Building a Clean Water Toolbox
PA Water Implementation Plan (WIP)
Local Planning Process to Meet County-wide Goals
April 10th, 2018
Holiday Inn, Grantville, PA

Attendees:
About 200 leaders and interested stakeholders from municipal governments, county conservation districts, agriculture, environmental groups, water companies, and other entities participated in a meeting hosted by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to expand local engagement and seek feedback on the draft local planning process developed by the WIP Steering Committee and its workgroup members for Phase 3 of the state watershed implementation plan (WIP) for improving water quality in Pennsylvania's portion of the Chesapeake Bay watershed. The purpose for the meeting was to:

• Increase stakeholders' knowledge of the Phase 3 WIP process.
• Answer stakeholders' questions regarding roles in the Phase 3 WIP process.
• Engage stakeholders in designing the process to meet local planning goals.
• Provide an opportunity to identify key stakeholders to develop action steps at the local level.

The outcome of the meeting was to finalize a toolbox that will assist county stakeholders in developing plans that meet local planning goals.

During the morning session, participants heard from and responded to each of six workgroups that have worked over the past year to develop the Phase 3 WIP local planning process:

• Agriculture
• Forestry
• Funding
• Local Area Goals
• Stormwater
• Wastewater

Attendees participated in a roundrobin series of workgroup/toolbox carousel stations where workgroup chairs provided an overview of their workgroup's mission, work accomplished to date, what comes next, and their sector's role in addressing overall water quality needs. Participants asked clarifying questions and provided feedback, which recorders captured on flip charts. Following is a summary of those sessions:

Questions for WIP Workgroups
(From the WIP Workgroup Morning Carousel)

Agriculture:
Although some work has been done and some progress has been made, Ag still has a lot of work to do. Various messages are needed across the diverse Ag community since local empowerment is a new concept. Need to commit to taking the time to build relationships and have more outreach and education programs for farmers to facilitate their ability to report the practices they are using. For example, an outreach/marketing program that teaches farmers what a healthy, sustainable farm should look like and about the basic causes and impacts of nutrient pollution will give them an understanding of how managing their farms is important and will benefit them. A streamlined and easy to use permit process and incentives will facilitate progress. Improving soil health is a huge opportunity to increase the value/function of Ag lands and meet water quality goals. Are there economic benefits for farmers in addition to improved water quality. Connecting MS4 communities to farmers to work together on projects. Dedicated funding sources and technical assistance needed to accomplish large goals. Engage with Ag processors and integrators and distributors. Enforcement

and compliance play a role in this effort. More flexibility and fewer barriers to BMP implementation. Focus should be on future efforts such as what to do next, who will do it and how.

Forestry:
The understanding and accurate quantification of the costs/benefits of protecting what exists versus planting new must be clear, and generation of new and sustained buffers must be priority. Support for basic conservation and preserving what we have was the focus during this meeting. Buffer management, maintenance, diversity, placement, ordinances, easements, costs, funding, and education are all things to consider and focus on. Technology needed for targeted buffering. A focus is also needed on land management to improve soil infiltration rates so that less water and nutrients are reaching the buffers and stream systems. It is important to give incentives to control invasive species and for new development to preserve trees—tax breaks, funding, other possible options. Look at connection between legacy sediment projects and buffers for planning for best and most successful buffer placement. Committing to putting in the time to educate and engage with the public will provide an understanding of why this is important. Look at existing programs and assess what's working and what's not to help develop priorities. Focus on those programs and policies and demonstrate a commitment to align objectives with the 2025 TMDL goal.

Funding:
We need sustainable, dedicated funding sources and incentives to encourage advances in technology and management practices and technical assistance to get practices on the ground. We should encourage private/public partnerships to fund water quality improvement projects and state agencies should look at programs to restructure and provide incentives to achieve goals. We should also talk to private investors and consider block grants as possible sources. A legislative effort is needed to provide property tax incentives for private property owners to install practices. Federal funding is unpredictable, but we cannot give up on it or the role of federal leadership as a steadier flow of funding at the regional levels is essential to sustainability. We should give credit to municipalities who provided support/funding and match to meet requirement. Re-orient PENNVEST to nonpoint source issues. Incentivize municipalities who are part of a regional effort. Need a viable nutrient trading program. Need a central "one stop shop" clearinghouse with easily accessible access to funding sources. Simplified funding application process with less paperwork.

