

Lebanon County Clean Water Alliance

Water Quality Improvement Strategic Action Plan Initiative



The Mission

“The mission of the Lebanon County Clean Water Alliance (LCCWA) is to maintain a coalition of local government agencies and interested stakeholders to partner together to conserve, protect and enhance the water resources for the people of Lebanon County.”



Who is the Alliance Today?

Initially organized in January 2011, this informal coalition now has representation from 18 municipalities, Lebanon County, the Lebanon County Conservation District, and several non-profit organizations involved with water resources management issues.

The Purpose for a Water Quality Improvement Strategic Action Plan Initiative

The Alliance was formed in 2011 in an effort to address current and future U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP) requirements focused on cleaning up and preserving the Chesapeake Bay. Pennsylvania along with the neighboring states of Delaware, Maryland, New York, Virginia and West Virginia and the District of Columbia are mandated to reduce nutrient and sediment pollution loads flowing to the Susquehanna River and ultimately the Chesapeake Bay.

As the mandates are implemented through regulatory actions impacting waste water treatment plants, municipal storm-water management systems, the agricultural community, and the development community involved with construction sites, finding the most cost-effective solutions will become a critical concern for Lebanon County taxpayers.

The LCCWA with funding support from a grant administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) for the EPA, has hired the firm of Land Studies, Inc. to assist the Alliance in establishing its organizational structure and undertaking the initial steps to develop a Strategic Action Plan.

Addressing clean water issues in Lebanon County is complicated by the diversity of watersheds and land uses as well as the extensive local government structure. There are a number of on-going initiatives throughout the county to address water quality issues. What is lacking is a comprehensive approach to coordinate all these efforts amongst the many local governments, identify and fill any gaps, and develop a strategy for how Lebanon County can continue to move forward in a cost effective manner.

Project Goals

1. Develop organizational structure for the LCCWA that will facilitate the improvement of water quality
2. Develop an approach to coordinate clean water initiatives
3. Develop a strategy for the cost-effective implementation of clean water initiatives that will address the following:
 - Where are we now in meeting the mandates?
 - Where do we need to go to meet our obligations?
 - How do we get there cost-effectively?



Key Objectives for Meeting the Project Goals

1. Develop an understanding of the key organizations, their current roles and potential future roles in clean water efforts.
2. Develop an understanding of stakeholders who need to be integrally involved in this effort.
3. Facilitate key stakeholder participation and input to clearly define long-term goals and objectives.
4. Develop a clear understanding of existing key clean water initiatives.
5. Clearly define a detailed scope of work for developing a Strategic Action Plan to guide long-term clean water investments.
6. Develop and execute a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with key stakeholder organizations to define organization roles, responsibilities, and principles of cooperation.
7. Strive for continuity of involvement in terms of membership by municipalities in the LCCWA.
8. Clearly communicate to stakeholders why there is a need for such an initiative.
9. Involve all sectors including Agricultural non-point sources, urban non-point sources and especially communities with regulated municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4s), waste water treatment plant (WWTP) operators and the development community.

The Challenge

To meet these goals and objectives, active participation by a variety of stakeholders will be essential in developing consensus on the most cost effective strategic initiatives.

The Alliance, working with a diverse group of interested stakeholders and local governments, has set a goal to develop a Strategic Action Plan to serve as a comprehensive county-wide strategy to meet water quality pollutant load reduction targets. As a needed step toward achieving the County's load reduction targets set by the PADEP, the Strategic Action Plan needs to provide the following:

- Prioritization of potential water quality improvement projects
- Identify local responsibilities for implementation,
- Quantify the water quality improvements
- Estimate costs of implementation
- Perform a cost-benefit analysis.
- Include benefit stacking in the analysis and strategy



Benefit stacking involves the implementation of projects with multiple environmental, economic, and regulatory advantages as well as benefit stacking between multiple initiatives. The strategy should provide recommendations and information that will help us make decisions about how to cost-effectively meet our water quality obligations and the role that local municipalities may need to play in that process.
