

Conewago Creek Watershed Community

A VISION FOR THE CONEWAGO CREEK WATERSHED



January 2011

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Acknowledgements

The development of a vision for the Conewago Creek watershed and this report would not have been possible without the support and funding for the Conewago Creek Initiative provided by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the Pennsylvania Foundation for Watersheds.

Special thanks also to Penn State Public Broadcasting for producing the video version of the vision, and to the partners of the Conewago Creek Initiative for their support of and participation in the visioning process. Thanks also to Lawn Fire Company, Aberdeen Mills, Londonderry Township, Lower Dauphin School District, and Londonderry Elementary School for providing venues and volunteers during the visioning process.

We especially want to acknowledge and thank Janie French of the Pennsylvania Environmental Council for drafting this report and her skilled facilitation throughout.

Finally, a very special thanks to the members of the Conewago Creek Watershed Community who served on the vision team, attended the public sessions, and provided the input that resulted in this vision.

Photo credits: Stephanie Harmon (p. 2, bottom); Kristen Saacke Blunk (p. 7, bottom); Dick Brown (p. 8, bottom); Anna Marie Nachman (p. 9, bottom); Matt Royer (all others).

Executive Summary

Over the course of a three month period between August and October 2010, more than 100 stakeholders of the Conewago Creek Watershed Community provided input that generated a vision for their home, community, and watershed. The consensus building approach used in this visioning process established multiple priorities aimed to achieve and maintain a healthy Conewago Creek Watershed. These priorities include clean water, viable and productive agriculture, green open spaces, vibrant and well planned communities, and enhanced outdoor recreational opportunities. Each priority is interrelated to the other priorities and reflects the connectivity between the community and the watershed. The community approach promoted by the Conewago Creek visioning process, which included a public kickoff breakfast, development of a multi-stakeholder Conewago Vision Team, and a public *A Vision for the Conewago* Conference, integrated many different perspectives into the decision making process. The vision is the product of a constructive, inclusive process that identified unique opportunities in the watershed to be valued and protected and issues that need to be addressed.

The following statement captures an overall vision for the future of the Conewago Creek Watershed. It is an idealized version of the future, but one that we should strive to achieve:

The Conewago Watershed Community has envisioned a future that establishes the restored Conewago and its tributaries as a centerpiece of pride and a treasured asset in a rural landscape.

This vision includes a strong agricultural community and productive farmland, community recreation areas and vibrant, well planned communities. Pristine landscapes will be protected while providing sustainable uses of natural resources, clean water and streams, and educational opportunities for generations to come.

While visionary documents can vary greatly in scope and detail, the main purpose is to collect the fundamental ideas and priorities of local stakeholders and establish goals to serve as guiding principles for future planning and management activities. The five goals identified through the Conewago Creek Watershed visioning process include:

- (1) Strengthen Community**
- (2) Preserve Rural Landscapes and Agriculture**
- (3) Establish Sustainable Land Use Practices and Principles**
- (4) Enhance Recreational Opportunities**
- (5) Restore and Protect Natural Resources**

I. The Visioning Process and its Purpose

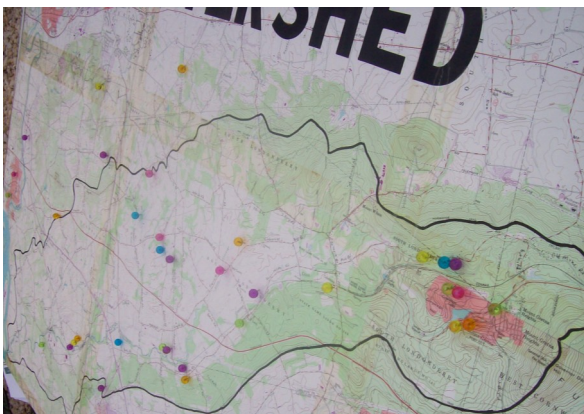
The Conewago Creek Initiative is a locally-led, collaborative partnership effort that seeks to improve water quality in the Conewago Creek Watershed by working with local residents and landowners in the community. The primary intent is to increase awareness of and interest in adopting land management practices that will improve water quality of local streams, ensure healthy farms and communities, and protect and maintain quality of life.

Partners include the local watershed group (Tri-County Conewago Creek Association), the Dauphin, Lebanon, and Lancaster County Conservation Districts, Penn State Cooperative Extension, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and the PA Department of Environmental Protection, and many other local, state, and federal organizations. But the most important partners in the effort are the Conewago residents—the farmers, homeowners, business owners, and municipalities that live and work in the watershed.



In order for any collaborative partnership effort to have success, a strategic plan is needed. When the partnership seeks to work collectively within a watershed community to achieve water quality, conservation, and quality of life goals, it is essential that the community be involved in developing this blueprint. Accordingly, there was a strong need to embark on a visioning process that involved Conewago residents and stakeholders to develop an authentic vision for the Conewago Creek Watershed Community—a picture of what they want the watershed to look like in the future—and suggest ways in which to achieve that vision. The visioning process sought to increase awareness of and engagement in the Initiative by community members, and provide an authentic roadmap for use by the community, Initiative partners, and others working to achieve conservation goals within the watershed.

The vision for the Conewago was created through collaboration among agencies, the public, and a watershed "vision team." Through this effort, public agencies in the watershed worked with the public and the vision team to identify issues and values in the watershed and define desired future conditions for watershed resources.



