

**Pennsylvania
State Office**

359 East Park Drive,
Suite 2
Harrisburg
Pennsylvania 17111

Ph: 717-237-2100

State Technical Committee (STC)

AGENDA

Thursday, October 24, 2024

This meeting will be conducted both in-person at the PA NRCS state office and remotely via Microsoft Teams internet conferencing. The office address, meeting link and a call-in telephone number are provided at the end of this document.

1:00 pm Welcome – Denise Coleman, NRCS State Conservationist

1:10 pm Program Highlights/Presentations: PA Watershed Rehabilitation and Flood Prevention Programs (PL-566, Emergency Watershed Program); Heather Smeltz, Assistant State Conservationist for Water Resources

1:45 pm Technical Reports

- Engineering – Tim Peters, State Engineer
- Ecological Sciences – Dan Ludwig, State Resource Conservationist
- Soils – Yuri Plowden, State Soil Scientist

2:00 pm Partnership and Easement Programs Report

- Updates- Susan Parry, ASTC for Partnerships
- Outreach Report- Abigail Appleman, State Outreach Coordinator
- Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) – Melissa Hanner, Easement Program Manager

2:30 pm Financial Program Reports

- Updates – Jared Shippey, ASTC for Programs
- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) – Ryan Cornelius, Program Manager
- Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) and Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) – Ashley Lenig, Program Manager

3:00 pm Committee Input for Fiscal Year 2025

- Topic and/or Committee Suggestions?
- Open Forum for State Technical Committee members

***2024-25 Dates for State Technical Committee Meetings:**

Wednesday, January 22, 2025

Thursday, April 24, 2025

Tuesday, July 22, 2025

Wednesday, October 2025

October 24, 2024; Microsoft Teams meeting link:

Join on your computer, mobile app or room device.

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 267 044 151 901

Passcode: 2J7TRH

[Download Teams](#) | [Join on the web](#)

Or call in (audio only)

[+1 202-650-0123,657303009#](#) United States, Washington DC

Phone Conference ID: 657 303 009#

State Office Address and STC Webpage Link:

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/conservation-basics/conservation-state/pennsylvania/technical-committee>

STAC Handout Web Page Link:

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/conservation-basics/conservation-by-state/pennsylvania/pennsylvania-state-technical-committee-0>

Pennsylvania State Technical Committee Meeting

October 24, 2024

Denise Coleman, PA State Conservationist, NRCS, opened the meeting at 1pm and welcomed all participating online and those attending in person.

Heather Smeltz, Assistant State Conservationist for Water Resources. (See attached hand-out) Heather began her presentation with an Overview of watershed programs: Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations (WFPO), Watershed Rehabilitation, and Emergency Watershed Protection. WFPO Program is used as a proactive approach to ongoing flooding. It is a partnership between NRCS and a county or a municipal entity. It is locally led and NRCS will provide most of the financial assistance. She continues to say that watershed program funding can take a longer time with the time frame being 6 years or longer. Watershed Rehabilitation Program allows owners of the dams to come back and ask for upgrades to fit today's standards and specifications. PA NRCS Dams average \$44.5 M total benefits annually. She continued with a status update on Pennsylvania dams:

- 3 fully rehabilitated, 1 under full construction, 4 in design, and 2 construction-ready pending state funding.
- Rehabilitation aligns with NRCS's 65% construction funding policy.
- Highlighted recent work on the Cardiac Ville Dam in Crawford County. Which includes Sheet pile installation that was completed in the auxiliary spillway. Winter shutdown is planned, with work resuming in spring.

Mark Buckwalter continued the presentation by speaking on the Emergency Watershed Program (EWP). Federal emergency recovery program that addresses flood and erosion concerns post-disaster. The program supports recovery from significant rainfall events, with eligibility and focus areas being:

- Natural Event
- Priority on imminent threats to life/property
- Covers permanent structures, utility protection, and NRCS-built flood control systems.

Criteria that the PA NRCS staff has sent to be eligible include:

- Fulltime residences and businesses that are located within 50 ft of a stream channel and significant bank erosion poses an imminent threat to life or property.

- Protection of affected public utilities located within 10 feet of the stream bank
- Deposition and debris removal caused by the declared event associated at an eligible site
- Key step in the process is that if there is no willing and able sponsor there is no EWP (sponsors include: state, political subdivision of state, qualified Indian tribe or tribal organization, unit of local government.)

Mark says that once they figure out who is eligible, and a sponsor is chosen then staff will go out and do a damage survey report. Once DSR gets approved by DC headquarters and then they give funding. NRCS may pay up to 75 percent of the cost of construction of eligible recovery measures. Sponsors must contribute the remaining 25 percent of construction costs.



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USDA-NRCS PA Watersheds Programs

Mark Buckwalter, PE
Civil Engineer

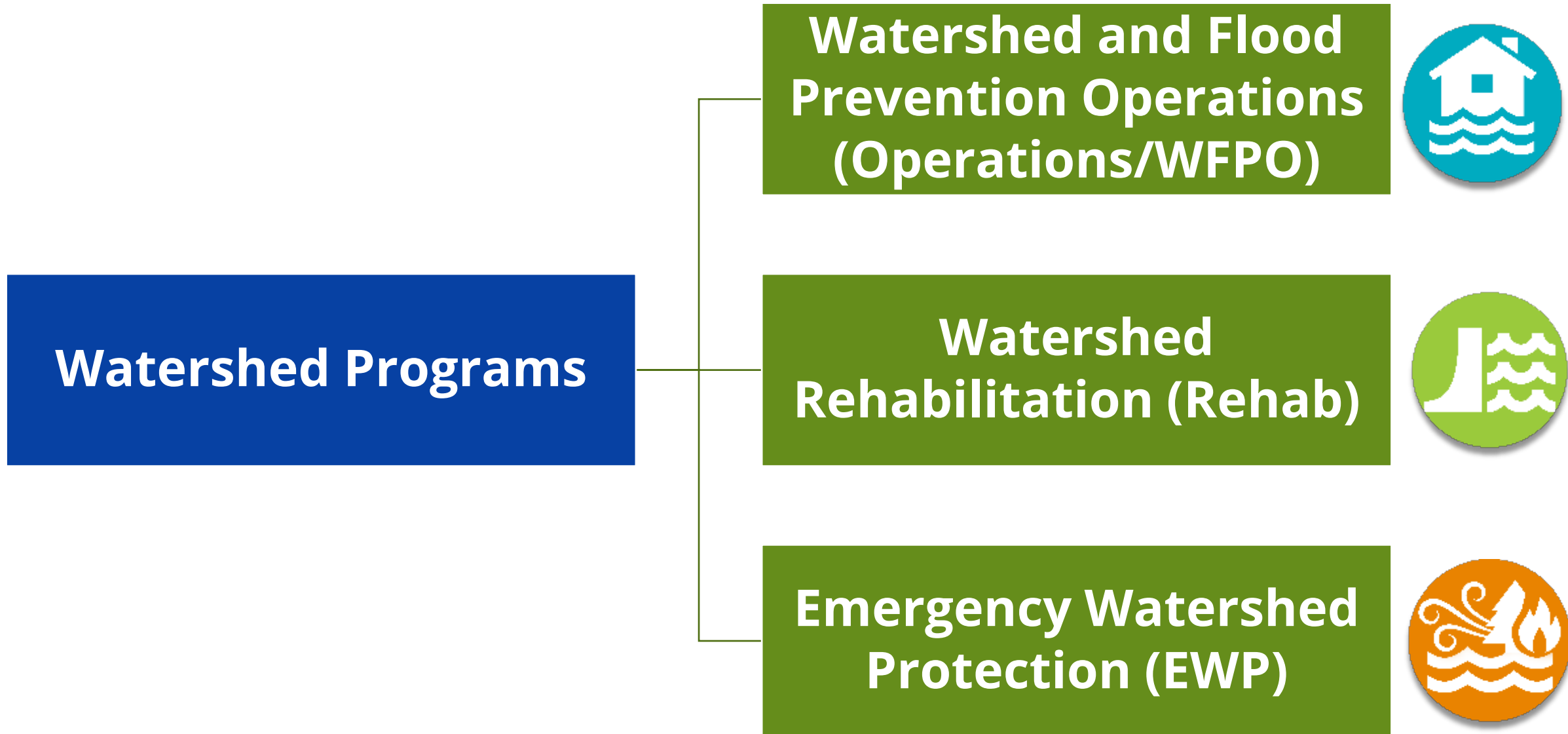
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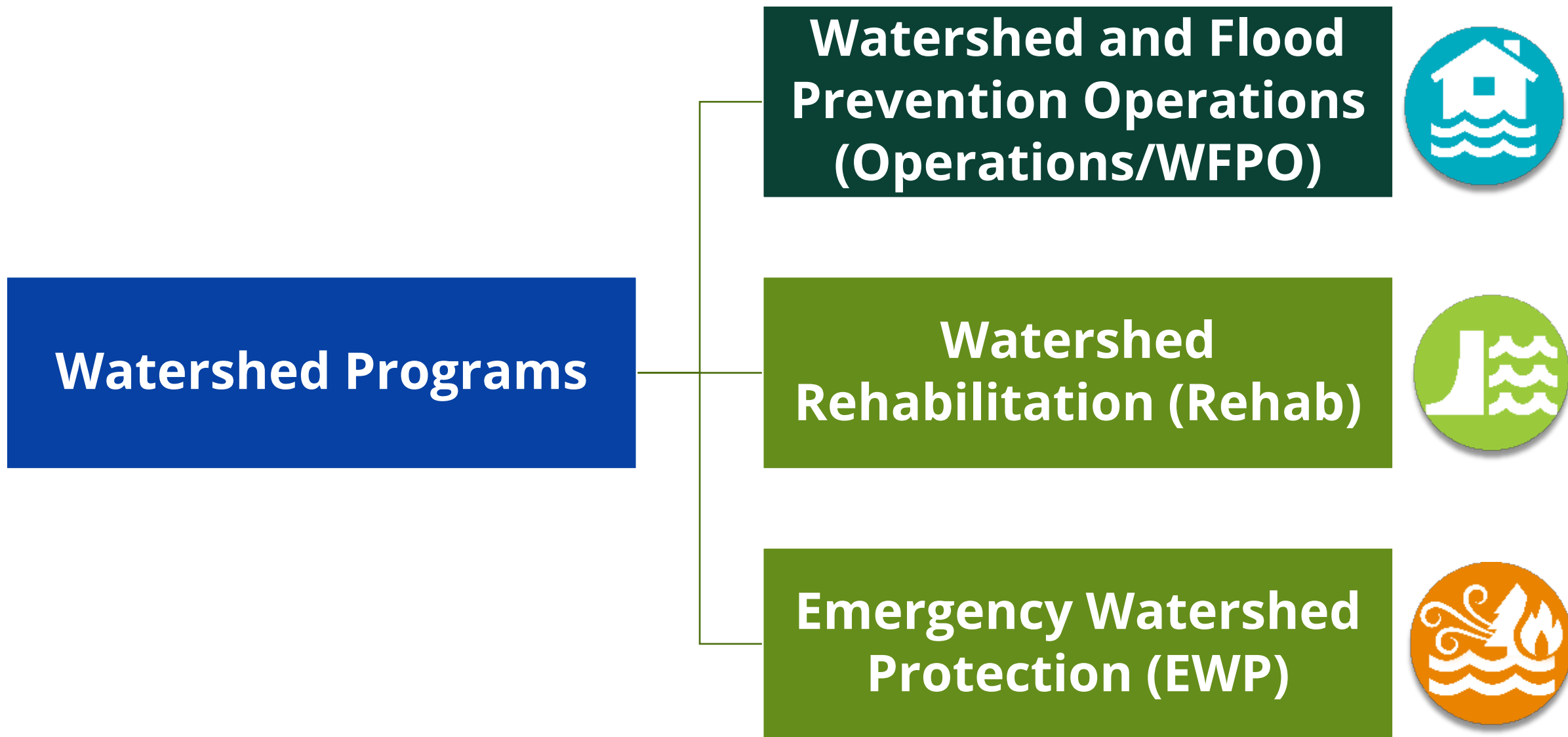
Heather L. Smeltz, PE
ASTC – Water Resources



State Technical Committee Meeting October 2024

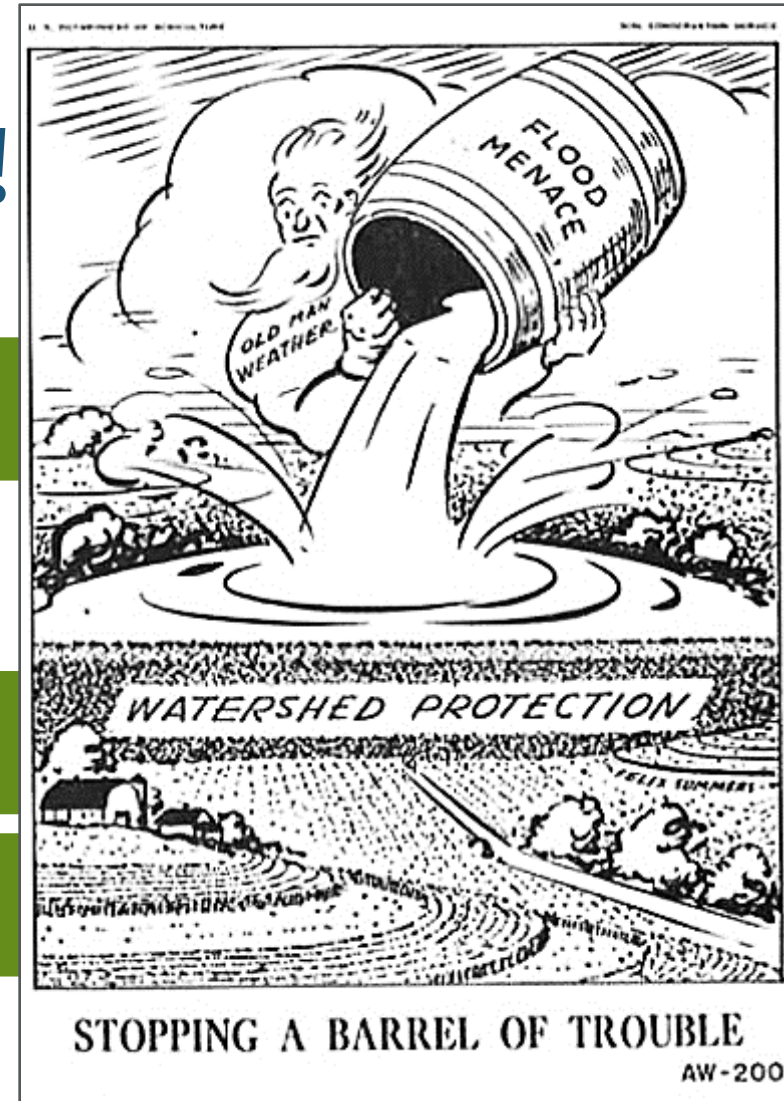
FARM PRODUCTION AND CONSERVATION
FSA | NRCS | RMA | Business Center





NRCS has been in the Watershed Business for Years!

- PL83-566 since 1954
- PL78-534 since 1944



Why is the WFPO program used?

