



1383 Arcadia Road
Lancaster, PA 17601
www.lancastercleanwaterpartners.com

November 28, 2022

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection
ATTN: Chesapeake Bay Office
909 Elmerton Avenue
Harrisburg, PA 17110

Dear Department of Environmental Protection,

Thank you for your continuous support of Lancaster's grassroots approach to implementing the Countywide Action Plan (CAP)! This past year, Lancaster continued to live out a culture of stewardship, anchored in commitment to protect heritage *and* natural resources for future generations. We saw significant progress in places where partners integrated water quality needs with other local priorities; where funding increased for staff capacity as well as implementation projects; and where several higher education institutions and on-the-ground practitioners strengthened partnerships. The sense of urgency to improve local waterways is palpable – and that's exciting!

Lancaster operates with a bias towards action to ensure partners collectively see increases in sustainable funding and overall capacity of the county. We've continuously pitched the efficiency and effectiveness of block grants and the need for fewer roadblocks in order to get dollars from funding sources to the landowner for increased implementation. We will continue to collectively work to address these needs in 2023.

The 2025 milestone is around the corner, which is a key point in Lancaster's journey to achieving a shared vision: clean and clear waterways in Lancaster by 2040. To achieve this, we're prioritizing restoration in headwater areas, directing funding to high-quality best management practices at an accelerated pace and scale, and consistently using a collaborative decision-making model. Implementation efforts continue to take a multi-prong approach on farms, suburban source water areas, and parks to not only reduce nutrient and sediment loads but also improve habitat and local economic development. Recreational opportunities like kayaking, fishing, and creek stumping continue to inspire community engagement and local awareness of water quality issues to become action.

We were delighted to share Lancaster's work through field tours with municipal MS4 staff in June and Bay-wide audiences such as the Chesapeake Bay Commission in May. At the full Partners meeting in June, we engaged agencies, partner organizations, and stakeholders to ensure policies fuel efficient processes. And we empowered community members to take action through watershed leadership training, plus connections with resources and neighborhood experts – stretching themselves to take the work to the next level. New full-time positions were filled to directly accelerate countywide efforts, and new partnerships are forming to accelerate pace and scale, such as with Franklin & Marshall's new



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Chesapeake Watershed Initiative, retirement communities, and investment bankers to pilot the Revolving Water Fund.

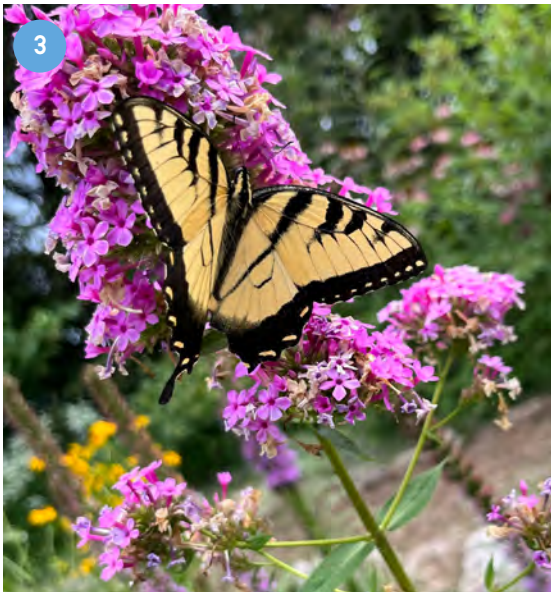
Partner organizations around the county experienced several lingering ripple effects from COVID, such as supply chain issues, an extremely limited workforce, and packed contractor schedules. Yet, Lancaster is getting closer to its goal. The work is happening today, but the inspiration will continue to trigger action months and years down the road.