The Conewago visioning process kicked off in August 2010 with a community breakfast at the Lawn Fire Hall, where watershed residents were given an opportunity to provide input on opportunities and changes need to ensure the health and vitality of the Conewago Creek Watershed Community. Breakfast attendees were asked to place pushpins on the watershed map to indicate where they live. Breakfast organizers were stationed by the map to talk with participants about the watershed and the Conewago Creek Initiative.

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At the breakfast, several residents expressed interest in serving on a vision team made up of diverse stakeholders to craft a vision for the watershed—what it might look like in the future. Vision team members included farmers and residents of the watershed, local municipal leaders and business owners, and members of agencies and organizations active in the Conewago Creek Initiative. This team, which contributed to the process through two workshops, helped synthesize input from the public and agencies to frame issues and define desired future conditions for the watershed vision.

The first meeting of the vision team was held on August 24, 2010, a cookout hosted by Aberdeen Mills. During this session, a facilitator-led discussion drew upon the experiences of participants to reveal what the ideal watershed would look like in the future and what barriers would need to be resolved to meet this future vision. Five major themes were identified as important components to the Conewago Creek watershed's future.



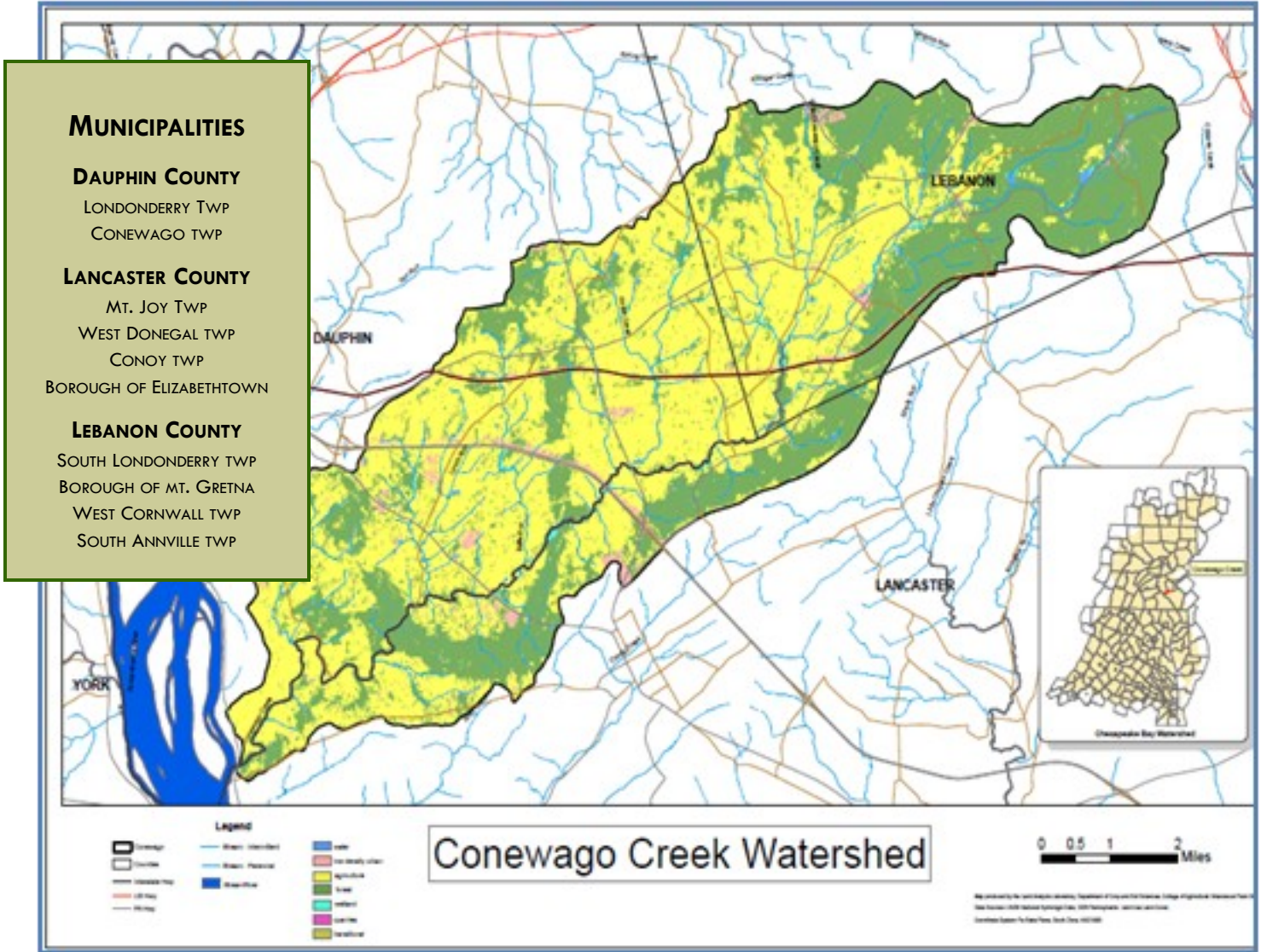
The second meeting of the vision team was held on September 13, 2010. The team produced a draft vision statement, advanced five goals aligned with the themes that had emerged in the previous meeting, and began suggesting action items to achieve the vision and goals. (Notes from the vision team meetings are provided in Appendix A and B. A complete list of vision team members is provided in Appendix E).



On October 23, 2010, *A Vision for the Conewago* Conference was held to present the vision to the broader Conewago watershed community and determine how it may be implemented. At the conference, more than 40 participants commented on the vision, suggested action items, and then prioritized action items to advance the vision. (Notes and prioritized action items from the conference are provided in Appendix C).