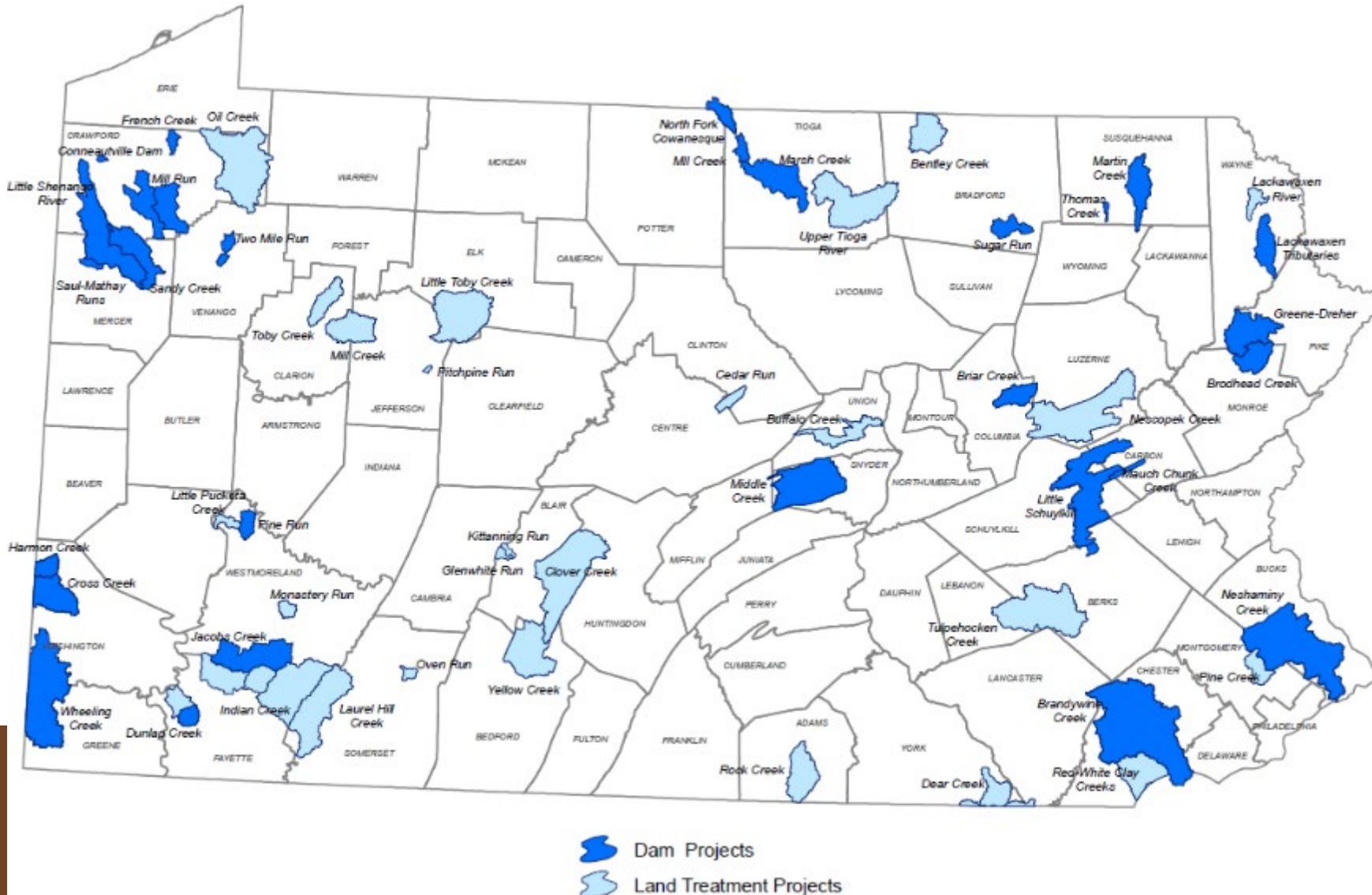
- Ongoing Flooding
- Farm Bill Programs don't quite fit the need
 - Program payment caps
 - AGI requirements
 - Operator/Landowner doesn't need to be a farmer
 - Work on public (non-Federal) lands



Watershed Operations Overview

The WFPO Program provides for **cooperation** between the **Federal government** and the **States** and their political subdivisions to **address resource concerns** due to **erosion, floodwater, and sediment** and provide for improved utilization of the land and water resources

- Locally led
- NRCS provides technical and financial assistance





Project Purposes

Watershed & Flood Prevention Operations

Flood Prevention

Land
Treatment

Public
Recreation

Public Fish
and Wildlife

Water Supply

Water Quality
Management

Flood Prevention Options



Dams



Levees
& Dikes



Channels



Non-Structural

Watershed Protection/ Land Treatment in Pennsylvania

- Agricultural Conservation Practices
- Acid Mine Drainage



Watershed Program Funding

Planning

- NRCS funds 100%
- 2-3 Years

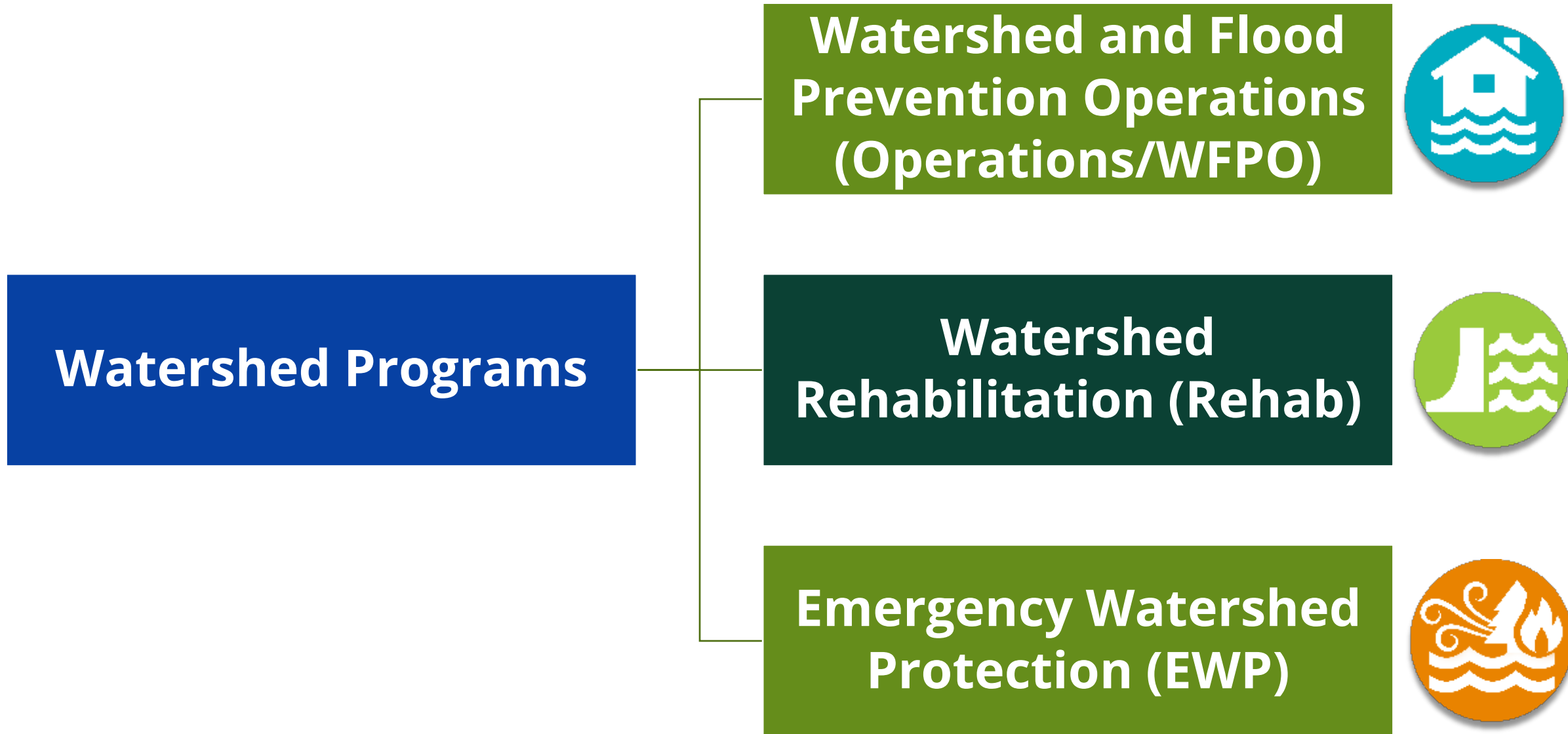
Design

- NRCS funds 100%
- 2-3 Years

Construction

- NRCS funds 50%-100%
- 2-5 Years







Watershed Rehabilitation Program

provides assistance to local project sponsors to:

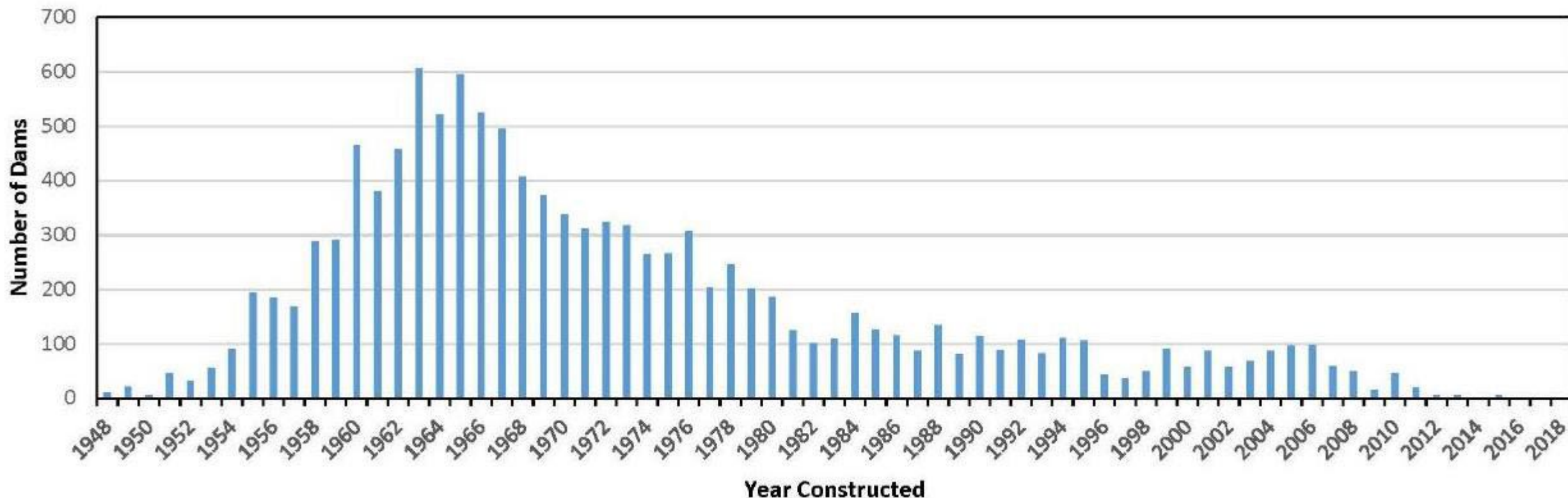
- rehabilitate aging SCS/NRCS-constructed dams, and/or
- build or augment existing water supplies based on current and future water supply demands.



Watershed Rehabilitation Program

Aging Infrastructure

NRCS PROJECT DAMS



The peak of dam construction was 1963 to 1965. To date, over 6,400 dams have reached their design life

Flood Protection

- Detained millions of gallons of runoff, preventing significant flooding
 - Protect the homes and public infrastructure below them
- PA NRCS dams average \$22.8 M flood reduction benefits, annually

PA NRCS dams average **\$44.5 M total benefits,**
annually



Koenigs Creek Dam (PA-425)



The dams are no less safe than the day they were built.

- Inspected annually by a PE and PA DEP, Division of Dam Safety.
- No imminent dam safety hazards have been identified.
- The dams are aging gracefully.

Reasons for Rehabilitation

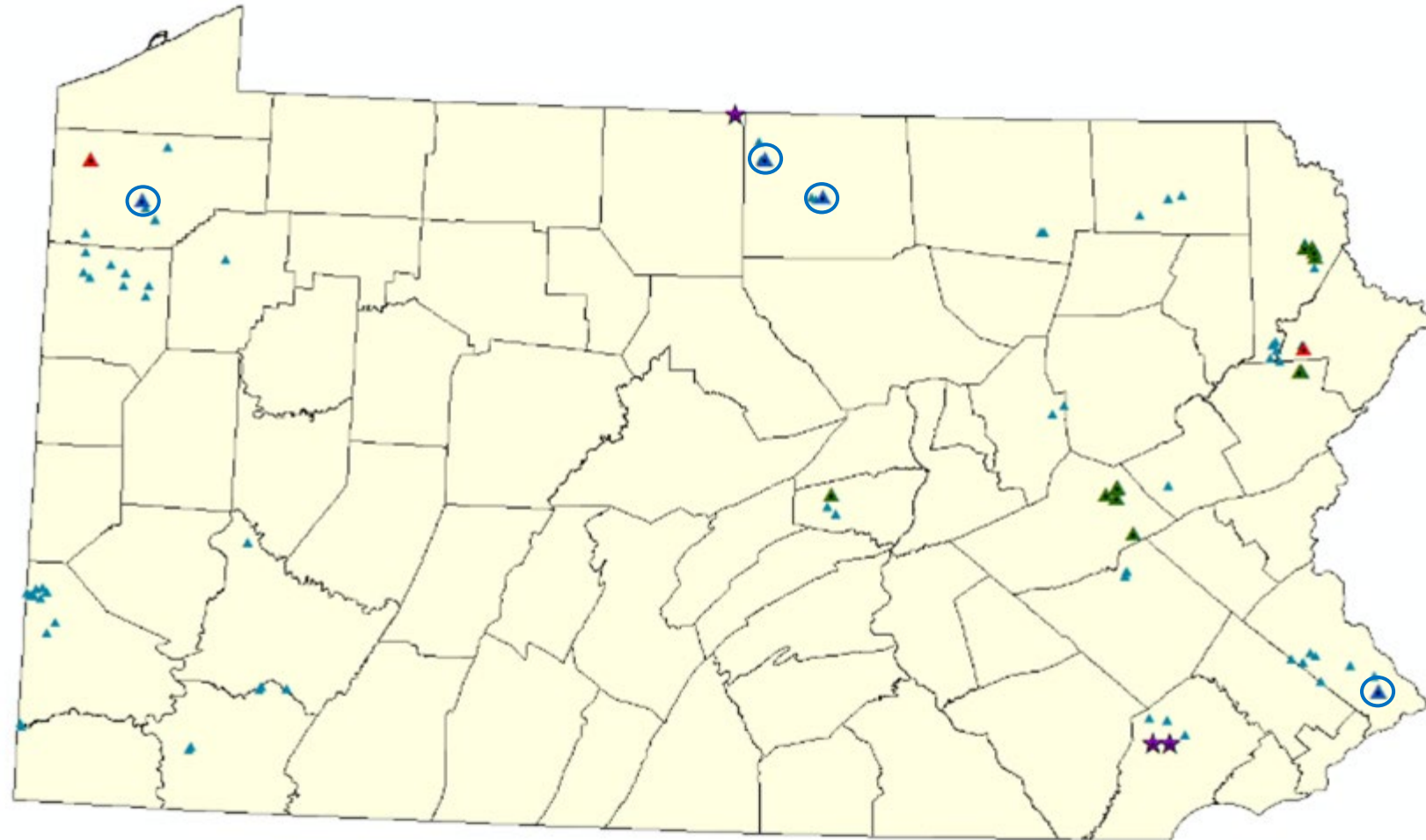
- More conservative safety standards & design criteria
 - Seismic
- Changes in rainfall rates and distributions
- Land use changes above and below the dams
- Expected “wear and tear”
- Sediment storage
- All our dams are now classified as “high hazard potential”



Blue Bug-a-Chug | How safe is this car today?

