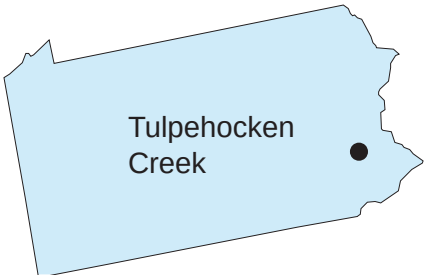
Watershed Operations

April 2009

Improving Water Quality in Tulpehocken Creek, Pennsylvania

Introduction

This watershed project is a locally sponsored and locally led effort to improve Tulpehocken Creek and Blue Marsh Lake by treating agricultural contaminants. Approximately 36,000 residents will benefit from the project.



The Tulpehocken Creek is located in Berks and Lebanon Counties, Pennsylvania.

Funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009, this project is part of the Obama Administration's plans to modernize the nation's infrastructure, jump-start the economy, and create jobs. NRCS is using Recovery Act dollars to update aging flood control structures, protect and maintain water supplies, improve water quality, reduce soil erosion, enhance fish and wildlife habitat, and restore wetlands. NRCS acquires easements and restores floodplains to safeguard lives and property in areas along streams and rivers that have experienced flooding.

Project Description

- **Location:** Berks and Lebanon Counties, 6th, 16th, and 17th Congressional Districts
- **Federal Funding:** $1,375,000
- **Sponsor Funding:** $410,000

The funds for this project will be used to treat agricultural pollution and improve water quality, restore aquatic habitat, and sustain agricultural productivity.

Partners

- USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Berks County Conservation District
- Lebanon County Conservation District
- Berks County Conservancy
- Borough of Myerstown
- Schuylkill River Action Network
- Stroud Water Research Center
- Pennsylvania Game Commission
- Pheasants Forever
- Trout Unlimited

Benefits

This project will protect 19 miles of stream from soil erosion and sedimentation and provide a system to properly manage animal waste.

The Tulpehocken Creek's water quality is degraded due to agricultural non-point source contaminants.

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Economic Opportunities

The funds provided to implement the Tulpehocken Creek land project will create or save jobs in the local area. In addition, the project will generate revenue for privately-owned businesses through increased sales of farm supplies, construction materials, equipment, parts, and services. The total input to the local economy is estimated at nearly $1.8 million.

Statewide Perspective

Improving water quality impaired streams, restoring aquatic habitat, and protecting ground water from contamination are high priorities in Pennsylvania. The project is especially valuable to the State economy by assuring a productive, sustainable agriculture industry. The dominant agriculture operation in the watershed is dairy, and Pennsylvania currently ranks fifth nationally in milk production. The project supports and complements the ongoing efforts of the Schuylkill River Action Network, Delaware River Basin Commission, and Partnership for the Delaware Estuary Program.

For More Information

USDA, NRCS
One Credit Union Place, Ste. 340
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17110-2993
Phone: 717-237-2100
www.pa.nrcs.usda.gov

Before animal walkway was installed.

After animal walkway was installed.

The ARRA funding will help install conservation practices such as animal walkways to prevent non-point agricultural pollution in the Tulpehocken Creek.