TOM WOLF, GOVERNOR • RAMEZ ZIADEH, ACTING SECRETARY

July 2022

Hello partners for water quality!

We have much news to share on progress by state, local, and sector partners to reduce nutrient and sediment pollution and improve water quality in Pennsylvania's share of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.

For the state leaders, complete plan document, and more details on the Phase 3 Watershed Implementation Plan, visit the Phase 3 WIP website. For a broader educational look at nutrient and sediment pollution in local streams, rivers, and lakes in the watershed, including tips and success stories, visit Healthy Waters, Healthy Communities.

Please consider how you might join in or help support this work. Anyone interested in their county's Phase 3 WIP County Wide Action plan can sign up to get involved. And help spread the word! Share this newsletter or the subscribe page.

— *DEP Chesapeake Bay Office*

Programs and Projects by Local, State and Federal Partners

DEP submits final Pennsylvania Chesapeake Bay Watershed Plan with new state funds supporting partners' progress

DEP submitted the final Phase 3 Chesapeake Bay WIP to EPA on July 18, meeting the 90-day deadline. The amended final WIP highlights the significant new funding from the Fiscal Year 2022-23 state budget to support and accelerate the progress partners are making on water quality improvement. It emphasizes the impact the Countywide Action Plans (CAPs) and county teams are having on partnerships, projects and progress across Pennsylvania's Bay watershed, and also calls on EPA to improve and update computer modeling, and highlights the USGS 2020 Nutrient Report and DEP's 2022 Integrated Water Quality Report that document improving trends in water quality and nutrient levels.

Governor Wolf signs Turfgrass Fertilizer Bill into law

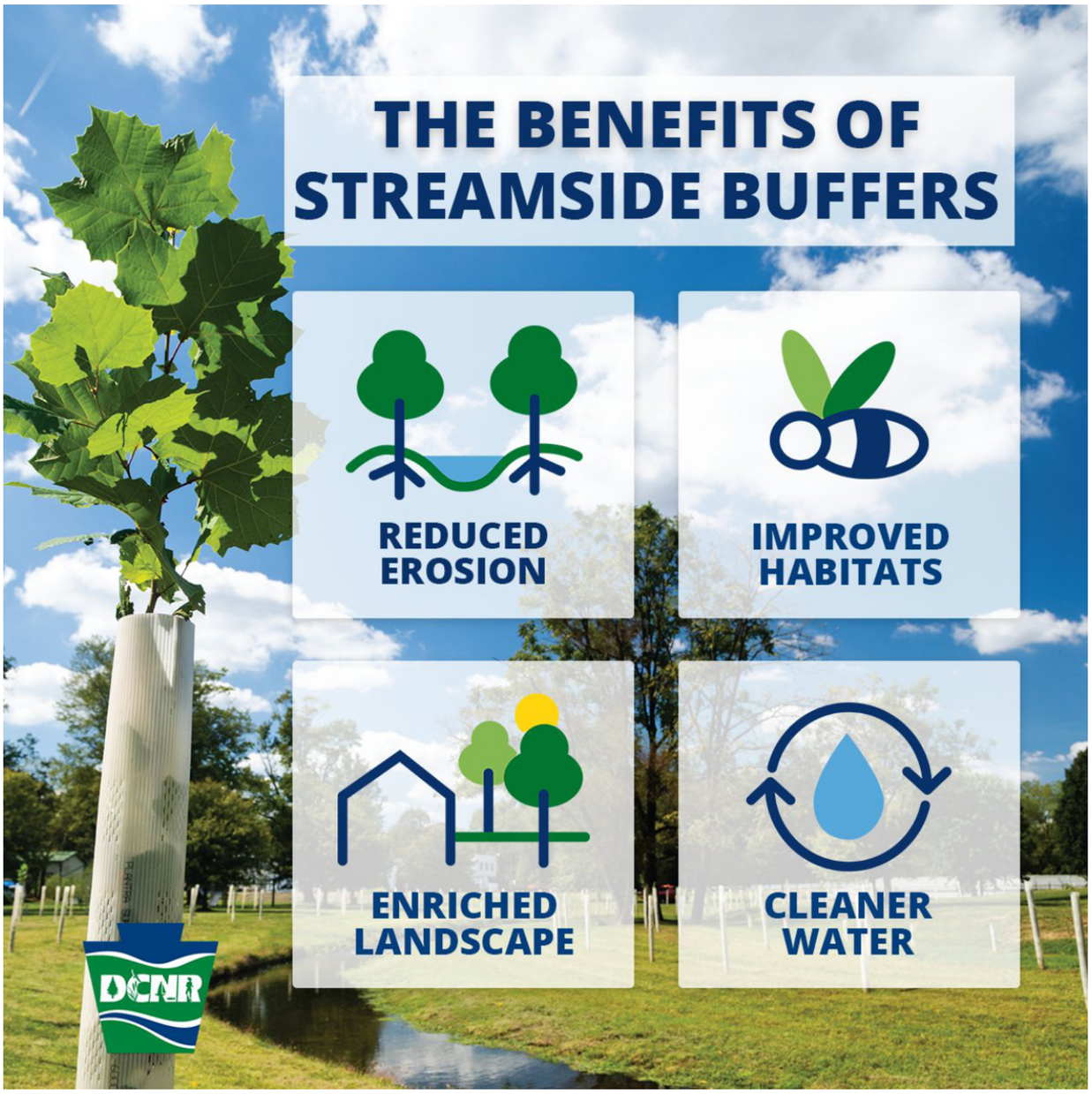
On July 11, Governor Wolf signed SB 251, a bipartisan bill sponsored by Senator Gene Yaw (R) and Senator Carolyn Comitta (D), into law. Pennsylvania now has a law governing turfgrass fertilizer application dates, practices, rates, and type of fertilizer used. Details on the legislation are available through Penn State Extension.

