

Honorable Members of the House, Staff and Guests

First of all, thank you for allowing me to provide background information regarding Conservation Districts and stormwater in Blair County and across the Commonwealth and also the opportunity to comment on the MS4 program compliance from a District and County perspective. My name is Donna Fisher and I am speaking today in my capacity as the District Manager of the Blair County Conservation District and as a participant in the Blair County Intermunicipal Stormwater Committee (ISC).

Conservation districts are local units of government established under state law to carry out natural resource management programs. Districts work with landowners and local governments to help them manage and protect land and water resources on private and public lands. The county districts are led by a volunteer board of directors consisting of farmers, public members, and a member of the county government. The board identifies local conservation needs, decides which programs and services to offer, and develops a strategic plan so the district can continue to assist with their county natural resource projects.

Conservation district participation in the MS4 program as a local program are as varied as the counties themselves. There are 40 counties within Pennsylvania that have MS4 permittees. At the very least, most conservation districts provide education and outreach activities related to stormwater. Sometimes districts assist municipalities in their county who have MS4 programs. That assistance includes MOUs with the municipalities, reviewing erosion and sedimentation plans, implementing NPDES stormwater permitting programs, and other types of technical assistance. In some counties, a MS4 permit is required, and the district takes a lead role in all aspects of the program or participates in a countywide advisory or steering committee. Clearly, there is not a "one size fits all" approach by the conservation districts to tackle the difficult stormwater challenges many of us face.

As you know, the NPDES MS4 program is a Federal Program, delegated to the States and then passed to the local municipalities for implementation and compliance. Funds are not attached to the permits to administer the program nor to implement Best Management Practices associated with program compliance. **Staffing is a major challenge for many of our local entities. Funding is a monumental obstacle for compliance.**

How did we get to our point of compliance through collaboration in Blair County? The Environmental Protection Agency performed MS4 file reviews at the State level in 2010 resulting in deficiency letters being sent to many municipalities across Pennsylvania to include many in Blair County. In 2014, the EPA conducted an Inspection of the MS4 program in the City of Altoona. Needless to say, our collective attention for MS4 program requirements were heightened.

Meanwhile, as the municipalities were scrambling, Conservation Districts, when delegated by DEP for the Title 25, Chapter 102 Erosion and Sediment Pollution Control Program, are able to serve a support role to local municipalities for numerous targets and activities related to Minimum Control Measures required by the MS4 Permit. When a Conservation District authorizes an NPDES Permit for Stormwater Associated with Construction Activities; performs a site inspection; or responds to a complaint, the municipality is notified and thus our actions can be attributed to the annual reporting required for the Municipal MS4 permit. When the Conservation District provides an educational program or event related to construction, erosion and stormwater, again this serves to meet the municipal permittee's MS4 Public Education Minimum Control Measure requirements. The field and staff presence of the

individual Conservation Districts often serves an **integral role** related to Municipal MS4 program compliance especially in **rural areas where municipal staff is limited**. It is a great partnership and one that has worked well in Blair County.

Blair County municipalities recognized the need for collaboration related to MS4 compliance starting in 2012 and have steadily worked toward a formalized approach to jointly manage, implement, fund and comply with the Federal Regulations. In Blair County, the municipalities have chosen to continue municipal specific permit applications but have undertaken many of the tasks related to program goals on a regional basis. Regionalization solidified partnerships between municipalities and cooperating agencies.

January 1, 2017 saw the formal creation of the Blair County Intergovernmental Stormwater Committee (ISC) on a 2-year trial basis. A Department of Community and Economic Development, Municipal Assistance Program (MAP) Grant was received to hire Blair County's first Stormwater Coordinator, hosted by the Blair County Conservation District to serve the ISC.

The regional approach has worked in Blair County! However, each Blair County Municipality impacted by the MS4 regulations, has participated in the effort and has expended time, administrative funds and more recently started contributing project funds for permit compliance. Regionalization maximized efficiency for the program in Blair County but it did not eliminate the burden for the individual municipalities. Rural municipalities and small Boroughs can easily become overwhelmed by the enormity of the permit requirements. Larger entities will struggle with the cost to implement Pollution Reduction Projects.

