

2022 Lancaster WIP Milestones Report:

Progress Towards Achieving the Chesapeake Bay Nutrient Reduction Goals under the Phase 3 Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) in Lancaster County



Progress and Milestones Towards Achieving Nutrient Reduction Goals in Lancaster County through the Lancaster Clean Water Partners

Executive Summary

The Phase 3 Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) is a set of strategies developed by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PA DEP) to reduce pollution flowing to the Chesapeake Bay via its PA tributaries. The WIP is a key component of Pennsylvania's effort to meet its obligations under the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL), a federally mandated plan to restore the health of the Bay, and it outlines the specific actions that the state will take to reduce pollution in the Bay and its tributaries over the next several years.

At the local level, the counties have developed a Countywide Action Plan (CAP) which outlines local priorities and actions to achieve the required nutrient and sediment reduction goals. Lancaster Clean Water Partners (the Partners) has been actively involved in helping to facilitate funding and capacity support to achieve Lancaster's local goals, which also help Pennsylvania achieve its WIP goals.

So, what progress has been made in the last two years? To highlight the milestones of that progress, PA DEP created the WIP Milestone Report with five Priority Initiatives: Communications and Outreach, Funding and Resources, Expanding Capacity for Technical Assistance, and Reporting and Tracking, and Compliance. The WIP Milestones Report details the progress made including aggregated data, status of actions, and descriptions of efforts from the organization's perspective.

Please find below 1-2 local examples that highlight the progress achieved at the Lancaster level, aligned with our CAP goals. It is important to note that these examples are not exhaustive, as there are numerous other instances worth mentioning. We extend our gratitude to all partner organizations for their remarkable and cooperative efforts in striving to ensure the cleanliness and clarity of Lancaster's creeks and rivers by 2040!

[Click to view PA DEP's 2022 WIP Report for the progress highlights from the state perspective](#)

1. Communications and Outreach | Lancaster, PA's WIP Progress: Milestone Highlight

- **Municipal outreach and Peer Support**

East Donegal Township has initiated a quarterly public works training program aimed at addressing water quality issues and equipping municipal employees with the necessary knowledge and skills to contribute to their day-to-day work. The program has been well received and attracts on average, 25 public works employees from neighboring townships such as Conoy Township, Marietta Borough, Mount Joy Borough, and West Donegal Township, who join the East Donegal Township Public Works Department for the training sessions. The training topics have been carefully selected to provide practical insights and training on critical water quality issues, and have included handling sewer overflows, identifying illicit discharges, response, and cleanup procedures, permitted stream maintenance activities, as well as essential BMP maintenance items on newly installed municipal BMPs. East Donegal Township is committed to continually improving the program and plans to cover more relevant topics in the future. Through this initiative, they are confident that municipal employees will be better equipped to identify and manage potential water quality issues, ultimately contributing to healthier waterways and a cleaner environment for our communities.

2. Funding and Resources | Lancaster, PA's WIP Progress: Milestone Highlight

- **Lancaster's Countywide Action Plan Implementation Funding**

Serving as the CAP Coordinator team leads, the Lancaster Clean Water Partners and the Lancaster County Conservation District allocated over \$2.5 million to high-impact restoration projects in Lancaster County with funding from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's Countywide Action Plan. With implementation focused in 2023, these projects will reduce nitrogen and phosphorus in local waterways and improve water quality. This funding is managed locally using the Clean Water Fund, a process that engages local advisors through a highly respected system at the Lancaster County Community Foundation. Since 2019, the Fund has awarded \$9 million to 29 nonprofits and municipalities working on various clean water projects. The grantees will have greater capacity and use their bias towards action to effectively implement innovative stormwater treatment systems, stream restoration, riparian buffers, and agricultural conservation practices.

