

Draft: Penn's Woods West Trout Unlimited

Board Meeting—February 7, 2020

TU Mission: To conserve, protect and restore North America's Coldwater fisheries and their watersheds.

Attendees: Ian, Chuck, Bryan, Ed, Jamie, Dale, Nora, Ron

Topics (Meeting Opened 7:30 PM):

- 1) Welcome and call to order
 - a) Previous minutes (embedded in AGM minutes). Ed Moved to accept, Bryan seconded.
<Accepted unanimously>
 - b) Chuck suggested posting on web site; we had a brief discussion as all agreed.
- 2) Old Business
 - a) Conflict of Interest forms. Ian believed all had been done and were in his possession. Following the meeting he confirmed that all are indeed in the files.
- 3) New Business
 - a) Finances.
 - i) Ed has been looking into options for keeping our books electronically and leans to Quicken, through Costco, for \$189 (3 year sub). He and Bryan were at the Forbes Trail Chapter meeting on the 6th and compared notes with their Treasurer who manages with a simple spreadsheet. After considerable discussion Chuck suggested creating a PWWTU Quicken account. Nora also suggested that an off-site backup for the account (Quicken cloud is, we believe, included) was mandatory (all agreed on this). Chuck and Ed will investigate further.
 - ii) Ed will be collecting the checks and financial records from Walt at Monday's meeting.
 - iii) Chuck had some check questions; Ed asked that Chuck send them in an e-mail and he'll look into them after he has the records.
 - b) Resolutions and Policies
 - i) Chuck wants these in place to allow us to more easily deal with funding agencies and ensure compliance with TU National. Broad agreement on this, but the attachments proved incomplete. Chuck apologized and indicated he'd re-send them after the call. **<Tabled until March>**
 - c) Clearances
 - i) Nora raised this as an issue – we really need clearances in line and on file in order to allow board members to interact with young adults and children at any of our events, STREAM Girls, for example. Minimal discussion.

- (1) Proposed (Nora), Seconded (Jamie): “All PWWTU board members and chairs will apply for and retain the criminal background and child welfare clearances”. **<Passed Unanimously>**
- ii) Brief discussion followed centered on what to do if a board member or chair refuses; no decision at the meeting, tabled for the moment.
 - iii) Nora will send out information on how to apply for the two clearances in question (sent late evening); process is quite straight-forward.
 - iv) Board members should forward electronic (or physical) copies to Ian when they arrive.
- d) Chapter meeting location and time
- i) We are unable to get back to the Barn as it is solidly booked. There is some discontent at the current meeting location. Kristen has offered the fellowship room as an alternative, but it is not available Monday evenings. It is however, considerably closer to the parking area and more accessible in general than the current room. Chuck asked that we look at it on Monday and assess.
 - ii) Ed suggested, and most agreed, that there should be no change until autumn at the earliest. We may look at a survey of the membership to see if another night is better than Mondays. Ron observed, for example, that he simply cannot do Tuesday evenings. We’ll need to assess and determine if changing night will help or hurt attendance.
 - iii) While we might consider another venue, Grove Farm has plenty of parking, easy access from I79/I279 and, as Dale is a member, they don’t charge us for the room.
- e) Board Retreat
- i) Broad agreement that a retreat was desirable, then a considerable discussion over dates. We decided – April 4, 2020 9:00 AM, Seven Springs (precise location to follow). Discussion will likely center around conservation, insurance and communication. Projected to run 3 hours with fishing likely to follow.
- f) TU Tacklebox
- i) Chuck recommends that anyone who hasn’t should go and look at the tools available on the TU web site. They are extensive and all board members and chairs should be set up with access.
- g) Inclusivity
- i) We had an extensive discussion about broadening our reach; Chuck opened by suggesting that spin fishermen might be considered an untapped resource for PWWTU. TU, as Bryan indicated, is focused on cold water conservation, not on fishing. TU, however, does have a fly-fishing image. Jamie asked about our presence at shops and shows around the area and several examples came to mind – LL Bean, Patagonia, Orvis, outdoor show in Monroeville, our own Cabin Fever, etc. Really, the issue seems to be how do we get our membership more active, rather than how to add more members. One observation that came up is that some of the other chapters in the greater Pittsburgh area have similar issues – several hundred members on file, of whom only a couple dozen are actually active in meetings, events and the like. Ron spoke about the outdoor show (Feb 14-16), that he needs more volunteers, and that the plan is to provide hands-on tying instruction at the show. In return

the organizers grant us the booth for free and this year have also given a \$300 check to PWWTU.

- ii) Ed specifically thanked Nora for her outreach to the Forbes Trail women's group.
- h) Other topics
 - i) Wifi in the Monday meeting room to help with sign up for Cabin Fever volunteers. Dale provided the guest network and password by separate e-mail.
 - i) Adjourn. Ed moved, Nora seconded.

Meeting closed 8:30 PM

Important Dates: (most are listed on the PATU website)

- Mar 1 Cabin Fever
- Mar 5 Next Board Meeting

Committee Reports

Penn's Woods West Chapter of Trout Unlimited

Officers and Committee Chair Reports

Month: February Year: 2020

Committee Chair: Bryan Mathie

Committee: Conservation

Conservation Chair Report:

First order of business was to assess previous financial and volunteer commitments that fall under the conservation domain for the chapter. It was determined by the board to categorize our annual commitment to the Allison Park Sportsman's Club Children's fishing derby as an education activity which falls under another committee budget. We will continue to support that activity as it aligns with TU's overall mission and specifically with PWWTU's endeavors.

