

Conservation Committee Report

Volume 20 Issue 4

Jack Walters—Conservation Chairman

June-July 2018



The Conservation Pledge

I give my pledge as an

American to save and faithfully defend from waste, the natural resources of my country; the soil, the water, the air, the minerals, the plant life and the wildlife.

This is my Pledge!

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Wolf Administration Bolsters Funding to Fight Lyme Disease, Zika, and West Nile Viruses

Governor Tom Wolf bolstered funding to protect Pennsylvanians from Lyme disease, Zika Virus, and West Nile Virus as part of the recently signed budget. Increases to both the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Department of Health (DOH) will go towards improving mosquito and tick

surveillance and education about the diseases associated with these insects.

To help combat the drastic rise in Lyme disease cases in Pennsylvania, Governor Wolf prioritized an additional \$2.5 million in his 2018-19 budget to hire staff at the Department of Health to implement

the recommendations of the [Lyme Disease Task Force](#), which include building a more robust Lyme disease prevention and education program, conducting more well-rounded surveillance through activities like a statewide environmental survey, and

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Lyme disease in children surges in Western Pennsylvania

Lyme disease infections increased at an exponential rate from 2003 to 2013 in Western Pennsylvania, reaching more children in cities and towns, according to

a new study from Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC.

The Lawrenceville hospital and its regional community practices treated 285 children for the

disease in 2013, up from just five cases in the years 2003 through 2005,

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Wolf Administration Bolsters Funding to Fight Lyme Disease, Zika, and West Nile Viruses (continued)

improving participation in tick-borne disease surveillance with providers and local health departments.

“We appreciate the recognition that Lyme disease is a public health concern in Pennsylvania,” Secretary of Health Dr. Rachel Levine said. “With more recorded cases of Lyme than any other state, we are committed to taking steps to address Lyme disease in Pennsylvania. The notable increase in funding will help us accomplish this mission.

“The Lyme Disease Task Force developed a total of 18 recommendations that are critical to beginning the process of slowing, and then reducing the growing incidence of Lyme disease and other tick-borne illnesses in the state. We are grateful for this funding to move this important initiative forward.”

This year’s budget also includes an increase of \$139,000 to support DEP’s West Nile Virus and Zika Virus control program, which will help to increase monitoring and control operations efforts. Funding will also be used for public education and events.

“The increased funding for Pennsylvania’s Zika Virus and West Nile Virus program will be a boon for Pennsylvanians,” said DEP Secretary Patrick McDonnell. “Monitoring mosquito populations and controlling when necessary is an important function of DEP during the summer months when mosquitoes are at their peak and we’re thrilled that the governor prioritized this funding to help more Pennsylvanians.”

The budget also includes funding to increase protections for Pennsylvania’s natural resources by providing an additional \$2.5 million to enable the DEP to fill 35 mission critical positions throughout the agency, which will increase responsive oversight and improve customer service.

Pennsylvanians are strongly encouraged to take steps to reduce the risk of mosquito bites and possible mosquito breeding habitats around their homes or apartments. Simple steps like the following can reduce places where mosquito populations can flourish:

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Wolf Administration Bolsters Funding to Fight Lyme Disease, Zika, and West Nile Viruses (continued)

Eliminate standing water – kiddie pools, bird baths, wheelbarrows, and other places where water can stagnate can be magnets for mosquitoes.

Clean clogged gutters – gutters can be out of sight for most people, but not mosquitoes.

Discard tires, plastic containers, or other refuse that can hold water – even a small amount of water can allow mosquitoes to breed.

Fix or replace broken window screens.

Use insect repellent when outside.

Source Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

Lyme disease in children surges in Western Pennsylvania (continued)

according to study results published in *Clinical Infectious Diseases*. The disease spreads through deer tick bites.

“We thought that we would see that there was an increase in the number of children with Lyme disease, but we were surprised to see that it was this number and that it rose this rapidly,” said Dr. Brian Campfield, an assistant professor of pediatrics at Children's who co-authored the study.

Of the 773 cases of Lyme disease the authors found, 270 came from rural zip codes, while 503 came from urban and suburban areas, with the non-rural cases increasing over time, according to the study. The disease, which originated in Connecticut, has spread southwest.

Campfield said disease-carrying ticks may be spreading in urban areas through two of their most common hosts.

“Anywhere there's deer and mice, it's plausible they could be transporting ticks,” he said.

Campfield said the study didn't identify a reason for the spread, but he refuted a common myth that ticks are surviving winters that no longer get cold enough to kill them. He said ticks go into a dormant state during winter and aren't killed by subzero temperatures. They can wake up on warm days in January or February, but 62 percent of the cases found in the study came between May and August.

The disease was most common in white males between five and nine years old. Campfield said children start spending more time outdoors at those ages and their parents might not be as likely to spot ticks on them as on younger children who they would bathe.

The disease usually appears first as a rash, usually within a week of a bite, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Rashes can spread to about a foot in diameter and may feel warm to the touch but rarely are itchy or painful.

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Lyme disease in children surges in Western Pennsylvania (continued)

If it isn't treated, serious symptoms can develop, including meningitis, neck stiffness, arthritis, brain inflammation, nerve pain, facial palsy, pain and short-term memory loss. Antibiotics are an effective treatment for the disease, and usually cures the associated symptoms, however serious, Campfield said.

