

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Background of the Chatham Run Study**

This Chatham Run Watershed Stormwater Management Plan update was completed in accordance with the Pennsylvania Stormwater Management Act 167, passed in 1978 and implemented by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PA DEP). The purpose of Act 167 is to provide a planning framework to encourage a coordinated approach to watershed-wide stormwater management. The emphasis on watershed-wide planning, as opposed to highly fragmented local level regulation, is the cornerstone of the Act, and was mandated on the principle that stormwater runoff conforms only to watershed boundaries and must be managed accordingly.

Historically, stormwater management was subject to regulation by local municipalities without regard to uniform application of procedures within a given watershed, and without regard to downstream impacts of the local ordinances. This approach tends to produce a very limited “at-site” stormwater management philosophy, with a proliferation of conflicting standards for the control and release of stormwater from engineered facilities. Therefore, the two top priorities in the current PA DEP stormwater program are: (1) watershed-wide planning, and (2) representation in the planning process by all affected municipalities within the study area.

### **Requirements of Act 167**

The basic elements of Act 167 are summarized as follows in terms of specific responsibilities assigned to various units of state and local government:

1. Each county must develop regional stormwater management plans for each watershed within its boundaries, recognizing that most watersheds will cross county boundaries, and will require collaboration with neighboring counties.
2. Each municipality must adopt local ordinances and engineering design criteria which conform to the provisions of their respective stormwater management plans.

3. Developers must implement stormwater management techniques that meet the standards and criteria set forth in the appropriate municipal ordinances, as supported by the watershed stormwater management plan. In general, these stormwater management techniques will ensure that post-development runoff rates throughout the watershed do not exceed pre-development levels.
4. PA DEP serves as the review agency for each watershed stormwater management plan submitted by the counties. The Act 167 planning process involves three essential steps:
  - a. Documentation of existing watershed characteristics, including land use, soils, runoff conditions, peak flows, existing stormwater drainage problems, and flow obstructions. The existing conditions in the watershed represent the baseline for evaluating the effects of future runoff caused by land development.
  - b. Preparation of a watershed stormwater management plan to manage stormwater from new development and land use changes within the watershed. The plan includes criteria and performance standards for managing urban runoff, and a listing of alternative stormwater management techniques.
  - c. Development of priorities for implementing stormwater management practices within each municipality in accordance with the objectives set forth in the watershed stormwater management plan. This step is crucial to the entire planning process, since local level control is the only mechanism by which total watershed-wide stormwater management can be achieved. While this may seem contradictory with the earlier emphasis on watershed-wide planning, the reader is asked to bear in mind that responsibility for managing excessive stormwater resides with each municipality, in accordance with Act 167.

### **Goals and Limitations of Chatham Run Watershed Stormwater Management Plan**

The Act 167 planning process is directed primarily at mitigating the effects of future land use change on watershed hydrology, as well as ensuring that existing storm drainage problems are not aggravated. The Act 167 Stormwater Management Plan presented herein for the Chatham

Run watershed (hereinafter referred to as the Plan) will not require municipalities to correct existing storm drainage problems. The Plan identifies and documents conceptual solutions to existing drainage problems. The Plan will not have a remedial impact on problems of major flooding in natural waterways, although existing flooding problems are identified in the Plan. The Plan does not present detailed engineering design calculations for specific runoff/flooding control points in the watershed. However, the Plan does present a philosophy for managing stormwater discharges within the Chatham Run watershed. The Plan establishes stormwater management performance standards, and leaves the selection of stormwater management techniques and design of stormwater facilities to the engineering professional. The Plan is an instrument for decision-making, and is intended to be used in evaluating the impacts of future land use on the existing hydrology of the Chatham Run watershed. The Plan is not intended to restrict land development, but is intended to provide a framework for evaluating the hydrologic and environmental impacts of future land uses. The Plan is dynamic, and should be updated periodically as development and land use changes dictate.

### **Planning Process Participants**

The Chatham Run Watershed Act 167 Stormwater Management Plan was prepared by the Clinton County Conservation District. Act 167 requires that a Watershed Plan Advisory Committee (WPAC) be established to provide assistance and guidance in the development of the Plan. The Chatham Run WPAC is comprised of a delegate from each of the following Clinton County municipalities and agencies:

Gallagher Township

Dunnstable Township

Pine Creek Township

Woodward Township

Clinton County Board of Commissioners

Clinton County Conservation District

Clinton County Geographic Information System (GIS) Department

Clinton County Planning Commission