

Minutes for the Joint Meeting of the
Stream Team and the Science & Technology Committee,
Monday, May 17, 2010

Attendees: Kelley Curran, Hazel England, Roger Edwards, Alex Brenner (summer intern), Joseph Balwierczak, Paul Steck, Adam Slutsky, Chuck Gullage, Lisa Stevens, Wesley Boyce, Debra Apruzzese, Frank Stillinger

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm. It was delayed one week from the originally scheduled date Monday, May 10 due to a storm-caused electrical power failure at the GSWA headquarters. Because Bob Crocco was unable to attend, Frank Stillinger agreed to serve as interim chair for this session.

Roger Edwards began the technical discussion by handing out and describing a sheet of lab results for Great Brook water testing since early February, 2009. This sampling now occurs at six sites, including a recently added one at the bridge crossing Pleasant Plains Road within the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge, just upstream of joining with the Passaic River. The results of sample analyses displayed a very consistent pattern of exceeding NJ Surface Water Quality Standards by Total Dissolved Solids, and by chloride ion specifically, during February in both 2009 and 2010. This "February effect" results primarily from road salt application during winter months.

These testing results led to discussion of the long-standing concern that GSWA has had with road salt deleterious effects on the watershed, and how those effects can be mitigated. Attendees were reminded that a workshop was held last fall (October 22) about winter roads maintenance methods, which drew an overflow crowd of municipal workers and others. However it was agreed that the Association needs to continue communicating the message forcefully. One suggestion is to prepare and circulate a succinct brochure stressing alternative road maintenance techniques, and how those alternatives could save money in the long run. Such a brochure could assist local corporations burnish their "green" images by helping them to initiate and publicize changes in roadway and parking area treatments. It was also mentioned that the contents of such a brochure might be published in the League of Municipalities magazine, and summarized in local newspaper editorials.

Kelley Curran discussed the present status of the Silver Brook restoration project. This project currently has agreements for plantings with four groups located along the brook: the Harding Land Trust, Christ the King church, and two private land owners. A document outlining the project will soon be completed. Kelley also discussed some possible summer intern projects, and solicited further ideas from attendees. For the benefit of those who might be interested she also noted two water-quality news items with the headlines: (1) "Experts Warn of Impending Phosphorus Crisis" (<http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/0,1518,690450,00.html>), and (2) "Saving U.S. Water and Sewer Systems Would Be Costly", Charles Duhigg, NY Times Toxic Waters Series (<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/15/us/15water.html>).

Adam Slutsky offered the suggestion that a potentially informative project would be to monitor the water runoff from athletic fields with artificial turf. This kind of project would be optimal if it were possible to follow the runoff behavior chronologically from a period before turfing to an extended period afterward.

Chuck Gullage reported on a recent visit to the Morristown Sewage Treatment facility to observe their solar panel installation. Evidently the placement of those panels with respect to optimal solar illumination left much to be desired. A more general discussion of solar panel technology ensued, including the proposal in Chatham Township to convert most if not all of the Rolling Knolls (Miele) Superfund dump site into a solar farm. Because the testing and cleanup effort directed by EPA at that location is far from complete, the proposal is still far from final local government approval.

Kelley announced that the next (non-joint) Stream Team meeting has been scheduled for Thursday, June 10, to begin at 9:30am.

The impending disbanding of the Ten Towns Committee led to a brief discussion of what its implications might be for GSWA. Although some opportunities for projects and funding might arise, the general opinion was that GSWA must avoid undertaking new responsibilities unless others with equivalent demands on resources are abandoned.

Hazel England outlined the currently scheduled corporate workdays. Details can be found on the spread sheet she made available in a 02/03/2010 email message. These workdays will occur both at the CMA as well as at the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge. In addition to the never-ending invasive species removal at CMA, volunteers have been and will continue to be involved there in erecting deer fencing around the marsh section of the Zimmer property.

Hazel stressed that the year 2011 will be the 30th anniversary of the founding of the Great Swamp Watershed Association. As part of the corresponding celebration, the Association intends to hold a third biennial BioBlitz next year. The GSNWR management has expressed strong approval of the predecessor BioBlitz2009 that occurred in the Refuge, so it seems reasonable to begin planning for a repeat under their auspices with BioBlitz2011. The natural site for the focus of activities would be the recently opened Helen Fenske Visitors Center, presumably utilizing its large octagonal pavilion. It would be natural once again to share operation of the BioBlitz2011 activities with the Friends of Great Swamp organization, so constructive discussions with their directors should soon be undertaken.

Hazel reminded the attendees that this year's Volunteer Appreciation Dinner would be held at the GSWA headquarters on Tuesday evening, June 8, from 6:30pm to 8:30pm.

The next joint meeting for the Stream Team and the Science & Technology Committee has been planned for Monday, July 12.

The meeting adjourned at 8:25 pm.

These minutes were drafted and have been edited by Frank Stillinger.