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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Water Resources Education Network Awards Funding to Fifteen Partnerships for Community Water Education Projects Across Pennsylvania

HARRISBURG, PA (May 24, 2013) The Water Resources Education Network (WREN) Project, a project of the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania Citizen Education Fund (LWVPA-CEF), has announced that fifteen community partnerships across the Commonwealth have been awarded a share of grant funds totaling **\$68,400** in funding. The recipients will carry out grass-roots community water education projects between July 1, 2013 and June 30, 2014.

WREN is a nonpartisan informal collaboration of organizations and public officials working for the protection and management of Pennsylvania's water resources, through grass-roots education and informed policy-making. WREN provides training and grants to support community coalitions that raise public awareness of water resources, empower communities to take action as environmental stewards, and develop public policies necessary to protect Pennsylvania water resources.

The WREN Project has two clean water initiatives: Watershed Education to prevent polluted runoff to waterways, and Source Water Protection Education to raise awareness about the importance of protecting public drinking water sources, including groundwater and surface water from contamination.

The three **2013 Source Water Protection Collaborative** grant recipients are:

Berks County: Center for Excellence in Local Government - Albright College - \$7,000

Columbia/Montour Counties: Columbia and Montour County Conservation Districts - \$7,000

Pike County: Hemlock Farms Conservancy - \$5,000

Funding will support the formation of three new County Source Water Protection Collaboratives that will work together to educate community stakeholders about ways to protect public drinking water sources from pollution. Each coalition will form a Source Water Environmental Education Team (SWEET) that will conduct a series of public education and outreach events. The coalitions will develop educational materials and address improved emergency response coordination to potential contamination events.

Source of funding for Source Water Protection Collaborative grants is the PA DEP Source Water Protection Program through Section 1452 of the Safe Drinking Water Act Amendments of 1996, administered by US Environmental Protection Agency.

Source Water Protection Project Summaries

Berks County: **Center for Excellence in Local Government - Albright College**

Project Title: *Source Water Protection for Berks County*

Grant Amount: **\$7,000**

Contact: Paul Janssen, Director, Center for Excellence in Local Government, Albright College – 610-921-7246

Email: pjanssen@alb.edu

Partners: Berks County Commissioners, Berks County Conservation District, Berks County Solid Waste Authority, Western Berks Water Authority, Reading Area Water Authority, Pennsylvania American Water Company, Hamburg Municipal Authority, City of Reading Public Works Department, Georgeadis Setly, Esq., and Dale R. Kratzer

Focus: The Partners will form a county wide Source Water Protection Collaborative that will create awareness, programs, and policy which will enable the implementation of an effective Source Water Protection program for all of Berks County. The coalition will form a Source Water Environmental Education Team (SWEET) that will conduct a series of public education and outreach events including a full day seminar on July 31st for municipal officials, water and sewer providers, a comprehensive web site, an informational brochure, and a public education program to be delivered to civic groups, schools, and municipal bodies.

Columbia & Montour Counties: [Columbia and Montour County Conservation Districts](#)

Project Title: *Columbia-Montour Source Water Protection Coalition*

Grant Amount: \$7,000

Contact: Mary Wagner, CCCD Manager , 570-784-1310 x114 **Email:** maryruth.wagner@columbiaccd.org
Kim Leshock, MCCD Manager, 570-271-1140 **Email:** kleshock@verizon.net

Partners: Columbia County Commissioners, Columbia County Emergency Management Agency, United Water Pennsylvania, Catawissa Water Authority, Fishing Creek Watershed Association

Focus: The Partners will form a multi-county source water protection coalition of key stakeholders (public and private water suppliers, municipalities, agriculture, industry and others who value water resources) throughout Columbia and Montour counties that will promote long range strategies to urge protection and preservation of water resources for future generations. The Coalition will form a Source Water Environmental Education Team (SWEET) and conduct a series of public education and outreach events at schools and community meetings using models and maps to describe source water protection areas and to encourage land use planning and resource management practices that result in reduction of water contamination threats. The team will develop educational materials including a brochure and website for public outreach. The Coalition will seek participation from all water suppliers in Columbia and Montour counties to develop source water protection plans.

Pike County: [Hemlock Farms Conservancy](#)

Project Title: *Pocono Source Water Collaborative*

Grant Amount: \$5,000

Contact: Marian Keegan, Hemlock Farms Director of Community Conservation 570-775-4200 Ext 127
Email: Marian.Keegan@hfca.com

Partners: Twin and Walker Lakes Conservancy, Blooming Grove Township, Pike County Conservation District, Lackawaxen River Conservancy, Pennsylvania Rural Water Association

Focus: The Partners will foster collaboration to prevent contamination of public and private water sources in Pike County. The Coalition will form a Source Water Environmental Education Team (SWEET) to conduct community education for key stakeholders about major pollutant risks and to encourage responsibility to reduce the risks. The team will develop a unifying message and develop a press release, website, and stewardship programs using models, fact sheets and educational materials. The Coalition plans to encourage all water systems in Pike County to implement source water protection efforts.