PennVEST makes $269 million investment in 11 water infrastructure projects in 10 counties

On July 20, the PA Infrastructure Investment Authority announced the award of $269 million in funding to 11 drinking water, wastewater, stormwater, and nonpoint source water pollution control projects in 10 counties. Of the 10 counties, six are located within the Chesapeake Bay, including a nonpoint source project where the Lancaster County Conservation District received a $606,823 grant to install a circular concrete waste storage structure and associated improvements at the Amos Esh dairy farm in Jackson Township. The project will implement approved Best Management Practices (BMPs) and will reduce an estimated 4,044 pounds of sediment, 3,753 pounds of nitrogen, and 1,617 pounds of phosphorus annually from an impaired stream.

PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) expected to receive $3 million from EPA Most Effective Basin funds

PA DCNR expects a $3 million award from EPA MEB funds for watershed forestry work within the Chesapeake Bay watershed. DCNR is in the process of completing the paperwork and hopes to have the funds in the coming months. At least $2 million will be specifically for buffer implementation work within the Bay watershed. The remaining funds will be utilized for other watershed forestry project implementation, and to help cover administrative costs.



Penn State to hold annual Ag Progress Days

Penn State's Ag Progress Days, held annually during three days in August, is Pennsylvania's largest outdoor agricultural exposition. With over 400 exhibitors from the United States and Canada, there is something for everyone to enjoy at no cost, as parking and admission are free. The show is hosted by Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences and showcases educational programs, current research, and the latest innovations in agricultural equipment and technology. This year's Ag

Progress Days will be held August 9-11 at the Russell E. Larson Agricultural Research Center, 2710 W. Pine Grove Road, Pennsylvania Furnace, PA 16865.

DCNR's Urban and Community Forestry Program, in partnership with TreeVitalize, applied for NFWF's America the Beautiful Challenge

DCNR is partnering with TreeVitalize, DCNR's Urban and Community Forestry Program, on a proposal to NFWF's America the Beautiful Challenge. DCNR applied for $5 million to be spent over four years to make funding available through its existing grants and contracts to expand watershed forestry work across Pennsylvania. The proposal includes:

- Riparian forest buffer, lawn conversion, and TreeVitalize project implementation (to be made available via grants and/or contracts statewide, with emphasis on Bay and environmental justice communities);
- Support current positions if needed, or to add additional regional staff;
- Pilot a planting plan reimbursement program, similar to the one developed by the Upper Susquehanna Coalition and used with success in New York;
- Support a new position and program to manage workforce development efforts for both TreeVitalize and Watershed Forestry, including the Correctional Conservation Collaborative/Prison Program; and
- Pilot a DIY Meadow Kit to help smaller property owners convert their lawn areas to meadows.

