



Visit us on the web at
conewagoinitiative.net

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

Volume 4, Issue 1

Winter 2014

The Coordinator's Report

As the watershed lies frozen in a blanket of snow, it is a good time to reflect. And there is much success to reflect upon!

At the end of November, we wrapped up work on the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant awarded to Penn State to fund the Conewago Initiative. Since that time, we've seen more farmers, landowners and residents putting conservation practices on the ground than ever before. And we've seen signs of better water quality through our fish and bug sampling.

In December, our partner Penn State Public Media released a video that documents the story of the Conewago. It has been getting rave reviews! Visit our website at www.conewagoinitiative.net to

view the video. Pass the link along to your neighbors and friends.

Winter is also a good time to think forward. As you read below, the work of the Initiative continues, and we have many events planned for the next few months. A Master Well Owner's Network training is scheduled for March 22 at the Londonderry Township Building.

On February 25, we will host our third annual Conewago Winter Farmers Meeting at Hoss's in Etown. A series of manure management planning workshops are offered by the conservation districts. On March 22, join us for a live staking workshop

and planting at the Hanson farm in Upper Lawn. Hopefully the weather will have turned and really have us "thinking spring!" Until then, stay warm and join us for our winter events!

Matt Royer
Penn State Ag and Env't Center
(814)-863-8756
mroyer@psu.edu



The Conewago Story: For the Next Watershed

The following is a copy of an article about the Conewago Creek Initiative written for Penn State News.

University Park, PA -- A community based partnership in a small watershed in south-central Pennsylvania is beginning to yield exciting results for improved water quality and a model for Chesapeake Bay restoration.

Over the last several years, a partnership of over thirty organizations called the Conewago Creek Initiative has been working cooperatively to increase watershed engagement and work with farmers and landowners to adopt land management practices to improve water quality. The partnership is

facilitated by the Penn State Agriculture and Environment Center, and supported by a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. Further support is provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's designation of the Conewago as a "Showcase Watershed" and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection through the Section 319 nonpoint source pollution control program.

"Through the hard work of Conewago partners, farmers and other landowners, an incredible amount has been accomplished in the last five years," said Matt Royer, Director of the AEC and the project

coordinator for the Conewago Initiative. "Over a thousand residents participated in workshops and events. Nearly every farm now has a conservation plan. The rate of implementation of several priority conservation practices increased, some dramatically. And improved results in fish and aquatic insect sampling are early signals that the stream is improving."

"The Conewago Initiative is a model for watershed restoration everywhere," said Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection Secretary Chris Abruzzo. "It is a great example

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The Conewago Story Continued

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of how state and federal resources can be leveraged by hard working local partners, volunteers and citizens to increase conservation on the ground and achieve success toward reaching clean water goals.”

Penn State Public Media recently released *A Conewago Story*, a video

documenting the work of the Initiative and the Conewago’s farmers and other residents. “The video should be mandatory viewing for anyone involved in conservation,” said Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture Deputy Secretary Jay Howes. “It shows what local partnerships, farmers and citizens can do together to improve water quality.”

View [A Conewago Story](http://www.conewagoinitiative.net) on our website at www.conewagoinitiative.net.



Farmers Are Invited



The Conewago Creek Initiative will again host a Winter Farmers Meeting on Tuesday **February 25**. Like in the past, it will be held at Hoss’s Steak and Sea House in Elizabethtown from **9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.**

All Conewago watershed farmers are encouraged to attend. Attendees will learn the results of the Conewago Initiative including a viewing of a video that features several watershed farmers and residents. Presentations on no-till, cover crops, feed

management and updates on programs and regulations will all be included.

Initiative partners will be on hand to discuss programs available for farmers to install conservation practices on their farms. This will also be a great opportunity for farmers to hear tips and success stories about conservation practices and programs from their fellow farmers.

The meeting is free and includes a tasty Hoss’s lunch. Space is limited so be sure to register early!

You can register or find out more information by calling the Initiative’s Project Assistant, Kristen Kyler, at 717-948-6609 or by emailing the Initiative at conewagocreekinitiative@gmail.com. The full agenda is available on our website.

Conewago farmers come join us for an educational, delicious, and fun event!

Winter Farmers Meeting
February 25, 2014
9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
Hoss’s Steak and Sea House
840 North Hanover Street

Don’t Forget to “Like” us on Facebook!

The Conewago Creek Initiative joined Facebook this past fall. Photos from events and around the watershed can be viewed on our page. Event details, news related to the Conewago Creek, Susquehanna River and the Chesapeake Bay will be shared, and Facebook provides an easy way for you to ask questions and be involved.