A final post-conference meeting of the vision team was held on December 16, 2010, at which team members debriefed on the conference, reviewed a draft of this vision report, and provided further ideas for advancing the priority action items suggested by the Conewago Creek Watershed Community. (Notes from this meeting are provided in Appendix D).

II. About the Watershed Community



The Conewago Creek Watershed is located in Dauphin, Lancaster and Lebanon Counties and transcends 10 different municipalities. The watershed comprises 53.2-square miles and is a drainage to the Susquehanna River, entering the river north of the village of Falmouth (very near Three Mile Island Nuclear Facility). The headwaters are situated in Lebanon County in and around State Game Lands No. 145 and the wooded community of Mount Gretna. The stream generally flows in a southwestern direction, intersecting with several highway systems; the larger including US Interstate 76 (Pennsylvania Turnpike), Pennsylvania Route 283, and Pennsylvania Route 230.

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Conewago is an Indian word meaning "at the place of rapids" (Conewaugha). Grist mills and trading posts sprung up in the watershed as early as 1730. In colonial times, Conewago Creek was an environment of pristine waters and diverse plants and animals. But for 300 years, waves of settlement and growth cleared more and more land for agriculture, livestock, and development.



The majority of the watershed is in agricultural production (approximately 53%) with over 200 farms varying in size. Many of the main stem and tributary floodplains are actively pastured or cultivated for crop production. Major crops include corn, soybeans and alfalfa. Livestock include dairy cattle and beef cattle. Poultry and hogs are also present.



Because of the predominant agricultural land use, water quality impairments are heavily linked to non-point agricultural sources. Excessive loadings of sediment and nutrients are credited as being significant causes of water quality impairment. Yet there are other sources of sediment and nutrients

within the watershed including individual on-lot septic systems, point source discharges such as sewage treatment plants, stormwater runoff from residential, commercial and industrial development, and eroding stream banks.

In spite of the impaired water quality, the Conewago Creek Watershed holds many unique attributes. Huddled between the more urban and heavily suburban areas of Harrisburg, Hershey, Lancaster, and Lebanon, the watershed remains relatively rural with rolling farm fields and green open space. There are several hiking and biking trails. These include the Conoy Canal Trail, the Conewago Recreational Trail, the Lebanon Valley Rails-to-Trail, the Horse-Shoe Trail, Governor Dick, and various trails throughout Game Lands No. 145. Conewago Lake in Mt. Gretna is open to the public for swimming in the summer. Fishing opportunities are also available. The upper portion of the Conewago is stocked with trout, while the lower portions contain smallmouth bass, pickerel, bluegill and rock bass.



III. A Vision for the Conewago Creek Watershed

The most common form of presenting a watershed community's vision is through a vision statement—a concise set of words and phrases that communicate the essence of the watershed community in the future.

The Vision Video

Recognizing that words are only one form of communication, are subject to numerous interpretations, and only partly present what the Conewago watershed can be, the vision is also illustrated through a video that was presented at the conference. The video will be shown at municipal township meetings and can be viewed by community members at www.conewagoinitiative.net.

The Vision Statement

The Conewago Watershed Community has envisioned a future that establishes the restored Conewago and its tributaries as a centerpiece of pride and a treasured asset in a rural landscape.

This vision includes a strong agricultural community and productive farmland, community recreation areas and vibrant, well planned communities. Pristine landscapes will be protected while providing sustainable uses of natural resources, clean water and streams, and educational opportunities for generations to come.

Goals

To achieve this vision, five major goals are identified. These guiding principles include:

- 1) **Strengthen Community** through education, intergovernmental cooperation and commitment of human and economic resources.
- 2) **Preserve the Rural Landscape and Agriculture** through open space protection while promoting a sustainable agricultural enterprise.
- 3) **Establish Sustainable Land Use Principles and Practices** through integrating natural resource management and low impact development.
- 4) **Enhance Recreational Opportunities** by linking people to the natural landscape.
- 5) **Restore and Protect Natural Resources** through creating a connection between people and ecosystems.

IV. Advancing the Vision: Priority Action Items

The result of this comprehensive process is a roadmap to success with action steps leading the way. Elected officials, business and industry leaders, along with many passionate citizens can together lead the charge in making the Conewago Creek Watershed Community one that its residents desire and deserve.



Several priority action items were suggested by the vision team in its second workshop. Many additional action items were developed by participants at the *A Vision for the Conewago* Conference during facilitated breakout sessions. Conference participants then voted for their top three action items under each of the five goals. The three action items receiving the most votes were considered the top priority action items under each goal. Some of the priority action items developed by the vision team and some of those developed and prioritized at the conference are similar, and have thus been combined and rephrased where appropriate.

The top action items for advancing the vision for the Conewago are listed below by goal.

All action items suggested by the Conewago Creek Watershed Community throughout the visioning process can be reviewed in Appendix C. Further ideas on advancing the priority action items, suggested by the vision team in its post-conference meeting, are included in Appendix D.

Strengthen Community through education, intergovernmental cooperation and commitment of human and economic resources.

- Create a message that we all need clean water.
- Identify various stakeholder groups (with an emphasis on homeowners) and offer educational opportunities that lead to being exceptional stewards of land and water.
- Establish a multimunicipal watershed working group.
- Form Environmental Advisory Councils in all municipalities.
- Develop a website dedicated to the watershed.



Preserve the Rural Landscape and Agriculture through open space protection while promoting a sustainable agricultural enterprise.

