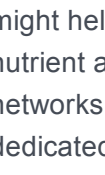




PHASE 3 WIP NEWS

Pennsylvania. Partnership. Progress.



TOM WOLF, GOVERNOR • PATRICK MCDONNELL, SECRETARY

December 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 best management practice (BMP) education and installation in their areas of influence.

The State Team will meet on January 26, 2021 from 1 PM to 4 PM virtually. The [agenda and associated materials for this public meeting will be posted here](#) prior to the meeting.

PENNVEST

In November, PENNVEST finalized its agreement with Land Logics Group to develop the new Center for Water Quality Excellence. The center is anticipated to go live online by May 2021, with the physical location opening planned for summer 2021. Land Logics will do outreach at a variety of events to the extent possible during the COVID-19 pandemic, with safety protocols maintained.

The Center for Water Quality Excellence will be a one-stop shop to help farmers, land owners, municipalities, municipal authorities, conservation districts, and businesses determine the best technical and financial assistance available for sustainable water quality infrastructure projects to reduce nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment discharges into local waters and ultimately the bay.

The center will offer guidance and technical support on BMP installation based on resource management and surveying tools such as topographical mapping. It will coordinate with federal, state, private, and local funding opportunities and provide guidance on the optimal use of all of available funding for BMPs and other non-point source pollution prevention projects, such as habitat improvement projects.

State Conservation Commission

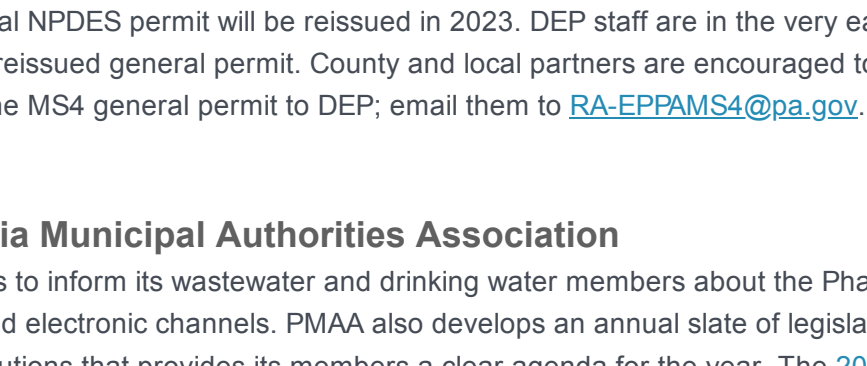
The [Conservation Excellence Grant Program](#) awarded over \$1 million each to York, Lancaster, Cumberland, and Franklin counties to enable implementation of best management practices on agricultural operations in high-priority locations. In addition, the commission is working with a Lancaster County nonprofit on a private-public partnership to use CEG dollars. The CEG Program has now allocated \$4.8 million in state and federal funds to implement priority BMPs.

Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

DCNR has distributed all of its buffer planting funding for fiscal year 2020-2021. The funds will result in 110 acres of new forest buffers. These projects will be recorded in PracticeKeeper for the first time, with a plan to expand this reporting next year. DCNR will apply to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for additional funding for buffers.

A direct mail, social media, and news media outreach campaign developed by a marketing firm resulted in 180 landowners reaching out to DCNR with interest in getting assistance with planting forest buffers along streams on their properties. Service foresters are following up with the landowners, and four projects are already underway. The Farm Bureau is aiding DCNR in further outreach, specifically to agricultural landowners.

DCNR is working to fill another position to help with buffer outreach and another TreeVitalize position for tree canopy and lawn conversion.



Making Progress on Streamside Forests
DCNR strives to support the planting of trees along streams.
@dcnr.pa.gov

DEP MS4 and Construction Stormwater

MS4 communities are beginning to implement BMPs identified in their 2018-2023 Pollutant Reduction Plans. Staff in the DEP MS4 section are developing guidance materials to help address questions about BMP implementation, with a primary focus on stream restoration and how credits work.

The draft *Post-Construction Stormwater Management Manual* (previously the *Stormwater BMP Manual*) is nearly complete. It's going through internal DEP review before it'll be published in the Pennsylvania Bulletin for public comment.

The MS4 general NPDES permit will be reissued in 2023. DEP staff are in the very early stages of developing the reissued general permit. County and local partners are encouraged to submit comments on the MS4 general permit to DEP; email them to RA-EPPAMS4@pa.gov.

