

## **EPA Recognizes Land Conservancy of Adams County for Drinking Water Protection**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency presented an award to the Land Conservancy of Adams County for its efforts to protect drinking water sources for more than 12,000 residents in the Gettysburg area.

“The Land Conservancy of Adams County is receiving this source water protection award for taking proactive measures to help ensure that residents will continue to have access to safe and healthy drinking water,” said Donald S. Welsh, regional administrator for EPA’s mid-Atlantic region. “Drinking water is a finite and precious resource so we applaud these efforts.”

“We know that the health of our community depends upon clean drinking water so we are committed to protecting the sources,” said Dean Shultz, past president of the land conservancy.

By focusing its efforts on protecting large parcels of land in the Marsh Creek watershed from development, the conservancy has been protecting valuable drinking water sources in an area where soil and groundwater had been previously threatened by a nearby Superfund site.

In 1983, the soil and groundwater in Cumberland Township near Gettysburg were found to be contaminated from industrial compounds coming from the Westinghouse Elevator Plant, which was listed as a Superfund site in 1986.

In 1999, Westinghouse was fined nearly \$3.3 million for multiple violations of the Pennsylvania Clean Streams Law.

Bicky Redman, a founding member of the conservancy, worked with the Gettysburg Municipal Authority, Adams County Conservation District, Adams County Office of Planning and Development, and the Watershed Alliance of Adams County to ensure that a portion of the penalty money be used to protect the Gettysburg water supply.

In 2001 the Department of Environmental Protection provided an \$850,000 grant to the Adams County Conservation District to protect the Marsh Creek Basin. The conservancy used these funds and additional support for public outreach and to set up conservation easements. The easements allow landowners to continue to own the land while it is protected from potentially polluting land use. Currently, about 800 acres and two miles of stream bank are covered by easements.

EPA’s source water protection awards encourage organizations and communities to take steps to protect drinking water sources. The awards are open to individuals, and public and private organizations throughout EPA’s mid-Atlantic region, which includes Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, Delaware, the District of Columbia and Maryland. Recipients have

voluntarily gone beyond what the law requires to protect their communities.

In 1996, the federal Safe Drinking Water Act was amended to give greater protection to millions of Americans who rely on public drinking water systems. By law, all states must develop source water assessments for every public water supply, but it is up to the local authorities to develop plans and measures to protect drinking water sources from contamination.

For more information visit the Land Conservancy of Adams County - [www.lcacnet.org](http://www.lcacnet.org) .

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