

QUITTAPAHILLA WATERSHED ASSOCIATION
Meeting Minutes
Virtually via Zoom
April 18, 2023

I. Pre-Meeting on the upcoming Sunday, April 30 field tour in Quittie Creek Nature Park in Annville.

Present: Michael Schroeder, Rocky Powell, Kara Lubold, Russ Collins

1. The pre-meeting opened at 6:30 p.m. The goal was to develop a brief 10-12 minute program for the Sunday, April 30 field tour that will be undertaken by directors and senior administrators attending the 78th Annual Northeast Fish & Wildlife Conference in Hershey, co-hosted by the PA Fish & Boat Commission and the PA Game Commission. After discussion, consensus was reached on the following sequence of presentations of about 3 minutes each:

- A. Mike will open with words of welcome, introduction of local partners, and a brief summary of the role of the QWA in the restoration project undertaken in Quittie Creek Nature Park in 2014-2016.
- B. Rocky will offer a crisp summary of the stream restoration project.
- C. Kara and Ned Gible will summarize the role played by The Lebanon Valley Conservancy (TLVC) in administering the grant monies for the project.
- D. Russ will close with a summary of the work of Doc Fritchey Trout Unlimited in other projects in the Quittapahilla and adjacent watersheds.

The pre-meeting ended at 6:55 p.m.

II. Regular Monthly Meeting

Present: Michael Schroeder, Russ Collins, Karen Feather, Bryan Hoffman, Margaret Hopkins, Kara Lubold

- 1. The meeting opened at 7:02 p.m.
- 2. **Summer Internship Program.** Kara reported on discussions at TLVC's Board meeting last night regarding administering the grant money for our summer 2023 Internship Program, including details on payroll taxes and liability insurance. She further reported that this year's TLVC scholarship recipient is Hannah Horengic, an Environmental Science major at LVC, who the QWA selected as one of our summer 2023 interns. Mike noted that the second intern is Ilyssa McLaughlin, also an Environmental Science major at LVC. Kara was thanked for her and TLVC's support of our summer internship program.

3. **Past & Upcoming Events.** Mike reported on past & upcoming events, including:
 - A. Streamflow monitoring undertaken earlier in the day, organized and spearheaded by Kent Crawford, on the Quittie mainstem just downstream of the Spruce St. bridge, where stream restoration work is slated to commence later in the summer or fall. Volunteers, in addition to Kent, included Bob Connell, Shawn Jacobs, Michael Schroeder, Stephan Vegoe, and Gary Zelinske.
 - B. The annual Lebanon Co. United Way Day of Caring in Quittie Creek Nature Park is slated for this Saturday, April 22. Volunteers are asked to assemble at the Bachman Rd entrance to Nature Park at 9 am to be divided into work crews for spreading mulch, removing invasive species, and related tasks.
 - C. A cleanup effort this past Saturday, April 15 along both banks of the Quittie mainstem adjacent to the Fun Time Game Center & Mini-Golf on Cumberland St., organized by the Quittapahilla Creek Garbage Museum, resulted in some 30 bags of garbage.
 - D. The upcoming Sunday, April 30 field tour by directors and senior administrators attending the 78th Annual Northeast Fish & Wildlife Conference in Hershey, co-hosted by the PA Fish & Boat Commission and the PA Game Commission. Mike summarized the gist of the pre-meeting held immediately prior to this meeting (see the notes from that pre-meeting, above). Mike put together a two-page summary of the QWA's role in the project which is appended to these minutes.
 - E. The QWA will have a table at Historic Old Anville Day on Sat. June 10 for education & outreach that it is hoped will be shared by the Leb Co Conservation District and its Countywide Action Plan. Contact Mike for details.

4. **Project Updates.** Russ and, before and after the meeting, Rocky provided updates on several ongoing and proposed projects:
 - A. **Beck Creek Project 6.** Lebanon Countywide Action Plan (CAP) Has \$340,000 to be allocated or spent by Dec 2024. The Watershed Action Team decided to allot \$250,000 to Beck Creek 6 as match.
 - B. **Snitz Creek Project 2.** All permits obtained. Postponing request for funding for Construction until 2024 grant cycle. Cornwall Borough - \$131,000 match Not requesting any CAP funds. Construction anticipated in 2025.
 - C. **Snitz Creek Project 3.** Erosion & Sediment Permit approved by LCCD; Pipeline Encroachment application approved; PADEP/USACOE Permits on hold pending redesign to reduce amount of rock used for bank stabilization. Postponing request for funding of Construction 2024 grant cycle. Construction anticipated in 2025.
 - D. **Snitz Creek Project 4.** Moving ahead on this project will require signed landowner permission forms from some 22 property owners along the creek. Most have signed, but 4 or 5 have not yet agreed. Russ is working with PA State Senator Chris Gebhard's office in an effort to secure landowners' permissions.
 - E. **Killinger Creek Project.** Preliminary Design nearly complete.
 - F. **Bachman Run.** Preliminary channel alignment and buffer design was approved by landowners. Moving forward with completing Preliminary Design.

