**Conewago Project Advisory Team Meeting**

**September 18, 2013, 1 to 3 pm**

**Penn State Harrisburg
Room 101 Morrison Gallery, Library Building
777 West Harrisburg Pike
Middletown, PA 17057**

**AGENDA**

1. **Welcome and introductions**

Attending:

Matt Royer, PSU

Carl Rohr, DEP

Mike Langland, USGS

Rugh Henderson, S Londonderry Twp

Jeremy Zidek, ZedX

Mike Hubler, Dauphin CCD

Jineen Bouyle, DEP

Mark Myers, NRCS

Susan Richards, RC&D

Jill Whitcomb, Lancaster CCD

Kevin Lutz, Lancaster CCD

Susan Marquart, NRCS

Chuck Wertz, Lebanon CCD

Kristen Kyler, PSU

1. **Coordinator’s Report**

Matt Royer and Kristen Kyler, Penn State
*Includes updates from our work teams:*

**\***Two months left to spend down funds/sub awards!

* 1. BMP

90% of the conservation plans have been completed in the watershed.

All three County Conservation Districts reported on projects that are being completed this fall.

There are $27,000 dollars that are non-committed and available for implementation. The team decided that the funds can be used for larger projects and to support more traditional agriculture in order to help spend out these funds. If necessary, certain projects can be partnered with 319 funds if projects are too expensive.

* 1. Non-Ag

There are currently 20 completed Green Masterplans that were funded through the Stormwater Incentives Program. A large rain garden/wet meadow is being installed on Jeff Eisenbise’s property this fall. A reforestation and buffer improvement project is ongoing at the Neale’s (Aberdeen Mills). The Gallagher Run and Rohrer buffer plantings were discussed.

Horseshoe Trail Drive off of Old Forge Road is a private dirt road that the township has access to. The road keeps washing out into the headwaters of the Little Conewago. The issue has been challenging to fix and the possibility of a Green Masterplan was discussed. A buy-in would be needed from all the residents. The center for dirt and gravel roads will be contacted for technical assistance. Chuck and Matt will coordinate on this project.

Londonderry Township has created a customized Conservation Toolbox with the Initiative and has moved forward with two of the tools including a large riparian buffer planting along Swatara Creek Road in Middletown and by hosting a rain barrel workshop over the summer.

The Homeowner’s Guide to Stormwater that was developed by the Little Conestoga Partnership will have an online mapping version that is being funded by the Conewago Creek Initiative grant.

* 1. Stewardship Development
	The rail trail sign designs are finalized and a quote has been received by the sign company, Designs and Graphics. We are waiting for approval from Penn State to be able to pay and get them made.

One of the “You Are Now Entering the Conewago Watershed” signs is up outside of Colebrook. Efforts continue to find landowners for the other signs.

A fall newsletter will go out shortly and will be printed and mailed to all residents in the watershed. This will hopefully generate more interest and provide us with more email addresses for future newsletters.

* 1. Monitoring

The last erosion measurements were taken at Hoffer Creek. This data will be used by Fish and Wildlife to create a streambank restoration plan for this tributary. A second round of bacteria samples will be started in October at the Espenshade Farm to hopefully establish a positive trend since the cows were removed from the stream.

* 1. Environmental Markets

A small booklet featuring stories from the Conewago is still in the works to help explain ecosystem services and how they are provided by farms and other environmental practices.

Red Barn, through a grant from NFWF awarded to the Stroud Water Research Center, will be conducting several nutrient credit trading assessments in the Conewago.

1. **Conewago Report and Fall Press Event**
Matt Royer, Penn State and Susan Marquart, NRCS

**Press Event**
a. Krista Hardin (Deputy Secretary) is interested in coming but it will be short notice. Details will need to be prepared and ready to go for when she says she is available. An early November date is likely.

1. Ivan Hanson or Ron Kopp farms are an option. Is there cover at these sites to get out of the weather? The Lawn Community Park is close to Ivan’s and could be an option.

**Report**

* 1. Susan will start working on creating the final report which can be shared or highlighted at the press event. This will also help satisfy the NFWF final report requirements (not due until February). The report is currently in outline form but once a draft is finished, it will be sent out to the team for review.
1. **The Conewago Initiative 2.0: Life after the NFWF Grant**
	1. There has been a willingness to be “nimble” from all the partners. “Whatever it takes to get it done”.
	2. It was asked how close we are to TMDL and accelerated BMP adoption. The answer was that more BPMs have gone into effect reaching lots of people. Also, the projects in WIP have been implemented so TMDL progress is being made. However work should continue in order to implement WIP.
	3. Monitoring will be helpful in the future. USGS hoped to get more detailed monitoring but funding is always an issue and it takes a long time to see positive signs in monitoring.
	4. This has been a good opportunity for students (outdoor lab) attending Elizabethtown, Milton Hershey or Penn State. “Limitless opportunities for this continuing in the future.”
	5. The amount of wetland restoration in the watershed is great. Non-Agricultural BMPs are an interesting and unique approach with potential for growth. Municipalities have started to participate (having buy in helps). There is not a long history with non-ag people at conservation districts but the municipalities do.
	6. People know each other now so when a project comes up they know who to call. This is good for the future when it comes to projects of joint interest.
	7. Schuylkill Action Network has an annual meeting to give updates that is working well and is appreciated by its partners. Maybe this is how the Conewago Initiative moves forward.
	8. Penn State is still interested in hosting meetings.
	9. We still need to find a way to monitor and record improvement. There is at least two more years of funding for gage stations. The Dauphin water monitoring and Macros will continue and Greening of the Lower Susquehanna will start to expand the success of the Initiative to the entire region.
2. **Partner Updates**
	1. Jill mentioned that Matt and Becky are working on the MS4 calendar and that a new fish shocker has been purchased.
	2. Susan shared about the tillage survey (county by county) 45% in Lancaster and Dauphin, residue of at least 35%.
	3. Mark brought up the bog turtle restoration in the upper watershed and a pilot study on the need for canary grass control.
	4. Mike Hubler mentioned his meeting with the US FWS about the Lynch Run project moving forward.
	5. Jeremy mentioned the need to run models and to improve the aggregate score on the ZedX tool.
	6. Rugh discussed Lawn Park and the planning commission’s approval for zoning near the lake in Mt. Gretna which requires conservation by design. He will look into the Horseshoe Road problem from the Township’s perspective.
	7. Mike Langland announced that USGS will be conducting sediment sampling in the Conewago which will environmental tracers to determine where the sediment is coming from.