



PROTECTED LANDS OUTCOME - AUGUST 12, 2021 QUARTERLY PROGRESS REVIEW

The narrative analysis summarizes the findings of the logic and action plan and serves as the bridge between the logic and action plan and the quarterly progress meeting presentation. Based on what you learned over the past two years from your successes and challenges, you will describe whether the partnership should make adaptations or change course.

Use your completed pre-quarterly logic and action plan to answer the questions below. After the quarterly progress meeting, your responses to these questions will guide your updates to your logic and action plan. Additional guidance can be found on [ChesapeakeDecisions](#).

1. Examine your red/yellow/green analysis of your management actions. What lessons have you learned over the past two years of implementation?

Summarize what you have learned about what worked and what didn't. For example, have you identified additional factors to consider or filled an information gap?

The Protected Lands Logic & Action (L&A) Plan was not accepted by the Management Board until August of 2020, a year into the progress period, so we have had less than a year to execute and report on progress for some of the actions. Lessons learned during this shortened time period for the current action plan include the following:

- (a) Match actions and goals to staff availability and resources:** The L&A Plan was too ambitious in general for a 2-year plan, and some of the actions added later in the process were not achievable in the shortened time frame. The shutdown during the pandemic complicated this process, causing an extension of the time involved to develop consensus on policies and actions via virtual meetings. In addition, staff departures during this period have reduced capacity. As a consequence, there has been less progress than desired in some areas. Development of the next two year L&A Plan will need to include a better correlation of staff and resources availability with goals and actions, as well as an effort to right-size the tasks to a two-year timeframe. We will still include some stretch goals and actions.
- (b) Actions without an assigned responsible party and/or funding don't get done.** In the future, there needs to be a more concerted effort to identify a lead or responsible party for every action. Those without a partner in the lead should not be included in the plan.
- (c) Current events have elucidated more urgent needs, requiring adaptive management. Therefore, actions are shifting to address broadened priorities.** The Protected Lands Workgroup is operationalized by the Chesapeake Conservation Partnership (CCP), which has a broader view and scope of work than the L&A Plan alone. The larger picture of factors affecting land protection including social needs has been considered in this work, and plans have adjusted to address current gaps. There is an urgent need to direct more funding and efforts to provide green spaces as the land conservation contribution to improved public health in under-resourced communities of color in both urban and rural settings. This need was shown to be of critical importance given the disparate health impacts of the pandemic on these communities. There are an ever-increasing number of public health studies confirming the benefits to human health of time spent in a variety of outdoor green spaces.

In fall 2020, CCP and other land conservation nonprofits co-sponsored a series of four virtual sessions with partners and community based nonprofits, to explore means to better serve community needs. Discussions led to identifying policies and actions to assist in building capacity in communities to deliver green projects in coordination with agencies at all levels of government, foundations, and private investment. As a result, CCP

has engaged in adaptive management by developing a draft **Action Plan Focusing on Public Health, Green Spaces and Equity**, addressing actions which were not in the current L&A Plan. As the health/equity plan is finalized, actions in it appropriate to the Protected Lands work will be woven into the next L&A Plan.

Projects underway will be coordinated to best serve the new health/equity action plan and to further the progress toward the Protected Lands outcome, while also implementing steps in alignment with the CBP’s Diversity Strategy. In the 2020 GIT funding process, the Workgroup/CCP submitted a project proposal through the Stewardship GIT and it was approved by the CBP. The project has retained contractor Skeo Solutions to define and map under-resourced communities of color throughout the watershed and to then assess the adequacy of their green spaces. Another GIT funding project in 2020, submitted by the Public Access Workgroup, was approved and awarded to OpinionWorks to survey communities, including those identified by Skeo, to determine residents’ views on barriers and benefits to access to the Bay’s waterways. Finally, the National Park Service Chesapeake Bay Office is processing a cooperative grant agreement with the Trust for Public Land to develop strategies focusing on the Bay region’s urban centers to deploy land conservation and related sustainable practices to uplift under-resourced communities of color. These projects will work in tandem to help identify needs and barriers, and elicit future actions to pursue to address them.

(d) Expanded need for increased public access to green spaces: The pandemic has also demonstrated the increased demand for accessible open spaces especially water access, parks and trails for all residents of the Bay watershed. Many, many green spaces were oversubscribed and this trend seems to be continuing into 2021 even as the pandemic restrictions are being eased. These facts reinforce the need to maintain and expand resources for green spaces available for public access. This supports the Workgroup and CCP partners’ plans to conserve valuable lands to meet the Bay regional target to permanently conserve an additional 2 million acres over the 2010 baseline by 2025, and to continue these efforts to achieve CCP’s subsequent goal of conserving 30% of all lands in the watershed by 2030 (“30 x 30”).

