



## PHASE 3 WIP NEWS

Pennsylvania. Partnership. Progress



TOM WOLF, GOVERNOR • PATRICK MCDONNELL, SECRETARY

September 2020

### Hello partners for water quality!

We have much news to share on the state Phase 3 Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) and Countywide Action Plans to improve water quality in Pennsylvania's share of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. As you read on, please consider how you might help support and get the word out on these great efforts to reduce nutrient and sediment runoff pollution. And share this newsletter (or the [subscribe page](#)) with others to help spread the word on the progress we're making in Pennsylvania. Thank you for your dedicated work for healthy waters and healthy communities.

For more information on plan development and implementation, visit the [Phase 3 WIP website](#). For a broader look at the challenge of reducing runoff pollution in the watershed, visit [Healthy Waters, Healthy Communities](#). — DEP Chesapeake Bay Office

## State Action Leaders

[State action leaders](#) guide Phase 3 WIP implementation, review and revise milestones as needed, and support countywide implementation efforts. They're champions for clean water choices and Best Management Practices (BMPs) education and installation in their areas of influence.

### Seeking Comments on CAFO Permit: Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection

The Department of Environmental Protection invites written comments by September 14 on a draft National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Permit for Operation of Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs), or PAG-12.

DEP published notice of the availability of a final PAG-12 General Permit at 48 Pa.B. 1898 on March 31, 2018. This permit became effective April 1, 2018, with an expiration date of March 31, 2023. Since then, DEP has become aware of several modifications necessary to make corrections and to reduce administrative burdens associated with the permit. See a list of the modifications and information on how to submit comments in the [PA Bulletin notice](#).

To access the entire draft permit and related documents, visit [e-Library](#). Select "Permit and Authorization Packages," then "Clean Water," then "Draft—PAG-12 NPDES General Permit for Operation of Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations."

### Funding BMPs at Large Dairy Farm: Pennsylvania Infrastructure Investment Authority

The Pennsylvania Infrastructure Investment Authority (PENNVEST) has finalized a low-interest loan for \$800,000 to Murmac Farms, LLC, a large-scale dairy and agricultural operation in Centre County. The funding will support implementation of several agricultural best management practices (BMPs) that will improve the efficiency of the farm operation and dramatically increase water quality in the area and throughout the watershed.

### Manure and Nutrient Planning: State Conservation Commission and Department of Environmental Protection

The Manure and Nutrient Planning Technical Team (MNPTT) met in early August to review its work groups' recommendations for advancing policy, regulatory, and/or legislative changes in five areas: plan updates, amendments, review, and approval; flexibility; Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs); the Manure Management Manual; and the 9,000 gallon maximum rule for one-time application.

The MNPTT then shared these recommendations at the joint meeting of the DEP Agricultural Advisory Board and State Conservation Commission (SCC) Nutrient Management Advisory Board. The boards recommended that the SCC move forward with consideration of policy and regulation changes as they relate to the areas above. One regulatory change relates to plan amendments when additional lands are brought into the operation through purchase, lease, or renting.

The purpose of the MNPTT, formed in 2019 after stakeholder input, is to review manure management, nutrient management, and federal National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System CAFO regulatory requirements, guidance, and policies. The team is administered by DEP and the SCC and includes representatives from the DEP Agricultural Advisory Board and SCC Nutrient Management Advisory Board, agricultural consultants, and county conservation district staff.

## DEP Chesapeake Bay Office

The DEP Chesapeake Bay Office (CBO) continues to work with DEP staff in the Northeast, Northcentral, and Southcentral Regional Offices on outreach and education and support for the 35 Tier 3-4 counties as they begin developing their Countywide Action Plans (CAPs). The Northeast Regional Office has held initial meetings with county representatives and legislators.

CBO staff also continue to support the planning and implementation work underway in the eight Tier 1-2 counties (see "County Progress" below), through one-on-one assistance and weekly group trainings and meetings. DEP's Phase 3 WIP technical support team is working with the four Tier 2 counties to draft model scenarios of potential BMP reductions that they'll use to develop their CAPs. The counties are aiming to finalize their CAPs this fall.

The Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership's draft Conowingo Watershed Implementation Plan is currently under review by the Bay jurisdictions. It'll be available for public comment in the fall. DEP CBO staff are working with the Chesapeake Conservancy to develop a strategy to engage key Pennsylvania stakeholders in the public comment period.

