

**QUITTAPAHILLA WATERSHED ASSOCIATION**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Via Zoom in consequence of the global pandemic**  
**Sept. 21, 2021**

Present: Michael Schroeder, Karen Feather, Kent Crawford, Russ Collins, Bryan Hoffman, Laurel Etter, Courtney Reimann

The meeting opened at 7:08 p.m.

**1. Quittapahilla Creek Floodplain Restoration Report.** Bryan Hoffman of the Lebanon County Stormwater Consortium offered a welcome report and update on the Consortium's current plans for restoring the floodplain between the end of the Hazel Dike in Lebanon (around the 1900 block of West Cumberland Ave.) and the 22<sup>nd</sup> Street bridge—an area comprising some 1,800 linear feet of stream and a floodplain approximately five acres in extent. It is estimated that the project will remove approximately 200,000 lbs. of legacy sediment; substantially reduce the flow of silt & sediment downstream to the Chesapeake Bay; and will cost in the neighborhood of \$1.5 to \$2 million. The anticipated timeline for the project is as follows:

- Sept. 21, 2021 (today): pre-application meetings with PA-DEP;
- Sept. 30, 2021: meeting with Army Corps of Engineers;
- Oct. 1, 2021: permit application submitted to PA-DEP;
- Spring 2022: permit approval;
- Summer and fall 2022: construction;
- Fall or early winter 2022: completion of project.

Bryan said it would be fine to share the PowerPoint slide deck he presented outlining the project. Mike said he would post the deck as a PDF file on the Studies & Documents page of the QWA website.

**2. Comprehensive report on stream restoration projects.** Russ Collins submitted the following written report before the meeting and briefly summarized each item:

**A. Lebanon County Projects.**

- 1) Killinger Creek. Funding for planning, design and permitting nearing conclusion for the award agreement from The Conservation Fund organization to be signed. DFTU will be the recipient of \$130,000.
- 2) Bachman Run. EPA 319 non-point source grant application submitted March 24, 2021. Awards expected in late Fall or early Winter. \$161,081.55 applied for design and permitting.
- 3) Beck Creek. Construction phase grant application submitted. Again we applied to EPA 319 funding for construction. We applied for \$795,506, which was the low bid from four solicited contractors. PADEP aggressively scrutinized and accepted our application as presented. They tried to downsize the offer to \$140,000, grossly inadequate for the project's complexity.

- 4) Snitz Creek Project 2 in Cornwall Borough. The Kralls told the Borough that the Borough must purchase the two acres of land that includes the one-acre wetland creation area and the one-acre stream area. The Borough had seriously considered taking the property through condemnation, but they were alerted that the property has been in the Clean & Green Program for years, allowing the property owners to obtain an annual tax deduction. Consequently, the Borough would have to pay a \$35,000 tax penalty if they acquired the two acres through condemnation. Alternatively, they are pursuing a “deed in lieu” which avoids the tax penalty. The Borough is hoping to have everything wrapped up with the land transfer before the end of the year. We indicated that it should be wrapped up sooner would help us with our design and permitting schedule.
- 5) Snitz Creek Project 3. After receiving notice of the grant award, work has begun on this project’s design and permitting phase. Invoicing has started through the grant applicant DFTU.
- 6) Snitz Creek Project 4A, Growing Greener Grant application submitted for design and permitting in the amount of \$171,512 in early summer.

**B. Hammer Creek Project 9 (Cocalico Creek watershed).**

- 1) Barry farm project. This is the largest and most complex project thus far for DFTU. The project calls for the restoration of 8,400-plus linear feet of the stream; a natural stream design to create a new stream channel where wetland areas exist; backfilling the old channel and merging two tributaries; and a spring channel for the propagation of native Brook Trout.
- 2) Shuey Property. Narrative forthcoming.
- 3) Zimmerman Property. Narrative forthcoming.