Effective January 1, 2019, the ISC was reauthorized for a 5-year time period through 2023 with all permitted municipalities in the current NPDES MS4 permit cycle participating. The County of Blair received a waiver in the current permit cycle but have continued their participation in the ISC. The current 5-year term agreement stipulates that municipal members will contribute administrative funds, as well as project funds regarding the implementation of the Collaborative Pollution Reduction Plan.

For Blair County's Pollution Reduction Plan (PRP), municipalities are required to reduce a total of 1.4 million pounds of sediment per year by the year 2023. The ISC laid the groundwork for the current 5-year MS4 permit cycle including establishing projects necessary to meet the required sediment reduction of the PRP, prioritizing the potential projects, and formulating a budget to design and construct the proposed projects.

To determine the 5-year term budget to encompass PRP Projects and ISC Administration, a Municipal Percentage Allocation Formula was developed for shared expenses. The Allocation formula was originally developed by the Environmental Finance Center and is based on population, stream length, and impervious surface. The estimated cost of the proposed PRP projects at \$6.9 million and the \$500,000 Administrative Cost was divided on a percentage basis among the municipalities to determine their financial responsibility over the 5-year term. I would draw your attention to the table as part of this testimony listing financial obligations for each Blair County MS4 Municipality, dollars range from \$43,000 to 2.86 million dollars per municipality. It is important to note that currently no Blair County Municipalities have adopted stormwater fees or "rain taxes".

Project implementation took off with the current permit cycle and a steady stream of pollution reduction is being accrued on a regional basis in Blair County. Limited grant funding for projects is available and the ISC and the Blair County Conservation District have been very successful in attaining grants and we continue to actively seek funding opportunities. However, no guarantee exists as to whether funding will be obtained or allocated at sufficient levels to fully fund projects. A dedicated source of grant funds for Municipal Stormwater Projects, as referenced in HB2153, could serve to alleviate some of the draw on municipal general fund budgets. It is also important that funds earmarked for Stormwater be “new money”, in that simply moving funds from other grant sources to fund a new initiative does not always serve the common good. As a conservation district representative this is of critical importance as we often serve multiple resource concerns within our county.

HB 2153 provides \$300 million in federal funds to counties and municipalities to address municipal MS4 compliance. Since some conservation districts assist their local counties and municipalities with MS4 permits, we can support federal funding going toward these activities.

You have also heard as part of my presentation that the Blair County Conservation District has received funding in the past to facilitate and advance our water quality monitoring efforts. I am a believer in water sampling to determine BMP Implementation success. We have been sampling in Blair County for about 20 years at numerous and varied locations and have meaningful data collected to both establish baselines and to show the benefits of BMP Implementation. I would caution that sampling does require resources, related to both personnel and financial, however, I believe that it can be money well spent.

HB 2331 allows conservation districts and other entities to conduct water testing and provide the results to DEP showing that communities are compliant with federal EPA water standards. Some conservation districts conduct water quality testing in their county, and it makes sense to allow the test results to be utilized by DEP.

As a partner to the Blair County ISC, the District understands the obligations set forth for MS4 Communities and the requirements for compliance that need to be achieved by the year 2023 and beyond. We hope that through meetings such as this one today, that the Legislature and the regulatory agencies (DEP and EPA) understand the magnitude of the financial obligations and staff resources required to effectively manage a municipal MS4 Program.

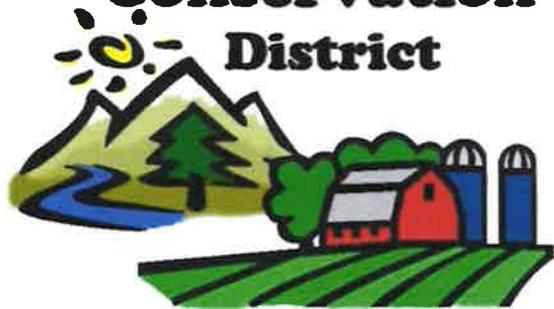
In conclusion, I believe the Blair County Intergovernmental Stormwater Committee will continue to strive towards compliance of the MS4 Program even though the cost for implementation has dramatically increased. Stormwater Pollution is coming to the forefront nationwide and it is only through collaboration that these concerns will be fully addressed.

