



**Lancaster**  
CLEAN WATER PARTNERS



Photo credit: Michelle Johnsen, Courtesy: Lancaster Conservancy

# Year in Review **2025**



# 2025 in Review

This document serves as a focused review of the programming and operations of the backbone organization over the past year. It is intended to highlight key initiatives, milestones, and lessons learned that reflect how the backbone supported, coordinated, and strengthened the broader network. While the work captured here represents an important piece of our collective progress, it is not a comprehensive year in review of the entire network. That level of detail would be extensive and is beyond the scope of this report. Instead, this review is designed to help readers understand the backbone's role and impact within the larger system, and to keep that perspective in mind throughout the document.

## A Year of Change

2025 was a year that challenged the way we do and think about our daily operations. From a funding freeze to start the year to a government shutdown in the fall, 2025 became a year that instigated a new line of thinking, stressing the need for additional funding solutions and shifting our capacity to meet new challenges. These challenges also confirmed the need for our approach of working better together to produce collaborative wins.

We expanded our network of partner organizations:

**18** New partner organizations in 2025

**83** Total partner organizations as of December 2025



## Funding

The Partners see revenue from both public and private sources. In 2025, expenses for the backbone organization were approximately (this does not reflect dollars brought in and given back out to partner organizations for project implementation):

**\$400,528** Public Funding

**\$220,485** Private Funding

## A Year of Progress

As a backbone organization, we led capacity-building efforts, including facilitation, trainings, celebrations, and collaborative events that strengthen our collective impact in Lancaster County. In 2025, we led or co-led:

**88** Events or sessions impacting

**38** Catchments and involving

**1,700+** People

# Letter from our Executive Director & Board Chair

Dear partners,

A common goal we all agree to and we all own - clean and clear by 2040 - was confirmed! Our newly revised Common Agenda officially came out in August and the process getting to that product gathered so many voices of support.

Early in the year, we all experienced a few moments of pause, of concern, and unknowns. The backbone organization provided space for conversation, support, and resources, whether it was for the release of the draft MS4 permit, the federal funding freeze, or our board's finance subcommittee. There were also moments of excitement with the start of the 2025 Lancaster Watershed Leadership Academy cohort, bringing 13 scholars together for a year of learning and leading around the county. In spring we conducted a second public opinion survey of the county which not only confirmed areas of need for education and outreach but also raised new opportunities for advocacy. We also celebrated Earth Week with DEP on-site here in Lancaster! The 2024 audit had good results, reinforcing the importance of our backbone team's role to bring in bigger dollars and have strong financial processes to get them out to partners doing the project work. We used creativity and aligned timing to ensure coordinated funding with the CAP implementation dollars, the Clean Water Fund, NFWF grants, and private dollars. While not every funding application resulted in what we had hoped, we listened to partner needs and we pivoted. The network map that came out in the summer showed us the strength of connections between partners, putting a visual to the way we know people work together. Even through a government shutdown in the fall, it was obvious that having partner group conversations about realities of agriculture and PFAS, celebrations of what our first municipal liaisons learned, and a podcast to amplify voices were essential tools for our work.

As Chair of the Board, first I would like to extend a big thanks to my predecessor Jenna Beckett for her leadership of the Partners. Also, the Partners could not thrive and be as effective as it is today without Allyson and the strong backbone team she has assembled. The Lancaster community continues to rise up and tackle this water quality challenge with a growing base of partners and individual property owners making things happen. Our staff has also risen to the challenge as the organization matures, using their diverse talents to keep the Partners moving forward and support the growing network of community partners. Making progress through the growing pains is of paramount importance in the mission of getting more resources to the people making the difference in Lancaster's water quality challenge. We look forward to a bigger and better 2026 and beyond.

