



Lititz Run Municipal Stormwater Mitigation Bank Development

The theory of the problem: Ensuring good water quality and managing stormwater can be costly for individuals and communities. Construction projects of all sizes can contribute to stormwater runoff, water pollutants, erosion, loss of wetlands and other wildlife habitat, or excessive amounts of impervious surfaces. The current stormwater management process requires the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs) to mitigate the impact of projects on our natural resources, but not all BMPs are created equal. There is a need for a deliberate approach to be implemented that will take the regional watershed into account and allow communities to address the most important issues, meet regulatory compliance, work efficiently, and save on costs.

The theory of change: The establishment of a municipal stormwater mitigation bank creates potential benefits for land developers and homeowners within the watershed by creating opportunities for them to purchase credits from the excess water quality and quantity capacity generated by a suite of restoration practices including, but not limited to, floodplain restoration, stormwater basin retrofits, agricultural best management practices, and bioswales. Restoration will be targeted and prioritized per a Watershed Action Plan that will emphasize larger scale, performance-based projects. For instance, if a homeowner wants to build a 600-square foot garage on their property, local ordinances require the homeowner to offset this additional impermeable surface via an on-site stormwater management and maintenance BMP, such as a rain garden, detention pond, swale, etc. The permit fees, engineering plans, and other requirements add thousands of dollars to the construction costs. However, if the homeowner could purchase stormwater mitigation bank credits from a floodplain restoration project, the garage could be built more affordably without the need for the creation and maintenance of an isolated BMP on the homeowner's property, while still protecting local water quality and quantity. In addition, through existing relationships that the Social Enterprise Institute (SEI) @ Elizabethtown College has developed with family foundations and social change investors, they will be able to find individuals interested in funding BMP projects in the watershed to further enhance water protection and ensure long term, stable funding. RiverStewards will work with potential partners, Warwick Township, Lititz Borough, and SEI to create a municipal stormwater mitigation bank program and social change investment funding mechanism that could be scaled up for all of Lancaster County and eventually the whole state.

The theory of action: The first step is to get approval from Warwick Township and Lititz Borough supervisors to move forward with creation of the bank. They will need to be involved with RiverStewards to develop the value of the stormwater management unit, which will measure how much credit is given for water quality and quantity benefits, and how businesses and individuals will go about applying for credits, etc. They will also work together to map out potential project sites within the Lititz Run Watershed to offer and receive SMU credits. While this is taking place, SEI and RiverStewards will collaborate to create a new nonprofit organization with the sole mission of managing this specific mitigation bank. As more properties get involved with the mitigation bank, RiverStewards will evaluate the progress and determine next steps to move forward on expanding the idea of stormwater mitigation banking for all of Lancaster County and beyond. SEI will also seek out social change investors to begin securing the long term funding needed to scale up the mitigation banking and BMP implementation for this project and beyond.

Budget and timeline to be determined.