

# *Lycoming County's Implementation Plan For the Chesapeake Bay Tributary Strategy*



The Lycoming County Conservation District's Board of Directors approved this version of the Lycoming County Implementation Plan for the Chesapeake Bay Tributary Strategy during their February 18, 2015 meeting.

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### **County Description**

Lycoming County is located in north-central Pennsylvania entirely within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. There are two distinct geomorphic provinces within the County – the Appalachian Plateau Province located in the northern part of the County and the Valley and Ridge Province in the south. The west branch of the Susquehanna River flows through the county, coming in at Jersey Shore and exiting below Montgomery. At 1215.5 square miles it is the largest county in the Commonwealth and is home to 116,111 people according to the 2010 US Census. Roughly 75 percent of the County is forested. Agricultural land use accounts for approximately 17 percent of the County’s total acreage and is the second largest land use category in the County. Twenty-two townships currently have agricultural security areas.

Farming is the major industry in the county with 1,207 farms comprising 158,462 acres. There are 431 cattle farms, 106 dairy operations, 67 hog operations, 57 sheep and lamb operations, 84 goat operations, 229 horse operations, and 186 poultry operations (2012 USDA Census of Agriculture). According to the 2012 USDA Census of Agriculture, there are 1,637 acres used for permanent pasture, 24,085 acres of forage crops, 17,694 acres of corn for grain, 3,129 acres of corn silage, 9,428 acres of soybeans, 771 acres of small grains, 1,445 acres of cut Christmas trees, and 898 acres of vegetable crops planted in Lycoming County.

In addition to the West Branch of the Susquehanna and its tributaries there are seven major watersheds in Lycoming County; Pine Creek (9-A), Lycoming Creek/Larry’s Creek/Antes Creek (10-A), Loyalsock Creek (10-B), White Deer Hole Creek (10C), Muncy Creek (10-D), Towanda Creek (4-C), and Fishing Creek (5C). There are approximately 2,200 miles of streams and 92 water bodies in the County. Roughly eight percent (185.74 miles) of the streams located in the County are listed as impaired. Atmospheric Deposition (68.74 mi.), followed by Agriculturally Related Activities (50.99 mi), Small Residential Runoff (25.2 mi.) and Acid Mine Drainage (8.23 mi) are the known causes of impairment. There are also 32.58 miles of impairment with unknown sources.

The population trends of Lycoming County municipalities over the 1970 to 2010 Census periods are indicative of statewide trends where population shifted outward from the cities and boroughs into the suburban and rural townships. Spatially, much of the growth is occurring in the townships located just beyond the suburban fringe of greater Williamsport, which is well within commuting distance. Earth disturbance activity associated with construction has the potential to impact water quality and increases the impervious area resulting in elevated stormwater runoff rates. Development rights of 70 farms totaling 8,682.19 acres have been purchased through the Conservation District for farmland preservation. The Northcentral Pennsylvania Conservancy is another organization that is working to protect the rural nature of the County. Their mission is “to conserve the working lands and identifying waters of northcentral Pennsylvania for the enjoyment and well-being of present and future generations”. To date they have protected 14 properties in Lycoming County totaling 1,200.6 acres.

### **Past Accomplishments**

The Lycoming County Conservation District (the District) has completed 32 Chesapeake Bay projects at a cost of \$674,031.11. In 2012 and 2013, the District, USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS), and Pennsylvania’s Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) assisted landowners who were affected by Tropical Storm Lee in 2011. Sixteen stream bank stabilization projects were completed at no cost to the landowner. The funds were used to stabilize 3,115 feet of stream bank at a total cost of \$564,031.00. Under the Nutrient Management Implementation Grant Program and Growing Greener Program, the District has assisted agriculture operators in obtaining

approximately \$369,000. The types of Best Management Practices (BMPs) installed include manure storage structures, heavy use area protection, milkhouse waste treatment systems, roof runoff control structures, diversions, waterways, walkways, stream bank fencing, spring development, contour strips, conservation tillage and stream bank stabilization projects. Other Growing Greener grants administered in Lycoming County include water quality inventories and assessments, acid mine drainage treatment, development of Watershed Restoration Plans and stream restoration projects. Over 1.5 million dollars have been spent in these efforts.

The District has seven active Chesapeake Bay contracts requiring compliance inspection to determine if the operations are maintaining the Best Management Practices that were installed under the Program. There are 25 farming operations that have Act 38 nutrient management plans developed in Lycoming County. The District is responsible to determine if the plans are accurate and being implemented.

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) has funded six projects to install 18,748 feet of stream bank buffers and 4.3 acres of wetlands buffered further than 15 feet from the stream. Between 2005 and 2011, the USDA-NRCS has helped to pay for the installation of, or worked with landowners to plan for the installation of 121,362 feet of fencing, 5,593.7 acres of filter strips, 861.0 acres of riparian forest buffers, 6.0 acres of wetland restoration, 42 watering facilities, and 16 stream crossings through its various programs since 2004. Most of this was done through the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). In addition to this work, the USDA also helped farmers in Lycoming County improve water quality by installing 1935 acres of contour farming, 36.1 acres of contour buffer strips, 750 feet of diversions, 26.5 acres of grassed waterways, seven roof runoff structures. They also helped implement 1410.3 acres of cover crop, 2,384.8 acres of pest management, 5,455 of conservation crop rotation, 570.0 acres of hay and pasture plantings, 371.7 acres of prescribed grazing, and 729.1 acres of forest stand improvement.

Between 2012 and 2014, the USDA-NRCS has helped to pay for the installation of, or worked with landowners to plan for the installation of 23,255 feet of fencing, 119 acres of conservation cover, 15.0 acres of riparian forest buffers, 11 watering facilities, and three stream crossings through its various programs. Most of this was done through the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). In addition to this work, the USDA-NRCS also helped farmers in Lycoming County improve water quality by installing five waste storage facilities, 612 acres of nutrient management, 125 acres of contour farming, 185 acres of conservation crop rotation, 464 acres of cover crop, 196 acres of no-till farming, 450 feet of diversions, 140 acres of prescribed grazing, and many other conservation practices.

