



**3-Year
Strategic Plan
June 2023**

Board of Directors

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Rita Graham, COLEMAN-GRAHAM

This document was adopted by the Conemaugh Valley Conservancy Board of Directors on June 13, 2023.

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COMMON ACRONYMS

AMD - Abandoned (sometimes referred to as Acid) Mine Drainage

AML - Abandoned Mine Land

AMR - Abandoned Mine Reclamation

BMPs - Best Management Practices

CD - Conservation District

CCCRA – Cambria County Conservation & Recreation Authority

DEIJ - Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice

DEP - Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection

ED – Executive Director

HR – Human Resource

ICCD – Indiana County Conservation District

LHORBA – Laurel Highland Off Road Biking Association

NGO - Non-Government Organization (e.g., Watershed association)

OM&R - Operation, Maintenance and Rehabilitation

RFP - Request for Proposal

ST Coord – Stream Team Coordinator

WA – Watershed Association

WPCAMR – Western Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation

WPT – West Penn Trail

Brief Overview CVC

The 1989 centennial recognition of the great Johnstown flood focused attention on Johnstown and on rebuilding a community, with substantial funding coming into the area. The Conemaugh Valley Conservancy (CVC) was formed to answer the need for a conservation-minded organization in the Kiski-Conemaugh basin covering portions of Armstrong, Cambria, Indiana, Somerset, and Westmoreland Counties.

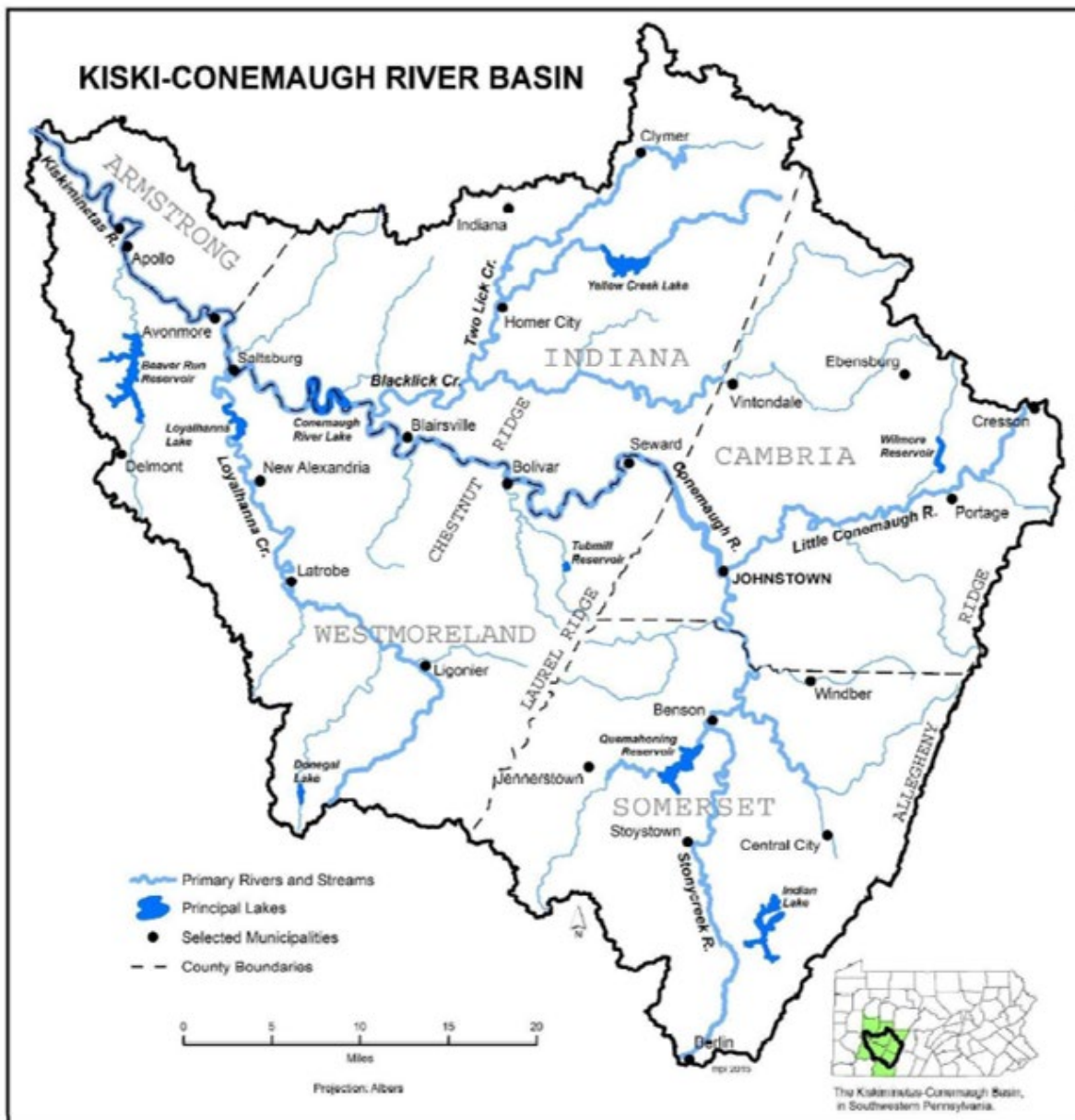


Figure 2 – Location map of the Kiski-Conemaugh River Basin

In the years that followed, CVC spearheaded many large projects, such as the \$6M purchase of the Quemahoning reservoir as well as the Hinckston, Wilmore, South Fork, and Border dams, ensuring that the reservoirs would be preserved for public recreation. With the construction of Greenhouse Park on Stonycreek, CVC and its affiliates provided for white water kayaking and tubing to become a regular activity in season. Another major project was the Kiski-Conemaugh River Conservation Plan, published in 1999, making the Kiski-Conemaugh the second largest basin in PA with a conservation plan at the time.

Over the years, CVC built cycling trails, with the 15-mile West Penn Trail being the center piece, requiring restoration or construction of three bridges over the Conemaugh River. CVC sponsors an annual Triathlon on the West Penn Trail in the autumn. In spring CVC organizes an annual four-day river Sojourn running from Johnstown to Apollo.



One of CVC's most significant projects is not easily visible to the public. Our Stream Team monitors about 150 locations quarterly for the PA DEP Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation, gathering water samples for the DEP laboratory in Harrisburg and documenting abandoned mine discharges and their effects on waterways. With our local watershed partners and volunteers, we provide a critical service across the 1,887 square miles of the Kiski-Conemaugh basin and help prioritize restoration efforts.

The Conemaugh Valley Conservancy has emphasized healthy outdoor recreation and habitat restoration for 30 years. In the spirit of continuing this leadership role, the following Strategic Plan is offered to chaperone our organization and its affiliates into the future.

Plan Development

CVC's 3-Year Strategic Plan identifies the Conservancy's priorities and lays out its steps to achieve the goals. The plan was created through a facilitated strategic planning process that involved the CVC's Board of Directors, partners, leaders, staff and stakeholders. The steps used to develop the plan follows:

- Sent out a Request for Proposals (RFP) to planning facilitators who had experience with environmental organizations

- Reviewed and selected a facilitator, and contracted Rita Graham of COLEMAN-GRAHAM as the facilitator to guide the Conservancy through the planning process
- Formed a Steering Committee to work with the facilitator throughout the planning process and to monitor progress. The Steering Committee was comprised of members of the Board of Directors and key staff.
- The Steering Committee conducted 7 meetings to work on the 3 Phases of the Planning Process:
 - **Where are we now?** (internal and external input, trends, current situation)
 - **Where do we want to be and how will we get there?** (mission, vision, goals, objectives, critical success factors, barriers, strategies and action plans)
 - **How will we implement and monitor?** (strategic plan document, monitoring and communication plans)
- An on-line customer survey and a stakeholder survey were used to solicit input on critical issues and the role of CVC. (see Appendix for input)
- An organizational assessment was conducted using a survey to the Board to assess where the organization is today and what the critical areas are for success in the future.
- A facilitated stakeholder meeting was conducted on January 12, 2023, involving CVC's Board of Directors, CVC's staff and representatives from PA DEP BAMR, Loyalhanna Watershed Association, Blacklick Creek Watershed Association, Ben's Creek Canoe Club, West Penn Trail, Laurel Ridge State Park, Somerset County Conservancy, Stonycreek-Quemahoning Initiative, AmeriCorps-CVC Stream Team, City of Johnstown Planning, Western Pa Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation, representatives from Cambria and Indiana County Conservation Districts and District 62, State Rep Jim Struzzi's office. The session was used to gain ideas on critical issues to be addressed, trends, analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (S.W.O.T.) and potential goal strategies. (see Appendix for input)
- The steering committee considered the internal and external input in the development of the goals, objectives, and action plans.
- Over a series of meetings, the committee created the draft plan content.
- The facilitator and CVC executive director compiled the information into a draft strategic plan for the steering committee and board consideration and approval.