The study authors found that children diagnosed in rural settings tended to visit doctors at later stages of the disease, when symptoms such as arthritis had developed. In urban settings, children tended to receive treatment in an emergency room or urgent care center for earlier symptoms.

"We're not sure why that is; if it's simply better access to medical care or if it's a reliance in certain communities on seeing your pediatrician," Campfield said.

He said children who have meningitis, severe arthritis or heart rhythm irregularities should be treated immediately, while children with rashes, joint pains or flu-like symptoms don't necessarily require emergency care.

Ticks typically live in grassy, bushy areas. The CDC recommends treating clothing and gear with the chemical permethrin if going into those areas. People should also wear bug repellent containing DEET. After returning to the indoors, people should shower within two hours and should check clothes for ticks and tumble dry them on high heat for 10 minutes to kill any ticks.

Lyme disease isn't necessarily any more common in children than adults, Campfield said. The study authors studied children because they happen to specialize in treating children and noticed an increase in cases.

By: Wes Venteicher , Tribune-Review staff writer.

Red Meat Allergies Caused By Tick Bites Are On The Rise

Tick bites can cause all sorts of nasty afflictions. And if you're bitten by a Lone Star tick, here's one more to add to the list: a red meat allergy.

Laura Stirling, 51, a realtor who lives in Severna Park, Md., was diagnosed with the allergy last year. She got a tick bite while walking on a trail with her dog, Gunner, near her home.

"I found [the tick] 3 or 4 inches to the left of my hip bone," Stirling recalls. She says at the time, she didn't think much of it. "I just took it off and threw it away."

Then, three weeks later, after she ate an Italian-style pork sausage for dinner, she had a horrible reaction. The reaction began about six hours after her meal, which is typical of this allergy.

"It was the middle of the night. I woke up covered in hives," Stirling recalls. She woke her husband with all her itching and scratching. She felt light-headed, and she experienced stomach-aches and other gastrointestinal troubles.

An allergist gave her a blood test to check for an [alpha-gal](#) meat allergy. When the test came back positive, she was told to avoid all red meat, including beef, pork and lamb. Some people who develop the allergy can no longer tolerate dairy products.

Stirling was surprised when she first got the news. "I thought it was completely crazy, because I've eaten dairy and red meat all my life." But she quickly realized the diagnosis was spot on. Meat and dairy did trigger her symptoms.

"Her story is really interesting," says Dr. [Scott Commins](#), an allergist and associate professor of medicine at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. He says it is a meat allergy, but about 15 to 20 percent of patients with the alpha-gal allergy also report getting symptoms from dairy, especially high-fat dairy such as ice cream.

About 10 years ago, Commins was among the first physicians to identify the allergy in patients with tick bites. Back then, there were just a few dozen known cases.

But that has increased dramatically. "We're confident the number is over 5,000 [cases], and that's in the U.S. alone," Commins says. There are also cases in Sweden, Germany and Australia — likely linked to other species of ticks.

In the U.S., the Lone Star tick has expanded its range beyond the Southeast, and there are documented cases of alpha gal meat allergies farther north — including New York, Maine and Minnesota.

"The range of the tick is expanding," says Commins. So is awareness about the red meat allergy it can cause. "We have a blood test, and the word is getting out."

Commins first began trying to solve the mystery of what was causing a red meat allergy back in 2007, when he was at a University of Virginia allergy clinic. "We had a growing population of people reporting these reactions [to meat]," he recalls.

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Red Meat Allergies Caused By Tick Bites Are On The Rise (continued)

Early on, ticks were not on his radar. "We thought it was a parasite," Commins explains. But then he and his colleagues realized that many of the patients were outdoorsy types who spent time hiking. And eventually they pieced together the tick bite connection.

One hint came from mapping newfound cases of the meat allergy. When he compared that with the geographic distribution of Rocky Mountain Spotted fever, also caused by the Lone Star tick, he saw striking similarities. "That map overlapped very nicely with the states where we were finding these emerging reactions to beef, pork and lamb," he says.

There's still a lot to learn about the alpha-gal allergy. Alpha gal is a sugar that animals — including cows, pigs and lamb — make in their bodies. "As humans, we don't make this alpha gal sugar," Commins explains. "We all make an immune response to it." So, how does a tick bite cause the allergy?

It's possible that ticks inject humans with alpha gal when they bite. The ticks likely get it from feeding off wild animals, such as mice or squirrels, that also carry alpha gal. Or it's possible that ticks activate the response in another way.

"Whatever the tick is doing, it seems that it's a very potent awakener for our immune system to produce antibodies," Commins says. "And in this case, it's antibodies to this very particular sugar in red meat."

Laura Stirling now avoids all red meat and dairy. "As soon as I stopped, I was fine, I felt great," she says.

"I get enough poultry and seafood in my diet," she says, so she's not pining for beef. And with all the non-dairy options now available, she says it's not hard to avoid milk. "But I kind of miss having, you know, a bowl of ice cream or really good cheese."

She says she looks forward to the day when she may be able to eat foods such as prosciutto and salami — and ice cream — again. And, there's a good chance she will outgrow the allergy.

"It can resolve," Commins says. But he adds a caveat: "We need people to avoid additional tick bites for the allergic response to wane." For people who like to be outside, this can present a challenge.

"I wear bug spray and I'm very cautious," Stirling says.