Various other public agencies and organizations are currently working for the protection and restoration of the County's watersheds. The District is actively involved in both waterway protection and Erosion and Sedimentation Pollution Control programs. There eight active watershed associations in Lycoming County; Pine Creek Preservation, Pine Creek Watershed Council, Greater Nippenose Valley Watershed Association, Larrys Creek Watershed Association, Lycoming Creek Watershed Association, Loyalsock Creek Watershed Association, Muncy Creek Watershed Association, and Black Hole Creek Watershed Association. The Clean Water Institute of Lycoming College has been very active in the assessment of the water quality in the County. The Susquehanna Chapter of PA Trout Unlimited, The Northcentral Pennsylvania Conservancy, and the Susquehanna River Basin Commission (SRBC) are also active in Lycoming County.

Previously, the County completed a system-wide investigation of Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) in the Williamsport Sanitary Authority (WSA) sewer service area. Known as the Lycoming County Comprehensive Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) Study, it is a series of nine related projects

that will be integrated into a single comprehensive analysis of the WSA area. As a result of this study, the Lycoming County Planning Commission was able to obtain \$2.6 million dollars in grants. The grant funding was used to map the CSO in the WSA sewer service area, to complete a combined demonstration project that included a comprehensive study on overflow stormwater treatment options, and to make system upgrades to the existing CSO in Duboistown. Upgrades are continuing to be made in Old Lycoming Township, South Williamsport, and Loyalsock Township.

**Impaired Waters of Lycoming County**

The following are the streams listed on the **2014 Pennsylvania Integrated Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Report (formerly the 303d list)** found in Lycoming County.

**Stream Name**

**Use Assessed (Section ID)– Miles**

**Date**

**TMDL**

**Source Cause**

**Use Assessed**

**Listed**

**Date**

**Abbott Run and Unnamed Tributaries (UNT) to Lycoming Creek**

Aquatic Life (4001) - 5.33 miles

Atmospheric Deposition      pH      2004      2017

**Beautys Run and UNT to Lycoming Creek**

Aquatic Life (5370) – 3.17 miles

Grazing Related Agric      Organic Enrichment/Low D.O.      2004      2017

**Bennetts Run and UNT to W. Branch Susquehanna River**

Aquatic Life (14110) – 5.84 miles

Small Residential Runoff      Siltation      2008      2021

**Bottle Run and UNT to Lycoming Creek**

Aquatic Life (5402) – 1.45 miles

Small Residential Runoff      Organic Enrichment/Low D.O.      2004      2017

Aquatic Life (14146) – 4.49

Agriculture      Siltation      2008      2021

**Buckeye Run to Larrys Creek**

Aquatic Life (9462) – 4.55 miles

Atmospheric Deposition      pH      1996      2005

**Carpenters Run and UNT to W. Branch Susquehanna River**

Aquatic Life (8443) – 14.2

Agriculture      Siltation      1998      2011

**Doe Run and UNT to Lycoming Creek**

Aquatic Life (4357) – 3.18 miles

Atmospheric Deposition      pH      2004      2017

**Dry Run and UNT to Lycoming Creek**

Aquatic Life (8385) - 5.98 miles

Agriculture      Siltation      1998      2011

**First Fork Larrys Creek and UNT**

Aquatic Life (5238) – 6.5 miles

Atmospheric Deposition      pH      2004      2017

**Frozen Run and UNT to Lycoming Creek**

Aquatic Life (4671) - 6.94

Atmospheric Deposition	pH	2004	2017
Aquatic Life (4695) - 2.03			
Atmospheric Deposition	pH	2004	2017
Aquatic Life (4676) – 3.77 miles			
Atmospheric Deposition	pH	2004	2017
Aquatic Life (4698) – 0.14 miles			
Atmospheric Deposition	pH	2004	2017
<b><u>German Run To Muncy Creek</u></b>			
Aquatic Life (8229) - 1.41 miles			
Agriculture	Siltation	1998	2011
<b><u>Grafius Run to W. Branch Susquehanna River</u></b>			
Aquatic Life (11374) – 8.47 miles			
Small Residential Runoff	Cause Unknown	2002	2015
<b><u>Grays Run and UNT to Lycoming Creek</u></b>			
Aquatic Life (5172) - 5.08 miles			
Atmospheric Deposition	pH	2004	2017
<b><u>Hagermans Run to W. Branch Susquehanna</u></b>			
Aquatic Life (3971) - 1.54 miles			
Urban Runoff/Storm Sewers	Cause Unknown	2004	2017
<b><u>Hound Run and UNT to Lycoming Creek</u></b>			
Aquatic Life (4134) - 3.78 miles			
Atmospheric Deposition	pH	2004	2017
<b><u>Little Gap Run and UNT to Lycoming Creek</u></b>			
Aquatic Life (5747) – 4.05 miles			
Abandoned Mine Drainage	Metals	2004	2017
<b><u>Little Muncy Creek UNT to Little Muncy Creek</u></b>			
Aquatic Life (8231) - 1.49 miles			
Source Unknown	Cause Unknown	1998	2011
<b><u>Lycoming Creek and UNT to Lycoming Creek</u></b>			
Aquatic Life (5087) – 0.91 miles			
Atmospheric Deposition	pH	2004	2017
Aquatic Life (4076) - 2.87 miles			
Abandoned Mine Drainage	pH	2004	2017
Aquatic Life (5402) – 2.17 miles			
Small Residential Runoff	Organic Enrichment/Low D.O.	2004	2017
<b><u>Mill Creek (East) to Loyalsock Creek</u></b>			
Recreational	- 2.89 miles		
Source Unknown	Pathogens	2014	2027
<b><u>Mill Hollow Run to Lycoming Creek</u></b>			
Aquatic Life (4695) - 1.21 miles			
Atmospheric Deposition	pH	2004	2017

**Millers Run to W. Branch Susquehanna River**

Aquatic Life (11036) - 1.16 miles			
Urban Runoff/Storm Sewers	Metals	2002	2015
	Other Inorganics (Sulfates, etc.)	2002	2015

**Miners Run and UNT to Lycoming Creek**

Aquatic Life (4075) - 7.04 miles			
Atmospheric Deposition	pH	2004	2017

**Otter Run to Larrys Creek**

Aquatic Life (9460) - 1.53 miles			
Atmospheric Deposition	pH	1996	2005

**Pine Run and UNT to W. Branch Susquehanna River**

Fish Consumption (11460) - 0.21 miles			
Source Unknown	PCB	2004	2017
Aquatic Life (14734) - 9.97 miles			
Agriculture	Siltation	2010	2023