Plan Distribution

A printed copy of the plan will be provided to all Board of Directors, steering committee members and staff. The plan will be posted on CVC's website and copies will be made available to others upon request.

Plan Usage

This is intended to be a living document, not a plan to be placed on a shelf and forgotten. CVC's mission and its responsibilities include areas that are subject to rapid change in today's world. Equipment, technology, grant funding and forms of communication are just a few examples. As the Conservancy fulfills its role and adapts to change, this document will serve as a guide, helping keep CVC focused and providing markers by which it can measure its progress toward meeting its goals and mission.

The organization's revised mission and vision statements are included below.

MISSION STATEMENT

Conemaugh Valley Conservancy conserves and promotes the natural and recreational resources of the Kiski-Conemaugh River Basin to strengthen connections between people and the land.

VISION STATEMENT

Clean and healthy rivers and streams, a robust economy, and generations inspired to enjoy and steward the watershed.

Critical Issues/Needs

The committee evaluated and considered the list of critical issues generated at the Stakeholder meeting, those identified in the customer surveys and the issues raised in the board surveys. Most issues were consistent among the sources of input. The critical issues selected for inclusion in the strategic plan are:

- **Water Quality**
- **Financial Sustainability**

- **Marketing & Communication**
- **Outdoor Recreation**
- **Partnerships**
- **People Resources (volunteers, members, board)**

Summary of Goals and Objectives

The strategic plan identifies six strategic goals to address the critical issues/needs.

SIX STRATEGIC GOALS

Goal A: Provide for and promote sustainable water quality improvement in the Kiski-Conemaugh Basin.

Goal B: Attract the financial resources needed to sustain the organization.

Goal C: Improve public awareness and visibility of the impact of CVC's services, projects, and resources.

Goal D: Instill a stewardship ethic by connecting diverse people to natural resources through low-impact recreational opportunities.

Goal E: Foster and engage in strategic partnerships to expand CVC's capacity and credibility.

Goal F: Recruit, develop and retain diverse human resources to sustain the organization.

The following measurable objectives were developed to monitor progress and achieve the goals over a 3-year period.

GOAL A: Provide for and promote sustainable water quality improvement in the Kiski-Conemaugh Basin.

Objectives:

1. Increase and develop the number and effectiveness of stream monitoring volunteers by 20% annually (baseline 20).
2. Maintain a coordinated list of stream monitoring sites with BAMR to assure continued monitoring of AMD impaired streams and treatment systems. (Ongoing)
3. Support Blacklick Creek WA and ICCD water improvement efforts in Upper Two Lick and South Branch Blacklick creeks by providing technical assistance.
4. Increase Stream Team HR capacity by 50% by 2026.
5. Reduce the number of sites monitored/managed by each volunteer to a maximum of 12 by 2024.
6. Increase the number of watershed assessment plans in KC basin by two by 2026.

GOAL B: Attract the financial resources needed to sustain the organization.

Objectives:

1. Increase unrestricted funds by \$30,000 for CVC operations by 2024, and annually.
2. Grow CVC's Sustaining Fund by \$10,000 annually.
3. Collect at least 5% for administrative fees on project grants.
4. Increase membership contributions by 10% by 2026. (baseline 110).

GOAL C: Improve public awareness and visibility of the impact of CVC's services, projects, and resources.

Objectives:

1. Create a formal communications plan to maximize impact of Objectives 1-4 by December 2023.
2. Increase engagement in CVC social media posts to at least 10 interactions per post.
3. Increase social media followers by 5% annually – from baseline of 1,400 as of March 2023.
4. Increase newsletter audience by 5% annually – from baseline of 459 as of March 2023
5. Increase CVC visibility and name recognition through public communications and signage at all CVC properties and events by 2024. (Baseline 5 properties, three events.)

GOAL D: Instill a stewardship ethic by connecting diverse people to natural resources through low-impact recreational opportunities.

Objectives:

1. Increase recreation opportunities with at least 1 targeted non-trad partners annually.
2. Increase the number of written and updated maintenance plans for outdoor recreational assets by December 2024. (Baseline 1)
3. Maintain the maximum number of Sojourn participants annually.
4. Increase the number of participants in the triathlon by 5 % annually. (Baseline 120)
5. Promote trails as a “leave no trace” method of stewardship.
6. Increase rec opportunities by one every three years in order to serve **diverse** populations of volunteers and users.
7. Increase the number of rec users who transition to CVC service and trail stewardship.

GOAL E: Foster and engage in strategic partnerships to expand CVC's capacity and credibility.

Objectives:

1. Nurture and expand partnerships to include a minimum of two State entities and two community group partners by 2024 to achieve and maintain environmental improvement in the Basin by 2026.
2. Increase diverse non-traditional partners (such as urban based entities) by including two new partners by 2024 to assist in CVC's efforts to expand recreational activities.

3. Establish partnerships in under-served communities to reach two new service areas by 2026.
4. Promote services available to a minimum of eight watershed organizations and other like-minded NGOs by 2025.
5. Strengthen our regional/statewide credibility as a respected conservation organization by participating in regional or statewide events, committees, or councils on an annual basis.

GOAL F: Recruit, develop and retain diverse human resources to sustain the organization.

Objectives:

1. Increase the number of members of CVC by 10 annually.
2. Increase the number of new *potential* board members through establishing 5 Associate Board member positions by 2026.
3. Maintain number of volunteers adequate to implement programs and services.
4. Increase the number of volunteers that convert to donating members of CVC by 5 members annually.
5. Increase the number of members of our organization who represent the geographic span of the watershed by 2026.
6. Cultivate organizational governance through annual board development to ensure the board is properly equipped and committed to the goals and objectives of the organization.
7. Maintain supportive and positive working environment to attract and retain qualified staff.

Communications Plan

Conemaugh Valley Conservancy

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Various groups will need to learn about the strategic plan. The communications plan indicates to whom and how the strategic plan will be communicated.

The steering committee identified the following communication methods:

1. Full Plan
2. Goals Objectives Document
3. Presentation (PowerPoint)
4. Fact Sheet

Audience	What	How	Who	By When
Board	Full Plan	CVC Board meeting	Executive Director	July 12, 2023
Partners	Full Plan	E-mail Electronic Copies as appropriate	Executive Director	July 31, 2023
Potential Funders	Full Plan	Electronic or Printed Copies if Appropriate	Executive Director / Board	Ongoing / at personal meetings
General Public	Goals	Social Media/e-newsletter/website	Marketing/Communications Committee	July 31, 2023
Elected officials/partners	Goals/Fact Sheet	Face to face meetings/virtual meetings	Executive Director / Board	July 31, 2023

Implementation of Strategic Plan

The strategic plan will be implemented by the Executive Director, Board of Directors, organizational committees, and any current/future staff and AmeriCorps members. Coordination with organizational partners will be used where necessary and important to accomplish the goals and objectives listed within this plan. The Executive Director will maintain an annual action plan consisting of the goals, objectives, and action items listed within the plan and track the progress of each action item.

Monitoring and Evaluation of Strategic Plan

A semi-annual review/evaluation of the plan will be completed by the Board of Directors and Executive Director in December and June of each calendar year. At that time, any necessary updates/modifications will be made to the annual action plan and be formally approved by the Board of Directors at a regular board meeting.

Strategic Goals, Objectives Action Plans

GOAL A: : Provide for and promote sustainable water quality improvement in the Kiski-Conemaugh Basin.

Applicable anticipated trends:

- We believe that new and increased AMD/AML funding is available to complete significant restoration work, therefore we must increase our AMD/AML projects and partnerships
- We believe that there will be more of a need to respond to environmental degradation due to climate change, therefore we must be aware of its impact on CVC's trail and water projects.

