

# PENNSYLVANIA'S CLEAN WATER PROGRESS

2024



Pennsylvania  
Department of  
Environmental Protection





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# LET T E R F R O M O U R S E C R E T A R I E S

As we reflect on 2024, we can celebrate a momentous year for clean water in Pennsylvania. It was a year filled with significant achievements, collaborative projects, and remarkable progress towards cleaner local waters flowing to a healthier Chesapeake Bay.

Vital to that success is the work done on the ground led by our many incredible Countywide Action Plan partners across 34 counties. Looking back, we see how the decision to meet our county partners where they are and empowering them to make plans that fit their local goals has made all the difference. We put local needs first, and earned the trust required to bring about meaningful and lasting change.

We share our sincerest gratitude with Governor Shapiro and Pennsylvania's legislature for codifying the Commonwealth's financial and administrative commitment to clean water for Pennsylvania, further demonstrating to our partners that they can count on our support as they bring polluted streams back to life and improve their communities while doing so.

Together, we celebrate groundbreaking initiatives like Rapid Stream Delisting, the Agriculture Conservation Assistance Program, and Watershed Stewards taking root, while foundational programs like Growing Greener and Countywide Action Plan Implementation Grants are resulting in unprecedented success for clean water efforts.

We are proud to report that collaborations with local, county, state and non-profit partners in 2024 led to just over 38 miles of streams being removed from Pennsylvania's impaired waters list, nearly 151 miles of streams being restored, and 73 Countywide Action Plan projects being completed...and that's just a small sample of the accomplishments we are excited to share with you!

Outcome driven projects across Pennsylvania's vast portion of the Bay watershed have not only led to measurable environmental improvements but have also positioned Pennsylvania as a recognized leader within the greater Chesapeake Bay Program partnership.

Looking to 2025 and beyond, we are excited for what's to come as we continue to expand our collective clean water work and build on the solid relationships we have created with our partners. Pennsylvania's healthy waters, healthy communities approach will continue to serve as a model for clean water innovation and leadership as we celebrate the people, projects and progress making a difference for our communities and our creeks and streams, now and into the future.



**Jessica Shirley**  
Secretary  
Pennsylvania  
Department of  
Environmental  
Protection



**Russell Redding**  
Secretary  
Pennsylvania Department  
of Agriculture



**Cindy Adams Dunn**  
Secretary  
Pennsylvania Department  
of Conservation & Natural  
Resources



# OUR COLLECTIVE IMPACT

The numbers tell the story of Pennsylvania's progress, highlighting its successful projects and programs.



**CUMULATIVE  
PROGRESS  
ALIGNED  
WITH THE  
PHASE 3 WIP**

Photo Credit: Megan Lehman

Projects  
Implemented with  
CAP Funds

**73 | 537**

2024 | 2020 - 2024

State and Federal Funds  
Invested in PA's Bay  
Watershed

**\$575 M**  
2024

**\$1.79 B**  
2020 - 2024

Stream Miles Removed  
from Impaired Waters List

**38.2**  
miles in 2024

**180.6**  
miles from  
2020 - 2024



**1300+**  
Partners Engaged

Photo Credit: Megan Lehman



**NATURAL**

**793,755** feet of Stream  
Restoration

**5,548** acres of Tree Plantings

**30,673** acres of Forest Buffers

**89,405**  
acres of Grass Buffers

**4,017**  
acres of Wetlands and  
Wet Ponds



**AGRICULTURE**

**682,521** acres with Soil and  
Water Conservation  
Plans

**1,235,765** acres of  
Conservation  
Tillage



**URBAN**

**4,530**  
acres of Urban Tree  
Planting\*

**19,808**  
acres of Urban Erosion  
& Sediment practices

**65,972**  
Septic System  
Improvements

**1,882,176**  
acres of Cropland with  
Nutrient Management  
Plans

**1,279,449**  
animal units Treated by  
Animal Waste  
Management Systems



**288,287**  
acres of Cover Crops



**73,152**  
acres of Stormwater  
Management Practices

**15,702,362**  
feet of Dirt and Gravel Road  
Erosion & Sediment Practices

Photo Credit: Michelle DiNicola



# RIPPLE EFFECT

## Restoring Streams and Connecting Communities

**A group of children laugh and play as they splash in a clear shallow creek, chasing trout and crawfish on a warm spring day. Jays, woodpeckers, and warblers flit among the branches, hunting gnats, damselflies, and other small insects for their next meal. Fresh leaves and flowers adorn the branches of the young saplings and mature trees that line the creek, their roots pushing deep into the soil, holding it securely in place despite the occasional spring shower's best efforts to wash it away.**