As we work in 2026, 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

Justin Evans, Chair of the Board



# Staff & Board



## NEW STAFF MEMBER



### MONIQUE DYKMAN

Monique joined us in October as the Director of Programs and Partners for Lancaster Clean Water Partners. Growing up on a tributary of the Chesapeake Bay ingrained a drive to work to support local water quality improvement. Through her career, Monique has worked in outdoor education, volunteer/program management, river garbage cleanup, and Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4). Monique loves living in Lancaster for the easy access to day hikes, kayaking, and city life.



Late 2025 was a year of change and growth for the backbone staff. We said goodbye to Director of Projects, Megan Blackmon, and hello to Director of Programs and Partners, Monique Dykman.

## NEW BOARD MEMBER



### CHRIS MURPHY

Chris Murphy is a Vice President and Business Banker with First National Bank, partnering with Lancaster County businesses to support growth through credit and financial solutions. He has over four years of experience in commercial banking and holds a finance degree with high honors from Penn State. A lifelong Lancaster County resident, Chris has a strong connection to the region's waterways and is passionate about achieving clean water in Lancaster County by 2040. He supports this mission through his service on the organization's Board of Trustees.

## OUTGOING BOARD MEMBERS



### THANK YOU FOR YOUR YEARS OF SERVICE TO LANCASTER CLEAN WATER PARTNERS

We would like to extend a special note of thanks to our two board members whose terms have come to an end at the end of 2025. Heather Valudes and Chris Thompson have both served for 9 years, and Lancaster Clean Water Partners would like to thank you, from the bottom of our hearts, for your service, wisdom, and guidance!



# Partners

Lancaster Clean Water Partners unites leaders from business, local government, higher education, conservation, and nonprofits to collaborate on clean water projects and amplify shared messages. Being a Clean Water Partner means strength in numbers, shared resources, and a common vision to restore and protect Lancaster's 1,400 miles of streams and achieve clean, clear water by 2040.

- Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay
- ARRO Consulting \*
- Big Picture Consulting \*
- Blackbirds Environmental Justice
- Blue Green Connector \*
- 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
- College Park Climate Action Neighborhood \*
- Conestoga River Club
- Cox Consulting
- Crossroads & Connections
- David Miller / Associates
- Department of Public Works, City of Lancaster, PA
- Donegal Chapter of Trout Unlimited
- East Cocalico Township Authority \*
- East Lampeter Township
- Economic Development Company of Lancaster County
- The Edible Classroom \*
- Elizabethtown Borough
- Ephrata Concrete Cleaners
- Flyway Excavating\_\*
- Friends of Fishing Creek
- Gumption Design Co.
- Green Fin Studio
- Hazmat 2 Environmental Fire Rescue Company \*
- Hess Home Builders \*
- 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.
- LCSWMA \*
- Little Conestoga Watershed Alliance
- Londonderry Township
- Lower Susquehanna Riverkeepers Association
- Mayapple Native Landscaping \*
- Mount Joy Borough
- Mowery Environmental, LLC
- Octoraro Watershed Association
- PA DCNR Bureau of Recreation and Conservation
- Partners for Environmental Stewardship \*
- Penn State Agriculture and Environmental Center
- Quittapahilla Watershed Association \*
- Quub
- Red Barn Consulting
- RETTEW Associates
- RGS Associates
- Salisbury Township
- Schuylkill Highlands \*
- SoWe
- Spanish American Civic Association
- The Steinman Foundation \*
- Stroud Water Research Center
- Susquehanna River Basin Commission
- Sustainable Chesapeake
- TeamAg, Inc.
- The Nature Conservancy PA/DE Chapter
- Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
- Warwick Township \*
- Water Science Institute
- Waterkeepers Chesapeake
- Waxwing Ecoworks Co. \*
- Weaver Environmental Consulting \*
- West Cocalico Township

• **partners who joined in 2025**



# Implementation Projects

This is by no means a comprehensive list, but rather a few highlights of the 2025 projects led or funded by the backbone staff but truly implemented by the partner organizations. Because the new state cost share program, Agriculture Conservation Assistance Program (ACAP) covered a lot of the Ag requests, we saw a bigger need for stream and wetlands restorations to collectively achieve our local goals. Leveraging the dollars we had helps get more done!