**Right Fork Otter Run and UNT to Larrys Creek**

Aquatic Life (9452) - 1.80 miles			
Atmospheric Deposition	pH	1996	2005

**Red Run and UNT to Lycoming Creek**

Aquatic Life (5091) - 11.48 miles			
Atmospheric Deposition	pH	2004	2017
Aquatic Life (14155) - 1.49 miles			
Atmospheric Deposition	pH	2004	2017

**Roaring Run to Larrys Creek**

Aquatic Life (5292) - 1.31 miles			
Abandoned Mine Drainage	Metals	2004	2017

**Stony Gap Run Unnamed To Lycoming Creek**

Aquatic Life (14145) - 2.06 miles			
Agriculture	Siltation	2008	2021

**Tules Run and UNT to W. Branch Susquehanna River**

Aquatic Life (14688) - 4.57 miles			
Small Residential Runoff	Siltation	2010	2023

**West Branch Murray Run and UNT to Loyalsock Creek**

Recreational (17484) 4.47 miles			
Source Unknown	Pathogens	2014	2027

**West Branch Susquehanna River and UNT to W. Branch Susquehanna River**

Fish Consumption - 22.30 miles			
Source Unknown	PCB	2004	2017
Aquatic Life (12857) - 1.43 miles			
Source Unknown	Metals	2006	2019
Aquatic Life (5996) - 6.47 miles			
Crop Related Agriculture	Organic Enrichment/Low D.O.	2004	2017

Aquatic Life - 0.75  
 Agriculture Siltation 1998 2011  
 Urban Runoff/Storm Sewers Cause Unknown 1998 2011

**White Deer Hole Creek and UNT to W. Branch Susquehanna River**

Aquatic Life (14091) – 3.66 miles  
 Agriculture Siltation 2008 2021

**Wolf Run and UNT to W. Branch Susquehanna River**

Aquatic Life (8394) – 4.01 miles  
 Agriculture Siltation 1998 2013

Aquatic Life (8395) - 1.29 miles  
 Agriculture Siltation 1998 2013

**Yellow Dog Run and UNT to Lycoming Creek**

Aquatic Life (4112) - 1.98 miles  
 Atmospheric Deposition pH 2008 2021

**US EPA Priority Agricultural Streams Impaired by High Total Nitrogen**

<b>STREAM NAME</b>	<b>HUC 10 DIGIT WATERSHED</b>	<b>12 DIGIT HUC CODE</b>
Big Run	Little Muncy Creek	020502060702
Quenshukeny Run	West Branch Susquehanna River	020502060602

**USDA-NRCS Priority Watersheds**

<b>STREAM NAME</b>	<b>12 DIGIT HUC CODE</b>
Little Fishing Creek	020501070602
Larrys Creek	020502060103
Hoagland Run	020502060207
Lycoming Creek	020502060208
Mill Creek- East side of Loyalsock Creek	020502060507
Antes Creek	020502060601
Quenshukeny Run	020502060602
Wolf Run	020502060605
West Branch Susquehanna River	020502060606
Beaver Run	020502060701
Big Run	020502060702
Gregs Run-Muncy Creek	020502060803
Spring Creek	020502060901
Delaware Run	020502061202

**Priority Areas**

Priority will be given to implementing the most cost-effective Best Management Practices to reduce nutrient and sediment runoff contributing to the impairment of the Chesapeake Bay. The Lycoming County Comprehensive Plan, the Department of Environmental Protection’s *Pennsylvania Integrated Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Report* list of impaired streams requiring Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs), and the expertise of the Conservation District and its cooperating



agencies will be utilized to identify project areas. Impaired streams not needing or having an existing TMDL will be considered priority areas too.

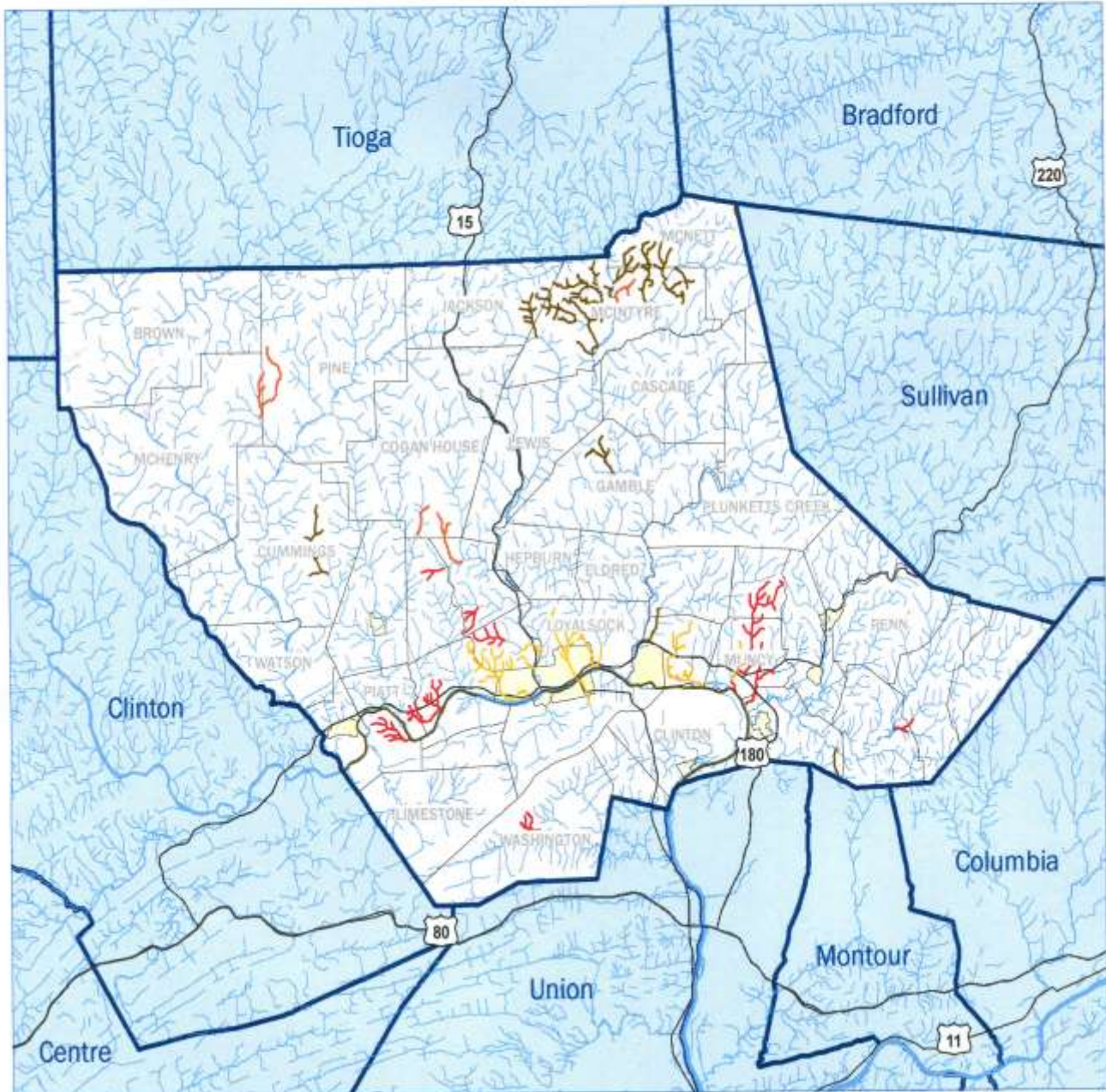
TMDLs can be considered to be a watershed budget for pollutants, representing the total amount of pollutants that can be assimilated by a stream without causing impairment or water standards to be exceeded. The maximum allowable amount of a specific pollutant is allocated to all sources in the watershed, including point source discharges from sewage treatment plants and industrial wastewater facilities (waste load allocations) and polluted runoff from the land (load allocation). The TMDL process allocates the amount of pollutants that can be discharged into a waterway from each category of pollutant source. The TMDL does not specify how dischargers must attain particular load reductions.

