

PROGRAM OBJECTIVE AND PRIORITIES

Conservation District Watershed Specialist Program

PROGRAM OBJECTIVE: The objective of the Conservation District Watershed Specialist (CDWS) program is to protect, improve, and enhance the waters of the commonwealth through the development and implementation of watershed based plans, strategies or other activities that focus funding and stakeholder output.

The priorities of this program are to:

1. Implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) designed to restore and to protect watersheds and improve water quality and quantity; or, where the water resource is found to be un-impaired, implement BMPs designed to maintain that unimpaired condition. This priority is met through the implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) designed to limit the influx of pollutants into water bodies. Further, this priority is met through the implementation of BMPs designed to abate, mitigate, and remediate human activities and land uses which result in water resource degradation.
2. Develop and implement Watershed Based Plans (WBPs) or equivalent planning documents whereby protection and restoration efforts are identified, prioritized, focused and effective. WBPs have several functions, one of those functions is to specify certain BMPs and/or specific project locations where, once BMPs are implemented, the water resource will be protected, maintained, or restored.
3. Liaise with local stakeholders, focusing and steering the efforts of local stakeholders such that time, money and energy invested by these individuals and groups is done so in a manner that effectively protects, maintains, reclaims and restores the waters of the commonwealth. This priority is a capacity building priority whereby the actions of stakeholders result in the implementation of BMPs in priority watersheds with subsequent water quality and/or quantity benefits.
4. Provide training to stakeholders and other interested citizens on topics associated with watershed science, watershed protection, and water resource restoration to the extent that the training provided enables those stakeholders to plan, implement, and track restorative activities within priority watersheds or such that the training provided enables stakeholders to enact positive behavior change relating to the protection of water quality. This priority is supportive of priorities 1 - 3 above whereby properly trained citizens can most effectively implement and maintain water resource protection BMPs as well as track the impact of watershed restoration activities.
5. Monitor water quality and/or support watershed stakeholder monitoring programs. Monitoring efforts support the drafting and implementation of WBPs and other watershed based initiatives used to protect and maintain water quality and/or quantity in priority areas. Further, monitoring efforts serve to protect existing water quality and quantity where the water resource is found to be unimpaired.
6. Secure funds for the implementation of BMPs and/or collaborate with local stakeholders such that those stakeholders can secure funds for the implementation of WBPs, other watershed based initiatives and/or individual BMPs for the protection and improvement of the water resource.

Note: Depending on the priorities/needs/resources of their respective county; the Watershed Specialist is not required to address all six priority areas detailed above within each grant cycle. Watershed Specialists may participate in auxiliary programs focused on the protection and restoration of the water resource to the extent that participation in those auxiliary and complementary activities does not preclude the Watershed Specialist from focusing on the planning, implementation, and tracking of plan-based watershed protection and restoration activities.