- Encourage communication between the farming community and residents (by working with the Pennsylvania Agriculture Ombudsman and offering farm tours and other programs that educate residents about good stewardship being practiced by farmers and woodlot owners).
- Encourage the adoption of agricultural Best Management Practices for environmental and economic sustainability.
- Encourage municipalities to support well planned land uses including agriculture.
- Promote an agriculturally oriented economy (by developing “Partners for Excellence in Agriculture,” promoting innovative agricultural opportunities, providing services to local restaurants, promoting agri-tourism, etc.).



Establish Sustainable Land Use Principles and Practices through integrating natural resource management and low impact development.

- Educate citizens on preservation opportunities.
- Encourage municipalities to adopt and implement ordinances consistent with well planned, sustainable land uses and watershed protection.
- Identify and secure resources and funding for adoption of agricultural and stormwater Best Management Practices.
- Increase green spaces.
- Implement Best Management Practices as demonstrations on municipal property.



Enhance Recreational Opportunities by linking people to the natural landscape.

- Connect recreation to the natural landscape.
- Include recreation goals in community plans.
- Get community groups such as scouts involved.
- Promote recreational opportunities such as trails, wildlife viewing, birding, nature centers, fishing, and canoeing.



Restore and Protect Natural Resources through creating a connection between people and ecosystems.

- Implement Best Management Practices for home and farm to protect and restore water quality.
- Create an awareness of stormwater as a natural resource and promote surface water infiltration into soil to improve groundwater recharge.
- Develop an education and training program on how to enhance natural resources (through neighborhood house meetings, landowner tours, field days, and use of experts).
- Promote residential and commercial green development.
- Improve wildlife habitat with native plants.
- Protect and improve streamside buffers to maintain and enhance aquatic life.



V. Conclusion

The Conewago Creek Watershed visioning process has illuminated the need for a coherent vision for the future of the watershed that all parties can voluntarily work towards. This report documents the vision of the over 100 residents and other Conewago Creek Watershed community stakeholders who participated in this visioning process. Individuals, government agencies, non-profit groups and private interests can refer to the vision report to ensure that their projects are consistent with the larger watershed-wide vision, and to seek guidance on next steps and further actions.

Restoration and protection of the Conewago Creek Watershed will require a committed and coordinated effort from many stakeholders with support and technical assistance from local, state and federal agencies. This document and the planning process it describes will serve as a beacon for all future watershed restoration and protection efforts.



Appendix A

Vision Team Workshop 1 Notes (including community breakfast comments)

August 24, 2010 – Aberdeen Mills

My ideal watershed community will be like this:

Recreation:

- Recreation, fertile farmland and community pride all coexisting
- People using area ? recreation
- High degree of outdoor recreation
- Community activities

Land use/Landscapes:

- Lots of wildlife
- Diverse landscapes with clean roadsides
- Native plants
- Lots of mature trees interspersed with wildflower meadows
- More native plants
- New housing in clusters at the edge of small towns
- A healthy mix of farms, forests and an occasional village
- Less mowed lawn space
- Free of mile a minute weed
- Maintain farms and woodland
- Increase recreation areas maintained by community
- Renovation and adaptive use
- More green with native plants, wildlife and clean water
- Natural beauty, clean, full of life and everyone cares
- Farmers continuing to farm productively, profitably and ecologically throughout the watershed
- More trees, meadows and wildlife habitat along the creek
- New and old homes with native plants and landscapes
- A connected and vibrant community of people
- 300 years ago

Sustainability

- Towns, agriculture, residents and business all invested in sustainable community (can't read ending)
- Viable economy with sustainable use of resources, healthy use and respect for others and future generations
- An ideal watershed that will be life sustaining and useful

Lean and Green

- A waterway that is not adding pollutants to the river
- Rebound of lost species native to the creek
- Clean water
- Clean air
- Clear, clean and open
- Lots of green space
- Clean water and land
- Less lawn, more garden or wild areas
- Smaller lawns

Education

- Happy faces
- Native Center
- Educational passive park

Challenges to making changes

Lack of education

- Knowledge
- Apathy of general public about littering
- Lack of involvement by all residents of the watershed
- Lack of knowledge of what needs to be done and where to go for this information
- More information
- Difficulty in reaching everyone

Lack of resources (people power)

- People involved with carrying out improvements
- Resources (people)
- Manpower to get the job done
- Lack of manpower
- Will to change “collective”
- Understanding what every person can do (youth, household, business, farms, municipal office, visitors, etc.

Lack of government resources and cooperation

- Consensus
- Government tie ups – “Not my job”
- “Why should I care -I don’t live along the creek”
- Lack of local government involvement
- Enforcement of laws

- Consensus on zoning and planning to control development
- Government resources and cooperation
- Central coordination
- Intermunicipal cooperation
- Zoning
- Informed citizenry – Know what government can do vs. what individuals must do
- There is no plan to help people see the need to change

Need to change perceptions and attitude

- Money talks when housing decisions are made – Entitlement falsehoods
- Reducing the pollutant loads to sustain levels will require identifying sources and persuading folks to make changes
- People do not like change
- Aesthetics – mowed lawns look very tidy which people like
- Push for profit and housing like everybody else
- Overcoming inertia to keep doing things the way we've always done

Lack of time, energy and personal investment

- Lack of good examples of caring as you drive around
- Lack of extra time to learn new practices/ adapt to change
- Life is too busy and “wired” for most to care about nature
- Inconvenience or competition for time in busy schedules

Lack of financial resources

- Money
- Economic barriers to adoption of practices
- Change costs money
- Financial costs

What needs to change?