Critical issues addressed: Water Quality

ACTION PLAN

Objective #1: Increase and develop the number and effectiveness of stream monitoring volunteers by 20% annually (baseline 20).

Action Step	Who will do it?	By When?
1. Contact previous volunteers	Stream Team Coord	Dec 2023
2. Speak to smaller stream/watershed organizations	ST Coord	ongoing
3. Hold a public water monitoring training session	ST Coord	Earth Week annually
4. Track the number of new volunteers	ST Coord	annual

Objective #2: Maintain a coordinated list of stream monitoring sites with BAMR to assure continued monitoring of AMD impaired streams and treatment systems. (Ongoing)

Action Step	Who will do it?	By When?
1. Meet with BAMR and review current plan	ED & ST Coord	July 2023
2. Contact PA DEP for any conflicts or gaps	ED	ongoing
3. Coordinate sites with local watershed groups	ST Coord	ongoing
4. Schedule periodic meetings to update plan	ED	annually

Objective #3: Support Blacklick Creek WA and ICCD water improvement efforts in Upper Two Lick and South Branch Blacklick creeks by providing technical assistance.

Action Step	Who will do it?	By When?
1. Meet with Blacklick WA and ICCD	ED	Spring 2023
2. Identify needs coverage and gaps	ED	Spring 2023
3. Identify who will provide assistance	ED	Spring 2023
4. Provide assistance and support	Various	Fall 2023

Objective #4: Increase Stream Team HR capacity by 50% by 2026.

Action Step	Who will do it?	By When?
1. Identify funding for PT staff Stream Team Coordinator	ED	July 2023
2. Hire a part time Stream Team coordinator	ED	2024

Objective #5: Reduce the number of sites monitored/managed by each volunteer to a maximum of 12 by 2024.

Action Step	Who will do it?	By When?
1. Determine current site load per volunteer	ST Coord	Nov 2023
2. Determine logical way to redistribute monitoring sites	ED and ST Coord	Nov 2023
3. Determine the number of additional volunteers needed	ED and ST Coord	Nov 2023
4. Recruit additional volunteers (See Objective 1)	ST Coord	ongoing

Objective #6: Increase the number of watershed assessment plans in KC basin by two by 2026.

Action Step	Who will do it?	By When?
1. Determine where watershed assessment plans are needed	ED and Watershed partners	Summer 2024
2. Provide technical assistance as requested	Staff	2026

GOAL B: Attract the financial resources needed to sustain the organization.

Applicable anticipated trends:

- We believe that new and increased AMD/AML funding is available to complete significant restoration work, therefore we must increase our AMD/AML projects and partnerships

Critical issues addressed: Financial Sustainability

ACTION PLAN

Objective #1: Increase unrestricted funds by \$30,000 for CVC operations by 2024, and annually.

Action Step	Who will do it?	By When?
1. Establish and recruit members for Fund Development Committee	Board/Executive Director	2023
2. Hold at least one additional fundraiser (in addition to WPT Triathlon and Sojourn)	Fund Development Comm	2024, annually
3. Cultivate relationships with potential private donors including businesses/individuals to encourage unrestricted donations	Fund Development Comm	Ongoing
4. Research potential charitable foundations and build relationships with them for future grant making opportunities.	Executive Director	Ongoing
5. Apply for available foundation grants that will provide unrestricted funds	Executive Director	Ongoing

Objective #2: Grow CVC's Sustaining Fund by \$10,000 annually.

Action Step	Who will do it?	By When?
1. Create a capital fundraising campaign	Executive Director / Fund Development Comm	June 2024
2. Hold a capital fundraising campaign	Executive Director / Fund Development Comm	Annually
3. Transfer any annual surplus of unrestricted funds/admin funds left over at the end of the year into the Sustaining Fund	Executive Director / Bookkeeper	Annually

Objective #3: Collect at least 5% for administrative fees on project grants.

Action Step	Who will do it?	By When?
1. Identify and apply for at least one grant project that has at least a 5% allowable administrative fee	Executive Director	Annually
2. Implement awarded grants and properly record/collect administrative fees	Executive Director, Bookkeeper	Ongoing

Objective #4: Increase membership contributions by 10% by 2026. (Baseline).

Action Step	Who will do it?	By When?
1. Evaluate current membership structure and make necessary adjustments to levels/amounts.	Fund Development Comm, Bookkeeper	2023
2. Hold a bi-annual membership drive	Fund Development Comm /ED	Bi-Annually
3. Investigate and if appropriate, create and implement a corporate/business membership campaign	Fund Development Comm /ED	June 2024 then Annually
4. Maximize sponsorship opportunities	Board & Fund Development Comm	ongoing

GOAL C: Improve public awareness and visibility of the impact of CVC's services, projects, and resources.

Applicable anticipated trends:

- We believe that we have to appeal to a broader public, therefore we must develop and implement an overall marketing/outreach plan.

Critical issues addressed: Marketing; Communication

ACTION PLAN

Objective #1: Create a formal communications plan to maximize impact of Objectives 1-4 by December 2023.

Action Step	Who will do it?	By When?
1. Establish Marketing/Communications Committee	Board	Summer 2023
2. Consider UPJ marketing class recommendations	Marketing Comm.	Aug 2023
3. Draft communications plan (key messages, target audiences, tools, etc.)	Marketing Comm.	Dec 2023

4. Establish Marketing/Communications budget	Marketing Comm./Finance Comm.	Summer 2024
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Objective #2: Increase engagement in CVC social media posts to at least 10 interactions per post.

Action Step	Who will do it?	By When?
1. Board, committee members create likes, comments, shares for posts.	Board	Ongoing
2. Generate reports every six months.	Laura Hawkins, FB admin.	Ongoing
3. Utilize small grants to “boost” posts	Marketing Comm.	Dec 2023

Objective #3: Increase social media followers by 5% annually – from baseline of 1,400 as of March 2023.

Action Step	Who will do it?	By When?
1. Utilize small grants to “boost” posts	Marketing Comm.	Dec 2023
2. Diversify posts, 2-3 per week (sampling, events, share partner info, ED's blog)	ED, Marketing Comm.	Spring 2024
3. Board, committee members create likes, comments, shares for posts.	Board	Ongoing
4. Compare number of followers annually	Marketing Comm.	March 2024

Objective #4: Increase newsletter audience by 5% annually – from baseline of 459 as of March 2023

Action Step	Who will do it?	By When?
1. New board members provide contacts	Board	Ongoing
2. Add new sponsors, members, partners	Bookkeeper	Ongoing
3. Sign-up sheet at all events	Board	Ongoing
4. Compare number of recipients annually	Laura Hawkins	March 2024

Objective #5: Increase CVC visibility and name recognition through public communications and signage at all CVC properties and events by 2024. (Baseline 5 properties, three events.)

Action Step	Who will do it?	By When?
1. Implement WPT signage project	Green Way Coord./Trail Council	2023
2. Prominently display banner at Sojourn, Ann Mtg, Triathlon	Sojourn Comm, ED, Triathlon Comm	ongoing
3. Provide board members with 1 page summary – how to be an ambassador for CVC	Green Way Coord, Board Dev Com	Aug 2023
4. Establish “a project of the Conemaugh Valley Conservancy” tagline for all programs/projects	Each program supervisor	Aug 2023

GOAL D: Instill a stewardship ethic by connecting diverse people to natural resources through low-impact recreational opportunities.

Applicable anticipated trends:

- We believe that this area has great potential to increase recreational opportunities and the demand for recreation is growing fast, therefore we must make sure we partner for development of new opportunities and plan for maintenance of recreational assets.
- We believe that there will be more of a need to respond to environmental degradation due to climate change, therefore we must be aware of its impact on CVC's trail and water projects.

Critical issues addressed: Outdoor Recreation; Communication

ACTION PLAN

Objective #1: Increase recreation opportunities with at least 1 targeted non-trad partners annually.