Farm Show

The Conewago Initiative had the privilege of being a part of the Pennsylvania Farm Show this year. The Chesapeake Bay Foundation collaborated with the Stroud Water Research Center to create an indoor stream, which the Initiative helped staff.

This flowing stream demonstrated how a single step taken by farmers can help control pollution run-off. The display included a streamside buffer of native plants and trees. Buffers not only help keep pollution out of streams, they also create habitats for wildlife and can keep the water

temperature cooler which is good for fish.

The Initiative had a great time interacting with visitors and pointing out the fish, 6 healthy Creek Chubs, that called this stream home for the week of Farm Show.

The indoor stream display was a great example of how incorporating practices such as streamside buffers, create a healthier watershed.

Additionally, our video, “A Conewago Creek Story”, was shared at a DEP

sponsored Ag BMP Showcase event. You can view it at www.youtube.com/watch?v=WYAQpRKpBFw.



Spring Volunteer Events Scheduled

*Live Staking Workshop and Volunteer Event

March 22, 2014
9:00 a.m. to noon
Hanson Farm
7081 Colebrook Road
Palmyra, PA 17078

Learn how to quickly and efficiently stabilize eroding stream banks on your property and help us improve the Little Conewago Creek at this workshop and volunteer restoration event. We will be demonstrating the process of Live Staking, cutting recent growth from trees that grow readily along wet stream banks, like willow and dogwood, and then inserting them directly into the eroding sections of stream bank. You will then get a hands-on opportunity to practice live staking while helping us continue an ongoing restoration project.

This event will be outdoors

and walking on some rough terrain will be necessary. Bring along a pair of tall waterproof boots, waders, gloves and small hand pruners if you have them. We will have some to loan as well.

*Flory Park Live Staking Volunteer Event

March 29, 2014
9:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
Flory Park
Greenland Drive
Lancaster, PA 17601

Come help us restore the bank of Mill Creek with this live staking event. This is a great follow up to the workshop at the Hanson Farm! Please join us for this restoration project even if you didn't attend the workshop. Be sure to wear sneakers or boots and bring along a pair of gloves, a shovel, and small hand pruners if you have them. We will have some to share as well. Hope to see you there!

***Because of the workshop format and stream conditions, please leave young children at home for these two events. We will have several kid friendly events later in the spring.**



Look for additional volunteer opportunities on our website in future weeks.

Become a Master Well Owner Network Volunteer

MWON Training Program

February 22, 2014
9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
Londonderry Township Building
783 South Geyers Church Road
Middletown, PA 17057

Pennsylvania is home to over one million private water wells and springs but it is one of the few states that does not provide statewide regulations to protect these rural drinking water supplies. As a result, homeowners using a private well or spring must understand proper water supply management practices to ensure safe drinking water for their family.

This is why the Master Well Owner Network (MWON) was created in 2004. MWON is a group of trained volunteers who are dedicated to promoting the proper construction, testing, and maintenance of private water wells, springs and cisterns.

Volunteers need to submit an application and be accepted into the program. The February 22 training workshop will be limited to the first 30

accepted applicants. **The registration deadline is Friday, February 14, 2014.** To be eligible for this program, volunteers must NOT have any financial interest in private water supplies (i.e. work for water well drillers, water testing labs, water treatment companies, etc.) and they must be willing to share what they learn with their neighbors, friends, and co-workers.

Volunteers who successfully complete the training course and pass a short exam will receive a free copy of the 80 page publication - *A Guide to Private Water Systems in Pennsylvania*, a coupon good for a 10% discount on water testing through the Penn State water testing lab, and access to various MWON educational materials.

To learn more about the program and to complete an application, visit the following website:

<http://extension.psu.edu/natural-resources/water/mwon/volunteer>

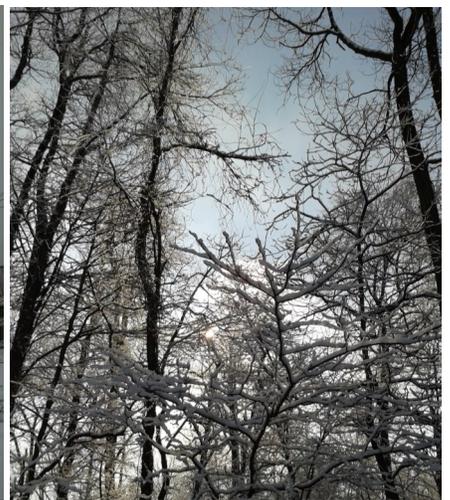
or contact Bryan Swistock at 814-863-0194 or brs@psu.edu.

