

# Supporting Local Countywide Action Plan Implementation in Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania is working alongside neighboring states to clean up our local waters that flow to the Chesapeake Bay. This effort is part of Pennsylvania’s Phase 3 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation Plan (Phase 3 WIP). The path to success for Pennsylvania’s Phase 3 WIP starts locally and is all about partners, projects and progress! Pennsylvania counties have created and are implementing local, county-developed action plans. These plans guide their efforts to reach their goals of reducing nutrient and sediment pollution in their local waters. Their collective effort, with support from state and federal action leaders, will clean up local streams and rivers across Pennsylvania’s Chesapeake Bay watershed.

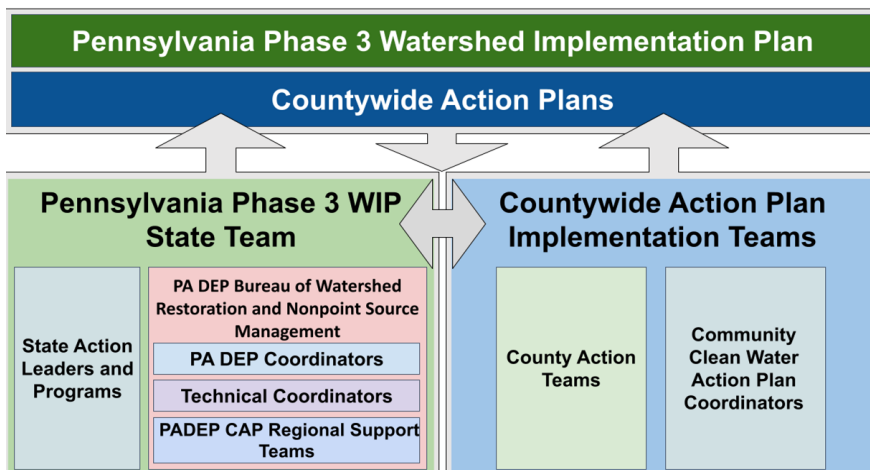
## Local Goals, Local Implementation

Clean water efforts at the county level are the foundation of Pennsylvania’s Phase 3 WIP. The Phase 3 WIP identifies nitrogen and phosphorus pollution reduction goals for each county. Achieving these goals will reduce pollution in Pennsylvania’s local waters, and ultimately the Chesapeake Bay. State and local action leaders are demonstrating their commitment to clean water by supporting efforts in 34 counties in the Chesapeake Bay watershed as they implement Countywide Action Plans (CAPs).

New partnerships, ideas and funding sources are needed to get the job done. As part of this process, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture (PDA) and the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) partnered early in the process to form a Pennsylvania Phase 3 WIP State Team. The State Team, locally-led CAP Implementation Teams and local stakeholders are taking collective action to implement Pennsylvania’s Phase 3 WIP. This is an adaptive and ever-evolving process that relies on continued support and commitment from the State Team action leaders, CAP Implementation Teams, legislators, nonprofit partners and academia.

The Pennsylvania Phase 3 WIP State Team relies on the leadership of the three agency Secretaries from DEP, PDA and DCNR. In 2019, DEP invited members of the statewide Phase 3 WIP Steering Committee that guided the development of the Phase 3 WIP to continue as members of the State Team to support implementation. DEP also invited additional public and private sector members with diverse and applicable skill sets to join the State Team. The State Team meets on a bi-annual basis and in sector-specific workgroups (Forestry/Wetlands, Stormwater/Wastewater, and Agriculture) to:

- Support the implementation of CAPs
- Review and revise milestones in the Pennsylvania Phase 3 WIP
- Provide needed programmatic support and updates
- Evaluate programmatic recommendations submitted by county partners
- Adapt the overall strategies, as needed, to reach our collective goals



# Program Support

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Since 2017, major new initiatives and programs have been developed to accelerate Pennsylvania's progress towards achieving nutrient and sediment reduction goals. This includes programmatic changes Pennsylvania has made or is making to support CAP implementation, including:

- Clean Streams Fund
- Pennsylvania Farm Bill
- Pennsylvania Fertilizer Bill
- DEP Chesapeake Bay Agriculture Inspection Program
- DEP Chesapeake Bay Agriculture Inspection Program Phase 2
- NRCS Technical Assistance Programs
- SCC Conservation Easement Purchase Program
- Center for Water Quality Excellence
- DEP Integrated Water Quality Report
- DCNR Lawn Conversion: Turf to Woods and Meadows
- DEP Watershed Implementation Plans
- DEP TMDL Priorities and Alternative Plans
- DEP Acid Mine Drainage Set-Aside Program
- DCNR Rivers Conservation Program