Action Step	Who will do it?	By When?
1. Develop partnership with National Outdoor Rec Developer to review our outdoor rec offerings and get their assistance in strengthening our offerings	Rob, John	September 1, 2023
2. Plan new offerings as per #1	Board and partners	annually
3. Implement plan	Board and partners	annually
4. Evaluate plan success	Board	annually

Objective #2: Increase the number of written and updated maintenance plans for outdoor recreational assets by December 2024. (Baseline 1)

Action Step	Who will do it?	By When?
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1. Create a CVC oversight committee for maintenance	Board	2024
2. Create list of outdoor rec. assets	Maintenance Comm	2024
3. Develop upkeep plans and staff needs (paid, volunteer, AmeriCorps)	Maintenance Comm	2024
4. Ensure new assets have appropriate maintenance plans	Maintenance Comm	ongoing

Objective #3: Maintain the maximum number of Sojourn participants annually.

Action Step	Who will do it?	By When?
1. Retain and increase sponsorships	Sojourn Comm, Board	Annually by March
2. Outreach to past users	Sojourn Comm	Annually by March
3. Market to new users	Sojourn Comm	Annually by March

Objective #4: Increase the number of participants in the triathlon by 5 % annually. (Baseline 120)

Action Step	Who will do it?	By When?
1. Promote Triathlon to members of related organizations	John, Laura, Mike Keltz	July 2023
2. Revise plan to document promotional efforts	WPT Council	Nov 2023
3. Document promotion of CVC brand	Marketing Comm	Ongoing
4. Evaluate annual increase	WPT Council	Ongoing

Objective #5: Promote trails as a “leave no trace” method of stewardship.

Action Step	Who will do it?	By When?
1. Each new project CVC undertakes will establish this method from day one via signage and newsletters	ED	As needed
2. Existing projects will communicate this message to users via signage and newsletters	Respective project committees	June 1, 2024
3. Document promotion of CVC brand	Marketing Comm	Ongoing

Objective #6: Increase rec opportunities by one every three years in order to serve **diverse** populations of volunteers and users.

Action Step	Who will do it?	By When?
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1. Identify potential rec opportunities (birding trail, train watchers, Sojourn demos, morning Tai Chi/Yoga)	Staff, Board	Summer 2024
2. Prioritize various opportunities	Board	Dec 2024
3. Plan given activity	Board and Partners	July 2025
4. Implement	Board and Partners	Jan 2026
5. Document promotion of CVC brand	Marketing Comm	Ongoing

Objective #7: Increase the number of rec users who transition to CVC service and trail stewardship.

Action Step	Who will do it?	By When?
1. Establish baseline	Green Way Coord	Dec 2023
2. Use events and programs as recruiting opportunities	ST or Event Coord	Ongoing
3. Report annually on transition numbers	ST or Event Coord	Ongoing

GOAL E : Foster and engage in strategic partnerships to expand CVC's capacity and credibility.

Applicable anticipated trends:

- We believe that new and increased AMD/AML funding is available to complete significant restoration work, therefore we must increase our AMD/AML projects and partnerships.

Critical issues addressed: Partnerships

ACTION PLAN

Objective #1: Nurture and expand partnerships to include a minimum of two State entities and two community group partners by 2024 to achieve and maintain environmental improvement in the Basin by 2026.

Action Step	Who will do it?	By When?
1. Seek advice from PA Park and Forests Foundation, County Conservation Districts, PA Fish & Boat, and Game Commissions	ED	Dec 2023

2. Contact existing partnerships that support CVC capacity, strengthen links and maximizing resources (Greenways, FPW, CFA, BAMR.)	ED	June 2024
3. Prioritize and contact likely partners	ED	Dec 2024
4. Identify joint projects	ED	2026

Objective #2: Increase diverse non-traditional partners (such as urban based entities) by including two new partners by 2024 to assist in CVC's efforts to expand recreational activities.

Action Step	Who will do it?	By When?
1. Seek advice from organizations such as CCCRA or Indiana Parks	ED, Board	Dec 2023
2. Prioritize and contact likely partners	ED	2024
3. Present CVC assets, ask how we can serve them.		
4. Identify joint projects	ED	2024

Objective #3: Establish partnerships in under-served communities to reach two new service areas by 2026.

Action Step	Who will do it?	By When?
1. Approach two organizations outside Johnstown oriented to under-served youth to present CVC assets, ask how we can serve them.	ED	July 2024
2. Utilize recommendation from Outdoor Inclusion Coalition	ED	July 2024
3. Develop and organizational DEI statement	Board	Dec 2023

Objective #4 Promote services available to a minimum of eight watershed organizations and other like-minded NGOs by 2025.

Action Step	Who will do it?	By When?
1. Advertise Stream Team program and technical support to watershed organizations	ED, ST Coord	Dec 2024

Objective #5: Strengthen our regional/statewide credibility as a respected conservation organization by participating in regional or statewide events, committees, or councils on an annual basis.

Action Step	Who will do it?	By When?
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1. Discuss with State Reps how CVC can be appointed to committees or councils	Board	Ongoing
2. Identify and prioritize events to promote CVC on the wider stage.	Board	Ongoing
3. Participate in chosen events	ED	Ongoing

GOAL F: Recruit, develop and retain diverse human resources to sustain the organization.

Applicable anticipated trends:

- We believe that volunteers and our board are aging out, therefore we must create and cultivate a volunteer recruitment and retention program.

Critical issues addressed: People Resources (volunteers, members, board)

ACTION PLAN

Objective #1: Increase the number of members of CVC by 10 annually.

Action Step	Who will do it?	By When?
1. Review partner organizations for joint memberships	Executive Director	June 2024
2. Identify special perks for membership such as the special sojourn registration fee for members	Marketing Committee	June 2024
3. Maintain the contact list for volunteers and members, to identify potential new members	Stream Team, Exec. Dir., Bookkeeper.	Ongoing
4. Recruit targeted individuals	Closest CVC member	Ongoing
5. Track new members	Bookkeeper	Annually

Objective #2: Increase the number of new *potential* board members through establishing 5 Associate Board member positions by 2026.

Action Step	Who will do it?	By When?
1. Create a definition and responsibilities for associate board members	Board Development Committee	Dec 2023
2. Edit, vote for, and add the definition to the board bylaws	Board Dev. Comm.	July 2024
3. Identify members of other organizations and interested/active volunteers for potential Associate membership	Board and Exec. Dir.	Oct 2025

4. Reach out to those potential associate members and select 5 for placement on the Board.	Board and Exec. Dir.	Feb 2026

Objective #3: Maintain number of volunteers adequate to implement programs and services.

Action Step	Who will do it?	By When?
1. Estimate the minimum number of volunteers needed for current programs/services	Board and Exec. Dir.	Fall 2024
2. Create and insert a framework for estimating volunteer needs into any new programs/services	Exec. Dir. and Board Committees	Fall 2024
3. Establish a real volunteer recruitment and retention program – recruit, train, track, recognize	Ad hoc Comm composed of ST, WPT, Sojourn. coordinators	May 2025
4. Implement recruitment/retention program	All Hands	Ongoing

Objective #4: Increase the number of volunteers that convert to donating members of CVC by 5 members annually.

Action Step	Who will do it?	By When?
1. Design solicitation emails/letters to volunteers	Marketing Comm.	May 2024
2. Send special solicitation to volunteers highlighting perks developed for membership	Marketing Comm.	Aug 2024
3. Document such new members	Bookkeeper	Annually

Objective #5: Increase the number of members of our organization who represent the geographic span of the watershed by 2026.

Action Step	Who will do it?	By When?
1. Create a list of members and their addresses	Bookkeeper	Dec 2023
2. Identify which zip codes are represented by the membership	Bookkeeper	Dec 2023
3. Explore organizational memberships (for watershed org and other conservation organizations) to better represent geographic blank spots	Exec. Dir.	June 2024

4. Solicit membership from targeted areas	ED, Marketing Comm	April 2025
5. Track such new members	Bookkeeper	Annually

Objective #6: Cultivate organizational governance through annual board development to ensure the board is properly equipped and committed to the goals and objectives of the organization.

Action Step	Who will do it?	By When?
1. Schedule annual retreat to review progress on goals/objectives of strategic plan	Strategic Planning Comm.	June 2024
2. Identify board training needs-board assessment survey	Strategic Planning Comm. (utilize first survey), Board Dev. Comm.	Ongoing, annual review
3. Expand Board Development Committee	Board	Dec 2023
4. Utilize Bayer Center/CFA library to provide board training	Board and Exec Dir.	May 2025

Objective #7: Maintain supportive and positive working environment to attract and retain qualified staff.

