



SPECIAL WATERSHED INITIATIVES UNDER THE GROWING GREENER GRANTS PROGRAM

Growing Greener Watershed Renaissance Initiative (GGWRI)

The Department is interested in funding the complete implementation of existing watershed restoration or implementation plans on small catchment areas of approximately 25 or fewer land parcels. Catchment areas may be bundled together or applied for separately based upon the Common Identifier. The focus is on agriculturally-impaired waterways to reduce nutrient and sediment impairments. Eligible small catchment areas are within Pennsylvania's Chesapeake Bay watershed and identified through local partner efforts and CAP development. These eligible catchments have agriculturally-impaired waterways as listed in DEP's latest Integrated Report and are located in the following counties: Centre, Huntingdon, Lancaster, Snyder, and/or Union counties. Statewide, agriculturally impaired stream reaches that form small catchments with approximately 25 or fewer land parcels identified by a [Total Maximum Daily Load \(TMDL\) or Advanced Restoration Plan](#) are also eligible. The objective is to complete the implementation of BMPs within seven years and rapid delisting within 10 years. The GGWRI program will be completed in phases. Phase 1 will fund a comprehensive approach of landowner education and outreach, agricultural planning, design/engineering, permitting, and data management. Agricultural plans must meet Pennsylvania's Chapter 102 erosion and sediment control and/or Chapter 91 manure management regulatory requirements, at a minimum. All structural agricultural BMPs must meet NRCS standards and specifications. With the completion of Phase 1, organizations may apply for Phase 2 or construction funding. The maximum grant request amount for Phase 1 is \$500,000.

In addition to general Growing Greener Plus Grant application requirements, the application must identify that it is for consideration under GGWRI and must thoroughly describe and identify the following:

- Small catchment area of approximately 25 or fewer land parcels with agriculturally-impaired waterways, such as nutrients and/or sediment as listed in DEP's latest Integrated Report, and are located in Centre, Huntingdon, Lancaster, Snyder, and/or Union counties or identified by a TMDL or Advanced Restoration Plan.
- Catchment area located in a watershed with an existing restoration plan. Plan examples are watershed implementation or restoration plan, Countywide Action Plan, agricultural conservation plans, such as Erosion and Sediment Control, Nutrient and/or Manure Management, and agricultural BMPs. BMPs must address the causes of the agricultural impairment(s). Applications *only* proposing stream restoration projects will not be funded but must have a mix of agricultural plan implementation, upland, and streamside agricultural BMPs.
- Agricultural plans must meet Pennsylvania's Chapter 102 erosion and sediment control and/or Chapter 91 manure management regulatory requirements, at a minimum. Agricultural plans may also meet NRCS standards, such as Conservation Plan, Grazing Plan, and Nutrient Management Plan standards.
- Design and engineering for structural agricultural BMPs must meet NRCS standards and specifications.
- Cooperative landowners and agricultural operations ready-and-willing to implement BMPs. The Landowner Letters of Commitment are encouraged, but not required. Landowner Grantee Agreements are required before BMP construction on any property.
- Slightly impaired waterways or those within 10 points of full attainment of water quality standards using the [index of biological integrity](#), or IBI, scores for [benthic macroinvertebrates](#).
- Robust landowner education and outreach strategy designed to motivate and recruit landowners.
- Expected pollutant load reductions, results, and model used. [Model My Watershed](#) is the recommended model.
- Reasonable timeline and schedule.
- Partnership contributions toward implementation, and how Growing Greener funding will complement those partnerships. Applicants need to include letters of support from partners.
- Documented assurance of long-term (20 years) operation and maintenance commitments addressing personnel and the cost of operation and maintenance of all BMPs installed.
- Monitoring and evaluation plan covering three years following final BMP implementation. The plan is intended to track BMP pollutant removal effectiveness. The monitoring and evaluation plan must provide documentation of personnel commitments and funding to carry out the plan.
- Description of plans to work with the county conservation district.
- Explanation of how the agriculture inspection program will be incorporated in counties with a conservation district Chesapeake Bay Technician. In counties where there are no Chesapeake Bay Technicians, include an explanation of how agricultural compliance assistance and/or assurance will be built into the project.

Growing Greener Healthy Watersheds Initiative (GGHWI)

The Department is interested in funding projects directed at curtailing threats projected to lessen the integrity of a healthy waterbody or watershed. The goal is to protect healthy, intact aquatic ecosystems and watersheds and to prevent environmental degradation by curtailing threats. The project will NOT be a traditional restoration project, and restoration will likely not even be a project component. GGHWI aims to avoid rather than treat a problem.

GGHWI projects will use existing data for projecting the trend of a condition or demographic correlated to some loss of integrity to a waterbody or watershed. Trends in factors that are shown to be headed towards a threshold that will degrade environmental integrity should be used in planning and applying practices. Projects should forecast and develop ways to keep the factors from crossing a described threshold that would cause identifiable harm or negative impacts to a healthy, intact ecosystem. A project might include ordinance development, protections, or offsetting, endorse green technologies, or changes in conduct and actions to address identified pressures.

Watersheds with a recognized, important distinction (e.g., with a Source Water Protection Plan in place; designated as a Scenic River) or carrying an elevated designation (e.g., Exceptional Value Waters or High Quality Waters; Class A Wild Trout Streams) or carrying another verified special classification, use or intrinsic merit will be given priority. However, any water body that is threatened is a potential candidate for HWI projects. Examples of conditions of concern include threats associated with changing land use, nonpoint source pollution, invasive species, lack of green practices, non-sustainable development, an attaining subwatershed within a larger hydrologic unit code 12 watershed with significant impairments, or other conditions that will reduce the environmental health or integrity of a waterbody if left unchecked. Additional consideration will be given to those projects and areas with demonstrated local interest and involvement in protection.

The applicant must describe and identify:

- The watershed under consideration and qualifying designation or distinctions.
- The threat, trend of threat, and threshold to be avoided, documented with valid, existing data.
- Methods used to show that indicators of integrity are trending towards and projected to go beyond a reasonably established vulnerability point.
- Proposed practices or activities that will curtail the threat of degradation and maintain or improve water quality.
- A reasonable time and activity schedule which includes planning and implementing practices to protect and preserve healthy waters.
- A strategy to inform and involve the public, officials, planners, and/or other stakeholders on findings and recommendations for the continued sustainability of healthy water bodies.