



Big Elk Creek Master Planning Task Force Meeting #1 Transcript

Meeting Date: March 28, 2024

Meeting Time: 6:00 – 9:00 PM

Meeting Location: The Meeting House at White Clay Creek Preserve

**All Task Force members have been assigned a number in lieu of their Names for the purposes of the meeting transcript.*

Task Force Members Present:

- Absent: 5, 20
- One member substitution: 22 was the substitute for 14
- Several DCNR employees, and one DCNR contractor, spoke beyond a standard introduction during this meeting: 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 30, 31

Meeting Minutes:

1 – First of all, welcome, and thank you for being here tonight as members of the Big Elk Creek Master Planning Task Force. Tonight’s meeting is going to be broad as we discuss the general Task Force goals and establish the baseline for what needs to be accomplished at this new state park. We would like to start tonight with a quick round of introductions. If you would please introduce yourselves, state your affiliation, any expertise you have in these subject areas, and tell us the one thing you think is most important that we tackle during this Task Force, that would be great. We’d like to keep these intros under two minutes each, if possible.

2- Thank you all for coming. You may know me from the Friends Group here at White Clay Preserve. That is a volunteer organization and a chapter of the Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation (PPFF). I am the Chairman of that group, which was actually started by (Name, #12) about 12 years ago. Two or three or four chairmen later, I’m here. If you’d like to see some of the projects we’ve done here at the Preserve, just go to the website – there have been a lot of infrastructure projects and changes to this park. Prior to now, we had a maintenance person and that was it. Then the state put in some money to improve this place. And now we’re in a really unique position to give others the opportunity to explore and enjoy what we love. I am excited to guide this process in the form of a master site plan for the Big Elk Creek State Park. So I’m looking forward to working with all of you and working with John and DCNR. I’ve worked with many of them in the past on projects and I’m really looking forward to it.

1 – Thanks, (Name #2). And before we jump to the next person, I was remiss in not mentioning my housekeeping notes. There are restrooms just outside the main doors to the left. And there are water

and snacks in the back, please help yourself throughout the course of the meeting and get what you need to get. (Name #9), please continue.

9 – Good evening. My Name is (Name, #9) and I serve as Representative of the 13th District. I think what I would like to say first is thanks to so many of you from the local community here who have stepped up to be a part of this group. The quality of the folks in our community who are excited about being a part of this group is remarkable, and I really appreciate it – you have a lot of other things you could be doing with your time. So thank you very much. And I also think it speaks to the importance of the work that this group is going to tackle. As far as my position, DCNR needs to uphold their commitment that they made several years ago to manage Big Elk as a state preserve and a place for low impact recreation. Those are not my words, those are DCNR's words. That is certainly what I am looking for from this group, at least from my perspective. So I'm glad to be here, I look forward to the meeting we have ahead of us, and I look forward to working with this group.

12 – I'll go next – (Name, #12). So I just live around the corner from here; I go on a 4-5 mile hike every day in the Preserve and I may be the only surviving member of the original Task Force that was the advisory group for White Clay. This is our 40th anniversary coming up, and we're going to celebrate with some low key things. So that's part of my background. (Name, #1) You asked us to say what our interest is – I think my part, and I tried to articulate this in the Kemblesville School meeting – we have a very unique property with Big Elk, also true with White Clay, and that just gives us some opportunities that I don't think we would have anywhere else, in what we can do both culturally and naturally and recreationally, and I look forward to seeing what we can do.

1 – Thanks, (Name, #12). (Name, #8), before you start, my team is keeping me on task, and not only did I forget housekeeping, as I mentioned in the communication, this meeting is being recorded for the purpose of the meeting minutes, and I need to make that notification to all of you that this meeting is being recorded at this time. Thank you, (Name, #8).

8- Yes, (Name, #8); a couple of roles in the past I guess. One is my property abuts the park – I have a state park emblem on one of my trees. I also hike there a lot, not as much as (Name, #12) unfortunately but, usually every weekend for a number of hours. I think I've been all over pretty much all of the park. But then, I'm also in a couple of local committees – the county EAC but probably most important to this is the Elk Creek Watershed Association as the President. The Watershed Association has a lot of work that we'd like to do with the park with DCNR; things like plantings, a thousand years of invasive removal projects that probably need be done, and just a lot of work overall. We want to do as much as we can to make it an oasis of habitat. I'm just really interested in your presentation and building that trust to help create that habitat for things like grassland birds, and I'm hoping we have an option to do that there.

3- I am (Name, #3), and my district is all in Chester County and goes from almost King of Prussia all the way down to where we are today. And I have 2 municipalities in Big Elk Creek State Park – Elk and Franklin Townships, and the expertise that I bring is listening. I want to thank everyone for being here, and I want to thank DCNR as well for listening to the people. It's really wonderful to see everyone here tonight to share their expertise for Big Elk Creek State Park, so I'm really looking forward to it.

16 – My Name is (Name, #16) and I represent the Franklin Township Planning Committee. I have been working in the environmental field since 1992 and in land preservation for about 20 years. I work with the State of Delaware in their Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control. I currently

write regulations for the Division of Waste and Hazardous Substances but I am also a Planner, and have worked in habitat preservation, land preservation, and connecting habitats because that's a big thing for me. I worked for Delaware State Parks system for 13 years so I'm very into maintaining a diversity of park experiences and I would probably mirror (Name, #9)'s comments about low impact opportunities for this area and maintaining that, and the connectivity between all of the acreage in this area. That's a big thing for me.

15 – I am (Name, #15) and I am a representative of Franklin Township. The first thing I'd like to start off with is that I have received an awful lot of feedback after your press release came out about the meeting. People would like the recordings, not only to have the meeting minutes but to have the recordings available to the public as well. They feel that would help with the transparency, so if that would be possible, that would be greatly appreciated. Aside from that, I am also here to make sure that the original agreement stands for the land to be a day-use, low-impact preserve. And I want to make sure that all of the concerns are heard and addressed and that the flora and fauna are treated with the respect and dignity that is deserved of this historic and unique piece of property.

22 – My Name is (Name, #22) and I am a member of the Elk Township Board of Supervisors. I am here as an alternate because (Name, #14) is unavailable tonight (*the reason stated in this transcript was altered to protect the privacy of (Name, #14) and their reason for being absent*). I am a member of the Board of Supervisors and also the Emergency Management Coordinator and I do a bunch of other things. And my concern is pretty much what she said. As low-impact as possible. The development of this particular facility would benefit a lot of people and I guess my main concern is the preservation of habitat, because without that this place wouldn't exist.

13 – I am (Name, #13) and I have been a member of the Elk Township Planning Commission for years, and I am the Chair of the Open Space Committee. We have had a very successful open space preservation program, to the point where we have over 60% protected land in our township now. And the supervisors and our residents have been very involved in that. My education is in landscape architecture and environmental design and planning. I worked for over 25 years in land development in the area and I'm on the board of the Elk Creek Watershed Association. As a young person, I worked for George Strawbridge galloping race horses and I actually galloped horses here on the property, well, over there on the property. So I've been involved for a very long time in this area and I would love to see the character of the area preserved.

18 – Good evening, (Name, #18), resident of New London Township and appointee of the township. My area of concern echoes those that are seeking to maintain this property as it has been historically – as a low-impact, day-use preserve, and also as it was represented to continue to be preserved to the community. Also, I would like to ensure that we have the legal instruments in place to make sure that that status is maintained for future generations to come so we don't have to revisit this issue again.

17 – Hello, (Name, #17) and I am a New London resident and the Township Supervisor and I think my thoughts fall with most of the others in the room. We'd like to see low impact infrastructure at the park and we'd also like to have it preserved the way it is for future generations.

10 – Hi I'm (Name, #10) and although my Name tag says "Name, #10" I am hoping you all get to know me well enough to call me "NickName, #10". I have been appointed by (Name, #9) and I appreciate that so I think it's safe to say that I concur with a lot of the thoughts that (Name, #9) said. I am a resident of

Franklin Township, and I consider myself probably the only one who lives in the 'bullseye' – I live at the intersection of Stricklersville Road and Mount Olivet at the farmhouse there. That has been in my family – I am the 4th generation there, so I've spent my whole life there. I love the country; I love the resource and I want to see it protected. This is an emotional issue for me.

19 – Hi my Name is (Name, #19) and I am a professor at Lincoln University. I probably get the award for being the newest resident – I just started at Lincoln in August and so I am here at the request of the President of the university. I know it says 'doctor' but you can call me (Name, #19) unless you can't pronounce (Name, #19), then you can call me 'doctor'. But, what I know about this is what I've read about this online, by the signs in the yards, and the various sources where I Googled. So I am listening, like others have said, learning, I take copious notes that's what I do, so that I can learn who you are and what is happening. And I also pass a sign for the Elk Creek Watershed every day, so it's important to know our watersheds and where they come from, and so I'm thankful to add faces to the people who are protecting and preserving and conserving, who care about not just their own backyard but the whole area.

6 – Good evening everybody I'm (Name, #6) and I'm happy to be here with my colleagues tonight. My district is the 9th Senatorial District which lines right up to Senator Carolyn Comitta's district. I represent parts of Delaware County all the way up here to Chester County, so I have a unique district. My goal is to aid the community to come together and look for an achievement goal. My background is plumbing and with that, I have a lot of negotiating skills so I know what it's like to give a little and take a little and I'm hoping that we come out of this successful and having achieved goals that everyone is proud of.

7- Hey everybody, (Name, #7), (Name, #6)'s Chief of Staff. Admittedly, I don't have nearly the expertise of this group but I have a young family so I imagine, or I know, that this is one of the stakeholders that DCNR has considered as a demographic of state parks. So I am here to learn, listen, and also to make sure that our constituents are informed throughout the process.

