

Lancaster County, PA

Background

Lancaster County is a 984-square-mile county in central Pennsylvania that is home to approximately 530,000 people across Lancaster City and the County’s 41 townships and 17 boroughs. These municipalities are small; they have an average population of less than 8,000 people. Yet the challenges they face are great; as communities throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed face more stringent water quality and stormwater management regulations each year, they struggle with the challenge of balancing addressing aging and long-neglected stormwater infrastructure systems in desperate need of maintenance with a host of other costly but essential community priorities. Few of these Lancaster County communities have dedicated revenue streams for stormwater management, leaving them little in the way of resources to support stormwater program needs.

HIGHLIGHTS

Location: Pennsylvania

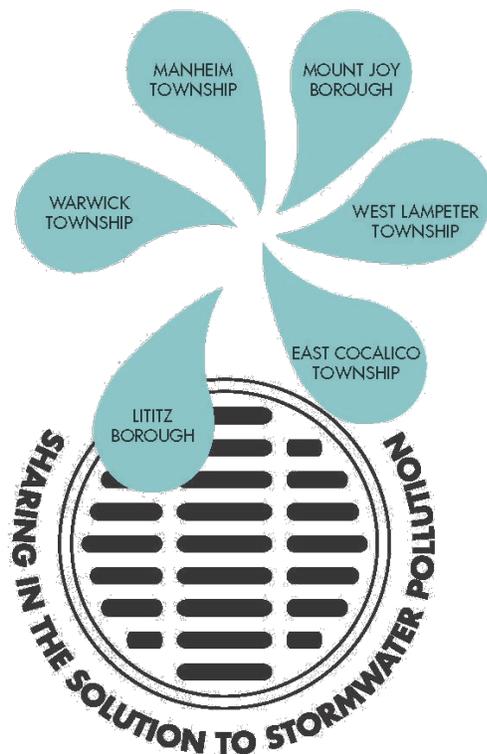
Jurisdiction Type:
Multiple Municipalities

Population: 100,677 (2010)
across six municipalities

MS4 Permit: Multiple Phase II

Project Period: 2012-2013

Funders: NFWF



In Pennsylvania, permitted communities, which tend to be significantly smaller and carry the additional constraint of developing a Chesapeake Bay Pollutant Reduction Plan (CBPRP), seem to be at a particular disadvantage. Stormwater programming that meets local priorities and addresses local infrastructure needs and pending requirements is expensive, and many Pennsylvania communities are coming to recognize that collaboration with neighbors, nongovernmental organizations, state agencies, and the private sector is necessary to accomplish stormwater goals efficiently and effectively.

It was this very challenge that led the Lancaster County Clean Water Consortium (LCCWC) to request the technical assistance of the Environmental Finance Center (EFC) at the University of Maryland. Through funding from the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), the EFC worked with six municipalities located in Lancaster County – East Cocalico, Manheim, Warwick, and West Lampeter Townships and Lititz and Mount Joy Boroughs – to conduct a stormwater management financing feasibility study that

included looking at ways in which the communities could address regulations collaboratively to reduce

costs and improve their local programs.

Approach

Because of breadth of diversity among the municipalities in terms of geography, hydrology, community priorities, regulatory requirements, and political climates, each jurisdiction's stormwater financing strategy needed to be as unique as the location it serves, reflecting the nature and characteristics of the community. The objective of this effort was to identify the current level of stormwater service for each municipality, determine the future level of service needed to deliver a comprehensive stormwater management program, and highlight any and all opportunities to work collaboratively across the collective municipalities.



*Mount Joy Borough Rain Garden
Volunteer Planting Day August 10th, 2013*

And, while the goal of the stormwater management financing study was to enhance each municipality's existing program and help them meet state and federal requirements more thoroughly, it was equally important that community water quality priorities were also properly addressed as all prepared for increased future nutrient reduction expectations. The EFC's approach included conducting in-depth interviews, data collection, and analysis of stormwater-related activities and expenses for each of the participating municipalities. The project also included a collection of outreach activities that helped to educate, inform, and engage citizens, businesses, and elected officials about the need to properly manage stormwater locally.

From the onset, the municipalities mutually agreed that the most important outcome of the stormwater management financing feasibility study should be the identification of an equitable, adequate, and sustainable financing structure to properly manage stormwater beyond 2013. The communities were also eager to learn of ways that the municipalities could generate cost savings by working collaboratively.

Key Findings and Recommendations

Based on the Project Team's evaluation, it was determined that there were several ways in which each municipality could improve their stormwater program. Some of the recommendations were straightforward and would require very little change to implement while other recommendations were found to be more costly in terms of additional resources needed to achieve future improvements. It was determined that all six municipalities would benefit from having a dedicated funding mechanism put in place specifically for stormwater, although the recommendations for each municipality varied based on their past stormwater activities.

There were easily attainable opportunities for collaboration identified that would achieve some cost-effective improvements. Multi-jurisdictional collaboration is nothing new to the water service industry; it has been practiced effectively for years in the wastewater and drinking water sectors and is quickly moving towards being a proven practice for stormwater, particularly for small capacity and resource strapped communities like the ones in this study. Adopting aspects of regionalization where possible is an appropriate approach for many Lancaster County municipalities to adopt as they grapple with rising costs and increased regulatory expectations. Working collaboratively and restructuring aspects of each jurisdiction’s stormwater program will create efficiencies that translate to reduced implementation costs over time.

The differences in size, location, overall need, and current program structure would make it difficult for the six municipalities to immediately begin to work jointly on all aspects of their program. However, there are several areas where some level of multi-jurisdictional collaboration could be implemented relatively easily and could prove to be an effective first step and establish a foundation for a greater level of collaboration on more complex aspects of stormwater management in the future.

These include:

- Capacity
- Education
- Outreach/Public events
- Written material
- Equipment
- Develop procedures and shared documents
- Monthly meetings, either formal or informal
- Trainings
- Grants
- Contractor and vendors
- Studies



Lititz Borough Public Works Department truck with the project logo and banner

For more information, please visit the [MOST Knowledge Center](#).

This project led by:



This project funded by