Pennsylvania Municipal Authorities Association

PMAA continues to inform its wastewater and drinking water members about the Phase 3 WIP through print and electronic channels. PMAA also develops an annual slate of legislative and regulatory resolutions that provides its members a clear agenda for the year. The [2021 Resolutions](#) voted on and adopted at our 2020 virtual conference include the following related to Phase 3 WIP objectives:

- Resolution 3-21: That PMAA support maintaining the wastewater nutrient reduction limits (6 mg/l nitrogen, 0.8 mg/l phosphorus) under the Chesapeake Bay Program.
- Resolution 4-21: That PMAA advise EPA and DEP that the Pennsylvania wastewater sector, already having complied with its sector's nitrogen and phosphorus reductions three years prior to the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) 2017 interim deadline and seven years prior to the 2025 deadline, should not be required to impose any more stringent limitations on their rate payers while other sectors' contributing nutrient and sediment loadings to the Chesapeake Bay have not met their 2017 or 2025 requirements.
- Resolution 5-21: That PMAA urge EPA and DEP to base nutrient and sediment TMDLs on sound science, required regulatory procedures, and cost/benefit analyses as required by existing federal and state statutes.
- Resolution 6-21: That PMAA support the use of a viable water quality trading program in Pennsylvania.

In addition, PMAA has boots on the ground, with members such as the University Area Joint Authority (Centre County) and past president Dan Becker (Lancaster County) providing technical support in communities for local water quality improvement in the watershed.

DEP Chesapeake Bay Office

Tier 1-2 Counties

DEP has awarded \$6 million in 2020 Chesapeake Bay Implementation Grants to Adams, Bedford, Centre, Cumberland, Franklin, Lancaster, Lebanon, and York counties. See [funding awards by county](#). They may begin using these grants in January to accelerate implementation of the priority initiatives specified in their Countywide Action Plans. They'll receive funding for full-time plan coordinators and a range of projects that represent scientific best practices to reduce nutrient and sediment pollution. The 2020 grants follow 2019 implementation grants as part of a multi-year agreement.

The counties have begun discussing the potential for a cross-county partnership when applying for future grants to better leverage funding.

Bedford, Centre, Cumberland, and Lebanon counties are meeting with CBO staff to finalize their Countywide Action Plans this month and then will immediately begin to transition from planning to implementation.

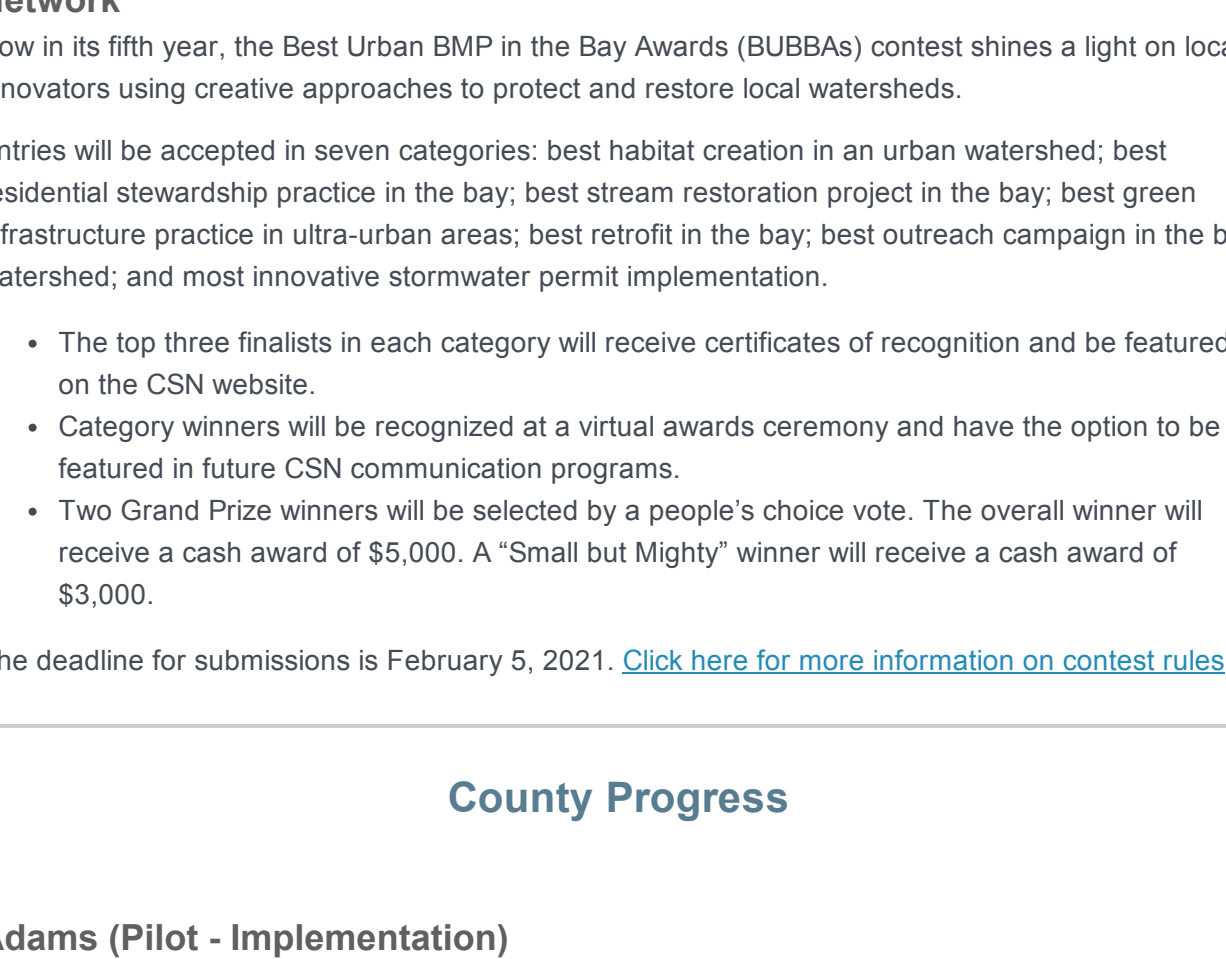
Adams, Franklin, Lancaster, and York counties are meeting with CBO staff to discuss the first-year progress reports they've submitted and next steps for the second year of implementation.

