

MORE TIPS FOR STORMWATER SUCCESS

DEP and engineering consultants share some additional tips for making stormwater management successful in your township:

- **Keep stormwater management at the forefront of all projects.**

"If you keep stormwater management in mind at the beginning of all construction projects, stormwater benefits will likely cost little or nothing to achieve," Lee Murphy of DEP says. "In return, the reward can be great."

- **Learn from others.**

"A benefit of Pennsylvania playing catchup on these pollutant reduction requirements is that we can learn lessons from other states," says Gregory Duncan, director of watershed studies and supervising engineer at T&M Associates.

For example, because Maryland has had high-functioning BMPs constructed and in place for years, it has been able to start monitoring the results and determining how well they are working.

"The evidence out there so far is that you can make a difference with these projects," Duncan says.

- **Don't get too hung up on using public land for constructing BMPs.**

Instead, reach out to private landowners and entities, Murphy says, and don't forget to take advantage of that "low-hanging" fruit, such as converting existing, outdated BMPs into low-cost, more effective modern ones.

"BMPs can be publicly or privately funded," he explains. "Likewise, they can be located on public or private land.

Too many times, municipalities make the assumption that a BMP has to be installed on public land, and that's not true."

He recommends knocking on doors and reaching out to others in the community, including homeowners associations and private companies, that may have an interest in working with the township to improve stormwater management.

- **Use conservation and environmental groups to take the lead in public participation.**

"Groups like this have tremendous energy and are very dedicated to pollution reduction as a cause," Murphy says. "Why not take advantage of their skill and time?"

In addition to spearheading public education efforts, such groups can do some of the legwork for applying for grants. To make sure the right message is being transmitted, he cautions townships that they still have to manage what the group says and does on their behalf.

These groups are also a good resource for volunteers when you need help with certain stormwater BMPs, such as repairing buffers or planting trees.

Finally, keep in mind that working with others, whether



VOLUNTEERS HELP WITH BMP IN DERRY TOWNSHIP, DAUPHIN COUNTY. About 30 volunteers planted close to 130 trees last October to expand the riparian buffer between two sewer treatment plant facilities and the Swatara Creek. The Derry Township Municipal Authority hosted the planting, which was part of a state Growing Greener grant administered through Penn State. (Photo courtesy of the authority.)

it's conservation groups or neighboring municipalities, may give you a leg up in grant applications.

- **Know your neighbors.**

"Know who is upstream and downstream of you and keep those relationships strong," says Nathan Walker of Amec Foster Wheeler. "Try to work together. If township A is upstream of township B, why would each want to write its own pollutant reduction plan for the same watershed?"

- **Know thyself.**

Inventory your own stormwater management system and know what it consists of and what you are responsible for.

"You know your sanitary sewer system. You know your drinking water system. You know where your roads are," Walker says. "Why wouldn't you want to know where your stormwater management systems are?"

- **Finally, remember you're in it for the long haul.**

Water quality improvements take decades to achieve, Walker notes.

"Yes, you have to get your application in by September, but you're not done then," he says. "And yes, this next permit may expire in 2023, but it's not over then. You'll have to get another one."

He advises keeping a long-term approach in mind when addressing stormwater management. "Bear in mind that year after year, you're making an investment in your water quality," he says.

"This does not necessarily have to be complicated stuff. It sometimes only takes what we call lifestyle changes to make it happen."