

## **Dauphin County Conservation District Frequently Asked Questions**

### **AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION PROGRAM**

**Q: How does this program preserve farmland?**

A: The program preserves farmland through the purchase of agricultural conservation easements. These easements restrict the use of the land to agriculture only. There are certain other activities allowed.

**Q: How much money will I receive for an easement on my farm?**

A: The easement value is determined by an appraisal. It is equal to the difference in the lands market value and its farmland value. Dauphin County currently has an easement cap of \$1,500.00 per acre. This means that the program in Dauphin County will pay a maximum of \$1,500.00 per acre for an easement, even if the easement is valued higher.

**Q: Is the money I receive for an easement taxable?**

A: Yes. It is strongly recommended that you seek tax advice before selling an easement.

**Q: What restrictions are placed on my land under this program?**

A: Farms preserved through this program are restricted to agricultural use. One additional house may be built and farm buildings such as barns and equipment sheds are allowed. In most cases, subdivision will not be allowed with the exception of up to two acres for the one additional house that is permitted.

**Q: Can I sell my farm or pass it to an heir after the easement is purchased?**

A: Yes. You still own the farm and may sell it or pass it on to an heir. The deed for this should be reviewed in advance of settlement. It is also required that the name, address and phone number of the buyer or heir as well as the price paid for the farm be forwarded to the county administrator.

CONTACTS: Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture – Bureau of Farmland Protection 717-783-3167

Dauphin County Agricultural Land Preservation Program – Dauphin County Conservation District 717-921-8100

### **AGRICULTURAL PROGRAMS**

**Q: What is a farm?**

A: Any operation which plows and tills, including no-till cropping and hay, and/or has livestock which generate manure (including only one horse) is considered a farm and must follow regulations pertaining to Conservation Planning and Manure/Nutrient Management Planning.

**Q: Do I need a Conservation Plan?**

A: All farms are required to develop and implement a written conservation plan to reduce erosion when plowing and tilling (includes no-till cropping). Conservation plans were required in PA since 1972 in the Chapter 102 regulations. In 2010, Chapter 102 added Animal Heavy Use Areas (AHUAs) to be covered in a written conservation plan. A Conservation Plan is a written plan that identifies conservation practices and includes site-specific Best Management Practices (BMPs). If you have a Conservation Plan that is more than ten years old, or you have recently changed some management practices on your farm (transitioning to organic from a no-till system, for one example), you may need an updated Conservation Plan.

**Q: What is an AHUA or ACA?**

A: An AHUA (Animal Heavy Use Area) or ACA (Animal Concentration Area) is a barnyard, feedlot, loafing area, exercise lot or other similar areas on agricultural operations where, due to the concentration of animals, it is not possible to establish and maintain vegetative cover of a density capable of minimizing accelerated erosion and sedimentation by usual planting methods. Areas such as this can occur in a pasture as well, and are often where livestock congregate and denude an area – typically this is seen near feeders, waterers, and shade trees. If runoff carrying manure or sediment from these areas flow into a waterbody, such as a pond or stream, these areas also are defined as AHUAs or ACAs and must be addressed in a Conservation and/or Manure Management Plan.

**Q: Who needs a Manure Management Plan?**

A: All farming operations that land apply manure or agriculture process wastewater, whether they generate the manure or import it from another operation must have a written manure management plan. Also, all farming operations that include an Animal Concentration Area (ACA) or pasture must have a written manure management plan. This plan can be prepared by the farmer, and does not have to be submitted for approval, but must be kept on the farm and made available for request. To obtain a copy of the manure management manual please contact the Dauphin County Conservation District, or visit their website at <http://www.dauphincd.org>, to obtain an electronic copy.

**Q: Is a Nutrient Management Plan and a Manure Management Plan the same?**

A: Farms defined as a CAFO (Concentrated Feeding Operation) or a CAO (Concentrated Animal Operation) are required to develop a more detailed written plan known as a Nutrient Management Plan. This plan must be developed by a Certified Plan Writer and submitted to the local county conservation district for review and approval. A CAO is defined as 8 or more animal equivalent units AND has an animal density in excess of 2 animal equivalent units per acre (2000 lbs.) of land suitable for manure application. Non-production livestock such as boarding horses are also included in this scenario.

**Q: I think I may need a Conservation Plan and/or a Manure/Nutrient Management Plan. Who do I contact for help?**

A: An Agricultural Specialist with the Dauphin County Conservation District will help get you started in determining what plans you need and how to obtain those plans. Please call the District at 717-921-8100 between the hours of 7:30am and 4:00pm Monday-Friday.