Thank you for your attention and I would be happy to entertain any questions.

Blair County MS4 Financial Obligations for the current permit cycle (2019-2023) on an annual (2022) and 5-year basis

Member Municipality	2022 Allocation	Total 5-year Agreement
Allegheny Township	\$ 237,942	\$ 997,880
City of Altoona	\$ 669,844	\$ 2,863,841
Antis Township	\$ 95,523	\$ 400,602
Bellwood Borough	\$ 25,048	\$ 125,239
Blair Township	\$ 89,999	\$ 449,995
County of Blair	\$ 10,032	\$ 42,892
Duncansville Borough	\$ 35,071	\$ 149,973
Frankstown Township	\$ 114,376	\$ 489,002
Hollidaysburg Borough	\$ 120,188	\$ 600,937
Logan Township	\$ 316,264	\$ 1,352,152
Total Allocation	\$ 1,714,287	\$ 7,472,513

**Blair County
Conservation
District**



Resource Conservation Since 1966

**Intergovernmental
Stormwater
Committee**



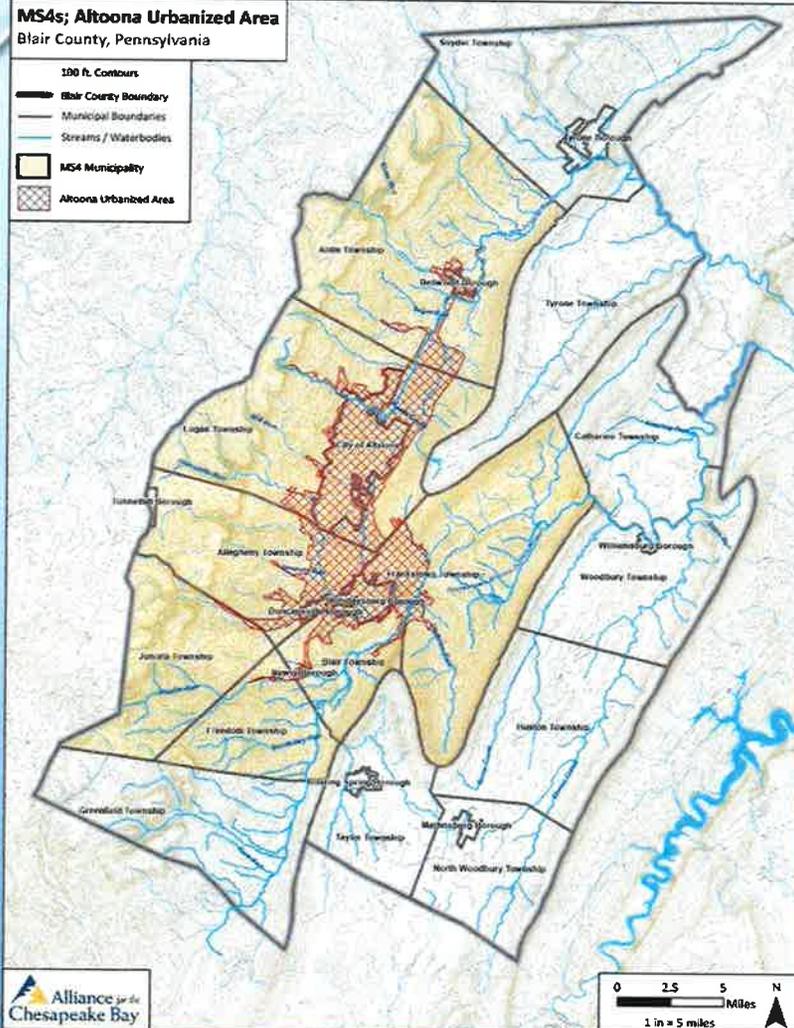
MS4 COMPLIANCE THROUGH COLLABORATION

House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee

June 13, 2022

MS4s; Altoona Urbanized Area
Blair County, Pennsylvania

- 100 ft. Contours
- Blair County Boundary
- Municipal Boundaries
- Streams / Waterbodies
- MS4 Municipality
- Altoona Urbanized Area



BLAIR COUNTY

NUMBER 1 INDUSTRY IS
AGRICULTURE!

