**Meeting Minutes**

**CITIZENS ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR WHITE CLAY CREEK STATE PARK**

**JANUARY 26, 2016, JUDGE MORRIS HOUSE**

**Persons Present:**

**Council and Division Representatives:**

AFL/CIO – Delaware – Bill Foster

Coalition for Natural Stream Valleys – Andy Urquhart

Delaware Audubon Society – David Carter

Delaware Equine Council – not represented

Delaware State Sportsmen’s Association – not represented

Delmarva Ornithological Society – not represented

Friends of White Clay Creek State Park – not represented

Mason-Dixon Trail System – Mike Ott

Omnia Humanitas – Cindy Kranz Greene

Silent Knights Soaring Society – Terry Lisanski

Trail Dawgs – Peter McLaughlin

Trail Spinners – James Ireland

UAW CAP Council – Delaware – Donald Sharpe

White Clay Flyfishers – Ed O’Donnell

White Clay Watershed Association – Linda Stapleford

Wilmington Trail Club – Gary Kirk

Angel Burns – Superintendent, WCCSP

Mika Greenwood – Assistant Superintendent, WCCSP

Matt Ritter – Delaware State Parks

John Wales – WCCSP Staff

**Members of the Public:**

Paul Baumbach, State Representative

Arabella Bianco – Coalition for Natural Stream Valleys

Judy Gorzynski

Tim Gorzynski – Trail Dogs

Desmond Kahn – Coalition for Natural Stream Valleys

Peter Saenger

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

I. The meeting was called to order at 7:08 pm by Chair Linda Stapleford. Council Representatives, Division Representatives, and Members of the Public introduced themselves.

II. The minutes of the October 27, 2015 meeting were reviewed and there were no comments or corrections.

III. OLD BUSINESS

* Election of Officers – The incumbent officers were unanimously re-elected for 2016 as follows: President – Linda Stapleford, Vice President – Ed O’Donnell, and Secretary – Andy Urquhart.
* Welcome to New Park Superintendent – Angel Burns was warmly welcomed as the new Superintendent of White Clay Creek State Park.
* Experience to date with Pilot Program for Extended Hours Trail Use – Park Ranger John Wales gave an update on this pilot program that started on November 25. A total of 262 permits have been issued, but trails are not heavily used. There have been relatively few problems, mostly minor. Examples include use of trails without permits, use of wrong parking lots, use on days not open due to hunting, and permit not in possession of trail user. Three people fled from rangers. The program runs until 8:30 pm, but parking lots are often left open all night, which has resulted in some increase in litter. Participants have included bikers, dog walkers, cross-country skiers, and other users, but mostly mountain bikers. Enforcement has issued some warnings, but no citations so far. There has been no vandalism or other criminal activity. In response to a concern expressed about getting to the Park Office on weekdays to get a permit, it was pointed out that permits can be obtained at other park offices. The plan is continue the pilot program during the trout season to see if there are conflicts. After the pilot program is complete, it will be assessed to determine whether extended hours trail use will be continued in WCCSP and possibly extended to other sites.
* Tri-Valley Trail in Big Pond Area – Mrs. Burns indicated that the topographic survey and wetland assessment are nearly complete. Then the Division will recommend a final alignment for the trail, and a public meeting will be held to invite inputs. [Subsequently the public meeting was scheduled for 4:30 to 7:00 pm on April 4, 2016 at Deerfield Golf Club.] Phase I of the program – a new parking lot and work on the road – is moving forward.
* Tri-State Marker Trail – Additional complimentary comments were made about this new trail.
* Five year update to Trail Plan – Mrs. Burns indicated that the Division must first complete the plan for the Tri-Valley Trail and also the Trail Plan for Brandywine Creek State Park (BCSP). She indicated that planning work to update the WCCSP Trail Plan will probably begin in the fall. The Division plans to establish a stakeholder group to work with during the planning process; this procedure worked well during the planning for BCSP and was less contentious and better received by the public.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