Look for these final CAPs and first year progress reports on the Phase 3 WIP website later in December. Pennsylvania's progress on its state Phase 3 WIP goal will be released this winter.

Tier 3-4 Counties

In partnership with the DEP Regional CAP Support Teams, the CBO is excited to announce 100 percent participation from our Tier 3 and 4 counties in the CAP process. We thank all the county partners and DEP regional offices for their great help in getting this effort underway. To streamline the CAP process, and make the most of the resources available, the Tier 3 and 4 counties will work in groups, sharing a coordinator. The groups are almost finalized. The counties will then have the option to create individual CAPs or create a regional CAP with other counties in their group.

There is already good work happening in Northeast counties that will be included in CAPs. The DEP Northeast Regional Office recently helped three farms install almost 8,000 linear feet of fencing and cattle watering troughs that are used as alternate watering sources to help keep cows out of streams and protect stream banks. Troughs and streambank fencing on farms are important tools for reducing nutrient pollution and protecting livestock health.



A cattle watering trough in a pasture in northeast Pennsylvania

Reporting and Data

The CBO submitted its 2020 Progress Run data to EPA on December 1 in compliance with the terms of its federal grant guidance. A total of 8,123 new records from our reporting programs were submitted, including records from new reporting programs, such as those from PennDOT, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, and the Chesapeake Commons. Additionally, animal heavy use area protection BMPs are now being reported for credit under the BMP title "Loafing Lot Management."

Pennsylvania's current active inventory of restoration practices includes a total of 61,229 BMP records. (Note that records are not synonymous with acres or other units of measurement.)

Funding Available

Loans from PENNVEST

The need for funding for Phase 3 WIP and county action planning efforts is a consistent message. There's not enough grant money to go around. So how can grant dollars be leveraged to go further? PENNVEST offers low-interest loans (1 percent over 20 years) to help project development and implementation! [Learn more and apply.](#)

Rivers Conservation Grants from DCNR

The DCNR Community Conservation Partnerships Program Rivers Conservation grant round opens in January. Rivers Conservation grants focus on protecting and enhancing the conservation or recreation value of Pennsylvania's waterways. Development of outdoor recreation and water resource conservation activities at all stages of project development may be funded. Nonprofit entities, municipalities, county governments, municipal agencies, state heritage areas, land trusts, and educational institutions can apply. These grants require a 1:1 match, with a minimum grant award of \$50,000. [Learn more and apply.](#)

Resource Enhancement and Protection Program from the SCC

REAP will have \$13 million in tax credits available in 2021, and \$4 million is still available this year. In addition, projects located in watersheds with a TMDL (i.e., all 43 counties in Pennsylvania's share of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed) are eligible for a REAP credit for 90 percent of out-of-pocket installation costs for the following BMPs: riparian forest buffer installation or maintenance, livestock exclusion for streams and related practices (e.g. streambank fencing, stream crossings, off-stream waterers, etc.), and soil health tests for farmers who are also participating in other organizations' soil health efforts.

REAP is a statewide program, and applications are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. Applicants must have all agricultural erosion and sediment control plans and manure management plans required of them by the Pennsylvania Clean Streams Law. [Learn more and apply.](#)

"Best Urban BMP in the Bay" Awards from the Chesapeake Stormwater Network

Now in its fifth year, the Best Urban BMP in the Bay Awards (BUBBAs) contest shines a light on local innovators using creative approaches to protect and restore local watersheds.

