

Year in Review 2024



Lancaster
CLEAN WATER PARTNERS

Photo credit: Michelle Johnsen, Courtesy: Lancaster Conservancy

2024 in Review

WHO WE ARE

The Lancaster Clean Water Partners is a countywide collaborative network of diverse organizations—local leaders in business, municipal public service, higher education, conservation planning, and nonprofit management—that come together with a common goal: clean and clear water in Lancaster by 2040. We are led by a Board of Trustees, staff, and collaborative partner organizations across Lancaster County.

A Year of Growth

2024 was a year of continued growth, both in the number of staff members and in our leadership. We welcomed two new staff members, Alex Cooper and Christina Martin, and two new Board members, Lauren Miller and Ezra Rothman.

TO READ MORE, SEE PAGE 3

We expanded our network of partner organizations as well:

12 New partner organizations
65 Total partner organizations

Funding

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

2024 expenses for the backbone organization were approximately:

\$245,189 Public Funding
\$411,683 Private Funding

A Year of Progress

As a backbone organization, we led capacity-building efforts including facilitated meetings, trainings, celebrations, and collaborative events that strengthen our collective impact in Lancaster County. In 2024, we led or co-led:

70 Projects and events

impacting

38 Catchments
and involving

250+ People

A Year of Collaboration

“As a group, we have bigger wins.”

-Gordon Hoover, Ag Outreach Coordinator at Lancaster Farmland Trust



Through a 2024 grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation—with support from the Chesapeake Bay Trust, Chesapeake Bay Funders Network, and the Chesapeake Bay Program—we created a video that explains the purpose and benefits of the backbone organization. The video features a few of the many projects and partner organizations helping us achieve our shared goal of clean and clear water in Lancaster County by 2040.



Letter from our Executive Director & Board Chair

Dear partners,

“Best grade in 22 years!” The report card headline says it all for 2024. Lancaster County is a major source of freshwater to the lower Susquehanna, and 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.

2024 was a solid year for the backbone organization as well as the network, both experiencing strength and learning. We have new staff and now with a better understanding of the true capacity needs we have, our skills overall are honed in for even better results. From financial compliance to catchment coordination, presentations to podcasts, kicking off the revisions of our Common Agenda to the largest application we’ve ever put together - this year included a lot of hard work and pushing ourselves to think and act big. My role as Executive Director is one of gratitude because I am fortunate to work with the leaders who make collaboration Lancaster's reality. Others around the Chesapeake Bay watershed are looking to Lancaster, now praising our work instead of putting us down. Even so, we still have a lot of work to do and will continue to drive the momentum, creating the narrative of local success to be Lancaster’s reality as well.

And for me as Chair of the Board, it has been so thrilling to see the momentum and camaraderie the Partners continues to build in Lancaster County for clean water. Allyson, Megan, Alex, Christina, and Kenn work so hard and care so much about the mission of the Partners and do an incredible job of getting everyone at the table and maximizing resources and impact. It has been an honor serving as Chair of the Board for the past year and I’m excited for the impact our incoming Chair, Justin Evans, will have on the organization. We move closer to accomplishing the common goal of clean and clear by 2040 and I’m confident that our partners and community will continue to make great strides in coming years.

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 work in 2025 and beyond, we ask you to think critically about your role, your commitment, and your actions that will show up in the revision of our Common Agenda. 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
Jenna Beckett, Chair of the Board



Staff & Board

NEW STAFF MEMBERS

Alex Cooper

Alex is the Project Coordinator for Lancaster Clean Water Partners and grew up fishing and kayaking in Lancaster County. He has worked in stream assessments, green infrastructure, and riparian buffer projects, including five years at TTF Watershed Partnership. A fellow of the Environmental Leadership Program, he recently returned to Lancaster and enjoys biking along the Susquehanna and Conestoga Rivers.



Christina Martin

Christina, the Finance and Grants Coordinator for Lancaster Clean Water Partners, manages financial integrity, compliance, and project budgets. With a background in administration, real estate, and government, she previously worked as an Executive Assistant for the Pennsylvania Senate. A Lancaster County native, she lives in Marietta with her two children and dog, Rosie, and enjoys fishing, kayaking, and outdoor adventures.



NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Ezra Rothman

Ezra is the President of EDC Lancaster County, is a mission-driven leader focused on community impact. He holds an M.S. in Strategic Leadership from Elizabethtown College and a B.A. in Government from Franklin & Marshall. Previously, he led strategic initiatives at EDC and directed the VITA Program at United Way, earning the 2018 SCORE Small Business of the Year Award. A Leadership Lancaster graduate, he enjoys boating on the Upper Bay, cycling, and exploring Lancaster City with his wife and dog.