**1 Blue Green Connector** - Recent Spring and Summer 2025 flooding damaged newly restored floodplain areas at the Conestoga House and Mennonite sites, limiting vegetation growth and causing erosion and plant loss. This project will repair and stabilize those areas through targeted replanting, seeding, and structural improvements that support water quality, habitat, and stream health. The work will restore a resilient floodplain and wetland system that reduces erosion, filters runoff, improves nutrient reduction, and strengthens long-term ecosystem function. This project was funded, in part, by the Clean Water Fund, NFWF, DEP, private donors, and municipal partners.

**2. Hickory Lane Floodplain Restoration** - The Hickory Lane Stream and Floodplain Restoration project will restore approximately 2,700 linear feet of Conoy Creek by stabilizing streambanks, improving floodplain function, and removing legacy sediment. The project will reposition the stream within the valley, establish a more natural braided channel, and expand native riparian vegetation and wetlands. These improvements will enhance water quality, reduce pollutant loads, and restore a healthier, more resilient riparian corridor. This project was funded, in part by the 2024 Large Grant Clean Water Fund

**3. Hope Episcopal Church Rain Garden** - With support from the Keith Campbell Foundation, the Center for Watershed Protection provided technical assistance to Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake to assess green infrastructure opportunities at congregations in Lancaster County. Hope Episcopal Church emerged as a strong candidate for implementation due to its location within a high quality watershed and demonstrated commitment to stewardship. The congregation formalized that commitment through IPC's Partner Congregation Pledge and participation in the Faithful Green Leaders Training Program. This project was funded, in part, by the Clean Water Fund.

**4. Lititz Run Floodplain Restoration at Ballstown Rd** - This project will restore approximately 1,700 linear feet of floodplain and eight acres of wetlands along an eroding stream channel through the removal of legacy sediment. The work will reestablish a functional floodplain wetland system that provides flood storage, protects infrastructure, improves water quality, enhances biodiversity, and supports groundwater recharge. These improvements will strengthen the resiliency of the Lititz Run watershed while delivering significant reductions in sediment, nitrogen, and phosphorus loads.

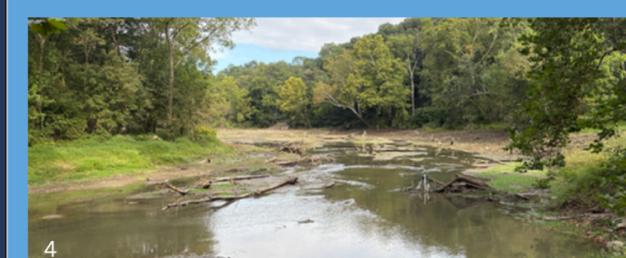
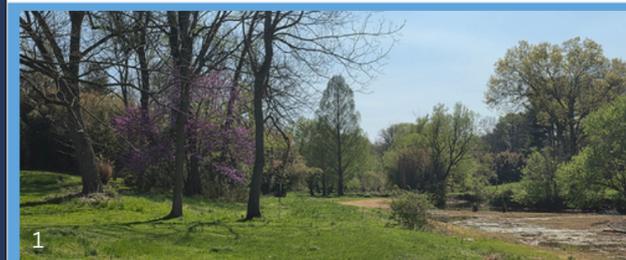
**5. Neff-Denlinger Stream Restoration** - This project will restore and stabilize more than 3,000 linear feet of Denlinger Run to reduce erosion, strengthen channel stability, and improve aquatic habitat. Using a multi-BMP, natural channel design approach aligned with Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission guidance, the work will support long-term sediment reduction and stream health. Enhancements to the riparian buffer and adjacent wetlands will further reinforce floodplain function and habitat benefits.