STILL 70% WOODED

ALTOONA URBANIZED
AREA

NORTH/SOUTH HIGHWAY
CONNECTION – 199

THE NPDES PROGRAM AND STORMWATER REGULATIONS IN PA

- CONSERVATION DISTRICTS CHOSE TO ACCEPT DELEGATION FOR THE NPDES PERMIT FOR STORMWATER ASSOCIATED WITH CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES BEGINNING IN 1990
 - EXPANSION OF OUR CLEAN STREAMS LAW – CHAPTER 102 DELEGATIONS RELATED TO EROSION AND SEDIMENT CONTROL
- MUNICIPAL SEPARATE STORM SEWER SYSTEM (MS4) PROGRAM WAS LAUNCHED IN 1990 WITH PHASE II FOLLOWING IN 1999 WHEREBY SMALLER URBANIZED AREAS ARE REQUIRED TO ATTAIN A NATIONAL POLLUTANT DISCHARGE ELIMINATION SYSTEM (NPDES) PERMIT

STORMWATER REGULATIONS AND THE MS4 PROGRAM IN PA

MINIMUM CONTROL MEASURES (MCM) ARE PART OF EACH PERMIT

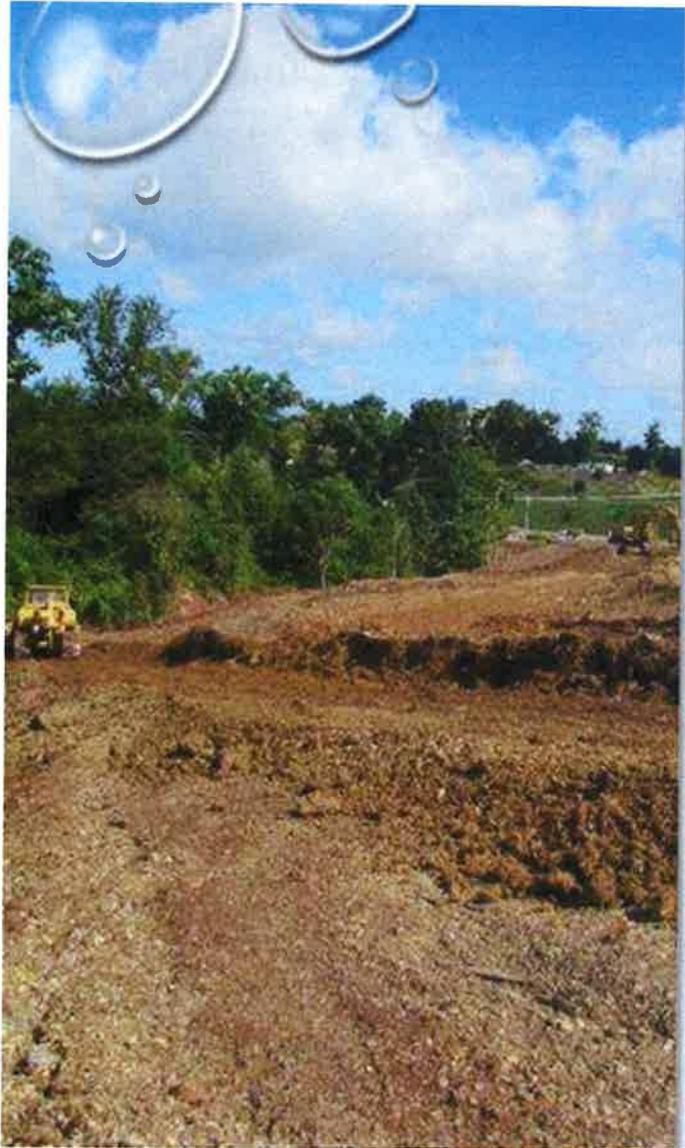
- MCM#1 – PUBLIC EDUCATION AND OUTREACH
- MCM#2 – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND INVOLVEMENT
- MCM#3 – ILLICIT DISCHARGE DETECTION AND ELIMINATION
- MCM#4 – CONSTRUCTION SITE RUNOFF CONTROL
- MCM#5 – POST-CONSTRUCTION RUNOFF CONTROL
- MCM#6 – POLLUTION PREVENTION AND GOOD HOUSEKEEPING