The Small Watershed Rehabilitation Amendments of 2000

- Watershed Rehabilitation Program
- NRCS can assist communities with rehabilitation of their aging SCS/NRCS-constructed dams.
- NRCS to provides technical and financial assistance.



Total Pennsylvania Dams

90

Construction Ready/Underway ▲ 2

Watershed Rehab Funding

Planning

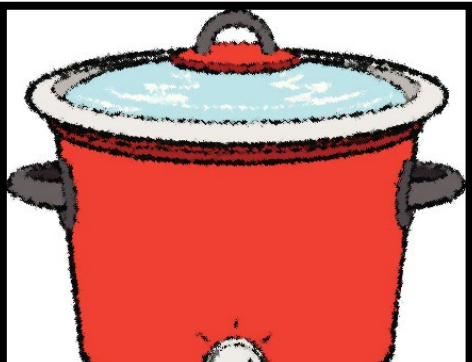
- NRCS funds 100%
- 2-3 Years

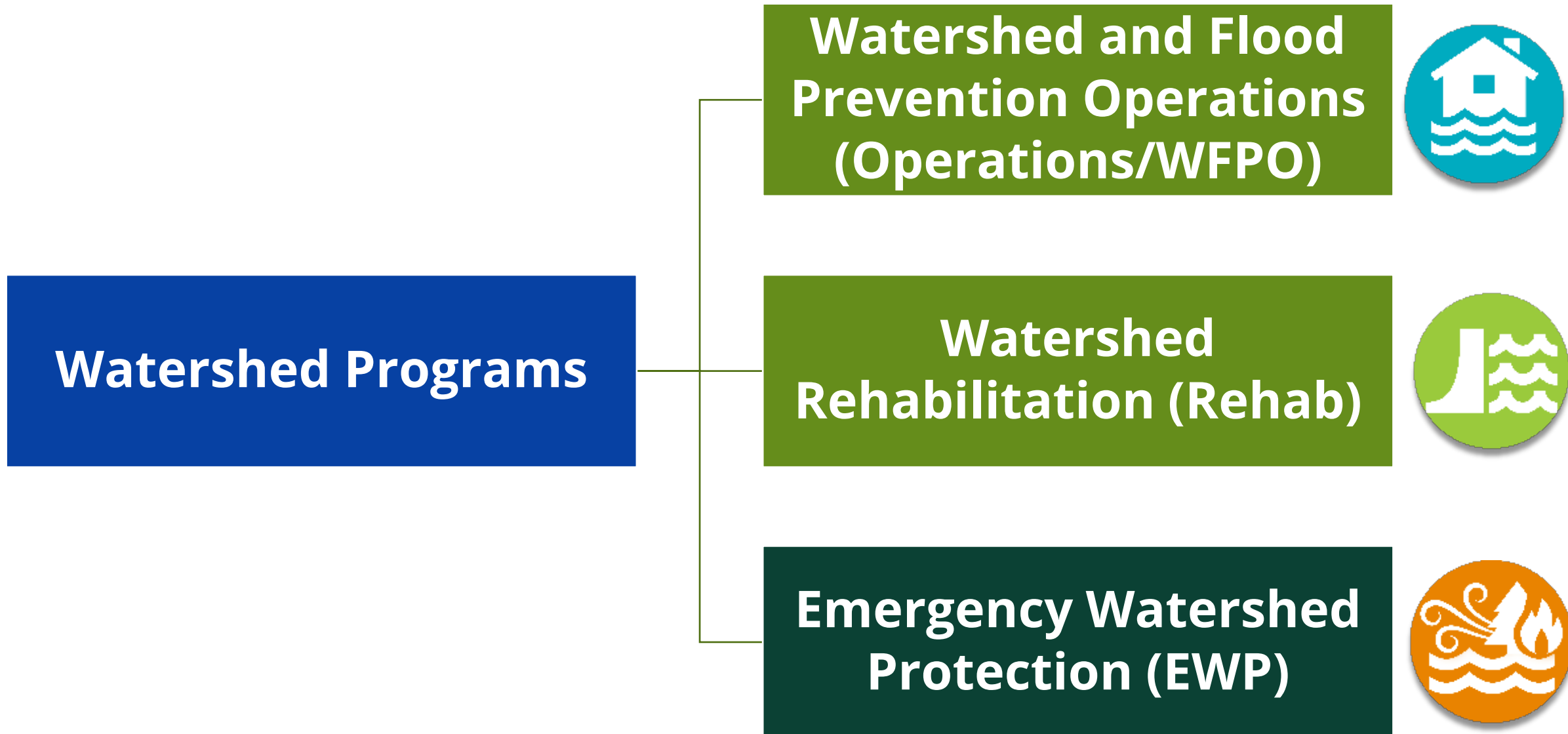
Design

- NRCS funds 100%
- 2-3 Years

Construction

- NRCS funds 65%
- 1-2 Years







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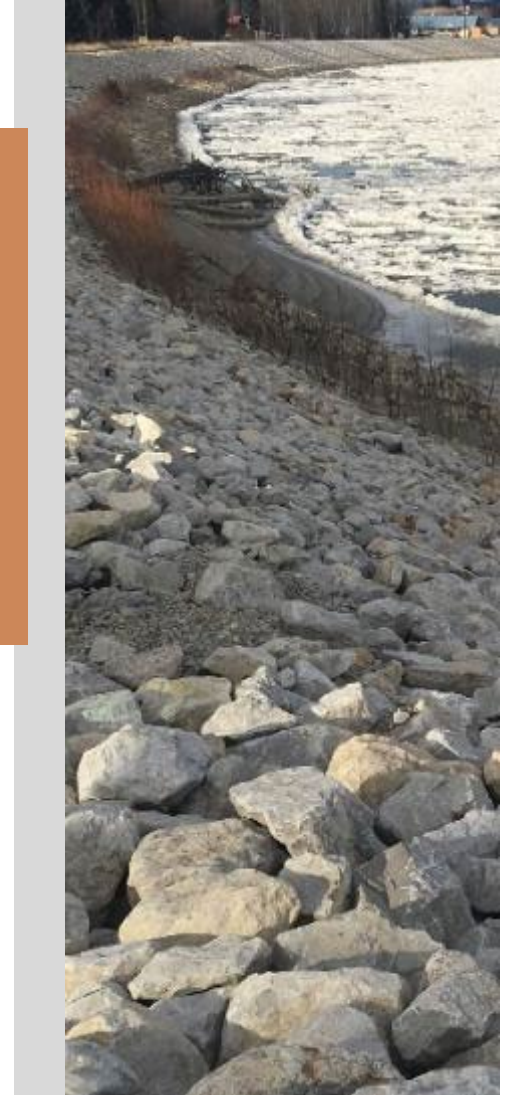
Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP)

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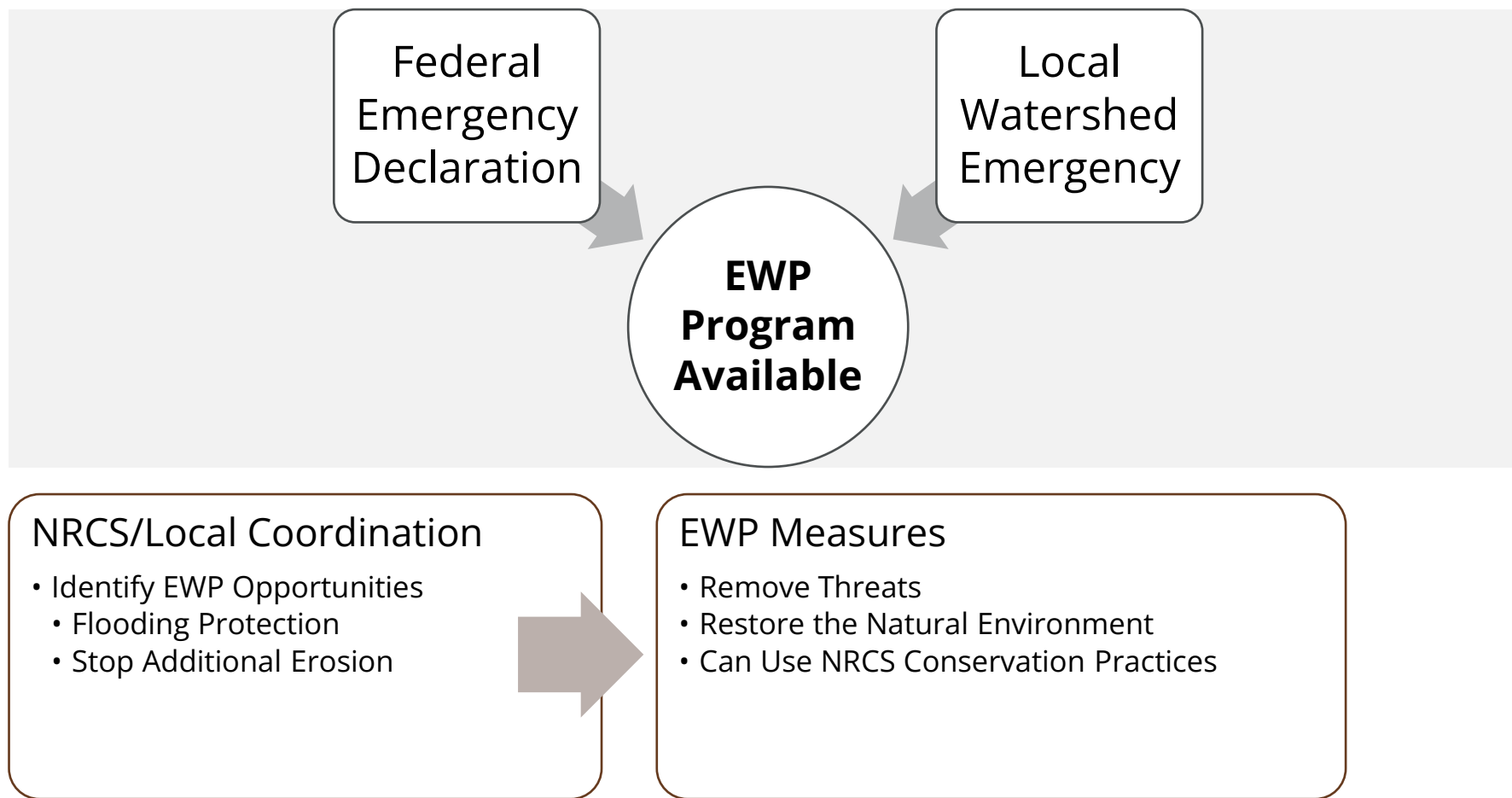
EWP Authority (PL 81-516)

The Secretary of Agriculture is authorized to undertake emergency watershed protection measures, including the purchase of floodplain easements, for runoff retardation and soil-erosion prevention, in cooperation with landowners and land users, as the Secretary deems necessary to safeguard lives and property from floods, drought, and the products of erosion on any watershed whenever fire, flood, or any other natural occurrence is causing or has caused a sudden impairment of that watershed.

- **A Federal Emergency recovery program that can address flooding and erosion concerns in communities after a natural disaster strikes.**
 - In PA, this is typically a significant rainfall event.



When EWP?





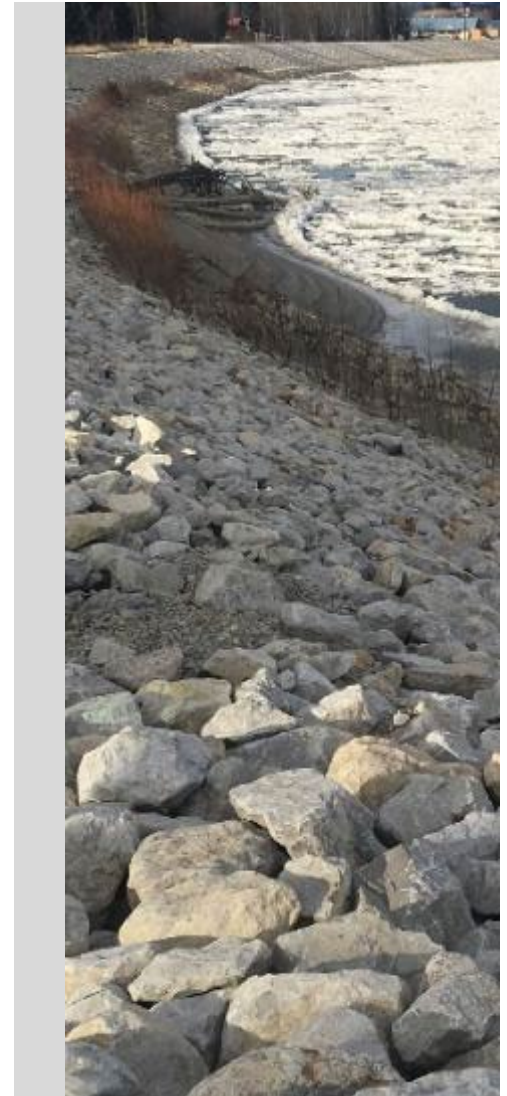
Program Eligibility

Property EWP
Program Can Be Used
to Protect:

- Permanent structures
- Houses & Buildings
- Public Utilities
- PL 83-566 Dams & Flood Control

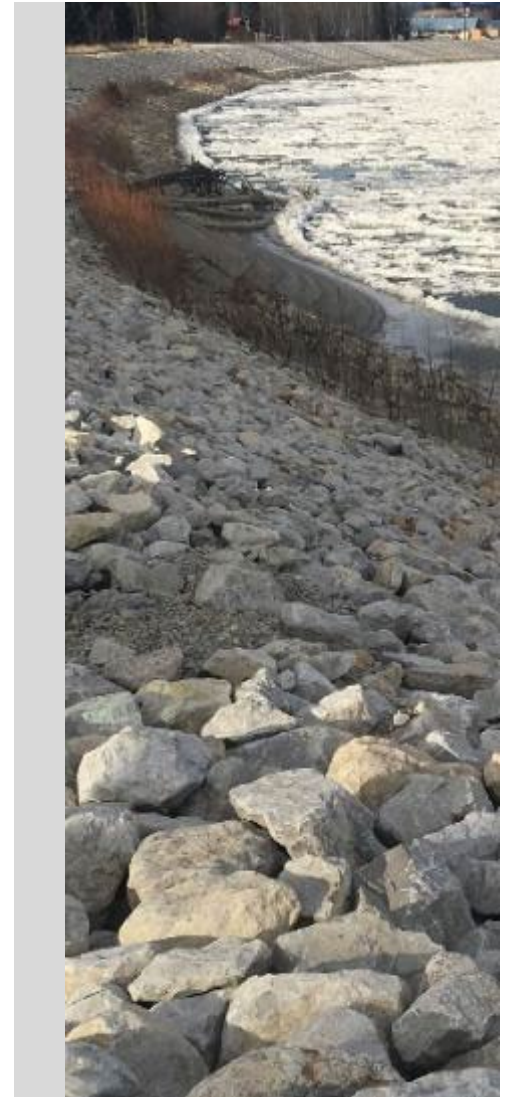
EWP Program Cannot
Be Used to Protect
Only:

- Standing Timber
- Orchards
- Agronomic crops
(other USDA programs are available for Ag Land)



Site Eligibility Criteria for PA

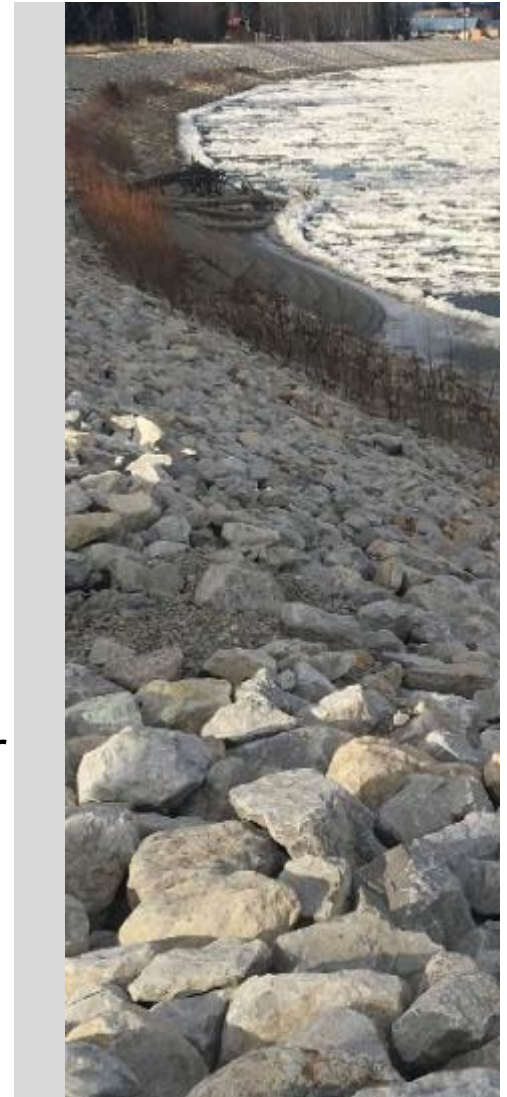
- Fulltime residences and businesses that are located within 50' of a stream channel and significant bank erosion poses an imminent threat to life or property.
 - Out buildings and seasonal homes are not eligible
- Protection of affected public utilities located within 10 feet of the stream bank.
- Deposition and debris removal caused by the declared event associated at an eligible site.



