



Visit us on the web at  
[conewagoinitiative.net](http://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:**

Equine Workshop	2
Green in Your Backyard Woods Workshop	2
Stream Team Training	3
Partner and Practice Spotlights	3
Photo Gallery	4
Stream Restoration	5
Fish Surveys	5
Hershey Meadows Signs	5
Calendar	6

# Conewago Currents

Volume 3, Issue 1

Winter 2013

## The Coordinator's Report

For a watershed partnership, winter is one of the slower seasons. Construction of best management practices on farms and restoration practices along streams have wrapped up for the year. You won't see Conewago volunteers planting any riparian buffers until the coming spring. But appearances can be deceiving. The Conewago Initiative partners are busy at work, writing conservation plans and nutrient management plans, planning outreach events for the coming spring and summer, and providing winter workshops and meetings for the Conewago community.

The first of these opportunities is for horse owners. Penn State Extension is offering an Equine Environmental Stewardship Workshop on Saturday, February 9 at the Londonderry Township Municipal Building, and an evening manure management planning session on February 12. You will learn how to give your horses healthier

pastures, reduce your weeds, and meet environmental regulations.

The second opportunity is for Conewago farmers. The Initiative will be holding the second annual Conewago Winter Farmers Meeting at Hoss's in Elizabethtown on Friday, February 22. Presentations will include environmental compliance, no-till and soil health, and riparian buffers and stream health.

Finally, if you are a property owner in the Conewago and your thoughts are starting to turn to spring, why not call us and schedule a free Green Masterplan? The Initiative, in partnership with LandStudies, Inc. is sponsoring this program to provide landowners with free landscape plans that incorporate native plantings into stormwater management.

Whether you are a farmer, a horse owner or a homeowner, take advantage of what the Conewago Creek Initiative has to offer this winter!

**Matt Royer**  
Penn State Extension  
(717)-948-6459  
[mroyer@psu.edu](mailto:mroyer@psu.edu)



## Initiative Hosts 2nd Annual Winter Farmer's Meeting on Feb. 22

The Conewago Creek Initiative will again host a Winter Farmers Meeting on Friday **February 22**. Like last year's event, 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 hear about the progress of the Conewago Creek Initiative, discover an appreciation for riparian buffers, and learn the importance of and tips for using no-till in the Conewago Watershed.

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.

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Winter Farmer's Meeting

(Continued from page 1)

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](mailto:conewagocreekinitiative@gmail.com). The full agenda will

be available on our website closer to the event.

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

The meeting and lunch are free but registration is required!

### Winter Farmers Meeting

February 22, 2013  
9:30 a.m.– 1:30 p.m.  
Hoss's Steak and Sea House  
840 North Hanover Street  
Elizabethtown, PA 17022



## Register now for Penn State Extension's Equine Workshop

Are you a horse owner interested in learning how to give your horses healthier pastures, reduce the amount of weeds in your fields, and be in environmental compliance, all at the same time? Then mark **February 9, 2013** on your calendar today!

The Conewago Initiative will be partnering with Penn State Extension to provide a one day (9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.) workshop designed specifically for horse owners on how to better manage pastures and manure.

A second workshop will be held in the evening from 7 p.m.-9:30 p.m. on **February 12th** that will give guidance on how to write a manure management plan for your horse farm.

The workshops will

be held at the Londonderry Township Building, 783 S. Geyers Church Road, Middletown, PA 17057. The daylong workshop will cost \$45 and provides you with a soil test kit and all the educational materials you need. The second evening is free.

**Residents of the Conewago Watershed, after attending both sessions, will be reimbursed for the cost of the class!**

**February 9, 2013**

9 a.m.– 3:30 p.m.

&

**February 12, 2013**

7 p.m.-9:30 p.m.

Londonderry Twp Building  
783 S Geyers Church Rd,  
Middletown

If you are interested in attending these workshops or would like

to find out more information, please contact the Northampton Extension Office at 610-746-1970.

### Funding Available to Help

#### Your Horse Farm

The practices that will be discussed during these workshops are not only beneficial to the health of your horses and to your property, but are also environmentally friendly. For this reason the Conewago Creek Initiative has set aside funds to help horse owners implement best management practices that will improve their farms and water quality!

Contact the Conewago Creek Initiative today to learn more about our Horse Farm Assistance Program: 717-948-6459.

### Don't Forget to "Like" us on Facebook!

The Conewago Creek Initiative joined Facebook this 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.



