

# Conewago Stream Teams

## Innovative Pilot Approach to Youth Water Education

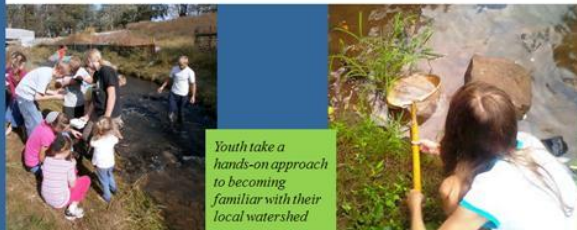
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### YOUTH ENGAGED IN LOCAL WATERSHEDS

- Most water education programs engage youth in activities about far away bodies of water or watersheds distant from their homes.
- Commonwealth Stream Teams (piloted in the Conewago Creek Watershed of Dauphin, Lebanon and Lancaster Counties) focuses on youth living in a specific watershed.
- Youth learn important water education lessons in a context that applies to the lives of their families, neighbors and communities.

### HANDS-ON WATER EDUCATION AND SERVICE

- Stream Team youth take part in the Pennsylvania 4-H Water Project activities, available in three subject areas:
  - Water Conservation
  - Water Science & Cycles
  - Water Quality
- Stream Team leaders are provided with resources and tools to connect the 4-H project to their local watershed
- Stream Team youth have opportunities to coordinate and complete service projects that are meaningful to their local watershed community



Youth take a hands-on approach to becoming familiar with their local watershed

### COORDINATION WITH LOCAL INITIATIVES

- Increased opportunities for discovery and service projects exist through connections to the *Conewago Creek Collaborative Conservation Initiative*
- Local agencies and organizations already active in the watershed are kept informed about local Stream Team activities, and they provide information about how youth can learn from and participate in their current activities as well
- Youth have an opportunity to have a voice in planning for the future of their watershed
- Youth participation in Stream Teams is an avenue to raise awareness of the watershed initiative in adult family members

### START-UP YEAR ACTIVITIES

#### Targeted Outreach:

- Social marketing and outreach materials targeted to residents of the watershed and surrounding communities have led to increased awareness of the program and engagement of local families.
- Local and Major Newspapers
- Township Newsletters
- Television News Coverage
- 4-H Program Newsletters
- Direct Mailings to Local Religious Institutions
- Direct Contact with Schools/PTOs Connected to the Watershed
- Online Presence Through Social Networking Sites
- Creation of "Captain Conewago" logo for consistency among program materials, increasing recognition and familiarity



Activities completed by youth can be shared and enhanced through social networking

The Conewago Stream Teams Program logo helps increase familiarity with the program.



#### Local Materials Development:

- Conewago Stream Teams Handbook* – provides adult leader with facts about the local watershed and guidance on leading a stream team
- Conewago Creek Watershed Map* (Poster and Handouts) – allow youth to identify their physical location in the watershed and see their interconnectedness with other watersheds
- Riparian Buffers Project Book* – addresses a specific need in the targeted watershed – buffer maintenance and monitoring

#### Building Connections:

- Valuable resources and word of mouth outreach has been gained through raising program awareness in a wide variety of local agencies already active in watershed activities:
  - County Conservation Districts
  - USDA-NRCS Local Offices
  - Local Watershed Associations
  - Township Governments
  - State, County, Local Parks & Recreation

### FIRST 6 MONTHS OF PROGRAMMING

- 73** Youth engaged on Stream Teams
- 324** Youth participating in one day programs
- 16** Volunteers receiving initial Stream Team training
- 90%** Youth demonstrating knowledge gained in water topics
- 80%** Volunteers planning service projects in the watershed\*

\*n<30



Youth take an active role in monitoring their watershed & developing projects they complete to improve local water quality

### WHAT YOUTH GAIN

- Increased familiarization with local watershed
- Understanding of human impacts on waterways
- Participation in hands-on water conservation projects
- Reduced personal water usage
- Increased knowledge of water topics addressed in State Academic Standards
- Improvement of water quality in/around the Conewago Creek Watershed through implementation of BMPs and related projects in partnership with the Conewago Initiative



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