This scene embodies the promise of Pennsylvania's Phase 3 Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP): ensuring that current and future generations can enjoy the beauty and benefits of the Commonwealth's 49,000 stream miles in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. The Phase 3 WIP not only enhances environmental health but also protects farmland, brings nature into urban environments, and facilitates community engagement. Shifting the focus to local, community-driven solutions rather than distant nutrient reduction mandates has led to meaningful and measurable results in Pennsylvania.

In 2024, the Phase 3 WIP received the prestigious National Association of Environmental Professionals (NAEP) Environmental Excellence Award, earning national recognition for its innovative approach and underscoring its role as a leader in Chesapeake Bay restoration efforts. Stream monitoring data confirms positive improvements across Pennsylvania's waterways, from small creeks to the mighty Susquehanna River, significantly impacting Chesapeake Bay health.

The Commonwealth demonstrated its commitment by dedicating significant financial support through the 2024-2025 state budget, ensuring the continuation and expansion of successful initiatives such as the Turtle Creek Rapid Delisting project. It's been inspiring to see so many county leaders, farmers, landowners, non-profits and others come to the table to tackle water issues in their community through programs such as the Countywide Action Planning (CAP) and Implementation process. Pennsylvania's approach to collaborating with local communities empowers them to identify and achieve their clean water goals through projects and programs that also enhance their communities.

This voluntary, county-led, bottom-up approach has yielded impressive results within just five years of initiating the Phase 3 WIP. All 34 counties in Pennsylvania's portion of the Chesapeake Bay watershed are implementing their unique action plans, making progress by implementing projects and programs that they chose, in places that they prioritize, and building partnerships every step of the way. Simultaneously, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) Bureau of Watershed Restoration and Nonpoint Source Management (BWRNSM) provides crucial support and coordination through open communication, training, technical assistance, and funding, building on a strong foundation of trust and long-term collaboration.







**"The collaboration with DEP, especially through the CAPs and watershed implementation plans, has been a game-changer. We're able to line up funding more effectively, track progress better, and make sure restoration projects are targeted in the right places."**

*~ Adrienne Hobbins  
Program Manager, Chesapeake Conservancy*



This trust proved vital when engaging with agricultural communities traditionally wary of government involvement. Personal connections established by many local partners knocking on doors and touring local operations has led many farmers to implement best management practices (BMPs), significantly improving water quality and farming operations. Programs such as CAP and the Agricultural Conservation Assistance Program (ACAP) have provided essential funding and support, making these practices accessible and successful. Satisfied farmers are now key advocates, promoting the value of clean water projects among peers.

#### **Pennsylvania's Phase 3 WIP Wins NAEP 2024 Excellence Award**

Winning the NAEP 2024 Environmental Excellence Award for Environmental Management, Stewardship, Conservation, and Protection highlighted Pennsylvania's successful approach. Jill Whitcomb, Deputy Secretary of DEP's Office of Water Programs, accepted the award at the 2024 NAEP Annual Conference, acknowledging the strong partnerships and collective efforts driving Pennsylvania's success. "This award reflects the tremendous collaborative effort among state and local partners, private landowners, and farmers," Whitcomb stated. "Thanks to their commitment, nutrient and sediment pollution in Pennsylvania's waterways flowing to the Chesapeake Bay is declining faster than ever."

This recognition validates Pennsylvania's approach for achieving the nutrient and sediment reduction goals set in the Phase 3 WIP and its commitment to a holistic approach to clean water and healthy communities. Perhaps more importantly, it brings visibility to this impactful project, providing a successful model for others facing challenges with reducing nutrient and sediment pollution in large-scale watershed restoration efforts.

