

Year-in-Review 2023



2023 was a year of growth and change for the Lancaster Clean Water Partners. It was also a year of tremendous success for our partner organizations working towards our shared goal of Clean and Clear waterways by 2040!





partner organizations across Lancaster.



From our Executive Director & Board Chair

Dear partners,

Collaboration is key. Operate with a bias towards action. Our collective voice will inspire more.

All of these phrases describe the work of the Lancaster Clean Water Partners. They can occasionally feel overused or too simple. Yet they are an authentic reflection of the effective way we approached water quality efforts in Lancaster in 2023, living our values and using the collective impact model.

And it's working. 2023 brought data about water quality trends for the Conestoga River that show a continued decrease in nutrient loads and an increase in the number of projects going in the ground. The types of capacity at partner organizations is growing and diversifying. We are making incredible progress! And that is thanks to all of you as partner organizations who are scaling up and working towards the common goal of clean and clear by 2040.

We are seeing unprecedented funding for this work, and Lancaster organizations are putting it to good use. Learning from our "ideal process" research and reflections, we have secured and deployed an inspirational amount of money and improved our compliance and processes along the way. We still have improvements to make, but we are not letting our foot off the gas as millions more dollars and hundreds of best management practices are needed in order to reach our CAP goals.

While not my first go around with the Clean Water Partners, this was my first year officially as Executive Director. It's been a joy and a learning process to lead in this role, one that I acknowledge has not only a lot of responsibility but also a lot of reasons to celebrate. In 2023 I celebrate the growth of our team at the Partners, the scholars in the Watershed Leadership Academy, the strength of the network, as well as my own participation in a cohort of executive directors all learning from each other. Such a fantastic year of new growth!

And for me as the Chair of the Board, it has been inspiring to see the growth of the Partners since its inception six years ago. Allyson and her extraordinary team strives everyday to enhance the collective work of all partners, to ensure we're all stretching for the common goal, and to keep this work fun and exciting! It has been an honor serving as Chair of the Board for the past two years and I look forward to the impact our incoming Chair, Jenna Beckett, has on the organization. There is still a tremendous amount of work to be done, but I'm confident with the commitment of our community, and you as partners, the common goal of clean and clear by 2040 will become reality.

Sincere gratitude for your commitment to the collaborative effort. Using the stream delisting strategy to guide outreach and implementation has engaged more landowners and coordinated partner efforts. Thank you for aligning your work and your time around common goals.

As we enter 2024, we ask you to lean into a call to action - invite someone new to join your project. Touch base with a neighbor about their goals and work together to achieve more. Collaboration is contagious! Thank you for being a part of it.

Sincerely, Allyson Gibson, Executive Director Jeff Swinehart, Chair of the Board

YEAR - IN REVIEW





STAFF

New Faces in '23

Jon Knorr joined in March as the Director of Funding. He brings over 35 years of experience in non-profit operations, management, funding, corporate relations, staff and board recruitment and program development.

Jon Knorr

Kenn Bennett came on board as Communications Coordinator in July. After 20-plus years in for-profit marketing, he decided he wanted to make a difference with his skills in web design, social media, video, business management and marketing strategy.



Megan Blackmon

New Positions in '23

Megan Blackmon was promoted to the position of Director of Projects in October. She leads the strategic development and implementation of the many collaborative projects, which often include funding puzzles and process improvements. She joined the Partners in 2021.

On staff since 2018, Allyson Ladley Gibson now serves as the Executive Director. Her leadership role guides the network and the staff, staying anchored in the collective impact approach.







Brad founded Flyway Excavating in 1987 and currently serves as CEO. He grew up in the construction industry, as his father, Clinton Clubb, was one of the owners of Wickersham Construction in Lancaster, PA. After attending the University of Delaware, he worked for Wickersham in various roles, including supervision of building and excavation projects.



Michelle Marsh

As a Chief Business Officer, Michelle provides strategic direction to LCSWMA's diversified business initiatives, including renewable energy, sustainability and recycling. She also oversees LCSWMA's real estate portfolio and regulatory compliance programs, including environmental and safety. She holds a B.S. in Environmental Sciences from Muhlenberg College and an M.S. in Strategic Leadership from Elizabeth College.