## Reporting and Data

### Reporting BMPs and Progress: FieldDoc Is Ready for County Use!

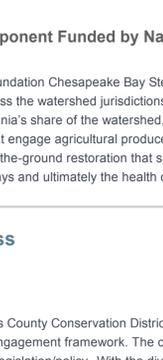
After much hard work, the DEP Data Tools Review Team is pleased to announce they've rolled out an enhanced version of FieldDoc to help Countywide Action Teams who are implementing and reporting data on best management practices (BMPs) identified in their Countywide Action Plans. FieldDoc, an online reporting tool, is integrated with existing data reporting tools, so that practices that are not reported in FieldDoc such as those that are reported elsewhere, like PracticeKeeper, will still be captured and shown in FieldDoc in an aggregated form to protect data privacy. FieldDoc will be a tool to centralize and communicate implementation progress for the Countywide Action Plans.

The team held a training webinar for the Tier 1-2 counties on August 27. Attendees learned how to use FieldDoc and what types of practices to report into the tool. This webinar, along with all training videos and training support documents, was recorded and posted to the Pennsylvania Clean Water Academy (CWA). The team hosted a follow up to the initial training webinar on September 3rd, which was a live question and answer session, focusing on answering questions about the training videos posted on the CWA.

FieldDoc was originally created by Chesapeake Commons, who, along with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Chesapeake Bay Program, supported the Data Tools Review Team in developing the enhancement.

## Why FieldDoc?

- You deserve credit for the work you have done and will be doing!
- Local partners need a data management tool to understand where projects are located.
- To track progress toward implementation of your Countywide Action Plan.
- We need transparent progress and accountability built into an integrated data management tool.
- Grant programs require various reporting methods, some of the Chesapeake Bay Grants will require reporting through FieldDoc.



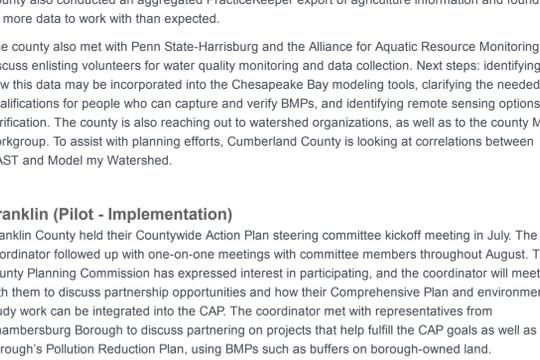
### Exploring BMP Credit and Verification Approaches: Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership Ad Hoc Best Management Practice Committee

The DEP CBO is actively working with the new Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership Ad Hoc Best Management Practice Committee to review BMP credit durations and lifespans. The committee is also exploring alternatives to BMP verification and re-verification. Recommendations will go through the Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership's approval process to possibly be incorporated in the next 2021 Chesapeake Bay CAST model update.

## Funding

### Funds Available to Organizations for Stream Bank Buffer Planting Now

Know someone who wants to plant a stream bank buffer now or next year? In addition to funding available for buffer plantings this fall, DCNR has funding available for spring and fall 2021 plantings. Applications are being accepted now, and shovel-ready projects are funded on a first come, first served basis. The 2021 funds will be dispersed after January 1. This funding is available for nongovernmental organizations, Conservation Districts, municipalities, contract planters, etc. to plant buffers on any kind of property, as long as it's within 300 feet of a stream that doesn't currently have a buffer. The funding cannot go directly to landowners. The landowners have to work with an organization that has experience with planning, organizing, and contracting the planting. Anyone who is interested and has a project, please contact Teddi Stark at 717-787-0656 or [c-tstark@pa.gov](mailto:c-tstark@pa.gov).



### Funds to Help Farmers in Three Counties Implement Planned Manure or Nutrient Management or Erosion and Sediment Control Plans

Farmers in Adams, Chester, and Lancaster Counties who've completed manure or nutrient management or erosion and sediment control plans and want to put planned BMPs in place can contact their County Conservation District offices to get funding and technical assistance from the DEP Chesapeake Bay Agricultural Inspections Program Phase 2. Launched this summer, the program has \$2.8 million to help farmers install BMPs specified in their plans to benefit operations and improve water quality.

### Reimbursements to Defray Cost of Developing Manure Management, Nutrient Management, and Erosion and Sediment Control Plans

The DEP Agricultural Plan Reimbursement Program has \$900,000 available to reimburse farmers across Pennsylvania's share of the watershed for the cost of developing BMP plans. Landowners will be repaid the cost of hiring a technical expert to develop plans after January 1, 2019. More than one plan may be submitted for reimbursement for up to a maximum of \$6,000. Small farmers are especially encouraged to participate. For more information and how to register, see the [Ag Plan Reimbursement Program web page](#).