Visit us on  
Facebook

## Green in Your Backyard Woods Workshop

Creating natural areas on your land, can have a positive impact on wildlife, air & water quality and landscape aesthetics; while reducing your energy costs, increasing your property value, potentially generating a revenue source and increasing your enjoyment of your land.

Penn State Extension, the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay and DCNR Bureau of Forestry are

sponsoring the Green in Your Backyard Woods workshop at the Farm & Home Center in Lancaster on February 9th.

For a low fee participants will learn about the region's vegetation and how to implement simple practices to enhance or establish vegetation on your land. Topics will include: tree (& shrub) selection and care, invasive plant control strategies, wildflowers/herbs and wild mushrooms of PA's woods,

establishing edge habitat, riparian buffers, and more.

### Green in Your Backyard Woods

February 9, 2013  
8:30 a.m.– 4:00 p.m.  
Farm & Home Center  
1383 Arcadia Road  
Lancaster, PA 17601

For more information and to sign up: <https://www.forestryforthebay.org/files/VegWYBY2.pdf>

## 4-H Stream Teams: Adult Training

Adults throughout Pennsylvania have a new opportunity to become volunteers for the 4-H Stream Teams Program.

A free, online training will be held by Penn State Extension to teach interested adults how to form and guide youth in the 4-H Stream Teams Program. The trainings will be hosted live, in a four part series, starting January 29, and will be offered in the afternoon and evening.

Registration is free, but required and can be completed at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/StreamTeamsTraining>.

This training is open to anyone who already works with youth, such as 4-H volunteers, scout leaders, camp directors, or classroom teachers and to any adult that is looking for an opportunity to share their interest in the environment with youth.

The mission of the 4-H Stream Teams Program is to

guide youth in learning about the water resources in their local community and encourage them to become water stewards and concerned citizens now and in the future.

In addition to teaching youth about our valuable water resources, 4-H Programs also provide important leadership, citizenship, and life skills that will benefit youth throughout



their lives. For additional information, contact Jennifer Fetter at [4HWater@psu.edu](mailto:4HWater@psu.edu) or (717) 921-8803.

## Conewago Partner Spotlight: NRCS

The USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) is an important partner in the Conewago Creek Initiative. Their programs help support local farmers financially when implementing conservation practices, and their agricultural knowledge helps guide new ideas and programs that the Initiative develops.

In June 2010, USDA announced that the Conewago was selected as a

Pennsylvania “Showcase Watershed.” This designation secured funding and resources to be used in the Conewago Watershed for outreach, use of innovative conservation practices and intensive conservation planning, implementation and monitoring. There are three showcase watersheds in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed improving water quality through combining strong partnerships, sound science and funding.

Farmers in the Conewago Creek Watershed

have high priority for funding through NRCS programs because of the Showcase Watershed designation, so NRCS is a great resource for the Initiative. Conservation practices funded by NRCS include everything from establishing pollinator habitat to creating nutrient management plans.

NRCS representatives from the PA State Office and the District Field Offices regularly attend workgroup and PAT meetings and are a valuable resource for the Initiative. This partner also works directly with Conewago landowners in the field to help plan, design, and install conservation practices.



## Practice Spotlights

### On The Farm: Rotational Grazing

Rotating animals between separate pastures allows the pasture plants to sustain growth over the long term. The plants should never be grazed shorter than 3 inches and should be allowed to grow to a height of 6-8 inches before the animals are allowed to graze that pasture again. This allows the plants to regrow vegetation and restore energy reserves for

future growth.

Since animals will naturally choose to eat the healthiest vegetation first, rotating pastures provides more healthy vegetation more often to the animals.



### Around The Home: Green Masterplans

Winter is the perfect time to start planning your gardens and landscaping designs. This year take stormwater into consideration when planning your outdoor space. How can you reduce the amount of rainwater that rushes off your property during a storm?

The Conewago Initiative in partnership with LandStudies, Inc. can provide

a free landscape plan on how you can improve your property to benefit the creek while also improving the beauty of your yard. Contact the Initiative about our Stormwater Incentives Program today!



### Conewago Photo Gallery



This issue's gallery features pictures from the fall fish survey, and winter scenes from the watershed.

## Stream Restoration on the Conewago at Old Hershey Rd

Tri-County Conewago Creek Association's (TCCCA) second major stream restoration project was completed just before Thanksgiving. The project is located on Hershey Trust's property downstream from the Hershey Meadows site and can be seen from the bridge on Old Hershey Rd.

The project is designed to reduce erosion and stabilize the bank of this 800 foot stream reach. Prior to the restoration work the stream banks were incredibly steep contributing large amounts of sediment to the stream during even small rain events.

