**Conewago Creek Initiative
Project Advisory Team**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Tuesday August 21, 2012**

**172E Olmsted Building, Penn State Harrisburg Campus**

**Attendees:**

Matt Royer, PSU

Kristen Saacke Blunk , PSU

Kevin Lutz, Lanc CCD

Susan Marquart, NRCS

Jennifer Fetter, PSU

Jeremy Zidek, ZedX

Kristen Kyler, PSU

Rugh Henderson, S Lond Twp

Jineen Boyle, DEP

Dawn Hintz, SRBC

**Webinar- Live From the Conewago: Innovations in Watershed Monitoring**

 Matt Royer started out the webinar with an introductory discussion on the different water quality monitoring projects that are being conducted in the Conewago Watershed. He also discussed future monitoring plans and the goals of the monitoring team.

 Mike Langland, USGS, presented on his high synoptic flow sampling results from a sampling that was conducted in May of this year. He was able to use the data collected on nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment loads to determine which tributaries to the Conewago are carrying the greatest loads during high water events. This data can be used to help prioritize streams for restoration projects and BMP installation.

 Kristen Kyler, PSU Extension, presented the results of the fish survey that was conducted at the Hershey Meadows restoration site in June. The number of species identified during this sampling was higher than previous samples which might be a sign of improved water quality due to the restoration effort. Other positive indicators are improved stream bank cover and that migratory birds have been seen on site.

 The entire webinar was recorded and can be watched from Penn State’s Ag and Environment Center’s Website: <http://extension.psu.edu/aec/webinars-presentations/lessons-from-the-land/conewago-live-lessons-from-the-land-focuses-on-innovations-in-watershed-monitoring>

**Coordinator’s Report**

* Goodbye Interns- Matt Royer discussed the work that the interns completed over the summer
	+ Pancake Breakfast and Tour
		- Approximately 100 people were fed by the Colebrook Fire Company and could see poster displays by the Initiative, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Penn State Extension, TCCCA and Dauphin County Conservation District
		- About 35 people went on the watershed tour which stopped at the Brown’s house to see Native Meadows and the Hanson’s farm to learn about no-till operations. The tour also drove by the Wenger’s riparian buffer and the USGS gage station
	+ Website
		- New information including a video on the fish survey, the student stormwater guide, the forms for the stormwater incentives program, and old meeting minutes have been uploaded to the website
		- Jess Moldofsky will continue to work on the website through the fall semester
	+ Outreach-a spring and summer newsletter was published, new emails were collected from landowners
	+ The municipal toolbox has made progress
	+ BMP factsheets and powerpoints are being created and will be uploaded to website once completed
	+ A video was made explaining ecosystem services through Conewago Watershed landowner’s stories
	+ Kristen Kyler will continue to work on the WIP amendment and the Landowner Monitoring protocol with the BMP Team and the Monitoring Team.
* Kristen Kyler will be staying on with the Initiative as a Project Assistant
* The Initiative will be requesting a no-cost grant extension to go through till November 30, 2013 which will be approved based on a call with NFWF. This will be done to allow more time for the implementation of Stormwater Incentive Program projects.
* The Equine Workshops that were scheduled for July-August were cancelled due to lack of interest. There might be an attempt to hold a one day event in the Fall when horse owners are more available.
* The PA One Stop workshop was held on May 21st. It was run by Rick Day and Bob Netter and about 12 people came and made their farm maps.
* The interns ran a table at the Campbelltown National Night Out event which presented an opportunity to outreach about the Initiative and the watershed
* The Initiative partnered with the Haldeman Mansion to celebrate Samuel Haldeman’s 200th birthday. Matt Kofroth, Jennifer Fetter, Matt Royer, and Ron Laughlin were present to outreach about the Initiative and to provide activities for kids. Larry Coble gave a presentation on freshwater muscles which related to the research of Samuel Haldeman. The kids got to see a mink in the stream during a Macroinvertebrate sampling led by Jennifer Fetter.
* Matt Royer attended the Chesapeake Bay Executive Council Meeting on July 9th and gave a 5 minute presentation on the Conewago Initiative. Susan Marquart made the push to include the Initiative on the agenda—thank you Susan!
* The General Accountability Office was given a tour of the Watershed as part of the evaluation of the TMDL program. This is a national evaluation and DEP suggested the Conewago would be a good location for them to see projects in action in Pennsylvania. The Kopp Farm and Hershey Meadows were highlighted on the tour.

