

## Countywide Action Plans (CAPs)

The Pennsylvania Phase 3 Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) focuses on local solutions to reduce nutrient pollution in our local waterways. Pennsylvania partners identified CAPs as a way for county-based stakeholders to focus on actions that will address local water quality issues.



### Some CAP Benefits

#### Reduced Flooding

- Forest buffers reduce flooding and damage.
- Stormwater best management practices reduce surface water flow.
- Restored wetlands capture and hold stormwater, protect roads, and infrastructure.

#### Cleaner Water

- No till and cover crops reduce polluted agricultural runoff.
- Rain gardens slow stormwater runoff and reduce pollution.

#### Quality of Life

- Wooded streambanks, rain gardens, and wetlands provide habitat for wildlife and recreation for people.
- Landscapes with trees, flowers, and other plants are visually pleasing and attract pollinators.



### Capacity/Resources

*"We are strapped right now and don't have the people or resources to do extra work."  
"We have a lot on our plate and not enough time for this."*

The DEP Chesapeake Bay Office (CBO) and its Region Support Teams are here to help you. They are one of your partners in your CAP development and implementation. The CBO provides data and outreach materials, technical assistance, tools, and training needed for county outreach and CAP planning and implementation.

The CBO also provides funding to support County Clean Water Coordinators at the county or regional level (varies by Tier) to support CAP planning and implementation efforts. They also serve as a direct line of communication between you and the Phase 3 WIP Action Leaders who are committed to assisting local partners in their CAP efforts.

The CBO is taking steps to make sure counties and local partners are equipped with the resources needed to successfully develop and implement their CAPs. This is a countywide plan that requires significant engagement and input at the county level, but no one person is responsible for doing this work. It is a team effort, and CAPs should leverage existing resources and support existing goals whenever possible. CAPs serve as a catalyst to bring together all of the good work and programs going on, while also identifying other county-based needs to improve water quality in local waterways.

### Funding/Budgets

*"We don't have funds in our current budget for this."  
"How much is this going to cost?"*

Funding challenges are familiar territory for governments and nonprofits. The Pilot and Tier 2 counties found that some existing projects fit within their CAPs, so new dollars were not needed; they also identified projects and programs that needed funding, and used their CAP as the catalyst to seek funding and resources.

Pennsylvania has dedicated a large chunk of dollars to support CAP development and implementation. This includes funds for counties to hire staff to coordinate CAP planning and implementation efforts. Funds have also been created and set aside to support on-the-ground projects with more streamlined funding approaches.

### Adaptability/Flexibility

*"If we put this in writing and aren't able to complete something in our CAP, will you penalize us?"*

*"What happens when we aren't able to do something that is in our CAP?"*

CAPs are living documents. The CAP effort is a work in progress. No one can know everything that is needed or anticipate every detail. Change is expected as you implement your CAP and see results or challenges come up. It is expected that each CAP will change over time to fit each county's current situation.

Priorities may change as your county gets closer to reaching its pollution reduction goals. In fact, DEP encourages each county to track and evaluate efforts to see what works, what doesn't, and how the plan can evolve based on lessons learned.

### Reporting/Data

*"The data doesn't tell the real story. We've done so much more and it hasn't been documented."*

*"If we were able to report our own projects, you'd see all the good work our county has already done to clean up our streams."*

One of the top priorities for the DEP CBO and the Phase 3 WIP is to make sure that your existing work and projects get counted. We want to know the good work you've already done and see that you get credit for it. There are efforts going on at DEP and beyond to ensure that all practices are counted.

The technical toolbox that the DEP CBO provides to each county includes a variety of county-specific surface and ground water data. It should be used as a starting point for each county to identify ways to improve local water quality and reach your county's clean water goals.

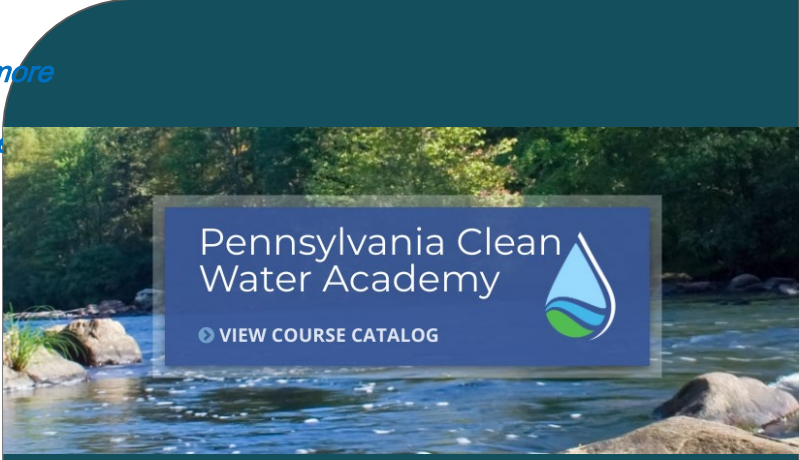
There are also a lot of other technical tools, data and resources available from other organizations. Those tools can be helpful, and the DEP CBO technical team can assist county CAP teams with ways to add other tools that may fit your local situation.

### Permitting

*"It takes so long to get permits. That's why we can't get projects completed."*

*"How can we get permits for the projects we put in our CAP?"*

Permitting can take time. The DEP's Regional Office staff is committed to working with county partners on ensuring the smoothest possible permitting process. As projects are being considered as part of your CAP, you are encouraged to schedule a visit with the DEP regional permitting office in advance to discuss the project, let them know this is part of your CAP, review required paperwork, and identify any potential issues they see in advance. A little work up-front will save time down the road--and your CAP helps you to track those needs as you identify projects you want to implement.



### DEP Clean Water Academy

The Pennsylvania Clean Water Academy houses a wealth of outreach and training tools to support counties during CAP development and implementation phases. This includes a variety of communication, education, and outreach materials and templates that can be used to plan CAP communications, share success stories, format CAP status updates, etc...