#### **Expanding on Success**

What is most impressive about the Phase 3 WIP is not just the scale of the work undertaken for clean water in PA, it's the results. In 2024, Pennsylvania's historic progress was recognized for its downstream impacts on the Chesapeake Bay. The Shapiro Administration announced the Chesapeake Bay showed steady overall improvement, earning the highest grade ever awarded to the overall health of the Bay from the University of Maryland's Chesapeake Bay and Watershed Report Card since the report was created.

**"Farmers in Montour County have been incredibly willing to work with us. If we can get them funding, they're on board. That willingness is key to making real progress."**

*~ Sean Levan  
Manager, Montour County Conservation District*



The Upper Bay, which gets 90% of its waters from the Susquehanna River, scored one of the highest grades among any area of the Bay – and posted a significant improvement from last year – showing how efforts in agency collaborations, strong partnerships, and sustained investments led to progress throughout the Susquehanna River watershed – the vast majority of which is located in PA – and beyond.

### Investment in PA

Pennsylvania and its clean water partners have made major strides improving program efficiencies to ensure every dollar invested goes as far as possible. Still, our commitment to restoring streams, planting trees, and helping farmers keep their soil on their fields comes with a big price tag. The Shapiro Administration and the Commonwealth's legislature demonstrated their commitment to clean water by including \$50 million of dedicated state funding for the Clean Streams Fund in the 2024-2025 budget.

This funding will support on-farm conservation practices and other local water quality improvement projects. The funding in the fiscal year 2024-2025 budget extends ACAP, which otherwise would have been exhausted by the end of 2026.

**"Pennsylvania is making serious investments in water quality, and people are taking notice. The groundwork laid through the WIP and Countywide Action Plans helped secure dedicated funding for agricultural best management practices. Other states are now looking at Pennsylvania as a leader in this space."**



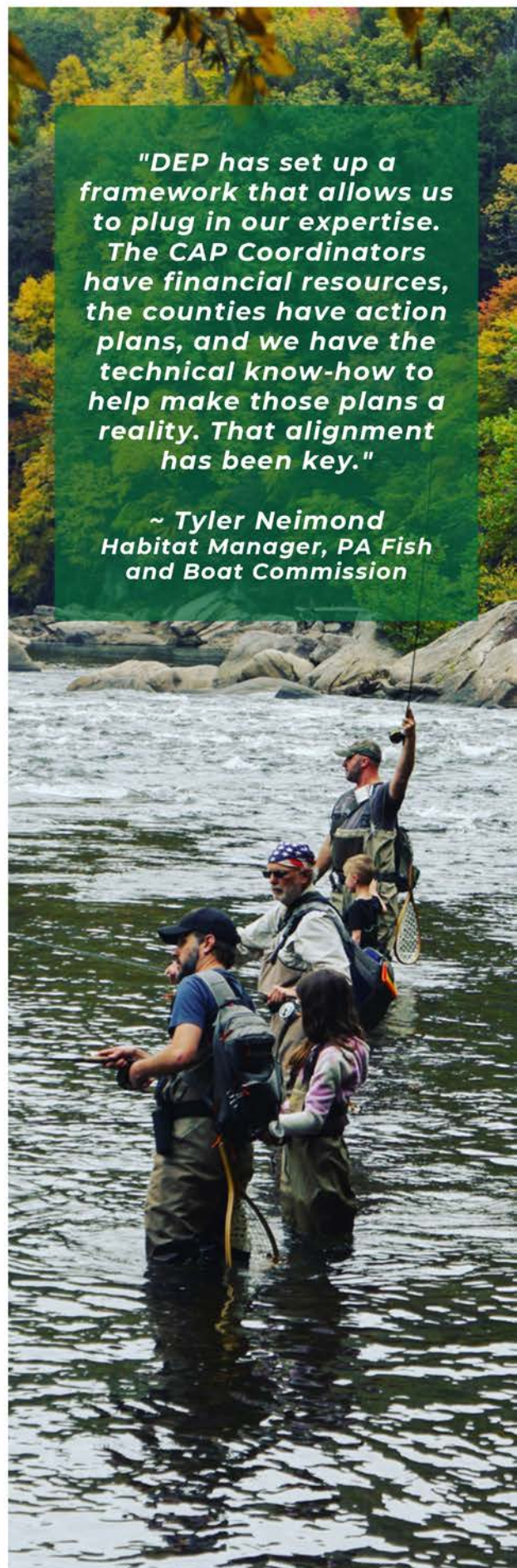
*~ Doug Wolfgang  
Executive Director, PA State Conservation  
Commission*

