Glossary

303(d)	A listing of PA streams that have not met or cannot maintain required water quality standards.
305(b)	A listing of PA streams that have documented water quality issues.
Abandoned mine drainage	A groundwater discharge that emanates from former underground or surface mines.
Abandoned mine lands	Lands where abandoned mines are located.
Abatement	A reduction or alleviation of.
Acid	Having a pH less than 7.
Acidity	The capacity of water for neutralizing a basic solution.
Alkaline	Having a pH greater than 7.
Alkalinity	Buffering capacity of the water, the ability of the water to resist pH change.
Alluvial	Pertains to the environments, processes, and products of streams or rivers. Materials deposited by flowing water are referred to as alluvial deposits.
Anoxic limestone drains	A system developed to treat abandoned mine drainage. The discharge flow is diverted underground to a buried bed of limestone (to create low oxygen conditions) and discharged to the stream with increased alkalinity.
Anticline	A rock structure inclining downward on both sides from a median line or axis.
Arial reconnaissance	A general examination or survey of a region from the air.
Bedrock	The solid rock that underlies the soil and other unconsolidated material or that is exposed at the surface.
Best management practices	Refer to the most environmentally appropriate techniques for agriculture, forestry, mining, development, urban stormwater management, and other practices that are potential threats to natural resources.
Biochemical oxygen demand	The oxygen required by aerobic organisms, as those in sewage, for metabolism.

Biodiversity	The variety of all living things. Can be measured by genetic variability, species richness, or ecosystem complexity.
Bituminous coal	A soft coal rich in volatile hydrocarbons and tarry matter and burning with a yellow, smoky flame.
Brownfields	Sites that are contaminated from past industrial use.
Buffer	To cushion, shield, or protect; any substance capable of neutralizing both acids and bases in a solution without appreciably changing the solution's original acidity or alkalinity.
Calcareous shale	Shale containing calcium carbonate.
Carbon sequestration	The act of removing, or withdrawing into solitude, carbon.
Channelization	The act of forming the bed of a stream, river, or other waterway.
Co-generation plants	Those facilities that utilize the normally wasted heat energy produced by a power plant or industrial process, especially to generate electricity.
Colluvial	Of or pertaining to loose earth material that has accumulated at the base of a slope.
Colluvium	Deposited at the edge of the slope
Combined sewage overflows	An overflow caused by a storm or flood event of a treatment system designed for stormwater and sewage that share a discharge pipe.
Comprehensive plan	A general policy guide for the physical development of a municipality, taking into account many factors including locations, character, and timing of future development.
Conductivity	A measure of the ability of a substance to conduct electric current, equal to the reciprocal of the substance's resistance.
Confluence	The meeting of two waterways. The terminal end of the smaller waterway (tributary) at the confluence is referred to as the tributary's mouth.
Coniferous forest	A forest consisting primarily of trees that are evergreen.

Conservation	The maintenance of environmental quality and resources; resources include physical, biological, or cultural. Ecosystem management within given social and economic constraints; producing goods and services for humans without depleting natural ecosystem diversity, and acknowledging the natural dynamic character of biological systems.
Conservation easement	A deed restriction that landowners voluntarily place on their property to protect natural resources.
Contamination	The act of making impure or unsuitable by contact or mixture with something unclean, bad, etc.
Critical areas	Areas that have constraints that limit development and various activities.
Cropland	Land used for cultivating crops.
Deciduous forest	A forest consisting primarily of trees that shed their leaves annually.
Deep mines	Area where resource extraction has occurred underground, with little disturbance to the surface.
Delta plains	A nearly flat plain of alluvial, often triangular deposit between diverging branches or the mouth of a river.
Dendritic drainage pattern	A drainage pattern of a branching form.
Deposition	The act or process of depositing.
Diversion wells	A system developed to treat abandoned mine drainage. Partial flow of a stream is diverted to a well filled with limestone and discharges back to the stream with an increased alkalinity.
Earthwork	Excavation and piling of earth in an engineering operation.
Ecological	The study of the interrelationships among organisms and between organisms, and between them and all aspects living and nonliving, of their environment.
Encroachment	The act of advancing beyond established or proper limits.
Envirothon	Environmental Education contest for high school students.
Erosion	The mechanical transfer by water and air of soils and rocks that have been weathered into finer particles.

Fauna	Animal life.
Floodplains	The level land along the course of a river or stream formed by the deposition of sediment during periodic floods.
Flora	Plant life.
Geology	The study of the development of the earth's crust. Rocks, fossils, etc.
Geomorphologic	Of or pertaining to changes in geologic processes.
Grassroots	The ordinary citizens of a community; not politically associated.
Greenway	A corridor of open space.
Groundwater	Water that occurs below the earth's surface; found in pore spaces in rock material. Source of drinking water for many; also contributes to surface waterways.
Hardness	That quality in water that is imparted by the presence of dissolved salts, esp. calcium sulfate or bicarbonate.
Hazardous areas	Those areas that pose danger, risk, or difficulty.
Headwaters	Refers to upstream reaches of a stream or river.
Herpetological	Dealing with reptiles and amphibians.
Hydric soils	Soils that are wet long enough to periodically produce low oxygen conditions and influence wetland plant growth.
Hydrology	The study of the movement of water on the earth; includes surface water and groundwater.
Important birding areas	Program identifying and protecting outstanding habitat for avian and other wildlife species.
Illegal dumps	Sites where trash and other unwanted items are disposed of illegally. Typically along streams.
Impervious space	Material that water cannot penetrate.
Infiltrate	To filter into or through; permeate.
Invasive species	Environmentally noxious weeds that grow aggressively, spread easily, and displace other plants.

