

York County Conservation District CBP Implementation Plan



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Table of Contents

Introduction

A-C. York County Watershed Implementation Plan

- **Introduction**
- **Identify York County Targets**
- **Where Does York County Need to Reduce Nutrients and Sediment?**
- **Way to Achieve and Account for Pollution Reductions**
- **Strategies (for Implementation)**

D. Nutrient and Sediment Reduction Efforts

E. York County Implementation Plan

F. References



Grass waterways installed at the Adam Shearer farm in Lower Chanceford Township- Muddy Creek Watershed

INTRODUCTION

The awareness of the importance of clean water to streams and rivers, and their connection to the larger Chesapeake Bay ecosystem, is growing in York County, Pennsylvania. This momentum is not with just a few individuals, but collectively as a county.

Presented with an challenge—the Chesapeake Bay TMDL—York County’s Conservation District and Planning Commission took on the roles of educator, facilitator, and change agent, with The Planning Commission taking the lead in forming a County-wide TMDL Work Group to develop a pollution reduction strategy to help Pennsylvania and York County meet it’s Bay Agreement goals.

Known as a Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP), the plan identifies the most cost effective nutrient and sediment pollution reduction practices to achieve clean water goals and restore streams. We have seen reductions from wastewater treatment and agricultural pollution sources, but one very important pollution source is continuing to increase, polluted urban and suburban stormwater runoff.

York County has developed a collaborative plan to reduce pollution, restore streams, and save everyone money. Now it is time to move on to implementation of the plan.

The plan calls for the implementation of actions in four key areas:

- Capture unreported projects from local, state and federal cost share programs;
- Existing program administration (e.g., agricultural conservation planning, land use planning, stormwater management, etc.);
- New nonstructural Best Management Practices applied on the ground to capture and treat urban, suburban and rural stormwater runoff and stream restoration; and
- BMPs not in current Bay Model (i.e., The York Water Company’s Sediment Filtration Plan).

A stakeholders group “Coalition for Clean Waters” has been formed—consisting of local business, government, nonprofit groups, and other individuals—to help educate the public about York County’s WIP and encourage implementation of the recommended Best Management Practices by landowners and local officials.

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation is lending a hand to York County and its 72 local municipalities through both private funding and a generous grant from the William Penn Foundation, by providing technical assistance for locally led water quality improvement efforts. The CBF has begun to host a series of workshops designed to assist local officials. The workshops began in January 2014.

The York County Commissioners adopted the York County WIP in September 2013.

The Conservation District is using the York County WIP as a replacement for the previous Sections A-C in our CBP Implementation Plan. This should save time and duplication of efforts for the District and support our partnership with the county plan.

Sections D and E have been updated to reflect the Districts current and future reductions efforts, plans and goals to improve water quality in York County.

D. Nutrient and Sediment Reduction Efforts

The York County Conservation District has a long history of assisting cooperators with implementing agricultural conservation practices, stream restoration and streambank stabilization projects. Many of these projects would not be accomplished without the cooperation of many partners and agencies including the USDA-NRCS and FSA, Penn State Cooperative Extension, York Ag Land Preservation, Watershed Alliance of York, county watershed groups and organizations, PA-DEP and the State Conservation Commission.

The following summarizes the major Agricultural and Watershed program priorities and responsibilities the District has undertaken since the last CBP-WIP update in 2010. Attached to this section is a summary of reported BMPs accomplished by District Ag staff since July 2010. The Watershed program information is from 2013. All activities of these programs have been reported in detail to DEP as directed in our delegation agreements.

Conservation District Programs- Agriculture

Chesapeake Bay Program

- From 1985 to 2007 the District contracted with 99 cooperators on over 14,000 acres of land, to install various practices to control soil erosion, manage and collect manure and implement nutrient management plans.
- Allocated and spent nearly \$2.2 million cost share dollars with nearly another 1 million dollars spent by the cooperators.
- Still have 19 active contracts to administer through 2017.
- Conducting Educational outreach visits to Ag landowners and operators in York County. Completed 588 visits as of 3/1/14. In the fall of 2013 we received a Special Project grant to fund contractors to perform visits for the District and enable us to reach our goal of 1,000 completed visits by June 30, 2014.