TMDLs are regulatory allocations. Once an impaired stream is determined to need a TMDL, PA DEP has 13 years to make sure that one is completed. Both TMDLs and the Tributary Strategies are developed to assist in cleaning up impaired waters. The main difference between TMDLs and the Tributary Strategies is that at this time the Chesapeake Bay Program's Tributary Strategy is a voluntary, cooperative restoration process.

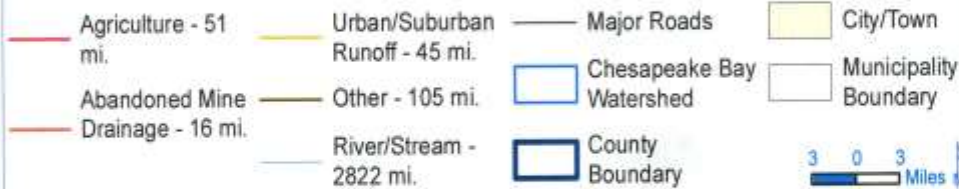
The areas of Lycoming County where agriculture is currently concentrated and the greatest potential for nutrient and sediment runoff is located were identified. These target areas include Jordan, Franklin, Moreland and Penn Townships in the eastern part of the County, Limestone and Washington Townships in the southern part of the County and Cogan House Township in the north-central part of the County.

The following is a map produced by the Chesapeake Bay Foundation identifying these impairments. A search on PA DEP's eMapPa website can also be used to identify causes of impairment. The URL address is <http://www.emappa.dep.state.pa.us/emappa/viewer.htm> .

# IMPAIRED WATERWAYS IN LYCOMING COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA



**IMPAIRED WATERWAYS:  
MILES BY TYPE**



**CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION**  
Saving a National Treasure

Source: Integrated List NonAttaining, PA DEP, 2014. Lists Primary Sources of Impairment Only.

### **Technical Resources**

The following resources can be utilized to implement this plan:

- Lycoming County Conservation District
- Penn State Extension
- Natural Resource Conservation Service
- Farm Service Agency
- PA Department of Environmental Protection
- Local Watershed Associations
- PA Department of Agriculture
- Eastern PA Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation
- Chesapeake Bay Foundation
- Local Interest Groups i.e. -Forest Owners Association, Trout Unlimited, Sportsmen's Groups, etc.
- Local Colleges and Universities
- Custom Manure/Fertilizer Applicators
- Local Industry
- Media
- Lycoming County and PA Farm Bureaus

### **Funding Sources**

The following can be utilized to assist in the implementation of this plan:

- Chesapeake Bay Program
- Farm Bill Programs
- PA Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) Program
- Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)
- Dirt and Gravel Road Pollution Prevention Program
- Growing Greener
- Conservation Security Program
- Farm Service Agency Loan Programs
- Miscellaneous Grants i.e. 319, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, etc.
- Local Industry

### **Best Management Practices**

The following Best Management Practices were identified as being the most cost-effective means of achieving the goals identified in the Bay Tributary Strategy:

- Stream bank stabilization
- Stream bank restoration
- Stream bank fencing
- Riparian buffers
- Off-stream watering systems
- Nutrient management plans
- Conservation plans/agricultural erosion and sedimentation plans
- Cover crops
- Critical area planting
- Conservation tillage/ No-Till
- Heavy use area protection
- Rotational grazing
- Land retirement
- Dirt and Gravel Roads practices

### **Agricultural Compliance**

Under current regulations, every farm operation in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania that generates or uses manure is required to have a manure management plan (MMP). An MMP is a water quality document that states how much manure is created or used on the operation. It also details how the manure is to be applied in terms of season and amounts.

One form of documentation that may be considered sufficient to meet the requirements of an MMP is the Nutrient Balance Sheet (NBS) from the PA Nutrient Management Program (Act 38). More heavily concentrated animal operations may be required to have a nutrient management plan (NMP). See Nutrient Management section for more details on NMPs.

All farming operations in PA that till or do no-till on 5,000 square feet of soil are required to have an agricultural erosion and sedimentation plan (Ag E&S plan) according to Pennsylvania Code's Title 25, Chapter 10. An Ag E&S plan is a water quality planning tool that is similar to a USDA-NRCS conservation plan. A conservation plan created by USDA-NRCS historically only addressed erosion in cropland. In order to meet the state requirements for an Ag E&S plan, the plan must be done to meet the tolerable soil loss rate, "T", over the course of the crop rotation and it must address erosion to cropland, pastureland, and heavy use areas. USDA-NRCS conservation plans that were completed after 2011 meet these requirements, while a conservation plan created by USDA-NRCS prior to 2012 may or may not meet the requirements of an Ag E & S Plan.