### Seventeen Projects with a Pennsylvania Component Funded by National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

Each year around this time, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund [announces a large slate of grants to great projects](#) across the watershed jurisdictions. Seventeen of this year's grants will support work in Pennsylvania's share of the watershed, from Lancaster to Tioga County. NFWF grants support projects that engage agricultural producers, municipalities, businesses, homeowners, and churches in on-the-ground restoration that supports quality of life in their communities and improves local waterways and ultimately the health of the bay.

## County Progress

### Adams (Pilot - Implementation)

The Countywide Action Plan Coordinator started in the Adams County Conservation District office on August 10. The planning team met in late July to lay out an engagement framework. The coordinator will lead three major advisory teams: agriculture, urban, and legislation/policy. With the diverse interests in agriculture, six sub-teams have been identified that will bring in experts on dairy precision feeding, waste storage facilities, riparian buffers, fruit growers, cover crops, and precision agriculture. Membership on each team and initial discussions are being developed.

Adams County is home to one of Pennsylvania's Critical Water Planning Areas under Act 220 of 2002. Discussions are underway to explore how the county's planning work as part of the Potomac Regional Committee of DEP's State Water Plan Update and the CAP process might be integrated and leverage each other. Adams County is also working on two forest buffer projects using DCNR multi-functional buffer grant funds, as well as funds from the Chesapeake Bay Foundation to plant 1,000 new trees in buffers around the county.

### Bedford (Tier 2 - Planning)

Bedford County is developing its draft Countywide Action Plan and BMP reduction scenarios in coordination with the DEP CBO technical support team. The CAP steering committee is building action teams in six priority areas: preservation of natural areas, agriculture, education and outreach, point source pollution, stormwater, and buffers.

### Centre (Tier 2 - Planning)

As it drafts its Countywide Action Plan, Centre County is considering how best to use the Chesapeake Assessment Scenario Tool and Model My Watershed; collect additional BMPs and ensure that BMPs have been captured; incorporate citizens' water quality monitoring data; and export aggregated agriculture information from PracticeKeeper to assure the agriculture community they're getting credit for all they're doing. The goal is to start getting partner feedback on the draft CAP in September.

The county team has conducted several key outreach efforts. They reached out to Ferguson Township regarding farm preservation efforts and a possible stormwater fee. They reached out to the Centre County Farm Bureau president and attended a bureau meeting. In a corridor of opportunity analysis, the county contacted 10 farmers for feedback on the CAP planning efforts and to discuss local plans. The county is considering surveying farms in this corridor for BMP opportunities. If this is successful, the county will do similar outreach in other areas.

### Cumberland (Tier 2 - Planning)

Cumberland County is doing extensive outreach across a wide range of potential and current partners from different sectors.

The county has been doing significant agricultural analysis and outreach. They conducted a corridor of opportunity analysis and then visited farms throughout August with the Lancaster Farmland Trust and talked with farmers about agriculture plans and implementing BMPs. The county has begun working with farmland preservation organizations to organize their efforts. The agriculture action team met with small groups of farmers to get their recommendations on a path forward. Cumberland County also conducted an aggregated PracticeKeeper export of agriculture information and found a lot more data to work with than expected.

The county is also meeting with Penn State-Harrisburg and the Alliance for Aquatic Resource Monitoring to discuss enlisting volunteers for water quality monitoring and data collection. Next steps: Identifying how this data may be incorporated into the Chesapeake Bay modeling tools, clarifying the needed qualifications for people who can capture and verify BMPs, and identifying remote sensing options for verification. The county is also reaching out to watershed organizations, as well as to the county MS4 workgroup. To assist with planning efforts, Cumberland County is looking at correlations between CAST and Model my Watershed.

### Franklin (Pilot - Implementation)

Franklin County held their Countywide Action Plan steering committee kickoff meeting in July. The coordinator followed up with one-on-one meetings with committee members throughout August. The county Planning Commission has expressed interest in participating, and the coordinator will meet with them to discuss partnership opportunities and how their Comprehensive Plan and environmental study work can be integrated into the CAP. The coordinator met with representatives from Chambersburg Borough to discuss partnering on projects that help fulfill the CAP goals as well as the borough's Pollution Reduction Plan, using BMPs such as buffers on borough-owned land.

The coordinator is holding meetings with county Conservation District staff to get input on upcoming BMP projects. The county is considering creating an Adopt-a-Stream program to aid in project implementation. A CAP Facebook page and the Conservation District newsletter are being used in outreach.

