

QUARTERLY PROGRESS MEETING – Aug, 2021
Chesapeake Bay Program



Protected Lands Outcome

*John Griffin, Chesapeake
Conservation Partnership
Protected Lands Outcome Lead*

Need to Conserve Valuable Lands:

- The 6th Extinction of Species
- Increased Public Demand

Major increase in federal funding

Increased federal resources in wildlife conservation

States already investing more in land conservation

Conserving wetlands, habitat, wetland retreat corridors, and reduce flooding impacts

Need for green space in under-resourced communities

Growing policy/ funding trends on conserving/ restoring natural capital assets

America the Beautiful =
Conserving 30%
of Watershed
Lands by 2030

A major voluntary balancing effort is needed

Through the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement, the Chesapeake Bay Program has committed to...

Goal: Land Conservation

Protected Lands Outcome: By 2025, protect an additional two million acres of lands throughout the watershed – currently identified as high conservation priorities at the federal, state or local level – including 225,000 acres of wetlands and 695,000 acres of forest land of highest value for maintaining water quality.



Patapsco Valley State Park (Photo by Will Parson/ Chesapeake Bay Program)



Subgoals



Photo credit: Chesapeake Bay Foundation

Ask CCP Partners to prioritize acquisition of lands that support wetlands, forest buffers, and brook trout habitat.

552,169

Acres of Forest
Conserved

79%

of the Goal
Achieved

66,892

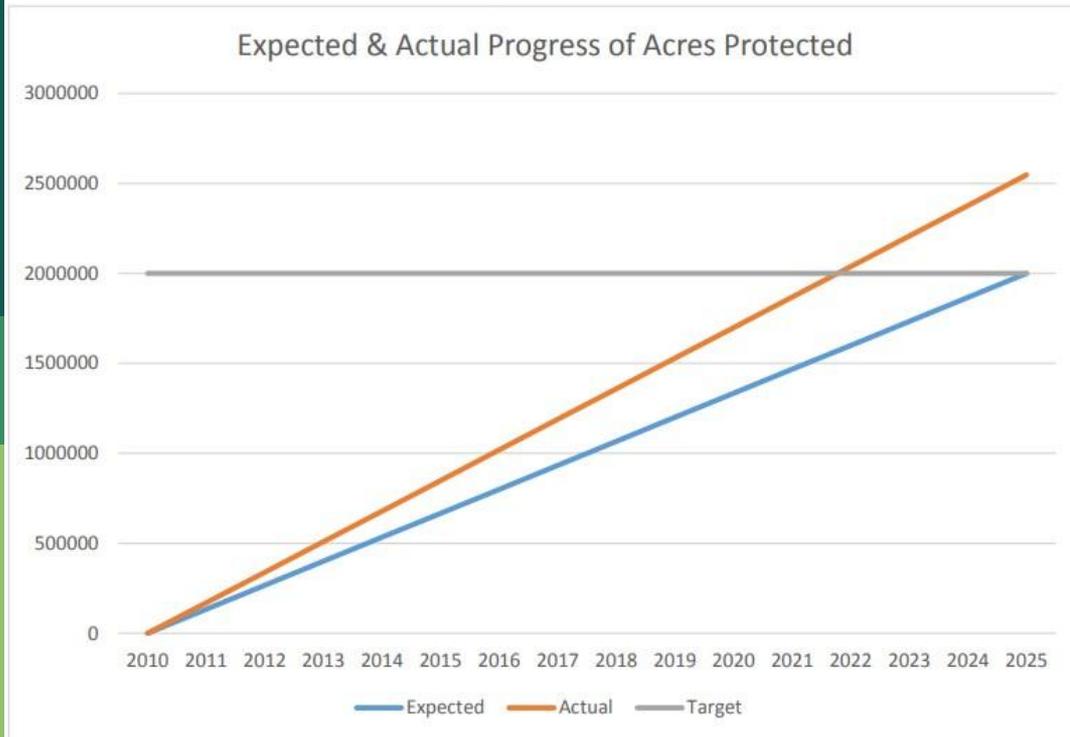
Acres of
Wetlands
Conserved

30%

of the Goal
Achieved

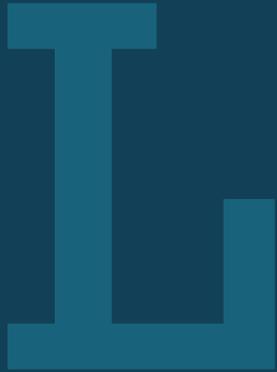


What is our Expected and Actual Progress?



- Table based on 2018 data. Biennial update of the Protected Land Status for 2020 expected in late 2021
- New methodology will provide accurate and timely land conservation information with more robust attributes to make informed decisions about land conservation. The comprehensiveness of this dataset is unique to the Chesapeake Bay region

* Actual progress is a projection based on a sustained linear growth of land conservation developed from previous years, and is subject to change depending on future updates of protected lands data.