**Q: Is there funding available to implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) or to write the needed Conservation, Manure Management and Nutrient Management Plans?**

A: At times, the Dauphin County Conservation District has funding available to help design and install needed structural BMPs, which are identified in a Conservation Plan. Some examples of such BMPs are manure storage facilities, waterways, terraces, improved barnyards, animal trails and walkways, streambank fencing, etc. Additionally, funding and/or technical assistance may exist to help with the costs involved with developing Conservation and Nutrient/Manure Management Plans. For more information, please contact an Agricultural Specialist with the Dauphin County Conservation District at 717-921-8100.

**EROSION AND SEDIMENT POLLUTION CONTROL**

**Q: Why is erosion control required?**

A: By volume, sediment is the largest single pollutant of Pennsylvania's waterways. Accelerated erosion and sedimentation of waterways due to earth disturbance causes a wide variety of environmental and physical problems. In addition to the adverse impact on stream and habitat quality, excessive sediment can cause infrastructure damage, increased maintenance costs and increase local nuisance flooding.

**Q: What am I required to do under this program if I am planning a construction project?**

A: The regulations for this program are found in Chapter 102, Title 25, of the Pennsylvania Code. These regulations require that for earth disturbances less than 5,000 square feet, the responsible party must implement practices for erosion and sediment (E and S) pollution control. For disturbances of 5,000 square feet to one acre a written E and S plan must be developed and be on site. Unless required by your local municipality or other entity, this plan need not be submitted for review and approval. For earth disturbances of one acre or more, an NPDES permit is required. The NPDES permit requires a written and approved E and S plan and a stormwater management plan.

**Q: Who is responsible for the program?**

A: The Dauphin County Conservation District is delegated by DEP with certain responsibilities. These responsibilities include, handling complaints, site inspections, administrative permit reviews, administrative stormwater management plan reviews, E and S plan reviews and approvals and outreach. The authority for enforcement of the regulations rests with DEP.

**Q: What are the penalties for violations of Chapter 102?**

A: The Conservation District always seeks to work with responsible parties for voluntary compliance with the regulations. In some cases where compliance cannot be achieved, the Conservation District must refer the matter to DEP for enforcement. DEP has the authority to require remedial actions, to stop projects, issue fines and to refer the matter for criminal prosecution.

**Q: How does this program relate to my local permit process?**

A: Under Chapter 102, municipalities may not issue permits or approvals until permit coverage, if required under Chapter 102, is obtained. For projects that do not require permits (projects disturbing less than one acre), some municipalities may require an E and S plan approval before they will issue local permits or approvals. Contact your local municipality for more information on local approvals.

CONTACTS: Your local government  
Dauphin County Conservation District – 717-921-8100  
Department of Environmental Protection – 717-705-4802

## **FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT**

### **Q: Who implements floodplain regulations?**

A: Floodplain management regulations were developed by the Federal government. Pennsylvania also developed certain regulations. Local governments are required to adopt, implement and enforce ordinances implementing these requirements.

### **Q: Can I build in a floodplain?**

A: Under the minimum regulations, construction is permitted in floodplains subject to elevation and floodproofing requirements. However, many municipalities have adopted more stringent ordinances. You are urged to contact your local municipality for information on ordinance requirements?

### **Q: How can I determine if my property is in a floodplain?**

A: Your municipality should have a set of floodplain maps that show the extent of the regulatory floodplain. It is important to remember that properties outside of the mapped floodplains may also experience flooding.

### **Q: Can I make improvements or build additions to my building if it is located in a floodplain?**

A: Yes. However, such improvements or additions are subject to the floodplain regulations in effect in your municipality. Before beginning such work, you should contact your municipal government to determine these requirements.

### **Q: Who can buy flood insurance?**

A: Flood insurance is available to owners of insurable property in communities that participate in the National Flood Insurance Program. Contact a licensed property insurance agent or broker for more information on purchasing flood insurance.

CONTACTS: Your local government

Dauphin County Conservation District – 717-921-8100

Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development – 1-888-223-6837

National Flood Insurance Program – 1-800-427-4661

## **GYPSY MOTH SUPPRESSION PROGRAM**

### **Q: Who do I contact if I have concerns about gypsy moth in Dauphin County?**

A: If you have questions or concerns about gypsy moth in Dauphin County please call the Dauphin County Conservation District at 717-921-8100.

### **Q: What is the objective of the State Gypsy Moth Suppression Program?**

A: The objective of this program is to protect targeted forest residential, forest recreational, and other high-use or high-value forested areas from serious damage by limiting tree defoliation caused by gypsy moth larvae to less than 30 percent on 80 percent or more of the highly favored host trees.

### **Q: How do I get my property sprayed for gypsy moth in Dauphin County?**

A: To get your property sprayed for gypsy moth in Dauphin County through the state program you must qualify for the program.

