

GRANT PROPOSAL
PENNRIDGE AREA WATER RESOURCES COMMUNITY AWARENESS PROJECT

I. Summary of Application

The proposed Pennridge Area Water Resources Community Awareness Project will educate the public and school age children about source water protection. A water awareness day will be held, and educational materials will be assembled for use at the public schools. Information also will be made available on Hilltown Township's web page at <http://hilltown.org/pacc/>.

II. Partnerships

The Pennridge Area Coordinating Committee (PACC) is an intermunicipal partnership among eight municipalities, the Pennridge School District, the Pennridge Chamber of Commerce, and the Bucks County Community College. Representatives on the Committee meet monthly to discuss issues of mutual interest and concern. Staff members of the Bucks County Planning Commission serve as advisors to the committee. The following communities make up the PACC:

Bedminster Township	Perkasie Borough
Dublin Borough	Sellersville Borough
East Rockhill Township	Silverdale Borough
Hilltown Township	West Rockhill Township

Telford Borough, although not a member of the PACC, is participating in the water resources planning effort. The Telford Borough Authority provides water service and maintains water supply wells in two of the PACC municipalities. In addition to the municipal partnerships, the project will involve a cooperative effort between and among various governmental agencies, the Pennridge area water suppliers, the Perkiomen Watershed Conservancy, citizen organizations, and the public, who are all stakeholders in environmental protection.

The subject education grant proposal is well supported by PACC members and partners. The proposed project will further previous efforts of educating the residents of the Pennridge Area about source water protection, wellhead protection, water conservation, and watershed awareness. In large measure, the educating will be done indirectly by educating and involving school age children who will in turn pass on information and ideas to other residents (e.g., parents, siblings, other relatives, and friends).

The Bucks County Planning Commission (BCPC) is the applicant organization for this grant with assistance from the PACC members. The contact person at the BCPC is Cynthia Unangst, Environmental Planner.

III. What is the problem or need your project will address?

The recently completed *Pennridge Water Resources Plan* (Plan) addresses the impacts on and threats to water resources in a multiwatershed area where there is a steady conversion of the natural environment to the built environment. To begin to solve the problems associated with land development, the plan will be coordinated with municipal land use planning documents during Plan Implementation. The Plan and its implementation are strongly based on the

partnership amongst the eight municipalities of the Pennridge Area Coordinating Committee (PACC). Municipal officials in the Pennridge Area wish to improve their watersheds by addressing issues such as nonpoint source pollution, drinking water source protection, stormwater management, streambank erosion, and the overall health of the watersheds.

One of the Plan Implementation tasks is a Source Water Protection Program. Subtasks of the program include creating a steering committee, delineating wellhead protection areas, enhancing inventory of potential sources of contamination, managing wellhead protection areas, developing a water monitoring network, developing ordinance language, planning for contingencies, reviewing new sources and educating the public. The focus of this WREN grant project is educating the public about the Source Water Protection Program, and specifically about wellhead protection and providing information to the public about what they can do to protect the groundwater.

The proposed project, to be known as the Pennridge Area Water Resources Community Awareness Project, will help the project staff educate local residents and will help increase public understanding of source water protection, managing water resources on a regional basis, watershed awareness, and water conservation.

Currently, the community is made aware of water issues via the local municipal web sites, local water authority web sites, e-mail newsletters, community newsletters, and local press coverage. Some townships have passed ordinances requiring both new homes and permitted renovations to employ new water saving devices. There have been numerous newspaper articles recently concerning wells in the Pennridge area that are contaminated with MTBE. Residents in the area with private wells are clearly concerned about the issue.

The PACC received a WREN grant in 2002 to develop and implement a project aimed at educating local citizens and decision makers about the importance of protecting and improving the community's drinking water sources in the Pennridge Area watersheds. A meeting was held with all of the area water suppliers; an educational public seminar was held; an educational symposium for municipal officials was held; and a brochure about source water protection in the Pennridge Area was created.

