

Master Watershed Steward Program



PennState Extension

ANNUAL REPORT 2016

PROBLEM

Non-point source pollution remains the biggest challenge facing surface water quality in Pennsylvania. From storm water runoff to acid mine drainage to nutrients from farms, non-point source pollution runs off from hundreds of thousands of individual sites throughout the state into Pennsylvania streams and rivers. No number of government regulators and environmental professionals could possibly address all the one-on-one outreach, engagement, and action needed to make change to so many sites, over so great an area. The sheer investment of time needed to make a difference requires ground-level citizen engagement.

PARTICIPANTS

The Master Watershed Steward program creates a corps of environmentally literate adult learners who will, in turn, volunteer in their communities to pass their knowledge to youth, adults, and elected officials through educational programming and on-the-ground restoration projects.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

What sets the Master Watershed Steward program apart is the formality of the training program, the structure of the program within a larger state-wide and nation-wide Cooperative Extension context, and the ongoing coordination of volunteer efforts after the training is complete. Continuing education of the volunteers and the maintenance of the group connection is the core strength of this program. Volunteers connect with each other, and with preceding and successive classes through social interactions, and are also connected to one another intentionally and directly by the volunteer coordinators.

Following their classroom instruction of 40 hours, the participants in each training class are required to give 50 hours of volunteer service in their first year. Once those hours are completed, they earn the official title of “Master Watershed Steward.” To maintain their title, they need to contribute a minimum of 20 hours of volunteer service and 10 hours of continuing education annually.



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PARTNERS

On a statewide-level, the Master Watershed Steward Program partners with the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Pennsylvania Environmental Council, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, and Conservation Districts.

On an individual county level, the Master Watershed Steward program connects every environmental organization within a county, since all of those organizations can benefit from knowledgeable volunteer assistance. These partnerships help stretch limited conservation funds for restoration projects and environmental education.

“My husband and I became Master Watershed Stewards because we appreciate and have concern for the environment. It turned out to be much more rewarding than we imagined it could have been.”

-Donna Mikol, MWS

2016 STATEWIDE HIGHLIGHTS

150 Master Watershed Stewards in 11 counties
 86 newly trained Master Watershed Stewards
 3,662 volunteer hours reported valued at \$85,690
 6,262 adult contacts
 3,431 youth contacts
 104,246 indirect contacts

Master Watershed Stewards Educate

47 schools
 43 community events

Master Watershed Stewards Partner

17 joined Watershed Association boards
 53 community partners

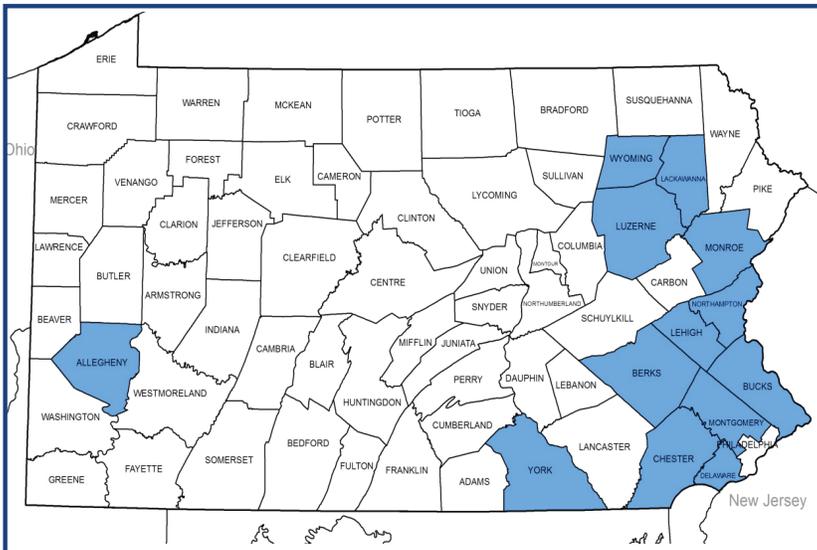
Master Watershed Stewards Protect

10 rain gardens (5,864 sq ft) installed and maintained
 351 trees planted
 5 MS4 Municipalities assisted
 61 rain barrels constructed
 0.5 acres of habitat created
 8.5 miles of stream assessed
 7 streams sampled

Statewide Funding Received to date:

DEP Growing Greener: \$178,066
 William Penn Foundation via
 Stroud Water Research Center: \$200,000

COUNTIES WITH MASTER WATERSHED STEWARD PROGRAMS



CONCLUSION

The Master Watershed Steward program is accomplishing the following goals:

- (1) educating and empowering Pennsylvania residents to engage in conservation efforts;
- (2) educating the community about water and natural resources;
- (3) creating partnerships and leveraging resources to increase watershed restoration and awareness efforts;
- (4) assisting municipalities with MS4 requirements and
- (5) accelerating the implementation of stormwater best management practices.