**6. Indian Springs Run Farm Stream Restoration** - Restoration work at the Indian Springs Run farm addressed stream degradation caused by limited buffers and livestock access to the creek, a cold water tributary of the Susquehanna River watershed. Led by the Lancaster County Conservation District and partners, the project restored about 3,000 feet of stream channel, installed fencing and crossings to exclude cattle, and planted native trees and shrubs to establish a riparian buffer. The work stabilized eroding banks, reduced sediment and nutrient runoff, improved aquatic habitat, and advanced Lancaster County's clean water goals.

**7 Good's Run Landis Farm Restoration** - The Darryl Landis Stream Restoration Project will restore approximately 1,600 linear feet of Good's Run to address erosion caused by limited riparian buffers and upstream development. The project will establish a 50-foot riparian buffer through CREP and implement natural stream channel restoration to stabilize banks, improve habitat, and enhance water quality. These improvements will support long-term stream health while accommodating continued agricultural use of the surrounding land.

**8. Cedar Creek Stream Restoration** - East Earl Township completed a restoration of 4,400 feet of Cedar Creek to address impacts from historical channel realignment and agricultural use that had caused streambed downcutting, erosion, and degraded habitat. The project reconnected the stream to its floodplain through the removal of legacy sediments and creation of pocket wetlands to support nutrient capture, while streambanks were regraded and stabilized to reduce sediment loads. A three-tier riparian forest buffer was installed to restore vegetation, stabilize banks, and reconnect the riparian root zone with the water table, improving long-term stream health.

**9 Nissley Rd Stormwater Basin** - East Hempfield Township completed the creation of a second bioretention basin on Township-owned property at 918 Nissley Road, just southeast of Four Seasons Golf Club, as part of a two-phase stormwater management project. The upper basin was installed to capture and infiltrate stormwater that had previously flowed untreated from legacy residential developments with no formal stormwater controls. Located along Gloucester Street, the project was designed to remove up to 12,159 pounds of sediment and treat approximately 15 percent of the previously un-detained stormwater within the overall catchment area.



# Capacity Building Projects

## Clean Water Conversations



Lancaster Clean Water Partners continued with seasons 3 and 4 of the podcast, *Clean Water Conversations*. Season 3, which was sponsored by Chesapeake Conservancy, featured some of the movers and shakers in clean water work, including Brian Gish, Emily Landis, and Diana Martin. The government funding freeze in March created an opportunity to discuss where we, as a network, stand and how to respond to media requests. The season concluded at the Crescendo in Collaboration celebration in June.

Season 4 focused on the end of the Bay Agreement 2025 deadline and some of the partner organizations who are pushing through toward clean and clear water by 2040. This season featured a variety of partners, including Emily Broich, Scott Peiffer, Patrick Flemming, and Matt Kofroth, with whom we celebrated the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Lancaster County Conservation District.

By the end of 2025, the podcast was downloaded over 4,000 times.

## Updated Common Agenda

It is safe to say that what we do as both a backbone and as a network is based on the Common Agenda. The Common Agenda is the shared vision, clear priorities, and specific strategies that lead us to our shared goal of clean and clear water by 2040.

In 2025, Lancaster Clean Water Partners worked closely with Due East Partners to update our Common Agenda. The process included feedback from public listening sessions, partner small groups, Action Teams, board sessions, multiple vision-shaping presentations including at our spring full partners meeting, where partners committed to specific strategies.

The updated Common Agenda was approved and released in August. Initial steps to implement the Common Agenda began in late 2025 and ramps up in 2026.



### 2025 Newsletters



## Newsletters Highlighting BMP's

In 2025, our [newsletters](#) were themed around Best Management Practices. Each month, this theme gave us the opportunity to celebrate the implementation of specific BMP's and the tangible, in-the-ground progress that our partners are making towards clean and clear water by 2040. We saw celebrations of wetlands, buffers, manure management, and more!

