RESTORATION EFFECTIVENESS MONITORING AND CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT

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ABSTRACT

Pennsylvania has reaped benefits from ample watershed restoration monies since 1999 including federal 319 Nonpoint Source grants, federal Farm Bill Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) money and the state's Environmental Stewardship Act money. Projects have been implemented across the Commonwealth including natural stream channel design projects, stream bank fencing and riparian buffer plantings. However, with dwindling financial resources in both state and federal programs in recent years, the priority now is to gage the effectiveness of restoration projects and show measurable environmental results. In other words, is the money well spent and should funding of these projects continue?

The problem faced by agencies that endure staff cuts yearly is how to monitor restoration effectiveness in an efficient manner. The answer lies with the volunteer monitoring community and the strong grassroots efforts across Pennsylvania. This discussion will focus on the integration of citizen volunteers into restoration monitoring and will look at natural stream channel design projects as well as CREP projects (stream bank fencing and riparian plantings). Monitoring methods, ongoing monitoring projects and the involvement of citizen volunteers will be discussed. Although much stream restoration has taken place in Pennsylvania to date, many problems still exist. Through the integration of citizen volunteers, agency personnel can work with citizens to show that stream restoration projects do result in positive measurable environmental results and assure continued funding for these undertakings.

KEYWORDS

Watershed restoration, citizen volunteers, monitoring, buffers, environmental results.

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