

Minutes
S&T / Stream Team Meeting
November 1, 2010

In attendance: Jim MacDonald, Frank Stillinger, Chuck Gullage, Blaine Rothouser, Steve Gruber, Ann McDonald, Joe Balwierczak, Terry Dyben, Wes Boyce, Lisa Stevens, Hazel England, Kelley Curran, Bob Crocco

6:40 PM

Hazel started with a recap of the work at the CMA, including reinforcing and tightening some spans of the fence. She also mentioned that approx 215 ft of boardwalk needed to be installed. There may be some additional work groups this fall, including the geocaching club and/or a recidivist group from Eisner. Hazel would like to arrange an internal work party, possibly for 11/6. Blaine offered to try to get use of an ATV to assist in the movement of the lumber.

Chuck Gullage mentioned that Girl Scout groups that he is working with are interested in helping on other CMA work projects.

It was decided that the S&T committee would prepare a position statement on the value of the CMA to the GSWA mission. Bob Crocco will craft the document after committee members have submitted their input. Please send your comments on the CMA to Bob by 11/12.

Hazel next summarized our outreach with local colleges. FDU and St Elizabeth's are interested in possibly doing stream visual assessments (for coursework extra credit). Hazel is following up with them.

The Rutgers landscape course study on the Great Swamp is proceeding well. All who attended the Breakfast Briefing were pleased and impressed with the progress of the project. Hazel asked for comments by November 10th on what we would like to see come out of the project, in order to more effectively direct the student effort. Please submit directly to Hazel.

Hazel then gave a brief 2011 BioBlitz update, with a meeting scheduled with Steve Henry for the week of November 8th. There is an ongoing discussion of splitting tasks with the FoGS, although Hazel stressed that GSWA needed an exclusive revenue stream from the event.

The next discussion centered on our website. The geocaching group has offered "geek services" for our technical needs, and would like to tap into GSWA's ecosystem expertise in order that the group can structure their hunts from an ecosystem framework. Hazel asked committee members to submit ideas for website content and/or connectivity.

A discussion of technical articles for the website followed. One suggestion was that we develop a series of habitat articles, leading up to and publicizing the 2011 BioBlitz. Blaine offered to develop a “template” for the first article, centering on a specific habitat of the Great Swamp, its characteristics, threats etc., along with what efforts GSWA is making to improve and protect the habitat. Bob Crocco offered to write some of the subsequent articles on other habitats.

Funding may be available for new GSWA outreach/education presentation materials. Hazel asked those present to submit ideas and suggestions to her.

One idea discussed was to take the habitat articles mentioned above and develop a set of hand out “trading cards” for students. The cards could serve as promotional pieces for GSWA since they would include actions our organization is taking to protect the various habitats. Frank Stillinger mentioned that potential effects of climate change could also be incorporated in the content of the cards. After the construction of the habitat article “template” we will explore potential presentation materials.

Kelley then gave a recap of the Silver Brook Restoration project, mentioning that four landowner properties had been targeted for collaboration in stream bank remediation of their properties. One landowner has backed out; we have been engaged with the Harding Land Trust and working on their property, and the other two landowners, including Christ the King Church are “on the fence”. Kelley is continuing dialogue with the Church, in order to reach a mutually acceptable plan for plantings on their section of the Brook.

A discussion followed regarding the deer problem in the area and whether any plantings would survive the intense deer pressure without fencing. Bob Crocco suggested that some property owners (including Christ the King) would almost definitely not want fencing for any new plantings, raising the notion that we may need to recommend more “deer resistant” plant species (some ornamental grasses, etc), in lieu of the ability to fence. Blaine mentioned that some sprays today are relatively economical. The deer problem in the area will not be going away anytime soon.

Chuck gave a recap next on the SWaMP program, mentioning the “uneven” levels of interest and results from the various schools. It was felt that we should focus our efforts on the engaged, productive schools. Chuck mentioned FDU and St. E’s as wanting to be involved and also recounted some encouraging and productive activity with Kent Place School, Bernards High and Watchung Hills Regional. Some of the efforts were hampered by large groups of kids on some outings and some by slow input of data. Chuck mentioned that the teachers of the mentioned schools were very enthusiastic.

Kelley mentioned (proudly) that GSWA had over 60% of all New Jersey data submits for World Water Monitoring Day. Our watershed group overwhelmed the rest of the state...although the total number of statewide respondees was underwhelming!

Kelley also mentioned that the final round of Great Brook sampling was this week. She also announced a Visual Assessment Training session for Sunday, Nov 7th, meeting at

9:30AM at GSWA and a “Save the Date” for the NJ Water Monitoring and Education Summit on Dec 1 and 2, at Montclair State.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM.
Minutes submitted by Bob Crocco