

Growing Greener Plus Program

Pennsylvania's Growing Greener Plus Program is part of DEP's Grant and Loan Program, which provides grants to assist individuals, groups, and businesses in addressing a host of environmental issues. The Growing Greener Plus Program remains the largest single investment of state funds in Pennsylvania's history to address Pennsylvania's critical environmental concerns of the 21st century. The program encourages partnerships between counties, municipalities, county conservation districts, watershed organizations, and other groups to restore and protect the environment. The three programs covered under DEP's Growing Greener Plus Grants Program include Growing Greener Watershed Restoration and Protection, Abandoned Mine Drainage (AMD) [Set-Aside](#), and Surface Mining Conservation and Reclamation (SMCRA) Bond Forfeiture grants. More information on these programs is provided in their respective sections in this Integrated Report.

The Growing Greener Plus Program is supported by the Environmental Stewardship Fund, which receives funding from landfill tipping fees. Signed into law on December 15, 1999, and reauthorized in June 2002, this legislation doubled the funding from \$645 million to just over \$1 billion for the Growing Greener Plus Program. This increased DEP's portion of funding for the program to \$547.7 million from the original \$241.5 million of the original five-year program. Since 1999, the Growing Greener Plus Program has awarded more than \$500 million of state funds for farmland-preservation projects statewide; protect open space; maintenance in state parks; clean up abandoned mines and restore watersheds; recreational trails and local parks; new and upgraded water and sewer systems; and installation of best management practices to reduce nonpoint source water pollution. The funds are distributed among four state agencies: Department of Environmental Protection; Department of Agriculture to administer farmland preservation projects; Department of Conservation and Natural Resources for state park renovations and improvements; and the Pennsylvania Infrastructure Investment Authority for water and sewer system upgrades.

DEP is authorized to allocate these funds in grants for: watershed restoration and protection, abandoned mine reclamation; and abandoned oil and gas well plugging projects. In 2019 and 2020, a combined 297 projects were approved totaling \$65,310,420 (Table 1 and Table 2) under the DEP's Growing Greener Plus Grants Program.

Table 1. 2019 Growing Greener, AMD, and SMCRA Projects

Program	Projects Approved	Amount Awarded
Growing Greener	134	\$28,799,520
AMD	6	\$1,375,115
SMCRA	1	\$249,500
Totals	141	\$30,424,135

Table 2. 2020 Growing Greener Projects, AMD, and SMCRA Projects

Program	Projects Approved	Amount Awarded
Growing Greener	150	\$32,803,035
AMD	5	\$1,586,032
SMCRA	1	\$497,218
Totals	156	\$34,886,285

Since 2016, there has been an added emphasis on agriculture and stormwater projects that are located in Pennsylvania's Chesapeake Bay Watershed, to reduce nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment in Pennsylvania's local waters leading to the Chesapeake Bay. A current list of projects for the protection and enhancement of Pennsylvania's water resources is available for 2019 and 2020 at DEP [Growing Greener Plus Grants Program](#).