

Minutes of the Clarks Creek Watershed Preservation Association

PO Box 75, Dauphin, PA 17018 / CCWPA.ORG

Tuesday, January 17, 2012, Dauphin County Agricultural Building, Peters Mountain Road

A General Meeting of the CCWPA was called to order at 7:08 by the President Sherry McLain, following a pot luck dinner which had begun at 6:15 pm. Approximately 20 members were in attendance. Sherry read the Mission Statement and led attendees in a recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance. Two guests who attended the pot luck were Chris Dietz, candidate for the PA State Legislature 104th district, and Gene Stilp, candidate for US Congress from the newly delineated congressional district which includes our watershed.

Secretary Paula Zankel distributed the minutes of the Sept 27, 2012, Annual Meeting of the CCWPA, which had previously been approved by the Board in November. Mike Blum moved to accept the minutes, and Carolyn Lauver seconded the motion. The minutes were approved as read.

Treasurer's report. Karen Stilp reported that as of December 31 we had a balance of \$1860.22, and our expenses this year were approximately \$500-600, which included the post office box rental, purchase of the banner, pop-up and table. We have 27 paid members. Karen announced that all dues paid in 2011 are good until September, 2012.

Committee reports:

Program Committee: Paula Zankel put out a call for program suggestions.

Outreach: Mary Hochendoner described the results of the two Adopt-a-Highway pick-ups along Clarks Valley Road in 2011. The first pick-up, in May, netted 43 bags of trash, and the second in October netted 17 bags and a truck transmission. Many tires were also gathered during the cleanup days. The next pick-up day is Saturday April 7, 2012, which does not conflict with the opening of trout season, for safety reasons. CCWPA was asked by Trout Unlimited to participate in planting seedlings along the creek in Game Commission property to replace trees damaged by the wooly adelgid. Mary noted our participation in the poster contest sponsored by the Keystone Coldwater Conference next month (February 2012), and a possible joint meeting with the Dauphin-Middle Paxton Historical Society. She presented a suggestion based upon the Pine Creek model to post temporary "Burma-Shave-like" anti-littering signs along Clarks Valley Road during fishing season. Shirley Shoop, who is also a member of Twin Valley Watershed Assn, suggested that we put trash bags on trees along the road, to encourage waste disposal by fishermen, instead of just random litter. Shirley said that farmers and other landowners do appreciate the results.

Web site and Publicity: Mike Blum plans to put a scannable QR code on printed material for use by smart phones. This is the little box that is now appearing that is similar in concept to a bar code; scanned, it refers the smart device directly to a file or a page on our web site, as programmed. He encouraged us to suggest web links between CCWPA and other organizations, and for members to "like" us on Facebook. CCWPA will set up an information booth at the Zankel driveway on March 31, 2012, the opening day of Trout season, as we did in 2011. Mike Blum also wants to enlist various members of the CCWPA in a publicity two-way process: helping funnel appropriate news TO him for posting on the web site and Facebook page; and helping disseminate news about CCWPA. Joe Lauver said the he is not getting e-mail from the group, and Mike Blum said that he will check into the matter on the CCWPA e-mail database.

Government Liaison: Brett Zankel has contacted the Environmental Hearing board about the Game Commission "Bridge to Nowhere" at the East end of the Harrisburg Reservoir property. There is no existing permit for the bridge, and cement was spilled into the creek. Terry Fetterhoff stated that he believes that trees have been marked for sale on this property.

General Discussion & New Business: Skip Lauver said that the DeHart spillway sustained damage during the 2011 flooding, and there is more concern now about the state of the dam than during the Agnes flood. Some of the spillway plates have lifted. We believe that the DeHart Dam is regarded as a “high hazard dam” because it is an earthen dam with no reinforcement. Terry Fetterhoff reported that the September floodwaters swept or carried many trees to the stone arch bridge, but that neighbors removed them. Terry also reported on the discovery of tires being dumped on private property in the Watershed: specifically, it has come to his attention that at least 100 tires were dumped along the old coal mine road off route 225 going up Peters Mountain; it is believed that this “dumping ground” is on private property. It was discussed that although it is against the law to dump tires on private property, the landowner has the obligation to remove them, and that the township code enforcement officer should be contacted, or other action taken. Terry agreed to further inquire as to how these tires could be removed. Paul Shoop noted that, in the past, Federal park rangers turned the action over to DEP when tires were discovered dumped on the Appalachian trail.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 for the evening’s program. The next board meeting will be January 24, 2012.

PRESENTATION: Two speakers were present:

Ms. Megan Blackmon, Dauphin County Watershed specialist spoke to us about her background, and provided us with a list of possible projects that the CCWPA could pursue. These included tree planting; rain barrel and rain garden creation; holding an Environmental film festival; participating in the collection of unused pharmaceuticals and disposal awareness; and Geo-caching. Megan described the “Best Management Practices Trail,” which includes 16 stations around the conservation district building; this would make a good evening's program. She also suggested possible sources of future funding, including WREN grants up to \$5K (proposals due in March), DEP environmental education grants, and grants from the Cora Brooks foundation. Other resources include the Pennsylvania Environmental Digest and STORMWATERPA.ORG.

Mr. Adam Schickley, a teacher at the Yellow Breeches Education Center and a Stoney Valley resident, described some of the activities relating to a stream study of Clarks Creek that were performed by his students. These findings showed the Creek to be in relatively good health, with a good mixture percentage of resistant and sensitive macro-invertebrates (the presence of “sensitive” macro-invertebrates means that the waters are clean; an over-abundance of “resistant” macro-invertebrates means that the waters are polluted and that only the hardiest organisms can survive in it). Adam told us that an HTH swimming pool kit is a good way to test the pH of one's private well water. He stated that Orvis corporate grants might be another source of funding for us, and also that the Middle-Paxton Home Association provides materials for “submarine sandwich sales” to benefit various groups. Also, Adam informed us that it is necessary to obtain a PA Fish Commission Collections permit in order to gather organisms from the water.

Respectfully submitted,
Paula Zankel,
Secretary

Pre-meeting activity: Gene Stilp spoke to the pot-luck participants prior to the general meeting. He described a 39-space parking lot and boat launch that the County is proposing to build in Middle Paxton Twp in wetland areas near the mouth of Fishing Creek, adjacent to the old gas station at the corner of Front Street and Route 443. He is interested in urging local environmental groups to pressure the township to deny the permit. Aaron Martin has been hired to lead the objection to this parking lot.