### State funding sustains critical programs and supports hundreds of water quality improvement initiatives across Pennsylvania's vast portion of the Bay watershed:

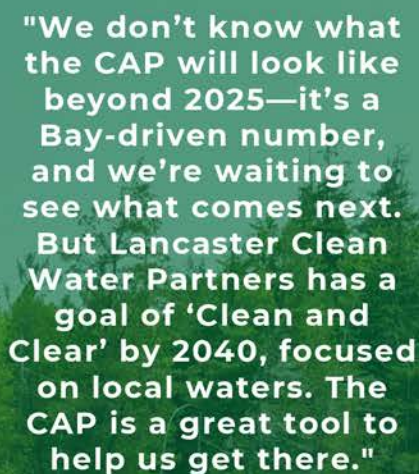
- DEP's BWRNSM awarded \$19.3 million in 2024 CAP Implementation Grants to county teams across Pennsylvania's share of the Chesapeake Bay watershed. These grants support their efforts in reducing nutrient and sediment pollution to restore the health of local streams, rivers, and lakes while also improving their communities.
- The 2024 CAP Implementation Grant round brought in applications for 226 projects that could be completed in the next 12 to 18 months, which would result in an estimated reduction of over 170,000 pounds/year of nitrogen, 122,000 pounds/year of phosphorus, and 36.3 million pounds/year of sediment.
- DEP awarded over \$8.8 million in Pennsylvania's Chesapeake Bay watershed through DEP's Growing Greener Plus grant program. These projects work to protect waterways and watersheds, reclaim abandoned mine sites, and work to reclaim and plug abandoned oil and gas wells.

**"DEP has set up a framework that allows us to plug in our expertise. The CAP Coordinators have financial resources, the counties have action plans, and we have the technical know-how to help make those plans a reality. That alignment has been key."**

**~ Tyler Neimond  
Habitat Manager, PA Fish  
and Boat Commission**







**"We don't know what the CAP will look like beyond 2025—it's a Bay-driven number, and we're waiting to see what comes next. But Lancaster Clean Water Partners has a goal of 'Clean and Clear' by 2040, focused on local waters. The CAP is a great tool to help us get there."**

**~ Allyson Gibson  
Executive Director,  
Lancaster Clean Water  
Partners**

Programs supported by state funds are at the forefront of the Commonwealth's clean water effort and provide the foundation for projects being put in place in priority areas across Pennsylvania's Chesapeake Bay watershed. Following is a breakdown of which funding programs supported implementation of how many BMPs in Pennsylvania's share of the Chesapeake Bay watershed in 2024:

- CAP Implementation Block Grant: 175 BMPs
- ACAP Grant Program: 166 BMPs
- Growing Greener Grant Program: 55 BMPs
- Section 319 Grant Program: 58 BMPs

Efforts to improve water quality, habitat, and hydrologic conditions across Pennsylvania's Chesapeake Bay watershed are numerically modeled using the Chesapeake Assessment Scenario Tool (CAST). In 2024, CAST modeling of BMPs indicated that Pennsylvania reduced 104.5 million pounds per year of nitrogen. CAST modeling did show slight increases in phosphorus and sediment loads from Pennsylvania in 2024, but the slight increase in phosphorus load was due to a technical change in the CAST model, not due to on-the-ground changes in the watershed – the 2023 version of CAST included revised fertilizer sales data, causing the increase in modeled phosphorus loads. The slight increase in Pennsylvania's 2024 sediment loads modeled by CAST was caused by a decline in conservation tillage BMP implementation in 2024.