5. Leb. Co. Stormwater Consortium. Bryan reported that work is expected to begin on June 1 on the section of the Quittie mainstem downstream of the Hazel Dike and upstream of the 22nd St. bridge, a project being undertaken by the Leb Co Stormwater Consortium.

The meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Schroeder, Secretary Pro Tem

Facilitating Partnerships for Stream Restoration Projects: The Work of the Quittapahilla Watershed Association in Lebanon County, PA

A Handout for Visitors from the 78th Annual Northeast Fish & Wildlife Conference in Hershey, PA

Michael Schroeder, QWA President
<http://www.quittiecreek.org>
Quittie Creek Nature Park, Annville, PA
Sunday, April 30, 2023

The all-volunteer, non-profit Quittapahilla Watershed Association (QWA) was founded in June 1997 by Lebanon Valley College Professor of Psychology David Lasky, its mission “to protect and improve the water quality in the watershed.” Dave led the organization till 2012, when I became co-president, and from 2014, president.

But it was Dave who established the precedents and created the basic template for our work, which is essentially to act as a *facilitator* of projects intended to improve the water quality in the watershed. Our most basic job is to bring people and institutions together to initiate projects and see them through to completion, which in most cases takes several years.

This includes *public entities*, most importantly:

- Municipal governments (here in PA that includes cities, townships, and boroughs; Lebanon County alone has 26 municipalities).
- State funding agencies (mainly PA-DEP and the PA Fish & Boat Commission)
- Federal funding agencies (mainly the US-EPA and USDA-NRCS)
- The Lebanon County Conservation District (LCCD), which runs the PA-DEP-funded Countywide Action Plan (CAP), which in turn contracts with LandStudies, Inc., based in Lititz, PA
- The Lebanon County Stormwater Consortium (a kind of ad-hoc marriage of convenience among six local municipalities and the engineering firm they contract with, to pool resources and collectively adhere to federal & state MS4 mandates)
- The Lebanon County Planning Department and its brainchild, the Lebanon County Clean Water Alliance (LCCWA, an earlier version of the Stormwater Consortium, also created to deal with unfunded MS4 mandates)

It also includes *non-profit 501c3 organizations* that actually administer the grant monies that projects receive: mainly in our case The Lebanon Valley Conservancy (TLVC) and the Doc Fritchey Chapter of Trout Unlimited (DFTU).

It also includes what is probably the key actor here, the *project manager*, which in our case is mainly Rocky Powell of Clear Creeks Consulting, LLC, based in Maryland. Rocky, who's been a stalwart ally of the QWA and its work for more than 20 years, does the design & permitting work and provides construction oversight for project implementation. In doing so he interacts directly with the construction contractor selected from a group of pre-qualified contractors competitively bidding on the project.

Finally, it includes *property owners* where the work is targeted. One of our main jobs is to solicit the permission of landowners to do the work. That usually means going door-to-door, explaining the proposed project, and asking property owners to sign PA-DEP's landowner permission forms. This can be a real challenge, especially for larger projects, and especially when the landowner is a corporation (e.g., the project we call Snitz Creek Project 18-19, which sits on property owned by a Delaware-based LLC and is leased to Lowe's Home Improvement through a property management company based in Manhattan; the project is now stuck because the property owner is refusing to sign on, citing made-up legal concerns about encumbrances on the property).

We've discussed becoming a 501c3 non-profit organization but decided against it, mainly to keep things simple and to avoid having to file taxes every year and deal with the headaches of actually administering grant money. We own no property or assets, meet in a public space (the Annville Town Hall till the pandemic hit), and maintain our own website, at <http://www.quittiecreek.org>, which I administer and pay for out of pocket. Mainly the website is used as a place to house, archive, and make readily accessible documents and data relating to our work. We have a small bank account (less than \$5,000) under the organizational umbrella of TLVC, made up of money that's been granted by both private and public entities (municipalities, DFTU, the Stormwater Consortium, and private donations), mainly for incidental expenses like waders and monitoring equipment.

In a nutshell, then, to the extent we've been successful in getting good work done in the watershed, it's mainly been the result of establishing, cultivating, and maintaining long-term relationships of mutual trust and respect with all these various actors. Especially with local public entities, that generally means getting to know people on a first-name basis, maintaining open lines of communication, and being transparent and responsive when questions or issues arise.