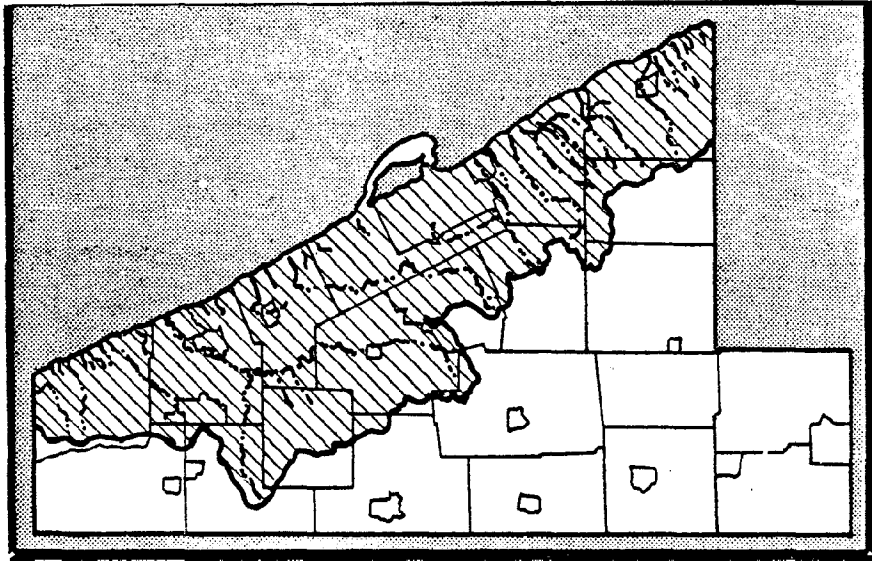


ERIE COUNTY STORM/WATER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

FISCAL YEAR 1981-82

FINAL REPORT

as part of the implementation of the
PENNSYLVANIA COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM



September 29, 1982

PREPARED FOR:

Pennsylvania Department of
Environmental Resources

PREPARED BY:

Erie County Department of Planning

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The preparation of this report was financed through the Pennsylvania Coastal Zone Management Program under provisions of the Federal Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972, (as amended), administered by the Coastal Zone Management Office, Office of Resources Management, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources; the Division of Storm Water Management - Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources; and the Erie County Department of Planning

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Despite continuous efforts to alleviate flooding through various flood control projects in the past, flood related damages in Pennsylvania have continued to increase. In an attempt to deal with this serious problem, the Pennsylvania General Assembly enacted the Pennsylvania Storm Water Management Act 167 on October 4, 1978.

The Storm Water Management Act represents a new approach towards formulating a solution to the widespread problem of accelerated storm water runoff within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Towards this end, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources contacted the Erie County Department of Planning (ECDP) concerning the Lake Erie and Elk Creek watersheds to address the management of storm water runoff in this portion of Pennsylvania.

On October 1, 1980, the County of Erie entered into an agreement with the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources for the development of a Storm Water Management Plan for the Lake Erie and Elk Creek watersheds as pilot studies in accordance with the provisions of the Pennsylvania Storm Water Management Act 167. The Plan was finalized in October, 1981. On February 1, 1982 the County entered into a second contract with the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources. The purpose of this contract was to implement the Storm Water Management plans for the Lake Erie and Elk Creek watersheds.

Implementation of the Plan was to be by individual municipalities through adoption of the separate storm water ordinances or through amendments to existing subdivisions or zoning regulations. The administration of the Plan was to be through a combination of enforcement actions undertaken through the subdivision process.

From October 1 to October 30, 1981, the Storm Water Advisory Committee, which had been established during the previous year's program, held a preliminary meeting with the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources and the consultant, the Northwest Institute of Research. Northwest Institute of Research and its consultant, Woodruff Engineering, Inc., presented the Plan, discussed the regional approach versus the on-site approach, and the Advisory Committee preferred the on-site method. Two more Advisory Committee meetings were held in the western and eastern portions of the County discussing the State's approach to storm water management under Act 167 as well as the contents of the Lake Erie and Elk Creek Storm Water Management Plan with the community leaders in the study area.

The draft versions of the Storm Water Management Plan as submitted by the consultant were reviewed by the ECDP with the required suggested changes made in the draft plan. Personal visits to the consultant's central offices in Cleveland and telephone communications with the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources, various members of the Storm Water Advisory Committee, the Northwest Institute of Research and Woodruff, Inc., plus the duplication of draft plans for distribution to local government officials for their review were all performed by the ECDP to successfully complete the draft plan by October 31, 1981.