The District, like all other Districts that receive Chesapeake Bay Program or Nutrient Management Program funding, has been mandated to make every farmer in the county aware of the current state regulations pertaining to agriculture. We have been required to do at least 100 on farm visits for the state fiscal year ending June 30, 2012. Between July 2012 and June 30, 2016 we must have every farmer in the county notified of his or her requirements. During the last four years, we would like to do as much of this as we can in small group settings or in conjunction with other agricultural outreach programs, assuming we are given permission to do so.

### **Agricultural Land Preservation Programs and Long Term Easement Programs**

One of the many issues that farmers face is pressure from development. A decrease in available cropland results in higher agricultural land purchase prices for farmers in heavily developed areas. One way to prevent viable agriculture from being developed for a purpose other than for agricultural purposes is to acquire permanent conservation easements.

Purchasing these easements helps protect normal farming operations from incompatible non-farmland uses that may render farming impracticable. These programs also assure the conservation of viable agricultural lands in order to protect the agricultural economy of the Commonwealth. Normal farming operations in agricultural security areas, whether they are in an agricultural land preservation program or not, should see a decrease in public nuisance complaints by keeping development pressure off of viable agricultural lands.

The District administers the Lycoming County Agricultural Land Preservation Program. This program uses state and local funds to purchase permanent easements on farms located in agricultural security areas throughout Lycoming County. The conservation easements compensate landowners in viable agricultural areas in exchange for their relinquishment of the right to develop their private property.

The USDA has an easement program called the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP). ACEP provides financial and technical assistance to help conserve agricultural lands and wetlands and their related benefits. Under the Agricultural Land Easements compo-

ment, NRCS helps state and local governments and non-governmental organizations protect working agricultural lands and limit non-agricultural uses of the land. Under the Wetlands Reserve Easements component, NRCS helps to restore, protect and enhance enrolled wetlands.

The USDA also administers two programs that offer long term rental payments in exchange for installing and maintaining best management practices designed address water, soil, wildlife, and other related resource concerns. These programs are the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) and the Conservation Enhancement Program (CRP). Both programs offer financial and technical assistance for landowners to install low cost best management practices such as wildlife grass plantings, riparian tree plantings, stream bank fencing, off stream watering systems, and animal walkways. In addition to receiving cost funds for the implementation of these practices, landowners are paid a yearly rental rate to offset the cost of taking these areas out of agricultural production and to maintain the practices. CREP and CRP offer 10 to 15 year rental payment options.

The Northcentral Pennsylvania Conservancy (The Conservancy) is a private organization that is dedicated to the conservation of “working lands and identifying waters of northcentral Pennsylvania for the enjoyment and well being of present and future generations”. The Conservancy is an option for landowners who would like to preserve their land for natural uses in perpetuity. The Conservancy offers several land protection options through conservation easements, a land donation program, and bargain sale of land program.

### **Barnyard Runoff Controls**

Runoff from barnyards containing manure and sediment will be reduced by installing roof water control and diversions to direct clean water away from the animal concentration area. Heavy Use Area Protection and associated runoff treatment filters will be used to armor the barnyard areas so the manure can be collected and land applied according to a nutrient management plan. Funding sources will be sought after the completion of an Act 38 Nutrient Management Plan. These sources are primarily the EQIP program and miscellaneous grants (e.g. Growing Greener).

### **Conservation Plans/Agricultural Erosion and Sedimentation Plans**

Conservation Plans contains a farming operator’s decisions regarding the conservation system being used when producing agricultural commodity crops on highly erodible cropland. A conservation plan is a document that describes the conservation system to be applied, documents the status of system application, describes the decisions of the person with respect to location, land use, tillage systems, and conservation treatment measures and schedules. In order to participate in a USDA cost share program or a USDA payment program, an operator must have a conservation plan.

All farming operations in PA that till or do no-till on 5,000 square feet of soil are required to have an agricultural erosion and sedimentation plan (Ag E&S plan) according to Pennsylvania Code’s Title 25, Chapter 102. An Ag E&S plan is a water quality planning tool that is similar to a conservation plan. A conservation plan will be considered sufficient to meet this requirement if the tolerable soil loss, “T”, for a field is met throughout the typical crop rotation of that operation.

### **Cover Crops**

The District will promote the benefits of using cover crops. Nutrients left in the soil after a crop is harvested can be captured by planting small grains without fertilizer on land usually left fallow over winter. The benefits of establishing cover crops are erosion control, nitrate capture, atmospheric nitrogen fixation, organic matter increase, soil structure improvement, water management and weed control. To make the best use of cover crops, producers need to match the reason for using them with the characteristics of cover crop species. They also need to be knowledgeable about cover crop management.

### **Dirt and Gravel Road Pollution Prevention Program**

Pennsylvania's Dirt & Gravel Road Maintenance Program provides dedicated and earmarked funding to eliminate stream pollution caused by dust and sediment from unpaved and low volume roads. Lycoming County receives annual requests totaling approximately \$1,400,000 to install environmentally sound maintenance practices and approved products to correct pollution problems. Current funding allows the District to allocate roughly \$560,000 towards addressing impaired roads. The practices used by the Dirt and Gravel Road Program in Lycoming County primarily include the placement of Driving Surface Aggregate (DSA) and construction of water control structures. At this time a method of calculating the nutrient and sediment reductions from implementing these practices has not been established.

### **Managed Precision Agriculture**

Crop Management Associations (CMAs) are grassroots, nonprofit organizations run by member farmers. Their ultimate goal is to promote more economical, efficient and environmentally sound crop production practices through best management practices and crop input efficiencies. To accomplish this, members generate funds through acreage fees and hire crop management scouts, technicians and consultants to provide a variety of services. Efficient crop production requires managing the many variables that go into growing a crop, which takes time and effort. For CMA members, much of this work is done by the association's employees: personnel, who have a background in agronomy, stay up-to-date on crop management practices and work with county extension agents who have close links to agricultural research at Penn State. Membership in a crop management association makes farmers better equipped to produce crops more profitably because members get the information needed to make sound management decisions. Crop management technicians gather and help interpret information about members' field and crop conditions. For example, technicians monitor crops for destructive insects and offer advice on control measures. Instead of routinely applying pesticides, CMA members can cut back on applications by spraying only when insect populations justify it. This saves money and protects the environment. As a result of insect monitoring information alone, one CMA member reduced chemical, equipment and labor costs by 75 percent.