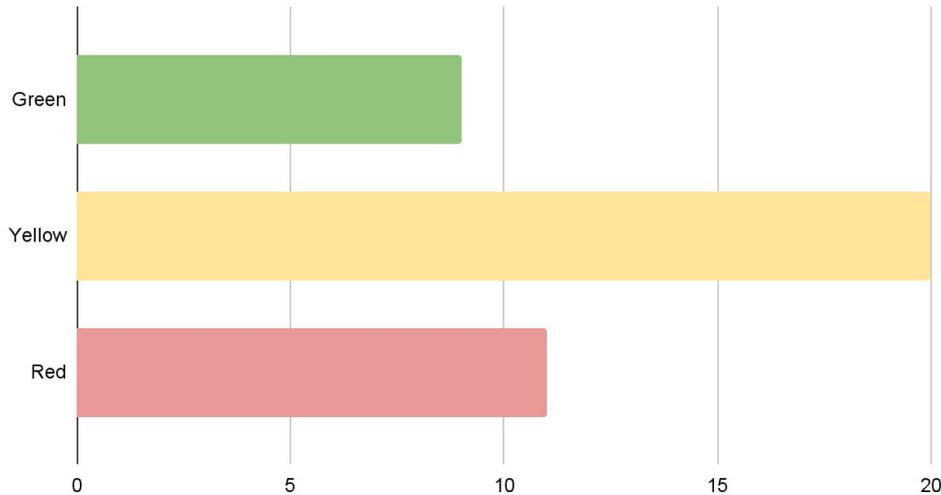
Learn

What have we learned in the last two years?



Lessons Learned

Status of Logic and Action Plan Items



73% of our performance targets were coded either green or yellow

- Actions and goals should match staff availability and resources.
- Assigning a responsible party and securing funding are crucial for achieving performance targets.
- Urgent needs around the connection between public health and green space required adaptive management and the development of an *Action Plan Focusing on Public Health, Green Spaces and Equity*.
- COVID-19 demonstrated the increased demand for accessible open space for all residents.



On the Horizon

- **Fiscal:** Funding opportunities have increased.
- **Policy:** Emerging Opportunities --
 - New Federal administration's executive orders and policies that will support our work toward the Protected Lands outcome
 - Model legislative proposal in MD General Assembly could attract increased private capital investment
 - State Heirs Property mapping and legislation
 - Outreach to land trusts and local governments to promote use of conservation BMPs
 - Chesapeake WILD legislation - partnership and funding



On the Horizon

- **Scientific:**
 - Growing science confirmation of need to protect 30% of land by 2030 and 50% by 2050 (referred to as 30x30 and 50x50)
 - Public health research and references establishing benefits of spending time in outdoor green spaces

A large, stylized, blue letter 'A' is positioned on the left side of the slide. The background behind it is a dark blue vertical band, which is part of a larger design consisting of horizontal stripes in shades of blue and green.

Adapt

How does all of this impact our work?



Based on what we learned, we plan to ...

- New work to achieve goal plus social/health benefits relates to:
 - Providing green spaces in under-resourced communities of color
 - Targeting resources to conserve the habitat of imperiled species, including under the Chesapeake WILD program
 - Providing more natural areas as part of achieving the CCP's 30x30 goal
- Focus on land conservation policies that address sea level rise / resiliency
- Prioritize public access, human health, and diversity goals that contribute to Bay restoration
- Align the CCP Public Health/Equity Action Plan with the L&A Plan



Help

*How can the Management Board
lead the Program to adapt?*



Preview: How You Can Help



Protected Lands Outcome

- Previous trends lead us to believe we will reach the outcome target by 2025. The biennial update of the Protected Lands status will provide data through 2020 to confirm.
- MB support needed to promote updated target of conserving 30% by 2030.



Help Needed

- Endorse an updated target of protecting 30% of valuable lands in the watershed by 2030
- Assist with facilitating a focus on health and equity to help meet multiple Watershed Agreement outcomes
 - Encourage counterparts in conservation, public health and other agencies to prioritize investments in underserved communities
 - The Workgroup is identifying items from the *CCP Action Plan Focusing on Public Health, Green Spaces and Equity* with which the MB can be most helpful.
- Engage land conservation efforts to aid wetland and forest buffer BMPs
 - MB target available resources to advance wetland and riparian BMP progress on lands already conserved or to be conserved
- Provide staff support to update of the Chesapeake Conservation Atlas habitat map layers

Data in Depth

Data from 2018

- 1,358,456 acres permanently protected since 2010 baseline
- 68% of the 2 million acre goal achieved goal adopted
- Total number of protected acres is 9,158,456
- Average rate of 169,807 acres/ year (above the 133,333 annual rate required to meet the two million acre goal)

In order to achieve 30% by 2030 need to conserve an additional 3,129,544 acres, according to the 2018 data. We've already achieved $\frac{3}{4}$ of the 30% target.



Discussion