4 – Hi my Name is (Name, #4) and I am (Name, #3)'s Communications Director and an alternate here today. I work for the Senate in the 19th district, and I need to clarify that we have New London and Elk Township, we lost Franklin Township in redistricting. So I have worked for the Senate for a long time and I have been on a lot of task forces and I still have always been an alternate, so maybe next time I'll get selected as a member. (Name, #3)'s official designee is (Name, #5) and he is listening in on TEAMS; he's having some connectivity issues but he asked that I briefly introduce him. (Name, #5) serves on the Pennsylvania Game Commission and he also is the President of the organization called Legacy Land and Water Partners whose mission is to really introduce young people, who wouldn't traditionally have the opportunity, to come experience the outdoors, outdoor activities through fishing, hiking, and generally just enjoying nature. So that's a big passion of his. After our initial conversation with him, he has been following very closely within southern Chester County and I think that most of your views and his are very closely aligned.

11 – Hi, good evening everyone, my Name is (Name, #11), but please call me (NickName, #11) so I don't feel like I'm in trouble with my mom. I was invited by Chester County to represent them on this task force. I am also a resident – I live in Franklin on Appleton Road with my partner. We can see the tree plantings from our backyard, so we can see what is really happening. I was selected to be a part of this, I think for the most part, because of my professional background which is in wildlife monitoring and management. I have spent the last year working for Audubon Mid-Atlantic as our Coastal Program

Manager so I'm doing a lot of restoration work down on the eastern shore of Maryland right now. And then before that I was working for Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife where I was a state biologist for 4 years and through that process I definitely saw the challenges of state park management and natural resource and species management and so one of my big interests is seeing that Pennsylvania is able to represent those wildlife species that are of particular concern and that they are protected under the appropriate protections of both the state and federal requirements.

21 – Hi everybody, my Name is (Name, #21) and I am here on behalf of PennEnvironment. We are a statewide environmental advocacy group that focuses on clean air, clean water and open spaces. Our biggest priorities are balancing and maintaining natural space and making sure that is successful.

1- And now, please, DCNR professional staff supporting these efforts, starting with you, (Name, #24).

24 – (Name, #24) and I am the Assistant Park Manager here at the Ridley Creek State Park Complex. I report down here to White Clay Creek Preserve and I directly oversee the staff that report to White Clay Creek Preserve and to Big Elk Creek State Park.

25 – (Name, #25), I am the Communications Liaison for the Bureau of State Parks.

23 – (Name, #23), Assistant Director for State Parks

26 – (Name, #26), Regional Manager for State Parks

27 – Hello, my name is (Name, #27) and I am a Park Manager Trainee for Region 4.

28 – (Name, #28), DCNR Press Secretary

29 – Hi, I'm (Name, #29), I'm the Park Operations Manager for the Ridley Creek Complex which is Ridley Creek, White Clay Creek, and Big Elk. I do report directly to Ridley Creek so (Name, #24) and I work together to manage the complex.

30 – Hi, (Name, #30), I am a Principal at SMP Architects in Philadelphia.

31 – (Name, #31), Resource Management and Planning for the Statewide Bureau's 300,000 acres.

1- Thank you, and thank you all, task force members, for your introductions and for sharing your interests and your focus as it relates to this work. It's interesting, I heard a lot of things that resonate and are meaningful to DCNR that are part and parcel of our mission and mandate. As we go through this orientation first and baseline information for the master planning work that this task force will provide input on, is what we're going to do next. If you'll go to the next slide, thanks. Just so, again, we had to sort of formulate the purpose and put it down on paper the important work and the time that you're contributing to this work is the purpose of the Big Elk Creek Master Planning Task Force. The purpose is to provide structure and diverse representation, comment, and feedback to DCNR for the creation of the Big Elk Creek State Park Master Plan. And I'm going to go into a little tutorial unfortunately on the whole master planning process again, tonight, because I think its important and critical that we have it locked in for all of us as we collectively work on this.

"In meeting this purpose, the Task Force will serve as liaisons for the local and statewide public stakeholders of Pennsylvania's state parks and provide information on the planning of this new state park

to help DCNR and the Bureau of State Park's missions in serving its constituents, both present and future." (slide 3)

I didn't create the line but I poached it and use it often "In State Parks and DCNR, we are in the forever business; the perpetuity business." We manage our lands, with the resource, both natural and cultural, in the forefront for both present generation's use and enjoyment as well as future generations. So it's a scientific approach, it's a people-centered approach because the parks are for the people, and that was certainly first and foremost as we move forward with the mission as our center to create the master plan. (next slide)

Just some meeting logistics, and thank you all for reaching out immediately after I sent the first list out of meeting times and dates that there were going to be conflicts. And I am happy to schedule evening meeting to, I believe, meet most of everyone's needs regarding participation in the task force. There may be some dates that certain task force members later in the schedule are challenged with, but we will work through those and try to find accommodation moving forward. All meetings are going to be centered here at the Meeting House. I was told by (Name, #29) but maybe you know this (Name, #2) – I'm not sure this Meeting House has ever had so many people meeting in it in a long time, is that correct?

24 – You'd be surprised how many fly fisherman come in here.

1 – Well it's certainly more people than I've ever seen in this Meeting House in my several trips to White Clay Creek Preserve over the years. Optional, we're going to have pre-meeting site visits, which I think are critical. This will actually put boots on the ground and be out on the resource, and looking at individual areas and focus areas; core standard areas, work that's already progressing regarding improvement of the resources, and work that we're contemplating regarding necessary elements in the master plan. I think those pre-meeting site visits we're looking at scheduling out in front of this meeting, which I know would be in conflict with some people, but again, they're optional, they're not required or necessary. But they will help inform the conversations and the input that you all are providing during the actual meeting times that are scheduled.

13 – About what time would those be scheduled?

1- Afternoons – We're looking at afternoons, the same day-of these meetings. But that final determination depends on where exactly we're going at Big Elk Creek State Park and the content, that's all still up in the air. But I think preliminarily we're looking at the day of the meeting, afternoon hours, but certainly we'll take suggestions and ideas if there's alternate dates that are requested for those site meetings to look at the things on the ground.

18 – If I could go back to the previous slide please (purpose statement slide), the task force purpose. New London's been a late add to this process – is this the purpose statement that was agreed upon by all the members of the task force as the purpose statement?

1 – The purpose statement was a DCNR process, requesting informed, deliberative input into our master planning process. The next iteration, if you will, of input we were soliciting as we started the master plan in 2023. So this is the needs and the ultimate goals of the work of this body, to be able to inform the master plan. This was what DCNR heard from the opposition or concerns that were expressed during the Joint Township Meeting about where we stood with the master plan and the preliminary concepts of

that master plan. This is the next stage – the structured, informed delivery of input that this task force needs to provide for us to come to a finished master plan for this state park, which is DCNR’s mission and mandate as we manage these lands for the Commonwealth.

18 – And has a copy of this purpose statement already been provided to the task force members?

1- No, but we can make the Powerpoint presentation available as well with the meeting minutes.

And again, regarding the pre-meeting site visits, your input and suggestions for that would be helpful. I think it’s critical as we progress with this work to be on site and looking at it and not just using photographs. I think it will help inform the discussions in the evening. It’s always nice to spend time outside.

22 – Regarding, the pre-meeting site visits, will there some kind of early notification of the location and timing?

1- Absolutely, that will be part of the agenda and we intend to get the agenda out the week before and there’s another slide in here where we’ll be soliciting agenda items or suggestions or requests that will come into (Name, #2) and myself 3 weeks before the meeting. This way, as we’re agenda setting, we can incorporate those elements into it.

2 – I think that the specific site visits we’d take will be dictated by this task force as it evolves. So the feedback is provided by all of you in this room, well that will drive us towards “okay, we need to go see this site because this has been a topic of discussion at the last couple of meetings”. So that’s why, it may seem vague right now as far as ‘what are we going to go look at’ but you guys will drive it toward what we’ll see.

1 – (next slide) Ground rules. It’s blank but it’s not blank, so we’ll just talk about this. We’re a large group here, and we’re meeting for the first time tonight, so just some general things that I will always put out because they may sound obvious but we want to make sure from the get-go that all of us, collectively, have a clear understanding that we will treat each other with respect, and in a respectful manner at all times during these task force meetings. And we will be courteous in all of our interactions towards each other. That first and foremost, I know people can become emotional during this, especially if it is an issue that is touching upon them personally, but again, as we work on this as a team, to bring this to a conclusion and have a master plan for this state park that meets the needs of the Commonwealth and meets the needs of all of the citizens who will be using this park both present and in the future. Our treatment towards each other needs to be first and foremost. And I also think that certainly it is part and parcel of how we will come to a successful end result and a deliverable in this process.

I was hearing some of the comments shared with me on social media recently related to Big Elk Creek State Park. There were some things that were said that were completely inappropriate and not factual, and in some ways, threatening. The one post that was read to me just today was that the Commonwealth, in our actions – I’m summarizing and paraphrasing here – related to Big Elk Creek State Park were criminal in nature. And those are some of the emotions and thoughts that exist out here as we’re doing this work, and all of you are participating in this task force work, and I just wanted to say that those types of disruptive and caustic or ad-hominem attacks are conspiracy-stirring. They are inappropriate and they cannot be tolerated in relation to the task force work at hand.

18 – You mean this towards the task force members specifically and not the public at large, correct?

1 – Yes, exactly. I am not asking you, or any of you, to control that. That's not my point here and thank you for pointing that out. In our actions towards each other, and in the work that we have to do, I think it's important – again the disruptive actions, behaviors, personal attacks – those things cannot be tolerated as a group or a body as we begin this work. It's about tolerance and it's about teamwork. And I know that you all understand that and I also know that there's heightened emotions about this topic within the community. So again, as you're interacting with your constituency, with your stakeholders, just be aware of that and hopefully everyone understands that those types of actions, behaviors, thoughts and communications are counterproductive to the work that we need to do.

15 – I'm just saying, to quiet a lot of that, they are not going to stop until they think you guys are being completely transparent. I hear it all day long every day. I seem to be the person that everyone comes to. So one of the best ways that you can say "hey we're being transparent" is to make these recordings public so people can listen. Since the meetings are closed to the public and they're closed to the stakeholders, they feel like we're hiding something. And the meeting minutes are being written by DCNR, which again, doesn't build trust with the public, so again, make the recording public. I don't see any harm in that because it will give them the transparency they want, so they'll be able to hear exactly what was said and not feel like anything is being hidden.