USGS Chesapeake Bay Activities Newsletter released

The latest USGS Chesapeake Bay Activities Newsletter contains a range of science activities related to freshwater fisheries, stream condition, hi-resolution land change, climate change, and a science approach to targeting resources. Also available is a new video on the USGS Chesapeake Science Strategy.

USGS is available to provide presentations on these items in upcoming meeting with interested stakeholders. Contact Scott Phillips (swphilli@usgs.gov) or the lead author of the publications in the newsletter.

Chesapeake Bay 'Dead Zone' predicted to be smaller than average

This summer's Chesapeake Bay "dead zone" is expected to be smaller than the long-term average, according to a forecast released by researchers from the University of Michigan, Chesapeake Bay Program, University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science and U.S. Geological Survey. This is due to a below average amount of water entering the Bay from the watershed's tributaries this past spring, as well as decreased nutrient and sediment pollution from jurisdictions within the watershed. Compared to the previous 36 years, this year's Chesapeake Bay hypoxic volume, or "dead zone," is predicted to be 13% lower than the long-term average, similar to the measured dead zones of the past two years.

Although different types of nutrients contribute to the annual dead zone, it is the amount of nitrogen that enters the Bay during spring that is a key driver in how hypoxic conditions can vary from year to year. The amount of nitrogen pollution entering the bay during spring 2022 was 22% lower than the long-term average and included 102 million pounds of nitrogen recorded at nine river-input monitoring stations and 5.7 million pounds from treated wastewater.

PACD opens application period for Introduction to Conservation Planning course

PACD is partnering with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the State Conservation Commission (SCC) to deliver a three-day Introduction to Conservation Planning course. This training is scheduled for November 1-3, 2022 in Grantville.

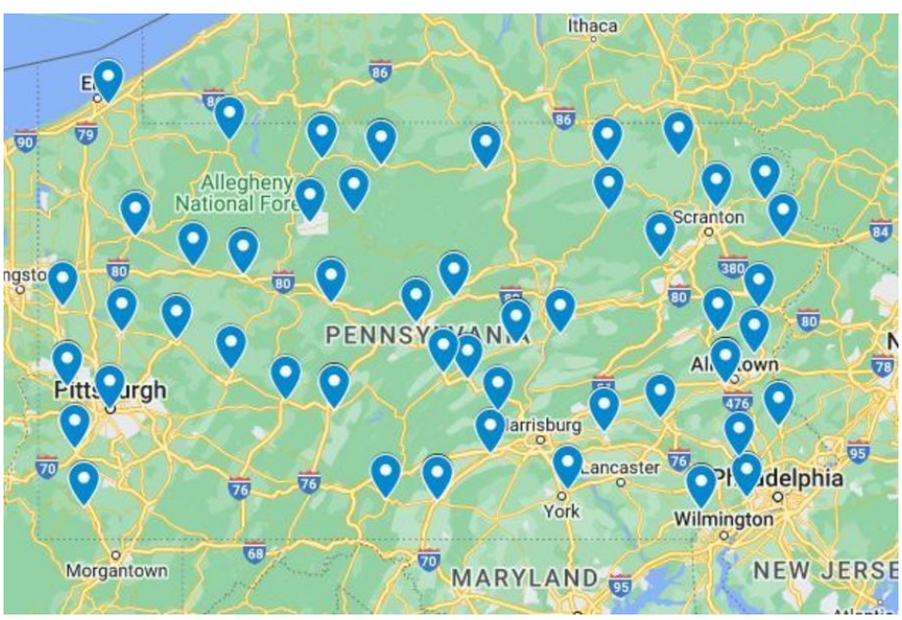
Introduction to Conservation Planning is an introductory course for people interested in writing conservation plans and becoming an NRCS Certified Conservation Planner. Eligible organizations include NRCS, State Conservation Commission, conservation districts, farmland preservation entities, and non-profits. The training is free and lunch will be provided. There is a pre-requisite for the course through AgLearn. Click here for the application and more information. Contact Shannon Wehinger at swehinger@pacd.org with questions.

Eighty-six nonpoint source pollution prevention mini-grant projects completed

In the 2021-22 Nonpoint Source Pollution Section 319 mini-grant round, 86 projects were completed by 49 conservation districts, reaching over 13,530 people.

- 2021-22 NPS Educational Mini-grant Program Outcomes
- Map of 2021-22 Nonpoint Source Pollution Mini-grant Projects

There are currently 33 projects underway in the 2022-23 mini-grant round. The next round will open in January 2023.

