

WREN SEPTEMBER 2011 Feature Article

PENNVEST Funding Available to Assist Polluted Runoff Solutions

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Under the new Non-Point Source Pollution funding program, PENNVEST is accepting applications for funding in four categories:

- agriculture best management practices - ag bmp projects have included things like manure storages, heavy use areas, covered walkways, stream crossings, streambank fencing, riparian buffers, feed and pesticide coverage;
- urban stormwater runoff - projects like rain gardens, green roof projects, any sort of green infrastructure initiatives;
- brownfields (as it relates to stormwater management) and
- acid mine drainage projects - both passive and active treatment.

Non-point source pollution, unlike pollution from industrial and sewage treatment plants, comes from a number of different sources and is caused by rainfall or snowmelt moving over and through the ground. As the runoff moves, it picks up and carries away natural and human-made pollutants, finally depositing them into lakes, rivers, wetlands, coastal waters, and even our underground sources of drinking water.

PENNVEST is looking to fund any project that improves water quality in a specific watershed or watersheds. Currently, the only eligible applicants are governmental agencies, like city, municipal and townships, conservation districts, multi-county authorities etc., although there is a proposed legislative change that will allow private citizens and non-profit groups like watershed associations to apply.

A major difference in this program is that the amount of money requested does not impact the rating of an application. And there is no requirement for matching funds or any in-kind donations. PENNVEST does expect that all planning and engineering will be done beforehand, and plans and specification submittal are part of the application process. PENNVEST is looking to fund "shovel-ready" projects and will not fund studies or design work. They also require the county of the project location to have an Act 167 Stormwater management plan in place. If the county does not have an Act 167 Plan in place, the municipality where the project is located must have an Act 167 stormwater ordinance or something comparable adopted, and in place.

Determination of a Grant vs. a loan is made by the evaluation of the applicant's financial status and ability to pay back a low interest loan. To date, a majority of the PENNVEST NPS funding recipients have been grant monies. Technical viability and review is performed by DEP. DEP and PENNVEST allow multiple projects to be bundled under one application, and applicants may submit projects in different categories.

The next application deadline is **November 16, 2011**, and applications are accepted on a quarterly basis with the decision made 2 months later at the PENNVEST board meeting. The applications are reviewed based solely on need

Chester and Lancaster County have had success in acquiring PENNVEST funding. The Chester County Conservation District received a \$1.5 million dollar grant to fund 25 separate agricultural best management

practices (BMPs) and stormwater projects throughout the county. Lancaster County, The City of Lancaster, and the Lancaster County Conservation District have received multiple grants from nine separate applications to fund a variety of green infrastructure stormwater projects and agricultural BMP projects.

Paul Herzer works with local conservation districts, small municipalities, farmers, and other non-profit organizations seeking funding for non-point source pollution prevention projects, evaluating the organizations' application status, and answering questions about the application process. Paul can be reached at paul-herzer@pacd.org or 717-712-6996.

The following county conservation districts received more than \$5 million in funding since April 2011:

Bucks County Conservation District received a \$129,406 loan to control stormwater at two equine farms in Northampton and Middletown townships that are currently allowing nutrient contamination of the Neshaminy watershed.

Chester County Conservation District received a \$1,505,664 grant to construct wastewater collection, storage and treatment facilities as well as stormwater control facilities to reduce nutrient pollution of local streams by runoff from mushroom and dairy farms in various localities in the county

Lancaster County Conservation District received funding for a number of projects that will reduce nutrient runoff into local streams and the Chesapeake Bay watershed. The individual awards and projects were:

- A \$425,397 grant to construct various manure-control facilities at a dairy and poultry operation in West Lampeter Township that will reduce nutrient runoff into Pequea Creek, which empties into the Susquehanna River and the Chesapeake Bay.
- A \$148,802 grant to construct manure-control facilities at a poultry farm in Strasburg Township, where nutrient runoff during wet weather is contaminating Big Beaver Creek and, ultimately, the Chesapeake Bay.
- A \$163,213 grant to construct a manure storage facility at a poultry operation in Paradise Township;
- A \$573,188 grant to construct a manure storage facility at a farm in Ephrata Township;
- A \$176,210 grant to construct a manure storage facility at a farm in Mount Joy Township;
- A \$157,534 grant to construct manure litter storage shed at a poultry operation in Strasburg Township;
- A \$657,050 grant to construct a manure composting facility as well as an infiltration basin at a farm in Drumore Township; and
- A \$212,056 grant to construct a manure storage facility and make other improvements at a second farm in Strasburg Township.

Jefferson County Conservation District received a \$750,000 grant to construct an acid mine drainage facility to eliminate contamination of Stump Creek and the Mahoning Creek Watershed that is caused by discharges from an abandoned mine in Sykesville.

Montour County Conservation District received a \$495,000 grant to install manure and animal control facilities at two livestock farms where there is significant nutrient runoff into Mahoning Creek, Beaver Run and ultimately the Chesapeake Bay.

Please visit the WREN websites: <http://wren.palwv.org> and www.sourcewaterpa.org