



CHESAPEAKE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Fish Passage Goals

*I*n support of our continuing pursuit of our shared vision of a Chesapeake Bay system with abundant, diverse populations of living resources, we reaffirm our commitment to protect and restore riverine aquatic habitats of the Chesapeake Bay watershed for the benefit of migratory and resident fishes and other aquatic living resources.

We recognize the critical roles fish passage construction and dam removal play in providing accessible upstream habitat and spawning areas for migratory and resident fishes. We also recognize that fish passage construction and dam removal improve the quality of surrounding habitat by reducing river fragmentation, increasing habitat opportunities for other aquatic living resources, and, in the case of dam removal, decreasing trapped sediment to augment river channels and floodplains.

Due to the over 2,500 manmade blockages in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, migratory and

resident fish spawning habitat has been greatly reduced throughout the Chesapeake Bay, thus total population numbers for many fish species still remain far below historic levels. While there have been recent improvements through the successful completion of the 2003 Fish Passage Goal, which opened approximately 1,300 miles of river habitat to migratory and resident fishes, *Chesapeake 2000* recognized the need to accelerate the restoration of this vital resource by setting a new 10-year goal to open more valuable habitat. Without thriving fish populations, the Chesapeake Bay could never be considered restored and healthy.



*T*herefore, the Chesapeake Bay Program signatory partners commit to adopting the Fish Passage Goal, as stated:







During the period 2005–2014, the Chesapeake Bay jurisdictions will complete 100 fish passage and/or dam removal projects, which will open 1,000 miles of high-quality tributary habitat to migratory and resident fishes. The Chesapeake Bay jurisdictions will require passage at all new dams or other blockages that interfere with the free passage of migratory fish within the Chesapeake Bay watershed to the fullest extent possible. Actual fish utilization and passage will be documented at all new fish passage projects and, wherever possible, these projects will be integrated within locally supported watershed management or restoration plans.

Priority will be give to projects which:

- Open larger stretches of highest quality habitat;
- Favor dam removals as opposed to structural fish passages, where practical;
- Enhance passage of migratory fish over resident fish and/or where shad and herring stocking programs occur, and
- Favor removal of impediments in streams formerly impaired by acid mine drainage where water quality improvements will support a diverse assemblage of fish and other aquatic resources.

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FOR THE STATE OF MARYLAND		<u>Robert Z. Elwell</u>
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FOR THE CHESAPEAKE BAY COMMISSION		<u>J. Sewell Stokes</u>