

Municipal Authority of Westmoreland County Source Water Protection Program

Scope: Regional – Southwest PA

Location: Pennsylvania

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Collaborative Lead: Municipal Authority of Westmoreland County

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SCOPE:

- Youghiogheny source water protection area, which includes the Youghiogheny watershed located in Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Maryland. The Youghiogheny River flows into the Monongahela and is part of the greater Ohio River Basin. In Pennsylvania, it includes 4 counties, 92 municipalities and 291 HUC12 Watersheds. This source water protection area also includes 4 community drinking water treatment systems and serves over 210,000 customers.
- Beaver Run source water protection area is part of the larger Kiskiminetas which flows into the Allegheny River and is part of the greater Ohio River Basin. The Beaver Run source water protection area serves > 140,000 customers.

COLLABORATIVE FORMATION:

- The collaborative formed in 2009 after the development of our delineated source water protection area.
- In 2019, the Authority hired a source water supervisor. From 2019-2020, the collaborative worked together to develop a vision statement, goals and an action plan.
- The collaborative meets at least once per year to review water quality sampling results and projects undertaken by MAWC and other entities in the collaborative. Additional “working meetings” are conducted as the need arises to make adjustments to our goals, water quality sampling, etc.
- The program focuses on water quality, incident and emergency response, land use management and public outreach.

STRUCTURE/FUNDING:

- To date the program is internally funded by the Authority although current efforts include grant opportunities.

MEMBERS:

A Current List of Source water protection committee member organizations can be accessed at <https://www.mawc.org/swp-info>

- Allegheny and Westmoreland County Conservation District
- Westmoreland County Conservation District
- Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection-Southwest Region
- Environmental Protection Agency Region 3
- Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission
- Protect Penn Trafford
- CNX Resources Corporation
- Mountain Watershed Association
- North Fayette Municipal Authority
- Pennsylvania American Water
- Westmoreland Marcellus Citizens Group
- Sustainable Monroeville
- Ohio River Sanitation Commission (ORSANCO)
- Fayette, Westmoreland, Somerset and Allegheny County emergency management
- Westmoreland Cleanways
- Three Rivers Quest
- Indian Creek Valley Water Authority
- Pennsylvania Department of Conservation of Natural Resources (DCNR)
- US Geological Survey (USGS)
- Penn State Cooperative Extension
- Jacobs Creek Watershed Association
- Kiskiminetas Watershed Association
- Indiana University
- St. Vincent College
- Department of Homeland Security
- Olympus Energy
- Appalachian Forest Consultants
- Hazen and Sawyer

WATER CONCERNS:

- Transportation corridors
- Industrial chemical release
- Agricultural nutrient runoff
- Oil and gas development
- Acid Mine Drainage


STRATEGIES:

- A source water delineation was performed in each source water protection area identifying potential sources of contamination in 2009.
- The Authority hired a source water supervisor to lead the program and develop an action plan in 2020. A strategic action plan was developed using guidance from:
 - American Water Works Association's Operational Guide to AWWA Standard G300
 - EPA's Handbook for Developing Watershed Plans to Restore and Protect Our Waters
 - Alliance for Water Stewardship International Water Stewardship Standard 2.0

RESULTS:

- As a group, we have worked together to develop strategies to reduce potential risk from natural gas drilling activities including the development of a well pad inspection checklist, development of natural gas completions water quality sampling, and development of an emergency response plan specific to natural gas operations. Additionally, MAWC has made great strides in developing spill reporting agreements with oil and gas companies conducting operations on, and close to MAWC's properties. Two online water quality monitoring stations have been established on tributaries to Beaver Run Reservoir where oil and gas operations are occurring or are anticipated.
- The program developed an incident response form and continues to work with emergency management to identify potential sources of contamination receive timely notification of spills and evaluate risk to the Youghiogheny and Beaver Run drinking water source waters.
- The source water protection program worked under a grant between EPA and ORSANCO to develop a source water contaminant inventory for the Ohio River Basin.

- MAWC's source water protection program has partnered with the Keystone 10 Million Trees partnership to increase forest cover to at least 65% in its source water protection areas.
- MAWC has undertaken a reforestation project that is being funded by CNX to replace trees on well pads that have been reclaimed. The goals of this project are to increase forest cover and subdue the many invasive plant species that have colonized the former well pad areas. 133 acres are being managed through mowing to prevent the continued seed production by invasive plants. Within that 133 acres, 42 acres have been fenced to protect tree seedlings from deer grazing.
- We completed a study with St. Vincent College on determining the effectiveness of using goats for invasive suppression to allow better tree seedling growth, helping to meet our forest cover goals.
- A cyanotoxin monitoring and response project has been initiated by MAWC to refine our monitoring protocols and best management strategies for responding to harmful algal blooms as they occur in our source waters. We are working with Penn State Cooperative Extension to further its tributary water quality monitoring and public outreach goals.



Information current as of November 2020. Please check with the Collaborative contacts (or website if available) for the most up to date information. To find other source water collaboratives across the U.S. or to add yours to the list, visit the Source Water Collaborative's [How To Collaborate Toolkit](#)