Lauren Miller

Lauren, Associate Director of Educational Partnerships at IU13, connects education, business, and community to enhance learning and workforce readiness. She holds an M.S. from West Chester University and an Ed.D. from Drexel. She leads the Lancaster County STEM Alliance and ENGINE of Central PA. An avid runner, she enjoys the outdoors, reading, and family time.



2024 Board of Trustees

Jenna Beckett
Stephen Campbell
Brad Clubb
Justin Evans
Kate Gonick
Gordon Hoover
Michelle Marsh

Lauren Miler
Ezra Rothman
Matt Royer
Joe Sweeney
Jeff Swinehart
Chris Thompson
Heather Valudez



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 nonprofit management—who collaborate on clean water projects, connect to support one another, and communicate to a broad audience through the megaphone of our combined messaging platforms.

Being a Clean Water Partner means having the strength of numbers, a community of support and resources, and the confidence of one collaborative vision. Together, we work to improve the health of Lancaster's 1,400 miles of streams with the shared goal of clean and clear water by 2040.

- Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay
- Blackbirds Environmental Justice
- Borough of Ephrata
- Bright Side Opportunities Center *
- C.S. Davidson, Inc.
- Center of Watershed Protection
- Chesapeake Bay Foundation
- Chesapeake Conservancy
- Chesapeake Conservation Landscaping Council *
- Chesapeake Legal Alliance *
- Chiques Creek Watershed Alliance *
- Choose Clean Water Coalition
- City of Lancaster
- Cocalico Creek Watershed Association
- Conestoga River Club
- Cox Consulting
- Crossroads & Connections
- David Miller / Associates
- Department of Public Works, City of Lancaster, PA
- Donegal Chapter of Trout Unlimited
- East Lampeter Township
- Economic Development Company of Lancaster County
- Elizabethtown Borough
- Ephrata Concrete Cleaners
- Friends of Fishing Creek
- Gumption Design Co. *
- Green Fin Studio *
- Hourglass
- HRG *
- Individual
- Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake
- Keystone 10 Million Trees Partnership
- Lancaster Area Sewer Authority
- Lancaster Chamber
- Lancaster Conservancy
- Lancaster County Community Foundation
- Lancaster County Conservation District
- Lancaster County STEM Alliance
- Lancaster Farmland Trust
- Landstudies, Inc.
- Little Conestoga Watershed Alliance
- Londonderry Township *
- Lower Susquehanna Riverkeepers Association
- Mount Joy Borough
- Mowery Environmental, LLC
- Octoraro Watershed Association
- PA DCNR Bureau of Recreation and Conservation
- Penn State Agriculture and Environmental Center
- Quub *
- Red Barn Consulting
- RETTEW Associates
- RGS Associates
- Salisbury Township
- SoWe *
- Stroud Water Research Center
- Susquehanna River Basin Commission
- Sustainable Chesapeake
- TeamAg, Inc.
- The Nature Conservancy PA/DE Chapter
- Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
- Water Science Institute
- Waterkeepers Chesapeake
- Waxwing Ecoworks Co. *
- Weaver Environmental Consulting *
- West Cocalico Township

• partners who joined in 2024

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



Projects

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, but rather a few highlights of the 2024 projects undertaken by our partners.

Implementation Projects



1. Little Conestoga Creek Foundation, Blue-Green Connector



3. Cocalico Creek Watershed Association – Beyer Project
The Beyer Dairy was identified as a high-priority project during outreach with Clay Township due to runoff issues affecting Middle Creek. The project redirects clean stormwater through a pipe system away from the feed-storage area and treats runoff from feed bunks using screens and separators to manage solids and collect nutrient-rich effluent for land application during dry periods.



5. East Petersburg – Bioswale
The Borough of East Petersburg replaced an existing pipe with a bioswale and stone drainage system in an area known as “The Meadows” to address flooding and improve water quality. Surrounded by residential and commercial properties, the site now offers a great opportunity for public education and access to outdoor recreation.



One of Stroud’s many buffer plantings



6. Silvopasture Planting
Lancaster Farmland Trust partnered with Trees for Graziers to implement strategic silvopasture plantings on 15 farms across five watersheds in Lancaster County. Silvopasture—the deliberate integration of trees and grazing livestock on the same land—provides ecological and economic benefits, including improved herd health.