### **Rapid Delisting Strategy**

Pennsylvania's Phase 3 WIP is inspiring partners to think strategically to achieve local and watershed-wide clean water goals. A fantastic example of this is the "30 by 30" project. Here, a diverse group of partners have committed to working together to rapidly restore 30 agriculturally-impaired streams by 2030. They plan to do this by accelerating the strategic implementation of BMPs to improve water quality and wildlife habitat in target areas. Streams are chosen for their potential to advance momentum in places that have the potential for the fastest recovery. The 30 by 30 partners are currently focusing on 57 streams statewide.

This approach is already working. In 2024, following decades of primarily adding new streams to the list of Pennsylvania's polluted waterways, 38.2 miles of streams were restored and removed from the list, providing tangible proof that restoring health to local creeks and streams on a "rapid" timeline is possible. An additional 12 stream segments are very close to being delisted.

**"Projects are the tip of the spear that keep progress going. Looking at all the projects going into the ground this year and the incredible slate of projects counties have planned for 2025, it's clear there's still plenty of progress to be made—and plenty of ways to do it."**

**~ Josh Clark  
CAP Program Manager, Herbert,  
Rowland & Grubic, Inc.**





## Delisting Success in Turtle Creek Watershed

In September 2024, members of the Chesapeake Bay Program's Stakeholder Advisory Committee, Pennsylvania legislators, and state and federal agency leaders joined the Chesapeake Conservancy for a tour of a farm in the Turtle Creek watershed to see the results of a 30 by 30 project in person. The tour highlighted successful stream restoration and delisting efforts by the Northcentral Stream Partnership, which includes the Northcentral PA Conservancy, PA DEP, PA Fish and Boat Commission, and Union County Conservation District

The on-site restoration projects included:

- Stream Stabilization Structures: 1,368 installed
- Streambank Fencing: 10,927 feet, or 2.07 miles, installed
- Stabilized Stream Crossings: 19 installed
- Total Stream Length Restored: 21,964 feet, or 4.16 miles


This demonstrated success in this part of Turtle Creek is further fueling the momentum driving the effort forward, growing landowner interest and generating demand for sustained investment. Leveraging the momentum from this effort, 30 by 30 partners aim to fully restore Turtle Creek and replicate this successful approach across Pennsylvania's portion of the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

## Future Focused Clean Water Planning

Looking to the future, the sustained success of Pennsylvania's watershed restoration efforts is rooted in collaboration, clear communication, extensive coordination, community engagement, and a strong commitment from clean water champions at every level. Partners across the watershed regularly gather to reflect on achievements made possible by the Phase 3 WIP and CAP initiatives, and take necessary steps to continue this important work long into the future.


At the state level, leaders continue to look for and implement ways to support the counties in their CAP efforts and remain a trusted, foundational partner. At the local level, partners regularly plan for what's next as they meet existing goals and set new ones. Each Countywide Action Plan remains adaptable and responsive to evolving local needs and changing conditions.

The Phase 3 WIP and CAPs have proven successful: Pennsylvania's waterways are cleaner, and so is the Chesapeake Bay.



**"There is no 'end' to conservation. No practice lasts forever, no landowner lives forever. Land use changes, new technologies emerge, and farms evolve. We'll always need to repair, upgrade, and adapt."**

*~ Jenn Fetter  
Director, Center for  
Agricultural Conservation  
Assistance Training, CACAT,  
Program Team Leader,  
Water Resources*



**"Pennsylvania's portion of the [Chesapeake Bay] watershed is significantly improving because we've brought people together and invested in Chesapeake Bay restoration efforts. This is a great example of what's possible when we work together—not just across different levels of government here in Pennsylvania—but across state lines and with the federal government as well. My Administration is proud of this progress—and we're going to continue to work to restore the Chesapeake Bay for years to come"**

*~ Josh Shapiro  
Governor of Pennsylvania*





# PROGRESS IN ACTION



## **Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay's PA Riparian Forest Buffer Project Plants 1,000th Acre of Forest Buffer**

In October 2024, the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay's PA Riparian Forest Buffer Project planted its 1,000th acre. This work started in the spring of 2018 with grant funding from DCNR, as the Alliance sought to offer flexible, comprehensive reforestation support that would help fill gaps in existing programs. Fourteen planting seasons later, the project is still going strong, thanks to many more grants from DCNR, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), the US Forest Service, and others.

