



**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**
Philadelphia District

PROJECT FACTSHEET

Schuylkill River Basin, Wissahickon Creek Watershed Philadelphia and Montgomery Counties, PA

February 2012

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS: Reps. Brady (PA-1), Fattah (PA-2), Schwartz (PA-13)

APPROPRIATION / PHASE:
General Investigations / Feasibility

BUSINESS PROGRAM:
Ecosystem Restoration

AUTHORITY The Authority for this study is House Committee on Public Works and Transportation Resolution dated March 15, 1988.

LOCATION: Wissahickon Creek, a tributary of the Schuylkill River, is located in southeastern Pennsylvania approximately 13 miles upstream of the Schuylkill's confluence with the Delaware River in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

DESCRIPTION: The lower Wissahickon Creek became urbanized in the late nineteenth century and the upper portion in the latter half of the twentieth century. A Reconnaissance Study was completed in August 2002; its purpose was to assess the Federal interest for potential feasibility studies in the future. The Reconnaissance Report identified impaired areas of the watershed and potential solutions for each, including but not limited to, ecosystem restoration, fish and wildlife habitat restoration, flood damage reduction, and allied purposes. Based on this study, it was determined that the primary problems within the Wissahickon watershed include stream flow variability, poor quality aquatic habitat, aquatic habitat degradation, flooding, and overall ecosystem imbalances. Various solutions to address these problems exist, and will be considered in depth during feasibility investigations. For example, riparian buffer enhancement, stream bank stabilization, natural stream channel restoration, construction of fish passages, wetland creation and restoration, and structural flood damage reduction measures will be considered for specific locations within the watershed. A Feasibility Cost Sharing Agreement was signed with the City of Philadelphia Water Department in April 2004. Montgomery County has not yet expressed interest in conducting a feasibility study for their portion of the watershed.

STATUS: To date, the study team has identified and analyzed the existing conditions of the ecosystem, noted existing water resource related problems and identified ten target sites for further study, along with restoration goals for those sites. The sites include five old mill dams that impede physical, chemical and biological transport, four tributary streams with a variety of problems, especially erosion and incision, as well as one site that combines a dam and a stream tributary with the associated issues. For each of the sites, the team has prepared three preliminary alternative restoration designs. The preliminary monetary costs and habitat benefits of each design have been identified, compared to pursuing no restoration effort, and analyzed for the cost efficient and best buy scenarios. The outcomes of the incremental cost analysis model have begun to be discussed in depth, and in the context of the nonfederal sponsor's interests, to identify which scenarios will receive further in-depth analysis and design. Before those more detail-oriented tasks, the product to date has gone through a thorough review by peers and higher authority to help assure that the optimal

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next steps are selected. FY12 funds will be used to conduct further environmental and engineering analyses (such as wetland delineation, cultural assessment, hydraulic modeling, surveying, etc.) toward identification of a selected plan and feasibility level design. FY13 funding will enable us to conclude those studies and initiate higher level project review.

FINANCIAL

DATA (\$000)	Fed	Non-Fed	Total
Feasibility	1,250	1,250	2,500

BUDGET

DATA (\$000)		Comments
FY 05	79	
FY 06	74	
FY 07	100	
FY 08	0	
FY 09	259	ARRA
FY 10	90	
FY 11	214	
FY 12	200	

SPONSOR: The City of Philadelphia, Water Department, Office of Watersheds.

COMMENTS: Critical issue—need for continued funding of the Federal feasibility costs. Continuation and completion of this project is imperative to help restore habitat for native species in the watershed, slow erosion and the resultant exposure of sewer infrastructure, and reconnect the stream with its floodplain in order to capture necessary nutrients and sediments before they are completely removed from the ecosystem.

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