



STORIES OF PROGRESS IN ACHIEVING HEALTHY WATERS

EPA Region 3 Water Protection Division

Pennsylvania Township Gets Results In Approach to Cleaning Streams

Broad Top, Pennsylvania • February 5, 2015

Do-it-yourself approach to watershed cleanup yielding results in Broad Top, Pennsylvania.

A small town in Pennsylvania has taken watershed cleanup matters into its own hands – and the efforts are paying off.

Broad Top Township has put the [cleaning of its streams](#) on par with maintaining roads, using its own plans, employees and equipment to restore and protect waters impacted by abandoned mine drainage and bacteria. EPA, through the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's [Nonpoint Source Program](#), has helped provide Broad Top with the tools to get the job done.

Since 2005, the township has received more than \$3 million in [EPA Section 319](#) Nonpoint Source Clean Water Act funds to design and construct systems to treat the mine drainage. About \$500,000 of those funds were focused on Longs Run.

The results? Streams are improving. In fact, in December 2014, EPA approved a request by Pennsylvania to take Longs Run off a list of impaired waters. The creek is now meeting clean water standards and criteria.

The rural community in Bedford County with a population of under 2,000 has found the personal touch to be the most cost-effective and sustainable approach to improving streams in Longs Run Watershed. That approach started in the mid 1990's when Broad Top Township officials created a program to manage septic systems and control bacteria at a nominal cost to homeowners.

By the mid 2000's, Broad Top had developed a watershed-based plan and was installing systems to treat the abandoned mine drainage. To date, the township has completed 35 "passive treatment systems" that use a series of ponds, including one lined with high-calcium limestone, to strip the water of chemicals and metals.

Township Secretary David Thomas said Broad Top is unique in that the work is done in-house with a team of five highly-trained staff, rather than through contractors at higher cost. The only contracting is for design and permitting. Township employees monitor the systems to ensure proper functioning and check the streams for water quality improvements. Also, with access to equipment and operators they can make immediate repairs when needed. A number of watershed groups and communities have contacted the township to get information on its practices. Said Thomas, "We have a very good field lab for people to come, look and learn how we do it."



AT A GLANCE

- *Township places high priority on cleaning streams.*
- *Supported with EPA Section 319 Clean Water Act funds.*



Treatment pond for mine drainage discharge