## **Salisbury Township – The Impact of Community Outreach on Conservation Work**

Lancaster Farmland Trust (LFT) knew a new approach was needed to reach the agricultural community in their conservation efforts. This led LFT to embark on an outreach journey in Salisbury Township like never before - visiting each farm individually (that's over 500 farms)! This type of community outreach spread from farmer to farmer, resulting in over 100 conservation plans and the installation of best management practices on 13 farms.



Photo Credit: The Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay

Photo Credit: LancasterFarmlandTrust.org





### Partnership Helping to Collect Water Quality Data

Since 2018, the Penn State Master Watershed Steward (MWS) Program has partnered with Dickinson College's Alliance for Aquatic Research and Monitoring (ALLARM) to train volunteers in water quality monitoring. Through ALLARM's Stream Team initiative, launched initially in York County with support from the York County MWS and the Susquehanna Riverkeeper Association, the program has expanded statewide. Currently, around 125 volunteers monitor 68 sites across PA's Bay watershed, including Cumberland, Dauphin, Lebanon, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Susquehanna, Bradford, Wyoming, and York counties. Stewards test local waterways monthly for pH, conductivity, clarity, nitrates, and water level.

**Pennsylvania stands at the forefront of farmland preservation, leading the nation with more than 6,500 farms and over 652,000 acres permanently protected for agriculture. Backed by nearly \$1.76 billion in investments, this legacy ensures that farming remains a cornerstone of Pennsylvania's economy, heritage, and way of life for generations to come.**

### Lancaster Farmland Trust Celebrates 600th Preserved Farm

In October 2024, Lancaster Farmland Trust celebrated the preservation of their 600th farm – the King Farm, an 83-acre dairy operation located in Leacock Township. The farm was first founded in the early 1800s, and the Kings have resided there for multiple generations. Mr. King decided to preserve his land for the future generations of his family, as his son hopes to continue farming on the property. The family cares for cows, draft horses, mules, and chickens on the farmstead, as well as grows support crops for their operation. Located only a mile and a half from Kitchen Kettle Village, the preservation of this farm guarantees visitors the gorgeous farm views they hope to see in Lancaster County.



Photo Credit: Lancaster Farmland Trust





# CLEAN WATER PROGRESS TEAMS & STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

## Advancing Pennsylvania's Clean Water Goals Through Partnership and Action

In October 2023, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) Bureau of Watershed Restoration and Nonpoint Source Management (BWRNSM) convened the inaugural Clean Water Gathering—bringing together more than 80 leaders from county, state, and federal agencies. This first-of-its-kind event united State Program Action Leaders and Countywide Action Plan (CAP) coordinators to celebrate progress and confront challenges implementing Pennsylvania's Phase 3 Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) and CAP nutrient reduction goals.

Through collaborative discussion, participants identified five recurring challenges that were refined into three primary focus areas:

- Technical and Administrative Assistance
- Staff Building and Retention
- Funding and Multi-Grant Coordination

These challenge areas were recognized as critical barriers to implementation and overall success—and they demanded strategic, collective action.

## Clean Water Progress Teams

To meet this moment, three Clean Water Progress Teams were formed—each aligned with one of the focus areas. Since January 2024, more than 60 individuals representing a wide range of partners have contributed nearly 1,000 hours to this effort. Working alongside DEP's BWRNSM, the teams developed a set of actionable recommendations now known as Strategies for Success.

## Strategies for Success

The Strategies for Success include 25 unique, actionable recommendations that address the core challenge areas. The recommendations are organized into six implementation themes:

1. Use digital tools to support funding decisions and streamline grant application and administration.
2. Streamline best management practices.
3. Research ways to improve programs, partnerships, project support and hiring.
4. Advocate for adequate and consistent funding to support clean water project implementation.
5. Form a workgroup or develop a network to support clean water project implementation.
6. Enable and encourage leadership and staff development.

These strategies are designed to guide program leaders, policymakers, and funding partners in making decisions that turn ideas into action—and continue to drive progress for Pennsylvania's people, communities, and waterways.

