

EASTERN LANCASTER COUNTY (PA) SOURCE WATER COLLABORATIVE

Scope: Local

Location: Pennsylvania

SCOPE:

- » Eastern Lancaster County, Pennsylvania
- » Led by Lancaster County Planning Commission
- » Alliance of water suppliers, local government and civic leaders, state and federal agencies, private environmental partners and non-profit organizations
- » Focus: reduce nitrate in groundwater

COLLABORATIVE FORMATION:

- » Formed to develop an implementation plan for the Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan water resources element, “Blueprints: An Integrated Water Resources Plan for Lancaster County”—adopted in October 2012
- » Selected as a 2013 Source Water Collaborative Pilot
- » Mission: The ELANCO Source Water Collaborative is committed to protecting and improving water quality for current and future generations through a cooperative, proactive approach. Using the shared interests of public water suppliers, citizens, businesses, private, non-profit, and governmental partners, the Collaborative promotes education and use of best management practices that will preserve and support Eastern Lancaster County’s unique culture and strong economy.

MEMBERS:

- » East Earl Township
- » Terre Hill and New Holland Boroughs
- » Susquehanna River Basin Commission
- » Water Resources Education Network (League of Women Voters)
- » PA Department of Environmental Protection
- » PA Rural Water Association
- » Chesapeake Bay Foundation
- » Lancaster County Planning Commission
- » Lancaster County Conservation District
- » Lancaster County Conservancy
- » Lancaster County Farmland Trust
- » Lancaster County Zoning & Building Permit Officials Association
- » Lancaster County Agricultural Council
- » Penn State Cooperative Extension
- » Mennonite community leaders
- » USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
- » Eastern Lancaster County School District
- » Western Heights Water Authority
- » Blue Ball Water Authority
- » Environmental Protection Agency

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Randy Heilman,
Senior Community Planner,
Lancaster County Planning Commission
717-299-8333
heilmanr@co.lancaster.pa.us

- » SMS Group
- » Future Farmers of America

WATER CONCERNS:

Nitrate in groundwater from a multitude of land uses and pollution sources.

STRATEGIES:

- » Protect and improve water quality for current and future generations through a cooperative, proactive approach.
- » Promote SWP by facilitating partnerships and sharing information, resources, and technical assistance to implement conservation practices
- » Using the shared interests of public water suppliers, citizens, businesses, private, non-profit, and governmental partners, promote education and use of best management practices that will preserve and support Eastern Lancaster County's unique culture and strong economy.
- » Integrate Clean Water Act priorities, programs, and activities with those of the Safe Drinking Water Act to protect drinking water sources.

RESULTS:

- » Held farmer education workshops in fall/winter of 2013 and 2014.
 - In 2013, approximately 400 Amish, Mennonite, and "English" farmers attended the event focusing on conservation practices to improve soil and water quality.
 - Served as partner with Stroud Research Center, NRCS, and Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts in hosting a soil and stream health workshop, held at Shady Maple Smorgasbord on October 29, 2014. With 7 agricultural sponsors and 6 organizational partners, the event brought in over 225 farmers to hear Ray Archuleta and Bern Sweeney speak on agricultural and conservation techniques, such as no-till and buffers, to improve water quality.
- » Developed action plans to build on successful workshops, including:
 - One-on-one farm visits by the Lancaster County Conservation District to discuss agricultural compliance in Earl and East Earl Township
 - Small farmer focus groups to provide trainings on a variety of topics, including nitrates in well water, implementation of best agricultural practices, including manure and pasture management
 - Identifying interested farmers in sensitive wellhead areas and matching those farms with a technical assistance provider who can assist with developing conservations plans and implementing appropriate best agricultural practices.
- » Developed a multi-pronged strategy that includes committees to address other land uses such as commercial/ industrial and residential properties. Long term the Collaborative seeks to build further partnerships with public water suppliers, and work with county and local governments to develop ordinances to protect source water areas.