

# Octoraro Source Water Collaborative

## What is a Source Water Collaborative?

Source Water Collaboratives are groups of organizations that include a wide cross-section of partners who work together to protect sources of drinking water.

## The Octoraro Source Water Collaborative

The Octoraro Source Water Collaborative is a partnership of local stakeholders, environmental and non-profit organizations, agency and municipal officials, and farmers that work to protect the Upper Octoraro Watershed and the Octoraro Reservoir. The Collaborative is a network of partners, agencies, and organizations collaborating to improve water quality for drinking water protection in the Octoraro Watershed. It coordinates efforts across the watershed to maximize the impact of each partner's efforts. The Collaborative is made up of a Planning Committee, Agriculture Workgroup, Monitoring Workgroup, and ad-hoc workgroups who all work together to achieve the mission, vision, and goals of the Collaborative.

The Octoraro Source Water Collaborative was formed in 2016 when the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay received two grants from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to reduce nitrate pollution in the Octoraro Watershed within Lancaster and Chester Counties. Seeking local expertise, the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay partnered with the Octoraro Watershed Association, which has worked in the watershed since 1967. These partners also led the creation of the Collaborative to reduce high nitrate concentrations in ground and surface waters in the contributing recharge watersheds of the Octoraro Reservoir.

## The Octoraro Watershed

The Upper Octoraro Watershed includes the parts of Chester County and parts of Lancaster County in Pennsylvania that drain to the Octoraro Reservoir. The Octoraro Reservoir is the main source of drinking water for Chester Water Authority, which supplies water to more than 40,000 customers in 33 municipalities in the City of Chester, Western Delaware County, and Southern Chester County. The entire Octoraro Watershed spans 208 square miles and has a population of about 45,000. It includes many agricultural communities as agricultural land use makes up over 70% of the landscape.

## Values

The values of the Collaborative are the beliefs, philosophies, and principles, that drive the work. Values important to the Collaborative include:

- Science-based decision making
- Community-based efforts, including agricultural, recreational, residential, business, and municipal communities
- Collaboration
- Habitat restoration
- Open communication and partnership
- Cultural heritage



# Mission

To provide a collaborative forum for partners to work toward a clean Upper Octoraro watershed to discuss common priorities, build capacity and leverage resources for their own and collective goals.

# Vision

A clean and healthy Upper Octoraro Creek Watershed that protects drinking water sources and contributes to high quality of life for the entire community with co-benefits for the natural environment.

# Goals

- 1. Improve Collaboration:** The Octoraro Source Water Collaborative Planning Committee will create collaboration opportunities in multiple formats so that all partners are engaged and can provide feedback to further enhance Collaborative efforts.
- 2. Build Capacity:** The Octoraro Source Water Collaborative will build capacity of individual partners and the Collaborative as a whole (a) through meetings, (b) by providing financial, data management, outreach and other training opportunities, (c) by expanding the Collaborative's membership, and (d) by creating opportunities for collective leadership.
- 3. Secure Coordination Funding:** The Planning Committee will identify and secure funding to support the administration and coordination of the Collaborative by Q1 2023.
- 4. Increase and Leverage Project Funding among Partners:** The Octoraro Source Water Collaborative Planning Committee will establish a OSWC Funder and Fundee Network to coordinate during major grant rounds (and as new opportunities/leads arise). Partners of this Network will be responsible for:
  - a. comparing planned efforts to avoid duplication, coordinating on applications, and identifying opportunities to create stackable matches.
  - b. requesting letters of support from all partner organizations and/or the 'Collaborative' to present as a unified approach/effort to funders.



Overall, at least 3 partners should collaborate on at least 4 grant applications each year. These goals have potential to grow annually.

- 5. Reduce Pollutants:** The Agriculture and Monitoring Workgroups will improve water quality by reducing nutrient and sediment loading in the Upper Octoraro through increased BMP implementation, identifying and accessing funding, monitoring and documenting changes, and sharing successes and lessons learned.
- 6. Increase Understanding:** The Octoraro Source Water Collaborative will update its stakeholder list annually. Responsible partners (i.e., Stakeholder-focused Workgroups, such as the Agriculture Workgroup) will engage each partner of the OSWC stakeholder list at least once a year so that community members, landowners, farmers, and community leaders are kept updated on success stories and ways they can protect surface and groundwater.