The following **twelve Watershed Education Projects totaling \$49,400** were awarded funding for activities focusing on improving watersheds by reducing nonpoint source water pollution. Funding for NPS education projects is made available by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's Nonpoint Source Management Program through Section 319 of the Federal Clean Water Act, administered by the US Environmental Protection Agency.

The goal of the WREN Watershed Education Grant Program is to raise public awareness, encourage watershed stewardship and action, and to improve public policies that will protect water resources in Pennsylvania today and for future generations. The twelve grantees selected for funding under the 2013-2014 WREN Watershed Education Grant Program are listed below.

2013-2014 WREN Watershed Education Project Summaries:

Allegheny County (SW): [Borough of Etna](#)

Project Title: *Design and Maintenance of Rain Gardens for Landscape Professionals*

Grant Amount: \$3,900

Contact: Mary Ellen Ramage, Etna Borough Manager 412-781-0569 **Email:** meramage@etnaborough.org

Partners: DCNR, 3 Rivers Wet Weather, Penn State Cooperative Extension, Nine Mile Run Watershed

Focus: As municipalities begin to deal with the ALCOSAN consent decree, they need to find innovative and cost effective means to address stormwater management. The partners will host a workshop that includes hands-on training to teach officials and landscape professionals how to design and install stormwater management Best Management Practices to ensure long-term success for municipalities throughout the greater Pittsburgh region.

Montgomery County (SE): [Borough of Ambler - on behalf of Ambler Environmental Advisory Council](#)

Project Title: *Public Awareness + Incentives = 10 Rain Gardens in Ambler PA*

Grant Amount: \$5,000

Contact: Justin Murray, Co-Chair Ambler EAC 267-322-1521 **Email:** jmurray@practicalenergy.net

Partners: Borough of Ambler, Ambler Environmental Advisory Council (AEAC), Penn State Cooperative Extension, Pennsylvania Environmental Council, Green Treks TV, Rain Gardens for the Bays, Wissahickon High School Key Club and Interact Club

Focus: The Ambler Environmental Advisory Council and its partners will educate hundreds of property owners and students about the need for stormwater management and the solutions that rain gardens provide. The partners will organize 20 volunteer events to install ten rain gardens in Ambler Borough. The partners plan to conduct two rain garden workshops, two rain garden tours, six community events, and make door-to-door visits and develop yard signs. Promotion will include distribution of newspaper articles and flyers. Ten case studies will be posted on three websites.

Lancaster County (SC): [Lancaster Farmland Trust](#)

Project Title: *A New "Greening" Model for Municipalities*

Grant Amount: \$4,450

Contact: Jeffery Swinehart, 717-687-8484 **Email:** swinehart@lancasterfarmlandtrust.org

Partners: West Lampeter Township, Lancaster County Agricultural Preserve Board, Lancaster County Conservation District

Focus: Project partners will explore a new "greening" model in West Lampeter Township, Lancaster County, utilizing agricultural Best Management Practices (BMPs). Partners will visit all 92 farms in West Lampeter's agricultural district. During visits, partners will distribute educational materials, discuss BMPs, inventory BMPs in place, and offer resources for developing and implementing conservation plans. Project activities include three workshops, developing an electronic newsletter, and distributing educational materials. Lancaster Farmland Trust will conduct a public meeting that engages West Lampeter Township officials, farmers and other residents in a dialogue to help identify future opportunities for collaboration and education about sustaining water quality.

Centre County (NC): [Spring Creek Chapter of Trout Unlimited](#)

Project Title: *Return the Roots-A Backyard Makeover for Streamside Landowners*

Grant Amount: \$3,800

Contact: Judi Sittler, 814-861-3277 **Email:** jlsittler@comcast.net

Partners: University Area Joint Authority, College Township, Harris Township

Focus: Project partners will host a Backyard Makeover Contest that creates community interest, demonstrates the value of healthy streamside plantings, and encourages streamside property owners to plant native trees and shrubs along the stream bank and refrain from removing natural vegetation.

Montgomery and Philadelphia Counties (SE): **Tookany/Tacony-Frankford Watershed Partnership, Inc.**

Project Title: *Managing Rainfall in the Tookany/Tacony-Frankford Watershed: Stormwater Project Tour*

NPS Grant Amount: \$5,000

Contact: Molly Finch, 215-844-8100 **Email:** molly@ttfwatershed.org

Partners: Philadelphia Water Department, Jenkintown Borough, Abington Township, Cheltenham Township

Focus: Tookany/Tacony-Frankford (TTF) and Partners will organize four project tours for municipal officials, institutions, businesses, and schools that will provide details on stormwater Best Management Practice project function, cost, and maintenance, as well as develop a virtual tour for the TTF website. Expected outcomes include generating awareness of BMP projects that already exist in the community and connecting interested individuals with resources to help them implement BMP projects on their own properties.