Action Step	Who will do it?	By When?
1. Identify and deliver staff development needs	Board	Ongoing
2. Conduct annual staff evaluation/engagement discussion	Board	Dec 2023
3. Commit to annual salary adjustments based on evaluation results	Board	Dec 2023
4. Provide adequate volunteer support to ensure realistic workload	Ad Hoc Volunteer Comm, ED	Ongoing

APPENDIX

Stakeholder Meeting Summary

Conemaugh Valley Conservancy (CVC)

Strategic Planning Stakeholder Meeting

January 12, 2023

Agenda

Purpose: to gather input to aid CVC in writing its' strategic plan for next 3 years. Gain your ideas on critical issues/needs to be addressed, trends, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities & threats (S.W.O.T) and potential goal strategies.

- 8:45 Gathering Time
- 9:00 Welcome & Introductions
- What the CVC does now – John Wenzel
- Services
 - Projects
- Planning Process
- Input
 - Timeline
- Critical Issues/Needs to Address in Plan
- Trends Which May Impact CVC
- S.W.O.T. Analysis
- Noon **LUNCH – provided**
- Ranking Critical Issues/Needs
- Criteria
 - Lobbying & Voting
- Potential Goal Strategies
- Wrap-Up
- 2:00 **Adjourn**

CVC Stakeholder Meeting Notes (1/12/23)

When I think of Conemaugh Valley Conservancy (CVC), I think of

_____:

- West Penn Trail
- Bike trails, watershed organization, water sampling
- Water sampling & rail trails
- Water quality & trails
- Water & trails
- Water sampling & rail trails
- Water sampling
- Stream Team water sampling & analysis
- Stream Team
- Stream Team and AMD water monitoring & river sojourn
- Water testing at AMD sites & Birding Trail
- Dedicated volunteers just trying to build trails & test water
- Active volunteers
- Umbrella environmental organization due to all the other env'tal entities they touch
- Umbrella or Octopus group connecting multiple initiatives
- Stewards of our natural resources
- Environmental conservation
- Environmental conservation
- Environmental conservation & trails
- Conservation & recreation
- Conservation (Stream Team) & recreation
- Stony-Kiski-Conemaugh River Sojourn
- Where it's come from and where it's headed
- The excitement & direction on the outdoors with such a gathering as today's

TRENDS which have the potential to impact the CVC over the next 3 years:

We believe that _____, therefore we (CVC) must

_____.

1. We believe that there will be more of a **need to respond to environmental degradation due to climate change**, therefore we must identify the highest at- risk areas, communicate with our partners and create a plan to address those areas.
2. We believe that **new and increased AMD/AML funding** is available to complete significant restoration work, therefore we must increase our AMD/AML projects and partnerships.
3. We believe that **fundors will want to see larger, more consolidated projects**, therefore we must form close partnerships with related organizations.
4. We believe there will be a **need to increase staffing**, therefore we must develop a program of technical and educational support to partners.
5. We believe that we have to **appeal to a broader public**, therefore we must improve our social media profile to find younger people.
6. We believe that we have to **appeal to a broader public**, therefore we must list the recreation groups and focus outreach on each (traditional and non-traditional).
7. We believe that we have to **appeal to a broader public**, therefore we must develop and implement an overall marketing/outreach plan.
8. We believe that this area has great potential to increase recreational opportunities and the **demand for recreation is growing fast**, therefore we must partner with others doing recreation, including businesses such as bike shops.
9. We believe that this area has great potential to increase recreational opportunities and the **demand for recreation is growing fast**, therefore we must make more connections to existing groups such as **LHORBA**.
10. We believe that this area has great potential to increase recreational opportunities and the **demand for recreation is growing fast**, therefore we must make sure we adequately maintain the recreation we have developed.
11. We believe that we need to **protect the natural resources on which the recreation takes place**, therefore we need to identify staff/volunteers and funding necessary to maintain our current recreational assets and look for opportunities to add to them.

12. We believe that trail development has evolved to a place where CVC's role in this must also evolve, therefore we must re-examine the county's role in trail development/maintenance and possibly move CVC to an oversight role since we are not positioned to manage all individual assets of all trails within the basin.
13. We believe that volunteers and our board will age out in 10 years, therefore we must enhance management of Stream Team outcomes as a recruitment and retention tool for new or younger volunteers to highlight reasons to volunteer.
14. We believe that volunteers and our board will age out in 10 years, therefore we must make the water sampling process a more "social" event to draw interest (examples: meet at a local brewery, end at a restaurant, have weekend opportunities).
15. We believe millennials care about the environment and want "hands on" volunteer experiences, therefore we must promote Stream Team social opportunities such as sample as a team on Sundays 4 times a year and meet at a brewery afterwards.

Stakeholders' Critical Issues Grouped by Categories

(#) is the scoring as a result of ranking to set priorities

Yellow highlights show the top 5 priority critical issues scoring in 50s & 40s

1. Water Quality (58)

- Water quality improvements
- AMD remediation
- Stream Team monitoring

2. Financial Sustainability (54)

- Paying Executive Director
- Staffing
- Long-term funding
- Financial stability
- Funding
- Funding maintenance of recreational facilities
- Best use of available funding

3. Marketing/Communications (45)

- Telling our story
- Public support (members, volunteers)
- Communication
- Community connections
- Make people aware they have a place at CVC
- Public awareness
- Increase communication with groups that benefit from our work
- Bird trail – as marketing tool

4. Outdoor Recreation (45)

- Outdoor recreation
- Expanding trails
- Trail connectivity
- Bird trail
- Inclined Plane Park
- Develop Conemaugh Gap Park

5. Partnerships (43)

- Working with other organizations
- Government support
- Increased communication with partners
- Assistance with property ownership issues

6. People Resources (33)

- Membership
- Grow membership base
- Diversify membership
- Volunteers
- Get younger people involved
- “younger” volunteers (40- to 50-year-olds)
- Enhanced training opportunities for volunteers re: sampling
- Legacy involvement

7. Stewardship (14)

- Sustaining initiatives – continue maintenance
- Invasive species – also related to water quality & land conservation

8. Board (8)

- Balancing interests
- Commitment to whole basin
- Maintaining relevance

Critical issues were selected by Teams to brainstorm potential strategies

Issue & Category	Potential Strategies (verb, object, purpose)
Stream Team – Water Quality	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attract or hire more staff/volunteers for the stream team to continue and expand. 2. Investigate funding opportunities to expand the program through assessments and pre and post project funding.
AMD Remediation – Water Quality	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop priorities and plans to facilitate AMD remediation.
Financial Sustainability	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish a stronger membership program to fund staff positions/operations funding. 2. Develop better connections to underserved communities in order to increase membership and therefore users for events and volunteers. 3. Identify a new revenue stream for operations.
Marketing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a communication plan to attract supporters. 2. Target specific audiences to increase effectiveness of marketing effort. 3. Tell our story and how it impacts individuals to increase awareness and create interest.
Outdoor Recreation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pursue funds to expand outdoor recreation to engage more people in nature. 2. Seek opportunities, maybe through partnerships, to engage people other than middleclass whites in recreation. 3. Develop opportunities, access and instruction in outdoor activities to novices of all ages.

