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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.*

Inside this issue:

Colebrook Planning	2
Live Staking	2
TCCCA Partnership	3
Creekside Water Fest	3
Photo Gallery	4
Gardening with Nature	5
Partners and Practices	5
Calendar	6

Conewago Currents

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Winter 2015

The Coordinator's Report

It's a new year and winter is upon us once again. And once again, it is time for the Conewago Winter Farmer's Meeting. All producers are invited to attend and learn from each other and presenters on topics ranging from feed management to soil health. Find the details for this event below and be sure to RSVP right away.

Winter is also the time to start preparing for the spring planting season. Live stake plantings do best just before bud break with late March being a perfect time to improve local stream banks. The article on page 2 discusses ways for you to learn more and to get involved.

Spring is also the time to hold workshops and festivals and this year is no different. Throughout the newsletter you will learn about different opportunities being offered throughout the Lower

Susquehanna Region pertaining to stream health and ways to improve water quality. I hope you will consider attending one or all of these events.

New opportunities are always developing and I encourage you to check the Conewago Creek Initiative website often to stay up to date. For an even faster news source, find the Initiative on Facebook.

Although many of us

are looking forward to warmer weather, I hope we are all still able to appreciate the beauty in freshly fallen snow.

Stay warm and enjoy this Winter Edition of Conewago Currents.

Kristen Kyler

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2015 Conewago Winter Farmer's Meeting Scheduled



The Conewago Creek Initiative will hold its annual Winter Farmers Meeting on Tuesday, **February 24**. It will be held at Hoss's Steak and Sea House, 840 North Hanover St Elizabethtown, from **9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.**

All Conewago

watershed farmers are encouraged to attend. This year's agenda will include presentations on the connection between clean water and livestock, soil health and more. Come share your experiences and learn from your neighbors while enjoying a free lunch!

Attendees will have the chance to win a \$50 gift card to Brandt's Farm Supply in Elizabethtown!

The meeting is free and includes a tasty Hoss's

lunch. Space is limited so be sure to register ASAP!

You can register or find out more information by calling the Initiative's Project Coordinator, Kristen Kyler, at 717-948-6609 or by emailing the Initiative at conewagocreekinitiative@gmail.com. The full agenda is available at: www.conewagoinitiative.net

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

Green Infrastructure Planning in Colebrook

A team of Penn State researchers, as part of the larger Greening the Lower Susquehanna grant, have been working with communities in Dauphin, Lebanon, and Lancaster



Counties to conduct green infrastructure visioning sessions. The 3 meeting series helps the Penn State team learn what is valuable and desired in the communities. By the end of the process, the communities are presented a plan that they have helped design. The plans focus on tree plantings, native meadows, rain gardens, and

other practices that will not only beautify the communities but provide wildlife habitat and improve water quality.

The most recent community participating in this process is the Village of Colebrook. The first visioning meeting was very successful with the importance of the Conewago Creek being identified and appreciated. Two

additional meetings will be held in the coming weeks. One will focus on the benefits that plants can provide and the final meeting will allow the residents of Colebrook to brainstorm a green infrastructure plan for their community.

The final plan, prepared by Penn State Landscape Architecture students, will set Colebrook up for do-it-yourself projects as well as implementation grants. The Village of Colebrook, in its small square mileage, already contains several wildflower meadows, a rain garden, and forested areas.

This enthusiastic community is excited to be making decisions that can help the Conewago Creek.

Other communities that Penn State has worked with through this project are the Oakmont Neighborhood in Dauphin County, the Creekside Community in Lebanon County, and the Grandview Chase and Village Grand communities of Lancaster County. See the article on page 3 for more information on the Creekside Community.

Live Staking: Webinars, Harvests, and Plantings

Winter is still very much upon us right now, but live staking season is right around the corner. To learn more about live staking, a webinar is available on the Penn State Extension website:

<http://extension.psu.edu/natural-resources/water/watershed-education/watershed-publications/live-staking>.

This webinar was presented by Kristen Kyler, Conewago Initiative Project Coordinator, and Jenn Fetter, Penn State Extension Educator. It provides step by step instructions on how live staking can be done on a stream in your own back yard. It is an easy and inexpensive method for improving eroding stream banks.

To get the live staking season started in the Conewago Creek watershed, a live stake

harvest will be held during the day on Friday, March 27. If you are interested in volunteering and helping to cut live stakes for use in local projects, contact Kristen at 717-948-6609 to find out additional details.

The first live stake planting of the season is scheduled for Saturday, March 28th from 9 AM-12 PM in the neighboring Quittapahilla watershed. The planting will be held at the Quittie Wetland Education Center in Lebanon where a riparian buffer was planted in the fall. This live staking project will help fill in the gaps where trees couldn't be planted last year to improve the banks of the stream and the functioning of the wetland system. To register for this fun volunteer opportunity contact Kate Austin at kaustin@cbf.org.

Additional volunteer opportunities for the spring, live stake plantings and other wise, will be posted at www.conewagoinitiative.net as they are scheduled.



TCCCA's Partnership with Moo-Duck Brewery a Success

As reported in the fall edition, Moo Duck Brewery in Elizabethtown chose to support TCCCA through the sales of their Hoppy Toad IPA. For the 3 months of November, December, and January, a percentage of sales was donated to the Tri-County Conewago Creek Initiative. The total has been announced as \$250! This is a fantastic donation that is very appreciated by the watershed group.