"I believe that every home buyer that is purchasing a house with a water well should be encouraged to take this class. Excellent, knowledgeable trainers with a lot of great information! Thank you!"

-MWON Volunteer



Conewago Photo Gallery



This edition's Photo Gallery features winter scenes from the Conewago watershed. It sure has been a snowy winter!

Manure Management Workshops Offered

Do you raise horses or livestock? Do you land apply manure? Current regulations require that any property producing or spreading manure must have a completed manure management plan. To help, Dauphin, Lebanon, and Lancaster County Conservation Districts will be holding Manure Management Workshops in February and March.

Bring farm maps, recent soil and manure test results, manure storage facility size, animal numbers, and crop rotation details to the workshop. Free soil tests may be available when you register.

Dauphin County

February 25 and 27 from 6-9 pm (must attend both sessions) at the Dauphin County Agriculture and Natural Resources Center, 1451 Peters Mountain Rd, Dauphin. Register by February 24 by calling 717-921-8100.

Lancaster County

February 13– Farm and Home Center, 1383 Arcadia Rd, Lancaster

March 4– Yoder’s Restaurant, 14 S. Tower Rd, New Holland

March 6– Hoffman Building, Solanco Fairgrounds, 172 S Lime St, Quarryville

Each workshop will be from 9 a.m.—2 p.m. and include a free lunch. Register by calling 717-299-5361 ext. 5 at least 3 days before.

Lebanon County

March 18 and March 25 from 9 a.m.– 3 p.m. at the Lebanon Valley Agriculture Center, 2120 Cornwall Rd, Lebanon. A free lunch will be provided. Register by March 11 at 717-272-3908.



Practice Spotlights

In Your Neighborhood:

There are many projects in our watershed that are helping restore the Conewago Creek. We enjoy telling you about these projects but who better qualified to share than those who are experiencing them first hand!

If you put in a rain garden we want to encourage you to talk to your neighbors about it. If you are a farmer who is having success with no-till

then tell other farmers about what worked for you. We are a community and by sharing what is working well, we can continue to grow and succeed together!



This Valentines Day:

Did you know that American’s go through more cut flowers every year than Big Macs? It’s true according to

Amy Stewart in her book “Flower Confidential.”. Today about 93% of roses sold here are grown overseas. The shipping of flowers from overseas adds to greenhouse gas pollution and takes away from local economies.

This year as

February 14th rolls around you can show some love to the environment by making your purchases from local flower growers, farmers, and entrepreneurs.



Conewago Partner Spotlight:

The Conewago Creek Initiative would not exist without the support from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. A large Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund grant was awarded to Penn State in 2009 to kickstart the formation of the Initiative partnership and to provide funding for practices, workshops, meetings, and monitoring.

The Conewago Initiative has been a huge success resulting in a

large number of projects being installed on farms and residential lands. The lessons learned from these first few years are being spread to other watersheds in the state and work will continue here in the Conewago.

Thank you to NFWF for funding the Initiative and for supporting additional partnerships that have grown from this starting point.



NFWF

CONEWAGO CREEK INITIATIVE

Kristen Kyler
Local Project Coordinator
Penn State Harrisburg
307 Church Hall
777 West Harrisburg Pike
Middletown PA 17057
Phone: 717-948-6609
Email: klk343@psu.edu

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. Geologic 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

Master Well Owners Network Training
Londonderry Township Building
783 S Geyers Church Rd
February 22 9:00 am– 3:30 pm
<http://extension.psu.edu/natural-resources/water/mwon/about>

Conewago Winter Farmer's Meeting
February 25 9:30 am-1:30 pm
Hoss's Steak and Sea House
840 N Hanover St,
Elizabethtown, PA 17022

Manure Management Workshops
February 13, 25 & 27, March 4,6,18,25 at various times and locations. See page 5.

Livestaking Workshop
March 22 9 am to noon
7081 Colebrook Road
Palmyra, PA 17078

Livestaking Volunteer Event
March 29 9:30 a.m. to noon
Greenland Drive
Lancaster, PA 17601

Riparian Buffer Demonstration
April 26 10:00 am
109 North Hanover Street,
Hummelstown PA 17036

Rain Garden Workshop
May 17 9 am—12:30 pm
Londonderry Township Building
783 S Geyers Church Rd
Check our website for more details closer to event

Earth Day is April 22!