

SCRA works toward cleaner Shamokin Creek

By DANIRAE RENNO THE NEWS-ITEM danirae_r@newsitem.com

May 27, 2022

The Shamokin Creek Restoration Alliance held a meeting Wednesday, May 18, to discuss plans for the restoration of Shamokin Creek.

Aaron Clauser, an environmental scientist, presented an assessment and restorative plan for the Buck Run and Quaker Run areas. The assessment included a breakdown of projects by cost and priority.

Clauser discussed the issue of mine drainage into the Shamokin Creek and the low pH in the Bucks Run area of the creek. He also stressed the importance of the SCRA working with municipalities, landowners and the community to accomplish their goal.

“Most people take it for granted that the Shamokin Creek ran dirty for 100 years,” SCRA Vice President Steve Motyka said. “I’m optimistic that the creek will be running clean in the next 10 years.”

Motyka is also borough councilman for Kulpmont. He said that Kulpmont should be an example for surrounding cities on how to work with the SCRA, and that it could open up doors for bigger projects. He also said that the community is key in getting work done.

“Recently we’ve partnered with the Shamokin Gardeners and the Boy Scouts, and we’ve even been teaming up with school districts,” Motyka said. “We are willing to work with anyone. You don’t have to be an environmental expert, but there’s a lot of work to be done.”

The SCRA’s most recent projects have included work on the Kulpmont Memorial Sports Complex and stream work in the borough.

“These projects benefit Kulpmont and the borough very supportive of us,” SCRA director Heather Makal said. “We’ve also been getting increased support from the City of Shamokin lately.”

Shamokin City Administrator Robert Slaby attended the SCRA’s last meeting.

“I think cleaning up the creek would have a positive impact on the community,” Slaby said. “If we can clean it up and have a little bit of pride, it would go a long way.”

Slaby plans to bring up the SCRA’s work with the Shamokin city council members and Mayor Robert Ulrich at their next meeting. He’s optimistic that the city will get involved with the SCRA.

“I think it’s very important for Shamokin to be recognized and have a face at the table,” Slaby said.

According to Motyka, the Shamokin Creek runs through 14 municipalities and sewer authorities, and few are members of the SCRA. One of the municipalities absent from the SCRA’s most recent meeting was Coal Township.

“It’s definitely a worthy project and there are good people doing it,” said Craig Fetterman, Coal Township board chairman. “Right now we are really involved with other projects, but any time that we have to spare, we would be willing to help.”

The SCRA is hopeful that they can get big projects moving soon. They are in the process of submitting about \$1 million in grants, and are hoping to see more money in the fall. After the federal infrastructure bill was announced, the SCRA met with the Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation to seek funds.

SCRA meetings are held at 6:30 p.m. on the second Tuesday of every month at the Kulpmont Sportsman Association. The public is welcome to attend.