

Stream Improvement Program

The Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP's) Stream Improvement Program offers assistance to Pennsylvania residents, businesses, and municipalities through the construction of small projects to restore stream channels damaged in floods and to stabilize streambanks affected by erosion.

This program originated in 1947 with the Pennsylvania Department of Forests and Waters, continued operation under the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources, and is currently administered by DEP. Funding for this program is provided as part of DEP's annual operating budget. DEP determines project eligibility, priority, and construction scheduling within the limitations of available funding.

Historically, the Stream Improvement Program typically has constructed 15 to 20 projects annually throughout the state, with a total annual budget of \$500,000. The projects generally involve bank stabilization (e.g., riprap, deflectors, walls, vegetative cover) and associated habitat improvements. DEP funds the design and construction of these projects.

To qualify for assistance, projects must alleviate imminent threats to the structural integrity of homes, businesses, or industrial structures. For projects to be approved, they must also be hydraulically beneficial, economically feasible, and environmentally sound.

All stream improvement projects must be sponsored by a local or county government agency. The projects then become a joint effort between DEP and the project sponsor. Sponsorship responsibilities include: securing all rights-of-entry for properties that must be accessed for project construction; removing or relocating any utilities or other structures that interfere with construction; and serving as liaison between DEP and local residents. DEP may directly provide the project design, contract bidding and administration, construction, and construction inspection. Alternatively, DEP may enter into cooperative agreements with the project sponsor to provide funding to accomplish some or all of the design, contract bidding and administration, construction, and construction inspection.

DEP cannot solve every flooding or erosion problem that occurs, but sites that meet the criteria outlined above are eligible for construction when funding becomes available and sponsorship items have been completed. The Stream Improvement Program will not fund projects to: remove fallen trees along streams; protect farmland or other undeveloped property; routinely protect public or private utilities or bridges; drain or fill wetlands; control or convey stormwater runoff; or perform routine channel maintenance. Also, the repair, rehabilitation, or reconstruction of facilities owned by others—such as dams, levees, culverts, walls, bridges, or fordways—is not eligible for funding.

For more information contact:

Department of Environmental Protection
Bureau of Waterways Engineering and Wetlands
Division of Project Development
P.O. Box 8460
Harrisburg, PA 17105-8460
717-783-0369
www.dep.pa.gov