Source: Allison Aubrey

EPA Outlines Specific Expectations For PA To Meet In The Next Phase Of Chesapeake Bay Restoration, And The Consequences If We Don't

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency [Wednesday notified Pennsylvania](#), New York, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia of what the agency expects to see in state and local implementation plans for the third phase of the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL).

Four pages of the 18 page expectations document outlines specifically what is expected of Pennsylvania and a series of steps EPA could take if Pennsylvania does not live up to these expectations.

A page and a half was devoted to specific expectations for Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia combined.

If it was not clear before, EPA made the point clearly that Pennsylvania will be held accountable for meeting its Chesapeake Bay cleanup obligations, obligations it has committed itself to in several Chesapeake Bay Agreements over decades, and that EPA's role is to provide that accountability.

EPA laid out 7 actions it could take in the absence of credible steps by Pennsylvania to achieve nutrient and sediments reductions required by the Bay Agreements by 2025. Those steps include--

- Target federal environmental enforcement and compliance assurance efforts in the Pennsylvania portion of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed;
- Expand full NPDES Water Quality Permit coverage to animal feeding operations, industrial and municipal stormwater sources and/or urbanized areas;
- Redirect Chesapeake Bay or other EPA grant funding to other parties to implement practices in priority areas when the Commonwealth has been unwilling or unable to implement necessary load reductions;
- Redirect EPA Chesapeake Bay funding to priorities EPA identifies if the Commonwealth does not adequately target workplans and funding toward priority actions;
- Adopt its own "finer scale" wasteload and load reduction allocations through a Pennsylvania-specific amendment to the Chesapeake Bay TMDL;
- Impose additional reductions of loadings on point sources such as municipal and industrial wastewater facilities in order to increase the share of allocations to stormwater and/or agriculture; and
- Promulgate nitrogen and phosphorus numeric water quality standards for Pennsylvania streams and rivers in the watershed that would affect all development.

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EPA Outlines Specific Expectations For PA To Meet In The Next Phase Of Chesapeake Bay Restoration, And The Consequences If We Don't (continued)

This is not the first time EPA has clearly set out its expectations for Pennsylvania in the Chesapeake Bay Program, only the most recent.

[EPA already has Pennsylvania](#) at so-called backstop levels for agricultural and urban/suburban stormwater sectors. This means they have substantial concerns with Pennsylvania's strategy to implement measures to achieve the goals and it may take federal action to get the state back on track.

[Just last year in June of 2017, EPA wrote a letter to Pennsylvania](#) saying the Commonwealth needs a realistic Plan showing how it will provide enough funding and staff to dramatically ramp up its Bay-related pollution control efforts, or it could face a variety of potentially costly federal actions within the next two years.

The FY 2018-19 budget just passed by the Senate and House and signed by Gov. Wolf has no additional funding to address Pennsylvania's Chesapeake Bay obligations in spite of requests by [Pennsylvania's representatives on the interstate Chesapeake Bay Commission](#) to establish a Clean Water Fund, environmental groups calling for more investments in green infrastructure through the state's Environmental Stewardship (Growing Greener) Fund (which has actually been cut by 75 percent over the last decade) and a recommendation to [earmark a portion of any natural gas severance tax](#) for water quality and other environmental restoration projects.

The Chesapeake Bay Program is a partnership between EPA and the states and the federal government has to keep up its end of the bargain in terms of resources too.

[The Trump Administration has repeatedly proposed cutting](#) or eliminating Farm Bill and other EPA funding critical to implementing Chesapeake Bay reductions. Fortunately, Congress, with bipartisan support, has not gone along with those cuts, yet.

[Pennsylvania's Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation Plan](#) Steering Committee is now developing the state's plan to meet the 2025 milestone reductions and has a workgroup specifically on finding additional resources for cleanup up rivers and streams in the state. ([Click Here for more on Pennsylvania's strategy.](#))

What follows is the [text of the Pennsylvania expectations EPA laid out](#) in its June 20 document.

It's worth repeating in its entirety to more completely understand the challenges Pennsylvania faces, how far behind the state is in meeting those challenges because of a decade of cuts to environmental funding and staff by the General Assembly and a variety of Governors of both parties.

EPA Expectations Document For PA

The Chesapeake Bay and its watershed are significant national resources, supporting approximately 18 million people, and an estimated \$1 trillion of economic activity. As an upstream jurisdiction in the nation's largest estuary, Pennsylvania has a significant impact on the Bay and much of its watershed, and has a pivotal role in the ongoing restoration effort.

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EPA Outlines Specific Expectations For PA To Meet In The Next Phase Of Chesapeake Bay Restoration, And The Consequences If We Don't (continued)

The Susquehanna River provides about 50 percent of the freshwater flows to the estuary, about half of the nitrogen, and more than a quarter of the phosphorus flowing into it.

Through a combination of regulatory controls and voluntary actions in urban/suburban and agricultural settings, Pennsylvania has reduced its loadings of nitrogen to the Bay by 14 million pounds over the past 32 years (since 1985).

During this period, Pennsylvania should have reduced its loadings of nitrogen to the Bay by 28 million pounds.

Between 2018-2025, Pennsylvania needs to reduce its nitrogen loadings by 35 million pounds in order to achieve its Phase III WIP nitrogen target.

The Commonwealth faces a number of challenges in meeting its commitments to achieve the pollutant load reductions called for in the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (Bay TMDL) including limited resources to effectively implement regulatory programs.

Pennsylvania has reaffirmed these commitments as a signatory of the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement and in 2016 with the release of the Pennsylvania Chesapeake Bay Restoration Strategy.

