**Project Advisory Team Meeting**

**July 17, 2013**

Matt Royer, Penn State

Kristen Kyler, Penn State

Jeremy Zidek, ZedX (on phone)

Kathy Brasier, Penn State (on phone)

Lynette Gelsinger, Lebanon CCD (on phone)

Matt Kofroth, Lancaster CCD

Susan Marquart, NRCS

Mike Hubler, Dauphin CCD

Rugh Henderson, South Londonderry Township

Carl Rohr, DEP

Chuck Wertz, Lebanon CCD

Jineen Boyle, DEP

**Updates/Presentations/Items for Discussion**

**Budget**: $108,000 was designated to spend on incentives. To date $71,000 has been spent or has been allocated to be spent. There were several different categories of incentives (equine practices, stormwater plans, stormwater BMPs, manure and soil testing, crop recordkeeping, ect) and at least one project has been funded within each of those categories.

**Homeowner’s Guide to Stormwater:** This guide was developed by the Little Conestoga Partnership and walks a homeowner through the process of learning where stormwater originates on their property, where the stormwater flows, and how they can better control this stormwater. The homeowner can create a final plan for their property that can be implemented using cost share through the Little Conestoga Partnership. The Conewago Initiative NFWF budget had an amount set aside to cover the cost of several farm assessments for determining nutrient trading capability. These farm assessments are instead going to be covered by a NFWF grant to Stroud Water Research Center and the money in the Conewago grant is being reallocated to help support the Homeowner’s Guide to Stormwater. An online version of the guide is going to be produced using these designated funds to help create a more user friendly way to create a plan and as a way to encourage broader use of the guide.

**WIP:** We are still planning on writing an amendment to the Conewago Creek Watershed Implementation Plan.

**Ag Progress Days:** Matt Royer and Kristen Kyler are scheduled to talk at Ag Progress Days on August 15. The focus will be on a combination of introducing the Homeowners Guide to Stormwater and celebrating the 5th year anniversary of the Conewago initiative.

**Volunteer Appreciation:** A slide show of pictures from all the Greening the Lower Susquehanna volunteer events that were held this spring was shown. Because of the huge success at getting volunteers to come out and participate, an appreciation picnic is being held on August 15 from 5-7 PM at the Colebrook Park. All volunteers and partners are invited- contact Jennifer Fetter to register.

**Riparian Buffer Workshop:** A riparian buffer maintenance workshop will be held on July 24 from 9-noon at John Hertzler’s buffer. Mark Metzler will be the main presenter at this event instructing participants on his methods to success.

**Bike Tour:** The bike tour, scheduled for July 20, was cancelled due to very low registration numbers.

**Ecosystem Services. Stories from the Conewago**: A document is being produced that will help explain what ecosystem services are and how farms and other natural areas are benefitting society. This is being accomplished by interviewing conservation minded individuals in the area and writing up their stories and opinions. A friend of Matt Royer, Shannon, is taking the photographs that will be associated with these stories.

**Conservation Toolbox for Municipalities:** This has been an ongoing project for several years that has finally been completed. This guide identifies 23 tools available to municipalities to help implement conservation practices. Each tool is described and then broken down into tiers of implementation so a municipality can decide on its level of interest and dedication. Contact information and partners are also listed. This is geared to municipalities in the Conewago watershed, but the tools are applicable to any municipality. The next step is to reach out to each municipality and set up a meeting to go over the toolbox, identify which tools they are interested in applying, determine ways in which they can partner with the Conewago Initiative, and then develop a customized toolbox with unique steps for that individual municipality.

**No-Till Equipment Purchase Incentives:** A local farmer has asked for cost share to purchase no-till equipment. This is not something the Initiative has previously discussed cost sharing and Matt Royer brought a potential list of guidelines to the table to be decided upon. The group decided that purchasing no-till equipment for individual farmers would not be a wise use of funds. Providing equipment for a group of farmers was more favorable, but the coordination of the equipment’s use is beyond the current capabilities of the Initiative staff and its partners.

**Fall Press Event:** Susan Marquart is leading the planning of a fall press event that will celebrate the success the Initiative has had to date. Hopefully the Deputy Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture will be in attendance. We are looking to hold the event in early November and will leave the exact date up to the people who we would really like to attend. The event will highlight the work that has been done and may feature speakers or a short tour of the area showing projects that were installed.

**Partner Updates**

Jeremy, ZedX: They are still working on the Conewago Tool and trying to get the aggregate layer to “look right.” A webinar will be set up between Jeremy, Kristen, and Matt in the near future to see the tool in more detail.

Matt, Lancaster CCD: A calendar for MS4 municipalities is being created. Ag projects are moving forward. Lancaster’s Youth Conservation camp will be touring the Conewago. Kristen will be presenting information about the Conewago Initiative at the Lancaster Lebanon Watershed Group meeting in October.

Susan, NRCS: Funding is still up in the air as is the Farm Bill.

Mike, Dauphin CCD: 319 grant phase 3 money is available for use throughout the 3 counties with a letter of agreement. The district is planning a county watershed association summit.

Rugh, South Londonderry Township: The Lawn Park riparian buffer and native meadow should be planted in the fall. The Township’s EAC held a natural areas tour. North Cornwall planning commission is looking into developing an EAC

Carl, DEP: DEP is finishing up some grants and looking to award new 319 projects.

Chuck, Lebanon CCD: Ag projects are moving forward and the county is on track with the number of conservation plans its farms have.