EARLY DUTIES UNDERTAKEN BY THE DISTRICT

THE BLAIR COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT BEGAN
ASSISTING MUNICIPALITIES BY

- MAPPING AND PROVIDING GIS DATA FOR OUTFALL OWNED BY THE MUNICIPALITIES
- COMPILING ANNUAL REPORT INFORMATION
- CONDUCTING DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS

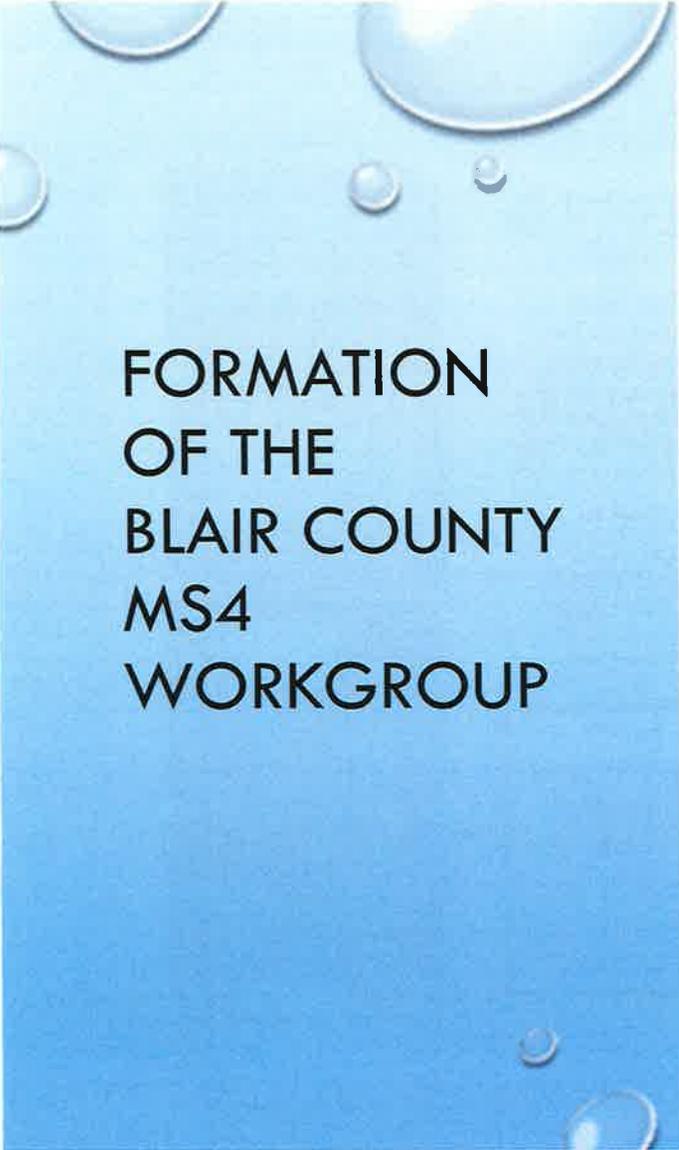




EARLY DUTIES UNDERTAKEN BY THE DISTRICT

EROSION AND SEDIMENT CONTROL AND POST- CONSTRUCTION STORMWATER

- THE DISTRICT IS DELEGATED BY PA DEP TO ADMINISTER THE NPDES PERMITS FOR STORMWATER DISCHARGES ASSOCIATED WITH CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES
- ALL PERMIT CORRESPONDENCE AND INSPECTIONS REPORTS ARE COPIED TO THE MUNICIPALITY
- MCM #4 AND #5



FORMATION
OF THE
BLAIR COUNTY
MS4
WORKGROUP

April of 2010 – the EPA performed file reviews for most of the MS4's in PA DEP's southcentral region (to include Blair County) and issued numerous deficiency orders

March of 2012 the first meeting of the Blair County "MS4 workgroup" was held to share municipal resources as part of their permit renewal application that was due in September 2012

