### Who can participate in the development of a Countywide Action Plan?

Everyone who cares about their community and their waterways is welcome to participate! We have a special need for:

* Streamside property owners
* Conservation Districts, and environmental or outdoor organizations who know the waterways first hand
* Leaders in any sector that have strong connections to waterways, such as local government, agriculture, forestry, construction, and water and wastewater authorities

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PA DEP) will guide local participants in the planning effort. So will our partners at the Pennsylvania Departments of Agriculture and Conservation and Natural Resources, as well as the United States Environmental Protection Agency.

### What is the Countywide Action Plan used for?

The Countywide Action Plan is a way for each of the 43 Pennsylvania counties, whose waters run to either the Susquehanna or Potomac rivers, to plan how they will meet pollution reduction goals set by PA DEP. At this time, counties have a lot of discretion in how they choose to meet their goals. Counties who do not reach these goals risk having stricter requirements imposed upon them by the EPA.

Countywide Action Plans can help counties identify actions that help them address their local issues AND meet PA DEP goals. By creating a Countywide Action Plan, counties can develop a strategy for: cleaning up local waters, lowering flood risks, and improving the quality of life in their community.

### What is expected of participants who want to help develop a Countywide Action Plan?

Participants are expected to come prepared to roll up their sleeves and get to work. The planning process provides a forum for local leaders and community members to work together and make decisions about how they will meet the PA DEP pollution reduction goals for their county. Participants can expect to attend meetings and conference calls with local partners, brainstorm around solutions, and offer your opinion on the best way to meet the goal set for your county.

**Planning snapshot:**

* Timing: It will take up to 6 months for a county to create a Countywide Action Plan.
* Staff Needs: One or two full-time volunteers or staff members to act as Countywide Action Plan Facilitators
* Potential Costs: Staff time, meeting facilities, meeting refreshments

### How do I get involved?

If you want to be a leader or a part of the solution, provide us with your contact information using this simple online form: <http://bit.ly/wip3-cap>

When your county’s action plan process begins, we will provide your contact information to the organizers.

### Where are the counties that will develop Countywide Action Plans?

Forty-three of Pennsylvania’s counties drain to either the Susquehanna or the Potomac rivers. We have calculated how much pollution is entering these waterways and where it comes from. Each county has its own goal to reduce its fair share. Some counties have more work to do than others!

Pennsylvania’s neighbors also have similar responsibilities. New York, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, Delaware, and Washington DC are all working together to clean up the Chesapeake Bay, which is our shared downstream resource.

### When will my county get started on its Countywide Action Plan? How long will it take?

Four counties have already started — York, Adams, Lancaster, and Franklin. The other 39 counties will start in winter of 2018/2019. It will take up to 6 months for each county to develop their plan. PA DEP will submit the draft complete cleanup plan to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in April 2019. The effort will conclude in August 2019.

### Why is it worth my time to help write a Countywide Action Plan?

It’s an opportunity for you to make a difference for your community! Cleaner and healthier waterways improve the quality of life and business environment. They flood less often and are safe and appealing for family activities like boating and fishing. Also, studies show that healthy waterways increase property values.

Pennsylvania communities have made a lot of progress in improving local waterways over the last 40 years. Many streams that once ran orange with abandoned mine pollution are now places where residents gather to swim, fish, boat, and play. There’s more work to be done to bring this progress to every corner of the state. Pennsylvania has cut the amount of phosphorus pollution going downstream by more than 1/3 , and the amount nitrogen pollution by about ⅙.

This is also an opportunity to ensure that your business interests are considered as your county figures out how it will meet its goals.

### How do we write a Countywide Action Plan?

PADEP will provide each county with a customized Toolbox to facilitate the planning process. The toolbox outlines the process, identifies county pollution reduction goals, and provides local planning tools. Once the county’s team is ready, PA DEP will guide them through each step of the process. It will take a fair amount of staff time and administrative effort to get this done. Some counties may choose to dedicate a full time staff person to this process, others elect to bring in partners or contractors to help.

### What will happen if we don’t make a Countywide Action Plan?

Counties who choose not to create a Countywide Action Plan will still be required to meet their county pollution reduction goals. We encourage counties to create Countywide Action Plans so they get credit for the actions they have already taken and decide for themselves how they reach their goals.

### Why is this all happening now?

In 2019, Pennsylvania and neighboring states are beginning the third phase of their work to clean up the Chesapeake Bay, our shared downstream resource. Phase 3 runs through 2025.