Improve water quality

- Better control of runoff
- Eliminate source of pollution
- Improve stream quality for fish
- Safe drinking water
- Private wells protected
- Safe municipal water
- Erosion control, cleaned up, fish restored to creek
- Eliminate sedimentation
- Streams all up to par in terms of water quality; supporting aquatic life recreation, etc.

- Intermunicipal cooperation on stormwater management in old and new neighborhoods
- I'd like to see pollutants reduced to sustainable levels

Land Use Planning

- Restrictions on housing developments
- No more new homes in the middle of fields
- Contain/control development
- No new housing developments
- Village style housing
- Limit development
- More parking areas for Conewago Trail
- Connected spaces
- Unplanned development
- Less costly ways to develop
- Well defined public access to forest and streams combined with respect and understanding for private lands and areas where public should not access

Awareness/ Public Relations/Education

- More active participation of residents, pride in watershed
- The non-ag community doing their part to help clean it up
- More community pride
- Change in value placed on water quality by community
- Every resident to do their part
- I would love more people to respect nature
- No dumping
- Littering
- Preserve bog turtles
- More tree planting ordinances
- Make the creek more visible
- More awareness of our connection to clean water and how we can impart it into our daily lives.

I like the Conewago watershed community because...

Rural Nature

- The rural nature of our area (not a lot of development)
- Plentiful farmland and the scenic value it provides
- The crossroad villages (Colebrook, Lawn, Deodate, Bachmanville, etc.)
- Sense of community
- Mostly rural
- The rural nature of the watershed

- Riparian areas, stream valleys with wildflowers, shrubs and woods
- The rural character of the community
- The size of the human population; Big enough to do great things, small enough to know one another
- Back roads, minimal traffic
- I like the rural and open feel of most of the watersheds
- Low population density in most areas
- Rural and green

Landscapes/Terrain/ Wildlife

- Overall landscape (i.e., sycamore trees)
- Variety of terrain
- I love the natural areas
- Trees, woods, animals
- Scenic qualities
- Living next to the creek
- The natural beauty of the creek
- Wildlife attracted to the creek
- Diversity of wildlife
- Wood ducks
- Open space
- I love the open spaces
- A lot of undeveloped land that could be preserved
- Open space
- Mixed land use but particularly the forest, cropland and pastures
- I like the varied topography
- Geological attributes

Quality of Life/ Sense of Place

- Natural and peaceful
- Peaceful community
- The volunteer organizations that care about the creek and our community
- Diversity of jobs, habitat and interests
- Stewardship among people
- The name "Conewago"; is it native American? What does it mean?
- Historic relevance
- History
- I like the history of the area
- Farms
- Farming activities

Recreation

- People using area for recreation
- Waterfowl and fishing
- I love the outdoor activities
- Public land and recreation
- Conewago trail

Appendix B

Vision Team Workshop 2 Notes

September 13, 2010 — Londonderry Township Municipal Building

A Draft Vision Statement for Conewago Creek

The Conewago Watershed Community has envisioned a future that establishes the restored Conewago and its tributaries as a centerpiece of pride and a treasured asset in a rural landscape.

This vision includes a strong agricultural community and productive farmland, community recreation areas and vibrant, well planned communities. Pristine landscapes will be protected while providing sustainable uses of natural resources, clean water and streams, and educational opportunities for generations to come.

The vision will be achieved through 5 themes that include:

Strengthening Community through education, intergovernmental cooperation and commitment of human and economic resources.

- **Educate homeowners on their impact on water quality.**
- **Promote innovative agricultural opportunities.**
- **Identify various stakeholder groups and offer educational opportunities that lead to being exceptional stewards of land and water.**
- **Create a message that we all need clean water.**
- **Establish a multimunicipal watershed working group.**

Preserving the Rural Landscape and Agriculture through open space protection while maintaining a viable agricultural industry.

- **Encourage communication between farming community and residents through farm tours.**
- **Develop “Partners for Excellence in Agriculture” to promote the agricultural industry.**
- **Develop a farm residential interface such as an ombudsman.**
- **Encourage adoption of agricultural Best Management Practices for environmental and economic sustainability.**

Establishing Sustainable Land Use Principles and Practices through integrating natural resource management and low impact development.

- **Identify financial incentives for adoption of Best Management Practices.**
- **Provide resources for Agricultural Best Management Practices.**
- **Increase green spaces.**
- **Encourage municipalities to adopt ordinances consistent with well-planned , sustainable land uses.**
- **Implement Best Management Practices as demonstrations on municipal property.**

Expanding Recreational Opportunities through ensuring green space is publically accessible and linked between and within communities.

- **Connect recreation to the natural landscape.**
- **Promote recreational opportunities such as the trail.**
- **Promote fishing along the creek.**

Enhancing Natural Resources through creating a connection between people and ecosystems.

- **Implement Best Management Practices for home and farm to protect and restore water quality.**
- **Promote surface water infiltration into soil to improve groundwater recharge.**
- **Improve wildlife habitat with native plants.**
- **Protect and improve streamside buffers to protect aquatic life.**

Appendix C

A Vision for the Conewago Conference Notes and Prioritized Actions

October 23, 2010 — Londonderry Elementary School

At the conference, participants commented on the draft vision statement as presented by the vision team, and made suggestions for revision. The final version of the vision statement reflecting those suggestions is shown below.