* Newark Country Club Status – The Country Club membership wishes to keep the club where it is in Newark. However, there is a need to strengthen the club’s finances, and options are being explored. The City of Newark would need to take the lead on any actions to preserve the property but would also need contributions from the County and the State.
* Update on Park Activities – Mrs. Burns provided an update on Park activities/events and an opportunity for Council representatives to ask questions:
* The yard waste site on Polly Drummond Hill Road was closed on January 11. After grinding up the accumulated yard waste material, the site will reopen for Saturdays only, starting on May 7.
* The Park’s First Day Hike drew more than 100 participants. This program was part of a national hiking initiative.
* Summer camp registration has opened. Some camps are already almost full.
* Debbie Davies has been made a full time Administrative Assistant in the Park Office.
* The Division has hired an arborist for State Parks. This person will be available to provide help to individual parks.
* Hunting in WCCSP finished on January 22. This year 3 new areas were opened to hunting. One hundred forty-five deer were taken, including 36 out of the 3 new areas. One managed hunt on the west side of Carpenter yielded 11 deer. Plans are to expand the hunting next year. The DuPont family has discontinued their hunts in the park. In response to a question about whether the current deer population is healthy, Mrs. Burns indicated that the deer population is lower now than 10 years ago and is about at a steady-state level. It was also noted that there are wild turkeys now living in the Park.

There is no hunting in the Park on Sundays. The proposal in the legislature is for Sunday hunting on private lands, so the Park would not be affected.

* State Resource Areas (SRAs) – Mr. Carter reported that the State is currently not in compliance with the Land Protection Act. Criteria are needed for selecting lands to be protected. Based on the criteria, SRA maps would show lands eligible for protection under the Open Space Program. Mr. Carter emphasized that he feels it is important to remove the link between the maps and zoning and the Land Protection Act. Otherwise landowners will oppose the maps.

It is very important that lands desired to be added to the Park are included in the maps; otherwise they would not be eligible for acquisition. There is an SRA Committee meeting on February 17 at which DNREC will present draft SRA maps to the committee. Lorraine Fleming should be contacted to see if Council can be represented at the meeting. If so, Mr. O’Donnell will attend on behalf of the Council. Others will look at the maps when available. The objective is to finalize the maps by May. In the future these maps can be amended, and they must be updated at least every 5 years.

Mr. Carter pointed out that future management of these lands is an issue. Fish & Wildlife, State Parks, and State Forests cannot accept any more lands because they lack the resources to manage them. Perhaps a percentage of the transfer taxes could help fund management of the properties.

* Sewer Line along Creek – The possibility of rerouting sewage away from the sewer line that runs along the Creek (south from the Wedgewood Road area) was discussed. The line carries sewage from the Bank of America and CSC facilities on Paper Mill Road. A problem is that the shortest alternate line would hook into the sewer interceptor at the Shoppes at Louviers on Paper Mill Road. There is an easement, but the owner of the shopping center claims it is only for maintenance and not to accommodate additional sewage. He wants $100,000 to allow the additional sewage connection. The City of Newark would like to see this happen, but they have no funding available. Mr. Carter suggested that the Clean Water Advisory Council might be a source of funds. Mr. Carter sees this as an advocacy issue and will have his students take a look at it. An engineering and feasibility study is needed with a ballpark cost. Mrs. Stapleford indicated that she will try to get a copy of the easement.
* Tri-State Marker Lands – It is desired that lands in Maryland and Delaware bordering the Tri-State Marker be acquired to complement the Pennsylvania land that abuts the marker. Apparently the Maryland authorities regard this as a good idea but see it as being a little way down the road. Perhaps some Delaware property could be acquired as a private initiative.
* Other Discussion –
  + Mr. Sharpe presented a list of suggestions and recommendations: (1) the State should paint the concrete road barrier along Creek Road near the Krapf Property; (2) repairs should be made to the wooden fence along the road in the same area; (3) the sign for the trail from Creek Road to Fairfield Crest is missing and should be replaced; (4) the Council might send flowers or a basket of fruit to former representatives Dorothy Miller and Bob Bennett to tell them how much they are missed [this has been done]; (5) he expressed appreciation to our local legislators, Paul Baumbach and David Sokola, for their continued support; and (6) he expressed appreciation to the Park Rangers for their good work.
  + Mr. Baumbach reported that both the House and the Senate passed House Concurrent Resolution 50 adding a representative from the Silent Knights Soaring Society to Council. Mr. Lisansky was welcomed to the meeting as the current Silent Knights representative.
  + Mr. McLaughlin reported that a pedestrian bridge across the mainstem of the Creek is being considered in the vicinity of Paper Mill Road. Plans are to designate it as the Charlie Emerson Bridge.

V. PUBLIC COMMENTS

* There were none.

VI. ITEMS FOR POSSIBLE FUTURE CONSIDERATION BY COUNCIL

* None in addition to those noted in the minutes above.

VII. NEXT MEETINGS – Scheduled for April 26, 2016.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT – the meeting was adjourned at 8:54 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Andy Urquhart

Council Secretary