Limits on EWP Assistance

EWP May not be used to...

- To address the same structural issue or practice 3 times within 10 years.
- For existing Operation and Maintenance.
- To repair, rebuild, or maintain private or public transportation facilities, public utilities, or similar facilities.
 - Protection of public and private roads and bridges are not eligible per PA NRCS.
- To repair or replace damage to physical structures
- When activities were undertaken by the Sponsor or Landowner prior to the signing of an agreement with NRCS
- For repair of nonstructural management practices, such as conservation tillage. Possibly eligible for Emergency Conservation Program (FSA)



EWP Flow Chart

Electronic
Distaster
Report
(EDR)

Sponsor
Request for
Assistance

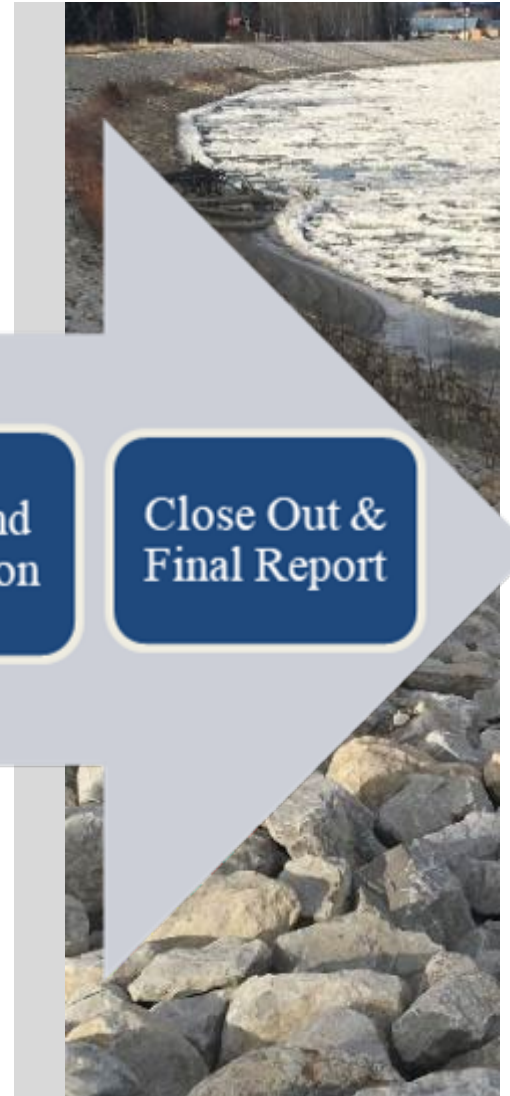
Damage
Survey
Report
(DSR)

Approvals
and Funding

NRCS &
Sponsor
Agreement

Design and
Constuction

Close Out &
Final Report



Emergency Declaration Process

1. There is a natural disaster declaration made by the president
2. There is a local watershed emergency declaration made by the STC

Rainfall from Fred, Henri, and Ida

- Rainfall totals from all three storms, Fred, Henri, and Ida, approached **18 inches**. For sites such as Central Park, NY, and Harrison, NJ, more than 3 months of rain fell during the 18-day period from August 18 to September 3. In fact, Central Park recorded its **all-time wettest** two-week period of 16.19 inches of rain from August 19 to September 1, with records back to 1869.

Maximum 14-Day Total Precipitation for New York-Central Park Area, NY (ThreadEx)

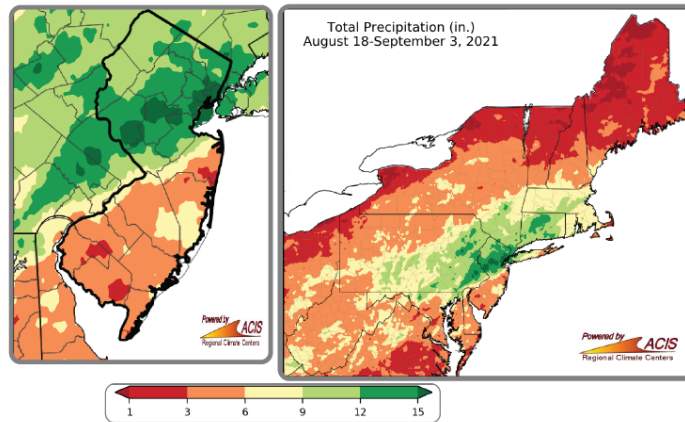
[Click column heading to sort ascending, click again to sort descending.](#)

Rank	Value	Ending Date	Missing Days
1	16.19	2021-09-01	0
2	16.09	2021-09-03	0
-	16.09	2021-09-02	0
4	15.46	1882-09-24	0
5	15.44	1882-09-23	0

Period of record: 1869-01-01 to 2021-09-09

The five wettest two-week periods on record at Central Park, NY.

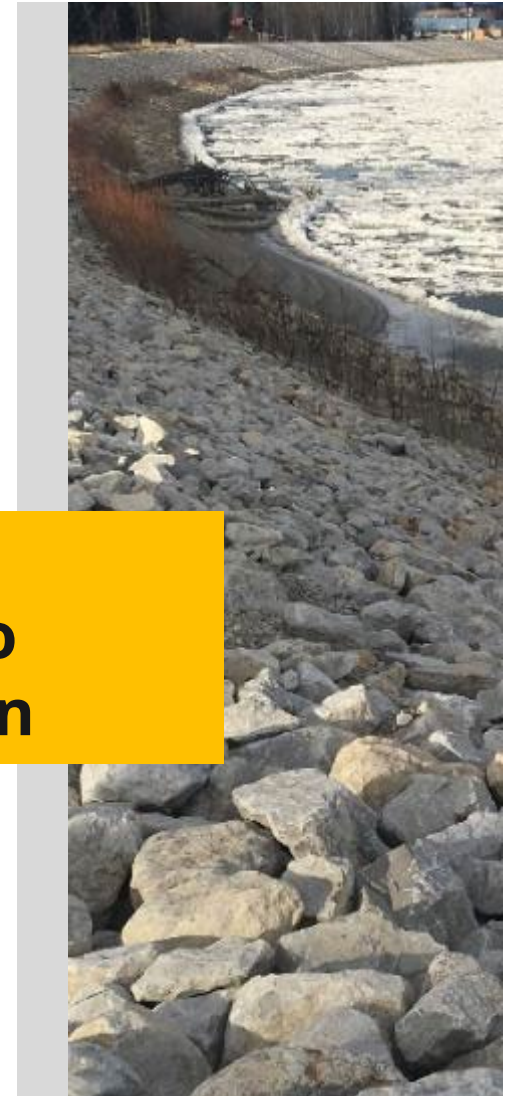
Combined rainfall totals from Fred, Henri, and Ida.



Contact: Northeast Regional Climate Center (nrcc@cornell.edu)

**Process typically
when a newswo
event happen**

Mid Aug-Sept 1, 2021:
Areas received 12-15
inches in a 14-day period



EWP Flow Chart

Date

- Disaster
- or Safe Site Access

Within
60
Days

Sponsor Must
Formally Request for
Assistance

Electronic
Disaster
Report
(EDR)

Sponsor
Request for
Assistance

Damage
Survey
Report
(DSR)

Approvals
and Funding

NRC
Sp
Agre

out &
report

- Key step in the process. There is No EWP without a willing and able Sponsor

Letter of Request for EWP Assistance
Template Version 5/10/2016

[Date]

[State Conservation Name]
Natural Resources Conservation Service
[Printed address for our NRCS field office]
[City, State]

Dear [NRCS Name]:

We request urgent assistance under the provisions of section 216 of the Flood Control Act of 1950, Public Law 81-576 for section 423 of the Agricultural Credit Act of 1975, Public Law 94-317, to remove emergency assistance on [Emergency name]. County [County name and type of disaster that occurred] on [Date disaster occurred]. This work is needed to safeguard lives and property from imminent hazard of [scope of the problem]. [Explain the assistance needed].

We are a [State, political subdivision of a State, qualified Indian tribe or tribal organization, or unit of local government] with a legal interest in the responsibility for the emergency measures by the established emergency. We understand operations of emergency watershed protection measures, that our responsibilities will include:

- Controlling a share of the project costs, as determined by NRCS, by providing funds or eligible services necessary to undertake the activity.
- Obtaining any necessary real property rights, water rights, and regulatory permits.
- Agreeing to provide for any required operation and maintenance of the completed emergency measures.

We have no financial or other institutional funding or other resources available to provide adequate relief from applicable hazards. We acknowledge that NRCS will not provide funding for activities not authorized by a contract prior to the signing of an agreement between NRCS and the sponsor.

The names, addresses, and telephone numbers of the authorized and authorized persons in our organization are as follows:
[Print name, title, address, email, and telephone of sponsor's representatives]

Please contact them for any additional information that you might need in assessing our request.

Sincerely,

Template Sponsor Letter

EWP Sponsors

EWP Assistance

- Technical
- Financial



Recipient

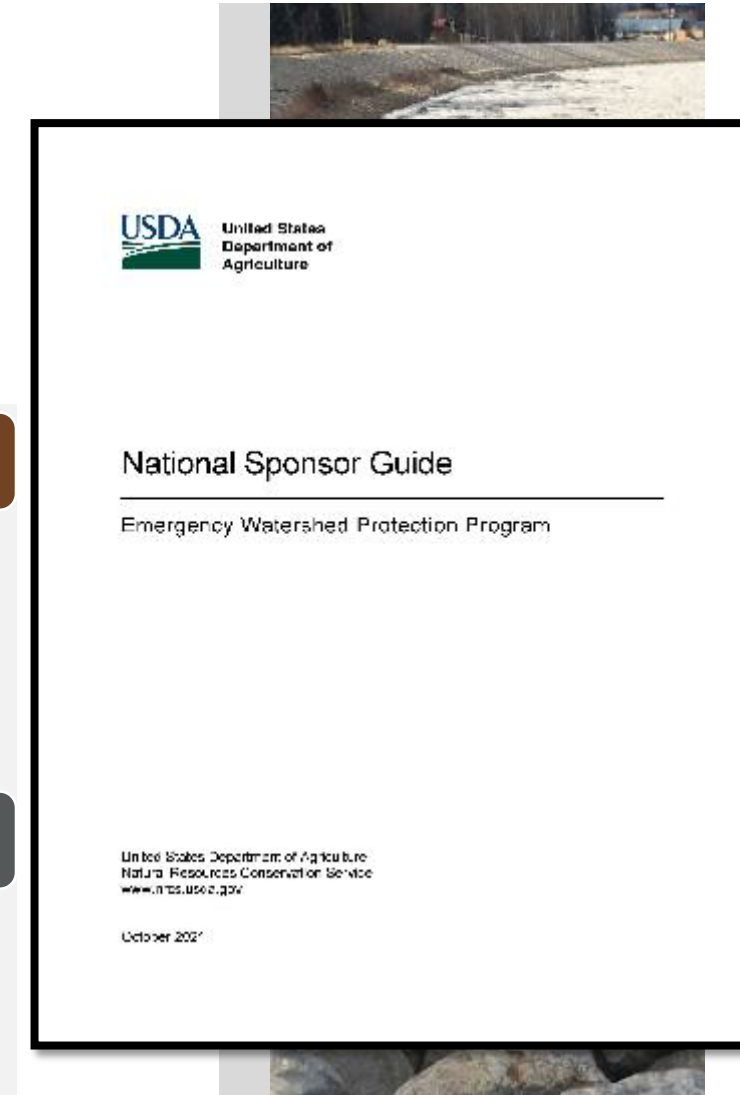
- Sponsor
- Landowner (through the Sponsor)

Eligible Sponsors

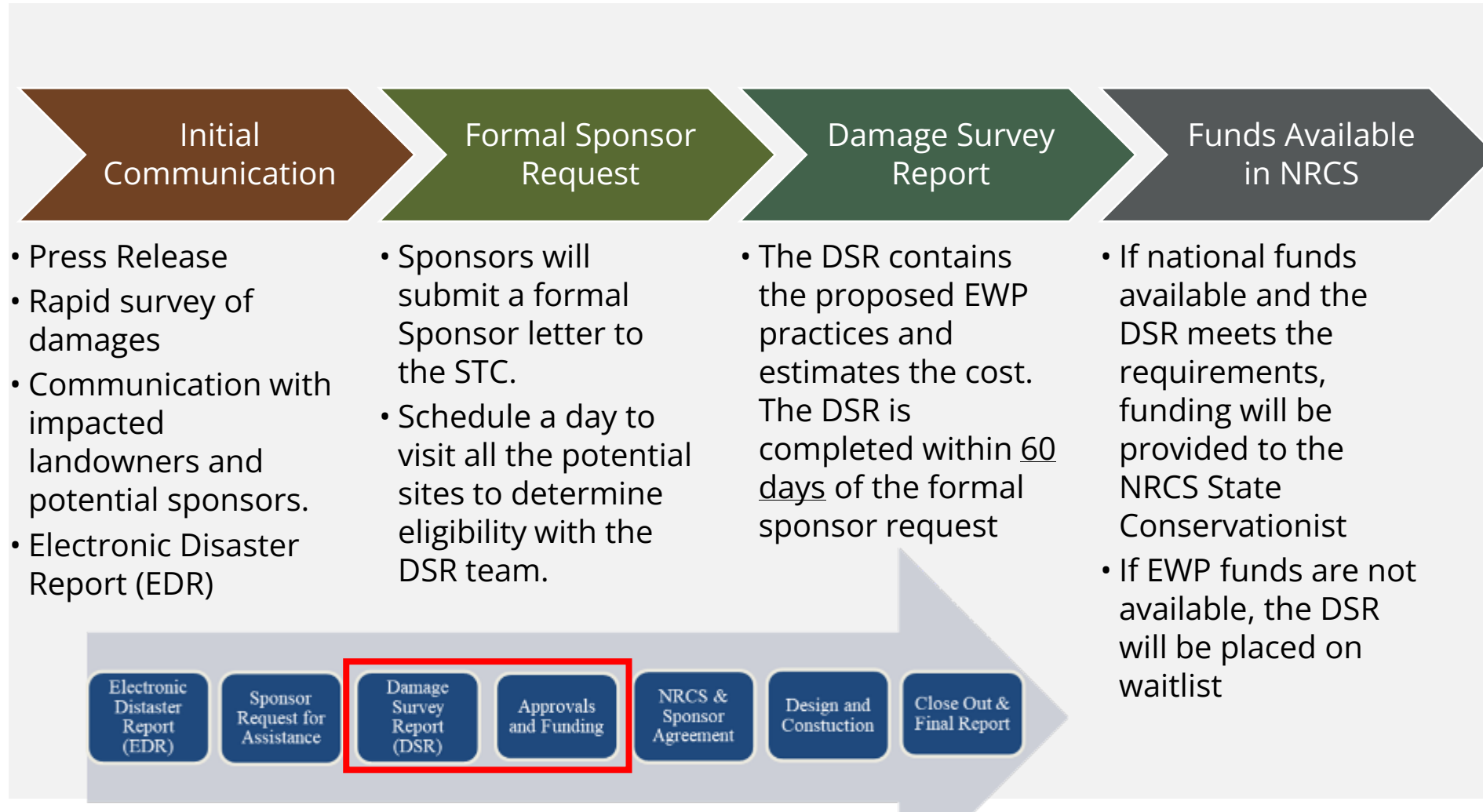
- State
- Political Subdivision of State
- Qualified Indian Tribe or Tribal Organization
- Unit of local government
- *All sponsors must have a legal interest in or responsibility for the areas threatened*