The Chesapeake Bay Restoration Strategy informed Pennsylvania's 2016-2017 milestones and details Pennsylvania's commitment to increase compliance with state agricultural regulations and to improve tracking of non-cost shared agricultural conservation practices.

Additional commitments from Pennsylvania's Restoration Strategy include improving implementation reporting and data tracking systems, creating a Pennsylvania Chesapeake Bay Program office, obtaining additional resources to improve water quality, and identifying legislative, programmatic, or regulatory changes necessary to meet the pollutant load reduction goals by 2025.

Phase I and II WIP and two-year milestone commitments that Pennsylvania has consistently not addressed include:

- Increasing levels of BMP implementation resulting from both programmatic improvements and increases in implementation and targeting of priority practices in the Agriculture and Urban/Suburban Stormwater sectors;
- Targeting geographic areas with the greatest nutrient pollutant load reduction potential for the Chesapeake Bay in order to target funding to the most effective practices and watersheds;

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EPA Outlines Specific Expectations For PA To Meet In The Next Phase Of Chesapeake Bay Restoration, And The Consequences If We Don't (continued)

- Revising its October 2010 Nutrient Trading Program regulations to address both the issue of the agriculture baseline being consistent with the Bay TMDL and nutrient credit calculation, as well as reconciling and updating these regulations with the trading policies Pennsylvania placed on its Chesapeake Bay Nutrient Trading website in late 2014 and in its Phase II WIP Supplement in 2016;
- Ensuring farms are implementing manure management plans as required by Chapter 91.36 and Erosion and Sediment Control or Conservation Plans per Chapter 102, and that Pennsylvania is using its authority to ensure BMPs are being implemented per those plans;
- Pursuing advanced technologies to address manure, and providing additional BMP alternatives if technologies are not providing the intended results; and
- Revising the Stormwater Management BMP manual.

The Chesapeake Bay Program partnership decision support tools allow the Commonwealth to develop various scenarios to demonstrate a combination of cost effective practices with the intent to achieve the 2025 nutrient and sediment pollutant load reduction goals.

Pennsylvania can use the scenarios to determine innovative financing mechanisms to make the effort affordable using all available tools.

In addition to requirements under the Clean Water Act, the Commonwealth has its own local incentives to act:

- Impaired water quality conditions in local streams, lakes, and rivers;
- Increased nuisance algae in the Susquehanna River; and
- high nitrate levels with health implications for local drinking water supplies.

Within the Chesapeake Bay watershed, Pennsylvania has approximately 14,800 miles of impaired rivers/streams (6,444 miles have a completed TMDL; 8,374 miles are on the 303(d) list and in need of a TMDL).

Of the 14,800 impaired miles, Pennsylvania has identified 1,725 miles as impaired for nutrient related impacts (1,368 miles for nutrients, 525 miles for organic enrichment/low Dissolved Oxygen and 33 for excess algal growth) and 4,976 miles impaired for siltation of which sediment (Total Suspended Solids) is a component.

Over the past 5 years (2013-2017), based on data in the Safe Drinking Water Information System, within the Chesapeake Bay watershed, Pennsylvania has had over 75 drinking water systems with nitrate Maximum Contaminant Level violations (post-treatment finished water) which have impacted nearly 17,000 people.

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EPA Outlines Specific Expectations For PA To Meet In The Next Phase Of Chesapeake Bay Restoration, And The Consequences If We Don't (continued)

With these concerns in mind, EPA provides the following specific expectations to guide Pennsylvania's development of a Phase III Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) that would outline the actions, document the necessary financial commitments, and provide assurance to the citizens of Pennsylvania, other Chesapeake Bay watershed jurisdictions, and all who depend on a healthy Chesapeake Bay, that Pennsylvania will meet its nutrient and sediment goals under the Bay TMDL.

Expectations

EPA expects that Pennsylvania's Phase III WIP will include the technical details (Best Management Practice (BMP) input deck) and evidence of public stakeholder engagement necessary to show it will meet its Phase III WIP planning targets. With a commitment for execution and a schedule for implementation, the Phase III WIP should include:

-- **Local planning goals**, showing how the Phase III WIP goals will be achieved through action at county, municipal, and/or sub-watershed scales — especially in priority areas in the Susquehanna and Potomac River watersheds where the most impact to the Bay and local water quality can be achieved.

A wealth of decision support tools and high-resolution information is now available to assist in identifying sources of nutrients and sediment, determining appropriate practices to reduce pollution flows, and calculating costs associated with selected actions such as the [Chesapeake Bay Assessment and Scenario Tool \(CAST\)](#).

In addition, the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) identified sources of nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment within the Chesapeake Bay that can help Pennsylvania and its local partners [determine where to target their efforts](#).

-- **Demonstrated collaboration** among local governments, state agencies, watershed and other citizen organizations, academic institutions, agricultural sector leaders, farmers, stormwater and drinking water utilities, source water specialists, and others as partners in identifying, planning for, and implementing the agricultural, urban stormwater, and wastewater actions needed to meet Pennsylvania's 2025 Bay TMDL goals;

-- **Commitment to programmatic, policy, legislative, and regulatory changes** needed to implement Pennsylvania's Phase III WIP and meet Bay TMDL goals. Examples of this commitment, previously discussed with Pennsylvania, include:

-- **Public identification of priority practices** and priority watersheds to target resources and implementation to maximize nutrient and sediment pollutant load reductions, consistent with the tiered approach for those highest nutrient loading counties.

