Locally Led in Developing Areas
Volunteers-Committees-Partnerships

Westmoreland Conservation District, PA
Kathy Hamilton, RLA, Stormwater Technician
kathyh@wcdpa.com
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Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania

- 1,000 Square Miles
- An Hour From Pittsburgh
- 370,000 People
- 67 Municipalities

- 50% Forested
- 30% Agriculture – 1,000 Farms
- Developing 1,000 Acres Per Year
- 74% Urban Population
Westmoreland County – Growth Areas

Legend

- Post 1967 Developed Land
- Pre 1967 Developed Land
- Preserved Land

NORTH
Founded 1949

- Agricultural Conservation
- Erosion and Sedimentation Control
- Storm Water Management
- Sustainable Forests
- Watershed Management
- Conservation Education
Driving Forces

- Mission & Vision
- WCD Strategic Plan (2003, REVISED 2010)
- County Comprehensive Plan (2004)
- Strong Working Relationships
  - Westmoreland County Industrial Development Corporation
  - Economic Growth Connection
  - Westmoreland County Department of Planning
  - Penn State Cooperative Extension
- Build on Past Success
- Board Willing to Take Risks-Reach Beyond “Comfort Zones”
- County Funding per Capita - $2.10
Mission

- Westmoreland Conservation District promotes, educates, & implements conservation principles . . . to build a culture of responsible stewardship & sustainability.
Westmoreland Conservation District promotes conservation ethics through programs & examples that encourage all to adopt a way of life that incorporates thoughtful, wise use of our shared natural resources.
Long Range Goals

- Clean Streams & Water Resources
- Sustainable Communities
- Shared Regional Vision
- Productive Farms
- Healthy Forests
- Stable Soils
Achieving Our Goals

- How do we achieve our goals with limited staff, limited time, limited resources?
  - Volunteers
  - Committees
  - Partnerships
District Committees

(70+ Community members involved)

- Conservation Education
- Dirt & Gravel Roads
- Communications
- Water Quality
- Forestry
- Nutrient Management
- Future of Agriculture
- Sustainable Energy
- Annual Banquet
- Stormwater Management / Erosion Control
Committee spin-offs

- PA Cleanways
- WPCAMR
- Westmoreland Woodlands Improvement Association
- Westmoreland County Land Trust
- GreenForge Corporation
- Westmoreland Agricultural Land Preservation
Committees
(with District representation)

- WPCAMR
- County Land Trust
- Open Space & Greenway Plan
- Regional Rails to Trails Council
- Industrial Development Corporation - public
- Economic Growth Connection - private
- Westmoreland Cleanways
- Sustainable Forestry Initiative
- Westmoreland Woodlands Assoc
- Pennsylvania Forest Stewardship
- 3 Watershed Organizations
- Smart Growth Partnership
- Ohio Basin Water Resources
- 25 Other committees
Benefits of Committees

1. Access to Community Opinions & Values
2. Provide Feedback & Direction to District
3. Attract Funders
4. Attract Project Participants
5. Build Public Support for Conservation Efforts
6. Recruit Board Members
7. Build Long Term Relationships
8. Educate & Reach Out
9. Provide Staff Support
1. Community Access

(WCD Stormwater Committee)

- Committee members include a cross-section of the regulated community:
  - PA Department of Environmental Protection
  - Municipal & County Representatives
  - Landscape Architects
  - Engineers
  - Surveyors
  - Solicitors
  - Planners
2. Feedback & Direction
(WCD Stormwater Committee)

- Program Priorities
- WCD SW Manual
- Fee Schedule
- Education Programs
- Outreach Projects
WCD SW Manual

- Program Policy & Guidance
- Standardization of Program Procedures
- Promote Stormwater Management BMPs
- Strengthen Working Relationships with Local Governments
SW Fee Schedule

- Cost Recovery
- Validation of Fees
- Parallels E & S Fees
- State Conservation Commission Approval
- Stormwater Committee Approval
Target Audience
- Engineers, Contractors, Inspectors, Developers, Municipal Reps, Homeowners, Utility Companies

Subject Matter
- Policy Updates, Permit Requirements, New Technologies, Old Technologies, Exchange of Ideas

Program Style
- Workshops, Lectures, Hands-on Activities, Bus Tours, Roundtables
SW Outreach Projects

- Vandergrift Urban Stormwater Retrofit
- Westmoreland County Community College Riparian Buffer & SW Retrofit
- Mt. Pleasant Residential Rain Garden Project
The historic Borough of Vandergrift has wide sidewalks and no stormwater management.
Project partners included elected officials and community revitalization groups.
Poros concrete is placed over ‘Silva Cells’ and trees are planted in the un-compacted soil to manage runoff.
A 4-acre college parking lot had curb cuts to direct uncontrolled polluted stormwater runoff to the stream.
Project partners included state environmental protection department, watershed association and property owner.
Riparian plantings now protect the stream while infiltration swales capture and treat sheet flow from the existing parking lot.
A Mt Pleasant neighborhood was targeted for SW retrofits because of flooding and sewer overflows.
Partnership with local officials and watershed groups is the key to a project’s success!
Each volunteer homeowner was involved in the design process.
3. Attract Funding

- Committee members lend credibility to fundraising efforts
- Committee members broaden range of funding sources
4. Attract Participants

- Credibility & Contacts
- Pool of Potential Volunteers
- Publicity
5. Build Public Support

- Credibility & Contacts
- Participants take the ideas back to their own municipalities
6. Recruit Board Members

- Pool of Potential Associates & Directors
- Qualified Professionals
- Interested Citizens
7. Build Relationships

- Future Benefits
  - Conservation
  - Professional
  - Political / Regulatory
8. Educate & Reach Out

- Help Organize & Publicize Events
- Educated Speakers
- Reach a Larger More Diverse Audience
9. Provide Staff Support

- Experienced & Knowledgeable Assistance in All Areas
- Advice & Guidance for New Staff
Thank You

218 Donohoe Road Greensburg PA 15601

Kathryn Hamilton RLA

kathyh@wcdpa.com

www.wcdpa.com