



Pennsylvania

Department of
Environmental Protection

**Water Resources Advisory Committee (WRAC) Meeting
Meeting Minutes | September 10, 2025, 9:30 AM – 12:00 PM**

Rachel Carson State Office Building, 400 Market Street Room 105, Harrisburg, PA 17101
and Microsoft® Teams online.

Call to Order, Introductions, & Attendance – Matthew Genchur, Chair

The meeting was called to order by Chair Matthew Genchur at 9:32 a.m. Bob Haines conducted a roll call and of the 15-member committee, 9 members were present. A quorum was established.

The following committee members were present:

Chair Matthew Genchur.....Resource Environmental Solutions (RES)
Vice-chair Beth Uhler.....Center for Watershed Protection
Myron Arnowitt.....Clean Water Action
Harry Campbell.....Chesapeake Bay Foundation
Jenifer Christman.....Western Pennsylvania Conservancy
Kent Crawford, Ph.D.....USGS (Retired)
Andrew Dehoff.....Susquehanna River Basin Commission
John Jackson, Ph.D.....Stroud Water Research Center
Kristen Kavanagh, P.E.....Delaware River Basin Commission

The following committee members were absent:

Alexandra Chiaruttini.....The York Water Company
Shirley Clark, Ph.D., P.E.....Pennsylvania State University
Theo Light, Ph.D.....Shippensburg University
Cory Miller.....University Area Joint Authority
Dean Miller.....Pennsylvania Water Environment Association
Charles Wunz, P.E.....Wunz Associates

Review and Approval of Minutes from March 12, 2025, Meeting (Action) – Matthew Genchur, Chair

Chair Genchur requested consideration of the March 12, 2025, draft meeting minutes. Jennifer Christman inquired about a miscount in the attendance record. Bob Haines acknowledged the error and noted that the record would be corrected.

Motion: Drew Dehoff made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from September with Kristin Kavanagh seconding the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment – Matthew Genchur, Chair

There were no public comments.

2026 Integrated Report Update – Dustin Shull, Environmental Group Manager, Bureau of Clean Water

Dustin provided an update on the 2026 Integrated Water Quality Report. This update included a general timeline for the report, major changes, and preliminary data highlights.

Kent Crawford asked why the water quality improved for Presque Isle Bay. Dustin replied that there were multiple changes that happened with regard to water quality discharges to Lake Erie and Presque Isle Bay as well as other general nutrient cleanups. Those efforts resulted in much lower contamination levels of bacteria particularly in *E. coli*. Dustin added that restoration activities led to this restoration.

Kent asked for more details regarding quality control of data from third-party monitoring groups. Dustin explained that Pennsylvania uses a three-tier system for data acceptance. Tiers 1 and 2 are generally informational and often lack study or quality assurance plans, so they cannot be used directly for assessment decisions; however, the Department does consider these data and shares them with regional offices to help prioritize data collection and reassessments. Tier 3 data, on the other hand, meet DEP collection protocols, have been audited in the field and laboratory, and include the necessary quality assurance documentation. These data can be used directly for assessment decisions, and Dustin noted that the number of Tier 3 submitters has been increasing in recent years.

Beth Uhler asked if the Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 designations for data submitter groups would be included as part of the background information in the Integrated Report. Dustin confirmed that they would, noting that the Integrated Report includes a separate Data Solicitation Report, located in the data subsection, which details all data submitters, the type of data submitted, the tiers assigned, and how the department used the data. Dustin explained that the 2026 version will be a 30 to 60-page report available for download. Beth commented that this will be valuable for local groups interested in participating in water quality monitoring, and Dustin agreed, adding that interest and activity in this area are rapidly increasing.

Matt Genchur asked why the Department has recently received much larger amounts of data from outside groups compared to the past. Dustin responded that several factors contribute to this increase. Dustin explained that communication with outside organizations has improved, with targeted webinars and presentations to watershed groups, conservation districts, and similar audiences, which has helped spread awareness of the process. Additionally, the tier structure has made the process clearer, giving groups a better understanding of how their data will be categorized and used. Dustin also noted that recent improvements, such as the creation of spreadsheet templates for data submission, have made it much easier for groups to submit their information, further encouraging participation.

