

Countywide Action Plan Overview

Bradford County

Plan Highlights

The Bradford County Countywide Action Plan (CAP) establishes guidance and planning for the county and its local partners to continue to work toward the common goal of clean water. Bradford County has created this plan with the assistance of county Stakeholders to outline approaches and initiatives to promote local water quality throughout Bradford County. The local activities outlined within this plan will assist the community while also contributing to the Chesapeake Bay Cleanup effort.

The Bradford County CAP outlines four (4) priority initiative groups as well as programmatic recommendations. Each priority initiative group outlines tangible and quantifiable goals to improve water quality, while also highlighting on county priorities such as stream restoration, stormwater management, and agricultural projects. The programmatic recommendations, also located within this plan, outline changes in current State and regulatory processes that would aid the implementation process of these conservation projects.

The Bradford County CAP is designed to achieve these outlined initiatives through the Best Management Practice (BMP) implementation timeframe of 2027. This Plan will also work long term to provide a planning document that can be altered to reflect upon implementation success and updates to local priorities to continue water quality improvement within Bradford County. This document will not only outline implementation initiatives but will also strive to increase the existing education and outreach programs to engage the local community and promote the value of resources within Bradford County.

A Bradford County Toolbox was developed and provided to the County from the PA Department of Environmental Protection to outline identified areas that Bradford County is seeing increased nutrient loading while also providing an established goal to meet nutrient reductions by 2025.

The Bradford County Toolbox contains an outline of what sectors within the county display the largest amount of nutrient contributions, and they are as follows: 58% from Agriculture, 25% from Natural, 12% from Developed, 3% from Wastewater, and 2% from Septic.

Key Findings

Throughout the planning process, Bradford county has gained insight from local Stakeholders and community members to develop a plan that reflects the county's overall goals and priorities. Bradford County has been at the forefront of conservation project implementation prior to CAP development and has a long-standing reputation of successful project implementation and positive community relations.

The Bradford County Conservation District and Planning Department already execute a large number of projects to achieve conservation efforts throughout the county that continue local

water quality and soil health improvement. Due to the large number of projects already developed within the county, and availability for continued work, Bradford County has developed this plan to identify further funding and resource availability.

Bradford County Conservation district is very active in the development and implementation of on-going and new projects and has the benefit of increased staffing to execute this plan effectively. Bradford County NRCS has also contributed to project implementations within the county by leading the Nation in riparian buffer implementation for many years.

Although there is an increased number of projects previously implemented, there is still a lot of room to expand these developments. Bradford County and its Stakeholders have expressed a large interest in providing equipment rentals to farmers for No-Till, Lime Application, and Manure Spreading to assist the farmers in their current practices or help implement a new management style. There was also high interest in stormwater management practices being deployed as part of this plan due to the increased amount of storm events and increased severity. Projects highlighted to assist stormwater management within the county included increased culvert sizes, residential stormwater controls, and roadway stormwater management.

Opportunities for Success

Due to the large number of ongoing projects and previous implementations, it will be important for Bradford County to increase reporting and verification of these past, current, and future developments to receive proper credit for the hard work completed.

There is a large potential to increase stormwater management practices to help increase flood mitigation and runoff controls throughout the county. This was an area that county Stakeholders had an increased interest in as well due to the amplified amount of significant storm events. It will be important to get the community involved in stormwater management application throughout the county. Involvement in this area will help deploy projects such as rain gardens or rain barrels in residential areas to withhold stormwater after rain events to limit storm surge. It will also be beneficial for contracting and state agencies to implement roadway stormwater management practices to alleviate flood risks from impervious cover, and alternative roadway treatments during inclement weather to lessen pollutant runoff into waterways.

There is added opportunity for plan implementation success through the deployment of a Farming Operation Transition Program. This program will allow farmers to reach technical assistance for either converting to a different operation type or transitioning areas out of operation. This will allow farmers to access support to plan for the future of their operation.

Another unique opportunity within Bradford County is the deployment of biosolid use on agricultural properties that are nutrient deficient. Bradford County soils are known to be largely nutrient deficient and need a lot of care and management to retain soil health year after year. Due to the lesser amount of manure available for application compared to the vast land needing

nutrients, fertilizers have historically been used to supplement areas that could not be manured. This program will investigate the feasibility of biosolid application with prospects to develop into an application program. This practice implementation would benefit the overall soil health of Bradford County.

Challenges to Implementation

Bradford County has several unique challenges to implementation that may impact their ability to reach some of the goals outlined within this plan. One of those challenges includes the addition of new projects due to the large amount of previously completed projects and lack of resources and funding available. Bradford County has worked diligently to identify and plan future projects and has created a backlog of possible developments that are awaiting funding and resources.

There is a large number of proposed project implementations that will require a significant amount of funding to complete. These include activities such as manure storages, barnyards, equipment purchases, septic maintenance, and stormwater infrastructure. These projects will be very beneficial to the county and this plan will strive to provide support for these priorities.



Stream corridor rehabilitation project located within Alba Creek, Bradford County and 1,800' of additional tributaries. Project consisted of riparian buffer, streambank fencing, and streambank rehabilitation. (2012)

Implementation Update - 2023

Bradford County has been effectively implementing projects that align with the outlined priority initiatives and have been securing additional funding to elevate project selection and increase project abundance.

Due to limited resources, the following priority initiatives have been removed from the scope of project completion through 2025, although are still of importance to Bradford County. These projects will be pursued as resources becomes available to support these actions.