**3. Countywide Action Plan (CAP) Update.** Mike reported that he submitted the following item summarizing the activities of the Education & Outreach Action Team for inclusion in the CAP Newsletter being put together by CAP Coordinator Mary Kate Gallagher:

The Education & Outreach Action Team has been busy trying to educate the larger community about the perils faced by the Chesapeake Bay and the urgent need to reduce the flows of nitrogen, phosphorous, sediment, and other pollutants into the Susquehanna River from Lebanon County, especially from the Quittapahilla watershed. As noted on the homepage of the Quittapahilla Watershed Association, the PA-DEP classifies some 98 percent of the Quittie watershed as impaired, mainly as a result of agricultural runoff (see [www.quittiecreek.org](http://www.quittiecreek.org)).

On a lovely blue-sky day in downtown Annville on Saturday, August 14, the Watershed Association set up an informational table staffed by volunteers, including our youngest member, 13-year-old Alyssa Witmer, who charmed passing visitors with the model watershed she’d made from cardboard, epoxy, paint, and other materials. Using orange gelatin to represent nitrogen; black sand to represent phosphorous; little toy cows to represent, well, cows; chocolate sprinkles to represent livestock manure; and poured water to represent a rainstorm, Alyssa’s model watershed and storytelling skills vividly illustrated the problems facing waterways downstream.

We look forward to another such opportunity on Tuesday, October 12 from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., when the Watershed Association and our Action Team will be staffing an informational table in the Freeman Lobby at Cornwall Manor. Other participants will include the Manada Conservancy, the Lebanon Valley Conservancy, Penn State Extension of Lebanon County, and the Quittapahilla Audubon Society.

We've also been in touch with the reporters from the *York Daily Record* who this past February published their eye-opening, 15-part series, "Killing the Chesapeake" to see if that series can be turned into a readily accessible pamphlet or PDF file. We're also looking at developing signage that tells people that they're entering the Quittapahilla watershed, envisioned as scaled-down versions of the prominent signs that tell people they're entering the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

In sum, increasing public awareness about the importance of healthy waterways is an ongoing challenge that we're pursuing in a variety of ways, and we welcome your suggestions moving forward.

*The Education & Outreach Action Team is made up of Michael Schroeder, President of the Quittapahilla Watershed Association; Stephanie Harmon, Watershed Specialist with the Lebanon County Conservation District; and Julie Cheyney, Executive Director of the Lebanon County Planning Department*

4. **Russ Collins named Conservationist of the Year.** We were delighted to learn that "Russ Collins was awarded the Doc Fritchey Outstanding Coldwater Conservationist of the year by the Pennsylvania Council of Trout Unlimited in light of his seemingly impossible and enormous scope of impact on the cold water ecosystems within his chapter's footprint. Over the last five years as president and now as conservation chair, he has brought together extensive and diverse stakeholders and has projects done or pending grant funding in at least eight trout streams within our footprint. He treats his position like a full-time job and is meeting with landowners, consultants, and politicians daily and researching different grants. Jim Suleski, MD, his co-chair, half-jokingly calls him 'the busiest man in Lebanon county, and that could be accurate.' Recently, Russ worked to get a group of farmers to agree to a project after a decade of other conservationists failing to find a solution for a stream project that worked for these farmers' needs and the trout. Recently he worked to submit an EPA 319 grant funding for a restoration of a diamond in the rough spring creek that runs through the farmer's 1000-acre farm that supports native brook trout. This project will be the biggest project that the Doc Fritchey Chapter has ever done and a massive boon to our State fish, the brook trout. 'Because of Russ Collins determination, problem-solving abilities, and long hours, he has been the best mentor I could have hoped for as someone getting into stream restoration,' says Dr. Jim." The assembled QWA members offered Russ their heartiest congratulations on this much-deserved honor.
5. **Monitoring Program.** Kent reported that the QWA's monitoring program is still on hold in consequence of the global Covid-19 pandemic, but that he hopes to get the program up and running again this fall or early winter

The meeting adjourned at 7:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Schroeder, Secretary Pro Tem