Subsequent to the Pennridge Area's water suppliers coming together for a meeting, they all applied for and received money from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's Growing Greener Program for a source water protection program. (The scope of work for one of the water suppliers is included as an attachment.) Educational activities that are part of the scope of work for the source water protection program are a community water awareness day, and to work with the Pennridge School District to integrate water awareness as part of the curriculum. The proposed Pennridge Area Water Resources Community Awareness Project will continue to build upon what was begun with the previous WREN project to further educate the public through these activities.

In summary, the proposed project is consistent with the WREN objectives of increasing public understanding of the need to manage local water resources on a regional basis, and encourage cooperation between citizens, local government officials, and private organizations in developing and implementing water resource protection policies and strategies. The educational efforts will also build awareness throughout the community that will encourage environmentally beneficial changes in habits or behaviors through a better understanding of our water resources.

IV. What do you hope to achieve and how do you plan to achieve it?

The project will increase public awareness of methods to protect local water resources from point and nonpoint source pollution hazards. Specific policies embodied in this grant application include, but are not limited to identifying what and where the source water protection areas are, what contaminant sources exist in the source water protection areas, water conservation, and proper care of streams.

We will create a water awareness day that could then be held annually in connection with the National Drinking Water Week. This is expected to include a variety of activities including:

- a water tasting contest
- press releases for local media
- exhibits featuring water-related organizations such as environmental organizations, vendors (e.g. well drillers), results of poster contest (see below)
- display of fire fighting equipment

We will also work with the Pennridge School District to integrate water awareness as part of the curriculum at different levels. This is expected to include:

- a water protection-themed poster contest (possibly in grades 4, 5, and 6)
- use of a groundwater simulator to educate students and residents, and for presentations at civic events
- developing material for use by the school district to reflect on the importance of water from both a historic as well as the day-to-day impact on student's lives
- assisting the school district with establishing a science-related program to help the students understand the water resources in the area and what a wellhead protection plan is.

The audience for water awareness day will be adults and children in the community interested in water resource issues. General educational and technical resources will be obtained from in-house information collected from various studies and sources. Technical information will be solicited from a variety of sources.

TIMETABLE:

First meeting with school district teachers—August 2004
Creation of school district materials—October 2004
Prepare for Water Awareness Day—November 2004
Water Awareness Day—May 2005
Website updates—throughout funding period

To prepare for the Water Awareness Day, we will follow a work program that includes the following sub-tasks:

- Subtask A. Prepare for Water Awareness Day
- Secure an event place in the Pennridge Area
 - Advertise in the municipal newsletters and web sites
 - Advertise in the water suppliers newsletters and web sites
 - Post students' contest posters with information about the water awareness day at a variety of commercial establishments in the community

- Distribute event flyers as “take-home items” to all of the elementary school-age students
- Get local newspaper coverage
- Invite appropriate vendors and organizations
- Send confirmation letter to vendors and organizations

Subtask B. Prepare Materials for Water Awareness Day

- Hand-outs
- Borrow a groundwater simulator from PA Rural Water Association to use in an educational exhibit
- Purchase bookmarks and/or pencils to distribute to children

Subtask C. Prepare Evaluation and Refreshments for Water Awareness Day

- Create an evaluation sheet
- Arrange refreshments
- Secure all needed materials

Subtask D. Prepare Project Reports

- Prepare follow up mailing to all vendors and organizations that attended
- Prepare a summary report evaluating the project
- Prepare an interim report

V. How will you evaluate your project?

The project leaders will create an evaluation sheet based on the Water Awareness Day objectives to judge whether the effort achieved the intended goals. It will be available at the event and will be collected at the end of the event. The project leaders will base the success of the event on the response to specific questions. The results will be reported on the PACC website.

VI. Will your program continue after the grant runs out?

Yes. The materials created for this project—public brochures and educational materials for schoolchildren—will be given free of charge to any interested community. Information on the *Pennridge Water Resources Plan* and Source Water Protection Program will continue to be promoted on the PACC website and by the community water suppliers. Implementation of the recommendations of the Plan will continue for many years as funding becomes available and through other contributions (e.g., municipalities, water suppliers, businesses, and/or private). The Source Water Protection Plan, which will take three years to create, will be implemented after DEP approval.