Wastewater

Previous Priority Initiative 3.1 – Private Septic/Sewer Maintenance

Previous Priority Initiative 3.1a – Private Septic/Sewer Education

Previous Priority Initiative 3.3 – Investigate Biosolid Applications

Implementation Update – 2025

Bradford County has met or exceeded performance targets, resulting in the creation of sustainable programs and resources. As a result, the following Priority Initiative is recognized as completed.

Agriculture

Completed Priority Initiative 1.3 – Existing BMP Maintenance Program

Please view the updated Priority Initiatives under the Plan Summary.

Plan Summary

The implementation of the Bradford County Action Plan (CAP) will center around four (4) Priority Initiatives: 1) Agriculture, 2) Urban and Developed Stormwater, 3) Wastewater, and 4) Watershed Health, as well as Programmatic Recommendations. Throughout the development of this plan, Bradford county established Stakeholder groups that provided oversight and focus point development within each Priority Initiative group listed below. Priority Initiatives denoted with **green** have been successfully completed as of the plan year 2025.



Close up of the multi-log deflectors utilized in the Alba Creek stream corridor rehabilitation project. (2012)

Priority Initiative 1: Agriculture

- Priority Initiative 1.1 - Implement Nutrient Management Analysis Program for Agricultural Landowners
 - Create a Program for farmers to apply for soil sampling, manure analysis, and agronomic assistance to allow technical assistance and recommendations for nutrient management implementation based on sampling analysis
- Priority Initiative 1.1a
 - Soil Sampling Program
 - Manure Testing Program
 - Agronomy Assistance
- Priority Initiative 1.2 – Increase Reporting and Verification of Existing BMPs
 - Collect data through the use of landowner reporting forms and verification of existing BMPs on agricultural operations
- Priority Initiative 1.2a – Create a Farmer Survey
 - Create and deploy a Farmer Survey to collect private landowner data on existing BMPs
- **Priority Initiative 1.3** – Existing BMP Maintenance Program

- Assist producers, through cost share labor and funding, with maintenance of existing BMPs to keep them functioning
- Priority Initiative 1.4 – Riparian Buffer and Stream Fencing
 - Implement Stream fencing and riparian buffer on crop and pasture lands
- Priority Initiative 1.5 – Soil Health
 - Promote soil health by increasing No-Till and Cover Cropping
- Priority Initiative 1.6 – Equipment Rental and Availability
 - Provide equipment rental to farmers to encourage more BMP implementation on small operations and reduce nutrients being applied incorrectly
- Priority Initiative 1.7 – Barnyard Heavy Use Management and Manure Storage
 - Implement BMPs on farms where the most nutrient concentration occurs (heavy use areas) and reduce the travel of nutrients into streams
 - This includes projects such as constructing roofed manure stacking pads to reduce winter spreading
- Priority Initiative 1.8 – Operation Transition and Land Retirement Assistance
 - Assist farmers that are transitioning operation types with the necessary BMP and management practices and consult individuals that are removing lands from production

Priority Initiative 2: Urban and Developed Stormwater

- Priority Initiative 2.1 – Nutrient and Fertilizer Planning for Turf Grass
 - Develop and implement plans and guidance for turf grass
- Priority Initiative 2.1a – Turf Grass Management
 - Management of turf grass fertilizer application and potentially reduce unnecessary areas
- Priority Initiative 2.2 – Existing Stormwater BMP Retrofit Program
 - Upgrades to existing basins and drainage systems to improve function
- Priority Initiative 2.2a – Stormwater BMP Prioritization Tool
 - Creation of a prioritization tool that consists of a database mapper and scoresheet to identify potentially beneficial project locations
- Priority Initiative 2.3 – Bridge Stormwater Management
 - Look at stormwater management to reduce contaminants flowing directly into resources

- Priority Initiative 2.4 – Roadway Stormwater Management
 - Manage stormwater on local forest roads on public lands to reduce runoff and flooding potential
- Priority Initiative 2.4a – Culvert Replacement and Flood Control BMPs
 - Replace undersized culverts that cause issues within the watershed and assist flood control abilities with new or maintenance of existing controls
- Priority Initiative 2.4b – Culvert Size and Flood Control Educational Program
 - Culvert sizing education and flood control program for county staff and private contractors

Priority Initiative 3: Wastewater

- Priority Initiative 3.1 – Upgrades and Maintenance on Public Sewer
 - Complete necessary upgrades and implement proper maintenance on public sewer systems

Priority Initiative 4: Watershed Health

- Priority Initiative 4.1 – Farmland and Forestry Preservation
 - Preserve farmland and forest lands through conservation measures
- Priority Initiative 4.2 – Forestry Management
 - Provide Forestry management plans and technical assistance
- Priority Initiative 4.3 – Stream Quality Improvements
 - Improve overall stream quality by creating grass and forested buffers, bed and bank stabilization, and headwater protection

Programmatic Initiatives

- Action 1.1 – Revise stormwater regulations to include 30% overdesign culvert replacements to account for increased flooding events
 - This revision will allow for the replacement of culvers to be 30% overdesigned to account for increased flood events from increased storm events
- Action 1.2 – Support of PA SB 465 and 1272 or similar legislation to provide agricultural cost share funding
 - This is an existing bill that needs support from all sectors to provide much needed funding
- Action 1.3 – Streamline Permitting Process for Conservation Related projects
 - Conservation specific permitting that is less rigid with faster turnaround time to approval
- Action 1.4 – Change program standards for Chesapeake Bay Technician
 - This change would allow for no inspection requirements within the Chesapeake Bay Technician job requirements while maintaining other job aspects at a county level
- Action 1.5 – Dedicated staff from DEP or Conservation District to Verify and Report BMPs
 - Dedicated staff member at district level or state level to verify and report BMPs into Practice Keeper that have been implemented within the county