New Vice Chair Announced

Jenna Mitchell Beckett took on the role of Vice-Chair of the Board of Trustees in 2023. Jenna is the Pennsylvania State Director and Agriculture Program Director at the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay. She has been delighted to have the opportunity to work with local companies like Turkey Hill Dairy, the Hershey Company, and Maryland & Virginia Milk Producer's Cooperative Association, and others to build sustainability into the culture and operations of the agricultural industry. Jenna will take the board chair role in March 2024.



Jenna Mitchell **Beckett**

Other members of the Lancaster Clean Water Partners Board of Trustees in 2023 were:

Stephen Campbell **Justin Evans** Lowell Fry Kate Gonick

Gordon Hoover Lisa Riggs Matt Royer Joe Sweeney

Jeff Swinehart Chris Thompson John Trescot Heather Valudes

PARTNERS



The Lancaster Clean Water Partners brings together a diverse group of partner organizations – local leaders in business, municipal public service, higher education, conservation planning, and non-profit management – who collaborate on clean water projects, connect to help each other and communicate to a broad audience through the megaphone of our combined messaging platforms. Being a Clean Water partner means we have the strength of numbers and a community of support and resources, and the confidence of one collaborative vision. Together, we work to improve the health of Lancaster's 1400 miles of streams with the shared goal of clean and clear water by 2040.

If you would like more information or to become a partner organization, please go to https://lancastercleanwaterpartners.com/partner-sign-up/









Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay https://www.allianceforthebay.org/ (717) 517-8698 Blackbirds Environmental Justice https://www.blackbirdsgo.com/

Borough of Ephrata https://www.ephrataboro.org/ (717) 738-9222 C.S. Davidson, Inc https://csdavidson.com/ (717) 846-4805









Center for Watershed Protection https://cwp.org/ (410) 461-8323

Chesapeake Bay Foundation https://www.cbf.org/ (888) 728-3229 Chesapeake Conservancy https://www.chesapeakeconservancy.org/ (443) 321-3610 Choose Clean Water Coalition https://www.choosecleanwater.org/ (443) 842-7535









City of Lancaster https://www.cityoflancasterpa.gov/ (717) 291-4711 Cocalico Creek Watershed Association https://www.facebook.com/ CocalicoCreekWaterhedAssn/ Conestoga River Club https://conestogariverclub.org/ Cox Consulting









David Miller/Associates, Inc. https://www.dmai.com/ (717) 898-3402 City of Lancaster
Department of Public Works
https://www.cityoflancasterpa.gov/dep
artments/department-of-public-works/

Donegal Trout Unlimited https://www.donegaltu.org/ East Lampeter Township https://eastlampetertownship.org/ (717) 393-1567









Economic Development Company of Lancaster County https://edclancaster.com/ (717) 397-4046 Elizabethtown Borough https://www.etownonline.com/ (717) 367-1700 **Ephrata Concrete Cleaners**

(484) 663-9354

Friends of Fishing Creek https://www.facebook.com/ profile.php?id=100064690596834





10 MILLION TREES PARTNERSHIP

Keystone



Hourglass

https://hourglasslancaster.org/ (717) 295-0755

Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake https://www.interfaithchesapeake.org/ (410) 609-6852