Ten log vanes were installed to redirect the flow of water back into the middle of the stream, protecting the stream banks, and three mudsills were installed to level out the banks. All of these structures

will also create fish habitat.

To ensure the success and long term benefits of this restoration, a riparian buffer will be planted along this section of stream in the spring. The buffer will also help to control the invasive species Mile-a-Minute, a vine-like plant that has taken over this site.

The stream restoration design and installation was completed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service through an EPA 319 grant awarded by PA DEP to TCCCA.

The Initiative is really excited about this project and looking forward to seeing the benefits develop over time. This project brings the Conewago Creek one step closer to being a healthy, clean stream!

Stream Restoration in progress: driving rebar into a log vane (top), and putting together the structure of a mudsill (bottom).



## The Final Report on the Conewago Fish Surveys is Complete

The past several newsletters have discussed and advertised the fish surveys that were conducted this year on the Conewago Creek. These fish surveys were the first ones to be organized by the Conewago Creek Initiative and to sample a location near the headwaters of the Conewago. And it was also the first time Hershey Meadows has been sampled since the restoration work was complete.

There were several surprising catches including a brown trout and over 100 pumpkinseed in the headwaters, bullfrogs and muscles at Hershey Meadows, and a Creek Chub and high diversity near the mouth.

The conclusions we can draw from these surveys regarding water and habitat quality can be found in the full report. The report also includes a chart listing all 33 species identified and where they were found. The results

from this year's survey was compared to surveys conducted in the past by other organizations and the fish population sure has changed since the 1970's.

The full 2012 Conewago Comparative Fish Survey Report and a short video can be viewed on our website under the monitoring team's tab.

[http://www.conewagoinitiative.net/?page\\_id=935](http://www.conewagoinitiative.net/?page_id=935)

## New Signs at Hershey Meadows

New signs have been installed at the viewing area for the Hershey Meadows Restoration Area. The viewing platform is located just off the Conewago Rail Trail about 0.1 miles east of the trail's intersection with Route 743.

There are 3 large signs. One gives an overview of the project and its benefits. A

second displays a map of the restoration area and identifies where certain structures have been added. The third sign informs the reader of some at home practices that can make a difference to water quality.

**We hope you enjoy the signs and the observation deck!**

**Note:** please do not venture closer to the project since it is located on private property and the wetlands are a fragile ecosystem.



## CONEWAGO CREEK INITIATIVE

Matt Royer  
Local Project Coordinator  
Penn State Harrisburg  
307 Church Hall  
777 West Harrisburg Pike  
Middletown PA 17057  
Phone: 717-948-6459  
Email: mroyer@psu.edu

[www.conewagoinitiative.net](http://www.conewagoinitiative.net)

*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 Service • 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**



**Community working together for a restored Conewago.**

**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

### Equine Workshop\*

February 9, 2013

9:00 am-3:30 pm

&

February 12, 2013

7:00 pm- 9:30 pm

Londonderry Township

Building

783 S. Geyers Church Road,

Middletown, PA 17057

### Winter Farmers Meeting\*

February 22, 2013

9:30 a.m.- 1:30 p.m.

Hoss's Steak and Sea House

840 North Hanover Street

Elizabethtown, PA 17022

### Tri-County Conewago

Creek Association

Monthly Meetings

January 30, 2013

7:00 pm – 9:00 pm

Conewago Township Bldg

3279 Old Hershey Rd, Etown

(717) 948-6459

### Conewago Initiative Project

Advisory Team meeting

March 20, 2013

12:00 pm - 3:00 pm

Penn State Harrisburg

Church Hall

(717) 948-6459

### Green in Your Backyard

Woods\*

February 9, 2013

8:30 a.m.- 4:00 p.m.

Farm & Home Center

1383 Arcadia Road

Lancaster, PA 17601

### 4-H Stream Teams

Training\*

Part 1: Tuesday, January 29,

12pm-1pm or 7pm-8pm

Part 2: Thursday, January 31,

(2pm-1pm or 7pm-8pm

Part 3: Tuesday, February 5,

12pm-1pm or 7pm-8pm

Part 4: Thursday, February 7,

12pm-1pm or 7pm-8pm

### The Importance of Using

Native Plants to Create

Sustainable Landscapes\*

February 7, 2013

7:00 pm- 9:00 pm

Hershey/Derry TWP Historical

Society Building

40 Northeast Drive, Hershey

Contact Manada Conservancy

to register or for more

information

\* Pre-registration Required