York Cost Share Program

- Administering program to cost share installation of Ag conservation practices.
- Has obtained funding from various sources for this effort including DEP CBP Special Projects, the York County Community Foundation, PPL Brunner Island settlement and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

Nutrient Management Act

- Administering the State Nutrient Management regulations on CAO's (Concentrated Animal Operations), CAFO's (Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations) and Voluntary plans.
- The plans are inspected annually and are reviewed and updated every three years.

Conservation Planning and Technical Assistance

- Partnered with the NRCS to provide planning and implementation assistance to landowner and operators who become District cooperators. We currently have approximately 1,246 cooperators in the system.
- Maintain and attempt to address a large list of requests for planning assistance from new and existing cooperators. As of 12/31/13 we had 141 requests on over 33,000 acres.

Biosolids Land Application

- Assisted the DEP and the York County Solid Waste and Refuse Authority to manage the land application of biosolids program. The District monitors the implementation of conservation plans on all permitted acres and provides conservation planning and technical assistance as needed.
- Currently there are 72 permitted farms with 7,044 acres of land in the county.

Chapter 102 and Ag Compliance

- The District currently has Level III delegation with DEP to administer the 102 Erosion and Sediment Control program. As part of this effort the District handles complaints related to Ag erosion and manure management.
- In 2013 the District Board adopted and DEP approved the YCCD Agricultural Complaint Policy District Ag and E&S staff work together to address complaints and achieve compliance.

USDA Programs

- The USDA-NRCS partners with the District to provide conservation planning and technical assistance to cooperators and farm landowners and operators.
- The NRCS administers Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) which offers an incentive payment to install BMP's to solve resource concerns related to sediment and nutrient loss, improve manure handling and application, and implement grazing systems.
- Major practices installed include grass waterways, Ag waste systems, stream fencing and crossings, riparian buffers, roof water controls, filter strips, upland wildlife habitat and watering systems for livestock.
- NRCS provides technical assistance for the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) program. The major practices include seeding of cool and warm season grasses, installing riparian buffers and establishing permanent wildlife habitat.
- Permanent easement programs are handled under the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP). Examples would be farmland preservation and wetland reserve.

Conservation District Programs- Watershed Program

Stormwater Management

- Assisted municipalities (42) and citizens (15) in reviewing stormwater problems. Referred complaints to appropriate state or local agency.
- Assisted York County Planning Commission, Watershed Alliance of York (WAY) and others with stormwater management watershed planning projects and MS4 program.
- Referenced the DEP Stormwater BMP Manual in seven (7) training sessions and 15 complaint handlings.
- Coordinated with York County Planning Commission to hold meetings with municipalities to discuss ways to better work together in Post Construction Stormwater Management (PCSM) process by developing a countywide Chesapeake Bay Pollutant Reduction Plan required by Pennsylvania's MS4 permits.
- Explored fee based opportunities of providing stormwater management education and outreach, financial and technical assistance to local municipalities.
- Supported the County with MS4 permit implementation by serving on the MS4 Committee.



Stormwater Management with Environmentally Sensitive Dirt & Gravel Road Improvements

