

MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

FISH PASSAGE

GOAL: Vital Habitats

OUTCOME

Continually increase available habitat to support sustainable migratory fish populations in Chesapeake Bay freshwater rivers and streams. By 2025, restore historical fish migratory routes by opening 1,000 additional stream miles, with restoration success indicated by the consistent presence of alewife, blueback herring, American shad, hickory shad, American eel and brook trout, to be monitored in accordance with available agency resources and collaboratively developed methods.

CURRENT EFFORTS

- Chesapeake Fish Passage Prioritization Tool—a GIS-based prioritization tool (developed by the Nature Conservancy and members of the CBP's Fish Passage Workgroup) designed to help investigate potential fish passage projects in the context of many ecological factors.

GAPS

- Funding for Stream Barrier Removal: The average cost of removal in MD, VA and PA is about \$200,000, which means partners will need more than \$20 million in project implementation funds to meet the outcome.
- Information to develop standardized assessment tools for fish passage evaluations, swimming performance and energetics, methods of motivating fish to enter and pass diversion structures, development of a fish passage database to provide a systematic, geo-referenced source of data for scientific assessment of distribution and performance of all known upstream fish passage structures.

MANAGEMENT APPROACHES

- Prioritization of projects using the GIS-based Fish Passage Prioritization Tool. Use the tool to help decision-makers rank each dam according to its potential benefit to diadromous fish. The tool determines high priority barrier removal projects based on the following: first blockages (the first barrier fish encounter on their spawning runs from the ocean to the headwaters), benefits to multiple species, largest habitat gains, high quality habitat, etc.
- Obtain the Mileage Goal. Open 132 miles every two years by working on existing dam removal projects and applying for restoration grants to fund design and removal of barrier projects.
- Project Development: Fish passage coordinators will develop new barrier removal projects using the Fish Passage Prioritization tool, conduct assessment and design studies on potential projects, and focus on high priority communities to test several dam owner incentives and community outreach tools
- Local Government: Local governments, watershed associations, nonprofits and the private sector, including private dam owners, have a role in this strategy. Local governments often own the dams targeted for removal and permission is needed to pursue the project. Nonprofits are often managing and implementing removal projects, providing funding for projects and conducting outreach.



For the full management strategy, visit: www.chesapeakebay.net/managementstrategies