16 – What about posting the recordings to Youtube or something? There has to be something where they can just watch on their computer. It's just a thought, but then that way they can see what's happening and the issues that we're dealing with.

7 – As someone who was a part of trying to find members of the community to join this task force, I had 3 people turn me down because of the fear of their comments in these meetings being made public and that they would be targeted publicly. I apologize (Name, #8) that three other people said 'no' before (Name, #8) graciously said yes. But that was one of the concerns. I'm not necessarily advocating one way or another, but to note that not everyone here is an elected official that has put their name on ballots to be in that position, so I just wanted to say that there may be some people who don't want their names or comments to be public.

2 – I want to comment on what you just said there. I am not DCNR, I am one of you. I live in the community. I will be approving the meeting minutes so I assure you, I will do the very best I can that the meeting minutes will reflect what goes on in this meeting, and not necessarily just a reflection of DCNR's interpretation.

15 – I understand that, I'm just afraid that the public doesn't. There's a whole lot of mistrust and like you said, a whole lot of conspiracy theories and a whole lot caustic comments, and I hear all of them. They come directly to me.

1- I'm sorry that you have to deal with that.

15 – I just want to make sure that we are doing our best to make sure that we are doing what we said and be as transparent as possible and not give them more to feed this. I spent a lot of time this afternoon dealing with people who wanted to just show up outside and protest outside the meeting because they weren't allowed in. So being able to put that out there, I think would quell a lot of that and

calm them and let them at least listen. Whether people agree with that or not, I don't know, but as far as the public is concerned I think that would be our best option.

19 – Can I make a suggestion? Point of order – can we have a way of being recognized as we speak? And secondly, there's an easy way to solve this. The meetings are just transcribed and we're assigned a number or letter, so that people can read the exact words that are spoken and no one's voice can be recognized and that's it. If you have to hire someone to transcribe, we can do that. There's no reason that can't be done. You would get the exact words that are spoken. That would require getting a microphone that would pick up everyone's voices, because I don't know how well a laptop is going to do that. There are probably programs that can do this.

16 – So I understand that, is it (Name, #2), will be approving the minutes but what if, for some reason, one of us doesn't agree with something in the minutes. What's the process to review them ourselves and give our approval of them? I'm just curious about what the process is.

22 – If you can listen to what was said, then it's very simple to check against what was written.

16 – Like, when we come here to these meetings. I'm very process-oriented and like administrative oversight, so I just didn't know what the process was for this. When we go to the next meeting, do we review these minutes or is that not even an issue because we get them 10 business days after the meeting and the meetings are two months apart?

19 – We could follow a typical board format, and it doesn't have to be super formal or even typical board rules, but everyone has to approve the minutes, and you can do this by email, and everyone can see the minutes. Typically, I'm not going to really read them if they're literally transcribed, but if I think I might be misrepresented I might know that following the meeting so I'm more likely to chip in with feedback. There are also ways we can build in safeguards into this, also keeping privacy in mind, which I think is important given all the things I've read on this. I realized that I've read about some of you in the articles and now I'm seeing you and it's nice to meet you. And there are several ways to make sure that these minutes keep us safe, while keeping the communities informed. Being transparent is really important and I understand that from what I've read so far, but we can certainly change things in ways that are above board for all of us and all be represented on this task force well.

6 – One of the things I was thinking about as far as whomever is taking the minutes, you always end up having clerks error and they wrote down something that wasn't said, and it's approved but then it's amended later. There are always amendments and you can get it approved by the larger group after the amendments have been made.

10 – I like that idea, because it's always hard to capture the essence of the meeting in the minutes. But I think it's important that all of us approve them and make the amendments that we think should be made. Not who said it or how it was said, but capture the essence of what was said. You might just be saying "hey, this is what was said, but not how it was meant" sort of thing.

16 – I mean, I can't imagine a 3 hour meeting transcribed.. it's going to take a long time.

1- That's a lot of transcription. But I think I'm hearing that that's the course of action that all those on the task force should be provided with the minutes to make sure that they are correct and accurate.

16 – And all of us should vote on them to say "yes, we approve".

1 – Electronically, out in front of the next meeting. Ok.

25 – Does that change the timeline for review and distribution of the minutes?

1 – It depends on how long we want to give everyone to review, then? 5 business days to write, 5 business days to review, 5 business days to revise, then meeting minutes finalized. Yes, thank you for those recommendations. Again, everyone's safety and public transparency are key. I would really like to see the temperatures lowered and the conspiracies and the strange accusations, particularly of criminal behavior by the Commonwealth which was shocking to me, be lessened. But I agree, the more transparent we can be, hopefully that will diminish with time as this task force does its work.

Alright next, very quickly, and I had this up at other presentations – both the Township Meeting and the November public meeting for the preliminary concepts review – is DCNR's mission is to conserve and sustain Pennsylvania's natural resources for present and future generations' use and enjoyment. Next. Our Vision Statement. We are the leader and chief advocate for conservation and outdoor recreation in the Commonwealth by inspiring citizens to value their natural resources, engage in conservation practices, and experience the outdoors. "To conserve and maintain Pennsylvania's public natural resources for the benefit of all people, including generations yet to come, we will take intentional action to ensure DCNR lands are accessible to all, provide inclusive and equitable programs and services, and recruit and retain a diverse workforce." All critical for us to meet mission and mandate of the agency. Next.

State Parks Mission and professional staff, for all the years that I have had the privilege of working with them in State Parks, and I've been with State Parks for 24 years now, have heard me say this probably ad nauseum. But I don't think so. Because they think there's a thread of why they're in the State Parks business, the vocation to begin with. We are a very mission-driven organization and the people that are our professional staff providing the multitude of services in our parks, they believe in the mission, they follow the mission, it is their North Star. "The primary mission of Pennsylvania state parks is to provide opportunities for enjoying healthful outdoor recreation and serve as outdoor classrooms for environmental education." Environmental education and interpretation is in our DNA and is in our mission statement. "In meeting these purposes, the conservation of the natural, scenic, aesthetic, and historical values of parks should be given first consideration. Stewardship responsibilities should be carried out in a way that protects the natural outdoor experience for the enjoyment of current and future generations." Next.

Statutory Authority. And another thing we talk about often in State Parks and DCNR, but specific to how we enact our mission, it flows from Article 1 Section 27, the Environmental Rights Amendment – "The people have a right to clean air, pure water, and to the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic and esthetic values of the environment. Pennsylvania's public natural resources are the common property of all the people, including generations yet to come. As trustee of these resources, the Commonwealth shall conserve and maintain them for the benefit of all the people." When that was added in the early 1970s to our Pennsylvania Constitution, and we're rare in the nation, because there aren't that many states that have a constitutional guarantee regarding natural resources, it became our predecessor agency, DER, before DCNR was formed in 1995. But when that was added to our constitution, it became our constitutional mandate as trustees. It wasn't 2.5 million acres then, but it's 2.5 million acres now of state forest and state park lands. The ERA became that unwavering way that we think about our business and how we do our work as professionals in DCNR.

11 – I was doing some reading online and I'm just trying to understand, what is State Parks' role in natural resource management as compared to say the Natural Heritage Program? Like what is the difference between those divisions and Game Commission's task of managing those natural resources? Because at least, in other states, sometimes those natural resources don't really fall within the purview of state parks, so I'm just wondering if you can provide some clarification on that.

1- In other states there is sometimes a combination of Fish and Game with the Department of Conservation in that particular state. In Pennsylvania, we are structured a little bit differently. I will just ask, thank you, (Name, #11) for asking that question, and throughout this presentation and orientation, please ask questions. And ask for clarity if something is confusing or you're disagreeing, particularly as we get into some of the core content for State Park's work in relation to Big Elk Creek, please ask those questions tonight. This needs to be a conversation. So, DCNR is structured with two main resource organizations – the Bureau of Forestry, which has 2.2 million acres of state forest lands that they are responsible for by statute, by Act 18, and 300,000 acres of State Park lands in the Bureau of State Parks. We are sister bureaus in DCNR, and we are the two resource bureaus that manage that land. We have a Game Commission and we have a Fish and Boat Commission in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania that are not agencies under the Governor's jurisdiction, they are separate entities. And they also manage lands – there are approximately 1 million acres of game land in the Commonwealth, I think, and I forget the total number of acreage and sites that Fish and Boat controls. That being said, there is coordination on the actual operations and management of the resources. There is shared assets often times to execute the natural resource work that we do. We have a strong relationship with the Game Commission regarding our work – they fund it, they support it. Fish and Boat Commission, certainly their stocked waters are in our state parks across the board across the entire state. Our commissioned officers – that is all of our management staff, including myself, as well as our ranger staff, are officers of the Commonwealth that have enforcement duties related to that. But there isn't that jurisdictional sort of overlap that occurs in other states. I don't know (Name, #11) if that answers your question or not.

11 – Yes, as a part of this master planning process, for natural resource management is that a part of the state parks division or do you consult with the Heritage Program on that and what that looks like?

1- There is consultation with the Heritage Program but I'll just say that for Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory (PNDI), a PNDI hit for a species of concern on the park, has its own jurisdictional basket. So, plants, while plants actually fall within DCNR, our sister Bureau of Forestry actually has that jurisdictional control; Fish and Boat Commission has their jurisdictional control for fish, amphibians, and reptiles; Game Commission has their jurisdictional control for mammal species. I'll look to my Resource Specialist, (Name, #31), anything to add or anything additional there related to this?

31 – You've done pretty well. As part of the master planning process, the conservation layers in the Heritage Program were utilized and they informed and were one of many as well as review of slopes and soils and all of that general background information, that went into the planning process.

16 – Moving on with what (Name, #11) said, will there be any future sharing with the Heritage folks the plans to ensure that whatever we decide on is actually going to not impact the variety of those species that are present at that location in Big Elk Creek? Like is there a partnership with the Heritage Program in what they're doing, and their information. I know you used that layer, but is there any feedback from them as you have progressed through the process to develop the landscape.

