**Conewago Project Advisory Team Meeting**

**March 15, 2011, 9:45 am to 12:15 pm
DEP Southcentral Regional Office**

**MINUTES**

**Attending:**

Matt Royer, PSU
Jim Baird, AFT
Tom Murray, Etown College
Aileen Molloy, Tetra Tech (by Adobe Connect)
Trudy Johnston, Material Matters
Carl Rohr, DEP
Mike Hubler, DCCD
Mike Langland, USGS
Lamonte Garber, CBF
Rugh Henderson, S. Lond. Twp.
Matt Kofroth, LancCCD
Jeremy Zidek, ZedX
Mark Dubin, CBP & U MD
Mike Snyder, NRCS
Jennifer Fetter, PSU

1. **Project Coordinator Update**

Matt Royer gave brief update. Now that Conewago Vision is complete, Matt is in the process of meeting with all of the municipalities in the watershed to share the vision and increase awareness of the Initiative. Jennifer is also attending to promote Conewago Stream Teams.

Landowner survey has been mailed and returns are coming in. Currently about 20-25% return rate. Expect surveys to be returned from now through May. Preliminary results will be shared by June or July.

Matt has convened a “Non-Ag Team” to begin shaping a program to work with non-farmer landowners in the watershed. Two meetings have been held to date. One concept to pursue is a cost share program for homeowners to develop conservation plans and install stormwater BMPs (like rain gardens). Jim Baird shared that a similar program has been implemented in Maryland (Montgomery County). There is also a “Watershed Leadership Initiative” that is modeled on the Master Gardener program. Alliance for Chesapeake Bay also has information on conservation landscaping.

1. **Work Team Updates**

**BMP Team Report.** BMP Team met in February to discuss buffers as priority practice. Dauphin County Conservation District offers enhanced cost share policy if buffers are installed. Program is modeled on CBF’s “buffer bonus” policy. Discussion of the need for additional maintenance cost share was also discussed. Buffer bonus plus maintenance program could be a way to provide more incentives to increase buffer establishment in watershed.

**Presentation via Adobe Connect: Aileen Malloy, Tetra Tech.** Aileen presented on the work Tetra Tech is doing for the Initiative—an assessment of developed lands in the watershed for stormwater load sources and potential stormwater BMP projects. First tier of assessment is a desktop survey using existing GIS tools. Second tier ranks properties based on several environmental and community factors. This work is currently underway. Aileen working with Matt to reach out to municipalities to help identify stormwater management problem areas and areas vulnerable to development. Third tier will involve site visit to several sites (stormwater BMPs and urban stream restoration) to ground truth and assess. More detailed project design might be completed for high priority sites to finish project. STPL model is bing used to model nutrient load reductions. STPL Model

**Monitoring Team.** Team has developed Monitoring Plan, which was summarized for PAT. Calls for water quality monitoring every two months; macroinvertebrates every three years (next sampling: 2012). Good for long term monitoring, but not short term monitoring. Other challenges include fiscal capacity. Monitoring team currently assessing costs and funding to cover costs. USGS should have first gage installed this spring.

**Environmental Markets Team.** Team met with All Todd, USDA Office of Environmental Markets, in February. Discussed ways OEM could be involved in Conewago. One would be to identify Conewago farmers willing to “test drive” NTT nutrient trading tool. USDA also very interested in concept of certainty and communicating to farmers when they are at compliance with TMDL and when they can participate in trading. Further discussions will be held with this team to see of the PEACCE program could help provide this type of third party certification.

1. **Partner Updates**

Carl Rohr (DEP). Working with grantees to move grants forward, developing priorities for this year (1) plant Hershey Meadows buffer; (2) continue to meet needs of CCD gratns; (3) continue to work with TCCCA and USFWS on stream restoration work.

Mike Hubler (DCCD). Stream restoration work on Lynch Run with County Growing Greener funds. A lot of practices being installed by Conewago farm community since 2009:
New or updated Conservation Plans on 30 tracts
1023 new acres of no till
310 new acres of cover crops
8 acres of waterways
21,000 feet of terraces
139 contracts with farm partners

Mike Langland (USGS). First high flow sample was collected last week.

Tom Murray (Etown College). Hershey Meadows yielding high bird counts this migratory season. Last weekend, 1500 snow geese, 2 bald eagles, 60 other species counted.

Rugh Henderson (S. Londonderry Twp). EAC is discussing possible Natural Areas tour.

Lamonte Garber (CBF). Meeting with a lot of landowners in Lancaster County. Just finished public meetings on Clean Water/Healthy Cows.

Matt Kofroth (Lancaster CCD): District is providing $750 vouchers to farmers for conservation planning and/or nutrient management planning to work with private sector TSP. Local biologist looking to do a weevil experiment as a mile a minute biological control.

Mark Dubin (CBP/U Maryland). Phase II TMDL process is underway. Discussions with states are ongoing. Will have a better handle on the direction of Phase II by June. EPA guidance coming out. ChesapeakeStat is being developed as a user friendly information sharing platform. Would like to include web pages on the Showcase Watersheds. Mark will work with Matt to set up meeting with ag partners (Districts) to discuss further what this would entail.

Jim Baird (AFT). BMP Challenge—has funding to work with 18 producers. Looking to have some in the watershed if possible. Working with Del Voight, Lebanon County Extension. Doing some manure incorporation—may include some producers in watershed.

Jeremy Zidek (ZedX). Working on incorporating AGWLF into Conewago tool.

Mike Snyder (NRCS). 10 applications, 5 obligated, for a little over $100,000.

Jennifer Fetter (Penn State Extension). A handful of groups interested in participating in Hershey Meadows buffer planting. Youth curriculum has been developed for buffer maintenance.