



## PHASE 3 WIP NEWS

*Pennsylvania. Partnership. Progress*



TOM WOLF, GOVERNOR • PATRICK MCDONNELL, SECRETARY

November 2020

### Hello partners for water quality!

We have much news on the state Phase 3 Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) and Countywide Action Plans for Pennsylvania's share of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. Please consider how you might help support and get the word out on this great work to improve water quality by reducing nutrient and sediment runoff pollution. And share this newsletter (or the [subscribe page](#)) with your networks 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 reducing runoff pollution in Pennsylvania's share of 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 practice (BMP) education and installation in their areas of influence.

### Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

DCNR is partnering with the U.S. Forest Service and Chesapeake Bay Watershed partner jurisdictions to improve forest conditions in the watershed. The state foresters of Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, New York, Virginia, West Virginia and the District of Columbia joined Forest Service Chief Vicki Christiansen in signing a stewardship agreement to strengthen collaboration in setting forest management priorities across the 64,000-square-mile watershed.

The agreement is a forward-looking strategy that positions partners to collaboratively leverage new opportunities, including:

- Incorporating climate change and placing Pennsylvania in a position of strength to build upon a solid foundation;
- Making a real difference in peoples' lives as we think about the benefits of increased tree cover and restoring forests;
- Benefiting from carbon-driven investments, corporate greening commitments, and a general trend toward a conservation ethic.



## DEP Chesapeake Bay Office

### Tier 1-2 Counties

Adams, Franklin, Lancaster, and York counties have reached the one-year milestone on their Countywide Action Plan (CAPs), and the CBO is excited to be reviewing their progress reports. The CBO continues to meet with Bedford, Centre, Cumberland, and Lebanon counties as they finalize their draft CAPs. County CAP coordinators are working with lead partners to share their draft plans with local stakeholders in November and will provide finalized CAPs to DEP in December, to be incorporated into the Phase 3 WIP.

Information sharing and training webinars continue. New addition: County spotlights, in which county partners share a project or process that's working well for them to help peers.

### Tier 3-4 Counties

The CBO, with assistance from the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania, hosted a webinar for county planning directors, commissioners, council members, executives, chief clerks, administrators, and solicitors. CBO staff and York County Planning Director Felicia Dell shared information on the CAP process and how counties can partner with DEP regional support teams by playing a leadership role in building local partnerships, leveraging resources, and managing projects and data. More than 45 attendees participated in this webinar. To date, 23 of the 26 Tier 3 and Tier 4 counties have indicated they will participate in the CAP process.

The DEP regional support teams, with technical assistance from the Susquehanna River Basin Commission, are presenting Community Clean Water Technical Toolboxes to the counties. The toolboxes have been very helpful, providing counties with county-specific information on the benefits of the CAP process and amount of effort needed to develop their CAPs.

A new public-facing course on the DEP Clean Water Academy, [Tier 3 and 4 Countywide Action Planning](#), provides planning and implementation materials for the Tier 3 and 4 counties.

## Reporting and Data

The CBO technical team is working with the Chesapeake Conservancy's geospatial project manager to reach out to counties in the watershed to review their draft 2017-2018 one-meter, high-resolution land cover data. The conservancy and the University of Vermont Spatial Analysis Laboratory are part of an agreement with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to provide GIS support to the Chesapeake Bay Program.

Ashley Lenker-White, a Phase 3 WIP Action Leader and Director of Government Relations for the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania, identified key staff in each county to conduct these reviews. The 2017-2018 datasets will be used to establish land use and land cover changes that affect counties' baseline conditions and loading estimates toward meeting the 2025 Phase 3 WIP goals. Once Pennsylvania has reviewed these datasets, they'll be presented to the Chesapeake Bay Program's Land Use Workgroup and incorporated into the 2021 update of the Chesapeake Assessment Scenario Tool (CAST), which allows users to model simulations in developing plans to meet nutrient and sediment reduction targets.

## Funding Assistance

In October DCNR announced the [2020 Community Conservation Partnership Program \(C2P2\) rivers and buffers grant awards](#). These grants fund stream bank forest buffer and stream restoration projects that help reduce nutrient and sediment pollution.

The next round of C2P2 rivers and buffers grants will open January 2021. Free workshops on how to apply for C2P2 grants are available online, with the Central Pennsylvania workshop scheduled for November 12. [Register here](#) and spread the word!

DCNR still has funding available for spring 2021 projects to convert turf into forest or meadow. Contact Kelsey Miller at [c-kelmille@pa.gov](mailto:c-kelmille@pa.gov). And visit the new [DCNR Lawn Conversion website](#) to learn more and sign up for their newsletter.