The vision team also presented several priority action items for advancing the vision and its five goals. Conference participants then divided into small breakout groups and suggested additional action items. Many, many action items were suggested. During lunch, participants were then given an opportunity to vote for their top three priority action items under each goal.

Below are all of the action items developed by the vision team and conference participants. They are listed by goal and in order of priority. Action items developed by the vision team are denoted with a “vt” in parentheses. Action items developed at the conference that received votes are shown with a number in parentheses indicating the number of votes received. Items without a number did not receive a vote.

A Draft Vision Statement for Conewago Creek (revised)

The Conewago Watershed Community has envisioned a future that establishes the restored Conewago and its tributaries as a centerpiece of pride and a treasured asset in a rural landscape.

This vision includes a strong agricultural community and productive farmland, community recreation areas and vibrant, well planned communities. Pristine landscapes will be protected while providing sustainable uses of natural resources, clean water and streams, and educational opportunities for generations to come.

The vision will be achieved through implementation of action items under five key goals that include:

Strengthen Community through education, intergovernmental cooperation and commitment of human and economic resources.

- **Educate homeowners on their impact on water quality. (vt)**
- **Promote innovative agricultural opportunities. (vt)**
- **Identify various stakeholder groups and offer educational opportunities that lead to being exceptional stewards of land and water. (vt)**
- **Create a message that we all need clean water. (vt)**

- Establish a multimunicipal watershed working group. (vt)
- Form Environmental Advisory Councils in all municipalities. (14)
- Develop residential education of impacts on stormwater runoff, yard treatments, “people pollution.” (13)
- Have a website dedicated to the watershed with a Facebook page; house videos on website and information on rain gardens, native plants, resources and contacts, meeting minutes. (12)
- Farm tours and stream tours for the public and/or municipal officials. (7)
- Promote education in elementary/high schools. (7)
- Develop education related to dangers of pesticides/ herbicides on lawns. (7)
- Education is often through media – have community activity and positive media coverage. (7)
- Youth need to be engaged to accept ownership and responsibility. (6)
- Youth need to be engaged to accept ownership and responsibility. (6)
- Signage campaign in yards to “benchmark” recognition. (5)
- Protect and preserve our good, pure drinking water. (3)
- Give message where people are already gathering. (2)
- Provide a case study from another community with problems and solutions and use visually shocking photos. (1)
- Generate buy-in and a message of urgency to community. (1)
- Make sure information is available at Mt Gretna, Rail-Trail, Governor Dick Nature Park, Horseshoe Trail, Orley’s water sales. (1)
- Education of hobby mechanics. (1)
- Farm chemicals/applications are heavily regulated but residential chemicals and applicators are not. (1)
- Use “work crews” to remove invasive species, etc. in communities. (1)
- Weekly/monthly column in local newspapers and use guest authors. (1)
- Protect and preserve areas that have unimpaired streams.
- Provide a picture of a disaster and work back to show how it could have been prevented.
- Provide community education.
- Educate lawn care/fertilizer companies.
- Education of residential/business cleaning and dry cleaning services.
- One-on-one contact with property owners and government entity and agency most related to cleanup effort; influential impact prioritization.
- Engage business owners.
- Develop cordial working relationship with neighbors.
- Inform residents that they can register with the County if they are sensitive to chemicals.
- Need to identify subgroups or organize subgroups within the watershed.
- Develop newsletter.
- Do newspaper ads.
- Recycling areas – increase number of drop-off sites and recyclable materials (County program).

- **Hazardous material; drop-off or collection (Pa Dept of Ag).**
- **Expand municipal yard waste recycling programs.**

Preserve the Rural Landscape and Agriculture through open space protection while promoting a sustainable agricultural enterprise.

- **Encourage communication between farming community and residents through farm tours. (vt)**
- **Develop “Partners for Excellence in Agriculture” to promote the agricultural industry. (vt)**
- **Develop a farm residential interface such as an ombudsman. (vt)**
- **Encourage adoption of agricultural Best Management Practices for environmental and economic sustainability. (vt)**
- **Educate residents about the good things farmers are doing as stewards and woodlot owners as forest stewards. (20)**
- **Encourage municipalities to support well planned land uses including agriculture. (12)**
- **Promote an agriculturally oriented economy (services to local restaurants, tourism, etc.). (11)**
- **Educate people about agriculture and woodlots - all scales of farming – large and small. (7)**
- **Engage local government in sustainable agriculture programs. (6)**
- **Promote farmland preservation. (5)**
- **Teach food preservation alternatives to the deep freezer. (4)**
- **Promote local sustainable agriculture and woodlots. (1)**
- **Promote financial programs for Best Management Practices (Federal, State and Local) such as grants, contracts, etc. (1)**
- **Educate farmers and woodlot owners about Best Management Practices. (1)**
- **Promote community gardens.**

Establish Sustainable Land Use Principles and Practices through integrating natural resource management and low impact development.

- **Identify financial incentives for adoption of Best Management Practices. (vt)**
- **Provide resources for agricultural Best Management Practices. (vt)**
- **Increase green spaces. (vt)**
- **Encourage municipalities to adopt ordinances consistent with well planned, sustainable land uses. (vt)**
- **Implement Best Management Practices as demonstrations on municipal property. (vt)**
- **Educate citizens on preservation opportunities. (16)**
- **Tell people what they can do in ordinances. (10)**
- **Instill watershed protection strategies with municipal planning. (8)**
- **Secure funding for projects. (8)**
- **Promote Environmental Advisory Councils. (6)**
- **More public participation. (5)**

- Update comprehensive plans. (5)
- Engagement with Municipal officials for Best Management Practices. (4)
- Specify target audience (commercial, developers, schools). (1)
- A watershed group as an “environmental advocate.”
- Better distinction between goal 2 and 3.
- Engage HOAs and municipal officials.

