

New York's Green Innovation Grant Program and the Upper Susquehanna

Under its CWSRF Program, the New York Environmental Facilities Corporation has created a Green Innovation Grant Program to encourage the use of green infrastructure. One project under this program has funded work to reconnect streams to their floodplains and constructing and restoring wetlands on the Upper Susquehanna Watershed.

About the GIGP

The New York Environmental Facilities Corporation's (EFC) Green Innovation Grant Program (GIGP) provides funding to public green stormwater infrastructure projects. Serving as an incubator for new ideas and solutions, it supports projects that utilize unique stormwater infrastructure design and create cutting-edge green technologies. Through 2015, more than 150 innovative projects—ranging from rain-absorbing green roofs in Rochester, Syracuse and other cities to the unearthing of a river in downtown Yonkers—have been funded under this program. These projects provide multiple benefits including protecting and improving water quality; spurring innovation in stormwater management; increasing capacity to build and maintain green infrastructure; and facilitating the transfer of new technologies and practices. And in some cases, green stormwater projects funded by GIGP have been incorporated into larger, more-traditional gray infrastructure projects that EFC has financed through the SRF.

The EFC created GIGP using federal funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. With CWSRF funds, the state has awarded nearly \$130 million in GIGP funding through 2015. Individual grants provide up to 90% of construction costs including eligible planning and design costs, with recipients providing a minimum 10% match.



Before and after berm removal. *Photo Credit: The Upper Susquehanna Coalition*



ECOS

This factsheet was developed by the Environmental Council of the States. It is one of ten factsheets on how states have used flexibility in the Clean Water State Revolving Loan Funds to pursue innovative projects. To view the other factsheets and information on other state projects visit www.ecos.org.

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CWSRF: A Flexible Tool for Advancing Clean Water

The Upper Susquehanna

In 2011 in response to Tropical Storm Lee, gravel streambank berms were created in New York's Southern Tier as a temporary emergency flood control. However, many were left in place, disconnecting streams from their floodplains. Using a \$920,000 GIGP grant, the Upper Susquehanna Coalition's Wetland Program removed berms and built wetlands to reconnect streams to the floodplain and to restore a more natural flow, making streams more resilient to wet weather events.

The Coalition restored approximately 120 acres of wetland complexes, selecting sites based on topography, soils, current land use, and the potential for habitat and stormwater management benefits. Each wetland complex was created with varying sizes of ephemeral wetlands, or vernal pools, mixed with larger permanent pools to maximize diversity. These expanded wetlands help New York to reduce its nutrient sediment loads to the Chesapeake Bay. The creation of significant headwaters wetlands acreage to capture runoff before rainfall enters the stream system is now considered an approach to managing larger and more frequent rain events related to climate change.

These expanded wetlands help New York reduce its nutrient sediment loads to the Chesapeake Bay.



Photo Credit: The Upper Susquehanna Coalition

More Information

For more information on the Green Innovation Grant Program visit:

<http://www.efc.ny.gov/GIGP> or contact GIGP@efc.ny.gov or 518-402-7461.

To learn more about the Upper Susquehanna Coalition's Wetlands Program visit: <http://www.u-s-c.org/html/wetlandprogram.htm>.

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