

ACTION PLAN TO IMPLEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

INNOVATIVE NEW IDEAS

Create a Department of Public Works Certification Program

Create a certification program for public works directors to conduct Best Management Practice (BMP) stream repair/restoration projects on nonexceptional value/high quality streams, without needing to obtain permits from the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).

By: Christina Art, AICP, DVRPC

Introduction

Many municipalities would like to do more to do protect and improve water quality, including stream cleanups and minor stream rehabilitation efforts; however, they are often prevented from engaging in this kind of work because of extensive DEP permitting requirements and associated costs. If a certification for Department of Public Works (DPW) staff were to be created, it would allow trained municipal employees to engage in stream projects without the need for such an extensive and costly permitting process. Such a program could be modeled on the existing Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP), which is a nation-wide program that teaches DPW staff proper safety and maintenance techniques for roadway infrastructure.

LTAP has a network of 58 Centers—one in every state and Puerto Rico, as well as several regional Centers serving tribal governments—that enables local governments to improve their roads and bridges by supplying them with training, information about new technology, personalized technical assistance, and newsletters. While certain classes cover road salt application, which impacts water quality, LTAP classes do not currently directly address water quality.

Anticipated Outcomes
Municipal staff would receive additional training and be better equipped to handle work in and around streams.

Possible Partner Organizations:
State Departments of Transportation's LTAP
American Public Works Association

Anticipated Outcomes

If implemented, more staff would get trained and more stream restoration work would get accomplished.

Funding

There are different types of funding associated with this proposal. Some are startup costs to develop the program, while others are ongoing costs that would need to be paid to keep the program running. Such costs include:

- writing the curriculum;
- advertising the certification to municipal employees;
- paying instructors;
- hosting classes (photocopies of materials, snacks for participants, printed certificates, etc.);
- paying administrative staff to schedule classes, coordinate instructors, mail materials, answer questions, and make sure certificate holders stay up to date on their certification; and
- paying administrative staff to periodically monitor DPW Certification holders.

Local Technical Assistance Websites in the Delaware River Watershed:

- Delaware: <http://sites.udel.edu/dct/t2-center/>
- New Jersey: <http://cait.rutgers.edu/njltp>
- New York: <http://www.clrp.cornell.edu/clrp/LTAP.html>
- Pennsylvania: <https://www.dot7.state.pa.us/LTAP/default.aspx>

Published to Web: August 11, 2017