The consultant submitted the final draft of the Storm Water Management Plan for ECDP's review. In November, the Department responded by studying the implications of the Plan and assembling a list of required changes in the Plan's content and format. The Department also met with representatives of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources to discuss the necessary modifications to the Plan. These revisions were discussed with the Advisory Committee and the Home Builder's Association of Northwestern Pennsylvania.

Finally, the ECDP conducted a meeting with the consultant to express the ECDP's review comments on the final draft and submitted the required data to the Department of Environmental Resources in order to finalize the Plan during the months of November and December, 1981.

During the period January 1 to March 31, 1982, the ECDP conducted informal meetings with the County Council and the County Executive discussing the various aspects of the Storm Water Plan. Also, discussions were held between the Department of Planning, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources and the consultant regarding the retainment of a 10% performance bond from the consultant's final payment.

A review letter concerning the final draft Storm Water Management Plan submitted to the ECDP by the consultant was forwarded back to the consultant and to the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources. The County Solicitor and the ECDP reviewed the Storm Water Contract for the 1981-82 fiscal year during January 1 through March 31, 1982.

Bids received by the ECDP for the publication of the final fourteen volume plan were reviewed and a contract presented to the firm which submitted the lowest bid which was conducted from April 1 to June 30, 1982.

Composition of Chapter 5 "Implementation" was submitted by the ECDP to the consultant for inclusion in the plan. The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources and the consultant received various letters from the ECDP pertaining to the plan during the period of January 1 through March 31, 1982.

From January 1 to March 31, the ECDP inventoried the fourteen volume document which included in its pages the 8" x 5" x 11" and 11" x 11" maps and preparation of the bid specifications for the purposes of reproduction. The reproduction documents were received, sorted and distributed to the Pennsylvania

Department of Environmental Resources and the various municipalities within the study area from April 1 through June 30, 1982. In addition, other reproduction documents acquired at the Penn State Storm Water Management Symposium were distributed to municipal engineers at that time. Press releases, letters to various officials, meeting notices, bi-weekly timesheets, second quarter invoice, and financial transactions with the publisher were among the various clerical duties performed by the ECDP during this time period as well.

The ECDP and Department of Environmental Resources presented the plan to the municipal and private engineers from the study areas during April 1 and June 30, 1982 meetings. Also, the ECDP held meetings with the Northwestern Pennsylvania Homebuilder's Association to discuss the provisions of the plan. The following locations were encouraged through private discussions with the ECDP to understand and support the plan:

North East Borough
North East Township
Girard Borough
Girard Township
Harborcreek Township
Greene Township
Millcreek Township
Summit Township
McKean Township
Franklin Township
Elk Creek Township
Fairview Township

In addition, arrangements were made for press briefings in an effort to publicize and receive support for the plan.

During the period of July 1 through September 30, 1982, private discussions were held with officials from numerous municipalities to fully explain the Storm Water Plan and its implications. A meeting was held with Representative Karl Boyes asking for his support of the plan.

On July 14, 1982, the Advisory Committee and other interested local officials met at the Millcreek Municipal Building for a formal presentation of the plan and to receive comments regarding its provisions. Presenting the plan were members of the ECDP and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources. After much discussion, it became evident that many of the officials did not view the plan as a cost-effective tool for meeting the challenge of managing storm water runoff in their municipalities. Also, the municipal consensus disapproved of the plan as they saw it as further direct involvement of County and State agencies in their community's decision-making process. There was some resentment by the local officials regarding the State's imposing additional regulations on their local government without providing funds needed to administer the regulations and the Department of Environmental Resources' failure to provide final guidelines to them in accordance with the mandate of Act 167. However, a small percentage of communities viewed the plan as a positive step toward solving their storm water management problems. At the close of the meeting, the ECDP representatives indicated that sample resolutions of support for the plan would be forwarded to all 25 affected municipalities. The request was that each municipality determine its decision at the next local meeting. Of the 25 municipalities, 12 responded. Ten (10) municipalities voted to oppose the plan while three (3) submitted resolutions of support, including the City of Erie, North East Borough, and Summit Township.

The new County Executive took office on January 1, 1982. Through the above communications she understood the unpopularity of the plan and decided to remove the Lake Erie and Elk Creek Watersheds Storm Water Management Plan from

the County Council legislative agenda. Until the local municipalities of the County of Erie express a desire for the plan or until State guidelines are finalized which mandate implementation of this plan at the local level, the Erie County Storm Water Management Plan will not be presented to the Erie County Council for adoption.

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