3. Expanding Capacity for Technical Assistance | Lancaster, PA's WIP Progress: Milestone Highlight

- **PA DEP Ag Capacity Funding for TA in Nickel Mine and Bells Run Catchment**

In 2022, Lancaster utilized State Capacity funds in collaboration with PA DEP to contract two technical service providers, TeamAg, Inc., and Mowery Environmental, to provide outreach and assess needs in four delisting catchments within the Octoraro Creek Watershed. Contracts were amended to include additional catchments in the Octoraro and Conestoga and the area downstream of the Bells Run catchment. Throughout the year, a total of 55 priority parcels were visited and 10 Ag E&S plans, 8 MMP/NMP, and 4 CNMP were obtained. Additionally, 4 plans were updated. TeamAg and Mowery Environmental worked with producers to apply for various grants and funding programs, including the RCPP, PennVEST, CEG, ARPA, and the Clean Water Fund Small Implementation Grant. A farmer meeting was also held to provide funding information and encourage the adoption of BMPs. The estimated cost for all identified BMPs is \$4,573,000 for construction, \$601,750 for design and engineering, and \$50,000 for additional outreach.

- **Growing Greener Watershed Renaissance Initiative Funding was Awarded for 4 Catchments to fund TA - this work will kick off in 2023.**

In 2022, PA DEP was awarded a growing Greener Watershed Renaissance Initiative grant for four catchments, which will fund technical assistance work that will commence in 2023. The project in Lancaster County includes work in the Conestoga and Pequea watersheds, where the focused effort of the delisting strategy is aligning all partners working to remove stream segments from the impaired waters list. Funding through the Watershed Renaissance Initiative will significantly help to advance the delisting strategy in Lancaster County by equipping landowners with updated plans that address resource concerns with a wide variety of best management practices designed to NRCS standards. Catchment leads will shepherd landowners from initial conversations through planning, design, evaluating relevant funding options, and finally, implementation and construction. The result will serve multiple purposes of helping landowners to address their goals, improve animal and soil health, realize long-term cost savings associated with improved nutrient management, and most importantly, achieve clean and clean water.

4. Reporting and Tracking | WIP Progress: Lancaster, PA's WIP Progress: Milestone Highlight

- **Best Management Practice Verification**

The Lancaster Clean Water Partners, in partnership with the CAP Coordinator team, had a productive year in 2022 by promoting best management practices for tracking and permit requirements across multiple sectors. One of their initiatives included identifying and supporting municipalities that needed additional capacity to establish and/or use urban/suburban BMP inventories. Through this collective effort with municipal staff and engineers, they were able to establish a verification process that ensured credit for existing stormwater BMPs. The Engineers Group meetings played a significant role in these efforts by facilitating two meetings in 2022 that engaged an average of 35-40 people. This allowed for more communication between municipal partners, and a forward-thinking approach was taken to adjust strategies to meet current and future verification, reporting, and permitting requirements. Verification work happened in the agriculture sector as well but with small steps, paying special attention to not duplicating efforts and respecting existing roles and responsibilities. More progress is coming for this work in 2023/2024. Overall the engineers, businesses, municipalities, and conservation partners made valuable contributions towards achieving local clean water goals and documenting the progress.

5. Compliance | WIP Progress: Lancaster, PA's WIP Progress: Milestone Highlight

- **Lancaster County Conservation District Agriculture Inspection Program**

In the Lancaster County Conservation District, the Agriculture Compliance Program is a crucial component of the Agriculture Department and has continued to work towards its goals of ensuring compliance with Phase II inspections. This includes conducting on-site farm inspections to verify that operators have the necessary documentation for their operations. This may include having a manure management plan for operations with animal concentrations under two thousand pounds of animals per acre, and an Ag Erosion and Sedimentation Plan or Conservation Plan for any fields that are being cropped or used for animals.

In 2022, the Compliance Program expanded its staff, allowing for more efficient inspections. The team successfully completed inspections for the year, including visits to previously inspected farm operations to ensure that the conservation plans were being properly implemented. Additionally, funding was made available for operators to implement BMPs as outlined in their conservation plans.

The Ag Compliance Program remains committed to ensuring that farming operations are meeting their own goals as well as regulated requirements, installing sustainable agriculture practices, and protecting water quality in the region.