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EPA Outlines Specific Expectations For PA To Meet In The Next Phase Of Chesapeake Bay Restoration, And The Consequences If We Don't (continued)

- **EPA expects Pennsylvania to share the results of the county pilots** in Adams, Franklin, Lancaster, and York Counties after they are conducted this summer to determine if EPA funding and resources need to be redirected towards more priority practices and geographic areas;
- **Implementation of initiatives**, including Agriculture Recognition Programs and Agricultural Certainty, designed to implement nutrient management planning and other priority agricultural BMPs;
- **Restrictions on manure application during winter months** to protect drinking water sources and ensure local and Chesapeake Bay water quality protection, and a plan for proper management of manure during the winter months;
- **Extension of Chapter 38 nutrient management requirements** to all animal and crop operations through statutory, regulatory and/or policy changes, as necessary;
- **Implementation of manure treatment and manure transport programs** for areas of manure imbalance;
- **Development and implementation of a state agricultural cost share program** to assist farmers in implementing priority agricultural conservation practices that are called for in the Pennsylvania's WIP and to address local water quality impairments;
- **Development of agricultural tax credit programs that incentivize compliance** with state regulatory requirements and higher levels of agricultural conservation practice implementation. For example, link the Clean and Green tax credit program to compliance with the state agricultural regulatory requirements and consider higher tax credits for higher levels of agricultural conservation practice implementation; and
- **Revision of state trading regulations and NPDES permits** to address trading program deficiencies and facilitate MS4 and interstate trading in order to allow permittees to manage their compliance obligations cost effectively and leverage nitrogen and phosphorus reductions.
- **Commitment to the level of staff, partnerships, and financial resources needed to fully implement the practices, treatments, and technologies necessary** to achieve Pennsylvania's Phase III WIP planning targets, including maximizing capacity between the Pennsylvania state agencies to fund and implement grant commitments. An example of this commitment includes:
 - Perform a workload analysis of the Commonwealth's core state programs, voluntary programs, and grant programs to identify the level of staffing necessary to meet Chesapeake Bay Implementation goals and submit this analysis and a resource strategy, detailing the actions and schedule necessary to address staffing resource needs;

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EPA Outlines Specific Expectations For PA To Meet In The Next Phase Of Chesapeake Bay Restoration, And The Consequences If We Don't (continued)

- **Continuing to track, report, and participate in quarterly grant meetings with EPA to demonstrate Pennsylvania's commitment** to reduce the amount of unspent or unliquidated obligations (ULO) for Chesapeake Bay Regulatory and Accountability Program (CBRAP) and Chesapeake Bay Implementation Grant (CBIG) grant funding
- **Contracting out or otherwise obtaining services of a third party** to perform activities central to the implementation of the Phase III WIP;
- **Modification of the current expected reductions for the Urban/Suburban Stormwater sector; and Commitment to additional reductions of loadings from point sources** to include reductions in current facility specific wasteload allocations for the significant municipal and industrial wastewater discharging facilities in order to increase the share of the allocations to stormwater and/or agriculture.

EPA Oversight

Given the deficits in Pennsylvania's projected pollutant load reductions in the Agricultural and Urban/Suburban Stormwater sectors, EPA commits to continue working closely with Pennsylvania in the development of Pennsylvania's Phase III WIP by providing technical assistance and feedback along the way.

EPA will review the details of Pennsylvania's draft Phase III WIP in 2019 to assess the adequacy of the programs and policies for confirmation that the Commonwealth will meet its 2025 Bay TMDL goals.

As long as Pennsylvania remains far off track for nitrogen and phosphorus reductions, EPA expects more frequent and detailed reporting of progress by Pennsylvania as part of EPA's enhanced oversight of Pennsylvania. This oversight reflects EPA expectations that:

- **Pennsylvania will demonstrate there are sufficient resources to meet the Commonwealth's Phase III WIP implementation needs;**
- In coordination with EPA, **Pennsylvania should pursue innovative partnerships with federal, state, and local entities** to incentivize sensible market-based approaches and technologies that enhance economic growth and accelerate nutrient and sediment reductions to maximize protection of Pennsylvania's air, land, and water resources;
- **Every six months Pennsylvania will report on progress** towards achieving its programmatic milestone commitments:

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EPA Outlines Specific Expectations For PA To Meet In The Next Phase Of Chesapeake Bay Restoration, And The Consequences If We Don't (continued)

--EPA will maintain the current milestone progress reporting deadlines of December for numeric progress and January for programmatic progress with an EPA evaluation provided in the spring; and

-- EPA will conduct an additional review of Pennsylvania's programmatic progress with an update from Pennsylvania due the end of September and EPA will provide feedback in the fall;

-- **Any Chesapeake Bay funds provided to the Commonwealth for implementation should be applied only for the Pennsylvania identified priority watersheds** within the Susquehanna and Potomac River watersheds, consistent with the county-level tiered approach; and

-- **Chesapeake Bay grant workplans should be in alignment with the evaluation findings of priority actions and needs**, and EPA will continue to perform semi-annual grant evaluations with a goal to align the grant evaluation with the progress evaluations.