Local Area Goals:
Need to stress the importance of the partnership and working together. Clarification on the logistics of it all and how to fit local data and information into EPA's box is essential. Local monitoring as a basis for pollution reductions and target locations is also important. Although, there is concern over the limited staff and time for implementation at the county-level and confusion over what "local" means. We must first focus where cooperation is already happening and provide "points" in grants for those areas. Several questions about the county's role, outreach, support, and funding were discussed. Clarification on what "local" means and what the local goals are and how they will be broken up may help answer some of these questions—do they sum up to state goals, will they be broken into sector goals? How do local ordinances support them? Also, identification of the most valuable tools for counties and who should take lead/do the reporting would help things run more smoothly. There is a need for continued support from state government and technical resources throughout the process. Future outreach/marketing efforts should focus on the importance of healthy farms, healthy communities, and the importance of high water quality and quality of life to motivate the target audiences.

Stormwater:
Enforce PennDOT MS4 permit, acknowledge cooperative efforts and engage more with PennDOT. In addition to MS4 communities, focus efforts on stormwater reductions in non-MS4 communities, focusing on benefits of community resiliency and floodwater at a minimum. It is important to educate the public on why this is important and how it will benefit them to help them understand and easily comply. Common language/terms on NPDES permits could also help their understanding. Better information should be provided on controllable/non-controllable sources. Funding should be given to communication as well, not just construction and maintenance, and should be used to support Ag BMP

implementation. Household fertilizer and lawn company regulation should be considered. Stormwater process is somewhat misguided and will not net large-scale pollution reduction in its current form. Streamline permitting process. We should ensure that the small, close to source BMPs are installed and maintained since the scattered approach is expensive and less effective. Incentivizing emerging developing technologies such as rain gardens to help with improvements for the future is important.

Wastewater:
Main concern is about the unwillingness to do more. Wastewater community says that its met its targets and does not understand why it should have to do more. Some are not interested in a collaborative effort given the large-scale effort already made. Public education on why wastewater treatment plants (WWTPs) should matter even though it is such a small part of the overall loading is essential. A few questions were brought up about WWTP such as where the money is coming from and how we will take the money the WWTP has received and use it for other sectors. Significant and nonsignificant facilities were also discussed. Significant facilities need to address the combined sewer overflow (CSO) systems and the discharge monitoring data needs to be accurate. Nonsignificant facilities have no permit limits and should be set to address local water quality issues. When will we start to look at these less significant facilities? How many are there and what do they need to do now? Determining where we stand with CSOs, how significant their contribution is, and what funding we are looking at going forward for CSOs is important. The non-significant sewage treatment plants and industrial WWTPs could be a boost to offsetting PN and helping the overall water quality of PA and the bay. Other funding efforts such as creating a tax based on impervious coverage on the parcel and having the funds go to improve stormwater could be very beneficial. Accounting for future growth is important.

In the afternoon session, participants were asked to provide feedback on the draft county planning toolbox presented during the lunch plenary session (and that they had received prior to the meeting). Focus areas included:

1. *Data/Resources*: Do the data and resources provided in the toolbox enable counties to be successful in achieving their desired outcomes/reductions toward the planning goals? What do you like about the Toolbox? What additional data or resources would be helpful?
2. *Engagement & Communication*: Engaging the right people is key to successful planning and implementation. Does the toolbox contain the list of those who could be engaged? Are there others who should be part of a county-wide planning group? What is the best way to communicate the importance of this local planning?
3. *Telling Your County Story*: Local communities are already involved in maintaining and improving local water quality. How do they track local efforts to reduce pollution and improve water quality?
4. *Reporting Plans, Outcomes, Challenges*: There is a draft template in the toolbox for local county-wide planning groups to use. What works with the template? What could be changed to make it more user-friendly or more understandable?

