



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **FAYETTE GROWING GREENER WITH WATERSHED PROGRAM**

**Uniontown, PA** – Fayette County municipalities are banding together to educate citizens about the many ways to protect and improve county watersheds.

Community Development Specialist Sue Martin said the county, as part of the Ohio River watershed, will implement a two-part program to:

- Educate township workers and contractors operating within Fayette, as well as citizens, about best management practices.
- Complete four source projects to help municipalities with existing non-point source stormwater problems.

“These projects will be accomplished through the participating municipalities’ workers and citizen participation during construction and educational signage at the project sites,” Martin said.

Citizen and worker classes will be held in Wharton, Luzerne, Dunbar and German townships, while a contractor class will be held in Uniontown.

Martin said Bullskin Township plans to complete a project at Mounts Creek for their park. It will involve installation of a rain garden to divert water which regularly pools near the stream along a walking trail.

Additionally, Connellsville plans to do a streambank stabilization project with rock armor and live plantings to protect Mounts Creek, as recent flash flooding washed out the trees along its bank.

Neighboring Dunbar borough has experienced the same problems, with flash flooding eroding the banks of Dunbar Creek. The municipality will plant a riparian buffer to stop the erosion and protect the creek.

“This area is famous for its trout fishing and one section of the creek is considered a high-quality cold water fishery, while the rest is stocked with trout,” Martin said.

A Perry Township program will involve installation of bioswales in an effort to re-aim runoff and keep sediment from entering a creek near the municipal building. At over 100 years old, the building sustains major runoff from state Route 51 and its roof.

“With native trees to filter the water and allow the cleaner runoff to be reabsorbed, it will protect and improve nearby Washington Run,” Martin said.

The program is part of the PA Non-point Source Plan, which calls for improvement in water quality from all state sources by employing best management practices and correcting stream bank erosion, stormwater runoff, agricultural runoff and acid mine drainage.

“The majority of townships participating are rural in character with many farms located in them,” Martin said. “Our projects will be economical as well as educational, as we correct existing problems that affect water quality.”

The program will be made possible thanks to an \$86,558 Environmental Stewardship and Watershed Protection grant from the state Department of Environmental Protection.

Fayette County was chosen from more than 200 applicants to receive the funding, known as a “Growing Greener” grant.

“We are very pleased to see such an interest in watershed restoration and protection,” said DEP Secretary Patrick McDonald of the county’s proposal.

The grant is one of many Fayette County has received to increase its environmental protection initiatives.

The DEP recently awarded Fayette a \$7,500 technical assistance grant, to be used for a recycling feasibility study, as well as a \$245,000 Recycling Development and Implementation Grant.

The latter grant, awarded to the Fayette County Recycling Program under the Municipal Waste Planning, Recycling and Waste Reduction Act, covers the majority of the total \$272,223 cost of the project.

Additionally, the county has implemented regular Hard-to-Recycle events throughout the year, in an effort to prevent dumping of electronics and other potentially hazardous items on hillsides and in water sources.

The 2019 Hard-to-Recycle events will be held 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. April 27, May 11, June 1, June 8 and Sept. 21. For locations and more information, call 724-430-4884.

Moving forward, Martin will meet with Fayette County’s assigned DEP grant advisors to discuss the “Growing Greener” project’s details.

She said the county hopes the grant will help meet two major goals of the PA Non-point Source Plan: improve and protect state waters from pollution associated with agricultural activities; and reduce pollution associated with stormwater runoff, streambank and shoreline degradation.

“We have the ability to improve water quality in Fayette County,” Martin said. “Our project will reduce pollutant loads, fortify partnerships, educate citizens and improve the way in which non-point source pollution is addressed.”

For more information about Fayette County projects and how you can get involved, visit [www.FayetteCountyPA.org](http://www.FayetteCountyPA.org).

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