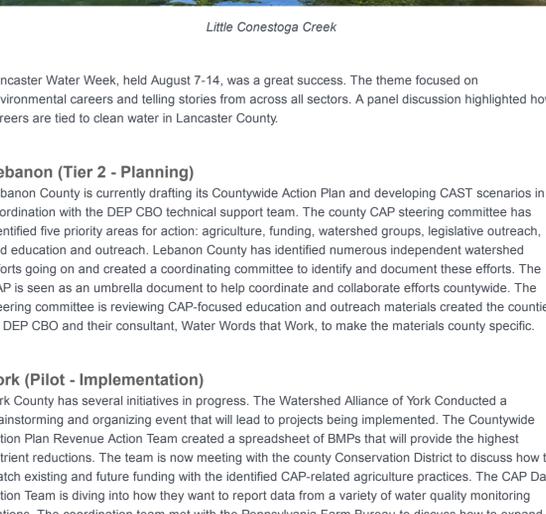
### Lancaster (Pilot - Implementation)

Lancaster County is working with local stakeholders and champions on a rapid impaired-stream delisting strategy. This includes forming a group to address water quality scores and identify specific stream segments and engage locally and with DEP on a delisting approach for each segment.

The county is finalizing the Lancaster Clean Water Partners Annual Report for fall release. They're examining every detail of the CAP and assessing efforts and next steps. This involves using funding programs to the maximum extent possible: Department of Agriculture Conservation Excellence Grants, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grants, DEP CAP Project Implementation Grants, Growing Greener, and other programs are helping them to implement practices and projects. Success stories are being developed to share with partners and others.

The Little Conestoga Creek Blue/Green Corridor Project team met with its four municipalities and received positive response. The team got feedback from potential funders, neighbors, and other influencers. The team met with every property owner along the 2.5 miles of the creek that will be restored, from Marietta Avenue to Swarr Run. An August 16 feature story in LNP introduced the project to the public. The announcement focused on the importance of clean water efforts in Lancaster County, the significance of legacy sediments and stream restorations, and how this project will help.

Funding for this project comes from the Steinman Foundation, UGI Utilities, and Lancaster Industrial Development Agency, and the project team has asked Lancaster County for \$100,000 from Act 13 funds. Remaining funds needed are expected to come from the municipalities.



Little Conestoga Creek

Lancaster Water Week, held August 7-14, was a great success. The theme focused on environmental careers and telling stories from across all sectors. A panel discussion highlighted how careers led to clean water in Lancaster County.

### Lebanon (Tier 2 - Planning)

Lebanon County is currently drafting its Countywide Action Plan and developing CAST scenarios in coordination with the DEP CBO technical support team. The county CAP steering committee has identified five priority areas for action: agriculture, funding, watershed groups, legislative outreach, and education and outreach. Lebanon County has identified numerous independent watershed efforts going on and created a coordinating committee to identify and document these efforts. The CAP is seen as an umbrella document to help coordinate and collaborate efforts countywide. The steering committee is reviewing CAP-focused education and outreach materials created by the counties by DEP CBO and their consultant, Water Words that Work, to make the materials county specific.

### York (Pilot - Implementation)

York County has several initiatives in progress. The Watershed Alliance of York Conducted a brainstorming and organizing event that will lead to projects being implemented. The Countywide Action Plan Revenue Action Team created a spreadsheet of BMPs that will provide the highest nutrient reductions. The team is now meeting with the county Conservation District to discuss how to match existing and future funding with the identified CAP-related agriculture practices. The CAP Data Action Team is diving into how they want to report data from a variety of water quality monitoring stations. The coordination team met with the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau to discuss how to expand outreach to York County's agricultural community and, specifically, how best to reach individual farmers. Next step: Meet with the York County Farm Bureau president and some local farmers to discuss ideas about outreach and the CAP.

## Legislative Updates

### Great American Outdoors Act

The [Great American Outdoors Act](#) was signed by the President on August 4. The Act addresses a maintenance backlog at national parks and permanently authorizes \$900 million per year for the Land & Water Conservation Fund, which supports parks, trails, and open space at the national, state, and local levels.



*Pennsylvania farmers have kept food on our tables through good times and bad. The long-term survival of their farms depends on healthy soil and clean water. These programs are a tangible way for us as a state to support the farmers who feed us and help ensure that they are able to continue feeding us in the future.*

— Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding, on [state funding programs](#) to support farmers' efforts for healthy waters



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