Feedback for Toolbox
(From the WIP Toolbox Afternoon Carousel)

Prioritize BMPs and target priority areas for efforts and implementation. The WIP template needs to be edited to make it as clear and concise as possible and the reporting form should be online so multiple people can easily add to/edit it. Toolbox needs to be clear and concise as possible in order to be used. There is a need for better, simpler communication to the counties to tell them what their nutrient reduction goals are and how their goals compare to other counties, the anticipated timeframe to form local workgroups, and when they need to submit their priority county-based focus efforts to be included in the WIP. It does not appear that PA is working together. Non-regulated area improvements should be counting toward same municipality/county reporting. Simplify permitting processes. The state needs to be realistic about how these municipalities that are both Bay contributors and MS4's can handle staffing, time and money for these efforts.

Data/Resources

The data and resources provided in the Toolbox along with electronic tools such as CAST enable counties to be successful in achieving their desired outcomes/reductions toward the planning goals. They liked how CAST offers cost breakdowns to allow them to update cost info for each scenario. They discussed possible additional data and/or resources that would be helpful in bettering the toolbox and making it easier to control and came up with a bunch of good possibilities. Graphics and language should be used to make the toolbox easily readable and links/references for explanation of data should be provided to ensure an understanding of the data. There should also be a flow-chart or graphical explanation of the local engagement and planning process to make it clear what is expected of the counties and municipalities. The local engagement and planning process should include a clear process with a timeline to update/correct data that will incorporate yearly fluctuations and trends. Finally, we need to highlight the technical assistance component by connecting local improvements with local priority areas and identifying technical support teams for the counties.

Communication and Engagement

The toolbox contains a list of those who can be engaged. Who they want to be a part of the county-wide planning group varies for each county but a variety of different organizations and people were mentioned such as PennDOT, school science teachers, the Amish steering committee, newspaper editors, community service groups, landowners, farmers, etc. There were several tactics and tools discussed as the best ways to communicate the importance of this local planning and the different tools should be used accordingly for different audiences. Having access to the toolbox online would allow broad audiences to easily access and view it. We should frame it toward local issues that interest and benefit locals but also benefit the bay and have community education programs to ensure a local understanding of why it is important and how it will benefit them.

Telling Your County Story

Leadership should set a common goal for the unified, collaborative partnership and let implementation be flexible. It is important to include farmers in county-based efforts and planning and to connect to their local values and motivations to help influence actions. Public tools and outreach programs such as educational programs should be better utilized and tailored to specific audiences. For example, educational programs for stakeholders to be able to understand the data and for those doing local planning projects to understand the importance of their work are essential to success. Also, there is a need for outreach people who can utilize social media to highlight success stories and before and after visuals to help motivate the public. A decentralized approach should be taken to collecting data/info and web-based visual reporting/tracking tools should be used to monitor at a more local level. We should utilize existing, successful watershed plans as catalysts for funding and any areas where there are issues should be marked. There should be two-way annual reporting from MS4s to allow locals to hear from DEP about what's happening and the data currently collected by DEP, EPA, SRBC should be available for the public to view.

Planning and Process

A lot of feedback was given when the attendees were asked what they liked about the draft template in the toolbox and what they would change about it to make it more user-friendly and more effective to relay information. They liked how it acts as a single reporting entity but suggested that an example of template completion should be added at the top to act as an instruction manual to help locals navigate the document. They also suggested doing a group exercise webinar on the template to help with understanding. Also, a web-based version should be made to allow other counties to easily access and view the document and check/drop boxes should be included to add consistency. Priority initiatives and goals need to be highlighted and better defined within the template to include more than just water quality. Who is responsible for the completion of these goals, a timeframe, and the results should also be included in the template. It was suggested to add interactive questions and/or examples of what others do to make it fun and facilitate completion. Expectations and a timeframe for template reporting and completion should be given.