Lehigh & Northampton Counties (SE): **Watershed Coalition of the Lehigh Valley**

Project Title: *Master Watershed Steward Program*

Grant Amount: \$4,650

Contact: Erin Frederick, 610-391-9840 **Email:** elf145@psu.edu

Partners: Penn State Extension, Pennsylvania Environmental Council, Northampton County Conservation District, Appalachian Mountain Club, Wildlands Conservancy, Upper Saucon Township Water Authority, Bushkill Township, Nurture Nature Center

Focus: The partners will collaborate on the Master Watershed Steward Program (MWSP) in Lehigh and Northampton counties, which is being piloted during 2013. The Program will provide volunteers with the knowledge and confidence to address critical watershed stewardship concerns at a time of tightening government budgets and constrained resources. Modeled after the highly successful Penn State Extension Master Gardener Program, the MWSP pilot will work to create a model that can be expanded throughout the Commonwealth.

Cambria and Clearfield counties (NC, SW): **Trout Unlimited, Inc.**

Project Title: *Chest Creek Watershed Community Engagement Project*

Grant Amount: \$2,350

Contact: Rachel Kester, 570-748-4901 **Email:** rkester@tu.org

Partners: Chest Creek Watershed Alliance, Patton Borough, Newburg Borough, Mahaffey Borough, Cambria County Conservation District, Clearfield County Conservation District, Westover Borough, Westover Municipal Authority

Focus: The partners will work to develop a stronger sense of cooperation and unity throughout the Chest Creek watershed by engaging municipal officials and local residents in a series of public meetings about polluted runoff that will develop six educational watershed signs. The project will develop a webpage, and a brochure.

Lancaster County (SC): **Borough of Mount Joy**

Project Title: *Mount Joy Borough Community Rain Garden: A Blooming Good Idea!*

Grant Amount: \$4,900

Contacts: Stacey Gibbs and Ken Barto, 717-653-2300 **Email:** staci@mountjoyppa.org; ken@mountjoyppa.org

Partners: Mount Joy Borough Water Authority, David Christian & Associates, Inc.

Focus: The partners will design and construct a functional rain garden demonstration site, including signage, at the Mount Joy Borough Office to educate officials and community residents. The partners will host two workshops and provide participants with a how-to manual and a professional garden design services discount.

Officials and community residents will be encouraged to participate in the various phases of the rain garden project including design , construction and maintenance.

Northumberland County (NC): [Sunbury's Revitalization, Inc.](#)

Project Title: *Storm Water Runoff Management: From Education to Implementation*

Grant Amount: \$5,000

Contact: Jess Runkle, 570-286-7768 **Email:** jrunkle@sunburypa.org

Partners: City of Sunbury, Sunbury Community Garden, Sunbury Municipal Authority, Northumberland County Conservation District, Hill Neighborhood Council, Shamokin Watershed Group

Focus: The Partners will educate residents of the Hill Neighborhood (1500 Households) and municipal officials about the negative effects of nonpoint source pollution at two workshops/workdays presented by the Northumberland County Conservation District and Shamokin Watershed Group. The workshops will offer incentives for homeowners to install rain barrels and plant rain gardens on their own properties. The project will also work with the City of Sunbury to evaluate current ordinances and storm water management practices to determine effective options to help reduce polluted runoff.

Centre County (NC): [Borough of State College](#)

Project Title: *Light Step, Right Step Festival*

Grant Amount: \$1,500

Contact: Alan Sam, 814-234-7145 **Email:** asam@statecollegepa.us

Partners: State College Borough, Clearwater Conservancy, Centre County League of Women Voters

Focus: Partners will organize the Light Step, Right Step (LSRS) festival to educate residents and local officials on ways to mitigate polluted runoff in the Spring Creek Watershed through the use of stormwater best management practices and water resource protection and conservation. The LSRS festival is a sustainability-based themed event in its second year. Partners hope to draw a large crowd from the Centre County region and beyond by hosting a number of activities, workshops, presentations, documentary film showing, as well as food and entertainment to celebrate water protection successes achieved thus far.

Dauphin County (SC): [The Manada Conservancy](#)

Project Title: *The Swatara Greenway: Restoring Our Riparian Buffers, a Community Planting Project*

Grant Amount: \$4,950

Contact: Jennifer Hine, 717-566-4122 **Email:** jhine@manada.org

Partners: The Manada Conservancy, Hummelstown Borough

Focus: The partners will conduct an hands-on streamside buffer planting event to educate municipal workers and creek side landowners. The planting project will create a 100 ft. buffer with educational signage to demonstrate proper installation of stream buffers and why they are essential to water quality. The partners will design and install educational signage at the site.

Bucks County (SE): [Warrington Township](#)

Project Title: *Green Infrastructure Outdoor Classroom Trail and Home Owner Linkages*

Grant Amount: \$3,900

Contact: Tim Tieperman, 215-343-9350 **Email:** eac.warrington@gmail.com

Partners: Warrington Township, Warrington Environmental Advisory Committee, Villanova University Sustainable Engineering Program, Warrington Open Space Committee

Focus: The goal of the project is to educate Warrington municipal officials and residents about green infrastructure (GI) and the benefits of maintaining GI in both public and private places. Interpretive signage will help transform an existing trail into an outdoor learning experience. In addition, the partners will provide materials, including rain barrels and native plants, to the public at a greatly reduced cost during the township's Annual Warrington Day event.