## Partners Network Map

In 2025, Lancaster Clean Water Partners strengthened collaboration by promoting the [Network Map](#). This tool shows how clean water initiatives, organizations, and professionals across Lancaster County are connected and working toward clean and clear water by 2040. Users can explore topics, types of work, and geographic focus areas to better understand the network. The map supports community engagement and increases transparency in local efforts. It also makes it easier for new and long-standing partners to connect, share expertise, build relationships, and contribute to shared clean water goals across the county.

## 2025 Public Opinion Survey

As a follow-up to the 2021 Public Opinion Survey, Lancaster Clean Water Partners commissioned a second round of research to measure how community attitudes toward water quality and environmental restoration have evolved. Conducted in 2025 by Susquehanna Polling and Research, the scientifically designed survey of Lancaster County voters tracks changes in awareness, priorities, and support for clean water initiatives. The results provide updated insight to guide outreach and communications, compare trends with 2021 baseline data, and inform action steps aligned with the Partners' Common Agenda, ensuring that local voices continue to shape and sustain the county's clean water progress.





# Funding

## Our 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 the backbone staff’s physical home and for including us in all things employment.

## Private Funding

The Campbell Foundation, Steinman Foundation, and Kentfields Foundation continued to support the Partners in 2025. Uniquely supporting the operations of the network, these funders have been critical to the backbone’s sustainability and growth. In 2025, the Partners also used funding from the High Foundation and a private donor for work on the revision of the Common Agenda. These funders directly support expenses such as overall operations, marketing and communications, audits and accounting, meeting expenses, staff time, a senior advisor, board development, and the Watershed Leadership Academy.

## Public Funding

The sources listed below are major sources of funding in 2025, but this is not an exhaustive list. These dollars come from public grants or government sources. The Partners secure and manage the awards, which are mostly given back out to partner organizations for on-the-ground work. The majority of these dollars are used to implement best management practices or for technical assistance; however, we do use some administrative or indirect dollars to run the network.

### **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 2025, over \$6 million went to 31 projects.

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

Through the Crescendo in Collaboration project, the Lancaster Clean Water Partners accelerated progress and overcame obstacles through targeted projects and intentionally collaborative processes. Funding from NFWF went to 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 2025, we secured a new grant called Reducing Runoff and Reaching New Leaders to continue this collaborative work through early 2027. Each uses a local leadership team of partner organizations to make decisions and strategically implement based on local priorities. These are Innovative Nutrient and Sediment Reduction (INSR) grants, and the Partners was a spotlight case as a collaborative example in the INSR assessment led by NFWF.

### **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 the end of 2026. Funding is going to 13 projects that have a transformational impact in the county by reducing 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. Projects include agriculture, urban trees, riparian buffer establishment care, and suburban wetlands.

### **CHESAPEAKE BAY TRUST - Regional Capacity Building Initiative**

Lancaster is one of six networks from across the Chesapeake Bay taking part in the Regional Capacity Building Initiative. The Partners backbone staff are the lead on the grant, which also supports other partners serving as network leads (Chesapeake Conservancy, Lancaster Farmland Trust, and Lancaster City). In 2025 the funding supported the development of the revised Common Agenda, strengthened network communication, made the public opinion survey possible, and covered capacity needs for data management and evaluation.

# 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 resource management, the backbone team drives the collective impact elements of shared measurement, continuous communication, mutually reinforcing activities, and leads the Common Agenda. The team also demonstrates the network's values in all that they do.



"As the new Executive Director of a local non-profit organization, with a small staff and limited funds, I have found the camaraderie, support, generosity, and professionalism of the CWP staff to be what makes THE difference in my work. Their experience in the Lancaster Community provides context when I need it. Their expertise and connections to other organizations provide the threads that are helping our organization to weave ourselves into the fabric of the already vibrant picture of this watershed community."

- Malinda Harnish Clatterback, Conestoga River Club

"Lancaster Clean Water Partners have facilitated meaningful collaboration between Lancaster Conservancy and many other local organizations through initiatives like the Communications Action Team, helping to amplify success stories, opportunities for action, and ways for the community to get involved in caring for streams and rivers in Lancaster County. The Clean Water Partners team is enthusiastic and dedicated to supporting the many groups and organizations working toward healthier waterways."