S.W.O.T Analysis

Format: attribute + its impact

Strengths – positive internal conditions that can be **used in strategies** to help carry out goals & objectives

- **Experience** so efficiency & ability to effectively manage projects/programs
- Capable/knowledgeable/ambitious/personable **Executive Director (ED)**, experience matters and strong relationship opportunities can continue to grow
- **Strong financial assets** & asset management so positioned for long-term financial stability & growth
- **Agile & flexible** so able to take on opportunities with all that is “new” (people, players, plans)
- Established “good” **reputation** so have shown ability to maximize partnerships & get things done
- Good history of **funding from foundations** which will help us with future funding
- **Low organizational operating costs** with few expenses so better sustainability & flexibility
- Engaged & **active board** which helps to support goals & our reputation for outcome of our projects
- **Geographic reach** which allows us to work with multiple partners & funders to stretch our program impact
- Organization framework with **manuals for board & volunteers** which allows board members, members & volunteers to participate with knowledge of procedures & allows for organizational continuity
- **Stream Team** allows CVC to be relevant in providing useful water quality data to partners

Weaknesses – negative internal conditions that are **potential barriers to address** for success of goals & objectives

- Limited number of people to lead projects means **few know details** of each project
- Limited number of people so attrition factor for **risk of lack of continuity**
- **Lack of staff** & **lack of future or legacy planning** yield being overwhelmed at times, maybe things fall through cracks
- Board & volunteers are aging & lack of staff means **lack of people to do work**
- **Lack of unified priorities** & “fragmentation” so decisions are not based on what is best for organization leading to unbalanced attention to existing projects or programs
- **Operational funding sources are not available** & can limit the long-term staffing needs & achievement of goals
- **Lack of diversity within CVC** & **within target audience** can lead to not being inclusive of different ethnic, racial, age groups; lack of appeal to recreational users; lack to funding

Opportunities – positive external possibilities that can be **used in strategies to help carry out goals & objectives**

- **Increasing amount of AMD funding** is/will be available which will provide more opportunities for AMD/AML treatment
- **Geographic location** which will provide more opportunities for AMD/AML projects
- **Many potential partners** (grassroots) give us opportunity to accomplish bigger projects
- A **large** but **disconnected trail system** that gives us the opportunity to unite or link them together
- **“trail gaps”** are a current DCNR priority so potential funding source
- **University system & local schools** which will help us get younger people involved & more potential for projects
- **Diverse populations** so we can reach out to get more volunteers & supporters
- **Growing recreational economy** can create more financial support
- Ability for **enhanced PR** to promote conservation/recreation and build partnerships
- New **DEI funding opportunities** allow for new initiatives to reach broader populations/demographics and increase access for all
- **EXTREME “experiential” urban-outdoor recreation project** for national/regional visibility & attracting new – younger – diverse parties to area and \$\$
- **Tourist branding strategy** can be joined with our work. We can raise our visibility in the community & can lead to further opportunities
- Property **tax sales** as opportunity to add & enhance access to recreational areas
- **Digital media** which can connect us to more younger users, other organizations, partners, etc.

Threats – negative external possibilities that are **potential barriers to address for success of goals & objectives**

- **Climate change can damage our assets** and add degradation to our environment
- **Program funding loss for staff & maintenance** cannot be found to complete and protect/maintain our projects
- **Lack and loss of interest from younger generation for outdoor recreation & conservation** (more tech that replaces traditional recreation) which leads to nature deficit disorder & less volunteers/members
- **Population loss** in Johnstown (peak pop in 1920, lost 10k in 20 years) and Cambria Co. (past 50 years 50k loss in pop) leads to less users, less support, less volunteers, less attractive for funding
- A **territorial mentality** of some organizations results in less cooperation & less projects
- **Less coal being mined & decline of coal industry** leads to less SMCRA money & **less industrial partnerships** for reclamation long-term
- **Rural versus urban population** less support for outdoors & need for consideration of impacts on rural areas
- **Political culture changes** impact environmental efforts
- **Lack of work ethic** in present society & culture leads to lack of involvement of younger people

Summary of Customer Surveys

Strategic Planning survey results

CVC Public and Stakeholders' Survey Results

John Wenzel, February 7, 2023

Executive Summary.

Two surveys were administered online. The public survey was distributed to our membership and also a link was posted on Face Book. This survey served to get a glimpse of who our public is, and how they interact with CVC. The public survey reinforces positions the Committee has already noted. Environmental issues are most highly prioritized, and the Sojourn and cycling trails figure strongly. A need for better publicity is clearly identified. Respondents represented a broader geographic area than we might have expected, with half of them not from the Johnstown area or Blairsville. This indicates we could attract supporters from a greater footprint than we usually expect. The Stakeholders' survey was more in depth and should be familiar to this committee. While there is evidence that Stakeholders differed in emphasis, there is a strong pattern of support for water quality work and trails. Also, stakeholders generally shared strong feelings regarding strengths and weaknesses of the organization of CVC. They identified marketing, communications, and finances as areas to be improved.

Public Survey. Questions were mostly simple with multiple choice answers or ranking. Complete results are in Appendix One, here I will summarize the main points from the 33 replies we received.

Most of the respondents were members (79%) and many were donors (24%). A third were interested users our programs or facilities, and both "related non-profit organization" and "partner in activity with CVC" earned 27% of the replies. Sixty-eight per cent of respondents said they either were regular or occasional users of our programs. Thus, the respondents have adequate background to provide helpful perspectives we seek.

Asked where they live, the regions were as follows: Johnstown/Westmont/Windber/Dale = combined for 13; Blairsville = 4; Once each - Leechburg, Hesston, Clarksville, Saltsburg, Pittsburgh, Forbes Road, Latrobe, State College, Hollsopple, Ebensburg, Torrance, Blacklick, Seward, Turtle Creek, Erie, Indiana. While Johnstown and Blairsville claim half the respondents, it is encouraging to see the broad spread of the other half. I checked for both of the most distant people, Erie and State College, and each of them connected to CVC through the Sojourn, indicating the popularity of the Sojourn. From these results, CVC could likely expand its support base much more broadly than we generally think of.

Asked what activities respondents engaged in, the Sojourn was top with 52%, followed by cycling trails and supporting other community groups, both at 33%. This last one is interesting because support for other community groups was ranked last when activities were prioritized (but it was high among Stakeholders, below.) The lowest participation was in education programs (9%), which is not a surprise because CVC has not had much of that recently. I included the question because I know that Missy did have some education activities and I was curious if there was a legacy of that.

Asked how they learned about CVC, a whopping 71% said by personal communication, although 19% indicated they found us through the website or web search. Stakeholders also indicated a shortage of public promotion, below. It is encouraging that the website did as well as it did, and that presents an opportunity for us to exploit.

Regarding what activities should be better known, top activities were water monitoring (64%) and education programs (51%). Because only 9% of the respondents have engaged in an education

program, I wonder if this is an artefact, as if they are saying “Education programs? I didn’t know CVC did education. I’d like to know more about that.” Close behind education was cycling trails (45%).

The ranking exercise divided activities rather clearly into three bins of priority (see Appendix One for actual results). The top priority was about equally environmental restoration and environmental monitoring which both received very high scores. Closely tied for second priority were education (there it is again!), and trails, and river events. Lowest priority was supporting other community groups, which is interesting because 33% of respondents said they were engaged in that activity.

The final question was “if you could make one recommendation, what would it be?” There were only 20 replies from the 33 respondents (see Appendix One for verbatim replies). Most replies can be grouped according to theme, with “Need better publicity” being the most common. This is consistent with the large number of respondents who learned of CVC through personal communication. Following that, there were several “keep up the good work” comments, which are encouraging but not useful to us in this exercise. Interestingly, while conservation and environmental concerns were ranked with highest priority, only two respondents used this opportunity to push that agenda. Five replies do not bin with the others.

Stakeholders’ survey. This survey was designed to seek opinions from those who have extensive experience with one or more CVC programs and to create a synthesis of opinions. Many open-ended questions allowed respondents freedom in replies. For certain questions, respondents assigned numerical scores, and these can be compared to see how various activities or programs stand in the eyes of our stakeholders. The respondents were primarily Board members (60%) and interested residents (33%).

Some themes come through clearly. Stakeholders shared a view that CVC’s mission and identity is environmental issues and recreation. See verbatim replies to Question 2 in Appendix Two. All respondents endorsed policy and practice supporting diversity, equity, inclusion, and environmental justice. There was a strong thread of concern regarding organizational issues, such as achieving adequate staffing and managing projects better. Open-ended replies are extensive and varied, but nonetheless show patterns, with most concerns and suggestions falling loosely into bins as “organizational,” “programmatic,” “financial,” and “marketing.” The prompt “what do you think CVC should do better?” (Question 16), produced six replies centered on improving organizational practices and three on marketing and communications. Suggestions for increasing effectiveness of CVC produced 11 comments that were organizational, five regarding marketing, and three programmatic in nature.

Turning attention to SWOT analysis, organizational aspects were the most commonly cited features in both Strength and Weakness. This is an interesting paradox, and addressing these aspects will be an important goal. Programmatic aspects were most commonly cited as Opportunities, whereas financial concerns dominated Threats.

Questions regarding who CVC should cultivate as partners in the future were very productive as a brain-storming session, and replies will be considered in a venue different from this report. Rating the services CVC provides (Question 25) placed water monitoring and technical support to watershed organizations at the top. Abandoned mine remediation split with 40% of respondents ranking it as first or second priority, and 40% as fifth or sixth priority. Ranking lower were trails, recreation development, and education and outreach.