2. Riparian buffer near Hammertown Rd



8. Church of the Good Shepherd Rain Garden



4. East Earl Township – Bioswale and Basin
A portion of Cedar Creek is part of a stream delisting catchment, and a large property needed to address stormwater runoff before it reached the creek. The township replaced an existing pipe with a bioswale and stone drainage system to address flooding and reduce soil loss. Surrounded by residential and commercial properties, the site now has proper drainage and runoff barriers to handle a higher volume of water.



7. Lititz Run
The Lititz Run Watershed Alliance completed a stream restoration project on Lititz Run, on the Millport Conservancy property adjacent to Warwick Road. The improvements span 2,000 feet and include 1,004 feet of moundsills, six cross vanes, four vanes, 288 feet of brush matting, and 426 feet of rock toe. The project also included a riparian buffer, improving fish habitat and cooling water temperatures.



Projects

Capacity Building Projects

Clean Water Conversations

In January 2024, we launched our podcast, Clean Water Conversations—a bi-weekly show where hosts Allyson Gibson and Kenn Bennett have casual discussions with local conservation leaders about creating clean and clear water in Lancaster County. The podcast strives to inform and excite listeners about existing and proposed projects, network strengths, and opportunities for more community-driven momentum, all while celebrating the work of our partners. Guests share stories about the incredible journeys they've had and the inspirational work they are doing to address the challenges and opportunities related to achieving clean and clear water in Lancaster County by 2040. The show is garnering attention for its blend of education and entertainment, featuring icebreaker questions, trivia, and a rule against unexplained acronyms. By the end of 2024, the show had over 1,700 downloads across its 18 episodes.



Municipal Liaisons

In 2024, Lancaster Clean Water Partners contracted two Municipal Liaisons. Their primary goals were to serve as trusted peers while meeting with and listening to municipal staff about their clean water needs and successes, gathering data and stories, and encouraging collaborative stormwater projects that improve local watersheds.



Terry Martin, Municipal Liaison

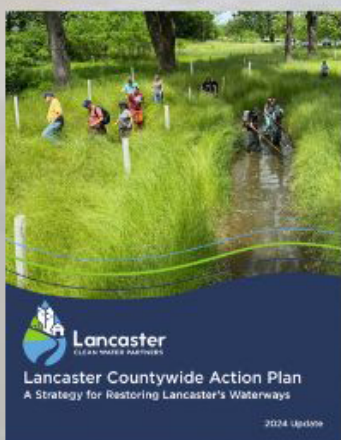
Terry, a lifelong resident of Eastern Lancaster County, has spent much of his time working in the Conestoga River watershed through agri-business, construction, and local government. He has served as Caernarvon Township Supervisor for over 10 years and Roadmaster for 14 years, actively supporting stream and river improvements in Lancaster County and beyond. He also serves on several regional and state committees, including the Lancaster County Planning Commission and the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors.

Ben Webber, Municipal Liaison

Ben moved to Lancaster at age three and spent his childhood exploring the streams and farmland of Manheim Township. With nearly 40 years of experience as a civil engineer—mostly in municipal roles—he recently turned his focus to local history, especially how community development has impacted neglected waterways. Through presentations, research, and collaboration, Ben is committed to raising public awareness and encouraging shared efforts to restore environmental balance.



Marketing



An Update to our CAP booklet

In 2024, Lancaster Clean Water Partners worked with [Green Fin Studio](#) to update our CAP booklet. Released in July, the Countywide Action Plan (CAP) is a roadmap with updated implementation goals for achieving nutrient and sediment reductions by 2025. It outlines prescribed best management practices across four categories and celebrates our partners' successes. The CAP is a valuable tool for partner organizations in grant proposals, a guide for BMP selection, and a resource for agency partners to illustrate local collaboration.

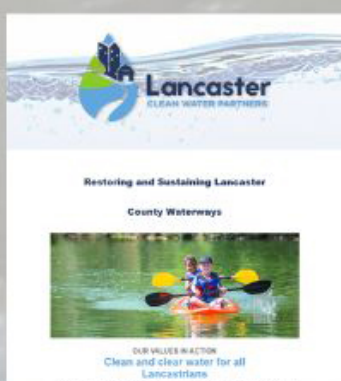
Local Advertising

Focusing on Lancaster City, [Fig](#) is a publication that celebrates small businesses, nonprofits, and local leaders. Known for its print, digital, and social media presence, Fig highlights local shopping, dining, arts, events, and culture. Its mission is to build stronger communities and support sustainable local economies. Following a shoutout from the High Foundation in the summer edition, we continued promoting clean water messaging in the fall, highlighting the ripple effects a single action can have—both locally and downstream.



