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Meeting Minutes

**White Clay Creek Watershed
Management Committee**

June 3, 2003,

Judge Morris Estates

Newark, DE

Attendees:

Chuck Barscz	Fred Muller	Janet Comly Kalb
Jerry Kauffman	Sally Cheyne	Jessie Benjamin
Nancy Parker	Dorothy P. Miller	David Hawk
Robert Lonsdorf	Ed O'Donnell	Rick Mickowski
Kristen Travers	David Bartoo	Andy Urquhart
Jake Michael	Linda Stapleford	

Invited Guests: Dan Greig and Chotty Sprengle, CCCD; Steve Piller, PA Department of Environmental Protection

MINUTES 03/11/2003

- *Chuck Barscz was caught in I-95 traffic and arrived late to the meeting. The reading and approval of the minutes of the March 11, 2003 meeting were therefore suspended until the September meeting.*

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:

Fish & Wildlife

Ed O'Donnell, subcommittee chair, reported that the Fish & Wildlife Subcommittee intended to conduct a school outreach program to reach students in both states. They also had agreed to fund an upper watershed flora and fauna study to be conducted by Jim White and Janet Ebert. The study would be accomplished in phases.

Education Subcommittee

Kristen Travers, chair of the subcommittee, stated they would be willing to work with Fish and Wildlife on their planned school project. In addition she announced winners of the mini-grants: 1) \$1000 for Avon Grove's School's nature education trail for 3rd and 4th graders; and 2) \$1000 to Sanford School for an education program for students in K-3rd grades to complement their Mill Creek tributary restoration project. They also hoped to re-advertise the grant program again in the fall.

Kristen also reported that they were earmarking \$8000 for working with DNREC Parks and Recreation to produce interpretive signs for the Wild and Scenic program to be placed in the parks in both states. The subcommittee would need assistance with pursuing road signage. Fish and Wildlife subcommittee will consider assisting with that endeavor.

Open Space

Robert Lonsdorf gave an update on the activities of the subcommittee. In '02 they identified the A list of Pennsylvania streamside and agriculture landowners (~60 each) to approach for conservation. In '03 they are working on a B list for Pennsylvania and an A list for Delaware and identifying assistance and funding sources in Delaware. So far there has been a poor response from the PA A list so the subcommittee plans to work more closely with the municipalities and utilize their resources in making contacts. One way to do this is to provide each township with a map of the outstandingly remarkable resources in their township. Franklin and London Britain have their own funding sources so the goal is to work more with other townships including New Garden and Londonderry. London Grove has a referendum this fall for open space conservation.

They also have a meeting scheduled with Fish and Wildlife subcommittee June 11 to plan discuss cooperative ventures. It was also noted that US F&W is offering grants for the first time, deadline July 1, with no match required.

Recreational Trails

Jake Michael (Chester County Planning) reported the trail map project is in progress courtesy of DNREC. It will primarily involve the Delaware portion, the preserve, and Fairhill, Maryland.

PRESENTATION: MUSHROOM FARM BMPs AND WATER QUALITY ISSUES:

Dan Greig , Chester County Conservation District and Steve Piller, Department of Environmental Protection, were asked to make a presentation before the Management Committee to discuss the progress of installation and effectiveness of Best Management Practices (BMPs) on mushroom farms within the White Clay Watershed. The particular focus was farms impacting the water quality of Trout Run, a tributary to the East Branch of the White Clay Creek in New Garden Township. At the March meeting Warren Reynolds from New Garden Township had made a presentation in which he contended that pollution from a neighboring mushroom composting facility is a source of contamination of Trout Run. This issue is the subject of a federal court case that Mr. Reynolds and his family brought against Rick's Mushroom Service. The composting facility is located on property located at Hillendale Road near Newark Road.

Dan reviewed the Conservation District's work with the three types of mushroom farm facilities: fresh composters

which create compost to grow the mushrooms, mushroom growers, and farms which process spent compost, turning it into useable products such as soil amendments. The District has assisted farmers to install and operate BMPs to address the two issues of concern for these facilities: water quality impacts and odor. Participating farms have created a closed loop system so that the water that leaches from the operation is collected, goes into a settling pond or and/or is treated in a constructed wetland, and is re-used, or sprayed onto haying fields. Some farms have state of the art technology, which even collects condensate water and is well buffered from neighbors. The bar is also being raised in odor control. Other control measures installed at various farms in the Trout Run watershed include forested riparian buffers, concrete wharves, filter soxx for inlet protections, grass filter areas, and stream restoration projects.

During a question and answer time regarding the impacts to the water quality problems in the WCC, Dan noted that this has been a historic problem and it is difficult to assess contributions from the past and current mushroom farm industry. He did note that in 1998, before the District's assistance with BMP design and installation, none of the farms had closed systems and today all those participating farms have them. He estimated that the last 10 years have improved the water quality impacts by 90%. More specifically, before the BMPs were installed fish kills had occurred in the ponds below Rick Mash's farm, the farm upstream of Mr. Reynold's. There are no major problems there now and Steve said the owner "has done whatever asked and corrected things to our satisfaction." It was also noted that just about the time all the BMPs were installed in this subwatershed, the USGS removed their water quality monitoring station that had been in place at the confluence of the Trout Run and the East Branch.

London Grove and New Garden Townships' Trail Systems

London Grove is developing a trail system and the Gouge property subdivision has a trail proposed with a pedestrian bridge crossing on a tributary. Jake Michael said Chester County wants them to work with an existing bridge. New Garden is considering a Rails-to-Trails plan that they have discussed with the state and county. Information is available on their web site. Jake recommended everyone proceed cautiously and not get ahead of the process. Trails, like highway planning, requires input from local residents first as well as the municipality, state, and county working together.

Wilkinson Seeding Access Road on Steep Slope Property

Janet Kalb reported that Wilkinson is trying to put an access road to a new development across a steeply sloped property owned by Harris. Another landowner is willing to sell their property as an alternate route for access. The Harris property would make a nice open space acquisition. It is on the Open Space subcommittee's A list.

Budget

The budget was discussed at length. It was decided that Fish and Wildlife should get up to \$4000 more from the money allocated in excess of the current \$50,000 budget.

Request to DRBC for Extension of the Groundwater Resource Protection Area

Discussion occurred regarding the value of requesting DRBC to extend the Groundwater Protection Area to include the White Clay Creek. A question was raised if the 1 in 25 year rule was enough to provide protection for the watershed's groundwater. It was decided that Jerry should talk to Jan Bowers to find out why she opposes extending the protection area and that it would then be discussed at the next Exec. Comm. Meeting.

→ There was discussion regarding inviting New Garden Township to the fall meeting but a final decision was not made.

THE NEXT WATERSHED MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING WILL BE:

Tuesday September 9, 2003, 1-3 PM

Londonderry Township Building

103 Daleville Road

Cochranville, PA

The meeting was adjourned at **4:15 PM.**