Began looking to formalize the collaboration and having discussions with DEP regarding shared services and projects



Blair County
Total Maximum
Daily Load and
Chesapeake Bay
Pollution
Reduction Plan

April 2014

PREPARED FOR

Blair County,
Pennsylvania

PREPARED BY

CENTER FOR
WATERSHED
PROTECTION

8590 Main Street, 2nd Floor
Ellicott City, MD 21043

www.cwpb.org

FUNDED BY



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION
Saving a National Treasure

BENEFITS TO A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

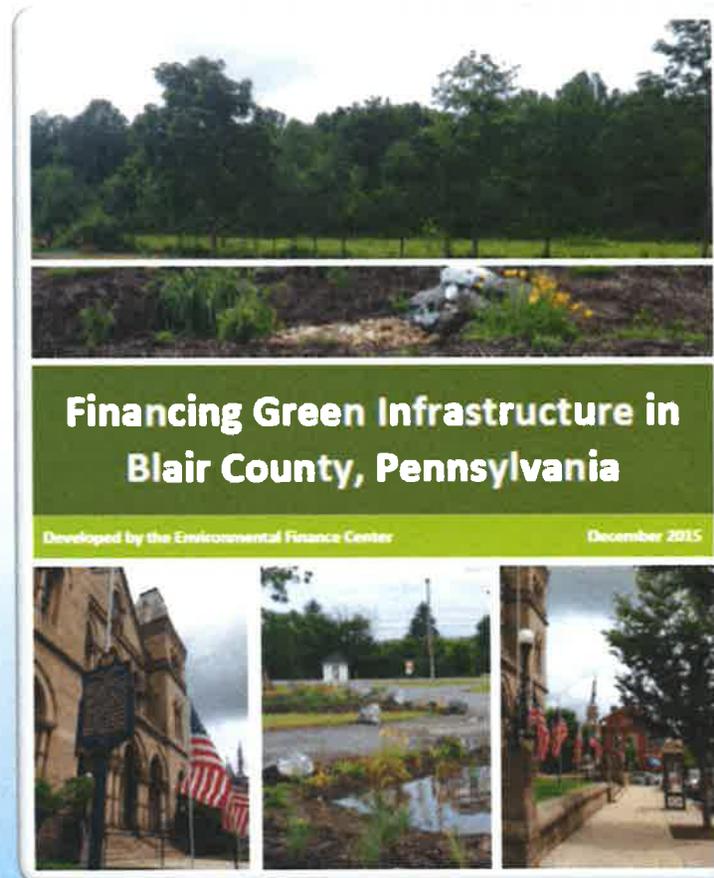
GRANT FUNDING.....

- COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION ON BEHALF OF THE MS4 WORKGROUP RECEIVED FUNDING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE THROUGH THE CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION AND THE CENTER FOR WATERSHED PROTECTION FOR THE PREPARATION OF THE TMDL AND CHESAPEAKE BAY POLLUTION REDUCTION PLAN AS REQUIRED BY THE MS4 PERMIT
- LESSENERD THE BURDEN ON EACH MUNICIPALITY FOR THE COMPLETION OF THE REPORT

FUNDING STRATEGY

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS PROVIDED A STARTING POINT FOR BOTH MUNICIPAL INVOLVEMENT AND BUDGETING

- PROVIDED SCENARIOS FOR A COST TO PARTICIPATE FOR EACH MUNICIPALITY
- IDENTIFIED A DESIRE TO HAVE A SHARED STORMWATER COORDINATOR



WEIGHTED FUNDING FORMULA

Developed through the Environmental Finance Center Report

Three Determining factors

- Total stream length within the urbanized area – 20%
- Total population within the municipality – 30%
- Total impervious coverage within the urbanized area – 50%

Total cost determined from implementation estimates in the Pollution Reduction Plan and Administrative Funds