The cleanup work first began in 1983 and there is a lot of progress to be proud of! However, there is more to do. Of the nearly 49,000 assessed miles of streams in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, 11,446 still need to be cleaned up. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has mandated goals that Pennsylvania must meet by 2025, but has also given lots of flexibility in how to meet the goals. If the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency determines that Pennsylvania is falling short of its cleanup responsibilities, it may step in. If this happens, likely consequences include:

* More livestock operations and municipalities subject to federal regulations
* EPA may withhold or redirect funding
* Impose new responsibilities for Pennsylvania in the Bay TMDL
* Require additional reductions from point sources, such as wastewater and industrial facilities
* Impose new water quality standards stream-by-stream in Pennsylvania

### Why focus on local involvement and partnerships to develop Countywide Action Plans?

PA DEP believes that path to success starts at the local level. You understand your own community, economy, waterways, and challenges better than anybody. If you choose to get involved in this process, you will have a say in how the goals get met. You can shape the mix of solutions that are chosen within your county. This is also an opportunity to ensure that your business interests are considered.

### Who is in charge of leading the development of each counties Countywide Action Plan?

Each county can decide that for itself. Every county is different and faces unique challenges. Some counties may even choose to work together to reach shared goals. Generally each planning team should include:

* Local community members
* County leaders/staff
* Municipal leaders/staff
* Environmental/watershed group representatives
* Farmers and agricultural organizations
* Local businesses and business organizations

### Is funding available to support projects included in a Countywide Action Plan?

As you work through the process, we will point you towards possible funding sources. Options include federal and state grant and cost share programs for local government, and philanthropic grants for not-for-profit community groups.

### What metrics will be used to measure pollution reduction?

PA DEP has set goals for each county to reduce nitrogen and phosphorus pollution. There are many possible solutions to these problems, and the solutions often have other benefits, such as flood reduction, cleaner water supplies, safer roads, better outdoor recreation, and improved property values. If a county chooses to include other goals in their Countywide Action Plan, we will work with you to make that happen.

### What is the relationship between the Countywide Action Plan and the MS4 permit program?

Preparing a strong a countywide action plan is a great way to convince the EPA that they don’t need to expand MS4 in your area! Counties can take credit for their MS4 compliance activities in their Countywide Action Plan.

### Has Pennsylvania met its EPA pollution reduction goals in the past?

Pennsylvania has made a lot of progress. We’ve cut phosphorus pollution by ⅓ and nitrogen pollution by about ⅙. However, we are still behind our neighboring states. We need to clean up about 23% of Pennsylvania streams that flow to the Chesapeake Bay.

### What’s with all this jargon?

Technical words and jargon are minimal in this document, but if you choose to participate in the Countywide Action Plan, you’ll be exposed to some. Here’s a cheat sheet:

**The Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load, or TMDL for short.** This is the required 2025 cleanup goals for each state, set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Some call it the “pollution diet.” Your county’s pollution reduction goals are your fair share of this total.

**Phase 3 Watershed Implementation Plan, or “P3 WIP” for sort.** This is how Pennsylvania will figure out how to meets its responsibilities between 2019 and 2025. Pennsylvania’s neighbors are doing this, as well. Phase 2 ran from 2012 to 2018. Phase 1 ran from 2010 to 2012.

Parking Lot

Money

* Will there be additional BMP implementation funds allocated to the Bay program and how will BMP funds be allocated between the four tiers?
* Will any state funding be available to support the development of these county plans?
* Will there be Special Projects funding available to help meet these goals?
* What should be done if we are unable to obtain enough funding to meet the goals?
* Also, will there be special projects funding available?
* What should be done if we are unable to obtain enough funding to meet the goals?

### Accountability

* County Commissioners and their planning departments have a fiduciary responsibility to all residents to implement the most cost-effective strategies. Other organizations do not. If the county commissioners don't take on that responsibility who will?
* Who will be responsible for putting the plan together in counties that don't have a bay technician?
* Who are you going to send in the County the letter which states: You are required to do this action plan? The County Planning Commission, Commissioners, Conservation District, Municipalities?
* Who will do the plan if the county decides to not do this?

### Process

* Will DEP have a fact sheet or public information on the county wide requirements and make it available for us to share with municipal officials to make them aware of the requirements? And perhaps even to give them a heads up on the impending correspondence
* Is the web based information to help a county develop its plans out now and available? In the April meeting, the expected timeframe was June 2018. Please update on status.
* Will the Community Clean Water Toolbox come preloaded with data that your agencies have already collected? How much data collection effort will need to be performed at the County level? What level of effort will be needed to complete the templates?
* Am I correct to understand that all the counties' (The remainder of the counties not part of the "First Four") plans are expected to be completed by April 12, 2019.

### Implementation/Accountability

* What metrics will be used to measure improvements?
* If a project is identified via the Countywide Action Plan and then completed, are all MS4 municipalities within the county able to get credit for it?
* At this early stage, has there been discussions on what additional management changes are necessary in the agricultural sector and farm community going to have to endure to meet the Phase 3 WIP requirements?

### History

* The WIP II effort assigned voluntary draft planning targets to Counties...and that voluntary effort did not pan out as far as EPA was concerned. Why does DEP think that voluntary county efforts to achieve targets during WIP III will succeed this time?
* Is Pennsylvania still being penalized, by EPA/Federal Govt for not meeting their initial WIP?