Eleven questions established perceived priorities of different activities. Those that scored highest were water quality monitoring, abandoned mine remediation, and technical support to other groups. Low scorers were recreational development and trails. This is not to say that recreation and trails are unimportant, they were commonly cited as part of CVC's central mission, rather these projects simply rank lower in our portfolio than do others.

The Stakeholders' survey is rich in suggestions. Although some are apparently at cross purposes, we should take to heart the common themes among varied replies.

Appendix One:
Public Survey: 33 responses.

1. Where do you live:

Johnstown/Westmont/Windber/Dale = 13

Blairsville = 4

Once each - Leechburg, Hesston, Clarksville, Saltsburg, Pittsburgh, Forbes Road, Latrobe, State College, Hollsopple, Ebensburg, Torrance, Seward, Turtle Creek, Erie, Blacklick, Indiana.

2. How do you interact with CVC?

Member – 78.79%26

Donor - 24.24%8

Interested user of CVC programs or facilities - 33.33%11

Related non-profit organization - 27.27%9

Partner in activity with CVC - 27.27%9

I do not interact with CVC often or directly - 12.12%4

3. What activities have you shared in?

river sojourn - 51.52%17

white water event - 18.18%6

Triathlon - 12.12%4

cycling trails - 33.33%11

water monitoring - 21.21%7

education program - 9.09%3

supporting other community group - 33.33%11

None - 6.06%2

4. Your participation is (32 replies)

Regular - 28.13%9

Occasional - 40.63%13

Rare - 21.88%7

previously active, but not now - 9.38%3

5. How did you learn about CVC? (31 replies)

Web site or web search - 19.35%6

Newsletter - 6.45%2

Annual report - 0.00%0

FaceBook or other social media - 3.23%1

Personal communication - 70.97%22

6. Which of these activities should be better known?

river sojourn - 36.36%12

white water event - 33.33%11

cycling trails - 45.45%15

water monitoring - 63.64%21

education program - 51.52%17

supporting other community group - 24.24%8

7. Please rank these activities in your perceived order of importance:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	TOTAL	SCORE
environmental restoration	28.13% 9	31.25% 10	21.88% 7	3.13% 1	6.25% 2	9.38% 3	32	4.44
environmental monitoring	21.21% 7	33.33% 11	18.18% 6	18.18% 6	9.09% 3	0.00% 0	33	4.39
environmental education	9.38% 3	6.25% 2	28.13% 9	25.00% 8	25.00% 8	6.25% 2	32	3.31
outdoor recreation - trails	18.18% 6	15.15% 5	12.12% 4	18.18% 6	27.27% 9	9.09% 3	33	3.52
outdoor recreation - river events	18.18% 6	15.15% 5	9.09% 3	24.24% 8	27.27% 9	6.06% 2	33	3.55
Supporting other community groups	6.06% 2	0.00% 0	9.09% 3	12.12% 4	6.06% 2	66.67% 22	33	1.88

8. If you could make one recommendation, what would it be? 20 responses, verbatim:

Need better publicity.

Better public awareness of activities which would recognition of the hard work and improvements. I found a pamphlet at a car dealership Spangler Subaru.

More info about public events, education, activities.

Continue to make known throughout the communities it serves CVC's efforts and goals.

As a member of Indiana county and local for the Laurel Highlands, I had to actively search to find this group. I am receiving emails from the group, and to be fair, have only been joined for about a year, but I didn't know that there was a white water in that or the river trip until this survey. Marketing could be better.

The West Penn Trail needs to be better promoted. You would be surprised at how many people in Blairsville and Saltsburg have no idea it even exists. Also, I think the triathlon needs to have much better media coverage than it currently does. The Johnstown and Pittsburgh TV stations need to be there to cover it.

Do more press releases! Let the newspapers know what you are doing, there is no cost. Election of officers, water monitoring, with a photo, trails, river sojourn, cleaning up of mine drainage sites, projects completed and projects upcoming are all good publicity for us. I would suggest this be done at least once a month. Email to the Tribune- Democrat, Indiana Gazette, Greensburg Tribune-Review and any others in the vicinity. Usually, a phone call ahead to alert them and give them a phone number they can use as a contact with any questions will help.

This group is practically a well-kept secret. More publicity!

More media coverage and community outreach.

Keep up the good work.

Stay the course. Continue to show the past (Conemaugh) and its success story and what it is today, and what it can be tmr.

CVC is excellent, expanding current programs.

Keep up the good work!

Continue effort to spread the CVC mission while attracting more people, young and old, to join in the executing of the numerous parts of the mission.

Keep up the good work.

Conservation, monitoring, etc.

Focus on environmental restoration in our are through volunteerism of our communities. Partner with Western Pennsylvania Conservancy.

A focus on conservation, preservation, and restoration is a true need in the region.

Unique:

Be sure politics and extreme views do not disrupt the goals and membership of the CVC.

Don't have enough experience with CVC yet to make a suggestion. Hopefully, in the future!

Attract young people.

Not sure.

Set up a means for automatic ongoing donation.

Appendix Two
Stakeholders' survey.
 Fifteen respondents.

1. Please select the group that best represents your connection to the Conemaugh Valley Conservancy.

CVC member/Board member - 60.00%
 County Agency - 6.67%
 County Conservation District - 0.00%
 Local Municipality - 0.00%
 State or Federal Agency - 6.67%
 Interested Resident - 33.33%
 Teacher/Educator - 0.00%
 Funding Partner - 6.67%

2. What do you perceive is CVC's mission or identity?

All replies focus on environment and recreation:

Water Quality Improvements/Monitoring (environmental restoration) and recreational trail development.
 Environment and conservation.
 Support and advocacy for environmental, recreation and community benefits throughout the CVC region.
 Conservation of natural resources and development of trails in the area.
 Promote outdoor recreation and work for clean water.
 We believe CVC main mission is conservation of the land and water.
 Restoration and Preservation of the Conemaugh River Region.
 To improve the quality of life of residents of the Conemaugh Valley through environmental, educational and recreational projects.
 To support conservation efforts and responsible outdoor activity in the watershed.
 CONSERVATION OF NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES.
 To promote both human powered, low impact recreation and conservation and remediation of land and water natural resources.
 To steward and promote our area's natural resources and appropriate usage of same.
 Conserve and promote natural and recreation resources in the Kiski-Conemaugh River Basin.
 Restore the environment, provide healthy outdoor recreation.

Questions 3-13.

Ranking (1 low, 4 high)
 average for all 11 indices =

What priority do you think CVC should give to Trail
 3.37

Development for the next 3-5 years? **3.1**

What priority do you think CVC should give to Water
 Monitoring for the next 3-5 years?

3.7

What priority do you think CVC should give to
 Recreational Development in the next 3-5 years?

3.1

What priority do you think CVC should give to
 Abandoned Mine Remediation in the next 3-5 years?

3.8

What priority do you think CVC should give to Technical

Support to Watershed Organizations in the next 3-5 years?	3.6
To what degree should CVC focus on Trail Development for the next 3-5 years?	3.0
To what degree should CVC focus on Water Monitoring for the next 3-5 years?	3.3
To what degree should CVC focus on Recreational Development for the next 3-5 years?	2.9
To what degree should CVC focus on Abandoned Mine Remediation for the next 3-5 years?	3.7
To what degree should CVC focus on Technical Support to Watershed Organizations for the next 3-5 years?	3.6
To what degree should CVC focus on Education and Outreach for the next 3-5 years?	3.3

14. Should CVC give priority to diversity, equity, inclusion, and environmental justice in both policy and practice across their various programs and operations?

Replies

These issues should be considered to the extent practical.

Should be given the same priority as all areas of CVC's mission and not be driving or deciding factor. CVC priorities should be those that benefit the most persons with the most environmental impact for the effort.

Yes, to the extent possible CVC should support and prioritize e-justice throughout its programs and operations.

Yes as it may a focus of Federal Monies that may help CVC's objectives.

Absolutely. This should have happened a while ago.

"Yes," nine times

15. In your interactions, what do you think CVC has done well? [Bold categories provided only after analysis to offer comments of like kind together.]

