



# Growing Greener Grants

Agricultural Advisory Board

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Tom Wolf, Governor

Patrick McDonnell, Acting Secretary

# Growing Greener Program

- What is the Growing Greener program?
  - Statewide program begun in 1999 providing grants to implement local watershed-based conservation efforts, including:
    - Ag BMP implementation
    - Streambank restoration
    - Urban stormwater infiltration/reduction
    - Abandoned mine drainage treatment
    - Conservation district watershed specialist funding
  - Funding also to PennVEST, DCNR, PDA and repayment of GG 2 bond

# ▶ Objectives of DEP Growing Greener

- Watershed Restoration and Protection
- Support priority conservation activities of the Department
- Involve local stakeholders in water quality improvement projects

# Growing Greener Funding

- How is the program funded?
  - Funded thru the Enviro. Stewardship Fund, initially by state appropriation and GG 2 bond
  - Current dedicated funding from ESF, revenue from:
    - Trash tipping fees
    - Act 13 of 2012
  - Amounts available to DEP for grants vary from year to year depending on revenues into ESF
    - 2016 funding level expected to be \$18.7 million

# ▶ Applying for Growing Greener Grants

- The opening of grant rounds announced annually
  - Open for at least 60 days to apply
- Signup on DEP website for notification when grant program opens
- Apply using application form, following program guidelines

# How projects are evaluated

- Projects evaluated by several program staff
  - Administrative review assessing:
    - Completeness of application - Follow the checklist
    - Project description - Clear and concise
    - Budget outlining the various project tasks/deliverables
      - Understandable, complete, on proper worksheets
    - Partner roles – Explain who will do what for the project
    - Administrative costs – keep to a minimum, 5% max
    - Match obligations – are they met, are they exceeded?
      - 15% match requirement

# How projects are evaluated

- Projects evaluated by several program staff
  - Benefits review assessing:
    - Statewide priorities – does it address any of these:
      - Restoration activities addressing polluted streams
      - Streamside forested buffer establishment
      - Implementing ag BMPs to address ag runoff concerns
      - Implementing practices addressing MS4 obligations
    - Regional priorities – does it address any of these:
      - Regionally defined ranging from ag to urban stormwater
      - Priority watersheds including Ches Bay

# How projects are evaluated

## – Benefits review assessing:

- Cost of the project – is it cost effective (bang for the buck)
- Special program considerations:
  - Watershed Renaissance
  - Healthy Waters
- Consistency with overall watershed strategy
- Potential to improve water quality!

# How projects are selected

- **Projects selected based on their technical merit following criteria evaluation**
  - There is no discussion with the applicant during the evaluation and selection process
    - Make your submission complete and understandable
  - All projects are compared against each other and the strongest projects are selected for funding
    - Historically approximately 50% funded
  - Project evaluation, selection takes approx. 6 months involving numerous staff
    - 4 years to complete project

# Types of common GG projects

- Education and Outreach
  - Such as outreach to landowners on pollutant reduction strategies
    - Agriculture
      - nutrient trading, runoff reduction, ag compliance
    - Stream side restoration
      - Forested buffers, protect property, safety, road stability
- Watershed Group Organization
  - Provide for public input on environmental issues
    - Public directed actions to address water quality concerns

# Types of common GG projects

- Design and construction of practices
  - Most common category of projects
  - Agriculture projects to address:
    - Water quality concerns on the farm
    - Barnyards, stream buffers/fencing/crossings, field practices, manure storage, manure treatment
  - Stream Restoration
    - Property protection, animal and equipment safety

# Extent of Ag projects under GG

- Common types of projects
  - Individual farm improvement
  - Projects addressing several farms in a priority area
  - Regional projects to support ag BMP implementation
    - TAG grant for engineering assistance
- Amount provided for ag projects in the past
  - 2012: 18 projects for \$4.5 million
  - 2013: 23 projects for \$4.8 million
  - 2014: 23 projects for \$7.6 million
  - 2015: 30 projects for \$6.4 million

# Extent of Ag projects under GG

- Future perspective
  - BMP implementation is the main focus
  - Currently a stronger priority on N, P, and sediment reduction practices in the Ches Bay watershed
  - Support farmers working to comply with state regs
  - Revised to further support ag work (regional projects)
  - Better verification of continued life of the practice
  - Looking to fully restore priority impaired waters
    - Looking to focus on recoverable waters

# Growing Greener Program Summary

- Projects selected statewide based on their merits to restore or protect water quality
- Projects address various sources such as:
  - Agriculture
  - Urban/residential runoff
  - Abandoned Mine Drainage
  - Streambank erosion
- Significant investment in ag projects in the past and increased emphasis currently

# Growing Greener Program Summary

- What is the expected outcome of GG
  - Reduced pollution loads
    - Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Sediment
  - Reduction in storm water runoff
    - Volume, and therefore intensity
  - Long-term streambank stability
  - Increase local involvement in water quality activities
  - Restored/Improved streams and lakes!

# Growing Greener Program

Questions?



**Douglas A. Goodlander** - [dgoodlande@pa.gov](mailto:dgoodlande@pa.gov)

Conservation Program Manager  
Office of Water Resources Planning

(717) 772-5642