All DCNR buffer funding for Spring 2021 plantings has been allotted. If you have buffer projects identified, reach out to Teddi Stark at [c-tstark@pa.gov](mailto:c-tstark@pa.gov), and you'll be put on the waiting list for future funding.

## County Progress

### Adams (Pilot - Implementation)

Adams County has submitted its CAP first-year annual progress report, highlighting what they've accomplished this past year. The CAP coordinator is working with municipal leaders regarding a Gettysburg Borough buffer project and with private consultants regarding advanced nutrient management projects. County Conservation District staff and the CAP coordinator are working with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service on additional nutrient monitoring at two monitoring stations. In addition, the coordinator is working on a land prioritization analysis to protect drinking water. This will help prioritize parcels for projects.

### Bedford (Tier 2 - Planning)

The Bedford County draft CAP has been submitted to the DEP CBO, who met with the county CAP management team to learn more about the plan and implementation.

Bedford County plans to finalize its CAP in November, and has created action teams that have already begun working on priority initiatives:

- The Preservation of Natural Areas Action Team is working to capture and map more data on currently preserved and conserved areas to start identifying higher priority locations where BMPs, such as forest/farm/wetland conservation and conservation landscaping, can achieve the most benefits in reducing nutrient pollution.
- The Agriculture Action Team is working to gain a better understanding of select BMPs (such as cover crops and grazing) and identify existing activities where CAP objectives can be incorporated into agendas and communications. The CAP coordinator is reaching out to the Bedford-Blair Penn State Extension Office to work on incorporating nutrient management goals into the "chemical meetings" they'll have with farmers this winter.
- The Riparian Buffers Action Team is working on engaging with the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, and similar groups to get details on their activities and goals in Bedford County.
- The Point Source Pollution Action Team is engaging the Bedford Sanitary Corporation for potential participation in the team. This will lead to greater understanding of the number, extent, and status of septic systems in the county.
- The Education Action Team is formulating a long-term communications plan to ensure that everyone countywide is in the loop regarding activities, opportunities, and ways to reduce pollution. They're also exploring social media platforms for outreach and what resources will be needed to manage different platforms.

### Centre (Tier 2 - Planning)

Centre County has completed their draft CAP, submitted it to the DEP CBO, and discussed it with them. The county CAP leadership team is conducting outreach seeking public feedback and comments over the month of November, with a goal of submitting the final CAP to DEP and moving into implementation in December.

To that end, the coordination team focused on targeted outreach over the past month to the agriculture community, watershed and land conservation groups, and Penn State University, and has held weekly calls with the county Farm Bureau. The CAP team has started a farm outreach program to provide information about the CAP, seek feedback and support, and perform farm analysis. This includes outreach with Plain Sect agriculture leaders. The county is also kicking off a project with Penn State to gather support for the CAP with the assistance student groups, focusing on outreach for the CAP.

Centre County is looking to expand on the Chesapeake Conservancy priority watershed approach, including a rapid delisting approach and new BMP implementation.

### Cumberland (Tier 2 - Planning)

Cumberland County has completed their draft CAP, submitted it to DEP, and discussed it with CBO staff. The county CAP leadership team is conducting outreach to get public feedback and comments from county stakeholders over the month of November, with a goal of submitting the final CAP to DEP and moving into implementation in December. The Lancaster Farmland Trust has begun visiting farms on behalf of the CAP effort, and the team is developing an "interested landowners" list for BMP implementation next year. The county is also looking into developing a preservation program to provide more technical support. Cumberland is receiving Conservation Excellence Grant funding for 2021 and is reviewing its existing landowner list to identify farmers who qualify for CEG funding.

### Franklin (County - Implementation)

Franklin County has submitted its CAP first-year annual progress report, highlighting what they've accomplished this past year. The CAP leadership team is performing an assessment of their CAP and tracking new goals for the upcoming year. The CAP coordinator is continuing to build a project-tracking spreadsheet that will streamline the process of matching funding to projects. The Franklin County Conservation District is working with a large horse farm to implement multiple BMPs that will reduce nutrients and sediment, in alignment with the CAP, utilizing funds from the CAP Implementation Grant.

### Lancaster (Pilot - Implementation)

Lancaster County has submitted its CAP first-year annual progress report, highlighting what they've accomplished this past year and showcasing a good effort in making their nutrient goal reduction.