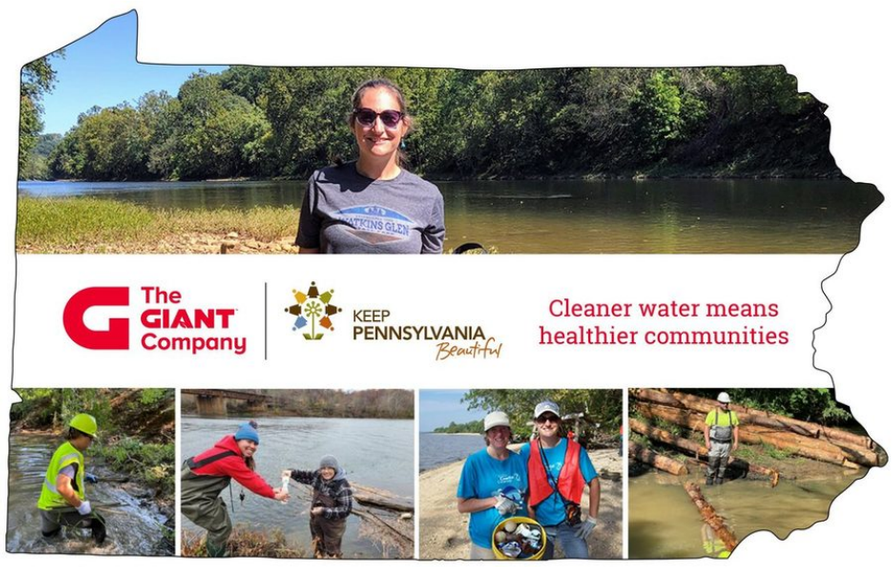


The GIANT Company and Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful award 45 Community Improvement Grants

The GIANT Company and Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful announced the 45 recipients of the 2022 Healing the Planet grant program. $300,000 in funding was awarded in support of projects aimed at improving the health and quality of waterways to help protect water resources and improve the overall health of communities.

“There’s only one planet Earth and the steps we take now will impact our environment and waterways for future generations,” said Jessica Groves, community impact manager, The GIANT Company. “Our customers and team members understand that changes of any size can make a big difference in healing our planet through their generosity in rounding up at the register in support of these types of environmental initiatives. We are excited to see these water resource projects brought to life in the coming months and continue to make a lasting difference in their local communities.”

Grants range from $2,500 up to $10,000. Eligible projects had to be in The GIANT Company’s operating areas within Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, or West Virginia. Funding for the grants was provided by customers at GIANT, MARTIN’S and GIANT Heirloom Market stores who agreed to round up their grocery purchase to the nearest dollar from March through May.



Funding Available Now!

PACD’s Ag Plan Reimbursement Program now open

PACD was awarded a $500,000 Growing Greener Grant from the PA Department of Environmental Protection to offer an Ag Plan Reimbursement Program for conservation districts from 2022-2024. Visit the program website to find guidelines, application forms, and reporting templates.

Please join PACD on August 9th for an informational webinar about the program. Registration is required. The webinar will introduce the program, review guidelines and instructions, and allow for questions and answers. Please contact Holly Miller at hmiller@pacd.org with any questions.

DEP expands Environmental Education grant funding

DEP is expanding the Environmental Education Grant Program to increase the number of applicants and environmental education projects supported statewide. The 2023 grant round will accept applications August 1 to December 9, 2022.

Mini Grants range from up to $5,000 for local environmental education projects to General Grants (Level I) up to $30,000 for large-scale, regional and/or statewide environmental education projects and General Grants (Level II) up to $85,000 for non-formal environmental education programs. DEP Environmental Education Grants support formal or non-formal environmental education projects that address water quality, climate change, and/or environmental justice. Details can be found in the 2023 Environmental Education Grants Program Manual. Eligible applicants include:

- Public schools and school districts (PreK-12) (includes Intermediate Units and Charter Schools)
- Incorporated private schools (under limited circumstances, private religious schools may be exempted from the incorporation requirement)
- Incorporated conservation and education organizations and institutions
- Universities and colleges
- County conservation districts
- Businesses (must be registered to do business in Pennsylvania)

Grant Funded Trees now available

The Keystone 10 Million Trees Partnership Fall Grant Funded Tree Applications is now live for all planting zones. View the training recording for how to order trees. Large stock trees are still available for Adams, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Lancaster, Lebanon, Perry and York Counties.