A request by current PWWTU board members has been made to support Nemecolan's fundraiser for "Stock the Yough." Inquiries have been made into the event and further conversation needs to be had with the PWWTU board to determine if we will support the event or not. There are potential financial issues as well as discussion that has to be had as our actions would violate National TU's stance on stocking over a current fishery.

Further discussion must be had by the board to determine our decision

The most vital role of the conservation chair is to create a vision and formal plan for the PWWTU's conservation program that must be ratified by the board and communicated to the chapter members for discussion. This exercise is in its initial stages as information is being gathered, partnerships identified and explored, and resources pulled together that will culminate in a written document that will outline the full elements of the program in detail including overarching mission statement that combines National TU's conservation message and PWWTU's unique issues with our marginal trout waters, heavily pressured stocked watersheds and close proximity to native trout waters under other TU

chapter's influence. There will be clearly identified conservation goals that are focused in 3 key areas : Allegheny County Watershed Conservation plan, Inter-Chapter Coordinated Trout Conservation, Allegheny County Conservation Education Initiatives.

Once the Vision and plan for our Conservation program has been established, conservation projects will be identified by the chair, the chair will begin planning these projects with budget commitment, project plans and timelines for board agreement to participate or initiate the project

Here are the Committee Chair's Activities:

1. Meeting with Allegheny Land Trust to discuss their activities, initiatives, needs and opportunities to work together. Next steps identified and possible initiatives around water testing and stream access for conservation through their land ownings/variances
2. Attended Chestnut Ridge TU chapter to discuss their conservation activities to learn how they follow through on their conservation commitment, and collect any guidance or learnings from the chapter I can apply to PWWTU
3. Attended Allison Park Sportsman's Club meeting to learn how they work on Pine Creek, discuss our historical partnership and what we can do to continue to foster continued support for Pine Creek efforts. Learned about their Children's outreach program through the fishing derby and how important it is for their club.
5. Conference call with PA TU to foster statewide discussion and referrals to other Chapters that have strong Conservation programs in place that would offer a blueprint for PWWTU efforts. Discussed Coldwater Conservation Event Feb 28-29 at State College and benefits for PWWTU Conservation Chair to attend sessions and make statewide connections.
6. Internal discussions were had with professional Geologist regarding creating a stream monitor program in partnership with the Allegheny Land Trust which is working on a grant to create standards, better calibrated equipment and a collaborative database to capture water quality readings at a high scientific standard.
7. Discussions with Rachel Kester with PA TU resulted in further discussions with PA TU's treasurer about finding corporate sponsorship of TIC as well as possible discussions with several Pittsburgh Museums about enhancing or adding a Watershed Conservation exhibit with sponsorship and PWWTU/PA TU brand visibility as a contributing member
8. Made contact with local PAFB officers to begin discussions around their efforts, initiatives and better alliance with PWWTU including regular participation of our local officers in our meetings (Much like Tri-County Trout Club) and our support for their stocking efforts
9. Identified Master Watershed Program candidates that require volunteer hours around Watershed conservation that could help PWWTU Conservation Committee Chair analyze current watershed research and help to formulate recommendations that could help guide PWWTU's conservation vision and plan. Further discussions have been scheduled with Ted Alexovich

Upcoming Events

1. January 31st meeting with Allegheny County Conservation District scheduled to discuss their initiatives and mandate to see if there are opportunities to work together. Current Allegheny County Watershed research and reports outlining environmental data on each watershed, current state and future conservation needs were supplied and require a huge amount of reading.

2. February 5th meeting scheduled with Forbes Trail TU chapter to build partnership, learn from their active conservation program and find opportunities for inter-chapter partnership to create high-impact conservation projects in sustainable trout waters close to Allegheny county
3. Scheduling meeting with Dr. Brady Porter to discuss his efforts and how PWWTU could help facilitate his efforts and gain from his knowledge of our local watersheds to help us best guide our conservation efforts in the most impactful way both financially and environmentally.

President: Chuck Buffington

This has been an interesting time for me. I was pleased that the Annual Meeting happened and that the slate of Board nominees was elected. We also approved a Budget for FY-21 and filled out Conflict of Interest forms. I've been working on a governance structure for the Chapter and a Board resolution that will allow us to generate PWW resolutions and policies. Trout Unlimited has very well-thought-out ideas about how Chapters should operate and we need to understand these ideas and put them into our policies. Insurance is a big issue that needs a thorough review before we expand our conservation activities. You will have been following the Wilkins School waiver issue. I modified the sponsor waiver based on language in the TU tacklebox and sent it to Jeff Yates, the director of volunteer operations at TU who approved the wording. The modified waiver was accepted by WSCC

Officer: Treasurer: Ed Barger

I am in the process of having records and bank accounts transferred to me from Walter Reineman. I expect this to be completed prior to the February chapter meeting. I was successful in having my chapter membership as originally assigned by National TU transferred from the Forbes Trail Chapter to Penns Woods West. I would like to develop a more robust and automated procedure for generating the reports and submittals required by our national organization as well as federal and state tax organizations. My on-line research has found one such program, "Nonprofit Treasurer", written specifically for non-profit organizations, that is free. I hope to provide a recommendation to the board for next meeting.