2. Regardless of how successful your short-term progress has been over the past two years, indicate whether we are making progress at a rate that is necessary to achieve the outcome you are working toward. The example graph below illustrates this concept.

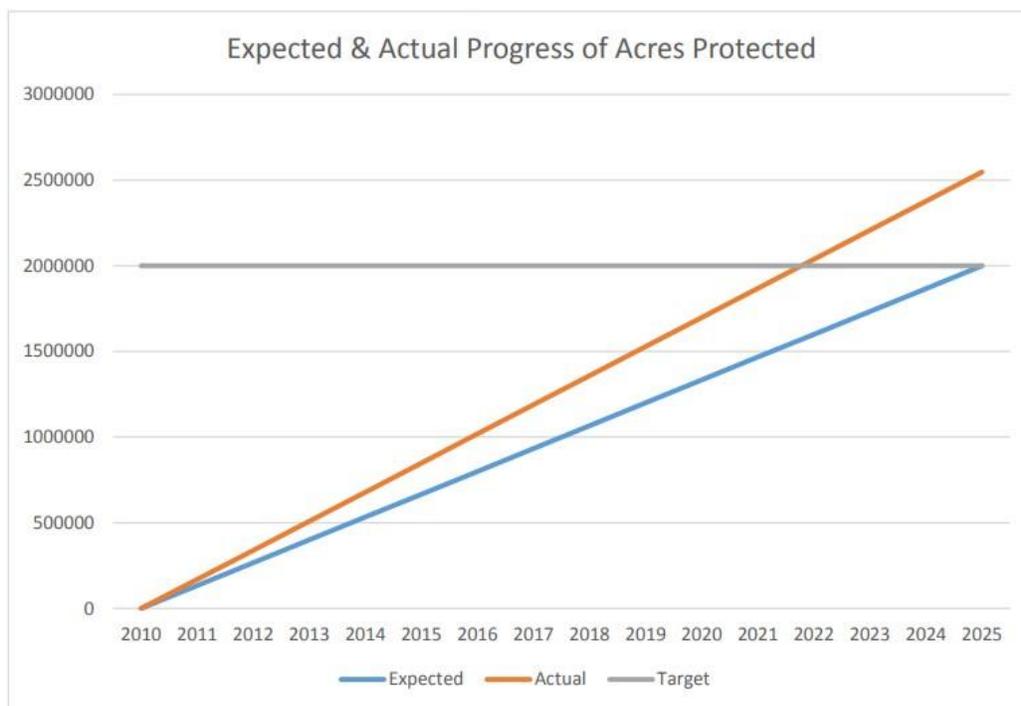


Table based on 2018 data. Biennial update of the Protected Land Status is expected in late 2021.

*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.

The outcome is on target to meet the 2025 Land Conservation Goal: According to data collected in the spring of 2018, approximately 1,358,456 acres of land in the watershed have been permanently protected from development over the 2010 baseline. This marks an achievement of 68 percent of the land conservation goal adopted in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement and brings the total amount of protected land in the watershed to 9,158,456 acres. The actual average annual rate of protection (169,807 acres) since 2010 is above the average annual rate required (133,333 acres) for meeting the 2025 two million acre goal. An additional 641,544 acres needs to be conserved to achieve the goal.

While some increases in acreage can be attributed to improvements in data collection — for instance, by reporting previously protected but newly digitized, corrected or refined parcels of land — other increases can be attributed to newly protected parcels of land, and data clearly indicate a general increase in protected lands in the watershed over time.

30x30 Goal: In order to achieve the CCP adopted goal of permanently conserving 30% of valuable lands in the watershed by 2030, the Partnership will need to conserve an additional approximately 25% more land or 3,129,544 acres of valuable lands.

Biennial Update of Land Conservation Progress: The update has been delayed by uncontrollable administrative procedures but is expected to be completed in draft form by the end of August, 2021. This will be a very important checkpoint to show how many more acres have been conserved over the past two plus years.

3. What scientific, fiscal and policy-related developments will influence your work over the next two years?

This may include information learned at the previous biennial SRS meeting or more specific information about your outcome such as an increase or decrease in funding, new programs that address gaps, and new scientific data or research. Describe how these developments are likely to impact your recommended measure(s) of progress, the factors you believe impact your ability to succeed, and newly created or filled gaps. These changes should be reflected in the first three columns of your revised logic and action plan after your quarterly progress meeting.