Newsletters Highlighting Our Values Throughout 2024

Throughout the latter half of 2024, we themed our [monthly newsletters](#) around our organizational values and showcased examples of those values in action by our backbone staff and partners. These themed editions garnered the highest open rate of the year for our newsletter.



Funding

Structure

In early 2023, the Partners became a subsidiary LLC of the Conservation Foundation, a standalone 501(c)(3) non-profit. The LLC is a “disregarded entity,” meaning it stands legally independent yet shares an EIN number and audited financial statements with the Conservation Foundation. The Partners has its 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 employees of the Conservation District, outlined by a service agreement for roles and responsibilities of each party. Thank you to the Conservation District for being our physical home and for including us in all things employment.

Private Funding

The Campbell Foundation, Steinman Foundation, and Kentfields Foundation continue to support the Partners. Uniquely supporting the backbone organization, these funders have been critical to the Partners’ growth within its first six years. In late 2023 and into 2024, the Partners also received funding from the High Foundation and a private donor for continued operational needs in 2024. These funders directly support expenses such as overall operations, marketing and communications, audits and accounting, meeting expenses, staff time, board development, and the Watershed Leadership Academy.

Public Funding

These are dollars that the Partners secure and manage, sending them back out to partner organizations for clean water work. 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 and use a group of local advisors to review and score applications. In 2024, \$3,868,250.66 went to seven projects.

NATIONAL FISH & WILDLIFE (NFWF) CRESCENDO IN COLLABORATION GRANT and REDUCING RUNOFF GRANT

Through the Crescendo in Collaboration project, the Lancaster Clean Water Partners are accelerating progress and overcoming obstacles through targeted financial and staff resources. Funding from NFWF includes project design, engineering, and 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; and engagement by Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake. Also in 2024, we secured a new INSR grant, called Reducing Runoff and Reaching New Leaders, to continue this collaborative work for an additional three years, scaling up and out while we grow the impact of the network.

AMERICAN RECOVERY PLAN ACT (ARPA)

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. Funding is going to 13 projects that have a transformational impact in the County by reducing harmful pollutants in waterways and creating 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 costs of infrastructure repairs.

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 Building 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 Partners facilitated the submission of a project proposal in 2020 for the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) of USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The RCPP was funded in the amount of \$7.4 million over five years and brings together ten contributing partners, who are leveraging over \$10.8 million in partner contributions, in support of the Countywide Action Plan (CAP) and Common Agenda goal of clean and clear water by 2040. The Partners, through the Conservation Foundation of Lancaster County, were the official RCPP applicant. The funding has been contracted to 26 farm projects. The Partners continue to work with project leads, NRCS, and technical service providers to ensure that the projects are successfully implemented.



The Backbone

The backbone staff of the Lancaster Clean Water Partners plays a pivotal leadership role in coordinating and advancing collaborative efforts to achieve the organization's mission of clean and clear water in Lancaster County by 2040. Serving as a central hub of facilitation and capacity, the backbone team drives the collective impact elements of shared measurement, continuous communication, and mutually reinforcing activities, and leads the Common Agenda. The team also demonstrates the network's values in all that they do.



"Stroud Center staff collaborate with LCWP staff in so many ways! They help us promote events, track buffer and BMP progress, and strategize on how to do our work better. LCWP has provided leadership on local clean water programs that is really making a difference."

- Lamonte Garber, Stroud Water Research Center

"Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake is proud to be part of the collaborative and solutions-driven network that is the Lancaster Clean Water Partners. Their commitment to uniting diverse stakeholders around a shared vision for clean and healthy waterways directly supports and strengthens our work with faith communities. One of the key ways we benefit is through their Communications Action Team, which provides thoughtful guidance and shared messaging tools that help us amplify the impact of local congregations taking action for clean water. This kind of strategic support allows us to be more aligned, effective, and visible within the larger movement for watershed restoration in Lancaster County."

- Natalie Johnson, Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake



Each member of the backbone staff also serves as a participant on an Action Team, lending their expertise, experience, and unique perspective to advance the team's focus. The Action Teams focus on Buffers, Communication, Stormwater, and Water Quality Monitoring.

By providing organizational support, strategic direction, and resource management, the backbone staff ensures that collaborative efforts are effective and aligned with the shared goal of improving Lancaster County's water quality.