In EPA's role to provide accountability, EPA will assess all potential and appropriate federal actions under its discretionary authority under the Clean Water Act (CWA) as described in the [EPA letter to the partnership Principals' Staff Committee](#) in December 2009 and in the [2010 Chesapeake Bay TMDL](#) Section 7.2.4 to take any or all of the following potential actions. Several examples of potential actions EPA could take specific to Pennsylvania include:

1. **EPA may continue to target federal enforcement and compliance assurance** in the watershed, which could include both air and water sources of nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment pollutant loads;
2. **EPA may expand NPDES permit coverage through designation**, as provided by the Clean Water Act and its regulations, for the following sources of pollutants not currently regulated under any NPDES permits: animal feeding operations, [industrial and municipal] storm-water sources, and/or urbanized areas. Such designations would require those sources to apply for NPDES permit coverage and would assist Pennsylvania in achieving the pollutant load reductions proposed in its Phase III WIP;
3. **EPA may redirect Chesapeake Bay or other EPA grant funding to a third party** (through a grant, cooperative agreement, or contract) to implement practices in priority areas in Pennsylvania when the Commonwealth has been unwilling or unable to implement necessary pollutant load reduction practices or spend down EPA grant funds in an efficient and timely manner;
4. **EPA may direct Chesapeake Bay funding to identified priorities in the EPA evaluations** if the Commonwealth does not adequately target workplans and funding toward priority actions and watersheds within the Susquehanna and Potomac River watersheds and other expectations of EPA's evaluations;

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EPA Outlines Specific Expectations For PA To Meet In The Next Phase Of Chesapeake Bay Restoration, And The Consequences If We Don't (continued)

5. **EPA may establish finer scale wasteload and load allocations through a Pennsylvania state-specific proposed amendment to the 2010 Chesapeake Bay TMDL** to include more specific wasteload allocations for additional municipal and industrial wastewater discharging facilities, concentrated animal feeding operations, and regulated stormwater municipalities, as well as more finely, geographically scaled load allocations for the non-federally regulated agricultural, stormwater, and other pollutant source sectors than are contained in Pennsylvania's Phase III WIP;

6. **EPA may require additional reductions of loadings from point sources** through a Pennsylvania state specific proposed amendment to the 2010 Chesapeake Bay TMDL to include reductions in current facility specific wasteload allocations for the significant municipal and industrial wastewater discharging facilities in order to increase the share of the allocations to stormwater and/or agriculture; and

7. **EPA may initiate a process to propose promulgating nitrogen and phosphorus numeric water quality standards** for Pennsylvania applicable to streams and rivers in Chesapeake Bay watershed.

[Click Here](#) for a copy of the EPA expectations statement.

Reaction

Following release of the letter, [Chesapeake Bay Foundation](#) President William C. Baker issued this statement:

"These expectations provide a sound framework for the Bay jurisdictions to develop plans to achieve the 2025 goals. As we have seen in the past, however, the success of the plans will depend on how well they are implemented.

"The EPA letter recognizes what we found in our assessment—the states need to accelerate efforts to reduce polluted runoff from agricultural and urban/suburban areas.

"The letter specifically details where Pennsylvania has fallen short in the past. It outlines actions EPA may take to hold the Commonwealth accountable. Now, Pennsylvania must develop a plan to close the gap and meet its 2025 commitments. If the plan does not, EPA must compel action."

For more information on the Bay program, visit EPA's [Chesapeake Bay Program](#) webpage.

Visit DEP's [Pennsylvania's Chesapeake Bay Plan](#) webpage for more information on the steps being taken to develop Phase 3 of Pennsylvania's Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implement Plan.

Source: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

DCNR Unveils New Features for State's 'Prowl the Sproul' Hiking Program

The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) is inviting hikers and other visitors to again sample the rugged beauty of the Sproul State Forest when the three-day "Prowl the Sproul" series of hikes steps off Friday, July 27.

Marking its 15th year, the increasingly popular hiking program links participants with guides from the Bureau of Forestry, Keystone Trails Association (KTA), and local civic and sportsmen's groups.

"With its thousands of mountainous, unspoiled acres to explore, Sproul State Forest offers a network of trails that draws hikers of all abilities, from beginners to seasoned veterans," said DCNR Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn. "This unique invitation is extended by the folks who best know this rugged forest district amid the Pennsylvania Wilds."

DCNR and KTA guides have selected many of the most popular trails in Sproul State Forest, including hikes on sections of the Chuck Keiper, Donut Hole, Eagleton Mine Camp, Jack Paulhamus Garby, and T-Squared trails, and the Long Fork Loop. Guides again will lead hikers off the beaten path to some of the lesser-known, natural jewels of Sproul State Forest.

Hikers will be able to choose from hikes featuring one of the oldest trout nurseries in Pennsylvania, waterfalls, overlooks, old railroad grades, historical sites, unique woodlands, and flora that make the Sproul State Forest truly unique among DCNR's 20 state forest districts. To combat summer heat, several refreshing hikes are planned to streams, waterfalls, and other cool spots known only by DCNR guides.

Guided hikes ranging from three to nine miles will offer hikers a variety of terrain and difficulty levels before Sproul XV events close Sunday, July 29. In total, the weekend will feature 18 guided hikes: three Friday, July 27; ten Saturday, July 28; and five Sunday, July 29. Participants are advised to register early, as each hike will be limited to 20 hikers.

Detailed hike descriptions and registration forms can be found on the [KTA website](#).

For general information, contact the [Sproul State Forest District Office](#), 15187 Renovo Road, Renovo; 570-923-6011.