Keystone Ten Million Trees Partnership https://tenmilliontrees.org/

Lancaster Area Sewer Authority https://lasa.org/ (717) 299-4843



Lancaster Chamber

Lancaster Chamber of Commerce https://www.lancasterchamber.com/ (717) 397-3531



Lancaster Conservancy

https://www.lancasterconservancy.org/ (717) 392-7891



Lancaster County Community Foundation

https://www.lancfound.org/ (717) 397-1629



Lancaster County Conservation District

https://lancasterconservation.org/ (717) 299-5361



Lancaster STEM Alliance

https://www.lancasterstem.org/



Lancaster Farmland Trust

https://lancasterfarmlandtrust.org/ (717) 687-8484



LandStudies, Inc. https://landstudies.com/ (717) 627-4440



Little Conestoga Watershed Alliance

https://littleconestoga.org/



Lower Susquehanna Riverkeepers Association

https://lowersusquehannariverkeeper.org/ (717) 478-1780



Mount Joy Borough

http://mountjoyborough.com/ (717) 653-5938



Mowery Environmental

https://moweryenvironmental.com/home (717) 648-6109







Octoraro Watershed Association

http://www.theowa.org/ (484) 947-9390



PA DCNR Bureau of Recreation and Conservation

https://www.dcnr.pa.gov/about/Pages/ Recreation-and-Conservation.aspx



Penn State Agriculture and **Environment Center**

https://agsci.psu.edu/aec



Red Barn Consulting

https://www.redbarnag.com/ (717) 393-2176



Rettew Associates

https://www.rettew.com/ (800) 738-8395



RGS Associates

https://rgsassociates.com/ (717) 715-1396



Salisbury Township

https://www.salisburytownship.org/ (717) 768-8059



Stroud Water Research Center

https://stroudcenter.org/ (610) 268-2153



Susquehanna River Basin Commission

https://www.srbc.gov/ (717) 238-0423



Sustainable Chesapeake https://susches.org/



TeamAg, Inc.

https://www.teamaginc.com/ (717) 721-6795



The Nature Conservancy

https://www.nature.org/en-us/ (703) 841-5300



Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership

https://www.trcp.org/



Water Science Institute

https://www.waterscienceinstitute.org/ https://waterkeeperschesapeake.org/



Waterkeepers Chesapeake

(800) 995-6755



West Cocalico Township

https://westcocalicotownship.com/ (717) 336-8720

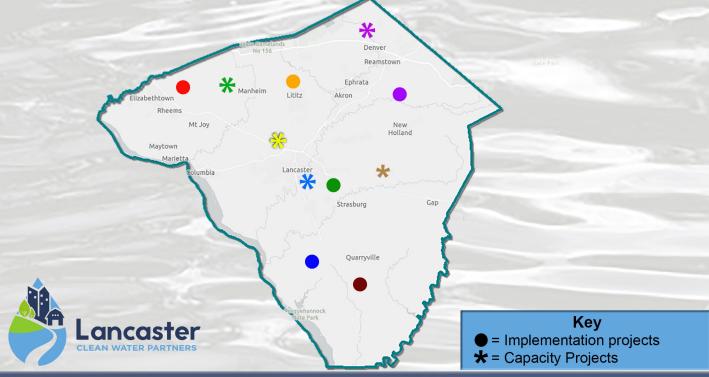


Working Lands Investment Partners,

https://working-lands.com/

Project Highlights from Partner Organizations

Lancaster Clean Water Partners is a backbone organization, supporting the boots-on-the-ground work of our partner organizations. This is, by no means, a comprehensive list, as that would take an entire book of its own, but merely a few highlights of the many projects undertaken by our partners in 2023.



Implementation Projects

* Funds were awarded in 2023. Thes projects are in various stages of completion.

Conewago Creek Floodplain and Wetlands Restoration

Mount Joy and Londonderry Townships implemented a restoration project that restored 4,877 feet and created an additional 2,988 feet of the Conewago Creek, restored 15.2 acres of floodplain to historical conditions, removed 125,000 cubic yards of legacy sediment, reducing year sediment loads by 509 tons and restored wildlife habitats.

Overlook Forested Buffer and Meadow

Partners at Stroud Water Research Center, Manheim Township and the Buffer Action Team created and maintained an eight-acre streamside forest and pollinator garden in Overlook Park using native plants and showcasing sustainable landscapring practices that homeowners can use themselves.

Lititz Run Stream Restoration at Millport Conservancy

Millport Conservancy and the Lititz Run Watershed Alliance aligned previous restoration work with this new project to restore 2,000 feet of Lititz Run, consisting of 1,004 feet of mud sills, 6 cross vanes, 4 vanes, 288 feet of brush matting and 426 feet of rock toe. The project also included a riparian buffer and publid education components.

Cedar Creek

East Earl Township worked in 2023 with private landowners on a bioswale and a retrofitted detention basin and continues the momentum in 2024 to restore 4,400 feet of Cedar Creek. That funding was secured for a combination of floodplain reconnection through the removal of legacy sediments with pocket wetlands, streambank regrading, reinforcement, and stabilization to reduce sediment loads and installation of a 3-tier riparian forest buffer to reconnect the riparian root zone with the water table for nutrient processing.

