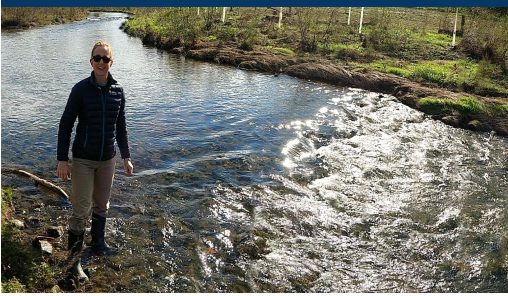


Countywide Action Plan

Why Is This Valuable To My County?



The Pennsylvania Phase 3 Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) focuses on local solutions to lower nutrient and sediment pollution in PA waterways. Countywide Action Plans (CAPs) are a way for county-based local stakeholders like you to decide what actions to take to clean up local waters. Having a CAP will plug your county into regional partnerships that support collective efforts and impacts. Read on to hear what others say about CAPs, and for more detailed information about Countywide Action Plans, visit: www.dep.pa.gov/chesapeakebay/phase3

It's a way to take action and move new and existing efforts forward.

I think of the CAP as a structure through which we ensure that all of our local partners are getting credit for projects that they're already doing. The CAP can help identify natural partners and act as an amplifier for support— attracting resources and leading to the greatest results possible. If we're going to succeed, we have to get out there and make sure everything's being counted and verified. Practices only count if they're counted, and the CAP helps make sure conservation practices are getting attention.

-Elizabeth Grant, Planning Specialist, Cumberland County Planning Dept.



In every county there's a Comprehensive Plan, and within that plan almost every county will have a goal in there about clean water. Unfortunately, most of these goals aren't detailed. A CAP can provide the details and the strategy to achieve those goals.

Bedford is going through a Hazard Mitigation Plan update this spring. During drafting we are consciously considering CAP implementation opportunities related to stream restoration to include in the plan.

-Mike LaSala, CAP Coordinator, Lebanon, Bedford and Lancaster

The CAP supports our local goal of making sure all of our county's farmers are in compliance with their conservation plans, manure management plans, and such. We believe the CAP will help to steer more resources toward BMPs that landowners are willing to put in, which helps us to help farmers fund projects and install BMPs that improve the farm and local waterways. Just having a plan isn't enough ... the CAP helps us define the funds and resources we need to back up our goal of farm compliance.

-Katie Doster, District Manager, Lebanon County Conservation District



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It's a way to build new partnerships and strengthen old ones.

We have a relationship with USGS on water quality monitoring that would not have happened without focus on the CAP. That's a partnership we were trying to forge for years, but there just wasn't the right emphasis or attention on the need around monitoring, and what could be done.

All of the stars kind of aligned when we developed the CAP to highlight why it's important.

-Felicia Dell, Director, York County Planning Commission



The Chesapeake Bay Office at DEP will support your county's effort.



I think we have a great collaborative relationship with the Bay Office. They have always been very timely with responses and provide valuable support to our CAP team. They will say "I don't know, but I will find out" and they respond with a connection to an expert. They have been really listening to the coordinators' needs and have been attentive to our challenges.

-Erin Letavic, CAP Coordinator, Cumberland and Centre Counties

The relationship has definitely grown, and we are appreciative of how supportive they have been. When they first asked us to do this, we had a lot of questions. We asked for specifics on what changes we are going to see at the state level about regulations, etc... We have seen some really helpful things come from DEP.

-Allyson Gibson, Coordinator, Lancaster Clean Water Partners



Having a CAP Coordinator gives a county someone who thinks about the CAP full time. The CAP Coordinator is somebody who can connect all the pieces and work on implementing the CAP and going after money for the CAP. Everybody else has a day job that is their focus, so the CAP comes second to their specialized focus. For me, the CAP is at the forefront.

-Caitlin Lucas, CAP Coordinator, Franklin County

It can help you find new funding and prioritize existing funds.

Limited human and capital resources is always going to be a hurdle. Part of the CAP effort is to prioritize those resources, and align them with areas where you have a problem. You can put in a project almost anywhere and it's going to give you a reduction, but we're focusing on solving legitimate water quality problems first.

-Mike LaSala, CAP Coordinator, Lebanon, Bedford and Lancaster



Having a CAP has helped us be more prepared for grants before they come out. We know what the rolling grants are, and we know what projects we want to put on the ground, so we created a spreadsheet of landowners that have expressed an interest in doing projects. The goal is to plan projects with them in advance so we can submit as soon as the grant RFP comes out.

-Caitlin Lucas, CAP Coordinator, Franklin County

Since writing our CAP we've become more aware of the funding that's available, because there's a lot of funding supporting water quality improvement efforts for the Chesapeake bay. We've spent time trying to tease out which ones are the right ones for York County to pursue, and work out all of the dynamics that go with making a successful application-- administering the funding and getting what you want at the end.

-Felicia Dell, Director, York County Planning Commission



You'll get help with CAP project permits.



One thing we're really grateful for is the Bay Office working with the Southcentral Regional Office to set up a weekly pre-application meeting for projects tied to clean water permits. We kept asking for a change in the speed of those permit processing times, and these once-a-week pre-application meetings are an opportunity to do just that. We appreciate this because we see it as an important change that supports our local CAP related efforts.

-Allyson Gibson, Coordinator, Lancaster Clean Water Partners

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It's a flexible plan that can be adapted to shifting county priorities.

CAPs are going to look different for everybody. Try not to feel pressured by how others are doing it. Each county is different--their goals are different, their people are different, and the resources available are different. It's okay to put your spin on it and think outside the box. We can all learn from each other!

-Caitlin Lukas, CAP Coordinator, Franklin County



Realize that even as your shifting into implementation, your plan can still change. Implementation will reveal new things to you that you hadn't thought of when you first developed your CAP. Be open to those adjustments that might need to be made.

-Felicia Dell, Director, York County Planning Commission

It's a chance to tap into a large partner network for insights and ideas.

Every county is different and they are each approaching this task differently. I think it's very beneficial to hear what other people have been doing, to get some ideas on how it works, and what best fit that specific county. Don't recreate the wheel or feel like you have to start from scratch. There's a lot of templates and guidance out there that you can use.

-Katie Doster, District Manager, Lebanon County Conservation District



Reach out if you have a question. There's a lot of people that are more than willing to help you. As a new Coordinator, I relied on others in the role already to help me through unfamiliar territory. The DEP's Webinar Wednesdays are helpful because all the coordinators get together in those meetings and we can bounce ideas off each other and see what's working well in other counties. I think that connection is essential.

-Ricky Whitmore, CAP Coordinator, Adams County