For volunteer or legislator recruiting assistance, and on-site Chesapeake Bay Foundation Communications staff press assistance, please fill out the Planting Volunteer and Outreach Recruiting form. For more information, contact Eric at Elivelsberger@cbf.org.

Achieving conservation through targeting information, outreach and networking grant opportunity

The Foundation for Food & Agriculture Research (FFAR) and the Walton Family Foundation announced a new program, Achieving Conservation through Targeting Information, Outreach and Networking (ACTION) to support innovative research that increases adoption of conservation practices. The program was developed in cooperation with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), which can provide additional support for practice implementation costs associated with opportunities developed through awarded projects.

Conservation practices include infield, edge-of-field, and edge-of-stream practices that retain and filter runoff and shallow groundwater. Despite their benefits to soil health, watershed restoration, and climate resiliency, adoption rates remain low, on less than 10% of all US croplands. The ACTION program seeks to increase adoption by strengthening technical service and outreach.

FFAR and the Walton Family Foundation anticipate awarding grants ranging from $200,000 to $500,000 for a total of approximately $1 million to compare and optimize outreach strategies. Projects that support the Edge of Field Roadmap and commit to implementing conservation practices through a partnership with the NFWF will be prioritized. Applicants are not required to secure a match; however, securing additional funds that FFAR can match is encouraged.

Pre-applications for this opportunity are due on August 31st. More information, including details on how to apply, is available on the ACTION program RFA webpage.

Getting Credit for Our Work

Chesapeake Bay Office 2021 progress achievements

Pennsylvania's 2021 Chesapeake Bay Model progress run notes several impressive improvements in BMP implementation. Three of these practices--Nutrient Management, Conservation Planning, and Cover Crop Planting--were especially impactful in nutrient load reductions because they covered large areas.

Nutrient Management

Core Nitrogen increased from 322,606 to 533,883 acres, which is an increase of 211,277 acres and a 39.6% increase in implementation from 2020 to 2021. Core Phosphorus increased from 200,999 to 533,793 acres, with a total increase of 332,794 acres and a 62.3% increase in implementation from 2020 to 2021. Increases in Core Nitrogen and Core Phosphorus Nutrient Management reporting can be attributed to implementation of the Nutrient and Manure Management Program and Chesapeake Bay Agriculture Inspection Program, as well as trainings by DEP staff on how to enter plans and document implementation into PracticeKeeper.

Cover Crops

Cover crops increased from 222,177 to 341,524 acres, with a total increase of 119,347 acres and a 34.9% increase in implementation from 2020 to 2021. Increases in cover crop reporting are attributed to conservation district outreach with farmers to plant cover crops, as well as local cover crop cost-share and statewide REAP tax credit programs. Cover crops are observed and reported through county Capital RC&D Transect Surveys.

Soil and Water Conservation Plans

Soil and Water Conservation Plans increased from 469,574 to 534,968 acres, with a total increase of 65,394 acres and a 12.2% increase in implementation. Increases in Conservation Plan acres are attributed to conservation district development and tracking of Ag E&S and Conservation Plans, the implementation of the DEP Agriculture Plan Reimbursement Program, Chesapeake Bay Ag Inspection Program, and trainings by DEP staff on entering plans and document implementation into PracticeKeeper.

DEP is greatly appreciative of the work that Pennsylvania's Conservation District and NRCS field staff, crop advisors, technical assistance providers, and landowners do in getting and keeping conservation practices up and running. None of our progress and the story of our success could be told without their hard work.

FieldDoc update improves user capabilities

FieldDoc is a web-based project management and data management tool. The platform is set up so that the BMP implementors, Countywide Action Plan (CAP) Coordinators, and program administrators can track the location of BMPs, the impacts of projects for reducing sediment and nutrients, and progress toward implementation of CAPs.

FieldDoc has received several updates over the past month to improve and widen the type and quality of data collected by the tool. These updates include the ability to enter details on the inspection of previously installed BMPs and the expansion of projects that are eligible to be recorded through FieldDoc. DEP's Chesapeake Bay Office has provided virtual training to partners on the new features.

