

MINUTES
TRI-COUNTY CONEWAGO CREEK ASSOCIATION
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 16, 2002, 7 P.M. – 9 P.M.
LONDONDERRY TWP. BUILDING

I. Welcome and Introductions

Matt Royer kicked off the initial meeting thanking Londonderry Twp. for hosting the meeting. Those persons attending the meeting introduced themselves and noted applicable affiliations. There were approximately 41 persons in attendance.

Royer explained that the group would be applying for a DEP Growing Greener Grant for start-up costs of watershed group formation. He said he hopes the group can show a real sense of organization to allow for it to submit a good grant proposal.

II. Introduction to the Conewago Creek Watershed

Royer brought a large map of the east Conewago Creek Watershed and pointed out its features to the group. He reviewed the basic facts of the watershed. (See attached.) The group discussed protected uses of the watershed, areas of impairment and sources of pollutants. Sediment and nutrients from agricultural runoff was identified as a major source of impairment. Royer explained that this is a form of non-point source pollution that the watershed group hopes to address, but that other problems may be discovered as the group begins studying the watershed.

III. What is a Watershed Group?

Hal Royer explained what a watershed group entails. He said watershed groups are interested citizens that organize for the good of a particular watershed. Stakeholders provide grassroots support for the watershed. They include people who live in the watershed, people who get their supply from the watershed, municipalities, schools, environmental agencies, businesses and farmers in the area.

The group works in concert to educate the community about the watershed, analyze problems, search for solutions and become involved in activities to improve the watershed.

The Conewago Creek watershed is important and impacts us all because it flows into the Susquehanna watershed that flows into the Chesapeake Bay watershed, etc.

Royer said it takes money to officially organize as a watershed group, obtain non-profit status, become eligible for grants, and apply for grants. Growing Greener grant applications are due in February. The Lancaster County Conservation District has generously agreed to sponsor the watershed group for a Growing Greener grant application until its 501 (c)(3) status is arranged.

Mary Golab, PA DEP Watershed Manager, discussed potential projects such as: stream cleanups, planting trees, watershed awareness and assessment, water quality monitoring, building nature trails, educational projects and booths at fairs.

Matt Kofroth, Lancaster County Conservation District Watershed Specialist, said the group would act as a "middle man" for the watershed group and help provide information for the grant application. LCCD will help keep the momentum going for the watershed group. He identified other sources of funding such as conservation districts, CREP (a program administered by the Game Commission), and Chesapeake Bay Foundation.

IV. Visioning Process

Open discussion: identifying issues of concern, determining goals and vision for group.

Ed Gallagher, a farmer in the watershed, commented that the Conewago Creek used to be a high-quality stream and has deteriorated over the course of 44 years due to many factors.

Developed name for group: Attendees listed possible names for the watershed group, voted and majority chose "Tri-County Conewago Creek Association."

Discussed:

- Establishing an address for the group.
- Goals of the group: turning red lines of impairment on the map to green lines of clean water.
- Drafting a mission statement that allows work to continue in the future.
- Identifying landowners and figuring out if the stream could use fencing.
- Enhancing public awareness: establishing a web site, newsletter, brochure.
- Plan to approach a speaker for the group to talk about funding sources.
- Increase awareness of water conservation.
- Prioritize short- and long-term goals. Set early goals.
- In the schools, educate the future citizens of the watershed.
- Rely on help from established watershed groups.
- Ask for in-kind services.
- Do "Watershed Snapshot" to get an idea of the condition of the watershed.
- Storm drain stenciling to let people know what our watershed does affects other watersheds.
- Celebrate Successes!
- Encourage members to write letters to the Editors of Newspapers (Particularly, respond to this month's Etown Chronicle article)
- Try to start a database of landowners.
- Establish Committees for Watershed Group work (i.e. Communications, Projects (ad hoc), Membership, Financial, Education.)

Steering and Drafting Committees were formed.

Drafting Committee: Kerry Royer, Erick Smith, Matt Royer.

Steering Committee: Kerry Royer, Erick Smith, Matt Royer, Ben Simmons, Steve Roland, Hal Royer, Lindsey Morris.

ACTION ITEMS:

- Send a press release about this meeting and announce future meeting. (Kerry Royer)
- Lawyer to start 501 (c)(3) and incorporation papers. (Marty Siegel)
- Drafting Committee will present draft mission statement at next meeting for discussion and final approval.
- Try to have all municipalities represented at meetings, get on municipalities' agendas. (Steve Roland, Stephanie Harmon, Jay Book, Ron Laughlin, and Charles Allwein volunteered to approach various municipalities)

Steering Committee to meet.

V. Next Meeting

Wednesday, February 27, 2002, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.
Londonderry Township Municipal Building

VI. Homework Assignment

Spread the word!