1 – I'm going to try and answer your question and then ask (Name, #31) to further flesh this out. We're looking at a state park master plan that is already going to identify areas of avoidance as we look at specific kinds of improvements. But that is not going to that next level of review for development. If we're in an engineering and design process, which is beyond the master planning, and not the task of this task force, we would be focusing on a specific project and a particular piece of ground that we believe is not an avoidance area, because we aren't going to try to sight something on an avoidance area based upon the resources that exist there. If we're in the design and permitting process then, and we receive a 'hit' and a discovery is made regarding a species of concern, that was missed in our original designation of avoidance areas for development, that's when we would look to mitigate or cancel that development in that particular area.

16 – I think I'm a little bit confused on that comment. When I get information from the report in this area, it looked like the majority of the parcel is in an area that is identified by Natural Heritage as very important and they have a buffer area that is wider to ensure the protection of the interior which is the majority, if not all, of the property that we're talking about. So that's why I'm confused that they're not at the table.

1- We looked at the core habitat areas and mapping and there are areas that fall outside, within the footprint of the park, the core habitat areas.

16 – Certainly the core but it's the supporting area that's needed to ensure the protection of flora habitat. And that is the entirety of the property, so that's why I really wish, and I would be more comfortable if, there was a representative from the Natural Heritage Program here at the table.

1- Thank you for that, (Name, #16).

23 – So as we progress and develop the site visits and the future meetings – today is an overview, so with all the input we get, we can bring in other people as subject matter experts to talk about all of these issues. We need to figure out what our priorities are, and it's certainly great input and something to consider for the next meeting. Just so you know that you're heard and that's a good point for the next meeting.

1- I think certainly throughout the task force meetings, bringing in subject matter experts will help inform the entirety of the task force as we're looking at decisions for the master plan is important.

11 – Can I just second that suggestion because I have been a part of projects in other states where there is a complete lack of conversation between state parks programs and species monitoring programs which leads to conflict where you're trying to manage state protected species and people and it inevitably leads to the wildlife being what suffers. So to (Name, #16)'s point, to have someone here who is advocating, and they will know the data and the resources much better than any of us, that would help inform some decision making. So yes, great suggestion.

18 – Speaking of individuals that should be advising, I would imagine we'd include the representatives from the Fairhill Natural Resource Area as well because it's an adjoining park and part of that overall corridor, I would think that is something that would be important to add as well.

24 – We certainly could invite Fairhill Natural Resource Area, but myself, the Superintendent of White Clay State Park Delaware, and the Park Manager at Fairhill Natural Resource Area are in contact

frequently with any updates that I have related to the master plan process and just daily and big picture operations as well. So that is a great suggestion, and they certainly have been kept in the conversation and that was one of the big feedback points early on, that people see the parks almost as one big entity and managing them in a connecting manor. And they were a part of the initial outreach conversations we had at the beginning of this process.

1- I will not read Act 18 – it's long but it's important – because it is DCNR's enabling legislation that essentially split our regulatory wing, the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) out of the natural resource wing. We were the Department of Environmental Resources before 1995 and Governor Ridge created DCNR with Act 18 and the Department of Environmental Protection. Again, it was this big, clunky regulatory agency with natural resource concerns and I think the agency probably, and Governor Ridge recognized this, struggled meeting the mission and mandate with both of those hats on. So 1995, created DCNR, the Bureau of State Parks, and many things carried over in the enabling legislation regarding our mission and our mandate, but this is where our statutory authority within the Bureau of State Parks comes to manage our 300,000 acres of state parks lands across the system at 124 state parks. Next.

Most of you maybe have seen this before. The acquisitions, I'm not going to go great detail but we did have essentially 3 phases of acquisitions with the Strawbridge properties. The first one, 2009-2010 I believe was complete, final acquisition in 2020. I thought maybe the Martin Tract was added after that, post-covid.

2 – Yes, that was 2022.

1- 2022, which was the last parcel that was added. Maybe not the last parcel ever because we're always looking to optimize the boundary, preserve natural resources, provide adequate buffers, in our goals for state parks across the system. And then we started the master plan, with prioritization of initial enhancements and improvements which is ultimately why we're here. I said earlier, the next step beyond what we attempted in 2023 with unsuccessful results. (next slide)

So what is in a State Park Master Plan? I probably ineloquently stated this at the Joint Townships Meeting and maybe even, the November meeting. I was using the metaphor that it was the blueprint for a state park, and I was using that trying to emphasize that it's a metaphor, because it's not the actual blueprint, it's not the design engineering and construction documents for the improvements and enhancements for the park. But as you can read, it is "a high-level conceptual plan for the park. The Master Plan uses ecological and cultural studies to outline what types of improvements, amenities and resource management projects are either necessary or feasible for the park that would be beneficial to both the mission and mandate of DCNR and the 38 million annual visitors to state parks." That's a lot but again, it's always high level concepts, but it's part of having one for a park, especially a new park. It's necessary for us to meet our mission and mandate and steward the natural resources and provide the public services and amenities.

22 – I'm sorry, your second bullet there kind of conflicts with what we saw originally; the plan that showed all the development.

1- Concepts. High level concepts. I know that people reacted in a very negative way, and I can understand after the fact, that when they were looking at different types of camping arrangements. The

master plan will call out the possibility of a use area of a park, but not the granular detail of what that activity may be. The original presentation in November were preliminary concepts, those were things that were not inked in stone. But I think that when people saw them, and I don't want to speak for everyone who was in the room who saw the concepts, but they were viewing them as "oh, there's going to be all of these campsites and this massive complex of buildings". It didn't help that we were identifying them graphically on a map and you need to identify them larger within a graphic than they would actually be individually on the footprint of what those sites represented.

22 – I think that concept was not made clear. It would have eased some of this had it have been.

1 – No, you're right. And I think a lot of people are still worried and concerned that some of those things that they were witnessing as preliminary concepts are somehow etched in stone and DCNR is proceeding with them. But that is not the plan, they were preliminary concepts. We went through the public presentation of preliminary concepts for Susquehanna Riverlands State Park in York Country not that long ago. And we certainly had some lessons learned from our experience in Chester County about how we were presenting some of this information as preliminary concepts and ideas, but we also were forced, as professional staff and the planning team for that master plan, to better define those specific recreational activities and what we're talking about and designating certain areas of a state park for certain types of uses, be it day use or overnight use, trail corridor proposals, and what we're trying to achieve with a corridor in that particularly area of a park. All of those are important things for us to answer in the planning process. So yes, it was not our intention in November to have it look like it was a ready-bake plan and this is what's happening, and that's unfortunately how many people took it.

10 – I don't know if this is the appropriate time for this, but I want to talk about the survey, because in my mind the survey created a lot of this mess, and I know there was a lot of, whether it was intentional or not, interpretation about how questions were asked and how answers were interpreted. So at some point, I want to circle back and revisit the survey to talk about how we can rethink that and maybe ask some new questions or better questions.

22 – One way to do that is avoid survey questions saying 'if'

10 – Again, I don't know if this is the appropriate time.

1 – We did not plan on delving back into the public survey. There was no intentionality, even though people could read the survey questions and believe there was intentionality or we were trying to lead people in a certain way. But the survey did certainly inform some of the presentation and the preliminary concepts, but we're moving beyond that public survey we did and the answers we gained through the input that you folks are providing as a part of the master planning process.

10 – My concern with that is that I can still see today on DCNR's website that 67% of people want a campground. And I think there's a big problem with that math. So if we're going to proceed with the master plan and reference some survey results, we should all be comfortable with the survey results. So that's why I'm bringing it up. For me to get past this, I think we all need to be comfortable with "well these are the questions, and this is how they were asked and this is what the people want".

16 – Along that same line, I know you said you don't want to go back and revisit, but as we progress we may want to put out another survey with maybe how things are moving, or decisions that are being made, to ensure they are in line with what the general public wants in this area. It's just a suggestion but

if the first survey was flawed, some might say, then it was giving false information, then the least we could do was provide a survey in the future that would be maybe better worded to ensure that it is truly objective for the decisions that are being made. It might be a way to tap into what people are thinking.

13 – Do we need another survey at all?

16 – Or maybe we don't need another survey at all.

1- And I've said it a few different times now and in a few different ways, and I'll say it again tonight. Camping and overnight experiences will not be an element in this master plan document.

16 – The fear is its not in this one, but what about the next. I mean no disrespect but the fear isn't about this one, its about the next one, or the one after that.

1 – The next what?

16 – The next master plan, or the next plan. I'm just mouthing what people are thinking, but that it would be great if it was never an opportunity for overnight camping in this area, or for RVs in this area. Or to keep in low impact for this area, so that it is a different type of state park, a different type of experience that you would get here that you might not get somewhere else. Because of the connectivity between the states, because of the wildlife corridors that you might see here and not elsewhere, because of the experiences of walking quietly and not having all these amenities. So I think that's what people are really concerned about – it's not this plan maybe, but it might be the next, or the one after that. And there's a constant vigilance to make sure that doesn't happen.

1 – There will only be one master plan for Big Elk Creek State Park. And what I believe I stated at the Joint Townships Meeting, that was not well received granted, because given what the overnight experience can mean and the spectrum of overnight experiences that are enjoyed by the public in state parks, and it's a diversity of overnight experiences from the Bald Eagle Nature Inn and a posh eco-lodge in Centre County to the Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail and a backpacking experience and primitive camping. There's a continuum of experiences including modern cabins and rustic cabins, all the way down to that primitive camping experience or back county experience. Not front county but back county experience. So what I said in that meeting is that the element of overnight experiences will not be in this master plan, but we will study and explore if there's opportunities for overnight options in this park in the future.

18 – And therein lies the problem.

1 – And there's the rut, because then they think that the RVs and a large full-service campground build out could happen. But again, to never say never, at this juncture...

15 – You can though, we'll be alright.

1 – Ok, duly noted. There were comments that were received after the public presentation, and certainly more people in opposition to the improvements from that November meeting, but one of the things we heard as well wasn't just outright "no camping experiences", but there were some people saying "well you should do what they do down at Fairhill", or "only allow organized group camping". Organized group camping would be for groups like the Boy Scouts, the Girl Scouts or church groups, that is low-impact camping experience. So there was a diversity of opinions expressed at that public meeting in November.