Nutrient management is another area where CMAs can provide assistance. As a first step, CMA technicians collect soil and manure samples for analysis. After determining crop nutrient needs, soil fertility levels and available nutrients in farm manure, technicians advise members on the application of manure and commercial fertilizer. The goal is to meet a crop's nutrient needs without applying excess nutrients that decrease farm profits and degrade water quality.

### **No-till Farming**

The District will promote the used of no-till farming practices. The environmental benefits of switching to no-till farming from conventional tillage practices are decreased soil erosion,

increased water quality, and decreased amounts of fossil fuels and carbon gasses being released into the atmosphere. No-till farming will benefit the health of the soil by increasing soil tilth and water infiltration, while decreasing soil compaction.

In addition to the environmental benefits that farmers will gain by switching to no-till farming, they will also see a decrease in labor requirements and machinery wear from not having to plow their fields. This will lead to increased time to do other necessary farm related duties and decreased fuel costs.

The Lycoming County Conservation District purchased a 7' Haybuster grain drill in August 2010. This drill was purchased to help farmers who want to try no-till farming without having to make a large financial commitment to purchase new equipment in order to start no-till farming. The drill is available for a rental fee of \$10.00 per acre. In the past, farmers using the drill were responsible to either pick it up at our office or at the last farm to use the drill since the district did not have a vehicle that was able to tow the drill around Lycoming County. The district now has access to a vehicle that is capable of transporting the drill around instead of having the farmers do it for us.

### **Nutrient Management Planning**

Under current regulations, every farm operation in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania that generates or uses manure is required to have a manure management plan (MMP). An MMP is a water quality document that states how much manure is created or used on the operation. It also details how the manure is to be applied in terms of season and amounts.

One form of documentation that may be considered sufficient to meet the requirements of an MMP is the Nutrient Balance Sheet (NBS) from the PA Nutrient Management Program (Act 38). A NBS is basically a nutrient budget for a particular group of fields that have the same crop rotations, manure and chemical fertilization patterns, and tillage practices. It includes residual nutrients from past crops and manure applications, as well as nutrients that will be received from future manure and/or nutrient applications.

Some farm operations are regulated to have an Act 38 NMP. These operations contain at least 2,000 pounds of live animal weight per acre for every acre that the operator controls. Acres under control are those that the operator has the final decision making responsibility for crops and manure application. This includes both owned and rented acres.

An Act 38 NMP is more detailed than an NBS or an MMP. An NMP is broken down into individual fields or a grouping of similar fields or strips known as a Crop Management Area. Each crop management area is restricted to less than 20 acres. A single NBS could cover an entire farm. Farming operations that are not required by regulation to create an Act 38 NMP may create one anyway. Having an Act 38 NMP gives an operator limited legal protection if the NMP is being implemented as it was written if the operation has an accidental discharge. In that circumstance, the legal entity will consider their efforts of developing and following an approved plan.

The Lycoming County Conservation District oversees the Nutrient Management Program in Lycoming County. The district encourages every operation to create a nutrient management plan as a tool to help farmers utilize their manure in an environmentally friendly way. Proper manure management may also lead to increased farm profit by not spending unnecessary money on chemical fertilizers and by applying manure in a more agronomically efficient manner.

### **Nutrient Trading**

Nutrient trading is a process that allows point source polluters to buy credits from a non-point source polluter. In order to sell credits, the credit generator must meet and exceed the minimum laws and regulations of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Currently, agricultural operations are the only non-point source pollution creators that have the possibility of selling nutrient trading credits. As credit generation standards are created this will open up to other non-point source areas such as stormwater and flood-plain restoration projects.

In Lycoming County, a countywide approach to nutrient trading is being pursued. This is being done as a way to allow the seven waste water treatment plants (WWTPs) in the county to achieve the upgrades that they are required to make, to achieve the required pollution limits set forth in the Chesapeake Bay cleanup, at a potentially reduced cost. Each WWTP will, through the Act 537 process and by evaluating their facility's unique situation, make an individual decision to determine if purchasing nutrient trading credits will be part of their business plan. Potential benefits of purchasing credits include cost savings, additional time to prepare for infrastructure upgrades, and flexibility in meeting regulatory compliance. Some WWTPs may opt to do building improvements to achieve a certain level of pollution cleanup, and then purchase credits to account for the remaining pounds of nutrients they are required to take out of the system annually. The cost advantage of a "partial upgrade" can be realized when the cost of a credit is less than the incremental cost of nutrient removal at the high end of treatment efficiency. For instance, the last bit of nitrogen that needs to be removed by regulation may cost the WWTPs \$20.00 or more to remove, but they may be able to purchase nutrient credits at \$4.00 to \$8.00 per credit. Since one pound of nitrogen credit equals one pound of nitrogen saved from entering the local waterways, the WWTPs would be saving \$12.00 to \$16.00 per pound of nitrogen for each credit that was purchased that year. This savings is then passed on to the users of the WWTPs since their operation costs remain lower.

In the case of the Lycoming County Nutrient Trading Program, the goal is to generate all the credits needed by the seven WWTPs in Lycoming County by farming operations in Lycoming County. This will save sewer and water system rate payers in Lycoming County money. It will also provide extra farm income for farmers in Lycoming County.

The conservation district is promoting the nutrient trading program to the farmers in Lycoming County. The district is also doing the work needed to verify the existence nutrient credits on these farms. The district is also calculating the amount of credits available on participating farms and forwarding that information form verification to DEP. They are also serving as a point of contact for DEP while DEP is working to certify the credits for future sale. Conservation district staff members are serving on workgroups and advisory committees associated with the Lycoming County Nutrient Trading Program.

The Lycoming County Planning Commission was able to obtain a grant through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to help with the start up of the Lycoming County Nutrient Trading Program.

### **Public Education**

Public education was identified as a vital component to attaining nutrient and sediment reductions. Agricultural issues like nutrient application and nonagricultural issues such as invasive species along stream banks and mowing too close to stream banks can all become major causes of nutrient and sediment pollution. The District must initially inform people of the changes that must be made in order to reduce pollution to the Waters of the Commonwealth and ulti-



mately the Chesapeake Bay. It is essential to inform the public that everyday activities commonly perceived as minor or insignificant can have a considerable impact on water quality. Enhancing community awareness and involvement will assist in accomplishing this goal. This objective can be achieved by developing newspaper articles and newsletters, distributing brochures, conducting classroom visits, presenting workshops and through one-on-one contacts. The District will work closely with Penn State Cooperative Extension and other cooperating agencies to promote the proper utilization of our natural resources.

