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**The Conewago Creek Initiative** is a locally-led, collaborative partnership effort in the Conewago Creek watershed in Dauphin, Lancaster, and Lebanon Counties. We seek to work with local residents and stakeholders to increase awareness and adoption of land management practices that will improve water quality of local streams and ensure healthy farms and communities, implementing the vision of the Conewago Creek Watershed Community: *a restored Conewago as a centerpiece of pride and a treasured asset in a rural landscape.*

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# Conewago Currents

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## The Coordinator's Report

Trees, flowers, grass and other plants are growing again! Anyone else finding it hard to be inside during these beautiful spring days?

Earth Day is right around the corner on April 22, and I hope everyone has a chance to participate in one of the many events that occur in celebration of the nature around us. In particular I hope you will join the Tri-County Conewago Creek Association for their 7th Annual Earth Day Celebration on May 2nd. This year's event will be better than ever with fun activities, food, and a wild animal presentation by Zoo America! See the article below for all the details.

I hope you might also get the chance to plant a tree this spring. If not on your own property, than consider joining the Greening the Lower Susquehanna (GLS) Volunteer

Corp on May 9th to plant 300 trees at the Hershey Meadows restoration project. This will be a great time to see how past plantings are doing and to add to the success of this project. See page 2 for more details on how to RSVP.

If you are interested in planting trees on your own property and converting some of your turf lawn to forest, contact me. Thanks to some enthusiastic tree seedling potting by volunteers from the Hershey Company, trees will be available for free to interested landowners in the coming months. Businesses and municipalities are also eligible for these free trees.

Alternatively, if you have seedlings popping up on your property in inappropriate places, like garden beds, let me know

and the GLS Volunteer Corp might be able to "rescue" the trees by finding new and better homes for the seedlings.

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## May 2nd will be the 7th Annual Conewago Earth Day Celebration

The Tri-County Conewago Creek Association (TCCCA) will sponsor the seventh annual Conewago Creek Earth Day Celebration on the banks of the creek at Aberdeen Mills, a historic mill and farmstead at 2405 Mill Rd., Elizabethtown, Pa 17022, on Saturday, May 2nd from 12 pm to 4 pm. This family oriented event is free and open to the public. There will be many fun and informative activities throughout the afternoon and a food vendor will be on site to offer food items for sale. A



portion of the proceeds will benefit the TCCCA. Attendees can go home with free wildflower seeds or tree seedlings. The event will take place rain or shine.

There will be many activities throughout the day. A wild flower and tree identification

walk will kick-off the celebration at noon. Tours of the old mill will also be offered.

Zoo America will be giving a live animal presentation at 1 pm. A Great-horned owl, a screech owl, a black snake, a

*(continued on page 2)*

## Earth Day Celebration



*(Continued from page 1)*

box turtle, a skunk, and a red-tailed hawk will all be featured during the hour long show. There will be plenty of space so feel free to bring along a lawn chair if you prefer to sit during the show.

A stream study and a program on freshwater mussels will be held between 2 and 3 pm.

The Lancaster County Conservation District will give an electro-fishing

demonstration. An electrical current is run through the water, which temporarily stuns the fish. The fish are collected in nets and identified in order to assess water quality. All fish are effected by the electricity so this method shows all of the uncatchable fish that elude anglers. The last time LCCD surveyed this section of stream it produced some very large bass! Partnering with TCCCA to offer the day's events and educational displays are Penn State Extension, Lancaster County Conservation District, and other partners of the Conewago Creek Initiative.

## Boy Scout Troop Live Stakes Gallagher Run



On Saturday, March 28, Boy Scout Troop 51 partnered with the Tri-County Conewago Creek Association to live stake Gallagher Run. Anthony Barb, one of the scouts planned the event as part of his effort to

become an Eagle Scout.

The day of the planting turned out to be a cold and snowy one but the scouts worked hard to complete the project. Anthony led his hardy troop of scouts to plant hundreds of willow and dogwood live stakes with about an inch of snow on the

ground. Now we let nature do the rest.

Gallagher Run is a small tributary of the Conewago Creek that runs parallel to Route 743 and enters the main stem at the Hershey Meadows project. Half of this section of creek was live staked very successfully last spring by a group of Penn State students. Anthony and his troop were able to stake areas that were not done previously to round out the restoration project. For a small stream, Gallagher Run has steep and eroding banks that will benefit greatly from the root structure these planted live stakes will provide as they grow into mature trees.

A riparian buffer has also been planted along Gallagher Run in recent years.

## Come Plant Trees at Hershey Meadows

Are you inspired to volunteer and help restore the Conewago Creek? On Saturday, May 9 (9am - 11am) a tree planting will be held at the Hershey Meadows project. This restored wetland site has been a model location for watershed restoration efforts and we have had a number of volunteer plantings here in the past. The tree planting on May 9 will add to the success that the project has already had.

Join us to plant 250-300 trees in the Hershey Meadow. If you have joined us in the

past, this is a great time to see what our plantings look like a few years later. For more details about this event and to register, please email Jennifer Fetter at [jrf21@psu.edu](mailto:jrf21@psu.edu) or call Kristen Kyler at 717-948-6609.