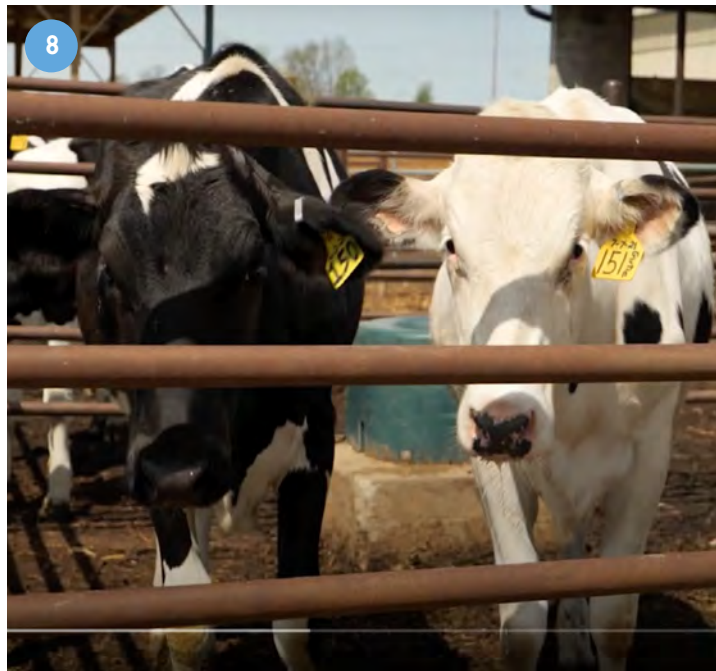
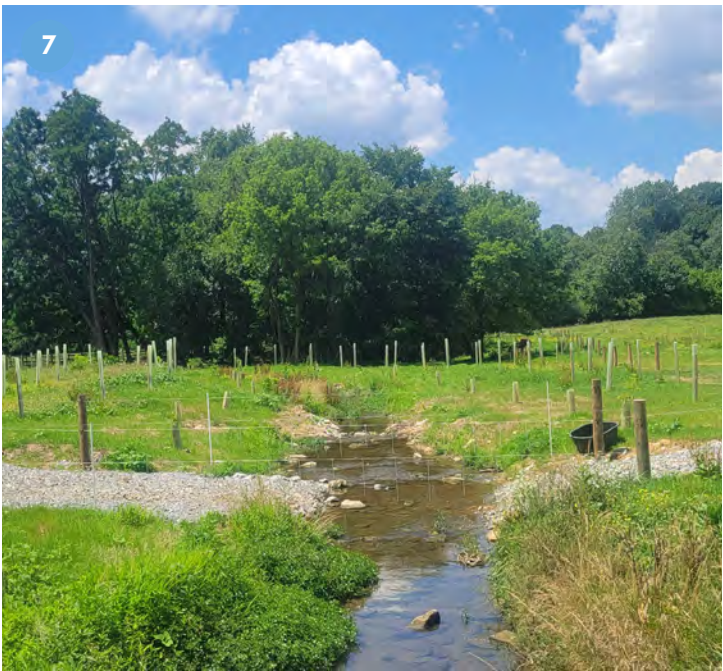
Thank you for the many ways you have supported Lancaster's efforts. This work couldn't be done without your flexibility and commitment. In the following pages, see the partners responsible for this progress and read about successes, challenges, and ways we've implemented our CAP in 2021 and 2022.

Sincerely,
Allyson Gibson and the CAP Coordinator team



Picturing Clean and Clear by 2040





1 Multi-county habitat assessment training
Jim Harnish, water quality monitoring volunteer with the Octoraro Watershed Association, reaches into Dellinger Run during a visual habitat assessment training planned in partnership with Chesapeake Conservancy. The training brought representatives from across Lancaster County and several neighboring counties (Blair, Centre, Snyder, and Union). Visual habitat assessments are a critical piece of the rapid stream delisting strategy because it's the first step in getting a stream off the impaired list. This training, coupled with the coordinated monitoring work from the Water Quality Monitoring Action Team, will advance the delisting strategy and assist in tracking water quality progress.

2 More efficient processes
Partners break the ice with a fun team-building exercise at the June 2022 full Partners meeting, where organizations came together to brainstorm ideas for more efficient processes. We heard from everyone about capacity needs and specific areas where we could use our voice to improve bigger processes. This year we've welcomed new voices of all kinds, but specifically two of those are team members at the Conservation District to help with CAP goals like data management, grant administration, and capacity building. This capacity supports partners across the county to accomplish more because of the collaborative way Lancaster operates.