FISCAL:

Funding for land conservation has substantially increased during 2020 especially at the Federal level; and at the state level, funding has been maintained or enhanced. At the Federal level, the Great American Outdoors Act was enacted and for the first time ever, the Land and Water Conservation Fund was fully funded permanently. This will provide increased and reliable funding for Federal lands and comparable increases at the state level. In addition, the Federal administration would provide additional resources for land conservation through executive orders and legislative proposals such as the proposed infrastructure funding. At the state level, proposed budgets at the beginning of 2021 maintained level funding or in some states enhanced funding. We believe one of the major reasons for these budgetary actions was the recognition of the greater demand for accessible and well maintained public lands demonstrated by the pandemic.

POLICY:

Federal administration executive orders, policy issuances and legislative proposals: The new Federal administration has issued executive orders and is implementing policies providing support that will aid the CCP's land acquisition goals. One example is the America the Beautiful Plan endorsing the 30x 30 goals which aligns perfectly with CCP's ongoing work.

Attracting increased private capital investment: A model state legislative proposal was introduced during the 2021 session of the Maryland General Assembly. If enacted, it will hopefully create momentum for other Bay states to adapt and enact similar statutes.

State Heirs Property mapping and legislation: Following the enactment of a recommended state Uniform Partition of Heirs Property statutes in New York and Virginia, the CCP is a participant in a coalition supporting the enactment of this statute in Maryland and DC over the next year, and subsequently in other Bay states. This statute is designed to provide some levels of protection against unscrupulous third parties “stealing” land from generational African American and other property landowners. To provide some data to bolster the need for this legislation, the Richmond Federal Reserve Bank is completing the mapping of residential properties in Maryland as they did in Virginia.

Land policy BMPs: The CCP will continue to promote outreach to land trusts and local governments to encourage them to use conservation BMPs to offset the pollution impacts of future growth.

Chesapeake WILD legislation: In late 2020, Congress enacted the WILD program to be managed by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service in collaboration with the CCP acting as the Bay watershed collaborative required under the law. Others such as the CBP are to be engaged as well. The program authorizes \$15 million a year for matching grants for a variety of wildlife related goals.

SCIENTIFIC:

Growing science confirmation of 30x30 and 50x50: Influential biologist E.O. Wilson has promoted a 50 x 50 (50% by 2050) goal to conserve valuable lands around the planet to avoid the predicted 6th extinction of species. Many international and national science organizations have conducted science studies generally endorsing the basic science of Wilson’s projections. And these studies combined with policy advocacy by a growing number of organizations led the new Federal administration to issue its America the Beautiful Plan to conserve 30% of the lands in the country by 2030. CCP has challenged its partners to exceed the 30x30 goal and move toward adoption of the 50x50 goal.

The CCP is advocating to the Federal government that the Bay watershed be adopted as one model for achieving the 30x30 goal. This work and that of Federal partners briefing DOI officials has brought positive attention to the Chesapeake Bay partnership and its efforts.

Growing body of public health studies establishing the public health benefits of spending time in outdoor green spaces: There continue to be new studies reinforcing these public health benefits. The CCP keeps abreast of these study results to allow the Partnership to target its land conservation actions to achieve improved public health outcomes.

4. Based on your response to the questions above, how will your work change over the next two years?

Describe the adaptations that will be necessary to more efficiently achieve your outcome and explain how these changes will lead you to adjust your management strategy or the actions described in column four of your logic and action plan. Changes that the workgroup, GIT or Management Board consider significant should be reflected in your management strategy.

The CCP will need to balance ongoing and enhanced or new conservation goals while continuing to achieve substantial conservation outcomes. The new goals relate 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, and providing more natural areas as part of achieving the CCP’s 30x30 goal. To help achieve co-benefits across Watershed Agreement outcomes, we will ask CCP Partners to prioritize acquisition of lands that support wetlands, forest buffers, and brook trout habitat. In addition, the CCP will also need to focus more attention on land conservation policies as strategies to address sea level rise and land subsidence.

A number of the Biden Administration's new programs and orders touch on our work and provide opportunities for advancing land conservation while we also work with the partners to align efforts to help meet public access, human health, and diversity goals as well as contributing to Bay restoration.

The Public Health Action Plan discussed in the first question, above, is also a critical component of how we will be adapting our work over the next two years.