These funds will help cover the cost of trees for riparian buffer plantings in the watershed and future outreach events. This partnership was also very

beneficial in spreading the word about the organization, the importance of clean water, and the Conewago Creek. Signs were posted throughout the establishment and coasters were distributed to customers.

TCCCA was very happy to partner with this new business and looks forward to working with them again in the future.

It's a myth that the history of beer's popularity originated from drinking beer as a substitute for unsafe water.

Beer needs clean water too!

For a Limited Time, Moo-Duck's Hoppy Toad IPA Supports TCCCA!



Creekside Community Water Fest being Planned



the stream that is the centerpiece of the plan, will also surely benefit.

To celebrate the beautiful addition to the community, a Water Fest will be held on April 26. The event will feature multiple stations where visitors can learn more about the different sections of the planting and the

The free event will start at 3:00 PM and run until 5:00 PM with parking available at the clubhouse off Creekside Drive, Lebanon. Members of the Village at Creekside as well as all other local residents are invited to attend. This planting is serving as a demonstration site for how native plantings and riparian buffers can be incorporated into communities, providing a variety of benefits. You are invited to drop by and check out this fun celebration of water and green infrastructure!

The Village at Creekside in Lebanon County participated in the Green Infrastructure visioning process with the Penn State team as described in the article on Page 2. By going through the visioning process, the participating community members decided that a grass meadow riparian buffer supplemented with trees and wildflowers would create a zone for wildlife that could be enjoyed by all of the residents. A walking path will provide access to the creek and provide an opportunity for users to connect with the planting. Snitz Creek,

wildlife that will benefit. Pollinators, birds of prey, and macroinvertebrates are just a sample of the wildlife that will be featured at the stations. The benefits of native wildflowers and trees will be compared to the problems that invasive plants can cause.



Conewago Photo Gallery



This edition's Photo Gallery features winter scenes from the Conewago Creek watershed and the ice covered Susquehanna River.

“Gardening with Nature” Series Hosted by Master Gardeners

The Penn State Master Gardeners of Cumberland County are hosting their annual workshop series titled “Gardening with Nature.” These workshops include programs on plant communities, bird-friendly gardening, rain garden plantings, garden-worthy Pennsylvania native plants, invasive plants, backyard meadows, and garden design basics.

The first workshop will be instructed by Kristen Kyler of Penn State’s Lower Susquehanna Initiative. She will present “Green Your Blues” on Tuesday, March 10, 2015, from 7:00 to 8:30 PM, in the lower level

community room at the Cleve J. Fredricksen Library, 100 N. 19th Street, Camp Hill. Kristen will review the “Homeowner’s Guide to Storm Water” and share ideas for incorporating rain gardens, rain barrels, native meadows, and tree plantings into your landscape. By using the right plants in the right places, you can create gardens that can help soak up extra rainwater – water that might otherwise carry harmful pollutants into our local waterways.

Everyone interested in healthy gardening and a cleaner environment is welcome and encouraged to attend this program.

The fee for this workshop is only \$5.00. Space is limited, so pre-registration is requested by March 3, 2015. To register for this workshop, please call the Penn State Extension office in Cumberland County at 717-240-6500, or toll-free at 1-888-697-0371 ext. 6500. You can also find us online at <http://extension.psu.edu/cumberland>, on Facebook at CumberlandExtension or CumberlandPerryMG, or e-mail us at CumberlandExt@psu.edu.

Practice Spotlight: BMP Explanation to New Homeowner

You worked hard to install a rain garden, disconnect your downspouts, plant a riparian buffer, garden with native wildflowers or install other watershed friendly practices on your property. Don’t let that effort go to waste when you



decide to sell your home. Make sure the new owners recognize and understand the

practice so that they can continue the good work that you started.

Many people are unaware of the need for these types of practices and would unknowingly replace them with more traditional landscaping. Selling property is a great time to pass on knowledge. Informing your realtor of the practices is also a good tip since they can be on the lookout for practices in other locations as well.

Providing maintenance instructions by writing out a short



checklist is also a good idea so that the new owner learns how to take care of these precious investments.

Conewago Partner Spotlight: Elizabethtown Area Water Authority

The Elizabethtown Area Water Authority (EAWA) has been engaged with the Conewago Creek Initiative for several years but has recently increased their level of involvement as they begin to tackle the project of educating their customers on the importance of stormwater management. EAWA draws water from the Conewago Creek to supply the residents of

Elizabethtown with clean drinking water. Clean water is very important to their business and they are working to spread the message on things residents can do to protect their drinking water supply.

They will be hosting an educational workshop and rain barrel sale later this spring to kickstart their educational initiative. The Conewago Creek Initiative supports their efforts

and will be presenting information on the Conewago Creek and the work of the Initiative at this workshop. If you are a resident of Elizabethtown be sure to check your water bill for more information on this event.



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

Winter Farmers Meeting
February 24, 9:00 AM
Hoss's Steak and Sea House
Elizabethtown
Please RSVP

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

TCCCA Meeting
February 28, 7:00 PM
Conewago Township Building
All are welcome!

Live Stake Harvest
March 27
Game Lands 145
RSVP to find out more
information

Live Stake Planting
March 28, 9:00 AM
Quittie Wetland education
Center
RSVP required



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