Sponsor Responsibilities

- Share of project costs
- Real property rights, water rights, and regulatory permits
- Provide for required O&M as determined necessary by NRCS
- Document they have insufficient resources to provide adequate relief



Steps to funding availability



DSR Documentation

Formal Sponsor Request

60
days

At Least 1 DSR by NRCS

DSR Form Contents

- Disaster Info and the Sponsor
- Program eligibility, watershed impairment, and program limitations
- Practice eligibility
 - protection from additional flooding or soil erosion
 - reduces threats
 - restores the hydraulic capacity
 - is economically/environmentally defensible and technically sound
- Site information and associated risks
- Cost estimates and the benefits provided

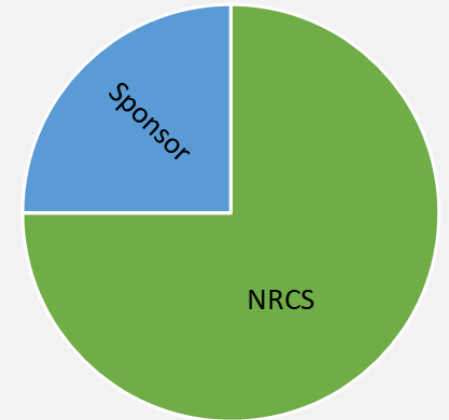


Project (DSR) Funding

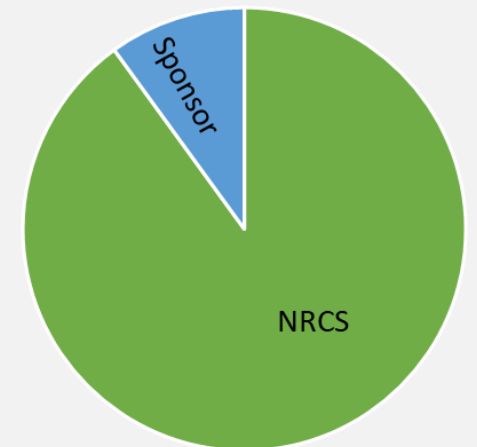


- NRCS may pay up to 75 percent of the cost of construction of eligible recovery measures. For communities designated as Limited Resource Areas (LRA), NRCS may pay up to 90 percent of construction costs.
 - Currently, no communities in PA meet the EWP definition of LRA, but may be evaluated if requested
- Sponsors must contribute the remaining 25 percent of construction costs. This may be in the form of cash or in-kind services.
 - Sponsors may seek Non-Federal grant funds to cover the 25%.
 - PA DEP's, Stream Improvement Program, has been able to partner with NRCS to provide local Sponsors with the 25 percent match in previous and current EWP events.

Standard Cost Share =
NRCS up to 75%



Limited Resource Area =
NRCS up to 90%















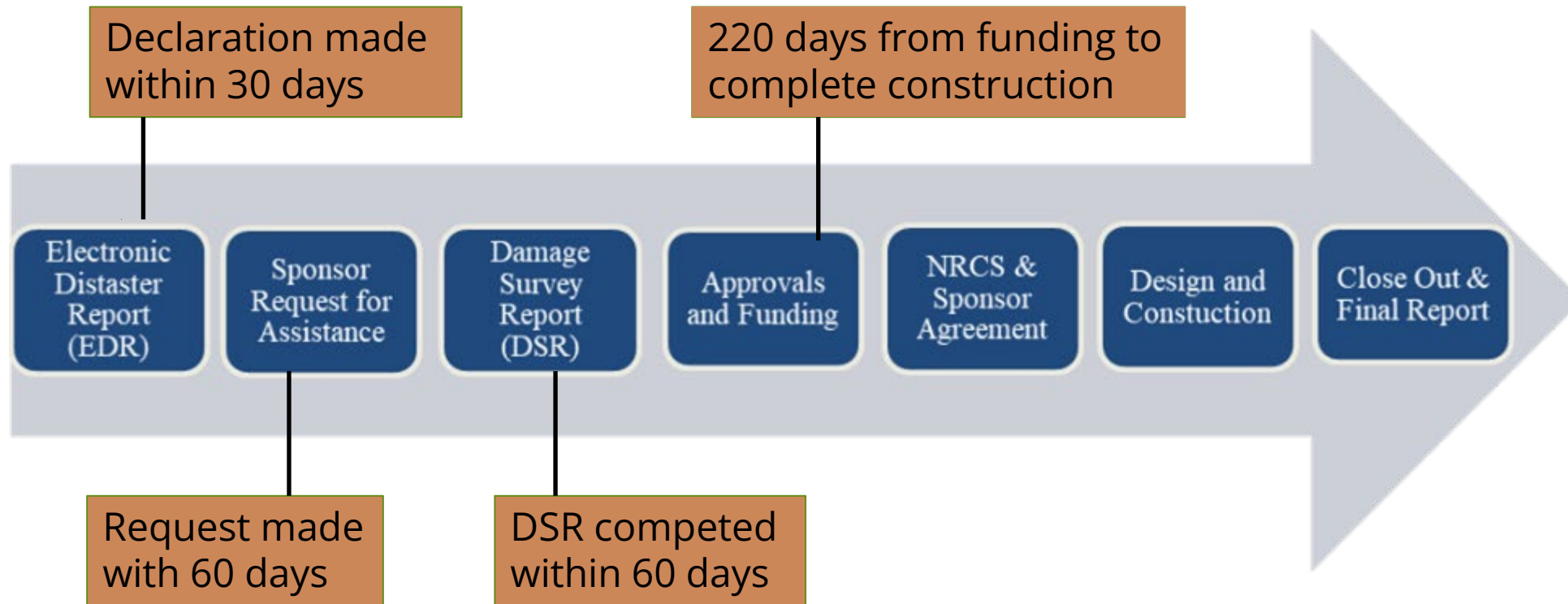








EWP Process Review



Recently completed EWP Event

- Tropical Storm Ida (Sept. 2021)
 - A total of 35 eligible sites enrolled
 - 33 were constructed
 - 13 Counties, 15 Sponsors
 - ~\$2.8 million in construction costs
 - NRCS contribution= ~\$2.1M
 - PA DEP contribution= ~\$700K
 - 43 Residences & Businesses protected
 - 94 Individuals



Tioga County
T.S. Ida

Ongoing EWP Events (Local Declarations)

– July 2023 Event

- SE PA Counties
- 10 sites (3 completed to date)
- 3 Counties, 3 Sponsors
- ~1.4M (NRCS to reimburse 75%)

– September 2023 Event

- NE PA Counties
- 7 sites (1 completed to date)
- 3 Counties, 3 Sponsors
- ~1M (NRCS to reimburse 75%)

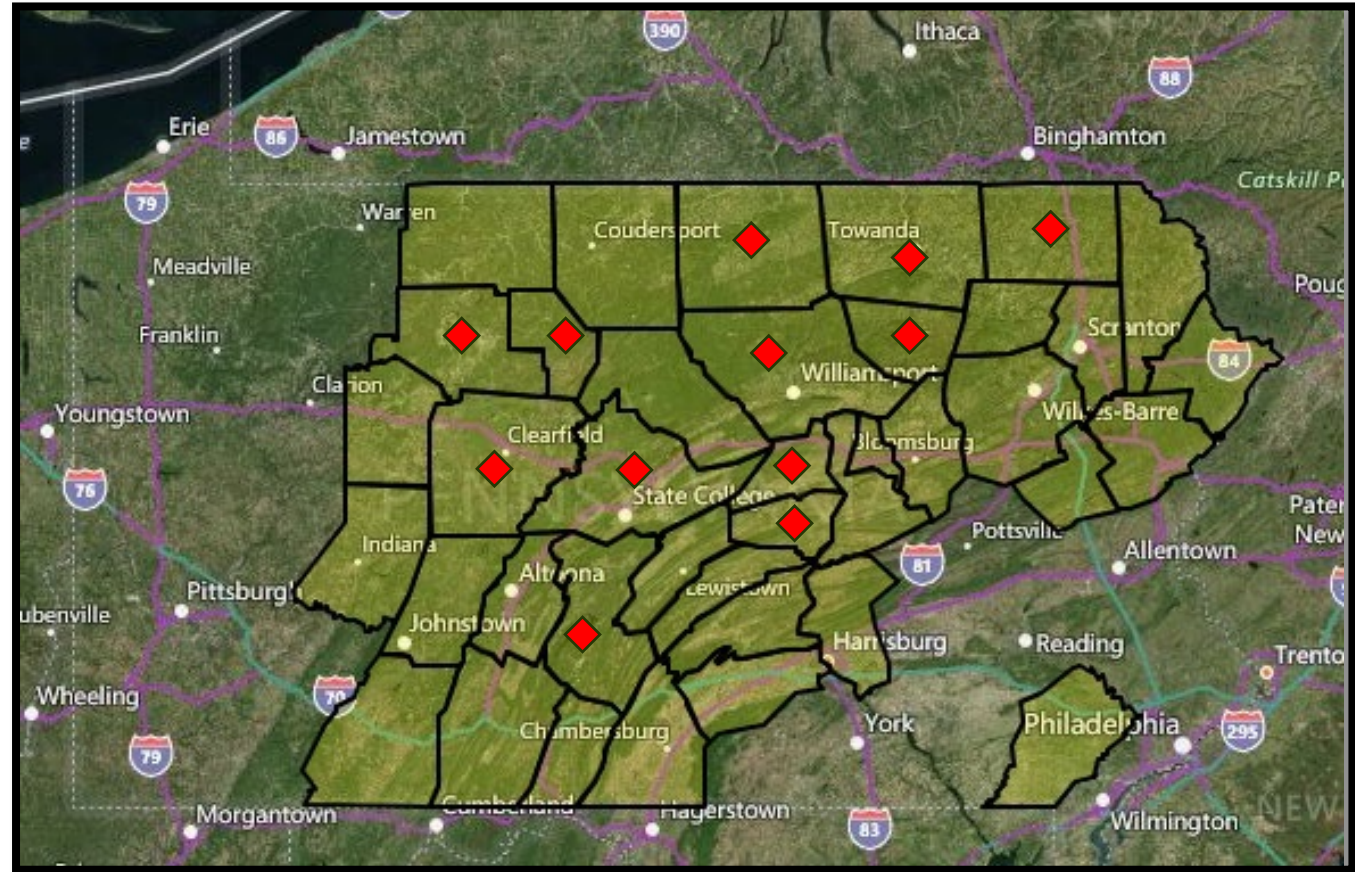
– April 2024 Event

- Western PA Counties
- 9 sites (awaiting funding)
- 7 Counties, 7 Sponsors
- ~1.42 (NRCS to reimburse 75%)



Tropical Storm Debby

- T.S. Debby (Aug 9-10, 2024)
 - 12 Counties, 12 Sponsors
 - Expecting 80 or more sites
 - Estimated costs to be around 8M



For more information on a potential
Watersheds project...

Heather Smeltz, PE

heather.smeltz@usda.gov

(717) 237-2214

For more information on EWP...

Mark Buckwalter, PE

mark.buckwalter@usda.gov

(717) 237-2245



Tim Peters, State Engineer, (See attached hand-out) Tim shares the conservation practices that were sent out. There are issues with the transfer system with where they are placed as they are not being moved over to FOTOG. Tim contacted the person running the system, and the documents should be transferred over very soon. Upcoming trainings: Winter engineering roundtable (he is looking for speakers and topics), Ag Conservation Technical Trainings (Boot Camp) Basic: March 24-27 (in person) and March 11, 18, and April 4 (Virtual)
Boot Camp 2: April 7-11 (in person) and March 21 and 28 (Virtual)

Brian Campbell, State Grazing Specialist, introduces two new practices: Practice 822 is for managing disturbance of plants or soils, and it is differentiated from prescribed grazing from whether horses are getting their nutrients from the ground or not. Practice 827 manages how you are feeding animals in order to address resource concerns.



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State Technical Committee Engineering Update 10/24/2024



FARM PRODUCTION AND CONSERVATION
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Overview

- Standards
- Engineering Roundtable Winter 2025

Conservation Practice Standards

- Issues with transfer system from the Conservation Practice Documents Document Management System
- Released (or soon to be):
 - Waste Storage
 - Animal Mortality Facility
 - Anaerobic Digester, Roofs and Covers
 - Irrigation and Drainage Tailwater Recovery
 - Lined Waterway or Outlet
 - Obstruction Removal
 - Drainage Water management
 - Pond Sealing or Lining
 - Geomembrane or Geosynthetic Clay Liner
 - Sinkhole Treatment
 - Terrace
 - Surface Drainage Main or Lateral
 - Watering Facility
 - Underground Outlet
 - Water and Sediment Control Basin

CPS 313 Waste Storage Facility

- Low Hazard Structures were added under conditions where the practice applies.
- Nutrient Management Plan was added as a basis for determining storage period.
- Freeboard requirement wording was revised to be consistent with PA State Title 25, Chapter 91.
- Clarification added for liquid waste storage foundations.
- Embankment effective height was defined as the height from the lowest downstream toe point to the spillway crest.
- Separation requirements between floor slabs and bedrock foundations were revised.
- Health and Safety considerations were added.
- A consideration of existing BMP locations was added.
- The considerations section for improving air quality was revised.

CPS 521 Pond Sealing or Lining, Geomembrane or Geosynthetic Clay Liner

- Purpose section revised to include reducing pollution to potential drinking water sources
- Conditions where practice applies added when water conservation is needed to protect surface or groundwater from contamination or to provide water for irrigation and livestock.
- Geomembrane thickness requirements were updated (no change to HDPE).
- The Leak Detection section was updated to be consistent with the Ag Waste Management Field Handbook.
- New bullets added under considerations regarding safety and minimizing unwanted access to liners.