- **JANUARY 2017** THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL STORMWATER COMMITTEE (ISC) WAS FORMED FOR A 2-YEAR PILOT PROGRAM
- THE CONSERVATION DISTRICT WAS CHOSEN TO HOST FOR A SHARED STORMWATER COORDINATOR POSITION
 - ADMINISTRATIVE DOLLARS ALLOCATED ANNUALLY (\$100,000) AND PRORATED BY MUNICIPALITY
- **JANUARY 2019** THE ISC WAS RENEWED FOR A 5-YEAR PERIOD AS WAS THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE BLAIR COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT FOR THE COORDINATOR POSITION
 - **IMPLEMENTATION FUNDS** COLLECTED ON A PRORATED BASIS FROM EACH MUNICIPALITY

ANNUAL MUNICIPAL ALLOCATIONS

Member Municipality	2022 Allocation	Total 5-year Agreement
Allegheny Township	\$ 237,942	\$ 997,880
City of Altoona	\$ 669,844	\$ 2,863,841
Antis Township	\$ 95,523	\$ 400,602
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Total Allocation	\$ 1,714,287	\$ 7,472,513

COMPLIANCE THROUGH COLLABORATION

SHARE WEBSITES, PUBLIC OUTREACH, MUNICIPAL TRAINING

MCM #1, 2 AND 6



www.blairconservationdistrict.org

www.cleanblairwater.org





COMPLIANCE THROUGH COLLABORATION

EROSION AND SEDIMENT CONTROL AND POST- CONSTRUCTION STORMWATER

- THE DISTRICT CONTINUES TO ADMINISTER THE NPDES PERMITS FOR STORMWATER DISCHARGES ASSOCIATED WITH CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES
- ALL PERMIT CORRESPONDENCE AND INSPECTIONS REPORTS ARE COPIED TO THE MUNICIPALITY
- MCM #4 AND #5

COMPLIANCE THROUGH COLLABORATION



WATER QUALITY
MONITORING WITH
AUTOMATED
SAMPLING WILL
CREATE CREDIBLE
BASELINE DATA AND
EVENTUALLY SHOW
WATER QUALITY
IMPROVEMENTS
WITH BMP
IMPLEMENTATION!

COMPLIANCE THROUGH COLLABORATION



PROJECT COMPLETION WITH
SHARED REDUCTIONS

RAIN GARDEN AT BLAIR
TOWNSHIPS MUNICIPAL
BUILDING

COMPLIANCE THROUGH COLLABORATION



PROJECT
COMPLETION WITH
SHARED
REDUCTIONS

RAIN GARDEN TO
CONTROL
STORMWATER
WITHIN THE CITY OF
ALTOONA

COMPLIANCE THROUGH COLLABORATION



PROJECT COMPLETION
WITH SHARED
REDUCTIONS

RAIN GARDEN AND
RIPARIAN BUFFER
PLANTING AT
LAKEMONT PARK, A
COUNTY OWNED
FACILITY WITH AN
AGREEMENT TO
OPERATE WITH A
PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP.

