

SRS Review for Management Board November 2021
Chesapeake Bay Program



Oysters

*Stephanie Westby, NOAA
Chair, Maryland and Virginia Oyster
Restoration Workgroups under the
Sustainable Fisheries GIT*

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

Goal: Oysters

Outcome:

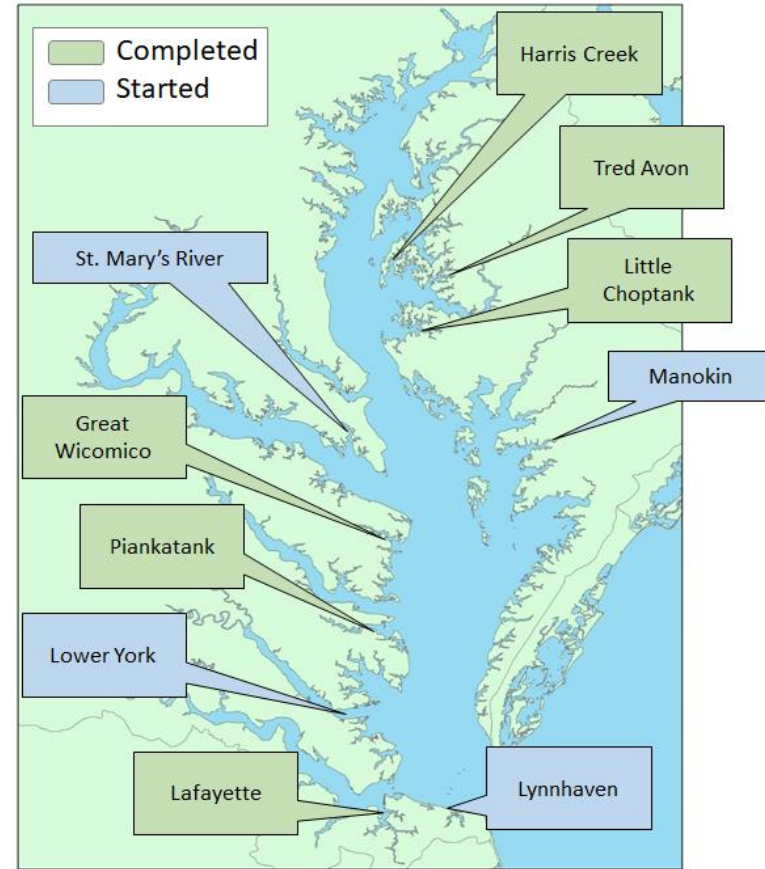
Continually increase finfish and shellfish habitat and water quality benefits from restored oyster populations. Restore native oyster habitat and populations in 10 tributaries by 2025 and ensure their protection.

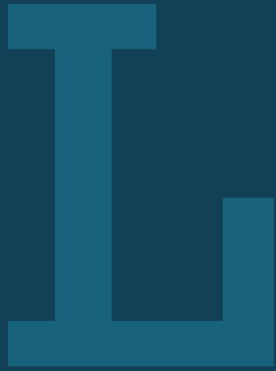


What is our Expected and Actual Progress?

On track
to meet the oyster outcome by 2025.

- Tribs selected: 10
- Restoration plans completed: 10
- Restoration complete: 6 tribs
- Remaining tribs:
 - 2 slated for 2022
 - 2 slated for completion by 2025
 - 1 bonus trib completed in VA





Learn

What have we learned in the last two years?



Successes and Challenges

- Developing a strong framework up front was time well spent.
- Oyster restoration is expensive up front, but the ecosystem service benefits (ex: denitrification, fish habitat) can make for a relatively quick return on investment. *See [NOAA Fisheries Tech Memo on ORES research findings](#).*
- Monitoring could likely be streamlined.





On the Horizon

- States have stepped up in recent years to help ensure the oyster goal will be met:
 - Maryland passed legislation mandating the completion of its five tributaries.
 - Virginia allotted \$10 million in additional funding to ensure its tributaries are completed.
- To streamline monitoring, partners are working on developing a rapid assessment protocol.

A large, stylized, blue letter 'A' is centered on a dark blue background. The letter has a thick, blocky font with a slight shadow effect. The background is divided into horizontal bands of color: a dark blue band at the top, a medium blue band in the middle, and a light green band at the bottom.

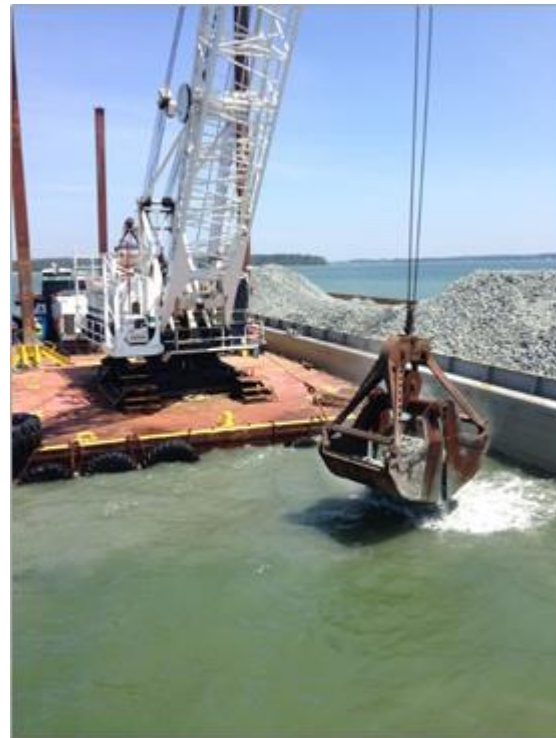
Adapt

How does all of this impact our work?



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

- Implement all planned reef construction to complete work by 2025
- Continue monitoring reefs at 3 and 6 year intervals, using a streamlined approach if appropriate.





Equitable and inclusive restoration ...

- Restoration tribes were selected based on science and feasibility; achieved some geographic diversity.
- Partners need to evaluate opportunities for better inclusion. Education, outreach, and volunteerism may provide opportunities.





Help

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



Help Needed

- Reaffirm commitment from states, other partners, to ensure we complete planned work
- Amplify success to date
- Support for DEIJ efforts





Discussion