These strategies:

- Outline what actions should be taken,
- Identify who should be involved, and
- Suggest when implementation steps could or should occur.

This initiative exemplifies how strong partnerships drive collective progress. It demonstrates that mutual accountability and shared solutions are the keys to sustainable clean water outcomes.

## Looking Ahead to 2025

The finalized Strategies for Success were shared with a broader network of partners, including state and local program leaders and stakeholders, at the second Clean Water Gathering in 2025. The second Clean Water Gathering served as a platform to further align efforts, share lessons learned, and chart the next phase of clean water actions and progress for Pennsylvania.



## BERKS COUNTY

### Equine Operations Install BMPs

In 2024, Berks County Conservation District installed a suite of best management practices (BMPs) at two equine operations to reduce pollution and improve stream health. At Chesterfield South in Pine Grove, which boards about 40 horses, BMPs included off-stream watering posts, a roofed manure storage area, stream crossing, fencing, and a heavy use area. CAP Implementation Block Grant Funds supplemented United States Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service Regional Conservation Partnership Program (USDA-NRCS RCPP) funding. At Creekside Stables in Brecknock Township, BMPs addressed runoff, soil loss, and stream access. Funded by CAP, Growing Greener, the USDA's Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), and other programs, improvements included off-stream watering, fencing, a roofed manure pad, and heavy use area protection.



## LANCASTER COUNTY

### Hammertown Tributary Stream Restoration

The restoration of the Hammertown Tributary of the Conestoga River in Lancaster County reflects 15 years of collaboration and conservation. Beginning in 2008, USDA-NRCS and the Lancaster County Conservation District worked with landowners to implement BMPs like grassed waterways, streamside fencing, and nutrient management plans. Funding came from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), EQIP, CAP Implementation Block Grant Funds and others, with support from TeamAg, Stroud Water Research Center, and Lancaster Clean Water Partners. Phase 1 concluded in June 2024 with a final streamside buffer planting. Ongoing monitoring by the Stroud Center will track water quality improvements.



Photo Credit: Lamonte Garber, Stroud Water Research Center

## POTTER COUNTY

### Dungster™

The Potter County Conservation District partnered with Summit Trail Rides and Dungster™ LLC to install a sustainable manure composting system at an equine boarding site near South Woods Branch, a High-Quality trout stream. Using \$50,635 in CAP Implementation Block Grant funds, the project included a Dungster™ composting system, roof gutters with underground outlets, and a stabilized animal walkway. The Dungster™ system features two 30-yard composting dumpsters with aeration equipment, leak-resistant covers, and a manual loading ramp. The first compost batch was completed in November 2024. This composting process converted animal waste into a stable resource that is rich in organic material useful for improving low quality soil and fertilizing plants while also retaining moisture and reducing the need for chemical fertilizers.





## NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY

### Dry Run Buffer Plantings

The Northumberland County Conservation District worked with two local landowners to plant just over 15 acres of 50-foot-wide buffers in fall 2024 along an impaired section of the Dry Run Stream in Watsontown. The District used CAP Implementation Block Grant funding to pay for the buffer planting. Two other landowners saw the results of the planting, and have committed to planting an additional four acres in fall 2025. In total, over 19 acres in buffers will be planted with \$574,670 in CAP funding.



## YORK COUNTY

### Oil Creek Stream Restoration

In fall 2024, the York County Rail Trail Authority restored part of Oil Creek in Heidelberg Township to address erosion and pollution. Supported by funding from the J. William Warehime Foundation, the CAP Implementation Block Grant, multiple county and state partners, and a land easement from Warehime Enterprises, Inc., the project addressed severe streambank erosion and water quality issues caused by pathogens, nutrients, and sediment. Phase one restored 1,300 feet of stream, five acres of wetlands, and 500 feet of floodplain, treating eight acres in total. This restoration effort is expected to reduce 221 pounds of nitrogen, 102 pounds of phosphorus, and 193,700 pounds of sediment annually. A second phase will continue in 2025.