Project Highlights from Partner Organizations

Indian Spring Run Catchment Council

Landowners from a small catchment worked together to explore social and economic drivers for conservation as part of the Chesapeake Watershed Initiative project led by a team at Franklin & Marshall College.

Fishing Creek Stream Restoration

Donegal Chapter of Trout Unlimited restored and stabilized 1,904 linear feet of a tributary of Fishing Creek along Scalpy Hollow Road, combining erosion reduction and stabilization of the stream channel. The project enhanced aquatic habitat (macro-invertebrates and fin fish) and preserved and created a riparian buffer along both banks of the stream.

Amish Liaison Project

An outreach element of the Octoraro Source Water Collaborative, this program facilitates peer engagement between Amish farmers. Lead partners include the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, Conservation District, and the watershed association.

Capacity Projects

These are projects that establish resources needed to fulfill the collective goal of Clean and Clear by 2040.

😾 Senior Living Community - Green Master Plan

This plan provides a new opportunity with community members in creative and unique ways at 3 Senior Living Facilities in Lancaster, PA by creating a green master plan that includes educating and implementing sustainable landscaping on their campuses. The approach includes facilitated visioning sessions with residents, preparation of a custom Green Master Plan for native landscapes, and coaching/mentoring for residents along with professional support for each selected facility.

🜟 Landcaster County Planning Department Leadership Award

Thanks to successful farmer outreach, engagement, and implementation in delisting catchment 92 of the Pequea creek watershed, the Lancaster County Planning Department awarded the Leadership Award to the collaboration of Lancaster Farmland Trust, TeamAg, Inc., and Stroud Water Resources Center,

🐈 Water Week

Leading the way to clean water by protecting over 7,000 acres of wild lands, the Lancaster Conservancy created Lancaster Water Week to connect us all to clean water. Lancaster's 1,400 miles of streams and rivers drive local economic and agricultural growth. In the event's 7th year, hundreds of people participated in over 40 events as we paddled, explored, volunteered, and took action as a community to protect our streams and rivers for the future.

Penn State AEC & Donegal Trout Unlimited Nursery

The DTU Nursery relocated in 2023, shifting from Millport Conservancy to the PennState South East Agricultural Research and Extension Center (SEAREC) located in Rapho Township. The expansive 155-acre SEAREC houses an impressive array of over 50 projects, experimenting with diverse ideas and methods related to farming crops, annual and perennial flowers, and various horticultural crops.

The Nature Conservancy's work in the Cocalico Watershed

The goal of this project is to Improve Water Quality, Stream Health, and the Resiliency of Freshwater Ecosystems in the Cocalico Watershed of northern Lancaster County through the formation of a catalytic regional partnership aligned for collective action that is focused on targeted, high-impact wetland, floodplain, and stream restoration.

Water Monitoring - *Throughout the entire County*

The Water Quality Monitoring Action team is a partnership of Lancaster county focused organizations discussing, planning, conducting, and analyzing water quality data. The team meets quarterly to share tools, resources, and strategies, as well as to prioritize streams for monitoring consideration. The WQMAT aims to provide and share up-to-date high quality data with the stream restoration community in Lancaster county.



FUNDING



STRUCTURE

In early 2023, the Partners became a subsidiary LLC of the Conservation Foundation, a standalone 501c3 non-profit associated with the Conservation District. The LLC is a "disregarded entity," such that it stands legally independent yet shares an EIN number and audited financial statements with the Conservation Foundation. The Partners has their own Board of Trustees and operating budget. The Conservation Foundation is managed by employees of the Lancaster County Conservation District; similarly, the full-time, backbone staff of the Partners are leased employees of the Conservation District. *Thank you to the Conservation District for being our physical home and for including us in all things employment.*

As an organization, the Partners use both public and private dollars to operate.