John Jackson asked how many waters have been completely removed from the 303(d) list after being restored for all designated uses. Dustin replied that he did not have a specific number but explained that it is rare for all four use categories of a waterbody to be fully assessed and fully restored. More commonly, only one or two uses are impaired and later restored, leaving others unassessed and making complete removal uncommon. John noted that most of the 1,100 stream miles restored since 2004 are related to abandoned mine drainage (AMD) and expressed interest in highlighting broader success stories, particularly in agricultural and urban waters where recreation and aquatic life are restored. Dustin agreed, acknowledging that while AMD dominates the restoration record, some agricultural and nutrient-related improvements have led to multi-use recovery. John emphasized the importance of showing these examples and noted the challenge of distinguishing true restorations from simple reclassifications. He added that restoring a stream requires significant effort from many stakeholders, including property owners and water users, and underscored the value of the integrated report's increasing clarity and accessibility in communicating these efforts.

Matt Genchur recommended that DEP present an example of a fully restored stream that has been removed from the 303(d) list as a future presentation to WRAC.

Chesapeake Bay Progress Update – Kate Bresaw, Environmental Program Manager, Bureau of Watershed Restoration and Nonpoint Source Management

Kate provided an update on the Chesapeake Bay progress, highlighting nutrient management efforts and agricultural inspections and compliance.

Kent Crawford asked about the continuation of various funding sources, specifically IJJA funding. Kate responded that DEP currently has 2025 funding allocations and anticipates receiving 2026 allocations. Kent expressed support for that update and then asked whether DEP coordinates with local entities regarding revenues generated from stormwater fees (commonly referred to as a “rain tax”), which amount to significant funding for activities such as retrofits and stormwater management. Kate replied that she did not have an answer on that coordination but would look into it further. Beth Uhler added that the NPDES MS4 program is driving much of the development and implementation of stormwater fees, with DEP's role primarily through the regulatory program, which creates the incentive for municipalities to establish such fees. Beth noted that these projects often meet MS4 requirements, citing the Lebanon County consortium as an example. Kent then asked whether those projects are included in DEP's accounting, and Kate confirmed that they are reported as part of the MS4 program, one of the 48 data reporters in DEP's tracking system for the Chesapeake Bay reporting.

Harry Campbell asked about Pennsylvania's perspective and priorities in the ongoing discussions to develop a new Chesapeake Bay Agreement, referred to as “Beyond 2025,” which will guide future commitments by partner jurisdictions. Kate responded that she was not the most appropriate person to speak on Pennsylvania's role in those conversations but noted that the department could follow up with additional information from the appropriate staff.

Pam Shellenberger, representing the York County Planning Commission, claimed that MS4 reporting is only included in Chesapeake Bay reporting, if the reports are submitted electronically by municipalities; paper-based submissions are not captured in the reporting system.

Note: DEP's MS4 Program staffed followed up with the York County Planning Commission after the WRAC meeting to provide clarification on how BMPs installed to meet MS4 permit requirements can be reported to the Bay Model. Any BMPs reported in MS4 annual reports that are submitted electronically through the MS4 eReporting application will be exported from the application and provided to the Bay Office for reporting to the Bay Model. However, this is not the only way to report MS4 BMPs to the Bay Model. Permittees that chose not to use the eReporting application have the option of reporting MS4 BMPs through Practicekeeper.

John Jackson complimented the presentation but noted that it lacked updates on site visits conducted by counties to track compliance, such as which entities have appropriate nutrient management plans and are actively implementing them. Kate replied that the inspection program, including nutrient management plans and enforcement efforts, is ongoing. Kate noted that an annual summary is typically produced in the fall, and the 2025 summary has not yet been completed. Kate offered to provide a future presentation specifically on these inspection results. She added that the program continues with participation from county conservation districts and DEP regional offices, which are actively performing Chesapeake Bay inspections.

Chapter 105 Program Update (Informational) – Domenic Rocco, Director, Bureau of Waterways Engineering and Wetlands

Domenic provided an update to the Committee on the Chapter 105 program. Topics covered included modernization of general permits, updates and improvements to SOPs, and the pilot program and joint permitting initiatives.

Jenifer Christman asked for more details on recent Senate bills. Domenic noted that Senate Bills 403 and 404, sponsored by Senator Yaw, focus on stream maintenance and that a link to the bills will be provided. Domenic added that similar legislation has been proposed in previous years under different bill numbers over the past three to four years.