Enhance Recreational Opportunities by linking people to the natural landscape.

- Connect recreation to the natural landscape. (vt)
- Promote recreational opportunities such as the trail. (vt)
- Promote fishing along the creek. (vt)
- Market recreation goal to community development plans. (11)
- Get community groups such as scouts involved. (11)
- Promote wildlife viewing, birding, bird counts, workshops, nature centers, fishing derby, canoeing. (10)
- Target youth groups to get involved for education and maintenance. (5)
- Sponsor community days for recreational facilities. (4)
- Get schools, students, scouts involved with trail maintenance. (3)
- Form partnerships- interface bulletin. (3)
- Incorporate stream habitat enhancement. (3)
- Develop educational brochure about trails. (3)
- More public access to stream. (3)
- Place Best Management Practices next to where students are.
- Make trail educational signs, labels. (3)
- Remove liability for public access (PA Recreation and Right to Use Act). (3)
- Develop Friends of Trail group. (2)
- Expand access for fishing. (2)
- Expand hunting opportunities. (2)
- Enhance Best Management Practices on farms to improve water quality and stream recreation. (2)
- Assure maintenance of public lands. (2)
- Promote trail through partnering and more signs. (1)
- Enhance trail to include more options. (1)
- Develop a study for potential of non automobile recreation. (1)
- Connect different types of outdoor recreation. (1)
- Get more community involvement. (1)
- Solicit volunteers.
- Raise funds for projects.
- Provide areas for trash disposal.
- Various groups take responsibility for trail maintenance.

- **Develop partnerships with PA Fish and Boat Commission, PA Game Commission, Hershey Trust.**
- **Develop email list.**
- **Identify who is responsible for protecting recreational resources.**
- **Place bat houses and butterfly gardens along greenways.**
- **Develop educational signage.**
- **Improve fish habitat including in stream improvements.**
- **Recognize various plans in place and be consistent.**
- **Promote trails through fundraising events and points of interest.**
- **Improve water quality to enhance fishing.**
- **Increase fishing access, where appropriate, to streams.**
- **Bird education with maintenance activities.**

Restore and Protect Natural Resources through creating a connection between people and ecosystems.

- **Implement Best Management Practices for home and farm to protect and restore water quality. (vt)**
- **Promote surface water infiltration into soil to improve groundwater recharge. (vt)**
- **Improve wildlife habitat with native plants. (vt)**
- **Protect and improve streamside buffers to protect aquatic life. (vt)**
- **Provide more education training on the how and what. Use house meetings where neighbors invite neighbors; sponsor a property/landowner walking tour; bring in expertise. (16)**
- **Stormwater should be specifically viewed as a natural resource to manage as a benefit and not a harm. (15)**
- **Residential and commercial green development; trees benefit home cooling; can attract developments of the future; corporate benefits include green roof stormwater management, water infiltration, goodwill with neighbors. (12)**
- **Planting warm season grasses and native wildflower meadows as stream buffers; add trees/shrubs in 2-3 yrs; include all streamside owners. (10)**
- **Streamside buffers are important but CREP tool is cumbersome because of maintenance; could organize volunteers for maintenance; farmers could “husband” CREP. (8)**
- **Include more streambank fencings and crossings but ensure that the infills of plants are managed. (7)**
- **Realistic values assigned to natural resources. (6)**
 - **Trees more than lumber have a hydrologic value and show there are different ways to timber.**
 - **Water more than drinking benefits habitat, flood control, recreation, wetlands.**
 - **Open space.**

- **Improve instream habitat and reintroduce fish species that may no longer be there. (6)**
- **Align education and planning with projects on the ground; MS4 Stormwater management; need to expand dialogue beyond 9-5 and structure communication; include residents that can inform officials with calls and photographs. (4)**
- **Increase understanding of connection – human sustainability is dependent on environmental sustainability (educate, buy in, market, municipalities). (3)**
- **Define green development through infrastructure, new buildings, improve and protect existing green infrastructure, improve existing buildings to be green. (2)**
- **Outreach to corporations (i.e., DAS and Industrial Park (Pioneer and Crowe); identify specific projects/opportunities they can “own.” (2)**
- **Use local knowledge to inform land development issues to avoid environmental problems; for example stagnant water on trail between Old Hershey Road and new Hershey Road at Hershey Meadows. (1)**
- **Preserve bog turtle habitat.**
- **Reintroduce lost species native to the creek such as brook trout.**
- **Connect pocketbook to natural resources by creating a message that ties economic impacts with the environment.**
- **Create citizen interest groups.**
- **Educate with flyers and bulletins.**
- **Develop a program for invasive species management (creeping vines, mile-a –minute).**
- **Add government to implement Best Management Practices and adopt municipal ordinances.**

Appendix D

Post-Conference Vision Team Meeting Notes

December 16, 2010 — Lawn Fire Company

Team went through priority action items established at the conference and provided other ideas on implementing action items.

1. Strengthen Community

Form Environmental Advisory Councils in all municipalities.

PEC runs PA's EAC Network, and can provide materials and assistance to municipalities interested in starting EACs. PEC will provide EAC Handbooks to Matt for distribution to municipalities. South Londonderry Township is example of successful EAC in the watershed and is willing to share story of success with others.