More information on some of the planned hikes can be found at the [Explore PA Trails](#) website.

Source: The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)

Guided Whitewater Rafting at PA State Parks—A Scenic and Stimulating Adventure!

Have you ever wanted to try whitewater rafting but didn't know where to start?

Pennsylvania is home to some of the best beginner and intermediate whitewater in the Mid-Atlantic. There are many opportunities for guided whitewater rafting in Pennsylvania state parks. The real question is: "Where to go first?"

Here are a couple of the best areas for guided whitewater rafting in state parks.

Where to Go in Southwestern PA

Located among the southern reaches of the Allegheny Mountains, [Ohiopyle State Park](#) encompasses approximately 20,500 acres of rugged natural beauty while serving as the gateway to the Laurel Highlands.

Close to major metropolitan areas and offering vast recreational opportunities, Ohiopyle is the largest state park in Pennsylvania, attracting millions of visitors every year, mostly for its whitewater.

What to Expect on the Yough

Ohiopyle derives from a Delaware Indian word translating to "white frothy water." Flowing through the very heart of the park is the 132-mile Youghiogheny River -- or Yough for short. It's one of the most actively run sections of whitewater east of the Mississippi. "Youghiogheny" means, "a stream flowing in a contrary direction," due to it being one of the few rivers in the country to flow from south to north.

This world-renowned stretch of whitewater has defining characteristics that set it apart from the rest. It's very different from the wide-open Susquehanna River or slightly rippled Delaware River. With massive, predominantly sandstone boulders scattered throughout, a rafting line looks seemingly unsurpassable. It may look as if someone just dropped a cluster of boulders in the middle of the river!

This landscape calls for quick maneuvers and tight squeezes through its gushing labyrinths. But don't let this description deter you, as it is one of the most scenic rivers in the continental U.S. Just beckoning to be experienced, licensed outfitters in Ohiopyle State Park offer rafting trips lead by trained guides, whom are always keen on showing a rookie down their first Yough run!

Just below the renowned 15-foot Ohiopyle Falls begins one of the most popular intermediate sections of whitewater in the east. The Lower Section features 7.5 miles of class III-IV rapids. It is considered a drop and pool river with rapids separated by calm deep pools, allowing you to catch your breath and enjoy the scenery.

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Guided Whitewater Rafting at PA State Parks—A Scenic and Stimulating Adventure! (continued)

The Middle Yough is a scenic, 11-mile beginner section of class I-II whitewater. It is best suited for families with young ones and includes opportunities to paddle, splash, and even swim. This section offers opportunities to experience the Yough escorted by raft or inflatable kayak alongside trained guides.

Guided Trips on the Yough

Guided trips are available from licensed commercial outfitters that provide rafts, guides, and all necessary safety equipment and transportation to and from the river.

Guided trips are offered on the Yough during the spring, summer, and fall. Trips are available daily throughout the summer. Plan to go between April and October.

For more detailed information and a list of licensed, commercial outfitters currently operating on the Lower and Middle Youghiogheny River, visit the [Ohio State Park whitewater boating web page](#).

Where to go in Northeastern PA

Located in northeastern Pennsylvania, and winding through the mossy valleys and ridges of the Pocono Mountains, lies the Lehigh River. With 30 miles of park-protected mountains, [Lehigh Gorge State Park](#) features picturesque waterfalls, diverse plant species, and class II-III whitewater. Lehigh also means, “where there are forks” in Delaware Indian, due to its many islands.

What to Expect on the Lehigh River

On this river, you can experience beginner-to-intermediate guided whitewater rafting surrounded by a lush forested gorge, edged by boulders, wildflowers, and tumbling waters.

It's important to plan ahead, and this includes understanding the [international scale of river difficulty](#). Class I is categorized as easy, while Class IV is advanced. It's important to understand that this system is not exact. Rivers do not always fit easily into one category and there may be regional interpretations or weather-related impacts.

Weather and water temperatures will dictate what you should wear on the river. It is always best to call before your trip and ask what the recommended attire will be.

Commercial outfitters may provide wetsuits and splash jackets for a small fee. In warmer conditions, it is best to wear a swimsuit, synthetic shirt (not cotton), hat for sun protection, and sturdy footwear (no slip-on shoes).

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Guided Whitewater Rafting at PA State Parks—A Scenic and Stimulating Adventure! (continued)

You should plan to bring:

- Plenty of water
- Sunglasses with a retainer strap
- Sunscreen
- Carabiners
- A waterproof camera (if you want some fun photography)
- Lunch (if not provided by the outfitter)
- A towel and extra set of dry clothes for after the trip

Learn More

Interested in learning more about paddling and water sports? Check the [DCNR calendar of events](#) for outdoor programs on the water at state parks and forests. Some are beginner education events, while some are for more those more experienced on the water.

You can learn more about Pennsylvania waterways and their classes of difficulty from [American Whitewater](#).

To learn what recreation opportunities Pennsylvania state parks and forests offer, explore [DCNR's What To Do web page](#).

Source: PA DCNR

Thank you 2018 volunteers! Now, preparing for the 2019 Ohio River Sweep.

Since 1989, this award-winning cleanup for the Ohio River and its tributaries brings thousands of volunteers to the riverbanks to remove tons of trash and debris. River Sweep encompasses the entire length of the river, from its origin in Pittsburgh, PA to its end in Cairo, IL, including nearly 3,000 miles of shoreline and many tributaries.

