



## MEETING MINUTES

October 17, 2023, 10:00 am, New Garden Township Building

Meeting Attendees:

Ellie Mortazavi	Doug Janiec	John Goodall	Kelley Dinsmore
Olivia Wilson	Sarah Bursky	Dave Hawk	Shane Morgan
Lucy Dinsmore	Laura Lee	Cori Trice	Aileen Parrish
April Schmitt	Rachael Griffith	Martha Narvaez	Rick Mickowski

Rachael Griffith chaired the meeting.

### **The committee voted to approve the minutes of the July 18<sup>th</sup> 2023 meeting.**

Shane and Lucy started with an overview and photos of some of the recently installed projects of the Catch the Rain Program to give Sarah time to arrive for the open discussion. The committee was also updated on the progress of the new rain garden planned for Harmony Park in West Grove to be installed in 2024 with matching support from a Dockstader Grant.

### New Business

The Committee welcomed Rachael as the new Co-chair, and a round of applause was given to members who retired (Don Peters, Rick Mickowski (retiring in early 2024), and Dave Hawk, who retired as Treasurer. Efforts will be made to find new committee members to fill the two upcoming vacant roles.

Shane walked the committee through the updated Policies and Procedures section of the Operations Manual. Shane discussed the need for updated policies and procedures to clarify roles and for the continuity of the Program should there be a new Director one day. Shane suggested that every committee member reread the entire section to understand better the Wild and Scenic Committee, how it functions, and the various roles of members, the Program Director, and the National Park Service. During the review, additional comments were taken from committee members to be incorporated into the final approved document. Shane will make those edits and share them via email after the meeting to do the formal approval. Once approved, it will also be updated on the website.

While discussing committee policies and procedures, Big Pond came up as an example. Shane noted that the Committee submitted comments on this project to the State in 2019, that there is no new information or a permit to react to, and that she will send out a copy of that response to Desmond Kahn so he is clear on our role.

Laura Lee will help find someone to take minutes during committee meetings. They are hiring a new full-time assistant superintendent, and this task could be written into the job description. Shane will reach out to Laura to discuss further.

Shane expressed her concern over the watershed association maintaining their nonprofit compliance. Sarah stressed the importance of maintaining compliance so we can pass the review NPS does each year during the contract agreement process; therefore, she has a vested interest in this. Rachael suggested that an ad hoc committee be formed to discuss this in more detail outside of the WS meeting to develop a strategy that can be implemented. Cori Trice, Doug Janiec, Rachael Griffith, and John Goodall volunteered to sit on this committee. John Goodall suggested that the goals be set prior to the ad hoc committee meeting.

#### NPS River Manager Report

Sarah mentioned there was nothing new to share on the dam removal projects. Sarah identified a few professionals from American Rivers and The Nature Conservancy who can speak about the range of ecological benefits from dam removals and how they balance restoration objectives with historic preservation. This will be an optional (but encouraged) virtual meeting. Sarah will send out the date once the speakers are set. A few committee members asked when the Alosine Study would be ready. Melinda Daniels was not present. She did send an update that Stroud Water Research Center completed the sampling, but that water levels were unusually low through spring which is not representative of a typical year. Shane noted that the report should be ready by the end of December. Melinda will present the results at the January meeting.

Laura Lee mentioned that there would be a Phase 2 report on Dam 7 (Tweeds Mill Dam) regarding archeological resources.

Dave Hawk mentioned that the London Britain Historic Commission was asked by the State Historical Preservation Office to be a consulting partner for the Evans Fulling Mill Dam (Dam 8 in the Preserve).

Olivia gave an overview of the project she is working on for the White Clay. She is calculating the size and stormwater capture of rain gardens on residential and institutional properties located within selected drainage areas called out in the Avondale Greening Plan (by Meliora). The goal is to capture more stormwater at the sources (impervious cover from rooftops) before it flows to the BMP listed in the plan for that drainage area. She will select ten priority projects (with Shane) and develop a report (and/or PowerPoint) to showcase these projects as her final deliverable as an NPS Fellow.

## Wild & Scenic Committee Updates:

Stream Watch. Shane noted that the bacteria data for the 2023 recreational season are in. She will review it at the January meeting, along with the year-round monitoring results.

### Watershed Improvement Projects

Shane gave an update on the Growing Greener Demo Project in Avondale Borough, which had to be relocated due to contaminated soils and a deed restriction at the original site. The new site selected is a porous pavement basketball court at the Garage Youth Center. The remaining funds will be put towards depaving the front area of the building and supporting an outdoor classroom with planters and raised beds. Construction would not occur until late 2024 or sometime in 2025.