3 Creation care inching us closer
A butterfly sits on phlox, a native shrub, in a maturing pollinator garden at Ridgeview Mennonite Church in eastern Lancaster County. This year, we've seen tremendous growth in conservation connections from faith-based work, which is an essential part of our diverse community. From Grace Lutheran Church's focus on green infrastructure to Ridgeview Mennonite's new native garden, leaders like Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake make caring for the natural world an easier way to achieve local conservation goals as well as bring new voices to the table for bigger success.

4 Collective grant asks for sustainable funding
The Lancaster County Board of Commissioners presents a check to the Lancaster Clean Water Partners, Conservation District of Lancaster County, and several partner organizations at the Conewago Recreational Trail trailhead. In July, the County Commissioners voted unanimously to approve \$3.4 million from the county's American Rescue Plan

Act (ARPA) funding for 11 water quality projects. This represents the largest single investment in preserving clean water in Lancaster County government history. The projects leverage several funding sources, including implementation funding from the state. The collective application is just one method the Partners is using to pursue sustainable funding for conservation implementation.

5 Sharing research and collaborative approaches
Matthew Royer presents at the Lancaster-Lebanon Watershed Forum and Science Symposium in November 2021 at Elizabethtown College's campus. Organizations worked together to design the agenda that reflected student work as well as industry-specific progress. The two-day event featured research presentations and a forum for collaborative watershed work, attracting 225 attendees. Penn State will host the third PA in the Balance Conference in December 2022 to bring motivated leaders in our agricultural and environmental community together to continue building on recent momentum, developing collaborative strategies to achieve PA's common goals between agriculture and water quality.

6 Increasing capacity through Watershed Leadership Academy
Seven scholars in the Lancaster Watershed Leadership Academy graduated from the inaugural class in December 2021. The next cohort of scholars will begin classes in January 2023 to learn the basics of watershed management, the benefits of conservation practices on varying land uses, different leadership styles, and creative ways to lead clean water projects. The Academy is already proving to add valuable capacity to Lancaster County's clean water work. One scholar changed from a career in investment banking to a career in environmental water management solutions. Another works in advocacy but started consulting with the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission to translate boating safety messages into Spanish. And another has helped launch a river story collective in downtown Lancaster.

7 Holistic conservation planning
Conservation practices were implemented along a small tributary to the Mill Creek in East Lampeter Township to alleviate flooding and other stormwater issues due to high amounts of impervious surface upstream. When heavy rains come, the landowner could not let his animals out into the pasture because of high-levels of flooding. Funded by 319,

the property now displays a stream restoration project involving 1,300 linear ft. of bank stabilization and instream habitat improvements in addition to a 35 foot riparian forest buffer.

8 Conservation for the next generation

Two dairy cows stand in an upgraded “loafing area” on Jonas Fisher’s farm in the Pequea Creek Watershed. The conservation practices installed on his land, including the loafing area, manure storage, paved animal walkway, and fencing, will significantly improve animal health and local and Bay-wide water quality. Jonas Fisher, one of the three farmers having conservation practices installed through a Clean Water Fund grant managed by Lancaster Farmland Trust, is excited about the tremendous improvements he’s already seeing on his farm. He’s eager to pass along the farm to one of his sons and for the conservation practices to be an example to the next generation of dairy farmers.

9 Moving the needle with the stream delisting strategy

Partner organizations investigate maps of priority catchments in Lancaster County to identify areas for potential delisting where we will focus outreach and implementation efforts to agricultural landowners. After a little over a year of employing the stream delisting strategy, partners have completed outreach to approximately 39% of landowners of high-priority farms, with outreach anticipated to be complete by the end of 2022. Across all catchments, implementation is on track for 76% of the agricultural restoration goals and 84% of buffer restoration goals. Twelve of the 21 catchments are on track to meet restoration goals by 2024.

10 Place-based connections for continued learning

Outdoor experiences like this, our MS4orum event for municipal staff and engineers, provided place-based connections and engaged partners in value-add, relevant learning experiences that also provided networking opportunities. This is one event of many that happened across Lancaster for local audiences like MS4 professionals as well as Bay-wide audiences such as the Chesapeake Bay Commission and the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee. Field investigations help all of us collaborate more and operate as systems thinkers.