## BEDFORD COUNTY

### Yellow Creek Streambank Stabilization

In 2024, three streambank stabilization projects were completed in the Yellow Creek watershed with CAP Block Grant Implementation Funding. Two projects on Potter Creek, led by the Fort Bedford Chapter of Trout Unlimited (FBTU), the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy (WPC), and the PA Fish and Boat Commission, used natural structures to reduce sediment by 66 tons/year. The third project, managed by WPC on the Snyder farm along Yellow Creek, stabilized 4,062 feet of streambank and included various in-stream structures and plantings. Completed in September, it will reduce sediment by 158 tons/year and cost \$281,791.







# CUMBERLAND COUNTY

## Rain Garden Project

At the end of 2024, Silver Spring Township completed the Willow Mill Park Rain Garden Project in Cumberland County. Funded by a \$200,000 CAP Implementation Block Grant, the project redirected a former straight-pipe stormwater discharge into a bioswale and rain garden before reaching the Conodoguinet Creek. The township designed and permitted the project through its Pollutant Reduction Plan, keeping it shovel-ready for grant funding. All plantings are native to Pennsylvania and will begin growing in spring.



# LUZERNE COUNTY

## Borough Tree Planting

In April 2024, the Luzerne County Conservation District led a two-week project to plant 100 native trees—elms, maples, oaks, and honey locusts—along streets and in parks in Kingston Borough. Funded by CAP Implementation Block Grants, the project supports the county's CAP by reducing stormwater runoff and flooding impacts near the Susquehanna River. The trees help curb erosion, absorb runoff, and reduce pollution entering waterways. Kingston Borough will maintain the trees.



# SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY

## Rain Garden Project

The Susquehanna County Conservation District built a bioretention rain garden at Salt Springs State Park in spring of 2024 with funding from the CAP Implementation Block Grant. Volunteers from the Penn State Master Watershed Stewards Program and the Upper Susquehanna Coalition helped complete the project. The rain garden improves water quality by capturing and filtering stormwater runoff, reducing sediment and promoting infiltration before the water reaches nearby waterways.





# LOOKING BEYOND 2025

Until now, the clean water work coming out of the Phase 3 WIP was undertaken with 2025 end goals in mind. With that milestone looming, the question becomes what does the effort look like beyond 2025? Pennsylvania and the other signatories to the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement are working together to figure that out.

Through a series of collaborative strategy meetings, they have reaffirmed their commitment to reduce pollution in local waters flowing to the Bay and codified that in a report that outlines a path that builds on the momentum generated by their collective effort over the last several years:

- Update Chesapeake Bay Program goals with consideration for the latest science.
- Integrate climate resilience into restoration strategies.
- Simplify governance structures for effective collaboration.
- Prioritize equitable engagement and community participation.
- Strengthen transparency and clear communication across partnerships.
- Implement adaptive management strategies to handle evolving environmental issues.
- Foster inclusive decision-making and emphasize accountability for results.
- Strengthen transparent communication among stakeholders.
- Prioritize outcomes and regularly reassess progress.
- Clearly define partner roles and responsibilities.
- Expand outreach and education efforts.
- Ensure adequate, sustained funding and resources.
- Develop strategies for addressing new environmental stressors.

At the state level, there is no doubt about the Commonwealth's continued commitment to cleaner water for its citizens and its local waters that flow to the Chesapeake Bay. Local partners are also reaffirming their commitment to continue their clean water efforts beyond 2025. Working together on shared clean water goals, we will sustain lasting progress for a healthier PA and Chesapeake Bay.



"Governor Shapiro has made it clear—Pennsylvania is committed to restoring the Chesapeake Bay for years to come. The work will evolve and our focus will remain on setting ourselves up for success well beyond 2025."

**Jill Whitcomb, Deputy Secretary  
Office of Water Programs, PA DEP**



"The momentum is real, and you can feel it. Partnerships have strengthened, investments are being made, and we're headed in the right direction. It's exciting to be a part of that continued progress."

**Robert Boos, Executive Director  
PENNVEST**





**Pennsylvania  
Department of  
Environmental Protection**

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
Department of Environmental Protection  
Bureau of Watershed Restoration and Nonpoint Source  
Management

Visit Pennsylvania's Phase 3 Watershed Implementation Plan to  
learn more about the Phase 3 WIP and Countywide Action Plans