

# Berks County Partners for Clean Water

Clean Water is the lifeblood of a community, and everyone has a role in protecting this valuable resource. An important tool in protecting our water supply is the use of best management practices (BMPs) on agricultural properties to ensure pesticides, fertilizers, and animal waste is filtered out of stormwater before they reach local waterways.

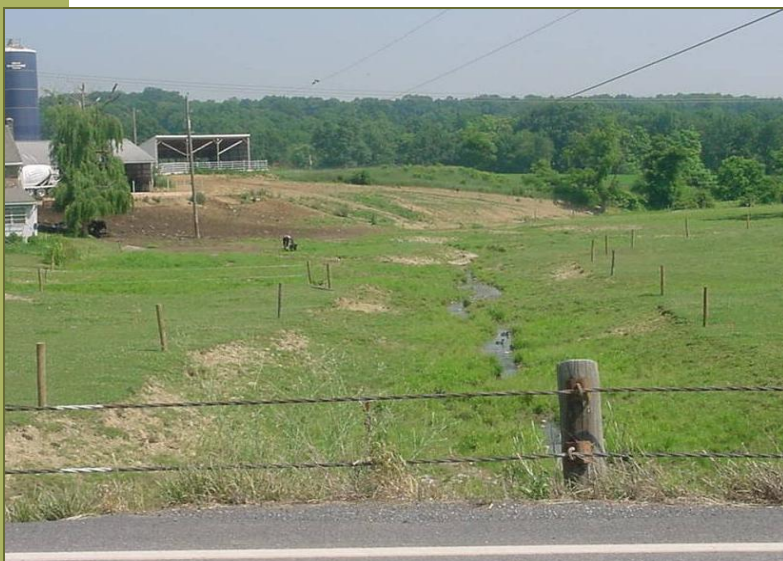
A new effort has been initiated in the Schuylkill River Watershed portion of Berks County to link businesses who benefit from a safe and reliable water supply with farmers who are looking to incorporate BMPs into their operations. Many local farmers are interested in incorporating small BMPs (total cost typically less than \$2,500) into their operations. However, funding for these projects is often difficult to obtain. The goal of this program is to link these farmers with area businesses interested protecting the region's water supplies.

Donations to the Partners for Clean Water program will support a wide array of projects. The Partners for Clean Water program is run on a voluntary basis. Potential projects from interested property owners will be evaluated and prioritized. Tax deductible donations from area businesses will then be used to fund specific projects, selected by the donor, or will be pooled with other donations and used on the highest priority projects.



## before

A stream flowing through a farm before Best Management Practices (BMPs) were implemented. Cows were able to access the stream, which resulted in a loss of vegetation and deteriorating stream banks and erosion.



## after

The same stream segment, after BMPs were implemented. The stream was fenced so the cows did not have access. A stream crossing was installed to provide the cows controlled access to both sides of the stream, and a new water source was also installed. As a result vegetation returned to the stream banks and erosion along the stretch was greatly reduced.

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## benefits of participation

- Donations to the program will be to a registered not-for-profit organization, and therefore will be tax deductible
- Additional tax benefits may be available for donations that fund projects accepted into the REAP Program
- Donations will fund projects proven to improve regional water quality.
- Recognition throughout the community of efforts to protect the region's water quality.
- Demonstration of community leadership through the protection of our valuable water supplies.

## types of Projects

- Streambank Fencing - To keep livestock out of streams
- Animal Crossings - To allow livestock to cross fenced streams and provide limited access to water source
- Buffer Plantings - To filter pollutants out of stormwater before it reaches streams
- Conservation Plans - To guide agricultural operations toward water quality protection



## protecting springs

Another type of project that can be funded through the Partners for Clean Water program is the protection of springs found on farms. The clean water from a spring naturally attracts cows and other farm animals looking for a drink. However, the area around the spring can get disturbed, which leads to sediment washing off the site and into nearby streams. The structure above was built around a spring on a local farm. The basin in the middle fills with water so the cows still have a water source, and when the basin fills up the water will overflow, so the spring is still able to function naturally. The concrete around the spring limits the amount of polluted runoff leaving the site.

**For more information or to participate in this program, please contact:**

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