The District provides several public education services targeting school aged children on a continuous basis. On a yearly basis, the District cohosts the Lycoming-Sullivan Envirothon. Since 2013, the District has awarded each of the five members of the winning team from Lycoming County a \$500.00 educational scholarship. The District offers to send at least one Lycoming County high school student to the Conservation Leadership School annually. Our staff is also available to work with school and scout groups if the opportunity arises.

The District is also available to provide public education to adult groups. The District provides agricultural operators the chance to complete their required manure management plans at public workshops. The Erosion and Sedimentation Program staff cohosts a regional Contractor's Workshop annually to keep contractors up to date on changes to the erosion and sedimentation program. The District will also provide a scholarship for one Lycoming County teacher to attend the Ag in the Classroom training.

### **Stream Bank Fencing, Off Stream Watering Systems and Riparian Forest Buffers**

The degradation of stream banks due to animal access is evident throughout Lycoming County resulting in sediment and nutrients entering the streams. Fencing promotes pasture management allowing the operator more control over where cattle graze. By reducing animal contact with surface water there is less potential for pollution from sediment and nutrients. There are many benefits of stream bank fencing to farm operators, local communities and the entire region. Farmers are under increasing pressure to consider how their management affects others. Stream bank fencing is a low-cost, low-maintenance management tool that protects a shared resource and maintains good public relations. The environmental benefits of excluding livestock from streams include reduction of nutrients, sediments, farm chemicals and bacteria entering the streams resulting in increased water quality.

An adequate amount of quality water is essential for efficient animal production. Therefore, animals excluded from streams will need to be provided water by other means, such as spring developments, pumps and stabilized access areas.

Allowing trees and shrubs to grow along the stream banks, also known as riparian buffers, decrease the frequency and severity of floods and increase groundwater recharge. These streamside forests are also effective in removing excess nutrients and sediment from surface runoff and shading streams to optimize light and temperature conditions for aquatic plants and animals. The roots of trees and shrubs aid in stabilizing stream banks thus reducing cut bank erosion.

There are several programs available to farm operators in Lycoming County promoting fencing and riparian buffers. Various options are available from the Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF), Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). The District intends to promote these programs and assist in the implementation of these buffers. The Conservation District will assist NRCS to install more than 1000 acres

of Riparian Buffers and more than 400 acres of Grassed Filter Strips in Lycoming County under the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP).

The nutrient and sediment reductions for Riparian Buffers on agricultural land includes the original landuse loading rate (e.g. pasture, conventional tillage, hay ground) minus the forest loading rate times total acres converted plus upland landuse loading rate times total acres treated times percent efficiency. The upland landuse efficiency varies by hydrologic setting. In Lycoming County the practice will be installed on Valley and Ridge –Siliciclastic soils. For nitrogen every 435.5 linear feet of buffer (average width 100 feet) is estimated to treat 5 upland acres. For phosphorus and sediment every 435.5 linear feet of buffer is estimated to treat 2 upland acres of land. The efficiency rates for forest buffers are as follows: Nitrogen 44%, Phosphorus 45% and Sediment 45 %, the efficiency rates for grass buffers are as follows: Nitrogen 37%, Phosphorus 65% and Sediment 65 %. It is estimated that 90% of the forested riparian buffers will be installed on pasture ground and 10% installed on conventional tillage ground. This would compute to a reduction of about 48,196 lbs-N, 2,170 lbs-P and 511 tons of sediment. Four hundred acres of Grass buffers installed on previously conventional tillage ground would translate to a savings of about 31,706 lbs-N, 1,616 lb-P, and 697 tons of sediment. All of these Best Management Practices are expected to perform for at least ten years and the reductions are cumulative throughout the years. These figures were obtained by using the Chesapeake Bay Program Watershed Model Appendix C. - Chesapeake Bay Program Best Management Practices.

### **Stream Bank Stabilization and Stream Bank Restoration**

Sediment from stream bank erosion is a source of non-point source water pollution. The eroded sediment that enters streams may also contain nutrients and chemicals. Once stream bank erosion enters local waterways, it can decrease a stream's water carrying capacity, leading to increased flooding during a heavy rainfall event. With approximately 2,200 miles of streams in Lycoming County, the potential for pollution occurring at individual sites with stream banks that are in need of stabilization or restoration work is great.

In an effort to keep sediment from eroded stream banks from entering local waterways, the Lycoming County Conservation District will work with interested landowners to remedy existing stream bank erosion conditions. These landowners can be owners of agricultural and non-agricultural land, as well as municipalities. This work will be done in addition to work that is currently being done through the District's cooperation with watershed associations and through the Erosion and Sedimentation Control Program.

This work would include, but not be limited to, offering technical services and trying to obtain grant funding to do stream bank stabilization and restoration projects. Types of projects that could be done through potential grant funding sources include installing stream bank fencing, sloping and vegetating stream banks, installing riparian buffers, hard armoring streams with riprap, and installing log deflectors. Other best management practices, not listed above, may be used in stream bank and restoration projects, if they are needed in addition to, or instead of, these listed practices.

Currently, the Northcentral Pennsylvania Conservancy has grant funding to install BMPs in agriculturally impaired streams and NRCS priority watersheds in DEP's northcentral region. These funds can be used to cover the installation of in-stream structures that are used to stabilize stream banks and reduce erosion, stream bank fencing, riparian buffer plantings, and animal crossings and associated walkways. This funding will cover all costs of the projects, but donated

materials, equipment use, and volunteer labor are appreciated and encouraged. They are looking for projects that can be completed in the summer of 2015 or 2016.

### **Storm Water Management**

Flooding has been identified as a storm water management concern. Act 167 required counties to develop Watershed Stormwater Management Plans, and provides a mechanism for partial reimbursement from DEP, subject to availability of funds. The County completed a Comprehensive Watershed Stormwater Management Plan for the Grafius/Miller's/McClure's Run watershed in 2001. Small parts of the County are also part of the completed Chatham Run and Fishing Creek watershed Stormwater Plans.