So that's why I think we, as an agency, deserves, particularly with the opposition that we heard, further study and again, not doing anything in a vacuum or behind closed doors, that study in the future, beyond the scope of this master plan, would happen with full transparency. But thank you for those comments, I understand peoples thoughts and opposition to it. And Secretary Dunn, I'm always channeling her, she's the Chief Conservation and Department Head and champion for State Parks for the Commonwealth – she was talking to someone about the value of those overnight experiences for those who don't live within a day trip of one of our 124 state parks. And it does provide that immersive experience and that opportunity for someone who can travel from afar, that can maybe come in from Pittsburgh or Erie or Potter County to experience the natural resources. And do it in such a way in our State Parks that we're not impacting the natural resources or that we're minimizing, to the furthest extent possible, the impact on the resource while still providing that amenity or access. So that's my speech for overnight accommodations, but again, they are not in this master plan.

18 – But they are.

1- No. They will not be represented in this master plan.

18 – But they also won't be removed or excluded from future planning.

1- A master plan does not eliminate, it only represents. We're not saying "you're not going to participate in this activity, we're not going to do frisbee golf in this corner of the park", that's not what a master plan is going to do. So a master plan is again, going to provide the possibilities and the needs of the park. And we're going to get into this a little bit tonight once we get beyond this scope of what a master plan is as the core standards for state parks and what we do and how we have to do it. Next slide.

The only thing you need to see on this now, and I've thrown up a couple of timeline slides and they've always been wrong, they were wrong before we even put them up, because we were getting questioned after the Joint Township Meeting, "well is the master plan going to be finished in the spring of 2024?" and it is not. And we were calling that out initially, but now we have this process and this task force doing this important work, so it's all the TBDs lined up there. And we have 6 task force meetings scheduled through the end of the calendar year.

(10 minute break)

2 – So right before the break we got into some details about some things that you're passionate about and things that you want to represent your constituents about in this state park. And we kind of moved on, but we're coming back to those things, so there will be plenty of time to get back down to a level of detail that you'll be comfortable with. I didn't want you to think that we were just moving past it. Now we're going to try to establish some bases here, because everyone in this room is probably coming with a slightly different understanding of how things need to work and what DCNR's goals are in this process and some of the responsibilities and mandates that they're under. So we're trying to get everybody at the same level. So some of you are probably a little bit bored right now and some of you are probably learning some things – I know I am. But in the end, we're going to move together and get down into the weeds. There will be plenty of time for you to designate and document the things that are important to you and then we'll process those further. So I didn't want you think that that was done and we're moving on, ok?

1- Next slide, thank you. There's four State Park Core Areas of Focus. And each of the next four meetings will be focused in on one of these areas of focus. So we're going to cover just these four areas. And these are going to cover, as (Name, #2) said, there's opportunities for input, advice, and we'll drill down and get out into the weeds specifically in these areas. I'm going to go through these areas real fast for an overview of what we're looking at for State Park core standards, or a baseline. I'll read this as you read it – "Resource Management: DCNR is charged with protecting, conserving, and maintaining the ecological and cultural resources located on state park lands. This includes aquatic and terrestrial resources and their native ecosystems as well as the cultural resources found within a park. Big Elk Creek State Park must have active resource management initiatives to protect the existing native species and ecosystems present at the park, as well as valuable cultural resources, and enhance them for generations to come." I know we heard this at the Township Meeting, and we often hear it sometimes as people are thinking about a particular loved or familiar resource is "don't touch it, don't do anything to it". And they want us to put a jar over it and stay off of it even. But the reality is that our natural and cultural resources need active management to thrive, to prosper, to be the best that they can be. Anywhere in Pennsylvania, this is not an untouched, pristine resource. The hand of man, if you will, to use old language that was first in our original administrative act, is present everywhere. And the threats and the vulnerabilities to our natural and cultural resources that are on our 300,000 acres of state park lands. The resources, as we acquired them from George Strawbridge, to become Big Elk Creek State Park, were already being degraded so we're taking steps, even now, with funding and support by the Administration, to improve, safeguard, protect and conserve. Next slide.

Some examples, and I am not the all-inclusive ecological scientist here to go through every action that we can and will take to take care of the resources of the park. But, forest restoration, including tree and understory plantings, herbaceous meadow maintenance, and consideration for further field-to-meadow conversions. There's a lot of ag land on this resource as you all know. A lot of historic ag land. And there's a lot of challenges with that. To make the resource as valuable and as ecologically rich as possible it's going to require actions, by us, both ongoing and in the future, regarding forest restoration. Integrated Pest Management and dealing with threats not only for our plant species but for our forest resources. That Integrated Pest Management is a part of our resource management examples. Stream Health Assessment and Restoration Work. To make Big Elk the best it can be, again, we can't put a jar over it or just walk away from it, it needs our active management to be the best that it can be. Habitat Improvement Projects to support native species and management and Preservation of Cultural and Historical Resources. This is a historically rich landscape; the landscape itself is significant. The untold stories that exist, the importance of the deep Native American history and use of the land, but the mid 19th century of the Freedom Seekers, and the enslaved people working their way north on the Underground Railroad. This landscape itself, not just the cultural artifacts and remnants that exist on the park but the landscape itself holds vast and significant importance. All of that is part of our resource management strategy at state parks. Next slide.

11 – Can I ask a question? It's me again. So just to go back to resource management, will we see these efforts and the outcomes you hope to achieve with them? I totally agree with you that land needs active management, like with the tree planting and other restoration work, but I'm wondering if that's something that you have clear objectives associated with that restoration because it's all very well saying like "we will provide habitat improvement projects" but what does that mean? And will it be restoration, monitoring, all of that. Like, are there benchmarks or a purpose behind this because some of this is like,

sexy language but I'm just curious to know what's the meat behind it. And would that be made available to the public.

1- It will, I will say in a general sense, and I will look to (Name, #31) on this point specifically or (Name, #30) in the work we are doing on the master plan there is reforestation efforts that are called out – certain areas that are in old agricultural lands now. In the master plan we're saying "there will be tree plantings there" in the future. Am I accurate in that or am I missing some of that?

23 – Are you asking more for a prescription of what will happen there?

11 – Yes, just more of an understanding like what is driving the restoration process? Is it very much like providing a landscape that supports public access, or is it driven by what resources you understand the landscape needs?

31 – It's a balance of both.

11 – And so would that be made available as a part of our discussion or is that part of a different process?

31 – I'm not quite sure I'm understanding – I'm not sure what specifically you would be...

11 – I guess I'm thinking about a consultation with the Heritage Project. That seems like an opportunity to advise on this.

31 – We have been.

11 – Oh, ok.

1 – So, again, what we were doing with the work that's happening right now prior to the master plan being complete, the resource work, we're trying to be transparent. I think there's been press releases, there's been further plantings, and there's further plans and partnership efforts underway. But to (Name, #31)'s point, we were in consultation with the Heritage Area regarding the work we are doing. Right?

22 – You mean the Mason Dixon Heritage Group?

1 – No

31 – Each project is run through PNDI and each project has a consultation, so yes to your point, (Name, #1), there has been an iteration of those that are available.

1 – So future project work that is born from the master plan would be, again, available and communicated to the public as we were making those particular enhancements or improvements. Whether it's the stream corridor or forest restoration work, understory plantings, I'm not sure (Name, #11) if I'm answering your question.

11 – Not really, but my general question is "is there a purpose behind the restoration projects? How are these plans measured and will we be collectively talking about them?"

16 – For example, the planting that was just done, was that habitat based, was that person based? Could we have seen that information, was that what you're asking?

31 – Specific to the almost 300 acres, it ended up being 280 acres with the buffer, that was a set that original 300 number was the acreage that you got when you applied a, I want to say it's a 150 foot buffer, to every waterway within the park boundaries. The number was reduced from the original assessment, based on consultation with PNHP on the plant side as we identified rare species that required an herbaceous open canopy, that they would be shaded out by forest cover. In addition to this, we modified where some of the planting areas were because of wanting to maintain more open herbaceous areas for certain songbird species. I don't know if that answers your question or not.

30 – And I would just add that the master plan is at a higher level than all of that.

31 – Yes, absolutely.

30 – It would suggest areas that make sense to us at a gross scale, but it doesn't get into that level of detail that a specific project would be.

11 – Yes, that answers my question. I'm just trying to understand what is driving this and it sounds like you don't have this level of detail yet.

1 – Yes, next slide.

“Accessibility - DCNR must commit to serving all Pennsylvanians during implementation of the Big Elk Creek State Park master planning process. This includes assessing all options for increased and appropriate accessibility to this new park and the planned improvements for the amenities there. Big Elk Creek State Park will be committed to being open, welcoming, and inclusive for everyone to enjoy. Safe public access is a principle need.” It is certainly within our mission and mandate how we serve Pennsylvanians, how they access the resource, their safe access to the resource as well as their enjoyment of the resource. Again, as (Name, #31) said, it's a balance with the resource work that is part of our mandate and our mission is that consideration at all times, when we're looking even at accessibility issues when we're looking at the public accessing the resource. Next slide.

Accessibility examples, and just basic ones that you can see here at White Clay Creek Preserve. The park and the trails, the signage, parking lots, roads, recreational and educational accessibility also involves outdoor educational spaces as well as indoor spaces, but making sure that the public has access, without the barriers that sometimes exists on a piece of ground, particularly for state park ground that has been unimproved. I can't help but use the example that we're in right now. White Clay Creek Preserve is unique in many ways, but in State Park core standards, it's not, it fits the core standards. You parked over at the park office in a parking lot. Can accessibility be improved at this park? Absolutely it can. We have issues and project work that need to be done here at White Clay. But just on the general things that we are talking about that we need to provide public access to, this is important stuff and it is part of our core standards. Next.