DEP Chesapeake Bay Office

DEP's Chesapeake Bay Office hiring more staff to support our partners

Two South Central Conservation District Field Reps! The job posting is open now and applicants must apply by August 4th. There is only one posting for both positions so applicants only need to apply once. Both positions will be housed in DEP's South Central Regional Office on Elmerton Avenue in Harrisburg. Part-time telework is available with these positions.

T**wo Water Program Specialists for CBO's Agriculture Compliance Section.** The job posting is now open and applicants must apply by August 10th. There is only one posting for both positions so applicants only need to apply once. Both positions will be housed in DEP's Central Office, Market Street, Harrisburg. Part-time telework is available with these positions.

DEP applies for NFWF America the Beautiful Challenge grant

DEP submitted an application for the NFWF America the Beautiful Challenge (ATBC) grant. The ATBC vision is to streamline grant funding opportunities for new voluntary conservation and restoration projects across the United States. DEP applied for $7.5 million to fund up to three regional technical assistance circuit rider contracts to help counties navigate through agriculture project planning, design, engineering, permitting and construction by expanding technical assistance capacity and increasing partnership building to expedite project implementation. This project would lead to quicker BMP implementation to reduce the nutrient load entering the local waters through locally led and designed conservation.

If awarded, the project will be conducted in two phases: Phase One will focus on the development and release of the Request for Proposal (RFP) and the implementation of three projects in Clearfield, Huntingdon, and Susquehanna Counties. Phase Two will take the program through the completion of the grant timeline in 2026, and will expand the reach of the program statewide, with a primary focus on the Chesapeake Bay counties. The circuit riders will focus on agriculture project planning, design, engineering, permitting and construction for projects that yield increased nutrient (nitrogen and phosphorus) reductions, reduced flooding, increased carbon sequestration, and improves general watershed health. There has been a high amount of interest from partners, with letters of support provided with the application. NFWF will announce awards in November 2022.

CAP impacts handouts available to all

DEP has provided federal, state and county partners with two information pieces for use and dissemination to interested stakeholders:

Power of Countywide Action Planning fact sheet that provides analysis and summarizes all 33 CAPs that county partners created. The fact sheet provides an overview of Common Trends and Needs, County Highlights and State and Federal Programmatic Recommendations identified by

county partners in their CAPs.

Common trends and needs center around funding, workforce creation and data reporting and verification.

Programmatic recommendations to state and federal partners center around need for incentives and technical assistance, BMP verification and monitoring assessment, and ways to accelerate project implementation.

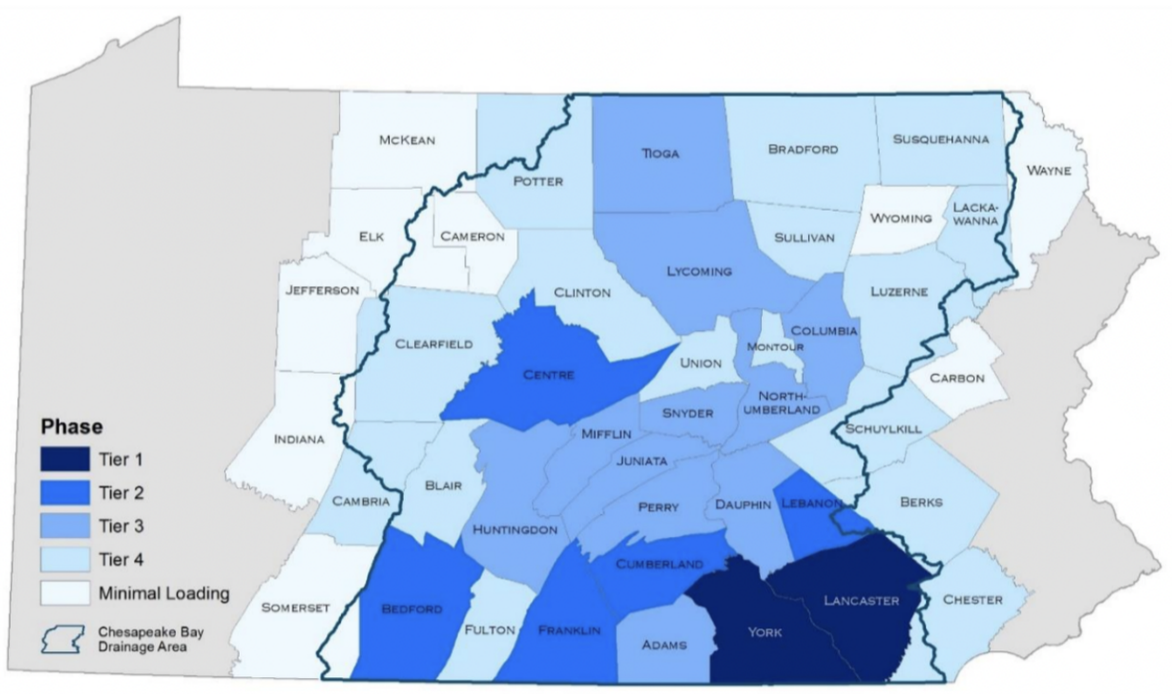
Countywide Action Plans Impacts handout is based on interviews conducted with county partners involved, directly and indirectly, with their county CAPs late last year. It focuses on how the CAPs have fostered new partnerships and streamlined implementation to projects, which has led to on-the-ground progress. This handout is a follow up piece to the previous CAP planning handout generated from CAP partner interviews in 2020.