Upcoming Trainings

- Winter Engineering Roundtable
 - Looking for speakers and topics
- Ag Conservation Technical Trainings (Boot Camps)
 - Basic: March 24-27 (In Person) and March 11, 18, and April 4 (Virtual)
 - Level II April 7-11 (In Person) and March 21 and 28 (Virtual)

Susan Parry, Assistant State Conservationist of Partnerships and Abigail Appleman, Outreach Coordinator, she stresses that one person cannot do outreach on her own, state and field offices support makes it possible. Over 79 thousand people were reached by NRCS. Susan and Abigail talk about the Philadelphia Urban Service Center opening. Abigail noticed that most urban contracts were coming from the southern states, so her goal in the next year is to reach out to producers in other states in the urban fund pool of EQIP are aware that we have that assistance for them. In the coming year, the Pittsburgh office will open, and date is TBD. The topic turns to the Peoples Garden. As of June 2024:

- 27 registered PGI garden sites in PA
- 2 PGI projects funded in FY23 (\$56,000 in ARPA Funds)
- 5 PGI projects funded in FY2024 (\$150,000 ARPA, \$100,000 in CTA)

Abigail and Susan talk about other updates. Philadelphia urban service reached over 100 growers in 2024 with outreach and technical assistance. PA office collaborated with the PA Department of Agriculture, other state agencies, and local contacts to support the installation of a conservation district office in Philadelphia to further support USDA's efforts. A second USDA service center in PA is on track to open in Pittsburgh with close coordination between FSA, NRCS, and County Conservation District partners. Susan touches on the pXRF Technical Soil Investigations. In 2023-2024 there are 17 sites, with one being in Philadelphia.



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Title VI Outreach FY24 Accomplishments

Abigail Appleman
Outreach Coordinator
USDA-NRCS in Pennsylvania



Title VI → outreach to external customers

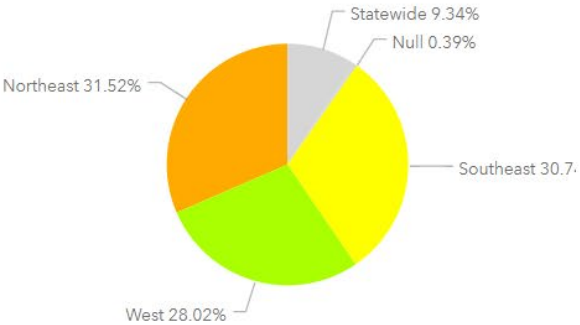
FARM PRODUCTION AND CONSERVATION
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PA FY24 Outreach Dashboard

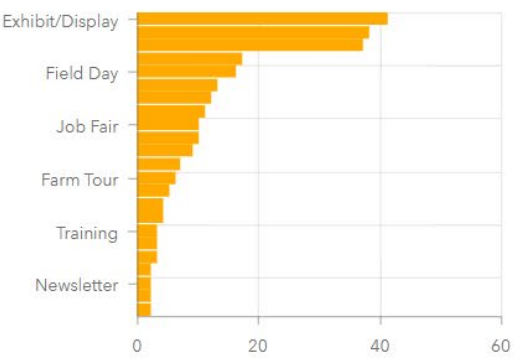
All

79,267

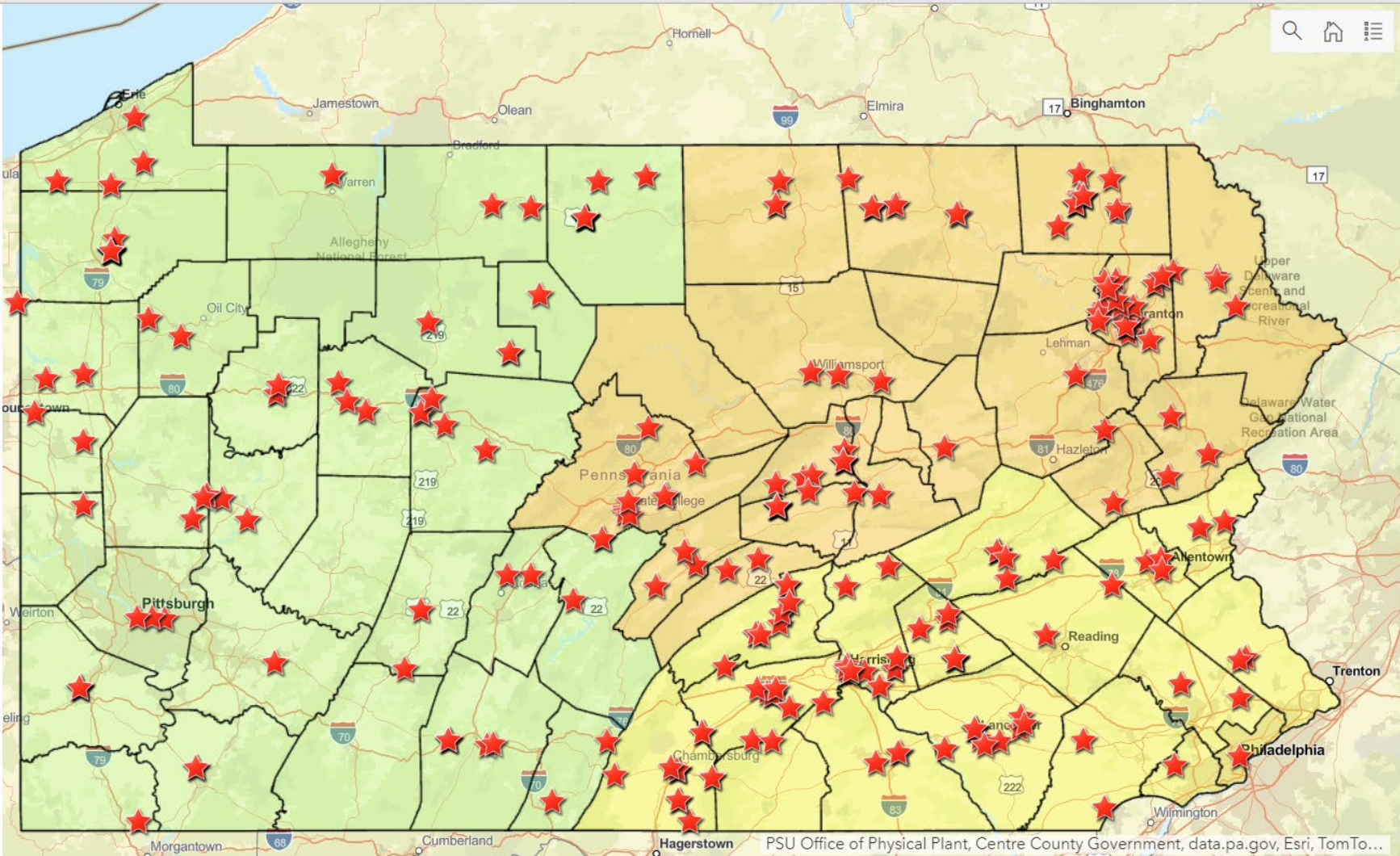
People Reached



Last update: a few seconds ago



Last update: a few seconds ago



PSU Office of Physical Plant, Centre County Government, data.pa.gov, Esri, TomTo...

Outreach Activities Demographics / Parity Tracker



PHILADELPHIA URBAN SERVICE CENTER OPENED!

Urban Ag

FY24:
\$202,749 Actual Cost
(~\$26,000 deferred/other funds)

Number of Contracts:

Allegheny - 2

Berks - 2

Bucks - 1

Chester - 2

Dauphin - 4

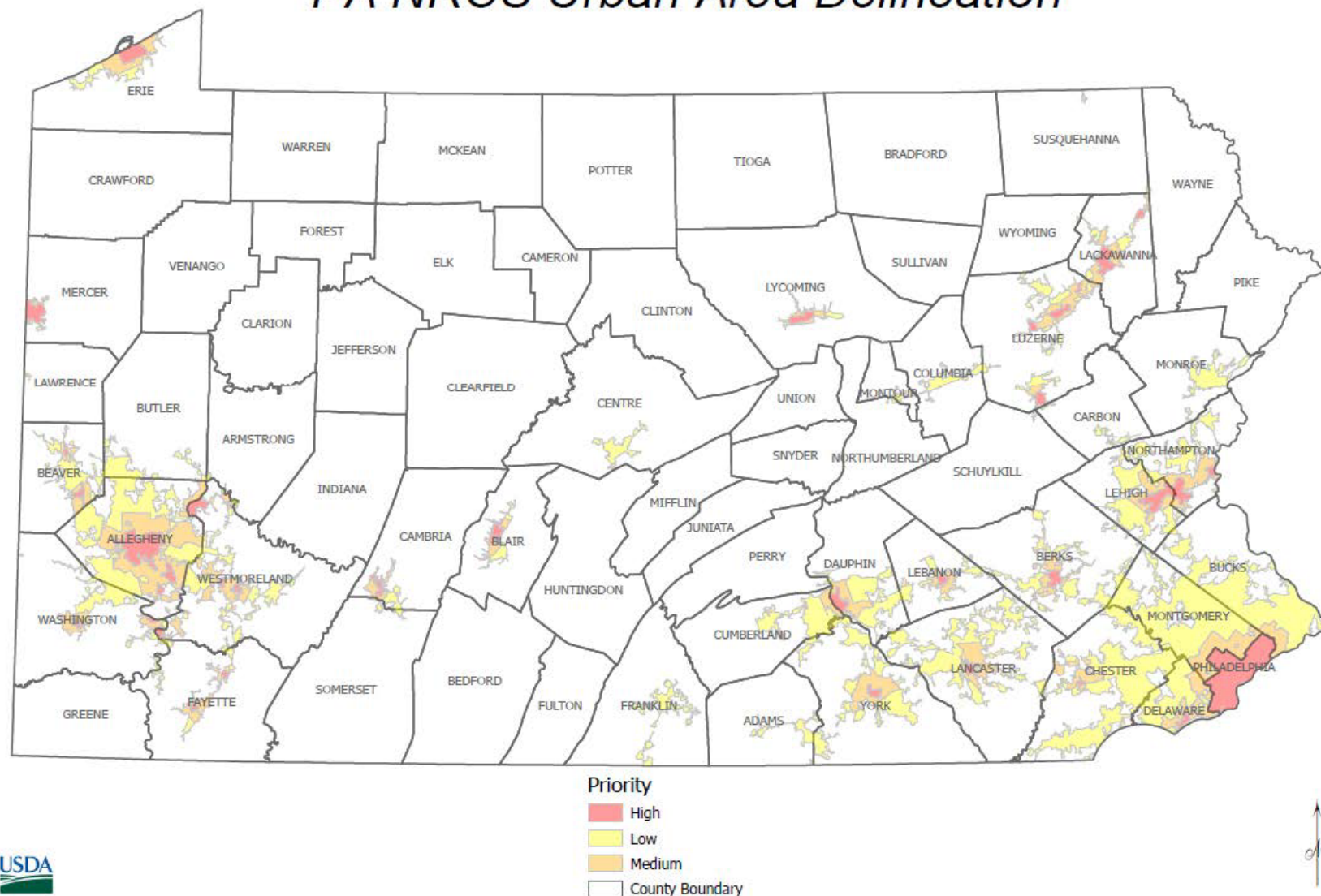
Montgomery - 2

Philadelphia - 1

York - 2

(\$10,000 x 25 = \$250,000)

PA NRCS Urban Area Delineation



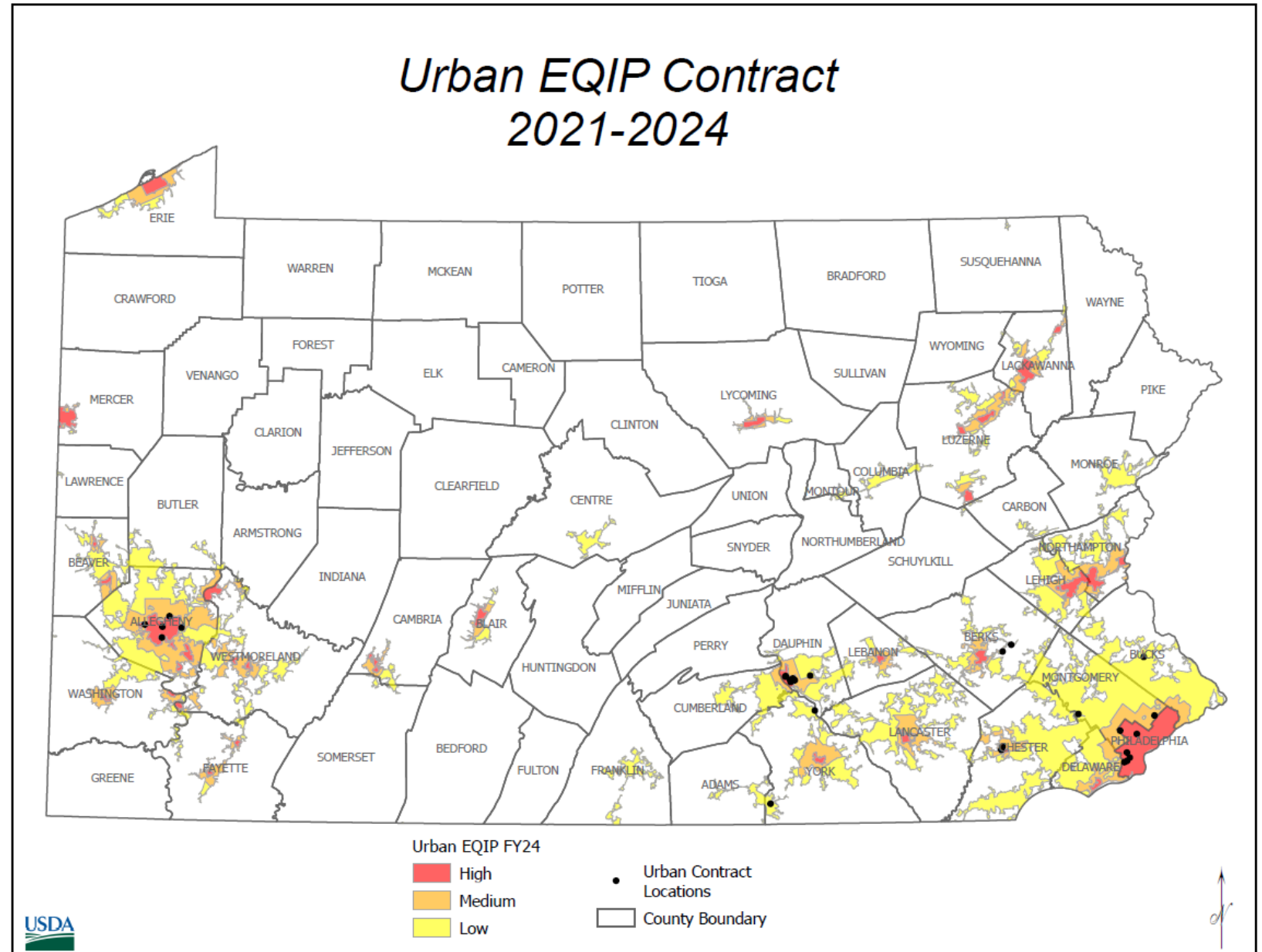
Urban Ag

Coming in FY25:
Pittsburgh office!

Outreach Goals:

Ensure producers in other cities
know about NRCS assistance.

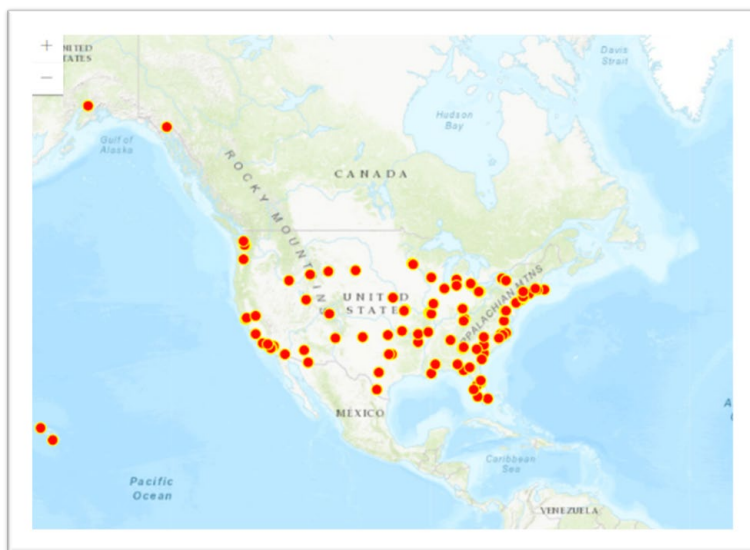
Identify barriers to assistance.