Number 3, there's a lot in this one. “Park Services, Visitor Satisfaction, and Safety. DCNR must provide safe and comfortable services to park visitors coming to Big Elk Creek State Park from across the Commonwealth and beyond. Facilities need to adequately address the needs and abilities of all park visitors to ensure an enjoyable, educational, and lasting experience in the state park, and provide DCNR staff the ability to provide these services. What a visitor experiences at Big Elk Creek State Park will be in line with the Bureau's Mission and execution across our State Park System.” We'll get into details maybe a little bit more on this. Some examples, parking, and I always go back to parking – we talk a lot about

parking, as well as bathrooms, in state parks. Because those are basic amenities that you have to provide – you have to provide the basic access to the resource. And it has to be safe. And it can't be limited. Where we run into problems at state parks is where we have limitations on that access – it has secondary and tertiary impacts to the community as well as the park itself. Pedestrian walkways, safe access in and out of the services being provided at the park. Restroom facilities, that's public health and safety and sanitation. When we had to close all of our facilities during Covid, but we kept our gates open, we had an example of what happens when you don't have public restrooms and facilities – we had waste issues across our entire system during that short period of time until our phased reopening of facilities. But we kept our gates open, unlike our neighboring state New Jersey. They closed their gates and we had all of their customers coming into our state during that time period. But the waste problems are critical – we talk a lot about bathrooms and its core critical infrastructure and our facilities to provide it so we don't have environmental issues in our parks. And we are under the regulatory oversight of DEP just like anyone else is. State park visitor center or park office. I know this caught some boos and outrage by certain quarters of the Joint Public Meeting. But I think I need to describe what our park office and visitor centers look like. I think people have, again through their own lens and their own experiences, what a visitor center means. And just like our overnight experiences in state parks, we have a spectrum of visitor center experiences and park offices to meet the needs. But at their core, they are a point of contact for the public and orientation, they provide direct public service by state park professionals. First and foremost they are our headquarters to manage all emergency response and law enforcement actions. They are the headquarters location for the park that allows the professional staff to provide not only the stewardship, but the public visitor services necessary in a state park. We have very large visitor centers, the largest being at Presque Isle in Erie County, 54,000 sq ft. It's gigantic – the Tom Ridge Environmental Center. It's a phenomenal facility, but it's at the far end of that spectrum that we're talking about. We also have facilities such as the one here at White Clay Creek, that provides those same core headquarter functions, visitor orientation, that a state park provides. So again, there's a spectrum – a continuum of park office or visitor center needs that are met at individual state parks and they are tailored to that park, so to speak, and the needs of that park.

16 – Can you describe pedestrian walkways?

1 – Versus trails? Yes, if we have a facility, again, ADA-accessibility-related or we have an ADA-accessible parking that is leading to an ADA-accessible facility, whether that's a visitor center or a restroom, they are going to be accessible. What surface they are, what material they are, that's prescription and an engineering determination. This again, is specific to the park. But again, it could be something as large as concrete and sidewalks and curbing, down to an ADA-accessible limestone crushed trail that serves the purpose as well.

Administrative facilities. And this Preserve has administrative facilities above and beyond what a park office has. We have a maintenance area, and that's probably the primary administrative facility type beyond a park office that every park has as a part of our core standards. White Clay Creek Preserve has an administrative maintenance headquarters location; that is where the professional staff take care of everything that happens or needs to happen, is housed. As well as the equipment that is needed for everything they are taking care of in the park. Be it the winter maintenance and snowplowing, to the carpentry repairs, to the trail improvements, everything in a state park comes out of that maintenance headquarters location. Trying to think – are there any other administrative areas, State Parks Team, that I'm missing in this mix that could be included? No, no swimming pools, marinas, etc. here.

Go to the fourth. Recreation and environmental education. As I said, environmental education, and education in general, is baked into our mission and our DNA of State Parks. The largest staffing complement of professional environmental education staff in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, roughly 120 I believe, across the state, and they're phenomenal. They are the ambassadors to the public, they are the educators that provide those deep immersive experiences, they provide a higher level of understanding of the natural resources that are contained in that state park as well as across the Commonwealth. But they are also interpreting not only the natural history of that park, but the cultural history of that park. Our education staff are key to that. We want to provide that healthful outdoor recreation – that's the other component baked into our mission, and outdoor recreation, as we were proudly and very happy to fulfill during covid with Governor Wolf, declared an essential service for the Commonwealth, which allowed us to bring our staff back into our state parks during those early days of the pandemic to provide public service to our visitors in our state parks. An essential service is outdoor recreation that we provide. Some examples, of course we have our educational and interpretive programming, trails in this core standards bucket, and I think for the purposes of this group at Big Elk Creek State Park it's hiking, biking and equestrian so it's multi-use. We typically don't, and I say typically because there are a few outlier examples, but we typically don't allow motorized recreation in Pennsylvania State Parks. Our sister Bureau of Forestry provides the motorized recreation. We do have some regional connection trails, small, that provide access for motorized recreation to access a scenic vista, the Pennsylvania Grand Canyon at Colton Point State Park, or to be able to use motorized recreation out of a campground, to access a trail on state forest land. But typically, we do not design, nor do we manage trails for motorized recreation. It's primarily hiking, biking and equestrian. I think particularly for Big Elk Creek, this is a trails park. Those trail experiences are the vehicle for the experiences to the natural and cultural resources of the park. So the master plan and the proposed corridors to provide access to certain areas of the park, or improve existing trails, are going to be critical to our work and your input to the master plan. Hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing, stargazing, day use and picnic areas – again, certain examples that exist in different layers of a state park experience. And in different scales also, just to be clear on that. (Name, #23) mentioned some things that occur in day use areas that won't be occurring in Big Elk Creek State Park, such as a marina operation, obviously because we don't have an impoundment nor a large waterway. Big Elk Creek is what it is – an amazingly beautiful water course that needs to be protected. There were several of you that mentioned too, passive recreation. All of these fall within the bucket of passive recreation. When we talk about more active recreation or development in a state park, we're talking about swimming pool complexes, major beach front or water front areas, marina complexes, even large (because they're a part of our water-based recreation experiences) pools, splash pads and other water play areas. These are not the type of projects we're talking about or things we're proposing for Big Elk Creek State Park.

Okay, you have an exercise. (Name, #23) I'm sorry I didn't tell everyone – I hope you still have your stickers... As long as you didn't lose your sticky notes and those 3 little stickers you're good to go. And we're going to ask for your tolerances in a bit of a facilitated exercise.

23 – We wanted to get to this point at 8:00, and we're going to be there in 1 minute, so thank all of you for keeping us on track. As (Name, #2) mentioned, (Name, #1) has been giving an overview, trying to get everyone up to speed so everyone in here is on close to the same page and has the same background. Now we have the opportunity to get in the weeds. Meetings 2-5 are going to be based on those core standard areas. So our next meeting is going to be focused on the resource, then we're going to have

accessibility, recreation, environmental education, park services, visitor safety and satisfaction. The four slides (Name, #1) went over, are going to be the content areas for the next four meetings. You are going to decide what those areas of focus are going to be. So you all have 3 stickers in front of you. You're going to go around the room and you have 3 stickers to put on your top three choices for discussion, for us to get the professionals to come to from both inside and outside of DCNR, to help. Maybe we look at places within the park that fit the mold of an area that we want to look at within the resource. Maybe we go to a community park, or another state park facility. Maybe we go into Maryland or Delaware. That's going to be up to the choices that you all provide with your input. So you have 3 stickers – if you think forest restoration is the most important and only thing you want to talk about with this task force, you can throw all 3 stickers under forest restoration. Or you can pick 3 different areas. But you get 3 votes. Everyone gets 3 votes. And then from there, everyone is going to be able to see it tonight. If you want to take a picture to see how everyone voted go for it. If we have one thing as an outlier or if everyone puts their sticker in, it's pretty easy to figure out what we're going to talk about next time, right? If we have 2 or 3 things that have equal votes, then it looks like we have 3 things to talk about. We're going to attempt to talk about everything that is of interest to this group. How many votes it gets will determine how much time is spent on that topic and where we go with it. I think that's the best way to hear from everybody in this room. Again, we have a lot of diverse thoughts and areas of expertise, and we want to hear from you what those areas are that they want to talk about. If everybody believes that one thing is on track, then let's not vote on it and rather vote on things you're more concerned about. So what we're going to do the next couple of minutes – does everybody still have their 3 stickers?

1 – Can I add one thing? The final category on all of these easels is “other”. And if you want to put all 3 of your stickers on the “other” category and write something down there, we want to know what that is certainly. Because certainly the information we've put up there, and the information we have provided you tonight with the 4 core focus areas are where we're going to focus. But there are other things we could be missing or you maybe want to emphasize that maybe aren't exactly teed up in those categories. So certainly “other” is an option in those categories and we're going to take it seriously. Sometimes the “other” is the important thing.

23- Yes, these are just examples as (Name, #1) outlined. So we're going to make sure we have a staff person with a marker at each area. Does everybody have their 3 stickers? Keep your post-it notes where you're at, that's going to be part of step 2. So just the stickers – leave the post-it notes where you're at.

(10 minutes for facilitated group exercise, see Appendix A for full results)

23 – Ok I think everyone has finished with their stickers. So just to reiterate, in case I wasn't clear, we're going to talk about all of these things. But the areas that all of you feel we need to focus on, maybe because you feel that you want some more information about how we would go about that in the master plan, or maybe you don't agree with things that you've heard or have a stance on something, those are the ones with the most votes. So those are the areas we're going to spend more time talking about in future meetings. Not to say we aren't going to talk about the ones people didn't vote on, but I think some of these cases people didn't vote on things because I think it's probably consistency with everybody in this room and how DCNR manages land. Maybe I'm reading into that and maybe I'm wrong. But we'll take a look at all of that.