DEP supports county progress and milestone reporting

During the month of July, DEP supported all 34 counties as they began working on 2022 Annual Progress and Two-Year Milestone reporting. This year, the Tier 2 counties (Bedford, Centre, Cumberland, and Lebanon) are participating in the Two-Year Milestone reporting process. This allows the counties to make both programmatic and numeric changes to the original CAPs that they created in 2019. The Pilot and Tier 3 and 4 counties will be reporting their annual progress, which gives counties the opportunity to highlight their accomplishments over the past year while also looking forward and planning for the upcoming reporting year.

DEP presents to Wildlife Leadership Academy

DEP staff spoke at the Wildlife Leadership Academy PA Bass Field School in Centre County. This weeklong camp serves as a springboard for high schoolers to learn about biology, stream ecology, habitat, watersheds, and warm water fisheries conservation. Water Program Specialist Erin Penzelik gave a presentation to the group highlighting the bigger picture of the Chesapeake Bay watershed and informing the campers of what they can do in their local watersheds to help improve local waterways and the Bay.



Counties in Action

Adams County plans stormwater runoff restoration project for Culp Run

Gettysburg National Military Park (NMP) staff and Gettysburg Borough Storm Water Authority (GBSWA) announced a stormwater runoff restoration project of Culp Run.

The Culp Run restoration project will restore and stabilize approximately 2,900 linear feet of stream bank associated with two unnamed tributaries to Rock Creek (Culp Run). Culp Run is highly degraded after decades of primary use by cattle as part of a special use permit. The cattle were permanently removed in 2021 in anticipation of this project.

Restoration activities begin on Culp Run

Franklin County receives grant from Chesapeake Bay Trust to address stormwater issues on rail trail

On June 9, the Borough of Chambersburg received a grant award of $150,000 from the Chesapeake Bay Trust to further implement a green infrastructure project along the Borough's section of the Cumberland Valley Rail Trail. Officials from the Bay Trust, EPA, PA DCNR, the Borough, and other grant recipients gathered at the project site on June 24 to highlight the Borough's project, which will address stormwater management issues between the Rail Trail and the Conococheague Creek.

This grant will be used to implement a multi-layered stormwater management solution that will reduce runoff into the Conococheague Creek, reduce associated flooding in the immediate area, address stream bank stabilization, implement green infrastructure components and benefit the health, functionality, and sustainability of the community through efficient and effective stormwater management.

Caitlin Lucas, Franklin Counties Clean Water Coordinator, speaks at Chambersburg event

Lancaster County receives EPA approval of the Pequea Creek Watershed Restoration Plan

Recent EPA approval of a new restoration plan for the Pequea Creek watershed clears the way for federal funding to put practices on the ground to reduce pollution from agriculture and urban development in Lancaster and Chester counties. The plan, developed by Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) Watershed Coordinator Brian Gish, is now eligible for federal funding through Section 319 of the Clean Water Act.

“EPA approval marks a major milestone in the multi-year development of a strategy to heal this iconic waterway,” Gish said. “Partners ranging from local government and citizens to leaders of the Amish church and agricultural sectors, tailored this plan to the needs, values and vision of the watershed’s communities.

