Countywide Action Plan Snapshot

Adams County, Pennsylvania

Current Conditions
Adams County is one of the higher loading counties in Pennsylvania’s Chesapeake Bay Watershed. Current loading rates are 4.72M lbs of nitrogen and 360.41K lbs of phosphorous annually. Adams County’s goal is to reduce 1.49M lbs of nitrogen and 39.5K lbs of phosphorous by 2025.

Pollutant Reduction Progress
By 2025, Adams County’s goal is to reduce 1.49M lbs of nitrogen and 39.5K lbs of phosphorous. Adams County has developed a plan that intends to reduce 830.62K lbs. (56%) of the nitrogen goal and 39.28K lbs. (99%) of the phosphorous goal. Sediment reductions are not required but this planning effort provides for a reduction of 49.66M lbs (15%) of the current load.

Priority Initiative Progress
Adams County has identified three (3) priority planning/progress initiatives: 1) Enhanced reporting and tracking; 2) Achieving pollutant reductions; and 3) Research, education and training. Ag Sector initiatives for pollutant reductions account for a reduction of 827.79K lbs of nitrogen. The stormwater initiatives, including non-MS4 municipalities reduce an additional 970 lbs of nitrogen.

Adams County’s PRPs and other municipal initiatives have identified practices that reduce 1.86K lbs of nitrogen. These priority initiatives result in a total reduction of 830.62K lbs of nitrogen. In addition to the 3 planning initiatives, there are significant programmatic recommendations that will be necessary to meet these targets including; improving funding program requirements and enhanced funding resources, streamlining the state permitting processes and allowing for projects to be conducted where they are most impactful to the environment even if they are completed by MS4 municipalities outside of their jurisdiction.
Information About the Watersheds
Adams County contains seven major watersheds: Conococheague Creek, West Conewago Creek, South Branch Conewago Creek, Marsh Creek, Rock Creek, Monacacy River, and Toms Creek. While these watersheds have been some of the highest loading watersheds in Pennsylvania’s Chesapeake Bay Watershed, monitoring shows that conditions for nitrogen have been improving which means nitrogen levels are decreasing. Conditions for phosphorous are remaining steady, which means no change in phosphorous levels. Of the 1,270 total stream miles in Adams County, approximately 30% are nutrient impaired.

County Land Use
Adams County has a total acreage of 333,943 acres. Agricultural land represents 40% of the total land with 133,008 total acres. Developed land represents 17% of the total land with 55,614 total acres. Natural land, which is made up of forests, streams and wetlands, represents the remaining 43% or 145,321 total acres. Cropland makes up a majority of the Agriculture sector with 83,037 acres. The developed sector is mostly Non-Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4s) (86%) 47,811 acres and a small portion of MS4 (14%) 7,803 acres.

Local Benefits
Adams County promotes voluntary conservation and good stewardship of natural resource to maintain a balance and harmony between a profitable agricultural economy and other land uses to enhance our quality of life. The efforts of this planning project are indicative of this local mindset and are intended to protect our resources and those of our neighbors downstream.

Learn more and Get Involved
To get involved with the Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) please visit: https://bit.ly/2RE7Dzb or http://www.adamscounty.us/Dept/Conservation/Pages/default.aspx