### **Q: How do I qualify for the State Program?**

A: The property owner must call into the Dauphin County Conservation District prior to July 31<sup>st</sup> of the summer prior to spraying. The spraying for gypsy moth control is performed in the spring. Only forested private residential sites containing trees 25 feet or more in height qualify for this portion of the program. These sites must have at least 50 percent of the surface area, when viewed from above, covered by the crowns of these trees. Twenty percent or more of this crown cover must be made up of tree species which are highly favored by the gypsy moth. Highly favored species include apple, aspen, basswood, beech, birches (gray, white, and river), boxelder, hawthorn, larch, oaks (all species), willows, and witch hazel. The site must have a dwelling located within or no more than 200 feet from the forest. The spray block to protect this site will be designed to provide treatment to all forested areas within 500 feet of the dwelling and, in so doing, must include at least twenty three (23) acres of forest. The spray block will be designed to facilitate aerial spraying regardless of how large or small the landowner's property actually is. Spray blocks will not be custom designed to accommodate property boundary lines. Neighboring residential properties where all the landowners desire treatment will be combined into a single block whenever possible.

### **Q: Is there a cost associated with the spraying?**

A: The cost to the landowner varies dependent upon in which municipality the property to be sprayed is in.

## **MUNICIPAL SEPARATE STORM SEWER SYSTEMS (MS4).**

### **Q: What is the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System program?**

A: The Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System, known as MS4, is an EPA program that seeks to minimize pollutants entering our streams, lakes and rivers through municipally owned or operated storm sewer systems. The program is administered in Pennsylvania by DEP.

### **Q: How does the MS4 program work?**

A: Designated entities such as townships, boroughs, counties and other public entities such as universities and hospitals must obtain a permit to discharge stormwater. The permit requires various activities that seek to reduce pollutants.

### **Q: Do any requirements apply to homeowners?**

A: Municipalities must adopt ordinances that prohibit the discharge of pollutants to storm sewer systems. Anyone that discharges pollutants to storm sewer systems could be in violation of local ordinances and subject to any penalties provided for in the ordinance. Prohibited discharges could include illegally connecting to a municipal storm sewer system, dumping pollutants into storm drains or areas that drain to storm sewer systems.

### **Q: Is my municipality regulated as an MS4?**

A: Most municipalities in southern Dauphin County are subject to the permit requirements. Contact your local government for more information.

CONTACTS: Your local government  
Dauphin County Conservation District – 717-921-8100

## **STORMWATER MANAGEMENT**

### **Q: What is stormwater management?**

A: When land is altered for development or other purposes, the conditions affecting how rain runs off the land is altered. Generally, more water, called runoff, is delivered faster to streams. This change causes many problems to the environment and to property and infrastructure. Stormwater management refers to how we manage these changes. The goal of stormwater management is to develop and implement stormwater management plans and strategies that reduce the adverse impacts of land alterations to our water resources, property and infrastructure.

### **Q: Who is responsible for stormwater management?**

A: In Dauphin County, nearly every municipality has a stormwater management ordinance. These ordinances specify how stormwater is to be managed. DEP also has a permitting program under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) that requires permits for earth disturbances of one acre or more. Part of the permit application and approval process is a plan for managing stormwater after the project is complete. The authority to enforce stormwater management regulations lies with these two entities.

### **Q: What does the Conservation District do related to stormwater management?**

A: Primarily, the Dauphin County Conservation District provides outreach and education on stormwater related issues. Please note that the Conservation District does not have any authority to enforce either local stormwater ordinances or NPDES permits.

CONTACTS: Your local government  
Dauphin County Conservation District – 717-921-8100  
Department of Environmental Protection – 717-705-4802

## **Water Resources Program**

### **Q: What does the Water Resources Program encompass?**

A: The goal of the Water Resources Program is to assess, mitigate, and prevent non-point source pollution (pollution from diverse sources such as runoff, abandoned mine drainage, and acid deposition). This is done through water monitoring, on-the-ground projects, and education.

### **Q: What kind of monitoring do we do?**

A: Water monitoring is the driving force of the program because it enables us to evaluate water quality trends, identify areas of concern, and plan future restoration projects to improve stream health. Our main water monitoring program is the Countywide Stream Assessment Program (CSAP), in which 101 sites throughout the county are monitored on a five-year rotation for water chemistry, flow, habitat, and macroinvertebrates. Macroinvertebrates, or bugs in the stream, are a good indicator of stream health because some are more tolerant of pollution than others; therefore the number, type, and diversity of macroinvertebrates sampled show a general level of water quality. This gives us a good indication of baseline stream conditions and water quality trends over time.

We also conduct more specific water chemistry sampling depending upon local water quality concerns. An example of this is the Long Term Nutrient Monitoring Program, in which fourteen sites throughout the county are monitored for phosphates and nitrates bi-monthly in areas where best management practices (BMPs) are being implemented to assess changes over time.