Develop residential education of impacts on stormwater runoff, yard treatments, "people pollution."

Conewago Initiative held partner meeting on November 23 to begin planning the development of a "non-ag" program in watershed. Additional meetings will be held in coming year. One idea that emerged was a "conservation planning for residents" workshop, whereby Conewago landowners would be matched up with Penn State landscape architect and engineering students to develop a conservation plan for their properties. Could also involve incentives to encourage adoption of practices. Initiative representatives should present at South Londonderry Township annual community meetings

Have a website dedicated to the watershed.

Through Initiative internship program, a Penn State student intern is in the process of developing a website, www.conewagoinitiative.net. Website will include the elements suggested by conference participants.

2. Preserve Rural Landscape and Agriculture

Educate residents about the good things farmers are doing as stewards.

Farm tours may be among the best tools to provide this community education. South Londonderry Township hosted a successful farm tour two years ago and included several farms in the watershed. Lions Clubs used to host Farm/City days, and should be contacted to see if they are interested in this.

Encourage municipalities to support well planned land uses including agriculture.

Review of and input on land use ordinances requires expertise. Probably the best approach would be to seek partnership with organizations that have existing expertise and are providing these services (Alliance for Chesapeake Bay, Natural Lands Trust, etc.). Both Conewago Township and South Londonderry Township are currently revising ordinances, so working with them right now would be timely.

Promote an agriculturally oriented economy (services to local restaurants, tourism, etc.).

Establish "Center for Excellence in Agriculture." Model exists in Cumberland County. Also consider "Transitional Communities," such as what is occurring in State College and Spring Creek Watershed. Perhaps breakfast meeting could be held to gauge support for these ideas.

3. Establish Sustainable Land Use Principles and Practices

Educate citizens on preservation opportunities.

See discussion of “non-ag” program above. Periodic workshops in the watershed will be available through the Initiative. For example, a Penn State Cooperative Extension pond owner workshop will be held on April 16, 2011 in Londonderry Township.

Tell people what they can do in ordinances. Instill watershed protection strategies with municipal planning.

See discussion of land use programs above.

4. Enhance Recreational Opportunities

Market recreation goal to community development plans.

Action item relates to the need to include recreation in municipal comprehensive planning. See discussion of land use programs above.

Get community groups such as scouts involved.

The watershed group has worked with scout groups on restoration projects. Better marketing needed. Communications plan should be developed and implemented for the Initiative. Other groups to engage include service groups like Rotary and the Lions Club, and Historical Societies (there was a lot of interest in the historical aspects of the watershed). Rural regions /communities can qualify as Historical Sites on the National Registry of Historical Places (check with PHMC). Word should also be spread to school districts, Gov. Dick Nature Center. Educational signage should be placed at Hershey Meadows site along trail.

Promote wildlife viewing, birding, bird counts, workshops, nature centers, fishing derby, canoeing.

Other groups to engage and partner with include the Rail-to-Trail Conservancy, Audubon, TU. Consider an annual watershed day, perhaps held in Mount Gretna, where seminars could be offered, birding trips hosted by Audubon and local bird clubs, TU could provide fly fishing lessons, bike trip of the watershed could be led, etc.

5. Restore and Protect Natural Resources

Provide more education training on the how and what. Use house meetings where neighbors invite neighbors; sponsor a property/landowner walking tour; bring in expertise.

All good ideas that should be pursued as part of “non-ag” program (see discussion above).

Stormwater should be specifically viewed as a natural resource to manage as a benefit and not a harm.

Along with public education through “non-ag” program, public areas should be considered for BMP demonstration areas, such as municipal buildings and schools. Conewago Elementary School currently undergoing construction for an expansion, possible demonstration site for BMPs.

Residential and commercial green development.

See above discussion of green development demonstration sites.

Appendix E

Vision Team Members

Mark Chegwidan	Lebanon County Conservation District
Dave Coble	Conewago Township Planning Commission Dauphin County Conservation District Board Farmer and resident
Larry Coble	Tri-County Conewago Creek Association
Bryce Davis	Owner, The Plant Place and Davis Organics Resident
Becky Eisenbise	Farmer and resident
Jeff Eisenbise	Farmer and resident
John Hertzler	Tri-County Conewago Creek Association Retired farmer and landowner
Sid Hostetter	South Londonderry Township EAC Mt. Gretna Bird Club Resident
Mike Hubler	Dauphin County Conservation District
Lance Koons	Owner, Rail-to-Trail Bike Shop
Ron Kopp	Londonderry Township Supervisor Dauphin County Conservation District Board Farmer and resident
Ron Laughlin	Tri-County Conewago Creek Association Resident
Steve Letavic	Township Manager, Londonderry Township Resident
Merritt Neale	Owner, Aberdeen Mills Resident
Katcha Neale	Owner, Aberdeen Mills Resident

Lynn Orley	Business owner Farmer and resident
Phil Rothermel	South Londonderry Township Supervisor Resident
Carl Rohr	PA Department of Environmental Protection
Matt Royer	Penn State Cooperative Extension Tri-County Conewago Creek Association Resident
Kristen Saacke Blunk	Penn State Cooperative Extension
Greg Shaffer	Resident
Ben Simmons	Tri-County Conewago Creek Association Resident
Sondra Simmons	Resident
Facilitator Janie French	Pennsylvania Environmental Council

A VISION FOR THE CONEWAGO CREEK WATERSHED