COMPLIANCE THROUGH COLLABORATION



PROJECT
COMPLETION WITH
SHARED REDUCTIONS

ANOTHER PUBLIC
PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

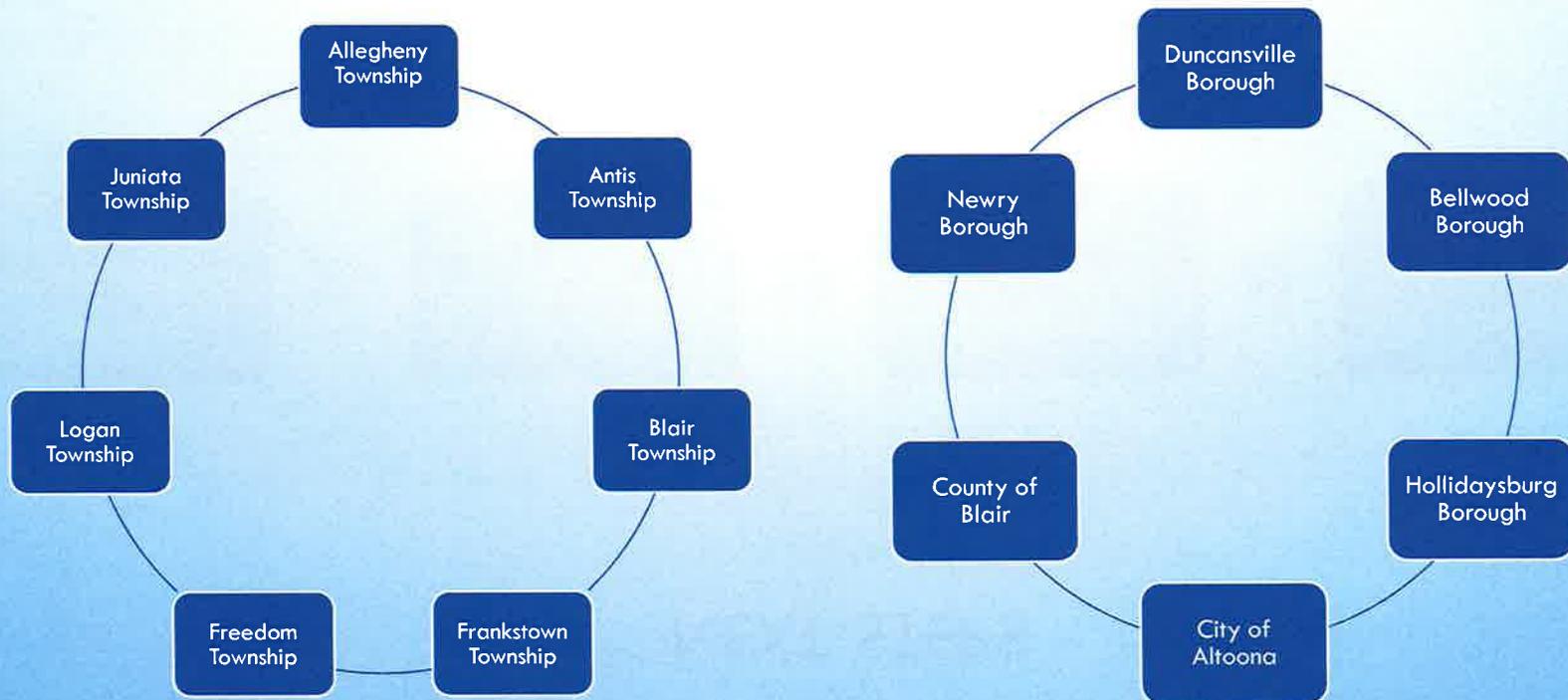
PNG FIELD
STORMWATER
RETROFIT

IN SUMMARY..... IS COMPLIANCE THROUGH COLLABORATION A SUCCESS?

YES - FOR BLAIR COUNTY

- OVER 1.5 MILLION DOLLARS OF PRODUCTS, SERVICES AND PROJECT FUNDS SECURED
- SHARED RESOURCES AND KNOWLEDGE
- ELEVATED THE LOCAL WATER QUALITY MONITORING PROGRAM
- ADVANCED PUBLIC OUTREACH AND EDUCATION EFFORTS

WHY IT HAPPENED – LOCAL BUY IN



NEXT STEPS

Continue
Planning for
Implementation



Maximize
Grant
Opportunities



Maximize
Municipal
Funding

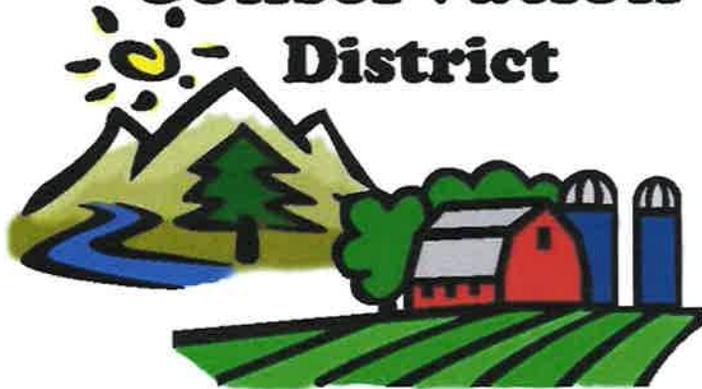


Achieve
Sediment
Reduction

WATER QUALITY IMPROVEMENT + TOCUT BOA IN

QUESTIONS.....

Blair County Conservation District



Resource Conservation Since 1966

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