Lycoming County Planning has secured a grant to develop a Comprehensive Stormwater Management Plan and Model Ordinance for the Lycoming Creek Watershed. This grant was amended to include a County-wide Stormwater Plan and Model Ordinance for the remainder of the County that does not have a Watershed Plan. The Ordinances differ only that the Lycoming Creek Ordinance has detailed stormwater peak retention standards that are designed to prevent increases in flood levels after the watershed has developed, based upon a detailed hydrological model that was developed as part of the Plan.

The Lycoming Creek watershed was selected mainly in response to repetitive flooding issues. The Lycoming County Plan was done to provide a baseline level of Stormwater management until detailed watershed plans could be developed. There is a wide variation in the level and quality of stormwater ordinances in the County. The MS4 communities around Williamsport, as well as Armstrong and Clinton Townships, all have comprehensive stormwater ordinances. The remaining municipalities do not have comprehensive stormwater management.

The Lycoming County and Creek Plans were adopted by the Lycoming County Commissioners on May 6, 2010 and were submitted to DEP and approved on September 16, 2010. Municipalities had until March 15, 2011 to adopt the model stormwater management ordinance (or modify their existing ordinance to be consistent with the model ordinance). The County conducted workshops on November 15, 2010 to advise municipal officials about stormwater ordinance adoption procedures, administration, and cost reimbursement from DEP.

The Lycoming County Conservation District oversees the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit program. NPDES permit regulations require a degree of storm water management on some projects. Persons proposing earth disturbance activities which disturb one or more acres over the lifetime of the project require an NPDES permit. The District reviews these plans and is active in educating the public and townships in their requirements.

### **Urban Nutrient Management**

The over-application of commercial fertilizers to lawns is a threat to the quality of the streams of Lycoming County and the Commonwealth. More efficient use of chemical fertilizers can be attained through the promotion of Penn State Soil Fertility Testing Program. This program is designed as a soil-management tool for farmers, homeowners, landscape contractors, golf-course superintendents, ornamental nurserymen and others interested in the fertility of their soil and in determining the optimum lime and fertilizer requirements of their crop. By better matching application rates to nutrient needs, over application of nutrients resulting in pollution can be avoided.

There are few mechanisms for reporting the nutrient and sediment reductions from this practice. It is difficult to assign a "before" condition; urban pervious acreage actually receiving fertilizer, the amount of that fertilizer, and timing of application or the definition of the "after"

condition. Another difficulty is tracking the numbers (acreage) and location in both categories over time. Nutrient reductions for this practice are as follows: Nitrogen =17%, Phosphorus = 22%. This practice is applied to mixed open land and developed land. The upland loading rates (EOS) in Lycoming County for mixed open land are 6.3 lbs-N/yr/ac and 0.50 lbs-P/yr/ac. This would compute to a reduction of 1.071 lbs-N/yr/ac and 0.11 lbs-P/yr/ac. The upland loading rates (EOS) in Lycoming County for pervious developed land are 10.6 lbs-N/yr/ac and 0.69 lbs-P/yr/ac. This would compute to a reduction of 1.802 lbs-N/yr/ac and 0.15 lbs-P/yr/ac. Assuming 100 acres of this practice were adopted it would translate into nutrient reduction of 180.2 lbs-N/yr and 15 lbs-P/yr. These figures were obtained by using the Chesapeake Bay Program Watershed Model Appendix C. - Chesapeake Bay Program Best Management Practices.

### **Woodland Management**

Lycoming County has over half a million acres of forested land in the county that have the potential to contribute pollutants to the Chesapeake Bay. Currently there isn't a method for crediting this practice in the watershed model. It suffers from the same problems as urban nutrient management. Examples of these problems are what is the acreage of harvest, define its condition before/after practices are installed, where is it located, and how does it change annually.

Between 2012 and 2014, the USDA-NRCS has been actively assisting forest landowners with completing new Forest Management Plans, and assisting with implementing recommendations and conservation practices from previously approved forest management plans. USDA'NRCS's total for this time period include the completion of two Forest Management Plans, 99 acres of early successional habitat creation, 138 acres of forest stand improvement, 147 acres of herbaceous and brush management of invasive species, 128 acres of tree/shrub establishment, and 623 acres of upland wildlife habitat management.

### **Summary**

The Lycoming County Conservation District will locate and interact with interested farm operators to address specific problems resulting in non-point source pollutants entering the waters of the Commonwealth. Runoff from barnyards containing manure and sediment will be reduced by installing roof water control and diversions to direct clean water away from the animal concentration areas. Heavy Use Area Protection and associated runoff treatment filters will be used to armor the barnyard areas so manure can be collected and land applied according to a nutrient management program developed by the District. Stream bank fencing, riparian and /or grass buffer development, cattle crossings and off-stream watering systems will be installed to reduce the accelerated erosion of the stream banks caused by unlimited cattle access. Nutrients from manure and commercial fertilizer as well as sediment leaving agricultural crop fields and pastures can be reduced by implementing an integrated management system including nutrient management and erosion control practices. Riparian buffers will be established and are effective in removing excess nutrients and sediment from surface runoff and shading streams to optimize light and temperature conditions. In addition, Conservation District staff will continue to work with watershed associations in an effort to implement environmentally sound practices to decrease the erosion potential of unstable stream banks. Any attempt at implementing a voluntary approach to restoring the waters of the Commonwealth will have to occur in combination with increased enforcement of existing regulations.

The District will assist the Natural Resource Conservation Service in promoting, planning and installing practices under the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program. If the goal of 1,000 acres of riparian forested buffers and 400 acres of grass buffers are established the pollutant reduction is expected to be 79,902 pounds of nitrogen (lb-N) per year, 3,786 pounds of phosphorus (lb-P) per year and 1,208 tons of sediment per year. By 2010, a reduction of 399,510 lb-N, 18,930 lb-P and 6,040 tons of sediment is expected. In Lycoming County these practices are most commonly under contract for 15 years, the nutrient and sediment reduction over this time period would be 1,198,530 lb-N, 56,790 lb-P and 18,120 tons of sediment. These figures were obtained by using the Chesapeake Bay Program Watershed Model Appendix C. - Chesapeake Bay Program Best Management Practices.

This plan was developed in cooperation with the Lycoming County Conservation District, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Farm Service Agency, Department of Environmental Protection, Penn State Extension, Lycoming County Planning Commission, Eastern Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation in an effort to address non-point source pollution resulting from agricultural and urban/mixed open land. Information gathered to develop this plan was derived from the Lycoming County Conservation District's Strategic Plan and several workgroups recently held by the aforementioned cooperating agencies.