Beth Uhler asked Dominic for clarification on whether the proposed stream maintenance bills would allow work in streams using equipment without permits or if they aimed for broader changes. Dominic explained that the bills are not DEP proposals and emphasized the importance of reviewing the actual bill language. He summarized that the bills would allow municipalities and PennDOT, and potentially others, to clear sections of streams that commonly flood or fill with debris, similar to past projects like those in Bradford County. He noted that the proposals are broader than existing channel clearing standards and are gaining some traction, but any questions or concerns would be best directed to the bill sponsors.

Matt Genchur asked about the Ch. 105 Pilot Program and how applicants can participate, including guidance on the process and any potential restrictions. Domenic clarified that participation is managed through the regional offices and the Regional Permit Coordination Office, totaling seven offices. Entry into the program begins with the standard pre-application meeting process: the first

meeting provides background information, and the second allows applicants to review a draft application and receive feedback. Applicants are encouraged to start with these pre-application meetings. Highly complex projects requiring extensive coordination are not suitable for the Pilot Program or SPEED. However, projects requiring a Submerged Lands License Agreement, if obtained early in the process, should not be an issue for either program. Domenic added that the Pilot program prioritizes publicly funded energy and restoration projects, although interest from these sectors has been limited so far. Domenic offered to share a link with additional information about the program.

Kent Crawford asked whether Beth Uhler intends to review Senate Bills 403 and 404 for the Committee or for personal reference. Beth offered to review the bills and provide a summary for the Committee.

John Jackson referenced the Brandywine Flood Study, a Pennsylvania–Delaware watershed-scale study on local flooding. He noted that recent rain events causing flooding exceeding what most stormwater infrastructure is designed to handle, creating confusion about how floods are defined and managed in engineering processes. The study highlights the immense volume of water in major storms and underscores the importance of maintaining a clearly defined 100-year floodplain and keeping development out of that area. John emphasized that reengineering streams is minimal compared to the scale of floodwaters and that the study explored location-specific solutions and engineering limits. Domenic thanked John for sharing the Brandywine Flood Study and noted reading the study as well. Domenic agreed with John’s points and highlighted that over 90% of flood events reported to the National Weather Service occurred outside of designated flood zones, with about one-third of related claims also outside those areas. Domenic emphasized that this demonstrates the need to think beyond the 100-year floodplain, as extreme rainfall events, such as four inches in two hours, are occurring more frequently nationwide and require a different approach to planning and preparedness. Domenic provided additional information on bridges and culverts, noting that DEP’s website includes resources on “continuity crossings.” He explained that this approach, often used in the Dirt and Gravel Roads Program but applicable more broadly, involves evaluating stream profiles upstream and downstream to design crossings that allow water and sediment to move naturally. Properly designed structures reduce the need for ongoing maintenance and prevent issues caused by mismatched elevations at culverts or bridges. Domenic added that guidance materials are available on DEP’s website and would be shared with the group.

Chapter 102 SPEED Update (Informational) – Krystal Bloom, Environmental Group Manager, Bureau of Clean Water

Krystal provided a progress update on the Streamlining Permits for Economic Expansion and Development (SPEED) initiative as it relates to the Chapter 102 program.

Harry Campbell asked whether the work of Qualified Professionals (QPs) in the SPEED program will be audited. Krystal responded that discussions are ongoing across all programs within SPEED on how QPs will be evaluated after completing permit reviews. While details are still being finalized, she emphasized that there is an intention to ensure QPs review permits at the same standard as DEP or conservation districts.

General Discussion/Agenda Topics Request – Matthew Genchur, Chair

Jenifer Christman raised the issue about the chat function being disabled. Bob Haines informed the Committee that per DEP policy the chat function will not be available for meetings and any resources that need to be given to the Committee will be emailed through the Committee liaison. Jenifer stated that in the meeting minutes from the March meeting it was referenced that a public comment was placed in the chat and the comment was not in the minutes. Bob said he would look into that discrepancy.

Jenifer Christman supported Harry Campbell's request to get DEP's perspective on the new Chesapeake Bay agreement, *Beyond 2025*.

John Jackson requested an update on funding, like the 319 grant and IJA, over the next 5 years for the Chesapeake Bay and other water quality efforts.

Bob Haines informed the Committee about the upcoming reappointment process for all members for the next two-year term. Bob stated that an email will be sent out shortly surveying interest. Bob also reminded the Committee about upcoming officer elections for Chair and Vice-Chair.

Adjournment – Matthew Genchur, Chair

Motion: John Jackson made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Jenifer Christman seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 11:28 a.m.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, November 4, 2025