Pequea Creek

Lancaster Clean Water Partners Clean Water Fund, Implementation Large Grant Applications opened July 26

Lancaster Clean Water Partners will be accepting another round of applications to the Lancaster Clean Water Fund, Implementation Large Grant category started July 26. This category grants funds from DEP for significant implementation projects contributing to Lancaster's CAP.

Applications for this round will be due September 30 and awards will be announced in early January. The Partners will offer an opportunity to submit draft applications by September 2 with comments guaranteed back on or before September 16. If there are questions, contact Megan at mblackmon@lancastercleanwaterpartners.com.

Successful municipal stormwater forum held by the Lancaster Stormwater Action Team

The MS4orum, hosted by the Stormwater Action Team, was a success again this year! The full-day event featured 12 presentations tailored specifically to help municipalities address MS4 requirements and meet water quality improvement goals. Attendees filled the Manheim Farm Show building for various breakout sessions and headed outside to explore a newly completed stream restoration project.

If you're interested in joining the Stormwater Action Team to help plan the MS4orum in 2023, contact Kristen Koch at klk343@psu.edu.

Lancaster Stormwater Action Team leads the MS4orum at the Manheim Farm Show building

Watershed Alliance of York receives Chesapeake Bay Trust funding as part of the Chesapeake Bay Green Streets, Green Jobs, Green Towns Grant Program

The Watershed Alliance of York received funds for a two-part workshop and repeatable workshop template that will focus on the responsibilities of Homeowner Associations (HOAs) in York and Lancaster counties for their stormwater management infrastructure. An important deliverable will be a template that groups such as watershed organizations can use to easily plan and conduct this workshop/charrette in counties throughout the Bay watershed.

Chester completes multi-functional riparian forest buffers

Chester County Conservation District completed two projects through PACD's multi-functional buffer sub-grant program.

- Chester County Conservation District planted 1.1 acres of multi-functional riparian forest buffer on a dairy farm in Chester County. The project cost was $9,850.
- Chester County Conservation District planted 5.5 acres of multi-functional riparian forest buffer on a farm in the White Clay Creek watershed in Chester County. The project cost was $52,289.

York County accepting land grant applications

Municipalities and nonprofits may apply for preservation funds in York County through the Open Space and Land Preservation Grant Program now through September 30. This grant includes assistance for buying and preserving park land and open space, and can also be used to repair existing trails and other open spaces in order to beautify parks and manage water resources. In a change from past years, the program will also include Marcellus Shale Legacy funding, collected via unconventional gas well impact fees. A virtual grant workshop will be held at on August 10. For more information or to access program guidelines, request a grant application or contact information, visit the York Open Space website or email yorkopenspace@ycpc.org.

Cumberland County presents at American Planning Association conference

On June 17th, Elizabeth Grant (Planning Specialist at the Cumberland County Planning Department) and Erin Letavic (Senior Project Manager at HRG) presented to the American Planning Association during a webinar titled, “The Nation’s Most Complex and Collaborative TMDL.” Speakers at this presentation presented on federal, state and local insiders’ perspectives on how six states, the District of Columbia, EPA and hundreds of other partners and stakeholders worked together to develop the Chesapeake Bay TMDL, also known as the “Bay Pollution Diet.” Elizabeth and Erin presented on how Cumberland County has utilized a grassroots approach to implementing its CAP, which directly supports meeting the Chesapeake Bay “Pollution Diet.”

Huntingdon County Conservation District (HCCD) fish sampling

On July 7th, HCCD staff partnered with biologists from DEP to complete fish community surveys for several streams in Huntingdon County. In a few short days, they discovered a new wild brown trout stream (potentially Class A) and collected fish data at sites where future restoration projects are currently planned. This data will serve to represent the fish community "before restoration" so that they can track how projects change and improve the fish community "after restoration" in future years. While it is always exciting to catch big fish, it is equally important to include all the small fish too!

Community fish surveys completed in Huntingdon County

Fulton County Conservation District is Hosting a Lunch and Learn

On July 22nd, the Fulton County Conservation District is hosting a lunch and learn on converting lawns to meadows. Reducing mowing and creating meadows provides additional habitat for wildlife and adding native lawn. The lunch and learn will be held at the 25185 Great Cove Road, McConnellsburg, PA 17233. For more information, call (717) 325-6096.

Clean water:
Great for PA
Good for the Bay

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, 400 Market Street, Harrisburg, PA 17101

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