



Turtle Creek Watershed Association Board of Directors Meeting Minutes July 28, 2026



Call to Order President Jim Brucker called the Board of Directors meeting, conducted in person and via Zoom, to order at 5:29 pm.

In attendance:

Board of Directors: Jim Brucker, Smokey Burdin, Karen Rose Cercone, Jason McCabe, Bill Mihalco, Paul Whealdon

Associate Directors: Ben Hedin, Ed Zinkan

Executive Director: Tom Keller

Members and Guests: Melissa Church

1. Approval of Minutes

- A motion was made by Bill Mihalco, seconded by Paul Whealdon, to approve the minutes of the June 30, 2026 meeting. The motion was approved.

2. Treasurer's Report and Invoices

- Paul Whealdon reported that our checking account has increased to \$8,612.67 thanks to income from the Ducky Race fundraiser. Our savings account is now \$501.19; our first Certificate of Deposit has increased to \$15,103.54; and our second Certificate of Deposit is now \$10,087.08.
- Karen Rose Cercone made a motion, seconded by Bill Mihalco, to approve the Treasurer's Report for June 2026. The motion was approved.
- A motion to approve Tom Keller's expenses of \$81.78 was made by Bill Mihalco and seconded by Paul Whealdon. The motion was approved.

3. Executive Director's Report

- Tom reminded board members to submit their in-kind hours to him.

4. Old Business

a) Letters issued and letters / emails received since the last meeting – Karen Rose Cercone

- We received an invitation to attend Flowing Forward: Regional Approaches to Healthy Watersheds on Wednesday October 7, 2026 in Pittsburgh. Jason McCabe indicated that he may be able to attend on behalf of TCWA
- We received an invitation to attend a gathering of regional conservation organizations at Morosini Reserve in White Valley on Thursday, August 13. Karen Rose Cercone indicated that she plans to attend on behalf of TCWA.
- We received an invitation to attend a ribbon-cutting for a new scenic parcel conserved along the Westmoreland Heritage Trail near the Parkside Trailhead in Trafford on Thursday, August 6 at 10 AM. All TCWA members are welcome to attend.
- We received an invitation to attend the Sewickley Creek Watershed Association's Anniversary Celebration on Friday, August 7. More info can be found below.

b) Irwin Discharge Committee – Jason McCabe

- Jason reported that monitoring wells have been drilled and installed throughout the research area, hitting some solid coal pillars on a couple of the sites. Lithology has been consistent throughout the area (limestone lenses, darker and lighter shales.) Depth to the top of the mine void is running around 88 or 89 feet. The Biddle well is located about 50 feet west of the former mine shaft and will be the second deepest. Once installed all wells will need to be monitored for a year to see if the water levels co-vary.
- Hunter Access Program – Bill Mihalco spoke to a representative of the PGC about their new hunter access program. We will need to submit an updated application for Open access (Tier 1). The board agreed that it made sense to use the same hunting parameters as the Irwin Sportsmen’s Association, including a restriction on Sunday morning hunting. Karen Rose Cercone moved, with a second by Paul Whealdon, to authorize Bill Mihalco to submit an application for Tier 1 hunting access for Biddle to the Game Commission.

c) TCWA Event Updates

- August Board Meeting – Our location has been confirmed at the Irwin Chamber – 1 First Street, which is the public works building right beside Tinker’s Run. Karen Rose Cercone will check on availability and logistics early in August to confirm that we can meet there.
- Meeting will begin with a PowerPoint overview of the Biddle Project and recent research
- Karen Rose will distribute flyers in the area and reach out to Shari Martino asking who else should be invited. She will also contact Brian Rasel’s office as well with an invitation.

5. New Business

- a) WCD Awards Banquet – Bill Mihalco shared that TCWA will receive the J. Roy Houston Conservation Award for this year at this event on September 9, 2026. A motion was made by Bill Mihalco, seconded by Karen Rose Cercone, to sponsor a Stars and Stripes Table for 8 members of TCWA so that we have folks there to accept this award.
- b) Ben Hedin noted that the Sewickley Creek Watershed Association is having an anniversary event on Friday, August 7 in Lowber at the site of the treatment system. The program runs from 11 to 1 and will include lunch, to be followed by a tour of the AMD treatment site. Karen Rose will forward the invitation information out with the draft minutes.

6. A motion to adjourn was made by Bill Mihalco, seconded by Paul Whealdon. The motion was approved by unanimous consent and the meeting adjourned at 6:10 PM.

7. The next regular TCWA Board Meeting will be held on August 25, 2026, 5:30 PM at the Irwin Council Chamber and via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Rose Cercone