- Avery Van Etten, Lancaster Conservancy



This year the backbone staff kept learning about the community by visiting LancasterHistory.org's exhibit about justice. A team's strength needs to be both mental and physical, so we had a personal training session at Universal Athletic Club. And we celebrated with the Barnstormers at a summer game!



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.

The backbone welcomed Tatum Long, our intern from Franklin & Marshall, for three months in 2025. Tatum was instrumental in establishing the Network Map.





# Lancaster Watershed

The Lancaster Watershed Leadership Academy is a year-long program co-hosted by the Lancaster Clean Water Partners and Penn State's College of Agriculture Sciences. It equips emerging and established community members with both watershed science and leadership skills to advance clean water efforts across Lancaster County. Scholars participate in a structured program of eight full-day, in-person sessions and eight virtual sessions, field investigations, professional leadership content, and an overnight Chesapeake Bay retreat. Along with a bigger personal network, the course deepens their understanding of watershed systems and builds practical leadership capabilities.



Abby Burkhart



Alex Cooper



Bethe Gettle



Christina Martin



Jacquie Morges



Jenny Engle

The curriculum emphasizes how watersheds function, the sources and solutions to water pollution, and strategic collaboration among stakeholders to reduce nutrient and sediment loads in local streams—part of the county's larger goal of clean and clear water by 2040. Scholarships are available to make the program accessible to more people. Participants come from diverse backgrounds, united by a commitment to community-based watershed stewardship.

Lessons from the 2025 Academy highlight that the program mixes rigorous content with applied experiences: scholars visited a small Amish farm, a large award winning dairy farm with its own digester, Lancaster Area Sewer Authority's water treatment facility, public parks and churches with green infrastructure, did macroinvertebrate assessments, explored what hospitality and culture mean at a thriving local business, and much more. All along the way, they practiced public speaking, worked through conflict management, dove into government affairs, and met creative leaders. The structure of the program supports bridging theory with practice through field visits and project work, preparing scholars to take on leadership roles in clean water initiatives across sectors.

Scholars' action projects illustrate how these learnings translate into real-world impact. Here are a few project examples:

**The Village Rain Garden Project** transformed a residential yard in Millersville Borough into a rain garden that functions as green infrastructure to manage stormwater and educate neighbors about watershed stewardship. Scholars Jenny Engle, Kenn Bennett, and Alex Cooper helped design and implement this project, demonstrating practical skills in community engagement and stormwater management tied to clean water goals.



# Leadership Academy



**The Featherbranch Planting Project** brought volunteers together to restore native habitat near the upper headwaters of the Conestoga River at Historic Poole Forge Park in Narvon. Led by scholars Sarah Mitchell, Lori Kier, and Bethe Gettle, the project focused on a volunteer planting with native vegetation to improve ecological health, stabilize soils, and provide habitat, reflecting the Academy's emphasis on hands-on restoration and community involvement.



Kenn  
Bennett



Leif  
Sundberg



Lori  
Kier



Melissa  
Tenneson



Michael  
de la Parra Gurr



Sarah  
Mitchell



For the **Raised Bed Education Garden + Community Event Kickoff**, scholar Jacquie Morges spearheaded a project that revitalized a closed city-owned site in Lancaster's SoWe neighborhood, creating an outdoor environmental education hub. This initiative combined green space creation with outreach, showcasing how leadership and urban gardening can foster community connection and environmental learning.

The **Overlook Planting** project, led by scholars Abigail Burkhart and Christina Martin, built on existing riparian buffer restoration efforts at the Overlook Community Campus. Their work enhanced an already significant seven-acre streamside buffer, advancing ecological restoration and providing an outdoor classroom for community awareness and stewardship.