Pennsylvania People's Gardens

As of June 2024:

- 27 registered PGI garden sites in PA
- 2 PGI projects funded in FY23 (\$56,000 in ARPA Funds)
- 5 PGI projects funded in FY24 (\$150,000 ARPA, \$100,000 in CTA)



THE PEOPLE'S GARDEN

THIS GARDEN CAN MAKE A BIG IMPACT IN YOUR COMMUNITY BY:

Growing fresh, healthy food and supporting a resilient, local food system.

Teaching people how to garden using sustainable practices.

Nurturing a habitat for pollinators and wildlife, and greenspace for neighbors to gather, reflect and enjoy.

LEARN MORE AT
[USDA.GOV/PEOPLES-GARDEN](https://usda.gov/peoples-garden)

USDA United States Department of Agriculture

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Other Updates:

- Philadelphia Urban Service Center (USC) reached over 100 growers in 2024 with Outreach and TA, worked on eligibility and ID'd potential barriers to USDA FA Programs.
- Collaborating with Pa Department of Ag, other state agencies and local contacts to support the installation of a Conservation District office in Philadelphia to further support USDA efforts.
- Second USDA Service Center in PA on track to open in Pittsburgh (FY25), with close coordination between FSA, NRCS and County Conservation District partners.



PA NRCS pXRF Technical Soil Investigations

Portable X-Ray Fluorescence



2023 to 2024

- 17 sites
- Philadelphia
- Delaware County
- Dauphin County
- Lancaster County
- Berks County



Types of Sites

- Urban yards
- Community gardens
- Church yards
- Parks/playgrounds
- Vacant lots
- School athletic Fields



Elements analyzed

- LEAD (Pb)
- Arsenic (As)
- Chromium (Cr)
- Copper (Cu)
- Cadmium (Cd)
- Vanadium (Vd)
- Nickel (Ni)
- Zinc (Zn)

FINDINGS –Focus on Lead (Pb)

Soil Pb was elevated for most observations relative to natural soil Pb (24ppm)

Average across all sites was 277ppm: low 6ppm, highest 2909ppm

How much lead is too much? No EPA or PADEP standards for urban gardening

- ❑ PADEP soils Pb threshold for brownfield remediation for residential use is 500ppm
- ❑ EPA Pb superfund remediation std is 200ppm
- ❑ Univ. of CT soil lead interpretation fact sheet recommends precautions when soil Pb is >100ppm

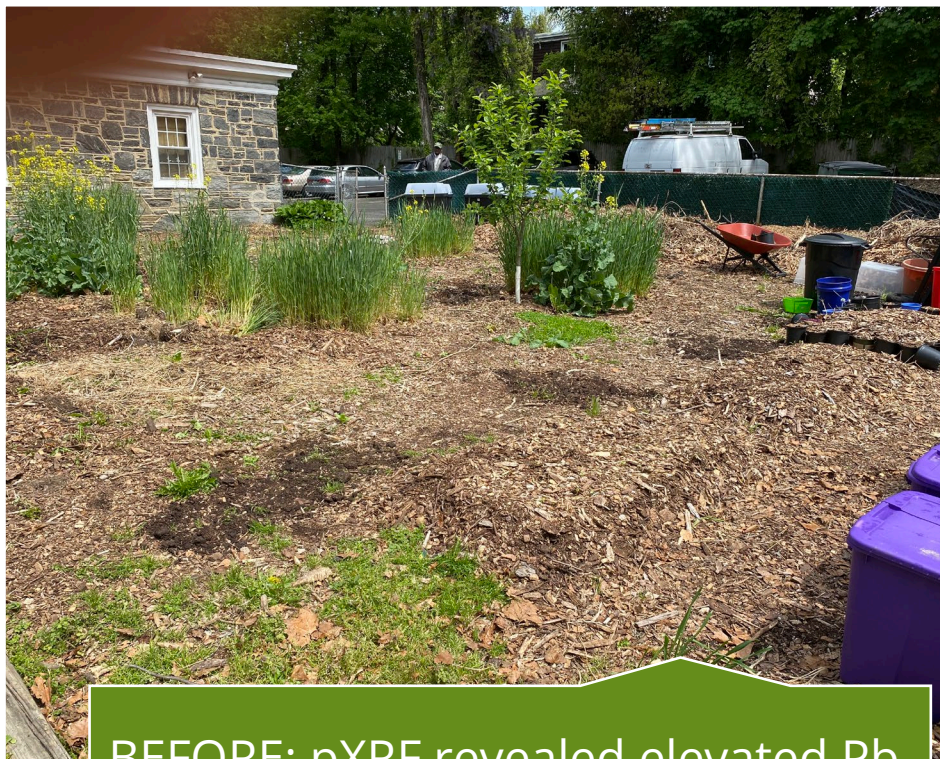
Vacant lots that once had houses had elevated Pb

Garden beds amended with compost often had Pb levels <100ppm

Areas closest to buildings and streets typically had highest Pb.



RESULTS: working as a team



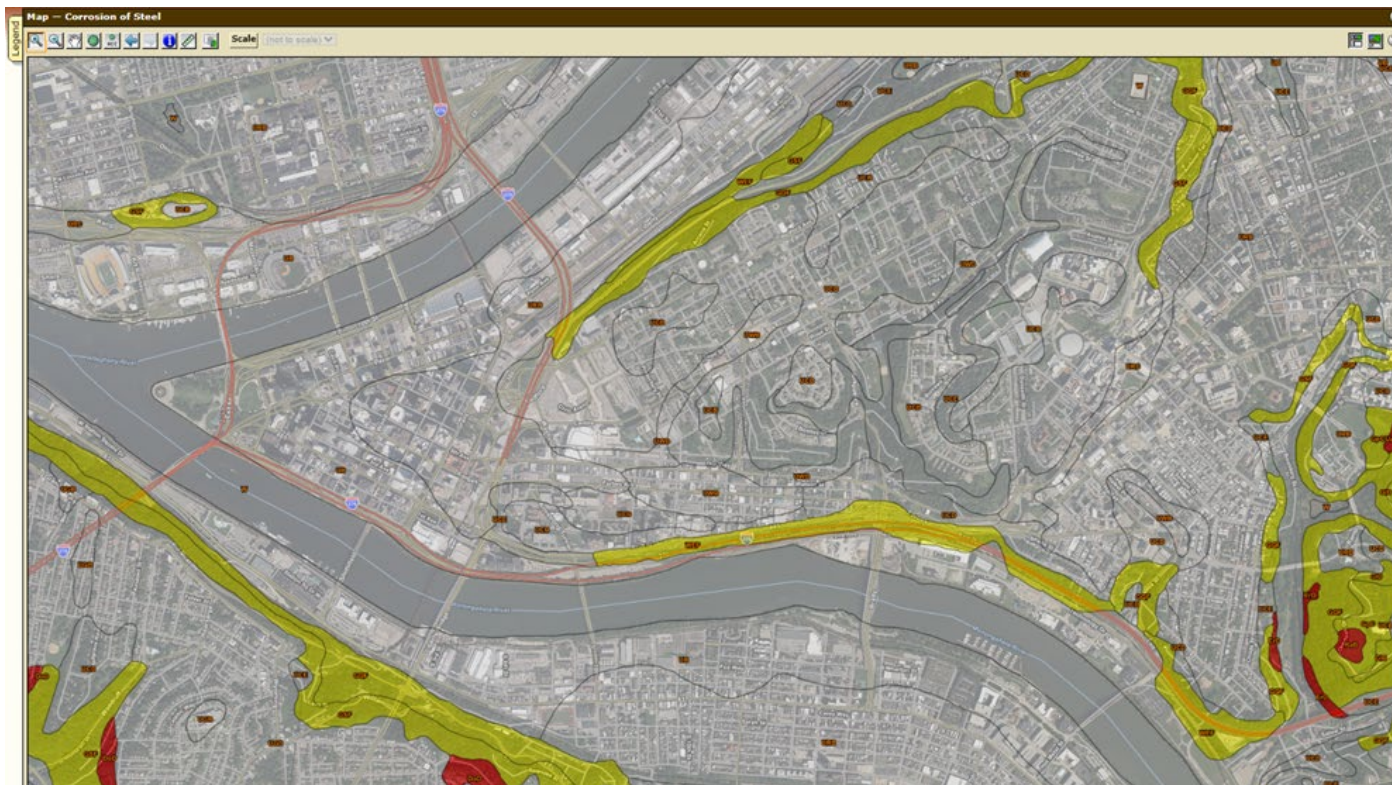
BEFORE: pXRF revealed elevated Pb. Vegetables were being grown in the ground.



AFTER: NRCS worked with customer to install raised beds. Lots of food can be grown here safely



NRCS Pittsburgh Urban Soil Survey update



Pittsburgh soil survey update requested by local partners who are collaborating

10 mapunits with an Urban named component

Urban components currently have no soils data and therefore no available interpretations

Field data will be collected which will allow interpretations

Morgantown Soil Survey Office (WV) is responsible with help from PA NRCS and local partners like the Allegheny County Conservation District



Abigail Appleman
Outreach Coordinator
USDA-NRCS

abigail.appleman@usda.gov

Call/Text: 570-660-0536

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Melissa Hanner, Easement Program Manager, (See attached hand-out) begins her presentation with a overview of FY2024 Easement contracts:

ACEP ALE

- 7 contracts
- 998,27 acres
- \$1,669,881,00

ACEP WRE

- 2 contracts
- 24.1 acres
- \$162,194,00

RCPP-1847 Kittatinny Ridge

- 8 contracts
- 1269.1 acres
- \$1,669,266,00

Melissa begins a review of the easement programs and what sanction they fall under. ACEP (Agricultural Conservation Easement Program) and RCPP (Regional Conservation Partnership Program) are Federal Easement Programs. Entity Held/Partner Easements are ACEP-ALE and RCPP. US Held-Stewardship Easement is ACEP-WRE. She ends her presentation with New Easements-FY2025 Application Cutoff Dates.

Statewide Cutoff (includes: RCPP, ACEP WRE, ACEP ALE)

- November 1, 2024
- January 1, 2025
- March 1, 2025

National IRA ACEP Cutoffs (includes: ACEP WRE, ACEP ALE)

- October 4, 2024
- December 20, 2024

FY2024 Easement Contracts

ACEP ALE

- 7 contracts (Adams, Cumberland, Schuylkill)
- 998.27 acres
- \$1,669,881.00

ACEP WRE

- 2 contracts (Lebanon, Juniata)
- 24.1 acres
- \$162,194.00

RCPP-1847 Kittatinny Ridge

- 8 contracts (Dauphin, Lebanon, Schuylkill)
- 1269.1 acres
- \$1,669,266.00



Federal Easement Programs

ACEP (Agricultural Conservation Easement Program)

- ACEP ALE (Agricultural Land Easements)
- ACEP WRE (Wetland Reserve Easements)

RCPP (Regional Conservation Partnership Program)

- RCPP-1847 Kittatinny Ridge Conservation Landscape
- RCPP-2035 Buffalo Creek (Armstrong County)
- RCPP-2712 Farm Preservation & Climate Change Mitigation

Entity Held / Partner Easements

- **ACEP-ALE**
- **RCPP**
- Partner is easement holder
- Partner takes application

US Held – Stewardship Easements

- **ACEP-WRE**
- NRCS is easement holder
- NRCS Service Center takes application

Easements – Application and Enrollment

Each Landowner listed on Ownership Deed files USDA Eligibility Paperwork at the Farm Service Agency (FSA)

- AD-1026 HELC and WC Certification
- CCC-902 Farm Operating Plans
- CCC-941 Adjusted Gross Income (AGI)

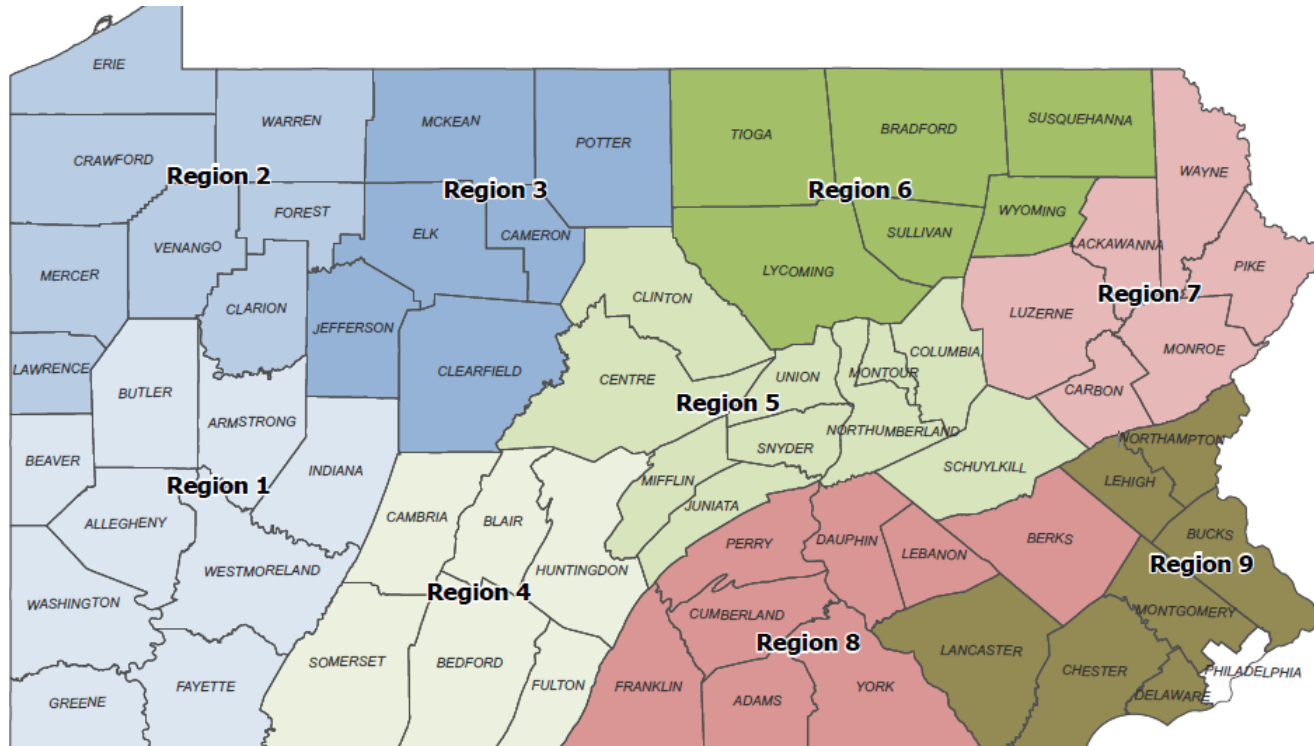
Due Diligence Forms -

- Landowner Disclosure Worksheet
- Hazardous Materials Field Inspection Checklist
- Hazardous Materials Landowner Interview
- Preliminary Certificate of Inspection and Possession
- **Include Maps and Photos**

Geographic Area Rate Caps (GARCs)

ACEP WRE Easement Valuation

The value of the conservation easement is calculated as 95% of the appraised value, not to exceed (NTE) the GARC.