Iron oxide recovery	The process or act of removing residual iron from AMD treatment systems for reuse in industrial processes.
Landslides	The falling or sliding of a mass of soil, detritus, or rock on or from a steep slope.
Leachate	Liquid substance created as a result of ground water seeping from a porous, perforated vessel that holds material. It is usually associated with the water seeping from a landfill or abandoned mine.
Levees	Area built up adjacent to streams to try to control flooding.
Limestone	A sedimentary type of rock comprised largely of calcium carbonate.
Macroinvertebrates	Organisms generally associated with soil or stream substrates that lack backbones and can be seen without magnification.
Management recommendations	Non-regulatory suggestions to improve the quality of life.
Mine drainage	A groundwater discharge that emanates from underground or surface mines.
Mine pool	Area underground where a natural resource has been extracted and water accumulates.
Mine subsidence	Movement of ground surface as a result of the collapse or failure of underground mine workings
Municipal waste	Waste from residential areas and businesses that is non-hazardous.
Native plants	Plant species that occur naturally in the region.
PA Natural Diversity Inventory Program	A partnership that conducts inventories and collects data to identify the Commonwealth's most sensitive and significant organisms and features.
Natural Heritage Inventory	A method of assessing areas of important plants, fauna and ecological communities.
Net alkaline	Discharges with greater alkalinity than acidity.
Nighttime two-band thermal scan	A scan using infrared light to detect temperature differences in surface waters indicating sources of pollution.
Non-point source pollution	Pollutants that have no readily visible source and often require detailed analysis and research to discern the source.

Non-regulatory	Meaning that they are not enforceable and hold no power in land use planning.
Noxious weeds	Weeds that are harmful to environmental health.
Nuisance vegetation	Plants that cause disturbance in a natural community.
Nutrient management plans	Plans providing information on nutrient allocations, excess manure utilization, stormwater runoff controls, and best management practices for farms with an annual density more than two animal units per acre.
Ordinance	A municipal regulation; ordinances can be used to describe zoning, subdivision, and other land use issues within a municipality.
Oxbow lakes	Bow-shaped lakes formed in a former channel of a river.
Permeability	The capability of a porous rock or sediment to permit the flow of fluids through its pore spaces.
Permit	A decree granting permission to do something.
pH	A measure of acidity or alkalinity of a medium.
Physiographic	The physical relatedness of all areas within a given region.
Point source pollution	Pollutants that can easily be traced to their source.
Preservation	The act or process of keeping something safe from harm or injury; the act of maintaining or reserving.
Rails to trails	A program that converted abandoned or unused railroad corridors into public trails.
Reclamation	The reclaiming of uncultivated areas or wastelands for productive use.
Recycle	To treat or process used or waste materials so as to make suitable for reuse.
Refuse piles/gob/ slag/spoil	Those materials regarded as waste as a byproduct of natural resource extraction; usually found in piles.
Relief	The relative degree of elevation change in any given area. Flat areas have low relief as opposed to mountainous areas, which tend to have high relief. Not to be confused with elevation that only measures the height above a certain point, typically sea level.

Residual waste	Non-hazardous industrial waste such as contaminated soil, rubber, fertilizers and pharmaceutical waste.
Residuum	The matter remaining after operation of any number of chemical processes, such as filtration, evaporation, or combustion.
Riffle	A ripple, as upon the surface of water.
Riparian habitats	Area of protective vegetation next to a body of water that serves as a barrier against polluted runoff and provides habitat corridors for all kinds of wildlife.
Runoff	Water from wet deposition (rain or snow melt) that flows over the surface of the ground to a receiving waterway.
Sanitary sewage overflows	An overflow of a system that was designed to convey and treat only sewage.
Sedimentation	The deposit of particles moved by erosion.
Silviculture	Cultivating and harvesting of trees.
Sinkholes	A hole formed in soluble rock by the action of water, serving to conduct surface water to an underground passage.
Soil associations	A classification of soil types that comprise two to three major soil types and a few minor soil types.
Stormwater management	Planning for surface runoff into streams and river systems during rain and/or snowmelt events.
Strip mined	Land that has been excavated by open-cut methods.
Subwatershed	The watershed of a tributary stream; it is a sub-unit of the receiving stream, river, or lake's watershed.
Superfund sites	A hazardous waste site placed on the Superfund National Priorities List and financed for clean up by the US EPA.
Syncline	A rock formation inclining upward on both sides from a median line or axis, as a downward fold of rock strata.
Terrestrial	Pertaining to dry land.

Total Maximum Daily Load	A limit for pollutant load placed on a waterway by DEP. TMDLs are determined for a waterway based on how much pollutant it is determined that the waterway can assimilate. TMDLs will be used to regulate the percentage of total pollutant load that each source in a watershed can contribute.
Topography	Describes landscape features of an area.
Tributary	A stream that feeds into another (receiving) stream, river, lake, or ocean.
Urban sprawl	The uncontrolled spread of urban development into neighboring regions.
Water budgets	A document detailing water needs, water usage, and water availability.
Water conservation	The act of using water wisely, as to not waste or injure the quality or quantity.
Water table	The upper surface of groundwater; or the area below which the soil or rock interstices are saturated.
Watershed	The area of land that drains to a particular point along a stream. Each stream has its own watershed. Topography is the key element affecting this area of land. The boundary of a watershed is defined by the highest elevations surrounding the stream. A drop of water falling outside the boundary will drain to another watershed.
Wetlands	Areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions.
Woodland	Land covered with woods or trees.
Yellow boy	An orange iron precipitate that coats the stream bottom from a mine drainage containing high metals and acidity reacting with a stream or tributary with a higher pH or temperature.
Zoning ordinances	A municipal ordinance that divides all land within the municipality into districts, and creates regulations that applies generally to the municipality as a whole as well as specifically to individual districts.