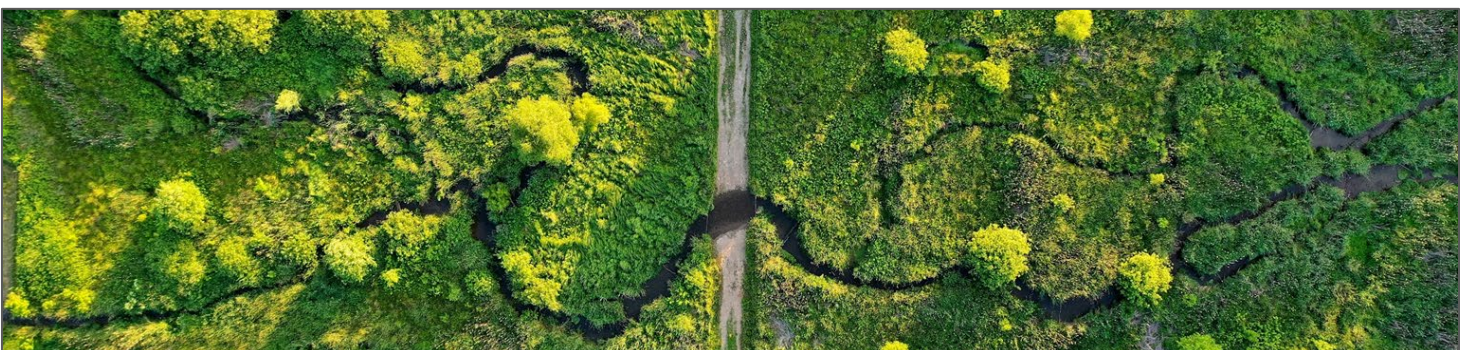
The Pennsylvania Clean Streams Fund, created in 2022, established a new Agriculture Conservation Assistance Program to help farmers implement water quality best management practices (BMPs). The Clean Streams Fund also enabled DEP to reinvigorate the Act 167 Stormwater Management Planning Program to provide grants to municipalities to plan and carry out stormwater runoff reduction measures. Further, the fund supports DEP's abandoned mine drainage reclamation, PDA's assistance to farmers for development and implementation of nutrient management plans, and DCNR's urban tree planting programs.

# Funding Support

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The Phase 3 WIP State Team has identified multiple state and federal funding sources targeted to local partners, projects and CAP implementation progress. Below are some of the funding programs that are part of an ever-expanding list:

- Clean Streams Fund
- DEP Bureau of Watershed Restoration and Nonpoint Source Management CAP Implementation Block Grant
- DEP Growing Greener Plus
- DEP Nonpoint Source Management Section 319 Grant
- DCNR TreeVitalize Grant
- DCNR Community Conservation Partnership Program Buffer Grants
- DCNR Forest Buffer Grant
- Keystone Tree Fund
- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) Grant Programs
- State Conservation Commission (SCC) Conservation Excellence Grants (CEG)
- SCC Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) Tax Credit Program
- SCC Agriculture-Linked Investment (AgriLink) Program
- Pennsylvania Infrastructure Investment Authority (PENNVEST) loans and grants
- National Resource Conservation Services (NRCS) Financial Assistance Programs



## Action Steps

DEP's Chesapeake Bay Watershed Restoration Division staff and regional office CAP support teams are taking action steps to support and coordinate local CAP implementation efforts and progress across 34 counties:

### Communication and training

- o Outreach and training through webinars and topic-specific meetings to assist counties with implementation.
- o Regular one-on-one county meetings to address county questions, issues and concerns
- o Pennsylvania Clean Water Academy (CWA): a vast online library of webinars, workshops, FAQs and other assistance tools and resources for CAP Coordinator and County Implementation Teams.

### Reporting and Tracking Progress

- o Pennsylvania tracks and reports WIP and CAP progress every year. The adaptive, evolving nature of the Phase 3 WIP is evident in the Biennial Milestone Reporting, when the State Team members re-evaluate their WIP initiatives to identify new and update existing opportunities.
- o Counties follow the same process as the State Team in reporting annual progress on CAPs and conducting biennial CAP initiative updates to ensure the CAPs continue to support the counties' local clean water efforts.



## Connecting County and Local Partners with Statewide WIP Action Leaders to Support CAP and WIP Implementation

The statewide WIP Action Leaders are available to help county partners with leveraging resources and sharing ideas for CAP implementation. Action Leaders can help make connections by identifying and engaging local stakeholders, providing access to financial and technical resources for projects and outreach, advocating for counties priority initiatives, and championing needed legislative, policy and programmatic changes. Action Leaders include:

- Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection
- Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
- Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture
- Pennsylvania State Conservation Commission
- PENNVEST
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission
- Susquehanna River Basin Commission
- County Commissioners of Association of Pennsylvania
- Pennsylvania Municipal Authorities Association
- Chesapeake Bay Commission Legislators

