**Conewago Creek Initiative**

**Monitoring Team Meeting**

**July 17, 2012**

**303 Church Hall, Penn State Harrisburg**

**Minutes**

**Attending**

Kristen Kyler, Penn State Megan Blackmon, Dauphin CCD

Jessica Moldofsky, Penn State Kristen Saacke Blunk, PSU - AEC

Jayne Ulrich, Penn State Susan Macquart, USDA NRCS

Dawn Hintz, SRBC Matt Royer, Penn State Extension

Dan Bogar, DEP

Matt Kofroth, Lanc CCD

Jineen Boyle, PA DEP

Stephanie Harmon, Lebanon CCD

**Landowner Monitoring Protocol**

Kristen Saacke Blunk discussed the landowner monitoring protocol, which aims to identify early signs of improvement in stream health as a result of best management practice implementation. The focus of the meeting was to identify manageable parameters for landowners that could be incorporated into their day-to-day property walk. Parameters to be included within the criteria are embededness, bank vegetative cover, flow, riparian vegetative zone quality, riparian vegetative zone width, and water clarity with turbidity tubes. There may also be some room for the use of bank pins.

The team decided that embededness would be a better parameter instead of sediment deposition because embededness is better linked with habitat of the macroinvertabrate community within the stream. The team also decided that Epifaunal Substrate wouldn’t change as drastically over time, so we plan on removing that parameter from the criteria.

Considerations include making sure that we are asking the landowners relevant questions since each landowner will interpret health of the stream differently. One way to overcome this obstacle would be to make use of picture references for which the homeowner can refer back to. Megan Blackmon also suggested the value that professional involvement may have. Professionals will be able to make the process more user friendly and explain where the best place for monitoring might be on their specific property. There was group support for the idea of having a professional work with the landowner to conduct the initial sampling in order to train the landowner on the protocol.

**Fish Survey**

A successful fish survey using electroshocking methods was conducted at the Hershey Meadows site on June 29. About 870 fish were identified within a 4-hour period. A total number of 24 species were identified and the number of intolerant species increased. Overall, results showed increased water quality and fish habitat.

**Webinar**

During the next meeting, Kristen Saacke Blunk will brief everyone on the USGS Webinar – “Social Water: A Tool for Harnessing the Power of Crowdsourcing to Involve Citizen Scientists in Hydrologic Data Acquisition.”

**Partner updates**

USGS – Mike Langland will bring final results from the High-Flow Synoptic Sampling for next months meeting.

Lancaster CCD – The Citizen Monitoring Program, where senior volunteers collect samples from the Conoy Creek, will be adding one sampling point on the Conewago. The group is still looking for a safe and easy access location for the sampling. The pull off on Old Hershey Road was suggested.