Water Quality

- Continued to co-sponsor a workshop on soils and septic systems for municipal officials and others, with appropriate state and local agencies, upon request. Provided 100 On-Lot Disposal Systems (OLDS) resource publications to local municipal officials, builders, homeowners, and others.
- Continued to educate homeowners (166,600 households) on their contributions and impacts to water quality.
- Continued to assist the public (28 landowners) with Chapter 105 Regulations for stream encroachments and wetlands protection. Referred to appropriate state and federal agencies.
- Administered the Dirt & Gravel Roads (DGR) program. Three active worksites contracted, \$88,742.55 total. In-kind contributions are \$83,187.45 (93.74%). Total worksite length (feet) was 9,560 and 5,280 feet maintained. Encouraged municipalities to attend the DGR training for project eligibility. Chaired the DGR Quality Assurance Board and appoint members as necessary. Co-host a tri-county (Lebanon-Lancaster-York) DGRP Environmentally Sensitive Maintenance training workshop (6 employees attended from 4 local municipalities).
- Assisted landowners (5) with pond-related concerns and issues by referring them to NRCS Tech Guide, PSU Coop Extension's Water Resources web site, and other resources.
- Advised and assisted 27 existing watershed associations and encourage development of additional watershed associations where grass roots interest exists.
- Continued supporting the Watershed Alliance of York (WAY), via the approved MOU.
- Continued developing and implementing the Headwaters Environmental Legacy Program (HELP) encouraging landowners sharing 1st and 2nd order headwater streams by providing financial incentives and technical assistance to three landowners, cost sharing \$12,150 stabilizing over 500 feet of streambank.



Citizen Volunteer Urban Stream Rehabilitation

Water Resource Management

- Administered the Floodplain Management Program. Completed one (1) Community Assistance Contact (CAC). Coordinated and facilitated FEMA CRS workshop (8 attended). Assisted planning and facilitating EPA Climate Change conference. Attended FEMA Risk Map meeting.
- Pursued dedicated (DEP RFP \$250,000 year/16-years) and special funding (Growing Greener: \$22,500 SBCC; \$59,925 Barshinger Run; \$60,500 EBCC; \$70,000 Pine Run; \$58,905 SBCC2). for stream restoration and protection projects.
- Continued supporting York County's Drought Task Force as necessary.
- Provided technical assistance to local five (5) Source Water Assessment and Protection Planning and (5) Rivers Conservation Planning implementation efforts.
- Considered implementation of a fee menu for Watershed Program products and services.



Codorus Creek Urban Streambank Stabilization

Special Projects

- Served on the York-Adams Regional Smart Growth Coalition Board of Directors.
- Implemented the Large Woody Debris Removal Project using York Haven resources. Completed four (4) LWD removal projects.
- Promoted use of rain barrel and rain gardens as effective stormwater BMP's. Assisted three (3) municipalities and one (1) high school with designing and installing demonstration rain gardens onsite. Facilitated one (1) rain barrel construction workshop (200 attended).
- Researched and identified potential new watershed-related program areas, products and services, and they include education and outreach, financial and technical assistance with NFIP-CRS; MS4 CBPRP development; York County WIP BMPs (unreported and new).
- Continued developing a database of stream buffers for York County.



Large Woody Debris Removal on Yellow Breeches

E. York County Implementation Plan

The York County Conservation District's plan will be to implement the following items which are listed by program responsibility. These items will be completed in all watersheds as the entire county is part of the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

AGRICULTURAL and E&S PROGRAMS

Conservation Planning

- Will continue to write new and update existing Agricultural Erosion and Sediment control (AG E&S) and conservation plans for farmers and cooperators.
- These plans will include erosion control for cropland, grazing plans for pastures, agricultural waste management systems for handling manure and stream corridor systems. All plans will be written to the current standards of Chapter 102, and the Pa Technical Guide.
- All planners will get certified by NRCS to meet their planning standards. Conservation plans are the basis for all other work we do.
- Will continue to apply for CBP Special Projects funds to enable Ag staff to provide planning assistance.

Installing Planned Conservation Practices

- Will continue to assist landowners with the design, layout and installation of planned practices.
- District staff will have Engineering Job approval from NRCS for this work. All practices will be done to Pa Tech Guide specifications. Most practices will be installed with cost share funds received but will also include non-cost shared practices.
- Will administer the York Cost Share Program to provide cost share funds to assist with BMP installation.

Other Ag Team Responsibilities

- The Ag team will continue to offer support to the Ag community through plan reviews for Biosolids Land Application permits, REAP program application verifications, and educational activities including outreach visits and manure management plan writing workshops.
- Will continue delegation with the State Conservation Commission to administer the Nutrient Management Program. All Ag staff will be certified under Act 38 to complete plan reviews and develop nutrient management plans.