The second part of this is you should all have 3 sticky notes in front of you. (*jokes about 2 vs 3 sticky notes*). It's late in the day but we got it. Alright, again so this is to get some feedback and give all of you

the opportunity to provide some input. Those sticky notes, you can write whatever you want on there. Constructive, but again to help dictate where we go in these meetings. So, if you put a sticker on forest restoration but you want to elaborate on something specific you want to see, certain folks you want to have out here, places we could go, anything specific to that, put that sticky note at that line. You don't have to put your name on it, but if we don't understand what it is, it would be helpful to go back to that person. We are not going to share who put what note at each thing. But it's important for us if we have questions to be able to reach out to you. And then (Name, #10), if I can use you as an example. We talked in the first couple of meetings that your property is right here, in the middle. So maybe, I'm not putting words in your mouth here – we have maps of the park up here. One is an aerial and one is a topo (*topographic*). The topo has the current trail system outlined. If you have a concern about being a neighbor, having the park and having a buffer, then maybe that is something you should put on a post-it note. Something that should be considered within the whole process. So that's an example of something that is not part of one of the things that are up there, but a certain area of the park that you are concerned about or that you want to learn more about. Like, "how can we get better access for people fishing from Stricklersville Road?". That might be a concern, maybe it isn't, maybe it is. But then you can just put a post-it note on the map, either of these two maps, specific to those related questions. Does anybody have any questions about that? Does everybody have a pen? No? Alright I have some extra pens here. Alright so whenever you're ready you can go throw them up there.

(10 minute facilitated group exercise - see Appendix A for full results)

23 – So I'd like to take, I know a couple of you are still writing your thoughts down and we can put them up when you're ready. I'd like to take the next 10 minutes, and hopefully no longer than that, to just go over where stuff ended up on the board and explain the comments. Each of our folks will talk about what those comments are, we won't say any names. But we'll tell you how many votes each thing got and what the comments were behind that. Again, we don't have any preconceived plan about what the next meeting is other than it's going to be resource management based. So you all gave us the content for the next meeting. Just getting it right now, we have to process that and see where we're going to go, and that'll be coming out once we have a chance to digest that. But this is what you guys provided us tonight for that. So we'll start with resource management, (Name, #25) if you want to go over the dots and the comments.

25 – Resource management, under 'forest restoration' there is one sticker and the post-it notes says "restoring present farm fields to native ecosystems" as well as "what is the long term management plan for replanting?". 'Stream habitat and restoration work' there are 4 stickers. 'Habitat improvement' there are 4 stickers and it says "Willistown Trust is doing great work on managing fields for grassland birds. More complex than just mowing late. We ought to use their knowledge". 'Cultural resource preservation' has 5 stickers and we had 2 write-ins for 'other'. The first is "designating as 'preservation' status" which has 7 stickers, and "natural heritage data informing resource management by the Bureau of State Parks" has 3 stickers. There are 4 post-it notes here, one says "restrictive covenant running with the land", one says "place legal limitations on current and future development. Preserve must be defined and enforced". Then one says "maintaining and enhancing wildlife corridors/preserve". And the last one says "Strawbridge parcel was acquired as part of a preserve. That term is very meaningful to this community both with White Clay Creek Preserve and other local preserves. Preserve status at Big Elk and management in keeping with White Clay Creek Preserve will be well received both locally and regionally".

23 – So now is not the time to debate any of that, but does anyone have any questions about something they heard or something that isn't clear?

1- I have one. Restrictive covenant running with the land. I don't understand the details behind that.

18- That's a covenant to run with the deed of the property to ensure that future generations get to enjoy the status as a preserve.

1 – Ok, thank you.

(one additional post-it note was brought up to resource management chart)

25 – One additional post-it note for 'stream habitat and restoration work' it says "increase Big Elk access to floodplain during flood events. Provide storage of flood waters to minimize storm impacts downstream".

1- That sounds familiar to State Parks, doesn't it,(Name, #31).

23 – Next we're going to go over to 'Park Services, Visitor Satisfaction and Safety'. So (Name, #27), take it away.

27 – 'Parking for various group sizes' we have 1 sticker of interest and we also have a note that says "plantings/landscape buffers around parking and facilities (where residents/neighbors are nearby)". At 'pedestrian walkways' we have nothing. 'Restrooms' we have no stickers but 2 notes – "want to make sure that we have proper facilities/bathrooms for visitors (when people don't have bathrooms, people make them). Waste/pollution/safety". And there's another note but I cannot read it, do you want to try?

6- That's my handwriting as a plumber. "Grey water system to flush toilets"

27- I was able to get some words, but I definitely didn't get that. So that's what we have for restrooms. Next up we have 'state park visitor center/park office' and we have 4 stickers of interest and a note that says "visitor/nature center: size? Purpose? Office? I question the need for a visitor center/maintenance building with White Clay Creek Preserve already having these amenities less than 5 miles away. Unnecessary to duplicate when the existing facilities in White Clay Creek Preserve meet the needs." And then in 'Other administrative facilities' we have nothing, and in 'Other' we have lots of notes. "Change in the bucolic nature. Cultural change", "Does DCNR have any involvement with USGS water gauges?", "Local roads (Wallow and Stricklerville) cannot handle additional traffic. Elk Township zoning should be respected". Next up we have "Safety: How would DCNR handle increased traffic flow?". Another safety question, "How will the incremental cost of emergency services be handled? Who will pay EMS for additional costs?". Another safety question "How will adjacent properties be protected?". Another question "Existing buildings off location for administrative needs". "Changing culture of the area, bucolic nature of rolling hills", and finally compliance "Park development will impact MS4 stormwater compliance issues. How will DCNR handle that?".

23 – Does anyone have any questions or clarification on anything in that category? Again, not debating it. Ok, accessibility.

31 – A general note on the 'Accessibility' category – "safety for Black people/people of color visiting an area that is primarily white". 'Signage/kiosks' there are no stickers, 'parking lots' no stickers but a note: "provide parking at the double gates on Stricklerville roadside both sides similar to Fair Hill on

Appleton/Gallaher to accommodate horse trailers". Two for 'trails' under accessibility and 3 notes – "improve the old horse bridge over Stricklersville for pedestrian access" and "provide low-impact access to preserved natural areas" and "how do you plan to maintain trails? To what degree and type?". Three stickers on 'facilities', and 3 notes – "lights on in residential areas", "Do ADA accommodations have to be throughout the park?", and "Facilities to make sure folks from across the Commonwealth can enjoy the trails, though no bigger than needed". One vote for 'outdoor education programming', and a write-in for 'other' that says "traffic on already taxed roadways".

23- Can you read the one comment about light on a residential area again?

31 – I believe that's...

6 – That would be me again. If you have a facility, you're going to have the lights on and if that's in a residential area, I didn't know if that will be adjusted.

23- I wasn't going to call anybody out, I was going to say talk to me afterwards if we couldn't read the handwriting. Ok, any other questions or comments on the accessibility. Ok, next one and the last one which is "Recreation and Environmental Education".

26- The first topic was 'education and interpretive programming', and there are 4 votes and a lot of notes – "Creative ways to tell the story of the cultural past of the area", "Enhanced attention to the underground railroad in this area", "How can we make the park an educational experience about all of the resources: natural, cultural and historic", and "Programs for preschoolers and young children". Next is 'trails', 5 votes which was the most and one note "Improvements and signage to existing trails (or bridges)". 'Hunting and Fishing' one vote and 2 notes "Restoration of SHAD to develop fishing interest" and "Ideas for increasing the deer harvest without limiting hiking days. Hunting needs to be more controlled than now but somehow increasing the harvest." 'Wildlife Viewing' one vote, 'Stargazing' one vote and 2 notes – "Dark skies and stargazing + educate about dark sky lighting for pollinator and critter protection. Native impacts of light pollution on critters and people" and "accessible dark sky designated areas for stargazing (astronomy)". One vote for 'Day use and picnic areas', three votes for 'Open space', and 'Other' we have 2 votes for 'canoe/kayak access' and one note "Would providing water access for non-motorized watercraft interfere with stream bank restoration? Other wildlife efforts?".

23- Good. Are there any comments on "Outdoor Recreation and Environmental Education"? So I'll get to the maps here in a second, but as our staff read down through a lot of these items, there's interplay with all four, right? And if there's a focus on environmental education, some of the items that were stickered were topic areas here, go with that. So while we're going to focus on resource management next time, some of this other stuff is going to get worked in because it's all a part of the entire package. So just keep that in mind. Up here on the maps – a couple of notes. "Have you considered increasing connectivity between woodland patches, eg. Here (*arrow*)". That's where the haybales are actually. Yep, ok. And "Parking areas should be minimized in size, discrete with location, safe and out of site. Secured for day use only". And back here we had "Trail network should avoid all residential properties (not just mine :))" and then there's two of them discussing the Underground Railroad and the connectivity there. So all good topics; all things we're going to dive into over the next 9 months. I would say that this isn't the only list – when we're out in the field and we have professionals come in at the next meeting, that may take us down a tangent on another topic. And we're going to explore that as well. As you can see here there's a lot of content that we need to dive into, and a lot of content that goes into this master planning

process. A lot of the background you already have, but we're going to continue to move forward with each of these areas with all of your input.

1- I'll add (Name, #23), that certainly the sticky notes that have, I'll call them questions or concerns, need to be addressed and they will be addressed.

23 – Does anyone have any questions about the exercise? (Name, #11)?

11 – Not a question about the exercise, but could I just suggest another group that hasn't come up yet? The Lenape – I just wondered if you've invited them or consulted with them?

31 – Yes, we have. We reached out to many, and ultimately consulted with two tribes for this.

1 – As part of a separate process, the planning process for White Clay Creek Preserve, which we included Big Elk Creek in that, with the National Park Service consultation. Twice now they have been involved because they were also involved in this master planning process for Big Elk.

11- Ok great, thank you.

1- I think there's only one slide left.

23- While we're working on that, don't leave because I'm saying this, but if you have your nametags if you could just leave them in place, so we're not wasting paper and we're not redoing them for every meeting, if you could just leave them here so we can collect and reuse them.

1- Four bullets on the last slide, and that's all. And I'll just go through them quickly. The first bullet was homework assignments and there aren't going to be any homework assignments with this first meeting. Again, it was more of an orientation and a welcome, if you will, from DCNR to the community, to all of our stakeholders to participate in this process. Meeting #2 as (Name, #23) noted will focus on the resource work and the issues associated with that resource work around the park. We will provide more information out in front, with the next meeting's agenda, regarding the pre-meeting field trip that will showcase or focus in on efforts that were again, some of them gleaned here from the exercise you went through tonight. So that will be forthcoming with our meeting minutes. We decided, and I appreciate the guidance on structure and how we're conducting these meetings in the future and the meeting minutes specifically and we're going to work on the transcription for the meeting minutes that was recorded here tonight as well as sending them out not just for (Name, #2) and I to review but for the entire Task Force to review and to have them back so we can then set the meeting agenda for the next meeting. Anything else?