News of the Network

In 2024, Lancaster Clean Water Partners and our partner organizations were featured in a range of news stories that showcased the collective impact of our work. From major project milestones and innovative funding wins to community-driven restoration efforts, these highlights reflect the growing momentum behind our shared mission. Local and regional coverage helped amplify the voices of our partners, celebrate successes, and raise awareness about the importance of clean, healthy waterways in Lancaster County.

- **January 22** - Lancaster Clean Water Partners published the first episode of the podcast *Clean Water Conversations*.
- **June** - Lancaster County Conservation District received award: Team Collaboration Award.
- **June 26** - A nearly \$1.5 million award from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation will boost the efforts of Lancaster Clean Water Partners as it works toward reducing sediment and nutrient runoff in local streams and waterways.
- **July 10** - The annual University of Maryland's Center for Environmental Science Chesapeake Bay Report Card ranked the Upper Bay, the Bay region Lancaster County drains into, as the second-highest scoring for ecosystem health—a mark local officials take as a sign that cleanup efforts in the Susquehanna River watershed are working.
- **July 23** - Lancaster County initiated the development of a Countywide Stormwater Management Plan, also known as Act 167, by launching the Watershed Plan Advisory Committee (WPAC). The process is co-led by the Partners and the County Planning Department to achieve a top goal in the CAP.
- **November** - 2024 PA Chesapeake Bay BMP Reporting Progress Year Update – Pennsylvania has submitted nearly 16,700 Best Management Practices (BMPs) for the 2024 Chesapeake Bay Progress Year—an increase of over 2,100—with final reports released in February.



Events

In 2024, Lancaster Clean Water Partners energized the community through a dynamic lineup of events designed to educate, connect, and inspire. From hosting hands-on field days and community cleanups to presenting at regional conferences and promoting partner-led initiatives, our team worked alongside local leaders and residents to turn shared goals into action. These events highlighted the power of collaboration in accelerating progress toward clean and clear water across Lancaster County.

This is a highlight list of events hosted by or in association with the Lancaster Clean Water Partners in 2024.

- **February 22 - Selling Conservation** @ Manheim Twp Public Library - Conservation representatives discussed better ways to form relationships with landowners, learned to sell the concept of change to people who reject change, listen more and have a plan for success.
- **March 1 - Board Retreat** @ Ressler Mill Foundation - Our Board of Trustees met for an operational strategy session and learned about the history and future of the Mill.
- **April 16 - Full Partners Meeting** @ Woodcrest Villas - Our partners heard from EPA's Mid-Atlantic Regional Administrator, Adam Ortiz and fellow partners. The session focused on the Little Conestoga and included leadership lessons and project specifics.
- **June 27 - Selling Conservation 2.0** @ Esch Farm - After the success of Selling Conservation in February, a follow-up class was held, including role-playing practice with peers and farmers, agriculture equipment demos and networking time.
- **July 22 - Act167 Watershed Planning Advisory Committee** @ Upper Leacock Municipal Office - Phase I of the County's Stormwater Management Plan kicked off with over 50 municipal representatives and stormwater professionals
- **September 13 - Fall Board Retreat** @ Climber's Run - Our Board of Trustees met for an operational strategy session and learned about the preservation efforts happening at the preserve.
- **October** - Board and staff meeting on Chief Uncas, a historic wooden and electric boat on the Susquehanna River
- **October 18-20 - Annual Chesapeake Watershed Forum** @ the National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, WV - The event is a watershed-wide event reaching over 400 restoration and protection practitioners to inspire and empower local action towards clean water. Among the speakers were Allyson Gibson and Megan Blackmon from Lancaster Clean Water Partners and Carly Dean from Chesapeake Conservancy.
- **October 21 - MS4orum** @ Public Safety Training Center - 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 22 - Connect and Prep** to support high quality grant applications from Lancaster
- **October 29 - Full Partners Meeting** @ Riverdale Manor - For the fall Full Partners Meeting, we focused on the Conestoga River. We were joined by Lancaster Mayor, Danene Sorace, local artists and historians, as well as conservation professionals leading projects.
- **November 7 - LCATs** presentation to municipal elected officials



Selling Conservation 2.0



Board and Staff Meeting Aboard the Chief Uncas



Connect and Prep



Watershed Forum



Fall Board Retreat



MS4orum



Fall Full Partners Meeting





Lancaster
CLEAN WATER PARTNERS

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