Lancaster is currently focusing on a stream delisting strategy, pairing this with their NRCS Regional Conservation Partnership Program application. This will use the delisting approach to prioritize watersheds for BMP implementation. The Conestoga, Chicques, Pequea, and Octoraro are the focus watersheds for the delisting approach. In these watersheds, 500 parcels have been identified where the landowner is willing or likely willing to accept funding and BMP installation. The strategy is looking at overlap with municipal stormwater Pollution Reduction Plans, Index of Biological Integrity stream health assessment scores, and monitoring efforts. This will help identify the most effective places, priorities, monitoring needs, and innovation opportunities. The strategy also includes following up with the initial outreach.

The county is also looking into EPA's Most Effective Basins program and has submitted an application for grant funding.

### Lebanon (Tier 2 - Planning)

The Lebanon County draft CAP has been submitted to the DEP CBO, who met with the county CAP management team to learn more about the plan and implementation. Lebanon County plans to finalize its CAP in November, and has created action teams that have already begun working on CAP priority initiatives.

- The Education and Outreach Action Team is developing a communications plan to ensure everyone is in the loop with activities and opportunities related to the CAP and reducing nutrient pollution. The team is also building out a CAP website and working with the other action teams to identify their outreach and education needs. The county believes that communications, education, and outreach will require an elevated focus to help push CAP objectives in the right direction.
- The Agriculture Action Team is working to bring existing water quality data into the county's Catchment Management Database to assist with prioritization activities for catchments and create initial focus areas for BMP implementation. The team will reach out to NRCS to ascertain what type of support can be provided for the next steps outlined in the NRCS Swatara report. The team is also working on getting a better understanding of select BMP definitions (e.g. cover crops).
- The Coordinating Action Team is working to engage local legislators to build support for implementation activities. The team will also focus on how to inject CAP objectives into existing efforts and programs to ensure resources do not compete for long-term implementation needs. The first step is to continue identifying other programs above and beyond what has previously been identified. Engagement with the Lebanon Valley Conservancy will occur to assist with initial efforts in the Swatara Watershed.
- The Stormwater Action Team is working to organize the line of communication to better streamline efforts and identify gaps between resources allocated and resources needed.

### York (Pilot - Implementation)

York County has submitted its CAP first-year annual progress report, highlighting what they've accomplished this past year. A consultant selected to help with a CAP technical and outreach campaign is pending approval of the York County Planning Commission. The Education and Outreach Action Team developed a list of upcoming opportunities to help get the outreach campaign started.

York County is focusing on agriculture outreach as part of their CAP priority initiatives. CAP leaders met with York County Farm Bureau president to increase their understanding and involvement with the agriculture sector and will be continuing to expand outreach to the agriculture community through these kind of outreach efforts. The Data Action Team is meeting with the U.S. Geological Survey to discuss the water quality monitoring network in York County, to look into ways to improve reporting in York County.

## Legislative Update

Congress passed the America's Conservation Enhancement (ACE) Act with strong bipartisan support on October 1, sending it to the President for signature. A package of measures authorizing \$1.1 billion in conservation programs relating to wildlife and habitat, ACE includes three significant provisions for the Chesapeake:

- **Section 109. Reauthorization of Chesapeake Bay Program:** This section reauthorizes appropriations for the EPA Chesapeake Bay Program with increases from \$90 million for fiscal year 2020 to \$90.5 million for fiscal year 2021; \$91 million for fiscal year 2022; \$91.5 million for fiscal year 2023; and \$92 million for fiscal year 2024.
- **Section 110. Reauthorization of Chesapeake Bay Initiative Act of 1998:** This section reauthorizes appropriations of \$3 million for the Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Watertrails Network and the Chesapeake Bay Gateways Grants Assistance Program for each fiscal year through 2025.
- **Section 111. Chesapeake Watershed Investments For Landscape Defense:** This section authorizes a new grant program administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at \$15 million per fiscal years 2021 through 2025.

If enacted, these authorizations are still subject to annual appropriations, but they provide an important benchmark for funding.



*I can't talk about the bay forest restoration work without talking about partnerships—from federal, state, and local governments; academia; conservancies; and, finally, local tree planting or landscaping contractors.*

*The sharing, energy, critical thinking, engagement and cooperation are evident and robust among the bay partners.*

— *Pennsylvania State Forester Ellen Shultzabarger on the new stewardship agreement between the U.S. Forest Service and state foresters of Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, New York, Virginia, West Virginia and the District of Columbia to strengthen collaboration in setting forest management priorities across the watershed*



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