

Conservation group organizing

MANHEIM - Residents of the Chickies Creek Watershed are in the process of forming a watershed association to assist in conserving the natural resources of that stream, it has been announced.

The Big Chickies Creek, in its 40-mile trek to the Susquehanna River through portions of Lancaster and Lebanon Counties, has been subject to considerable flooding and controversy in recent years.

Soil and water conservation along the stream, as well as wise management of the watershed's resources, will be primary goals of the newly formed association.

The association, still in the organizational stage, is seeking residents of the watershed willing to serve on the board of directors, according to Mark F. Nestleroth, temporary chairman of the group. Any resident who is interested in serving is urged to attend a steering committee meeting to be held in the Ag Room of

the Manheim Central High School, Thursday, March 25, at 7:30 p.m.

Directors will be elected from a salte of nominations at the association's first official meeting on April 8, 1976. Nominations will likewise be accepted from the floor at that meeting. Place will be the cafeteria of the Manheim High School at 7:30 p.m.

Any resident of the watershed are interested in conserving its natural resources is urged to become a member of the association and attend the first meeting on April 8.

The area of the Chickies Creek Watershed is defined as those lands drained or affected by the Chickies Creek, and areas of the flood plain, extending to the confluence of the creek with the Littel Chickies Creek, including all or part of the following boroughs and townships:

In Lancaster County - Manheim Borough; Rapho, Penn, Elizabeth, East

Hempfield and West Hempfield townships.

In Lebanon County - Cornwall Borough; South Lebanon and West Cornwall Townships.

It was tentatively decided by the association's steering committee that 27 directors shall be elected from the membership. Three directors shall be elected at large from each of the following townships or boroughs: Manheim Borough, Penn Township, (South) Rapho Township, (North) Rapho Township, East Hempfield Township, West Hempfield Township, as well as three directors from the combined areas of Cornwall Borough, South Lebanon Township, West Cornwall Township and Elizabeth Township.

Representation on the board of directors, it was felt, should be based on the amount of total land area that the borough or township contained within the confines of the designated watershed.

In addition to the above elected directors from

specific areas there will be six directors elected at large from the membership at its first meeting April 8.

Purpose of the nonprofit organization, as stated in the By-Laws drawn up by the steering committee, would be the following:

To promote the conservation of the natural resources of the Chickies Creek Watershed;

To conduct educational and scientific investigations and research related to natrual resources conservation within the bordering the Chikies Creek Watershed;

To disseminate information pertaining to the natural resources of the watershed to interested parties and the general public either without charge or at no profit to the Association;

To educate individuals and organizations in the value or stream controls and land activities;

To improve financial, technical and other assistance from federal,

state and local sources to implement the Watershed's protection and development.

Stated objectives would be to study the resources of the watershed and develop a watershed management program; and to promote local interest in the problems on natural resources conservation in watershed and solicit local support for the programs developed to correct and alleviate the problem conditions.

Membership of the Association will be restricted to individuals residing in or organizations having headquarters within the designated boundaries of the watershed.

While voting membership is restricted to individual members, each with one vite, it was felt organizations may become affiliate members without voting rights.

Associate memberships in the association will be open to all interested parties with all rights and privileges of resident members except voting rights and the right to hold office.

Like other watershed associations in the state, the Chickies Creek association will be strictly nonprofit. Its activities and projects will be supported primarily by membership dues and private contributions.

Forestry funding granted

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has announced 1976 funding for the Forestry Incentives Program (FIP) at the \$15 million level authorized by Congress. The FIP is a continuing program designed to increase the production of timber products on small, private timber tracts, according to Paul H. Keeney, Chairman of Berks County Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Committee.

In its third year of operation, FIP will again be available in designated counties with high resource potential for increased timber production. Both annual and long-term agreements will be offered to eligible owners of non-industrial private forest lands. Federal cost-sharing under these agreements will range from 50 to 75 percent of the cost of carrying out tree planting and timber stand improvement practices. All FIP agreements must be based on forest management plans developed by the local forester in cooperation with the landowner.

FIP is administered by the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, in consultation with the U.S. Forest Service and State Foresters.

Pennsylvania has received an allocation of \$344,000 to continue the Forestry Incentives Program. Landowners with woodlots producing commercial timber or planning to plant timber specie trees are generally eligible for this program. Eligibility is limited to owners of woodlots of 500 acres or less. Timber processors, utilities, and municipalities are not eligible.

Interested farmers and woodlot owners may file their request for cost-sharing assistance at county ASCS offices. FIP cost-sharing approximates 75 percent of the cost of trees and planting, thinning, pruning, and other woodlot management practices in Pennsylvania.

Eligibility for participation in all programs administered by ASCS is established under law without regard to race, color, religion, sex or national origin.

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