Shane will share the newsletter once it is published with our mailing list and the Christina Basin mailing list as well as publish it to the website.

Shane mentioned that NPS is also providing a Visual Resource Inventory Training event on September 29th for volunteers who signed up to receive the training and help out with conducting a VRI in the White Clay Creek. Several volunteers signed up representing several different groups in the White Clay including Delaware State Parks and DCNR. The volunteers will go out in groups after they receive the training and do scenic assessments at select locations in the watershed. These assessments will be used to formulate the grade for newly incorporated scenic resource indicator for the 2021 State of the Watershed Report. Shane also noted that Martha has been reaching out and collecting data from stakeholders for the other indicators.

The Committee reviewed and discussed the proposal for funding submitted by the Judge Morris Environmental Stewardship Group (JMESG). The JMESG under the leadership of Terri Tipping has been working on removing invasive plant species and replanting native species at the Judge Morris Estate lands for four years. This summer they worked on removing invasives from an area near a small stream that could use some vegetation to stabilize it. The proposal is for supplies (plants and fencing for to deer exclosures. All labor will be provided by the JMESG volunteers. The JMESG will all maintain the area after planting as they have done successfully with all the other areas they have worked on in the park. Their proposal was approved by the White Clay State Park (landowner) and technical assistance was provided by the state botanist Bill McAvoy. The committee voted unanimously to provide \$1400 from our White Clay Restoration Fund towards this project.

The Committee revisited an older tree planting project that was postponed due to COVID-19. The tree planting on privately owned land in Franklin Township was to be planted by 40 volunteers in early May 2020, but had to be cancelled due to COVID19 restrictions. The Brandywine Conservancy was awarded TreeVitalize funding for the supplies, but no longer has access to volunteers. They are requesting \$4000 to go towards the hiring of a contractor to get the trees in this fall. The Committee gave a conditional approval on using our remaining Wild and Scenic Restoration funds provided that the landowner signs a maintenance contract. Cori Trice noted that there may already be an agreement in place via the TreeVitalize grant. Shane will reach out to Rob Daniels to see if there already an agreement in place and share with the Committee.

Shane provided an update on the University of Delaware study regarding landowners' willingness to implement green infrastructure in the Brandywine-Christina basin. The survey went out to 15000 watershed residents and they had a return of 1500 which was more than they had anticipated. They selected 10 homeowners from the survey applicant pool to get customized site visits and additional funding to implement projects. Shane has already started the site visits and she noted that for each application she will receive \$2000 in funding form UD to implement the work. Furthermore, the funding can be used on other Catch the Rain projects if the selected applicants don't follow through with

implementation. The funding can also cover my time to do the site visit and report. We are guaranteed at least \$10000 total for five applicants in the White Clay. The other \$10,000 will go towards projects in the Red Clay and Brandywine Creeks through the Brandywine Red Clay Alliance.

Shane gave updates on the two municipal rain gardens installed this spring. The Papermill Park Rain Garden is filling in, but may need another flat or two of plants in the areas where the Aster is being eaten by rabbits. All other plants are doing better than expected. The West Grove rain garden is performing very well and also filling in as expected and will be the focus of an upcoming municipal training workshop on October 1. The workshop is this first to be offered in a series of training opportunities for the Christina Watersheds Municipal Partnership (CWMP). Cori Trice was awarded an environmental education mini grant (\$750) from the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts to fund the workshop.

Shane also noted that the CWMP is pushing out a new website (<http://cwmp.org>) with a focus of providing resources to help MS4 municipalities in Chester County with annual stormwater reporting requirements, articles for their newsletters, technical assistance, and potential funding opportunities for implementation. There will also be a calendar feature that they can subscribe to for events of interest. There will also be two upcoming zoom meetings with elected officials in early October.

Shane noted that we were not awarded NFWF funds to support our work testing out different strategies in multiple MS4 municipalities in the White Clay. She also noted that the White Clay still received funding from NFWF. New Castle County Conservation District and University of Delaware (Jason Fischel) were award \$350,000 for the removal of dam 4 on the White Clay (Paper Mill). We provided a letter of support and \$5000 towards this application and it was awarded.

Shane reviewed the Recreational Season Bacteria Data for the White Clay. The counts were notably higher in Delaware this year and mixed for Pennsylvania. In general, though the same trend remains that most of the streams remain impaired for bacteria.

A new continuous monitoring sensor station was installed above Paper Mill Road along an unnamed tributary to Middle Run just upstream from the other station located below Paper Mill Road. The new site will be used to compare conditions above and below the major roadway. The sensor was built, programmed and installed by Rob Tuttle our amazing volunteer. Rob completed the sensor station course offered at Stroud this past spring. Shane noted that our contract with DeIDOT has ended as they are no longer interested in using this area for future restoration work. Shane will be meeting with the

new University of Delaware interns who will be managing the sampling at all 6 sensor stations.

Aileen mentioned that there are a few potential land preservation opportunities London Britain Township is working on. It is too early to share specifics.

Shane mentioned that Kate Raman (Natural Lands) submitted to grant applications for two different properties in New Garden Township. No update on current status of those grants.

Shane mentioned that there will be a public open house at Saint Anthony in the Hills in late September. She noted that there have been two planning meetings to date, mainly for information gathering, but that early results from the surveys show that residents are most interested in passive recreation and community gathering space. She also noted that Natural Lands is involved in the panning of natural resources on the property.

Shane reviewed several former projects and their progress over the past few years with and without land stewardship activities. Land stewardship appears to be paying off in terms of tree survivorship and invasive species encroachment. After reviewing several properties Shane suggest we consider expanding our land stewardship budget line for the next budget. That way we have some additional funds to put towards getting projects established initially (first 3-5 years) which is the most crucial time. The long-term goal would be to have landowner/municipality take over total costs after the first few years of establishment during which we would be providing some project oversight. Shane included New Garden Township in the discussion and how although we do not fund the management of the open space along the trails, or the buffer in the township park that we are involved in the management and that the township pays for it through both their open space funds and park fund. This would be the goal for all municipal and private land projects.

Shane reviewed the financials. There were no questions.

White Clay Related Updates/Announcements

St. Anthony's in the Hills Public Meeting, St. Anthony's Pool Parking Lot Area (off of Rt. 7/Kaolin Road below 41), September 23, 5-7pm

White Clay Creek Visual Resource Training with National Park Service, Virtual Meeting 1-3pm. Please request zoom link from mpc@whiteclay.org if interested in participating.

GSI for MS4, West Grove Fire House and Municipal Building, October 1, 9:30-noon.
Registration required (being offered both live and virtual)
<https://forms.gle/7vGJwPXGo1hmeweo6>

The Chester County Historic Preservation Network presents the John Evans Estate, White Clay Creek Preserve, October 15 at 5 p.m., Information on registration at: cchpn.org

Next Meeting Dates:

Tuesday December 8th, 10am

Meeting adjourned at 12pm.