Not To Exceed (NTE) Rate per acre for Appraisals		
Legend	Market Area	NTE
	Region 1	\$6,526
	Region 2	\$5,880
	Region 3	\$5,880
	Region 4	\$5,880
	Region 5	\$6,967
	Region 6	\$5,880
	Region 7	\$5,880
	Region 8	\$8,378
	Region 9	\$13,984



New Easements – FY2025 Application Cutoff Dates

Statewide Cutoff

- November 1, 2024
- January 1, 2025
- March 1, 2025

RCPP, ACEP WRE, ACEP ALE

National IRA ACEP Cutoffs

- October 4, 2024
- December 20, 2024

ACEP WRE, ACEP ALE

Points of Contact

- New Easement Applications – melissa.hanner@usda.gov
- Stewardship – michael.albert@usda.gov

Ryan Cornelius, EQIP Program Manager, (See attached hand-out) an overview of funding Allocations was presented:

EQIP:

- Farm Bill-401 contracts totaling \$29,377,673,51 on 38,881 acres
- IRA-386 contracts totaling \$31,949,647,56 on 156,299 acres
- Total-787 contracts totaling \$61,327,321.07 on 195,180 acres
- 214 Historically Underserved Contracts totaled \$14,781,336 of this report.

AMA:

- 29 contracts totaling \$391,671,60 on 186.7 acres
- 23 Historically Underserved Contracts totaled \$262,671.60 of this report.

Over \$20 million in FA practice implementation in 2024. Ryan moves onto application timelines for fy25:

Application Ranking Periods:

- November 1, 2024
- January 1, 2025
- March 1, 2025
- May 1, 2025

Application Eligibility Timelines:

- January 1, 2025
- March 1, 2025
- May 1, 2025
- July 1, 2025

Ryan moves onto FY25 Allocations and ACT Now Ranking Pools. General EQIP allocation funding: \$20M (including specific initiatives such as Golden Warbler). EQIP-IRA allocation funds: \$41.6M allocated for initiatives like cover crops and pollinator habitat. He continues his presentation with FY25 EQIP Priority Practices which include prescribed burning, wetland restoration,

tree planting on abandoned lands, and nutrient reduction systems to receive up to 90% cost-share rates.



United States Department of Agriculture



Program Updates (EQIP & AMA)

USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service
Pennsylvania, October 24th, 2024



Ryan Cornelius
PA EQIP-Program Manager

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FY24 Contracting Obligations:



EQIP

EQIP-Farm Bill	401 contracts totaling \$29,377,673.51 on 38,881 acres
EQIP-IRA	386 contracts totaling \$31,949,647.56 on 156,299 acres
EQIP Total	787 contracts totaling \$61,327,321.07 on 195,180 acres

Of which:

214 Historically Underserved contracts totaling \$14,781,336

AMA

AMA 29 contracts totaling \$391,671.60 on 186.7 acres

Of which:

23 Historically Underserved contracts totaling \$262,671.60





FY24 Programs Update

-Over \$20 Million in FA practice implementation in 2024

Some highlighted practices:

Practice	Amount Implemented with FA		
313-Waste Storage Facility	61 No.		
340-Cover Crop	15,000 Ac.		
420-Wildlife Habitat Planting	146 Ac.		
528-Prescribed Grazing	1,920 Ac.		
561-Heavy Use Area Protection	175,000 SqFt		
590-Nutrient Management	11,200 Ac.		



FY25 Sign-up and Eligibility



Application Sign-up Numbers: Application ranking periods for AMA and EQIP:

Sign-up Number Application ranking periods for AMA (West) and EQIP:

- 1 November 1, 2024**
- 2 January 1, 2025**
- 3 March 1, 2025**
- 4 May 1, 2025**

Application Eligibility Timelines:

Applications must remain in “pending” status in ProTracts until all eligibility requirements have been met:

Sign-up Number Eligibility requirements shall be met by the following dates:

- 1 January 1, 2025**
- 2 March 1, 2025**
- 3 May 1, 2025**
- 4 July 1, 2025**



FY25 Allocations and ACT Now Ranking Pools

-FY25 EQIP-General Allocation **\$20,361,76** (includes \$795,296 for Golden Wing Warbler, \$495,400 Joint Chief Forestry, and \$1,804,254 in NWQI)

-FY25 EQIP-IRA Allocation **\$41,637,291**

-For FY2025, PA NRCS will be utilizing ACT NOW authority to process applications, submitted by the November 1, 2024 batch sign-up deadline (Additional batching deadlines will occur every 2 weeks from this date), and eligible for the EQIP-IRA Cover Crop (Northeast, Southeast, and West), EQIP-IRA Pollinator, EQIP-IRA Flares/Covers/Liners, EQIP Stream Corridor, EQIP AFO/CAFO Poultry, and EQIP-IRA Forestry (Northeast, Southeast, and West) ranking pools.

FY25 ACT Now Ranking Pools	Allocation	Minimum Ranking Score
EQIP-IRA Cover Crop Northeast	\$5,000,000	To be announced at a later date
EQIP-IRA Cover Crop Southeast	\$5,000,000	To be announced at a later date
EQIP-IRA Cover Crop West	\$5,000,000	To be announced at a later date
EQIP-IRA Pollinator	\$200,000	To be announced at a later date
EQIP-IRA Flares, Covers, Liners	\$2,000,000	To be announced at a later date
EQIP Stream Corridor	\$2,000,000	To be announced at a later date
EQIP AFO/CAFO Poultry	\$2,000,000	To be announced at a later date
EQIP-IRA Forestry Northeast	\$2,000,000	To be announced at a later date
EQIP-IRA Forestry Southeast	\$2,000,000	To be announced at a later date
EQIP-IRA Forestry West	\$2,000,000	To be announced at a later date



FY25 EQIP Priority Practices

Background for EQIP Priority Practices: EQIP policy at 530.403E,F allows the State Conservationist to solicit input on up to 10 priority practices for EQIP general. The rate would be increased to share in 90% percent of the cost of the practice versus 75% (530.406 B). The goal of these Top 10 priority practice lists is **NOT** to improve participation for practices that are well subscribed, like heavy use areas or fence, or practices like riparian forest buffers that may have many program alternatives offered to producers, but to introduce practices to participants that may not be very popular because of the high costs but have high environmental benefits.

The following conservation practices were accepted as the 10 priority practices to receive 90% cost-share under EQIP general.

338	Prescribed Burning
390	Riparian Herbaceous Cover
395	Stream Habitat Improvement and Management
396	Aquatic Organism Passage
490	Tree/Shrub Site Preparation (on abandoned mine lands only)
580	Streambank and Shoreline Protection
605	Denitrifying Bioreactor
612	Tree/Shrub Establishment (on abandoned mine lands only)
657	Wetland Restoration
782	Phosphorous Removal System



FY25 EQIP Source Water Protection (SWP) Priority Practices

SWP Priority Targeted Practices

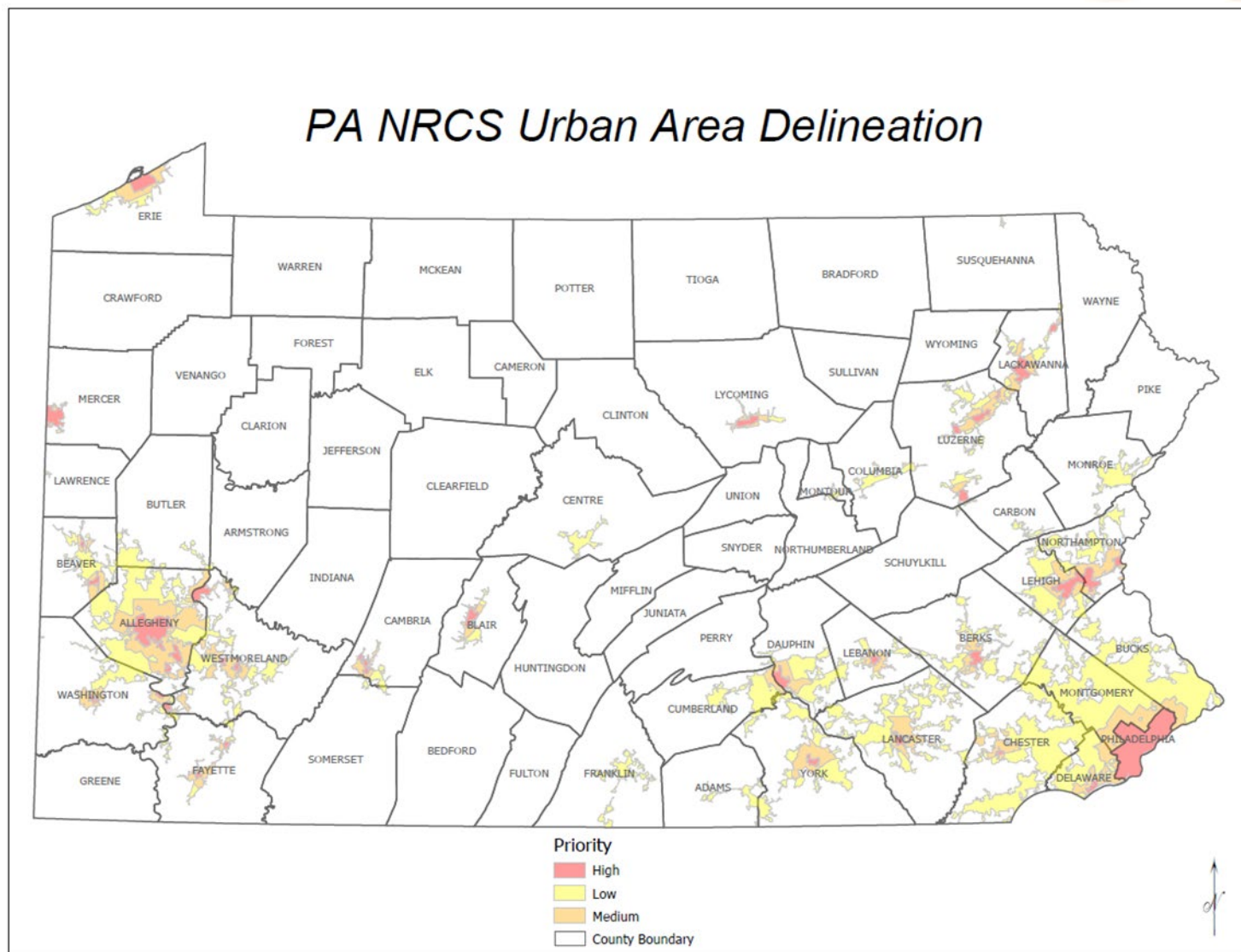
These conservation practices were accepted as the SWP priority practices to receive the 90% cost-share rate in EQIP.

Source Water Protection Practices with Higher Payment Rate

Code	Practice	Units	Lifespan
351	Well Decommissioning	No	20
527	Karst Sinkhole Treatment	No	10
580	Streambank and Shoreline Protection	Ft	20
605	Denitrifying Bioreactor	No	10
782	Phosphorous Removal System	No	10



EQIP-Urban Areas for FY25



Ashley Lenig, Conservation Stewardship Program Manager, (See attached hand-out) Ashley began her presentation with a rundown of CSP data in FY24.

CSP obligations this past year saw:

- 343 contracts,
- 69,762 acres,
- \$11,920,301.

CSP Allocations for FY25:

- CSP \$7,070,000
- CSP IRA: \$9,318,000.

Program renewal for existing Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) contracts are underway.

National Water Quality Initiative is summarized.

FY2024 Obligations:

- 18 contracts
- \$2,813,549.96
- 3,229.7 acres

FY2025 Allocations:

- \$1,804,254

Committee Input for Fiscal Year 2025,

- Kurt Wagner is working on a in a school program for FFA students where they will get to tour a farm and also will try to tour corresponding community water systems.
- Liz Feinberg announced the Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund's open grant solicitation (due November 5).

Next Meeting: January 22, 2025



United States Department of Agriculture

PA NRCS Programs Team

Financial Assistance Programs Update CIG, CSP, EQIP-NWQI

***Pennsylvania State Technical Committee Meeting
Ashley Lenig, Conservation Program Manager***

October 24, 2024

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Presentation Outline

- **Conservation Innovative Grants (CIG)**
- **Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)**
- **National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI)**



Conservation Innovation Grants



Funded 4 new Conservation Innovation Grants in FY 2024

- ❑ Earthcare, LLC
 - Manure Based Biochar Application Rates to Improve Soil Health.
- ❑ Water Science Institute
 - Legacy Sediment 4.0: Management Metrics
- ❑ Penn State University
 - Biochar Type and Rate Matter Controlling Plant Available N and N₂O Emissions in Agricultural Fields
- ❑ Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture
 - Evaluating Silvopasture Practices in PA.



Conservation Stewardship Program

CSP (Renewals, Classic, GCI) in FY2024

CSP Obligations (with CSP-Grassland Conservation Initiative)

343 contracts

69,762 acres

\$11,920,301

(FY 2023 Obligations: 318 contracts /108,683 ac. / \$10.9 M)



Conservation Stewardship Program

CSP Allocation for FY2025

- CSP \$7,070,000
- CSP IRA \$9,318,000
- Total: \$16,388,000



Conservation Stewardship Program

CSP FY 2025

• CSP Renewal Ranking Pools

Ranking Pool Name

NIPF-PA W Renewal FY25

NIPF-PA NE Renewal FY25

NIPF-PA SE Renewal FY25

NIPF-PA BFR Renewal FY25

NIPF-PA SDFR Renewal FY25

Ag Lands-PA WEST Renewal FY25

Ag Lands-PA NORTHEAST Renewal FY25

Ag Lands-PA SOUTHEAST Renewal FY25

Ag Lands-Statewide Organic Renewal FY25

Ag Lands-Statewide BFR Renewal FY25

Ag Lands-Statewide SDFR Renewal FY25

CSP IRA Renewal Ranking Pools

Ranking Pool Name

IRA CSP Renewal NIPF-PA W FY25

IRA CSP Renewal NIPF-PA NE FY25

IRA CSP Renewal NIPF-PA SE FY25

IRA CSP Renewal NIPF-Statewide BFR FY25

IRA CSP Renewal NIPF-Statewide SDFR FY25

IRA CSP Renewal Ag Lands-PA WEST FY25

IRA CSP Renewal Ag Lands-PA NORTHEAST FY25

IRA CSP Renewal Ag Lands-PA SOUTHEAST FY25

IRA CSP Renewal Ag Lands-Statewide BFR FY25

IRA CSP Renewal Ag Lands-Statewide SDFR FY25

IRA CSP Renewal Ag Lands-Statewide Organic FY25

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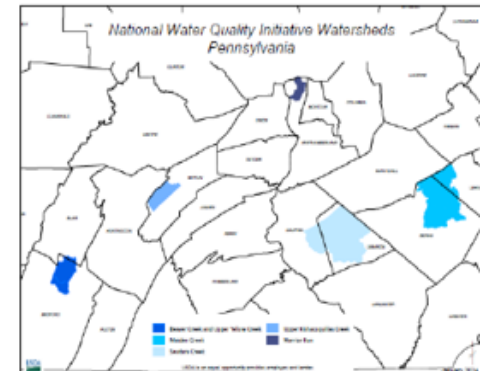
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National Water Quality Initiative

Environmental Quality Incentives Program – NWQI

- **FY2024 Obligations**
 - 18 contracts
 - \$2,813,549.96
 - 3,229.7 acres
- **FY2025 Allocation**
 - \$1,804,254



Questions?

Comments?



Ashley Lenig

Conservation Program Manager (CSP, CIG, NWQI)

ashley.lenig@usda.gov