**Demo of the ZedX tool**

 Jeremy Zidek showed the team the current state of the ZedX tool which will be used to update the TMDL reduction predictions in the WIP Amendment. The tool will also be able to use layers of information to pinpoint locations of high priority for targeted outreach for BMPs. The tool has made significant progress in the past month and Jeremy plans on continuing this higher momentum over the next several weeks with the goal of having it more or less finished by October. Data is being incorporated into the tool and developers are working to tie it all together. The BMP team needs to get the finalized Priority Ranking Layers to Jeremy so that work can begin on the “Risk Assessment” piece of the tool.

**Team Updates (Please reference team meeting minutes. Listed below are updates post team meeting)**

Non-Ag Team

* There are currently 10 landowners enrolled in the Stormwater Incentives Program. 2 of those are in the design stage, the other 8 are in the process of having site visits and Green Masterplans created by LandStudies.
* South Londonderry Township is one of the landowners working with LandStudies. They have 2 public parks that will both be getting Green Masterplans created for them. These will be excellent demonstration sites if BMPs are installed.
* Partnering firms, Meliora and Viridian, did not sign a partner agreement due to their distance from the watershed. This leaves 4 firms on the Qualified Technical Service Provider Partners List to hand out to interested landowners who are moving on to the design and build stage.
* Once LandStudies completes Green Masterplans, the Non-Ag Team will need to meet to approve plans.
* Many of the landowners are clustered in common areas of the watershed so Matt would like more outreach to be done in less represented areas.

Stewardship Development Team

* The Landowner Survey data has been split into municipalities by Kristen Kyler with assistance from the other Conewago Interns. Kathy Braiser will begin to analyze the data with the goal of giving the aggregated results to Jeremy Zidek to add to the ZedX tool.
* All of this work will provide an outreach tool to use to communicate with municipalities and to encourage adoption of BMPs in municipalities.

Environmental Markets Team

* A conference call was held to discuss the On-Farm Charrette and Nutrient Trading Assessments being planned for late fall/early winter. A list of farmers who might be interested in participating was developed.
* Matt will provide a write up on the idea to the conservation districts so they can make contact with these farmers.

BMP Team

* Work on the ZedX tool and the WIP is ongoing. No significant updates to report post BMP Team Meeting Minutes

Monitoring Team

* Bank pins have been installed along Hoffer Creek, directly upstream from where it enters the Conewago. These will be used to measure bank erosion and the data collected from the bank pin monitoring will be used by Fish and Wildlife to create a restoration plan for this tributary.
* The Espenshades of Lancaster County will be enrolling in CREP and installing stream bank fencing and planting a riparian buffer. This presents an opportunity to do some before and after sampling at a farm where cows currently have full access of the stream.
	+ Tom Murray and his students at E-town College will be conducting a Macroinvertebrate sampling this fall with a post sample in several years.
	+ Water quality monitoring will be done by Megan Blackmon, Dauphin County Conservation District, starting in September and every two months after.
	+ There is also the potential for bacteria sampling

**Partner Updates**

Kristen Saacke Blunk, PSU Extension

* Kristen is leaving Penn State to work as a consultant for NFWF. She is very sad to leave!
* Analeise Nachman, a communications student at Penn State, created a riparian buffer display and brochure for Ag Progress Days. The information can be distributed by any partners and the display can be used for any relevant events.
* Update on the Farm Bill was given. Penn State is hosting a conservation dialogue with producers on 10/9 at Masonic Village in Etown. There is a need to think about what will happen with Showcase Watersheds in this next Farm Bill. CBWI will be replaced with Regional Conservation Partnerships and Bay region will have to compete nationwide for priority. The NFWF Ag Networking Forum will spend some time discussing this.

Jenn Fetter, PSU Extension

* Diane Espy will be filming a youth field day on October 20th. A prep-day will be on September 1st.
* The Dive Deeper Education Summit is on September 27th

Rugh Henderson, South Londonderry Township

* The Annual Community Meeting is coming up soon and he is interested in seeing a study done that compares municipality feelings on water quality issues over the course of the Initiative

Dawn Hintz, SRBC

* The Etown Regional Water Authority’s source water protection plan is under review by DEP

Jineen Boyle, DEP

* The Growing Greener Grant application should be available soon

Susan Marquart, NRCS

* The fiscal year for NRCS is coming to an end. A national budget is not decided yet and the Farm Bill ends this year so the NRCS budget is very much up in the air and big cuts could be on the horizon

Kevin Lutz

* Farm surveying work will be done this fall to find locations to install BMPs
* A manure management workshop will be held in early winter in the Conewago. There was discussion about contacting Donna Foulk, PSU Extension, to blend a horse owner manure management workshop into this planned manure management workshop