Other examples are pH monitoring in Rattling Creek and pH and iron monitoring at the Bear Creek AMD Treatment system.

If you are interested in monitoring results, we have an [Interactive Map](#) on our website where you can click on sampling sites to see water quality data

### **Q: What other projects do we do?**

A: Another important aspect of the water resources program is education about conservation and ways to prevent or mitigate water pollution. Audiences can include civic organizations, municipalities, students, professionals, or the general public. Education and outreach often includes workshops, presentations, and written publications. For instance, in 2010, DCCD compiled the Stream Health Report to disseminate and explain the results of the first 5-year round of CSAP sampling throughout the county. The report was published and distributed to municipalities, watershed groups, and other interested organizations. It can also be accessed [on this page](#) of our website.

Using water monitoring data and watershed based plans as a guideline, DCCD can work with landowners to implement projects such as streambank stabilization structures and riparian buffers, or tree plantings along streams, to improve water quality. These projects are done as funding becomes available through grants. We can also provide technical assistance as needed to watershed groups.

### **Q: How can I become involved to help out in my local watershed?**

A: There are several local watershed groups that coordinate local volunteer events, educational activities, or other projects. A list of local watershed groups, along with their contact information, can be found [here](#).

### **Q: Who can I contact at the Dauphin County Conservation District regarding the Water Resources Program?**

A: You can either contact Rob Frank, Watershed Specialist, at [rfrank@dauphinc.org](mailto:rfrank@dauphinc.org). The phone number at the District is (717) 921-8100.

## **West Nile Virus Control Program**

### **Q: What is Dauphin County doing about mosquitoes and West Nile Virus within the County?**

A: The Dauphin County West Nile Virus Control Program is a mosquito control program based on sound entomological data to reduce the likelihood of human acquisition of mosquito-borne disease. We rely upon integrated mosquito management to target pesticide applications to specific habitats at specific times to reduce target mosquito populations. The Dauphin County West Nile Virus Control Program primarily relies upon biological control products to reduce larval mosquito populations and therefore reducing the threat of human sickness resulting from a West Nile Virus infected mosquito. Our surveillance protocols focus on the mosquito species most often involved in the West Nile Virus cycle. We also monitor nuisance mosquito populations within Dauphin County focusing primarily on floodwater mosquito. In the last few years the Dauphin County mosquito control staff has been responding to citizen complaints about the Asian Tiger Mosquito, *Aedes albopictus*, a relatively new mosquito species in Pennsylvania.

**Q: Where do I find more information about mosquito Control in Dauphin County?**

- A: 1. Go to [www.dauphincd.org](http://www.dauphincd.org) and select **Mosquito Control** from the menu on the left side of the page.  
2. Call the Dauphin County West Nile Virus Program Coordinator at 717-921-8100.

**Q: What do I do if I am concerned about mosquitoes in my area of Dauphin County?**

A: If you have a mosquito concern in Dauphin County please contact us at 717-921-8100

**Q: What do I do if I have found a dead bird and would like to have it tested for West Nile Virus?**

A: If you have found a dead crow, blue jay, hawk, eagle or owl, and would like to have it tested for the presence of West Nile Virus. Please follow the following directions:

1. Please check the bird for any signs of trauma (hit by a car, flew into a window etc.). If the bird has traumatic injury it is not suitable for testing.
2. The bird must have died within the last 12-24 hrs.
3. The bird must be free from any insects.
4. Please double bag the bird in plastic bags (plastic grocery bags work fine), and place it in a cool dry place that is inaccessible to insects and other animals.
5. Call 717-921-8100

**Adult Mosquito Control**

**Q: Should I wash toys and other items in the yard at the time of the application?**

A: While you can, if you wish, it is not necessary to wash items in your yard after the application. Due to low application rates, any exposure from contact with these surfaces would be low and pose negligible risks.

**Q: Should I cover the swimming pool before the application?**

A: No, residue in a pool would be low and also diluted by the water in the pool.

**Q: Should I close the windows and turn off my air conditioner?**

A: The ULV vapor disperses readily, and little movement of the material into open windows with screens is expected. However, individuals with upper respiratory problems, such as asthma, may react to ULV applications. Closing windows and turning off air conditioners is recommended for those with upper respiratory problems.

**Q: How long should I wait before I let my pet out?**

A: When the chemical is applied at the labeled rates there are wide margins of safety for humans, dogs, cats and other mammals. Indoor pets may be "let-out" immediately following the application. Outdoor pets may be left outdoors.

**Q: How long should I wait before allowing the children to enter the yard?**

A: The ULV vapor disperses very quickly after the application. Individuals with respiratory problems may react to ULV application. People with these health issues may want to wait an hour before resuming outdoor activities in treated areas.

**Q: How do I get on your no-spray list?**

A: Call the Dauphin County West Nile Virus Control Program office at 717-921-8100