Together, these projects reflect the Academy's dual focus on applied watershed improvement and leadership in practice—equipping participants to implement green infrastructure, habitat restoration, and educational outreach that contribute to healthier watersheds and stronger community engagement around clean water.





# News from the Broader Network

In 2025, 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, each of these developments affected not only our partners but, through the ripple effect, the backbone organizations as well.

• **January** -

The White House Office of Management and Budget directed federal agencies to temporarily pause the disbursement of funds for all new and existing awards, a move with significant regional impacts. Governor Shapiro brought a class action lawsuit against the White House, which got funds unfrozen.

• **February** -

An early update indicated that Pennsylvania's 2024 Chesapeake Bay BMP Progress Year reporting process was nearing completion, with DEP finalizing nonpoint source data ahead of EPA's deadline and partners reporting an estimated 16,700 BMPs, an increase of more than 2,100, with final validated numbers to be released in February.

• **April** -

Acting DEP Secretary Jessica Shirley joined Lancaster Clean Water Partners and key project leads, such as the Little Conestoga Creek Foundation at the Blue Green Connector, to celebrate Earth Week. With multiple phases and a unique watershed permit, the project will restore 1.3 miles of stream and 25 acres of floodplain and/or wetlands while integrating buffers, community trails, and new outdoor learning spaces.

• **July** -

July brought record-breaking rainfall to South Central Pennsylvania, putting our local stormwater solutions to the test. July 1 brought nearly 7 inches of rain to Manheim, nearly 5 inches at the Lancaster Airport, and 3 inches in West Lampeter Township. Another storm, on July 14, dumped 7.5 inches of rain on Mount Joy Township. In spite of the storms, the projects fared admirably well.

• **August** -

What a great morning of connecting with the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay and Chesapeake Conservancy for a sharing session about RCPP, project implementation needs, and funding coordination here in Lancaster! We discussed capacity issues, finding priorities, storytelling, contracts, and communication challenges. Thanks to all of the brilliant individuals who participated.

• **October** -

Due to the government shutdown, federally-funded organizations like NRCS and EPA were furloughed for 41 days. The work continued via partner organizations, but ripple effects of the shutdown were felt for months after.

• **December** -

Leaders of the Chesapeake Bay Program's Executive Council formally approved the updated Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement, which set a shared restoration framework through 2040, refocusing partner commitments on clean water, healthy landscapes, engaged communities, and thriving habitats while incorporating lessons learned and the latest science to guide pollution reduction and ecosystem restoration efforts across the watershed. At that same meeting, Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro was elected chair of the Chesapeake Bay Executive Council in December 2025 and is leading the coalition in 2026.

