

Columbia County Conservation District
December 19, 2023

The Columbia County Conservation District (CCCD) has partnered with the Berwick Borough to install downspout planters throughout high-trafficked areas in the Borough. The CCCD received a DEP Environmental Education Mini-Grant to complete this project. Berwick Borough is subject to an MS4 permit, so the CCCD and the Borough partnered to received both MS4 credits for the Borough and work towards meeting the County's Countywide Action Plan (CAP) goals as well.

On November 6, Abby Frey, the Environmental Education and Watershed Specialist for the CCCD presented details about the project and general information about stormwater BMPs for homeowners to interested Borough residents, business owners, and council members at the Borough Council meeting as part of the education and outreach requirement of the grant.

It is projected that about 15 downspout planters can be built utilizing the grant funds. The CCCD has done most of the outreach and education with some assistance from a local Girl Scout troop, while the Borough maintenance crew has agreed to construct the planters over the winter months as in-kind match towards the grant. Come spring, the planters will be installed at businesses and homes throughout the Borough, but mostly located along the main streets for more visibility. Planters located at businesses will have plaques identifying the project and funding source. Plus, a QR code will take a person to information on the project, downspout planters, stormwater BMPs, and how to construct a downspout planter at home.

Once the planters are installed and hooked up to the downspouts, they will be filled with the proper material and soils and planted with native perennials and plants. The planters will help manage and filter stormwater as well as beautify the area.

Hopefully, this will be a project that sparks some interest in stormwater management for Borough residents, as well as for other MS4 communities in the county. The CCCD is looking to partner with MS4 communities to help reach their Pollution Reduction Plan requirements and the CAP goals together.



Berwick Borough maintenance department and CCCD staff building a prototype in early December. The Borough staff will build the remainder of the planters over the winter months.