**White Clay Creek Wild & Scenic Steering Committee – Special Session**

Participants:

* Julie, Ed, Doug , Jenny, Shane, Rick, Kyle, Don, Kristen, Martha, Jerry, David

*Why this meeting came about:*

Strategic Planning under Jennifer Egan associated with the Watershed Management Plan and thinking about other non-profits the White Clay Wild & Scenic partnership could work with.

Difficult to explain to the public who is the White Clay Creek Wild & Scenic partnership and what is its relationship with White Clay Watershed Association?

Urgency of addressing the way the group is structured and its long-term sustainability to do the work, particularly the reliance on federal funding, which is shrinking. Also difficult to use the funding because of the complexities of federal regulations.

Shane: The Strategic Plan has been a critical reference for me as MPC. My number one priority has been outreach to PA municipalities, per recommendation in the Plan. I have limited time and not enough resources to address all of the opportunities. (Please don’t wear out staff!)

Kyle: WCWA is not robust or sustainable and may not want to expand its role. David Hawk may one day decide to retire from his volunteer duties – Who would step into his shoes to fulfill his critical administrative role?

*Comments on the options for restructuring:*

* Doug: In looking at using other NGOs to do the work, be aware that they have much broader missions that WCWA and a conflict of interest is more likely. There may be internal restrictions related to mission that may prevent them from focusing on the needs of the White Clay Creek Wild & Scenic program.
* Brandywine Conservancy: “Captain of the Ship” (currently Shane Morgan) is critical to driving the group and keeping us moving forward towards implementation of WMP. There are many opportunities. Possible to have the MPC work for another organization and also the White Clay Creek Wild & Scenic partnership as long as the two can be kept separate.
* Rick / NCC Conservation District: Can we ask all of the signatories to the WMP to sponsor the Wild & Scenic program with funding? Townships would be willing to contribute. But we need a fundraising plan. We can show the project results, the benefits of Wild & Scenic in order to make the ask.
* Doug: Partnership for the Delaware Estuary includes 2 US EPA regions. The drawback to using the organization is that the focus would not be on the White Clay watershed and this would create reasons for the public not to support the Wild & Scenic program. What would White Clay Creek bring to the Partnership – a “brand”? There would also be an administrative cost.

We had discussed bringing all White Clay related organizations under one umbrella – biking groups, Friends of White Clay Creek State Park, Friends of White Clay Preserve, etc. – the “mother ship.” However, this approach would require much work to re-organize. There would be multiple interests with a stronger voice for advocacy and fundraising.

Conservation Districts—These are restricted to a specific state. Neither New Castle County nor Chester County could represent the watershed as a whole.

Delaware Nature Society—The focus has been on land management and environmental education, not land acquisition. The DNS is not a good fit as a substitute for WCWA.

Martha: Christina Conservancy – No capacity; no staff – all volunteer. There is no advantage to moving the functions of the White Clay partnership to this organization.

University of Delaware administrative rules are complex and contracts are cumbersome. Water Resources Agency was, however, an early supporter of the White Clay’s designation.

Julie: In considering NGOs and institutions other than WCWA, you may have to waive the single source justification that you now have to award federal funding to WCWA. It is possible that NPS may apply a competitive selection process through Grants.gov.

Doug: Why should we create a new NGO? Wouldn’t it function the same way as the existing NGO?

WCWA advocacy role vs. role of signatories to the MOU supporting the WMP – What if we want to take a position on an issue?

Kyle: WCWA’s stagnant board is a problem. WCWA just needs resources, and we need to assist WCWA with fundraising.

Jenny: WCWA needs a fundraising plan considering endowment, sustainable financing.

NLT and BC need a simple way to move $ to an organization to do the projects, an organization that represents White Clay Creek Wild & Scenic River. Rebranding and re-marketing is needed.

Doug: Redundancy in WCWA positions is essential – a succession plan is needed.

Jenny: We should revise the White Clay web site to combine the White Clay Creek Wild & Scenic program with WCWA.

Note: WCWA board has 14-18 members currently, at least 6 are also represented on the White Clay Creek Wild & Scenic Steering Committee. Also has $5-6K of unencumbered funds.

WCWA needs a 5- to 10-year strategic plan and needs dedicated staff to fundraise. Show the economics of the projects (e.g., similar to Shane Morgan’s American Rivers blog). Overall plan should include tasks for partners to help Shane do the outreach. Go to private foundations for planning grants – Delaware Community Foundation, Chester County Community Foundation, and perhaps Dockstadter.

WCWA board members need to agree to the change and need new members.

Will Dave Hawk have to take on more of an administrative burden with additional sources of funding from fundraising? He may need outside help or we could use the Steering Committee members. Separate tracking of time for federal funding (already occurring).

Beef up WCWA board and generate additional funds for more projects. Shane Morgan would be an employee of WCWA, WCWA is a “simple and alive” vehicle and hiring of additional staff depends on WCWA. Possible to use Shane’ consulting business as means for WCWA to subcontract with her?

*Action items:*

* Jenny and Doug will help draft a fundraising plan for WCWA
* WCWA official board meeting – Consider how many board members is appropriate and what backgrounds are needed. Get board approval for change prior to March Steering Committee meeting.
* Projection of overall time – How much goes to White Clay Creek W&S and how much additional time is needed for other projects?
* Ask municipalities to contribute $ (for fundraising plan? Projects?)