

CHESAPEAKE BAY WATERSHED RESTORATION DIVISION

Within DEP's Bureau of Watershed Restoration and Nonpoint Source Management, the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Restoration Division coordinates Pennsylvania's activities to implement the 2010 U.S. EPA [Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load \(TMDL\)](#) to restore water quality in local waterways and the Chesapeake Bay. The Chesapeake Bay Watershed Restoration Division also coordinates efforts surrounding the implementation of the [2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement](#), which consists of goals that will advance the restoration and protection of local waters within the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

The Chesapeake Bay TMDL requires Pennsylvania to make specific reductions in nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment pollution and to have best management practices in place to meet those reduction goals by 2025. As part of the TMDL, a series of three "Watershed Implementation Plans" (WIPs) have been developed to specify how Pennsylvania will accomplish these pollution reduction goals. Pennsylvania developed its Phase 1 WIP in 2010; its Phase 2 WIP in 2012; and submitted its final [Phase 3 WIP](#) to EPA in July 2022.

Pennsylvania's Phase 3 WIP is the product of successful collaboration and engagement between government agencies, state legislators, county and local government officials, industry associations, nonprofit organizations, and citizens.

Pennsylvania has recognized that a bottom-up local engagement approach that focuses on local partnerships is a critical component of a successful Phase 3 WIP and is key to the success in planning and implementation of practices that will help to clean up local waters. This unique approach to meeting the state's Chesapeake Bay nutrient reduction goals has been well received by Pennsylvania counties in the Bay watershed. In fact, this comprehensive effort has resulted in the development of Countywide Action Plans (CAPs) for clean water that are realistic and implementable for local communities. All 34 counties who were asked to voluntarily draft CAPs have done so and are now implementing them.

Pennsylvania's Phase 3 WIP is unique in its strategic, bottom up approach to reducing nutrient pollution in Pennsylvania's portion of the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Trusting county partners to take the lead on clean water efforts has put the power to make change in the hands of the people most impacted by that change -- local community members and their representatives.

Pennsylvania takes its supporting role in the Phase 3 WIP seriously and has proven it by taking major steps to ensure counties have all they need to get the job done. Inspiringly, this dedication has not gone unnoticed and the Phase 3 WIP has created a diverse network of people and organizations who are actively working for clean water in the Commonwealth. Due to the momentum the Phase 3 WIP and CAPs have generated, many organizations and agencies are also developing dedicated funding streams to offer grants and other financial support to projects in Pennsylvania's portion of the Bay watershed.

Local action is making a difference through the work of individuals and partnerships focused on clean water. The Phase 3 WIP focuses on working with local stakeholders at the county level to

create and implement CAPs. Implementation of a CAP comes with many benefits, including financial resources. Both the state and a diverse group of partners working across Pennsylvania's portion of the watershed have dedicated funding to fund projects identified in county CAPs. As projects at the county level are funded and completed, water quality improves, benefiting local stakeholders and those living downstream.

Robust action by the state government and each sector (e.g., agriculture, stormwater, wastewater, forestry) has led to more funding, more staff members, and more programs. The Pennsylvania General Assembly took historic action in 2022 to provide funding directed at projects that reduce water pollution across Pennsylvania's portion of the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Staff across state agencies and state action leaders in agriculture, forestry, stormwater and wastewater had prepared for this in previous years and were able to distribute funds into a variety of programs that made, and will continue to make, measurable differences on-the-ground. Big changes in agency-level organization led to improvements in the state's ability to accomplish state-level work and support county-led efforts.

Cleaner water flows through the Commonwealth, breaking through barriers the pandemic created. While the pandemic may have restricted how progress could be made, progress has been made. Partners at every level – from the landowner who agreed to have a BMP installed on their land, to the local watershed organization on their county CAP team who put the project together, to the state grant program manager who approved the funding for the project – have found a way to do their part. The result is measurably cleaner water across Pennsylvania's portion of the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Much progress is occurring at the local, state, and federal levels around Pennsylvania's Phase 3 WIP. Thanks to the efforts of many partners at all levels, Pennsylvania is well on its way towards reaching the TMDL goals.

To learn more, subscribe to Pennsylvania's [Healthy Waters e-newsletter](#) to stay up to date on coordination efforts, action steps and resources Pennsylvania is counting on to achieve its nutrient pollution reduction goals by 2025.