## Attend a F.I.S.H. Workshop to Learn about the Success of Stream Projects

Would you like to learn how to spot the evidence of good things happening in nature? Residents of Lancaster and surrounding counties are invited to attend a workshop on how to monitor the success of streamside plantings and projects. The workshop will be held on May 11 from 5 PM to 7 PM at the Roger Rohrer Farm, 505A Paradise Lane, Paradise, Pa 17579. This workshop is perfect for anyone with an interest in nature including: landowners, environmental groups, and anyone interested in environmental improvement. The workshop will also



offer tips for success to landowners who have recently planted new trees and shrubs along a stream.

The workshop is free to attend but registration is required. Interested individuals can either register at <http://extension.psu.edu/water/events> or call Kristen Kyler at 717-948-6609. The training will be held outside so please dress for the weather and possible stream wading. To make sure all information is covered before the sun sets, the session will start promptly at 5 pm so please arrive a few minutes early.

The workshop, which is being led by Penn State Extension, will focus on a new citizen science opportunity called FISH: First Investigation of Stream Health. FISH helps landowners to connect with and learn from stream

improvement projects. The workshop will cover how to monitor plant growth, water clarity, and wildlife. By monitoring how the environment changes over time, landowners will learn how important their actions are locally and regionally. FISH is designed to be very easy to use and requires very little time to complete. The process is easy, hands-on, and fun for kids to help with. You can learn more about FISH by visiting: <http://extension.psu.edu/natural-resources/water/watershed-education/watershed-evaluation/fish>

The FISH protocol was developed by the Conewago Creek Initiative and the Greening the Lower Susquehanna project and funded by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

## Londonderry Township to Host Environmental Workshops

A Conewago Initiative partner, Londonderry Township, will be hosting two workshops this summer on simple practices a homeowner can do to be more environmentally friendly.

**Monarch Waystation  
Saturday, May 30  
10:00 am @ Sunset Park.**



Join us for a day devoted to protecting Monarch Butterflies. You will spend a few minutes learning about protecting Monarch Butterflies and then participate in planting a Monarch Waystation in your local park. Monarch Waystations provide all the resources Monarch

Butterflies need to survive, reproduce, and complete their migratory journey. The beautiful flowering plants are great for other wildlife too.

You will be able to take home some waystation plants of your own. No fee is required, but pre-registration is recommended. To pre-register or for more information, please contact Allison Funk, MS4 Environmental Specialist at (717) 944-1803 or email [afunk@londonderry.org](mailto:afunk@londonderry.org).

**Backyard Composting  
Saturday, June 27  
10:00 am - 11:00 am  
Londonderry Township  
Building**

Londonderry Township is partnering with Penn State Master

Gardeners of Dauphin County to hold a workshop on home composting. Attendees will learn how to recycle organic waste from their kitchens and gardens instead of putting it in the trash. Compost is a great addition to gardens and lawns, is free to make, and helps reduce the amount of trash heading to landfills.



There is no fee for the workshop, but pre-registration is recommended. To pre-register or for more information, please contact Allison Funk, MS4 Environmental Specialist at (717) 944-1803 or email [afunk@londonderry.org](mailto:afunk@londonderry.org).

## Conewago Photo Gallery



*This edition's Photo Gallery features photos of volunteers live staking the Conewago and Quittapahilla Creeks and potting trees for the Greening the Lower Susquehanna Native Tree Nursery.*

## Manada Conservancy Holds 15th Annual Plant Sale

The Manada Conservancy is holding their 15th Annual Native Plant Sale on Saturday May 2nd from 10am-4pm. Browse from a beautiful array of native trees, shrubs, and perennials provided by six regional native plant vendors. This year the plant sale will also feature local art vendors, live music, kids crafts, and food!

This year's sale is in a new easy to find location! Schaffner Park, located at the intersection of Poplar

Ave. & Water Str. In Hummelstown. Over 14 different businesses and organizations will be represented at the event. Attendees will even have a chance to talk with Manada's Gardening with Nature Consultant.

Manada Conservancy is a local, non-profit land trust dedicated to the preservation of the natural, historic, agricultural, and scenic resources of Dauphin County and to the promotion of environmental education. Their

Annual Native Plant sale is a great way to learn about land and water conservation!



## Practice Spotlight: Lawn Tips

While native plants are best, lawns are an important part of a homeowner's property, and can play an important role in protecting our water sources. Not only aesthetically pleasing, lawns can help prevent erosion and decrease runoff if a dense cover of turf grass is maintained.

To help protect your local streams, we have compiled a few suggestions for best lawn practice:

- 1) Keep clippings and mulched leaves on your lawn and out of storm drains
- 2) Sweep off any fertilizer that is on a paved surface
- 3) Fertilize at least 15 to 20 feet away from streams

Use a soil test to determine if fertilizer is needed. Based on the results of the soil test, choose an effective fertilizing plan that is specific to your property.

You can employ one of three strategies:

- Choose not to fertilize
- Reduce rate and monitor
- Apply less than a pound of nitrogen per 1000 square feet per each individual application.