2023 expenses were approximately:

Public: \$245.189 Private: \$411,683

PRIVATE FUNDING

The Campbell Foundation, Steinman Foundation, and the Kentfields Foundation continue to support the Partners annually. Uniquely supporting the backbone organization, these funders have been critical for the Partners' growth within its first six years. In late 2023, the Partners also received funding from both the High Foundation and the Conservation Innovation Fund for continued operational needs in 2024.

These funders directly support expenses such as overall operations, marketing and communications, meeting expenses, staff time, as well as board development and strategic planning.

PUBLIC FUNDING

These are related to dollars the Partners secure and manage to go back out to partner organizations. The majority of these dollars are not used directly by the Lancaster Clean Water Partners as an organization but we do use some administrative or indirect dollars from these sources to run the organization.

The Lancaster Countywide Action Plan Implementation Grant:

These dollars come from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection to the Lancaster County Conservation District and are co-administered by the District and Partners staff. The dollars are awarded through the Clean Water Fund Large Implementation Grant process, which is housed by the Lancaster County Community Foundation and uses a group of local advisors to review and score applications. In 2023, \$1,731,835 went to five projects.





FUNDING

NATIONAL FISH & WILDLIFE (NFWF) CRESCENDO IN COLLABORATION GRANT

The Lancaster Clean Water Partners' vision for the "Crescendo in Collaboration" project is to accelerate progress and overcome obstacles through targeted financial and staff resources. Funding from NFWF includes project design, engineering, and/or construction; Partners staff time; mapping work with the Chesapeake Conservancy and the Water Science Institute; Penn State as a co-lead for the Lancaster Watershed Leadership Academy; engagement with the Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake

AMERICAN RECOVERY PLAN ACT (ARPA)

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars were awarded to the Lancaster County Conservation District and are co-administered by the District and Partners staff. The dollars were awarded in 2022 and need to be spent by 2026. They went to 13 projects s that will have a transformational impact in the County by reducing harmful pollutants in waterways and s create multi-faceted improvements to residents' quality of life such as improved recreational use of streams, decreased cost of both public and private water treatment for safe drinking water, decreased flooding, and lower cost of infrastructure repairs to name only a few community-wide benefits.

CHESAPEAKE BAY TRUST - Regional Capacity Building Initiative

Lancaster is one of six networks selected from around the Chesapeake Bay to take part in the Regional Capacity uilding Initiative. As such, the Partners are the lead on the grant with other network leads from the Chesapeake Conservancy, Lancaster Farmland Trust, and the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay. The funding helps to support network-wide communication, innovative financing and processes for responsible and effective management of funds, and data management and evaluation.

REGIONAL CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

The Lancaster Clean Water Partners (Partners), through the Conservation Foundation of Lancaster County, facilitated the submission of a project proposal on November 25, 2020, for the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) of USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Sustainable restoration of priority streams and the acquisition of realistic, adequate funding are two key priorities of the Partners' Common Agenda. The Partners, through the Conservation Foundation of Lancaster County, is the official RCPP lead partner. To fully embrace a collaborative approach, ten partner organizations came together to form a leadership team. The leadership team includes the following organizations: TeamAg, Inc., Red Barn Consulting, Lancaster Farmland









YEAR - IN REVIEW





LANCASTER WATERSHED LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

The Lancaster Watershed Leadership Academy is a bi-annual program that supports the personal leadership development of individuals involved in the collective effort for clean water in Lancaster County. The twelve-month program is jam-packed with watershed content, field investigations, professional leadership content, and an overnight retreat on the Chesapeake Bay.

Scholars





Megan Blackmon



Lettice Brown



In January 2023, twelve people from different backgrounds and industries came together to learn to be better stewards, better leaders and better change-makers. Twelve months later, they had connected with local leaders, gained unique experiences and are ready for action that makes a difference in their watershed.





"I'll never look at a farm field the same way again. I've learned how hugely complex the issues are in Lancaster County. It's an issue of scale. We know what the problems are, and we know how to solve them, but the playing field is incredibly complicated."