5. What, if any, actions can the Management Board take to help ensure success in achieving your outcome?

Please be as specific as possible. Do you need direct action by the Management Board? Or can the Management Board direct or facilitate action through other groups? Can you describe efforts the workgroup has already taken to address this issue? If this need is not met, how will progress toward your outcome be affected? This assistance may include support from within a Management Board member's jurisdiction or agency.

(a) **Endorse an updated target of protecting 30% of valuable lands in the watershed by 2030:** If the updated biennial assessment of lands conserved from early 2018 through 2020 demonstrates substantial progress toward meeting the watershed agreement's 2 million acres outcome by 2025, the Workgroup will aim to continue protecting valuable lands toward the 30x30 target, and will adjust the next two-year action plan to reflect this. *To reach 30x30, we need to conserve an additional 3,129,544 acres of valuable lands by 2030, i.e., in 10 years, based on the data from 2018, which will be updated through 2020 by the end of 2021. Based on existing data, we're already 75% to the 30x30 target.* CCP is already committed to striving to reach this goal, but it has not been proposed to the CBP Partnership. This could be an opportunity to identify a stretch or aspirational goal for future consideration. We would seek the Management Board's support for this extended target, and their assistance in helping to position us to have in-depth conversations with the jurisdictional representatives to identify potential future opportunities for additional land conservation in each geographic area.

(b) **Assist with facilitating a focus on health and equity to help meet multiple Watershed Agreement outcomes:** The Management Board can assist the Workgroup and the Stewardship GIT in supporting the achievement of the various proposed actions in the new action plan addressing public health, equity and green spaces. This is not a new line of work for the Workgroup or the CBP. It is a better informed and more focused approach and set of actions to advance achievement, contributing to conservation alongside the large landscape scale work. Although it represents a long overdue and greater emphasis from the traditional, straightforward counting number of acres conserved, it will help to get us there, and importantly, will serve to build public support for conservation on various scales. This work cuts across outcomes and will simultaneously contribute to goals and outcomes in diversity, climate resiliency, habitat, stewardship and education -- while providing nature-based opportunities for meeting health and recreational needs and interests in communities.

The new health-focused plan identifies actions in two main categories: funding and technical assistance. One of the proposed actions in the new plan is to develop a strategy with state and federal partners to prioritize current funding for community green spaces utilizing land conservation and other funding programs. We need the MB to encourage their counterparts in conservation, public health and other agencies to prioritize investments in these underserved communities. CCP members will be working directly with these agencies, but advocacy and commitment from their MB peers is important.

(c) **Engage land conservation to aid progress toward wetland restoration and forest buffer BMPs:** The current land conservation outcome sets numerical targets within the 2M acres to conserve 225,000 acres of wetlands and 695,000 acres of forest land of highest value for maintaining water quality. Progress toward these sub goals was updated in the fall of 2019 based on the biennial update of all land conserved as of the spring of 2018. This update indicated that 577,176 acres of forest land has been conserved (83% of goal), and

41,884 acres of tidal wetlands has been conserved (19% of goal). Note that this does not count conservation progress from non-tidal wetlands in flood plains or other non-tidal wetlands—these are reflected in forest lands conserved. When the biennial update of conserved lands is completed this year, an update on further progress on meeting the sub goals for forest and wetlands will be done. The accounting of our efforts at land conservation should be more timely upon the completion of the GIT-funded project developing a closer to real-time data dashboard for ongoing updates to lands conserved.

As a way of making progress towards achieving the separate Bay restoration goals for riparian buffers and restored wetlands, the Management Board could assist by allocating additional resources to implement wetland and riparian BMPs on lands already conserved or to be conserved by 2025.

(d) Provide staff support to update the Chesapeake Conservation Atlas Habitat Map Layers:

The existing Chesapeake Conservation Partnership Conservation Atlas relies on a variety of analyses to support defined goals. For the Habitat Goal, the CCP directly utilizes the Conservation Design analyses developed by Nature's Network, which is "an interconnected network of lands and waters that, if protected, will support a diversity of fish, wildlife, and natural resources that the people of the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic region depend upon." This analysis was completed in 2017, and was made for a larger purpose than the CCP's specific guidelines and goals, meaning a specific analysis completed for the CCP utilizing updated data would be critically useful. With the availability of high-resolution data and a dearth of Chesapeake-specific GIS data, an updated habitat map supporting the Conservation Atlas would directly support not just the conservation goals of the Chesapeake Bay Program, but also directly identify more highly valuable lands for conservation. It is also important to the implementation of the recently authorized Chesapeake WILD Program. *The project is being considered for submittal to the 2021 Chesapeake Bay Program Goal Implementation Team (GIT) funding process, or other grant opportunities as needed.*