Shane shared photos of the completed biochar filter at a mushroom farm in New Garden Township. She would like to pursue Stroud on doing the monitoring if possible. It would need to be sampled during storm events, which doesn't usually work with student schedules.

Shane shared before and after photos of two afforestation sites in the White Clay that help steward. The Keen property which was planted in spring of 2022 and the Franklin Preserve which was planted multiple times (2013, 2016, and 2022). Franklin Township is funding the maintenance of Keen. The Franklin Preserve property is managed by Red Tail Restoration with an annual mowing by the township. Wild and Scenic funds have been supporting Red Tail's work. Our current contract concluded on September 30<sup>th</sup>. Shane asked the committee to extend the contract for another year of continued support specifically focused on maintaining tree health by monitoring tubes and removing or re-caging when needed, weed whacking the areas around the tubes' base, especially on the newer planted trees, and removing invasive species. **The committee voted to extend the contract for the 2023-24 season in the amount of \$2100.**

Shane noted that the Loch Nairn Concept Plan was reviewed at a public meeting in late July and should be ready for adoption by the township in the coming months. John Goodall mentioned that he is working on preserving two properties in the Upper East Branch, West Marlborough Township. He does not need any funding.

Shane noted that the NFWF-funded Upper East Branch Basin study is complete. She brought large format maps for the committee to look at after the meeting. She suggested that the committee review the restoration plan in more detail and attend the public meeting so that we can consider a project to pursue. She also noted that some of the sites are already in motion, like the Loch Nairn site that Natural Lands and Stroud are helping develop for New Garden Township and a residential property along E. London Grove

Road. This resident was an applicant to the Catch the Rain Program. We suggested a lawn-to-meadow conversion and a stream (and pond) buffer. She is implementing both, DCNR (and LandStudies) are assisting with the meadow now, and Stroud is installing the buffer in Spring 2024. The public meeting is on November 15<sup>th</sup> at The Garage Youth Center at 7 p.m. Shane is sending invites to the four municipalities in the focus area, landowners where projects were identified, and other parties that expressed interest. Both the watershed assessment and restoration plan were sent out to committee members earlier and are also on our website under the resources tab.

Shane wanted to discuss a potential new watershed improvement project. She met with Dr. Franco Montalto, a Drexel professor who spoke at the DRBC Fall Forum after hearing him speak. She would like to partner with him and his PhD Students to use GIS to map out flooding hot spots in the White Clay watershed. This would involve a bunch of modelling including PCSWMM, H&H, and HEC RAS. She would like to use the data to identify vulnerable areas and future vulnerabilities (due to climate change) and to advocate for policy changes. They could do a low-resolution mapping and then do high-resolution mapping of known hot spots, like Avondale where we also have some community data to help with some of the 'social' modeling. She requested help in developing the scope. The suggested budget for a PhD for one year was \$40K. Martha volunteered immediately as they are doing a similar project in the Brandywine. We may be able to piggyback off what they are doing in the Brandywine. Shane will meet with Martha soon to review and develop the scope and determine the best path forward.

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

Shane reviewed how to read the new financial reports done in QuickBooks.

#### White Clay Related Updates/Announcements

Christina BMP Bus Tour November 8<sup>th</sup>, 9am-3pm (Shane will be presenting on the West Grove Rain Gardens and the Avondale Outreach Project)

Upper East Branch Assessment and Restoration Plan Public Meeting November 15<sup>th</sup>, 7 pm, The Garage Youth Center, Avondale. (Please RSVP)

Christina Watersheds Municipal Partnership Meeting November 16<sup>th</sup>, 10am - 11:30am, CCWRA County Government Services Center, Room 171, 601 Westtown Rd, West Chester

Rick M. mentioned the annual DISC meeting that is coming up and will be hosted by the Harvest Ridge Winery in DE, and the Turning a New Leaf Conference.

Aileen let the committee know that London Britain Township will be doing lawn to meadow conversions in Nickel Park and two of their subdivisions (Country Walk and Windsor). There will be a spotlight on these projects in the upcoming Township Newsletter.

Upcoming W&S Quarterly Meetings

Tuesday, January 23, 10am-noon

Tuesday, April 23, 10am-noon

Tuesday, July 16, 10am-noon

Tuesday, October 15, 10am-noon

Meeting adjourned 12:05 pm.