-Jim Lewis







LANCASTER WATERSHED LEADERSHIP ACADEMY









rew Malmgren Theron Mitchell

Part of the Academy's curriculum is for scholars to plan and implement an action project. The projects chosen varied in their scope, but all worked to benefit Lancaster County waterways. Aidan Das, Andrew Pauls-Thomas and Megan Blackmon put on a series of community outreach events to bring awareness to the existing water quality initiatives in the city. Lettice Brown, Sally Reynolds and Stephanie Lower created a 190-foot buffer of native trees and shrubs along the north side of the Spring Hill Park in Mountville Borough. Kayli Rentzel and Cathleen Anthony researched the feasibility of some sustainable options for the Armstrong World Industries campus in Marietta. Jim Lewis and Andrew Malmgren organized a Salt Watch Program for data in order to advocate for a more innovative approach to road salt. Theron Mitchell organized a community event to introduce youth to conservation careers.













February - Lancaster Clean Water Partners become subsidiary LLC of the Conservation Foundation

July 26 - Senator Casey announces grant of \$14.3 million to connect Pennsylvania farmers with the financial resources and technical assistance they need to implement conservation practices

September 15 - Long's Park Wetlands Restoration Grand Opening Mayor Danene Sorace, Stephen Campbell, the Director of Public Works for the City of Lancaster and Lancaster City Water Resources Engineer, Angie Brackbill spoke at the ribbon cutting celebrating the completion of the wetlands project at Long's Park.

November 28 - EPA Announces Chesapeake Dead Zone Smallest On Record The Chesapeake Bay Journal reported that in 2023, the Chesapeake Bay's summer "dead zone" was the smallest it's been since monitoring began in 1985, according to data released by the Chesapeake Bay Program's monitoring partners



December 1 - DEP Announces \$4 Million to Lancaster CAP

The Shapiro administration awarded \$19.3 million to Pennsylvania's Countywide Action Plan (CAP) for 2024. The grant initiative targets projects that improve the health of streams and rivers, benefiting local stakeholders and those living downstream. Of the total, Lancaster County was awarded \$4 million.

December 15 - Version 3.0 Mapping Tool Released Some of the new features include a map design/printing function, new and updated data layers, and a reporting tool.

December - Lancaster Clean Water Fund Announces CAP Small Project Grant Recipients
This initiative, providing close to \$65,000 in grants, empowers local nonprofits and municipalities to spearhead initiatives aimed at enhancing the county's water quality. The recipients were Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake Bay, Let's Go 1-2-3, the City of Lancaster and Friends of Fishing Creek.







January 5 - Sharing Results with the Chesapeake Bay Commission
After gathering feedback from partners in our network, the Partners staff presented
the "ideal process" to legislators intending to improve restoration. The results have
had benefits way beyond this presentation and shaped work throughout 2023.

April 12 - Took Lancaster's clean water story to the Baywide Stormwater Network event

June 2-10 - Lancaster Water Week

Featured 40 events as we paddle, explore, volunteer, and take action as a community to protect our streams and rivers for the future!

June 16 - Co-hosted full day tour of Lancaster projects for the American Planning Association and Local Government Advisory Committee

August 26 - Ag Lenders Breakfast

Education and networking opportunities; explored agricultural funding challenges and solutions for local farmers, organizations, and community leaders.

September 13 - Lancaster Clean Water Partners Board Retreat

Board of Trustees met at Ridgeview Mennonite Church where they were given a tour of the pollinator garden and native tree plantings before a half day of insightful discussions and planning.

September 14 - Setting the Table

We welcomed new capacity to be part of the collaborative clean water work. Highlighting the clean water efforts that have been driving progress so far, this event brought together private sector company leaders and non-profit leaders to discuss the unique opportunities to improve our local waterways.

September 25 - Stormwater Action Team: MS4orum

It was an exciting day of engaging presentations focused on stormwater, maintenance, and municipal government topics that all have an element of collaborative spirit.

October 7 - Buffer Action Team: Made in the Shade

Environmental Conservation and plain air artmaking at Overlook Park. This event merged art and conservation education for the public.

December 14 - Lancaster Watershed Leadership Academy Commencement We celebrated the twelve graduating Academy scholars at the Cork Factory in Lancaster City.

April 5 & December 18 - Full Partners Meetings

Many of the partner organizations met at the spring and fall Full Partners Meetings to connect, hear from peers and experts, and make better decisions about how to restore and sustain healthy Lancaster waterways.