Fertilizer shouldn't be over applied, but the goal is to have healthy, thick grass with no bare dirt exposed. Covered soil helps keep our streams clean and healthy.

## Conewago Partner Spotlight: Londonderry Township

Over the past several years Londonderry Township has taken a strong interest in protecting local water quality and become an important partner in the Conewago Creek Initiative. They have been focusing time and resources on reducing stormwater and planting riparian buffers. They even created an environmental department with several employees.

Their new environmental staff attends Conewago Initiative meetings and provides valuable input on how projects can be accomplished. They are very engaged in looking for

new projects and opportunities to improve streams and wildlife habitat.

Londonderry Township has been offering a variety of workshops and opportunities for residents to learn about rain barrels, native plants, and stormwater in general. Check out page 3 to learn about their upcoming events.

They are also providing space, water, and other resources for the Greening the Lower Susquehanna Native Tree Nursery this summer and are

advocates for providing free trees to landowners. They have even planted a multi-property riparian buffer along the Swatara Creek and a rain garden at the Township building.



Community working together for a restored Conewago.

## CONEWAGO CREEK INITIATIVE

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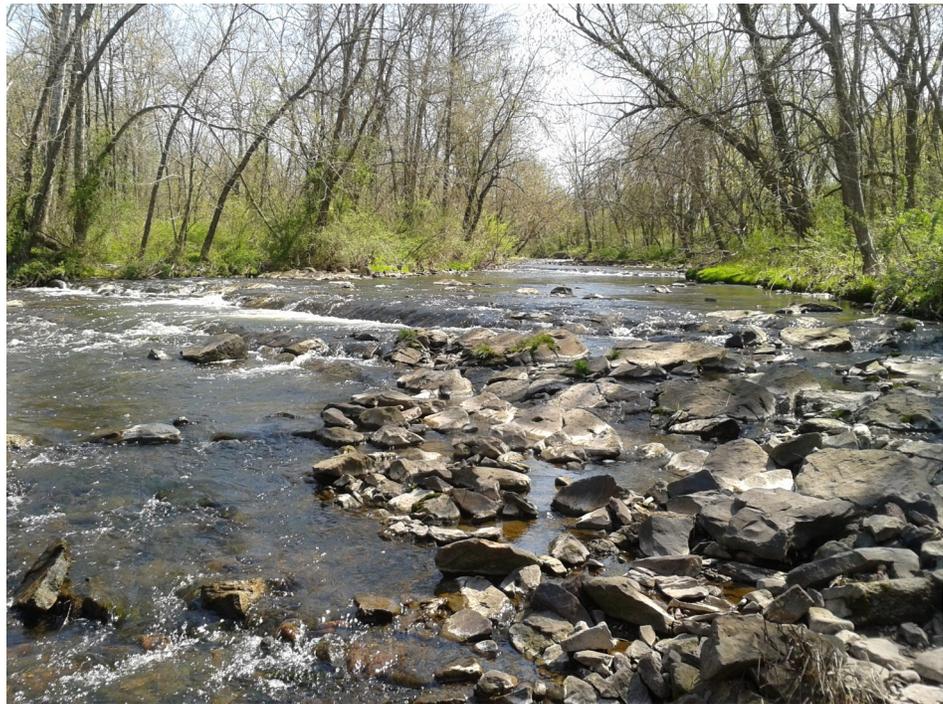
*Dauphin County Conservation District • Lancaster County Conservation District • Lebanon County Conservation District • Tri-County Conewago Creek Association • South Londonderry Township • Elizabethtown College • Penn State University • PA Department of Environmental Protection • PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources • PA Fish and Boat Commission • PA Department of Agriculture • USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service • USDA Agriculture Research Service • U.S. Geological Survey • U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service • U.S. Environmental Protection Agency • Chesapeake Bay Foundation • ZedX, Inc. • American Farmland Trust • Capital Area RC&D • LandStudies, Inc. • Wild Resources, Inc. • Tetra Tech, Inc. • Aquatic Resources Restoration Co. • RGS Associates, Inc.*

**The Conewago Creek Initiative is a project of Penn State Cooperative Extension made possible through funding by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the Foundation for Pennsylvania Watersheds**



**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.**



## Calendar of Events

**Creekside Water Fest**  
April 26, 3:00 PM  
Creekside Dr, Lebanon

**EAWA Rain Barrel Workshop**  
May 2, 9-11 AM  
95 S Wilson Ave, E-Town  
RSVP required.  
<http://www.etown-water.com/>

**Conewago Earth Day Celebration**  
May 2, 12-4 PM  
2405 Mill Rd, Elizabethtown

**Manada Native Plant Sale**  
May 2, 10 AM- 4 PM  
Schaffner Park, Hummelstown

**TCCCA Meeting**  
April 29, 7:00 PM  
Conewago Township Building  
All are welcome!

**Tree Planting**  
May 9, 9AM  
Hershey Meadows  
RSVP to jrf21@psu.edu

**FISH Buffer Monitoring Workshop**  
May 11, 5-7PM  
505A Paradise Ln, Paradise