Entries will be accepted in seven categories: best habitat creation in an urban watershed; best residential stewardship practice in the bay; best stream restoration project in the bay; best green infrastructure practice in ultra-urban areas; best retrofit in the bay; best outreach campaign in the bay watershed; and most innovative stormwater permit implementation.

- The top three finalists in each category will receive certificates of recognition and be featured on the CSN website.
- Category winners will be recognized at a virtual awards ceremony and have the option to be featured in future CSN communication programs.
- Two Grand Prize winners will be selected by a people's choice vote. The overall winner will receive a cash award of \$5,000. A "Small but Mighty" winner will receive a cash award of \$3,000.

The deadline for submissions is February 5, 2021. [Click here for more information on contest rules.](#)

County Progress

Adams (Pilot - Implementation)

Adams County used \$380,134 from the Natural Resources Conservation Program to complete a large number of agricultural BMPs throughout the county that will yield nutrient and sediment reductions through the CAP:

- 21 grass waterways, totaling 12.15 acres
- 3 terraces, totaling 2,091 feet
- 5 water and sediment control basins
- 10 underground outlet systems, totaling 7,041 feet
- 29 subsurface drainage systems, totaling 58,623 feet
- 8 rock lined waterway outlets, totaling 224 feet
- 119 feet of fencing around manure storage
- 1 diversion totally 508 feet

The county CAP coordinator is working with CBO technical staff on identifying new methods of testing and verifying precision dairy feeding. This is important for the county, since precision dairy feeding is included in the CAP. The county is also developing a priority watershed plan, which will help guide the implementation of BMPs.

Bedford (Tier 2 - Planning)

Bedford County has completed their CAP and is looking ahead to implementation. The team is focusing on identifying priority areas for BMPs, addressing point source pollution, and gathering data and existing agricultural plans. LandStudies Inc. will continue as the CAP coordinator as the county moves into implementation.

Centre (Tier 2 - Planning)

Centre County is continuing to receive comments on their CAP from planning team members and will have the final document and accompanying narrative completed by the end of December.

Cumberland (Tier 2 - Planning)

Cumberland County is continuing to receive comments on their CAP from planning team members and will have the final document and accompanying narrative completed by the end of December.

Franklin (Pilot - Implementation)

Franklin County submitted its first year progress report and its budget for 2021 to the CBO. Working with a consultant, the coordinator prepared an application for Section 319 grant funding from DEP to write a 319 watershed plan for Rowe Run. The [Franklin County Conservation Facebook page](#) has been created and has had good engagement.

Over the winter, the CAP coordinator will focus on agriculture outreach. The conservation district got a grant to host an event to educate members of the agriculture industry about the CAP and provide them with CAP information materials they can hand out as they talk to their farmers and other industry members.

The CAP coordinator has developed several new initiatives for 2021:

- Work with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to align their needs in the county with the CAP needs.
- Work on getting BMP reporting up to date.
- Collaborate with the Franklin County Planning Department to determine how the CAP fits in with its comprehensive plan. The Planning Department will work on incorporating priority initiatives.

Lancaster (Pilot - Implementation)

Lancaster County is working on submitting their annual progress report. The CAP coordinator team is looking to use the CAP progress report to help set their goals for 2021. There will be a shift to a more specific quantitative scope and reporting. The Lancaster team has submitted an RCPP grant proposal to use a delisting strategy to narrow down their priority catchments.

The Lancaster Clean Water Partners invite everyone to [subscribe to their new newsletter](#), to follow the county's progress.

Lebanon (Tier 2 - Planning)

Lebanon County has completed their CAP document and is looking ahead to implementation. The Lebanon County Conservation District is excited to announce that a new staff member has been hired to serve as the county CAP coordinator. LandStudies Inc., who acted as the coordinator during the planning phase, will continue to provide technical support. The new coordinator will move the CAP into implementation.

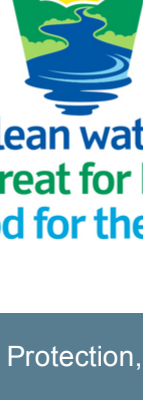
York (Pilot - Implementation)

York County has submitted their first year progress report to the CBO. The CAP coordinator is working with a marketing consultant on outreach, including developing a brochure on water quality monitoring. The Countywide Action Team has strengthened their partnership with the U.S. Geological Survey and the agriculture community. USGS is attending a data management team meeting as well as a Farm Bureau meeting, where they'll present on water quality.



We have a relationship with the U.S. Geological Survey on water quality monitoring that would not have happened without our focus on the Countywide Action Plan. That's a partnership we were trying to forge for years, but there just wasn't the right emphasis or attention on the need around monitoring, and what could be done. All of the stars aligned when we developed the CAP to highlight why it's important.

— Felicia Dell, AICP, Director, York County Planning Commission



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



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