23- I will just say, while there is no formal homework, this is all a part of the process. You were all invited to be a part of this by an elected official, some of you by stakeholders. Part of this is going back out and explaining what we did here. Not to shape peoples' opinions, but you mentioned transparency and we're trying to do everything that we said we were going to do and step one of that is getting that trust back. And that can start in this room. If you don't feel that we did that, that's fine too, it's certainly your opinion. But all of you are representing everyone who lives in this community, so we look to you to take what you've heard here back to them and bring stuff to the next meeting and future meetings based on that. That's part of this collaborative process.

1- Thanks for hitting on that, (Name, #23). I think if you're a public designee or a township or the county; certainly there's elected officials in that political jurisdiction that selected you, and I think our expectation is that you will be bringing back their specific questions and issues, representing that political jurisdiction. And I think we've seen some of that represented in the sticky notes tonight, particularly in the questions or concerns. But yes, please engage and that's your part to play. Not necessarily homework, but ongoing work.

10 – One thing that hasn't been discussed yet is sharing the names of the individuals on the Task Force. I certainly have been sharing my own name, but I haven't been sharing anyone else's because it's not public knowledge yet, at least not that I'm aware. I'm interested in talking with my neighbors and sharing what is going on, but I don't want to use other peoples names; I'm almost not sure what's appropriate.

1- We asked in our communication with all the task force members and the stakeholders that you represent that you do not share the names and contacts of individual task force members for a sense of privacy. And some may be ok with having their names shared, but others may not be. So we ask that again, it remains that way. When we put out the press release 2 days ago, we listed the legislators and that they're sitting on the task force with their public designees. But we didn't list the public designees, nor did we list that there were two public designees from individual townships or the county. We just said that there's representation and a designee from those political jurisdictions. Please, we ask that out of a courtesy to your fellow task force members that the list does not get generally put out there. Thank you for bringing that up.

17 – One of the major concerns I kept hearing after the meeting was what you guys were going to do about all the infrastructure. I don't see anything here about that.

22 – You mean like electrical service?

17 – Electrical services, barns, sheds. I don't think basic township residents want a lot of new infrastructure buildings and things of that nature on this property. The resource management, I don't think anybody has a problem with it. But I think that's something that needs to be addressed. What do you guys plan to do with parking lots, where are you going to put up sheds, where are you going to put up educational centers? Those are the things that really bother most of the residents.

2- (Name, #17) did you write that on a sticky note?

17 – I did not.

2 – Ok, so we can capture that.

17 – Here's the major concern. I don't think anyone has a problem with the resource stuff. It's your infrastructure plan that had everybody upset.

1- We're going to be definitely out in the weeds with all of you on that because I think things like administrative centers, park offices, we're going to have to hit that hard and address it.

2- Anybody else have anything to say or add?

19 – As I said earlier, I'm new to this area. I would also love to offer if any of you would ever want to have a drink because, you know, this isn't the most... yeah, it maybe could lower the temperature. This is

coming from a professor who teaches confrontational topics all the time. I'm serious, maybe you all already know each other but I'm just thinking in the future maybe after one of these meetings.

(lots of folks saying they'd join)

19 – Well it was nice to meet all of you. I am happy to become the social chair of this task force.

15 – Just a quick point of reference for everybody about using our names still. If you are a representative of your township, your name is already out there. It's a part of the public record. They had to vote on it in a board meeting, so I'm not sure, as far as sharing, I get a lot of questions about who our local representatives are. Can I answer that? As to who the representatives of our township are since they're technically public record anyway? Obviously no personal details or contact information, but I have been asked numerous times about who the local representatives are on the task force. So is it ok to put the township representatives out there? People want to know who is representing them and if they don't go to the Board of Supervisors meetings they may not be seeing that all of this was voted on in these meetings in a public forum and it's all a part of the Sunshine Act.

16 – Right, they could just get the minutes from those meetings and figure it out for themselves.

1- We were just talking about (Name, #25) and I in a sidebar, that's why I missed the first part of your question. But if we're putting transcribed meeting minutes on the state website, we don't want to highlight and call out peoples names in those meeting minutes, so we'll have them numbered. I'm just trying to wrap my head around putting this information out while protecting the privacy of those who don't want their names out there.

15 – Right but because of the Sunshine Act and how all the townships had to vote on their designees, that was all done in public Board of Supervisors meetings. For Franklin, Elk and New London. So those names are technically all public record. So if I'm being directly asked, which I am repeatedly, who our local designees are, can I?

22 – Maybe what each township should do is just ask those delegates if they mind if we tell that they're participating in this. And if someone says 'no', then if someone says "who are your delegates" you'd say so and so, but if you want to learn the second one, you have to do some digging.

15 – Alright, I just wanted to know how to answer the questions.

1 – Is that a wrap? All in favor?

(All in favor) Meeting adjourned.

Appendix A: Group Exercise Selections

Resource Management

Category	Number of Stickers	Post-it Note Comments
Forest Restoration	1	Restoring present farm fields to native ecosystems What is the long-term management plan for replantings?
Integrated Pest Management	0	
Stream Habitat and Restoration Work	4	Increase Big Elk Creek access to flood plain during flood events. Provide storage of flood waters to minimize storm impacts downstream
Habitat Improvement	4	Willistown Trust is doing great work on managing fields for grassland birds. More complex than just mow late. We ought to use their knowledge
Cultural Resource Preservation	5	
Other (write-in) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designating as 'preservation' status 	7	Restrictive covenant running with the land Place legal limitations on current and future development. Preserve must be defined and enforced. Maintaining and enhancing wildlife corridors. Preserve Strawbridge parcel was acquired as part of a preserve. That term is very meaningful to this community both with White Clay Creek Preserve and other local preserves. Preserve status at Big Elk and management in keeping with White Clay Creek Preserve will be well received both locally and regionally

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural Heritage data informing resource management plans from the Bureau of State Parks 	3	
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Park Services, Visitor Satisfaction, and Safety

Category	Number of Stickers	Post-it Note Comments
Parking for various group sizes	1	Plantings/landscape buffers around parking and facilities (where neighboring residents are nearby)
Pedestrian Walkways	0	
Restrooms	0	<p>Grey water system to flush toilets</p> <p>Want to make sure that we have proper facilities/bathrooms for visitors (when people don't have bathrooms, people make them). Waste/pollution/safety issue</p>
State Park Visitor Center / Park Office	4	<p>Visitor/Nature Center: Size? Purpose? Office?</p> <p>I question the need for a visitor center/maintenance buildings, etc. when White Clay Creek Preserve already has these amenities less than 5 miles away. Unnecessary to duplicate when the existing facilities in White Clay Creek Preserve already have needs.</p>
Other Administrative Facilities	0	
Other (write-in) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No categories written; only post-it notes 	0	<p>Change in the bucolic nature. Cultural change</p> <p>Existing buildings off location for administrative needs</p> <p>Does DCNR have any involvement with USGS water gauges?</p>

		<p>Changing the culture of the area; bucolic nature of rolling hills</p> <p>Local roads (Wallow, Stricklersville) can't handle additional traffic. Elk Township zoning should be respected</p> <p>Safety: How does DCNR handle increased traffic flow?</p> <p>Safety: How will the incremental costs of emergency services be handled? Who will pay for EMS, fire additional costs?</p> <p>Safety: How will adjacent properties be protected?</p> <p>Compliance: Park development will impact MS4 stormwater compliance issues. How will DCNR handle that?</p>
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Accessibility

Category	Number of Stickers	Post-it Note Comments
Signage/Kiosks	0	
Parking Lots	0	Provide parking at double gates on Stricklersville Road both sides similar to Fair Hill on Appleton/Gallaher to accommodate horse trailers
Trails	2	<p>Improve the old horse bridge over Stricklersville for pedestrian access</p> <p>Provide low-impact access to preserved natural areas</p> <p>How do you plan to maintain trails? To what degree and type?</p>
Facilities	3	<p>Lights on in pedestrian areas</p> <p>Do ADA accommodations have to be throughout the park?</p>

		Facilities to make sure folks from across the Commonwealth can enjoy the trails. Though no bigger than needed
Outdoor Education Programming	1	
Other (write-in) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No categories written; only post-it notes 	0	Traffic on already taxed roadways Safety for Black people/people of color visiting an area that is primarily white

Recreation and Environmental Education

Category	Number of Stickers	Post-it Note Comments
Education and Interpretive Programming	4	Programs for preschoolers and young children Creative ways to tell the stories of cultural past of the area Enhanced attention to the Underground Railroad in this area How can we make the park an educational experience about all of the resources: natural, cultural, historic
Trails	5	Improvements and signage to existing trails (or bridges)
Hunting/Fishing	1	Restoration of shad to develop fishing interest Ideas for increasing the deer harvest without limiting hiking days. Hunting needs to be more controlled than now but somehow increasing the harvest
Wildlife Viewing	1	
Stargazing	1	Dark skies and stargazing + educate about dark sky lighting for pollinator and critter protection. Native impacts of

		light pollution on critters and people Accessible dark sky designated areas for stargazing (astronomy)
Day Use and Picnic Areas	1	
Open Space	3	
Other (write-in) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Canoe/kayak access 	2	Would providing water access for non-motorized watercraft interfere with stream bank restoration? Other wildlife efforts?

Aerial Map

Category	Number of Stickers	Post-it Note Comments
No categories	No stickers	Trail network should avoid all residential properties (not just mine :)) Underground Railroad/Harriett Tubman – Tell the story Complicating the narrative around the landscape – hospitable and inhospitable – relative to the Underground Railroad

Topographic Map

Category	Number of Stickers	Post-it Note Comments
No categories	No stickers	Parking areas should be minimized in size. Discrete in location. Safe and out of site. Secured for day use only Have you considered increasing connectivity between woodland patches? Eg. Here. (<i>arrow</i>)