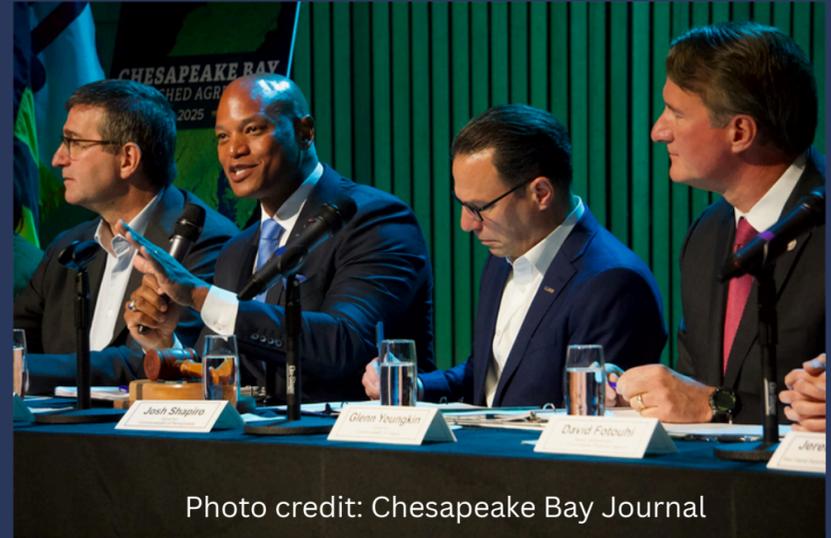
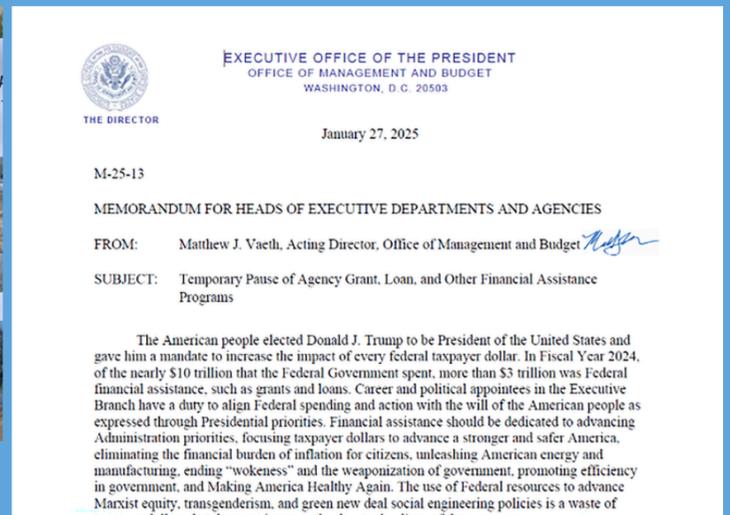


Photo credit: Chesapeake Bay Journal



# Events

In 2025, 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 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.

- **January 1** - Lancaster County Conservation District 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary kicks off
- **January 22** - Request for proposal for consulting services for the 2025 Lancaster County clean water **public opinion survey** went out.
- **March 10** - Hosted a feedback **session about the draft MS4 permit** with 50+ municipal partners at the Farm and Home Center; collated the results and submitted them to DEP
- **April 4** - **US Conference of Mayors Water Council** presentation in Lancaster
- **April 15** - **Informational Session** for the Clean Water Fund Small category grant.
- **April 23** - **Earth Week** press event with DEP and Little Conestoga Creek Foundation at the Blue Green Connector
- **April 29** - **Full Partners Meeting @ Village Mill** along the Pequea Creek
- **May 22** - **Stormwater BMP Lunch n Learn** at Mt Joy Community Park along Chiques Creek. Attendees learned about the Borough's latest stormwater improvements—including a basin retrofit, bioretention, and stream restoration—and heard from project leads over lunch.
- **May 15** - **Watershed Planning Advisory Committee meeting at Earl Township**
- **May 28** - **Celebration of the NFWF Crescendo in Collaboration grant** at Ascension Lutheran Church, along with a podcast recording session
- **June 3** - **American Rescue Plan Act** project progress presentation at public meeting for county commissioners
- **June 6-14** - **Lancaster Water Week**
- **July 8** - **Visit Delinger Run** for delisting work, field tours, and celebrations with partners
- **July 18** - **Municipal Liaison Celebration @ Historic Poole Forge**
- **August** - **Newly revised Common Agenda is released**
- **September 3** - **International Leadership Alumni Conference** presentation
- **September 5** - **Urban tree synergy** group meeting to coordinate countywide efforts
- **October 20** - **MS4orum @ Hotel Rock Lititz**
- **October 22** - **Connect and Prep** for coordinated grant applications from Lancaster
- **October 24** - **Full Partners Meeting @ Brick Gables**
- **November 7** - **LCATs** presentation to municipal elected officials
- **November 13** - **Co-led National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Ag Forum** tours
- **November 18** - **Hosted a capacity-building and professional learning session** for partners from a peer network called Envision the Choptank

*\* All photos in this document, unless otherwise noted, are credited to Lancaster Clean Water Partners*





Photo Credit: Michelle Johnsen



**Lancaster**  
CLEAN WATER PARTNERS

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