The Ohio River Sweep is an event organized by the Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission, an interstate water pollution agency for the Ohio River Valley, along with environmental protection and natural resource agencies from Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania.

This was the 28th year of participation for the Allegheny County Sportsmen's League.

Wolf Administration Joins in Celebration of ‘Trail of the Year’ Honors

The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn joined Friends of the Wissahickon and City of Philadelphia officials in celebrating designation of Forbidden Drive as Pennsylvania’s 2018 Trail of the Year.

Paralleling Wissahickon Creek, the trail is a focal point of Wissahickon Valley Park, within the city’s Fairmount Park system.

“Though we are just miles from Center City Philadelphia, Forbidden Drive has long been an avenue traveled by so many to a new world of outdoor adventure and discovery,” Dunn said. “Generations have been drawn to this bucolic valley where the drive follows Wissahickon Creek through miles of unspoiled woodlands.”

Forbidden Drive has generated sustained DCNR support as a rare and unique urban trail that draws more than 1.1 million users annually. Visiting hikers, bikers, and anglers patronize related businesses located along trailheads in the Chestnut Hill and Roxborough sections of Philadelphia.

DCNR has invested almost \$1 million in projects benefiting the National Recreation Trail.

“We’re thrilled that the beautiful and historic Forbidden Drive has been named Trail of the Year,” said Maura McCarthy, executive director of Friends of the Wissahickon. “The name belies this urban oasis that welcomes visitors of all ages on foot, bikes, or horseback to enjoy the wonders of nature that Friends of the Wissahickon work to conserve.”

Pennsylvania is a leader in trail development, providing its citizens and visitors with more than 11,000 miles of trails across the commonwealth to enjoy, from gentle pathways threading through miles of preserved greenways, to remote, rugged trails scaling the state’s rugged mountains.

Each year, the Pennsylvania Trails Advisory Committee designates a Trail of the Year to help build enthusiasm and support for both large and small trails and raise public awareness about the value of Pennsylvania’s trail network.

Friends of the Wissahickon (FOW) works in partnership with Philadelphia Parks and Recreation, organizations, and volunteers to maintain the park and its trails. Today, the Wissahickon Valley is viewed as among the most natural places in the City of Philadelphia, and is visited by more than 1 million people each year.

In 2017, DCNR and the Pennsylvania Trails Advisory Committee named Montour Trail in Allegheny and Washington counties as Pennsylvania’s Trail of the Year.

For more information on Forbidden Drive -- named long ago when it was closed to motor vehicles -- visit the [FOW website](#).

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Wolf Administration Joins in Celebration of ‘Trail of the Year’ Honors (continued)

For more information about Pennsylvania trails, visit the [Explore PA Trails website](#). More than 600 trails covering almost 12,000 miles in Pennsylvania are featured on the site.

Source: The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

Wolf Administration Joins Celebration of Loyalsock Creek's 2018 River of the Year Honor, Marking PA Rivers Month

The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn joined state and local officials, and Middle Susquehanna Riverkeeper Association members in celebrating the designation of Loyalsock Creek as Pennsylvania's 2018 River of the Year.

DCNR has invested \$40,000 to develop a river conservation plan for Loyalsock Creek and has approved a \$10,000 grant to the Middle Susquehanna Riverkeeper Association for stream-based support events, education and celebrations throughout 2018.

"As Governor Wolf noted in his proclamation naming June 'Pennsylvania Rivers Month' and commending the Loyalsock and its supporters, healthy, rebounding waterways are a boon to area communities," Dunn said. "A major tributary to the Susquehanna, the Loyalsock draws legions of paddlers, anglers and other outdoors enthusiasts to its waters, as well as neighboring businesses. Events like this serve economic revitalization by enhancing access to the stream; increasing tourism; and providing additional land and water-based recreational opportunities for area residents and visitors alike."

Held to commemorate PA Rivers Month, the River of the Year celebration highlights the state's wealth of rivers and streams, and recognizes their supporters. Its includes a sojourn on a stretch of the Loyalsock, which Dunn will be joining Saturday.

"We are delighted to share time with Secretary Dunn as we celebrate the creek's River of the Year designation today, and paddle on the Loyalsock to the West Branch Susquehanna River on Saturday," Middle Susquehanna Riverkeeper Carol Parenzan. "Not only are we connecting community to the creek but the creek to the river. We all live upstream. We are all the first source for clean water. We look forward to seeing the Loyalsock Creek through the eyes of Secretary Dunn."

Loyalsock Creek flows through Worlds End State Park, a highly popular destination state park encompassing 780 acres, and Loyalsock State Forest. Nearby is the Loyalsock Trail, a well-traveled 59-mile trail providing vistas overlooking the stream below.

Presented annually since 1983, Pennsylvania Organization of Waterways (POWR) administers the River of the Year program with funding from DCNR. A commemorative River of the Year sojourn is among many paddling trips supported by DCNR and POWR each year. An independent program, the Pennsylvania Sojourn Program, is a unique series of trips on state waterways. These water-based journeys for canoeists, kayakers and others raise awareness of the environmental, recreational, tourism and heritage values of rivers. For more information about the sojourn program, visit the POWR website.

To learn more about the River of the Year program, the nominated waterways, and past winners, visit the Pennsylvania River of the Year website.

To learn more about DCNR's Rivers Program, visit the DCNR's Rivers Conservation web page.

Source: The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources