

APPLICANT INFORMATION SHEET

Project Name: Chiques Creek Watershed Report Card

Award Category: Taking Care of What We Have

Participant Names and Organizations:

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<https://www.chiquescreekwatershed.org/>

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Chiques Creek Watershed restoration effort serves as a model for strategic planning that engages multiple municipalities, stakeholders and agencies with a goal of quantifiable pollution reduction to meet Federal mandates. The Chiques Creek Watershed Report Card is the tool that was developed to use as a data-driven guide to achieve these goals. The Report Card streamlines decision-making processes, exposes regional, multi-beneficial opportunities, and sets the foundation for funding and implementing projects with tangible, quantifiable results. It consolidates all of the previous assessments and data collection into a visual format that will serve the community.

NARRATIVE

Planning Leadership Principles:

The Report Card demonstrates an effective use of resources to advance several of the goals and objectives of places2040, including specifically ‘Thinking Beyond Boundaries’ and ‘Taking Care of What We Have’. Almost 800 projects and restoration approaches have been identified through various studies, reports, etc. The Report Card approach was used to help analyze and prioritize over 800 previously identified projects in the Watershed Action Plan [Alternative Restoration Plan (ARP)] based on real data and the long-term goals of the watershed for identifying projects that will provide real and meaningful results. The Report Card consolidates all of the previous assessments and data collection into a visual format that will serve the community.

The Report Card is an innovative tool and approach for project prioritization and regional planning that builds upon previous studies and assessments in the watershed. The information compiled as part of the development of the Report Card tool ultimately provides a new data driven means of prioritizing funding and efforts to achieve quantifiable results based on long-term objectives centered around a healthy watershed. The Report Card provides a snapshot of current conditions in waterbodies along with simple measurable thresholds of indicators of optimal conditions. In turn, the Report Card is used as a quantified reference tool for the Watershed Action Plan and the prioritization of restoration approaches that identifies and implements projects that will move conditions to a more optimal state.

The Report Card uses best practices in data collection and analysis, site assessments, cost-estimates, pollutant load modeling, etc. that meet industry standards and are proven to be reliable and consistently achieve results. It was developed as a useful tool for decision-making that can be replicated in other watersheds in Lancaster County;

The Report Card is a regional and collaborative effort between several partners including the Lancaster County Clean Water Consortium, the Chiques Creek Watershed Alliance, LandStudies, Inc., TeamAg, the Water Science Institute, Susquehanna River Basin Commission, local municipalities and stakeholders, and policy-makers.

The development of the Report Card required effective communication in order to engage the variety of stakeholders from municipal managers / supervisors, regulatory agencies, farmers and landowners, etc. This was mostly done through in person Watershed Alliance meetings and home visits to landowners and farmers. This effective communication paved the way for meaningful civic engagement efforts and advocacy for promoting the new Report Card tool that is intended to get cost-effective and quantifiable pollutant load reduction projects in the ground.

The Report Card is consistent with planning efforts including Lancaster's *Places2040* County Comprehensive Plan, Lancaster Countywide Action Plan (CAP) as part of the Chesapeake Bay PA Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP), Little Chiques Watershed Action Plan, Chiques Creek Watershed Action Plan, Donegal Regional Comprehensive Plan, Northwest Regional Strategic Plan, Manheim Central Region Comprehensive Plan, and *Growing Together* the Comprehensive Plan for Central Lancaster County.

Award Category criteria:

The Chiques Creek Watershed Report Card is being nominated for a leadership award in the “**Taking Care of What We Have**” category as part of *Places2040* “Big Ideas”.

This project closely aligns with “Taking Care of What We Have” by developing prioritized projects and strategies for cost-effective and maximum impact regional stormwater management; the protection and restoration of natural systems including floodplains, wetlands, native plants, and wildlife habitat to improve waterways, improve water quality, and reduce flooding; protecting and improving community infrastructure such as roads, bridges, water supply, and waste management systems; creating a sustainable supply of clean water and natural areas; and building resilience through cross-sector collaboration.

This project also closely aligns with the “Big Ideas” category, “Thinking Beyond Boundaries” by recognizing strategic land use planning as a priority for building community sustainability and resilience, including multi-municipal planning; encouraging cross-sector and public-private partnerships to help achieve planning goals; engaging various community groups in the planning process; and facilitating a strategy to work towards a unified vision for the watershed in order to achieve regional planning goals and targets.

SUPPORTING MATERIALS

- Chiques Creek Report Card Narrative and Appendices