Trails:

Trails, both water and land trails

Management of the West Penn Trail and associated events like the Sojourn and West Penn Trail Triathlon.

Sojourn, Triathlon are stellar events.

Stream Team:

Water quality monitoring and support of partner organizations.

As a watershed organization we rely on them for technical support and help in sampling.

CVC has done a great job in reestablishing the AMD water monitoring program.

Protect our natural resources by monitoring water quality and promoting our assets.

Hybrid:

The Stream Team, in the past, has always been a very good program. promote outdoor recreation and water quality monitoring.

Trail work, water quality monitoring.

Trails, water testing, working throughout the basin.

Unique:

Coordinator or facilitator for other organizations (umbrella organization).

Yes.

HELP ACQUIRE LAND AND FIND SUITABLE OWNERS.

Promote community development, chaperone watershed orgs.

16. In your interactions, what do you think CVC should do better? [Bold categories provided only after analysis to offer comments of like kind together.]**Organization:**

Organizational consistency... turnover has led to destabilization of good programs like the stream team. Seem to be on a better track now but need to work to maintain that and reduce the impact of potential future turnover.

Project development from studies/monitoring research; outreach of mission and goals

Increase the staff for education and technical assistance.

Work independently to advance CVC'S goals and initiatives.

Better coordination and prioritization of what projects we take on.

Focus.

Marketing and promotion.

Communications, involving young people

MARKETING AND PROMOTING THE OUTDOORS

Communications and promotions of its activities

Stream Team.

Put more emphasis on AMD/AMR work

Unique:

Always.

Fund their own operations.

Continue in the same path. CVC is not staffed to necessarily own projects rather is more equipped to facilitate projects.

17. What recreation or natural resource program ideas do you think CVC should consider implementing in the next 5 years? [Bold categories provided only after analysis to offer comments of like kind together.]**Stream Team related.**

AMD/AML reclamation projects... there's funding out there for this and it fits in our mission.

Technical support to local watershed groups; establish an outreach program to local school groups, expand the water monitoring volunteer base.

Environmental improvement through AML/AMD Reclamation and Treatment because of the large funding opportunities.

CVC needs to learn what role it might play in AMD activity, given all the new funding available.

Trails.

Improve the West Penn Trail by partnering with Westmoreland County to bring the trail up to the same quality as other area trails.

Connection of the rails to trails segments, develop a nature and historical center for schools and residence to use.

Unique:

Climate change education.

REGIONAL INTEGRATED RECREATION AND NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT TOOLS UTILIZING GIS THROUGH PARTNERING UNIVERSITIES SUCH AS UPJ, FROSTBURG, OR WVU.

Educational and public outreach.

Succession planning for watershed organizations .

Initiate some kind of partnership with area parks.

Revegetation projects using natives, consider creating a small demonstration area for native plants.

18. What are up to three suggestions you have for increasing the effectiveness of CVC? [Bold categories provided only after analysis to offer comments of like kind together.]

Organizational

Board Development

Reduced Turnover

Finish projects that we start.

Identify organization objectives more clearly to constituents and partners

Increase staff.

Increase membership

Inject some youth on Board

Better coordination and prioritization of projects.

Increase the membership.

Increase communication and networking.

Focus.

Programmatic

Continued partnerships

Work more closely with relevant partners

Better outreach

Financial

Securing funding for the ED. Two and three are the same.

Marketing

Continued public relations.

Be more interactive/communicate more with other organizations if possible.

Publicize more.

Keep website updated

Promote CVC more broadly beyond Johnstown.

19. Please list the top three community stakeholders for whom CVC should provide services. [Bold categories provided only after analysis to offer comments of like kind together.]

Non-profit

"Watershed organizations" Seven times.

BCWA [Blacklick Creek Watershed Assoc.]

West Penn Trail

Trout Unlimited

Nonprofits who need assistance and/or partnerships.

Government

Conservation Districts

Municipalities

gov entities such as DEP

BAMR

regional parks

regional conservation districts

Schools

Not organized.

public

Landowners/community members

local residents

teachers

Residents affected by our water quality

Other

Unfortunately, I do not reside in the local community

By "providing services," do you mean for a fee?

20. Please list three organizations or businesses that CVC should be actively partnering with, and why. [Bold categories provided only after analysis to offer comments of like kind together.]

Philanthropic foundations.

Foundation partners to generate financial sustainability

Understand the interests of regional philanthropies,

Government offices.

BAMR for AMD/AML projects

DCNR for trail projects

Better business bureau

Conservation district

DEP

County

Local governments

DNCR for trails and land conservation work

Municipalities for project partnerships

City of Johnstown

Cambria County

PA DEP

DCNR

Statewide natural resource committees: To better interact with leaders at the state level and boost CVCs visibility

Chambers of Commerce

DEP, county parks and recreation agencies,
BAMR for AMD issues

For-Profit businesses.

Travel agency
REI Bedford
Robindale or Rosebud mining to provide them a "green" facet

Non-profit.

Other nonprofits (none in particular) for project partnerships
Watershed organizations-need technical support
Educators - help with field trips
Western Pennsylvania Conservancy - preservation of habitat
The community so that we can be seen as a partner organization.
local promotion of CVCs accomplishments and assistance that CVC provides
Chambers of Commerce and tourism promotion agencies for the networking, connection, and public relations opportunities.
First Waves
3RiversQuest to be a player on a larger landscape,

21. Please list a Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, and Threat for CVC, currently. [Other than SWOT, Bold categories provided only after analysis to offer comments of like kind together.]

Strength:

Organizational

New Executive Director
Commitment
board members and staff
Organization longevity
Having a director
ED, history, credibility, and ability to war across the basin
Very involved BOD and Executive Director
Reputation and integrity of the organization
Executive director
Dedicated and passionate Board of Directors

Other

Longevity
Technical knowledge
Trails

22. Weakness: [Other than SWOT, Bold categories provided only after analysis to offer comments of like kind together.]

Organizational

- Financial Position
- Staffing
- Being spread too thin
- Need for more interactions with other organizations.
- Brand recognition
- Not enough staff
- Ongoing funding, low profile
- Lack of visibility at the state level
- Aging BOD
- Possibly understaffed to perform current scope of work and promote growth
- Lack of focus
- Lack of paid employees

23. Opportunity: [Other than SWOT, Bold categories provided only after analysis to offer comments of like kind together.]

Organizational

- See projects through to completion
- Time to develop an effective strategy to advance organization with current motivated Director
- Partnering with educators

Programmatic

- Partnerships
- AMD Remediation and monitoring
- AMD activities, birding trail
- Education and experiential programs
- Take leadership position regionally for certain conservation issues

Financial

- State/Federal AMD/AML Funds
- Legacy foundation funding for watershed organizations

Marketing

- Increase visibility, increase marketing
- Increased awareness of recreation and conservation opportunities in the watershed

24. Threat: [Other than SWOT, Bold categories provided only after analysis to offer comments of like kind together.]

Organizational

- Continued Turnover
- Sustainability

Programmatic

- other competing organizations doing the same function
- being stereotyped as "only" a water monitoring program

Financial

- Funding
- Lack of publicity
- loss of grant funding
- Funding, volunteer base
- Funding

Inadequate financial resources to promise long term stability

Marketing

Depopulation within the watershed

Lack of recognition or unawareness of the organization, funding

Other

Not sure

25. Please rate the services provided by CVC in important with "1" the most important and "6" the least important:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	TOTAL	SCORE
▼ Trail Development	14.29% 2	14.29% 2	14.29% 2	14.29% 2	35.71% 5	7.14% 1	14	3.36
▼ Water Monitoring	26.67% 4	20.00% 3	26.67% 4	13.33% 2	6.67% 1	6.67% 1	15	4.27
▼ Other Recreational Development	0.00% 0	13.33% 2	6.67% 1	40.00% 6	6.67% 1	33.33% 5	15	2.60
▼ Abandoned Mine Remediation	21.43% 3	21.43% 3	7.14% 1	7.14% 1	21.43% 3	21.43% 3	14	3.50
▼ Technical Support to Watershed Organizations	33.33% 5	13.33% 2	26.67% 4	6.67% 1	0.00% 0	20.00% 3	15	4.13
▼ Education and Outreach	0.00% 0	20.00% 3	13.33% 2	20.00% 3	33.33% 5	13.33% 2	15	2.93