Chapter 102 Ag Erosion Control and Chapter 91 Manure Management Compliance

- Will address Ag related erosion and manure complaints according to the YCCD Agricultural Complaint Handling Guidelines approved by the District Board in April 2013 and accepted by DEP in September 2013. This process is a joint effort of the Districts Ag and Erosion Control staffs.

WATERSHED PROGRAM

Stormwater Management

- Upon request assist municipalities and citizens in reviewing stormwater problems. Refer complaints to appropriate state or local agency.
- Assist York County Planning Commission, Watershed Alliance of York (WAY) and others with stormwater management watershed planning projects and MS4 program as resources allow.
- Reference the DEP Stormwater BMP Manual in training sessions and complaint handling.
- Coordinate with York County Planning Commission to hold meetings with municipalities to discuss ways to better work together in PCSM process.
- Explore fee based opportunity of providing SWM products and services to local municipalities.
- Support the County with MS4 permit implementation by serving on the MS4 Committee.

Water Quality

- Continue to co-sponsor a workshop on soils and septic systems for municipal officials and others, with appropriate state and local agencies. Provide On lot disposal systems (OLDS) resource publication/presentation to local municipal officials, builders, homeowners, and others.
- Continue to educate homeowners on their contributions and impacts to water quality.
- Continue to assist the public with Chapter 105 Regulations for stream encroachments and wetlands protection as time allows. Refer to appropriate state agency, until adequate funding for implementation of the delegation agreement is provided.
- Administer the Dirt & Gravel Roads (DGR) program. Continue to promote and receive applications for projects. Encourage municipalities to attend the DGR training for project eligibility. Chair the DGR Quality Assurance Board and appoint members as necessary. Encourage municipalities to attend Regional E.S.M. Training.
- Assist landowners with pond-related concerns and issues by referring them to NRCS Tech Guide, PSU Coop Extension's Water Resources web site, and other resources.
- Advise and assist existing watershed associations and encourage development of additional watershed associations where grass roots interest exists, and as resources allow.
- Continue supporting the WAY, via the approved MOU.
- Continue developing and implementing the Headwaters Environmental Legacy Program (HELP) encouraging landowners sharing 1st and 2nd order headwater streams by providing financial incentives and technical assistance, as resources allow.

Water Resources Management

- Implement the Floodplain Management Program as time and resources allow.
- Pursue dedicated or special funding for stream restoration and protection projects.
- Continue supporting York County's Drought Task Force as necessary.
- Provide technical assistance to local Source Water Assessment and Protection Planning and Rivers Conservation Planning implementation efforts as requested.
- Consider Implementation of a fee menu for Watershed Program products and services.

Special Projects

- As time allows, serve as sponsor for projects to improve/protect water resources if adequately funded.
- Serve on the York-Adams Regional Smart Growth Coalition Board of Directors, as time allows.
- Implement the Large Woody Debris Removal Project using York Haven resources.
- Promote use of rain barrel and rain gardens as effective stormwater BMP's.
- Research and identify potential new watershed-related program areas, products and services.
- Develop a database of stream buffers for York County.



**Natural Stream Channel Design stream Restoration on Pine Run,
North Branch Muddy Creek**



**Trout Habitat Improvement on 'Class A' Wild Trout Waters,
West Branch Codorus Creek**

REFERENCES:

- Pennsylvania 2011 Milestones to Reduce Nitrogen & Phosphorus - Assessment June 2012 FINAL PROGRESS
- Pennsylvania's 2012–2013 Milestone Commitments to Reduce Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Sediment
- Pennsylvania's Final Phase 1 Chesapeake Watershed Implementation Plan (2011)
- Pennsylvania's Final Phase 2 Chesapeake Watershed Implementation Plan Final (2012)
- Pennsylvania's Final Phase 2 WIP – York County Reduction Targets Draft (2011)
- York County's Integrated Water Resource Plan (2011)
- York County Watershed Implementation Plan (2013)
- York County MS4 – Pollutant Reduction Plan Draft (2014)