



Paddlers return to Kenilworth Park in Washington, D.C., at the end of a paddle night organized by the Anacostia Watershed Society on Sept. 23, 2014. (Photo by Will Parson/Chesapeake Bay Program)

I. Introduction

The Chesapeake Bay region is rapidly urbanizing. Now more than 11 million people live in metropolitan areas, while another six million people live in the rest of the watershed. These urban areas are categorized by significant community diversity including many new immigrants. As a consequence, in part, of this increasing urbanization, fewer people interact daily with the waters, forests and open lands of the region. Despite this trend—or perhaps because of it—regional residents increasingly seek opportunities to reconnect with the outdoors. State, federal and local governments are guardians of these opportunities, providing public sites where everyone can enjoy the natural and cultural bounty of the Chesapeake Bay watershed—relaxing, learning and reflecting in direct interaction with the region’s treasured outdoors. Some sites provide direct access to the Bay and its rivers for boating and swimming. Others provide spots where visitors without watercraft can fish, observe wildlife, walk trails and camp along the water’s edge. The *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* public access goal reaffirms both the need for and benefits of providing citizen’s access to these resources.

II. Goal, Outcome and Baseline

This management strategy identifies approaches for achieving the following goal and outcome:



Stewardship Goal

Expand public access to the Bay and its tributaries through existing and new local, state and federal parks, refuges, reserves, trails and partner sites

Diversity Outcome

By 2025, add 300 new public access sites, with a strong emphasis on providing opportunities for boating, swimming and fishing, where feasible.

Baseline and Current Condition

Physical access to the Bay and its tributaries is very limited, with real consequences for quality of life, local economies and long-term conservation. Increasing public access to local waterways for fishing, swimming, boating and other activities fosters a shared sense of responsibility and increased stewardship that supports watershed restoration goals. It is also good for local businesses as they provide needed amenities and services for those visiting and enjoying the waters of the Bay region. From 2011 to 2013, 69 new public access sites that provide additional opportunities for people to enjoy the water resources of the watershed have been opened to public use. This equates to approximately 23 percent of the goal of 300 new sites by 2025. This brings the total number of identified public access sites in the watershed as of the end of 2013 to 1,204.

A Chesapeake Bay Watershed Public Access Plan (2013)¹ was developed to outline and guide a strategy for achieving the 300 new public access sites goal. The plan was prepared by the National Park Service (NPS) and a newly constituted Public Access Action Team, including people involved in public access planning and implementation in each of the watershed states and the District of Columbia. The plan, prepared with extensive public involvement, inventories existing public access, assesses barriers to expanding access and identifies specific opportunities for new access sites. The Public Access Action Team² carries out annual processes for tracking progress in implementing the plan and identifying new potential access sites. The sections of this management strategy that follow draw on information prepared for and set out in the Public Access Plan.

¹ The baseline for tracking was set in 2010. Only new sites opened from 2011 onward are counted towards the goal. When previously existing sites are found which were not captured in the original inventory process which set the 2010 baseline they are added to the baseline number and not counted as new sites towards the goal. Thus, the baseline number may change overtime as previously missed sites are identified and added. Only new public access sites actually developed and opened since 2010, the base year, may be counted towards the goal.

¹ National Park Service, *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Public Access Plan, 2013*; see http://www.nps.gov/chba/parknews/upload/Public_Access_Plan_v16.pdf

² The Public Access Action Team was initially formed in 1989. With the issuance of the Chesapeake Bay Executive Order in 2010, the Team was brought under the umbrella of what is now known as the Chesapeake Conservation Partnership (www.chesapeakeconservation.org). The Action Team is specifically focused on carrying out planning, implementation and tracking to achieve the 300 new public access sites goal.

The definitions of public access and what counts as a new access site are taken from the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Public Access Plan:

Public access sites are defined as those sites owned, operated, and/or managed expressly for a type of public access by any unit of federal, state, or local government; or a non-governmental organization operating under a memorandum of understanding (MOU), grant, or other agreement with a governmental agency.

The four types of access that will be tracked towards the 300 new sites goal are as follows:

- Boat-related access: boat ramps and soft launches supporting motorized and non-motorized craft as well as boat-in campsites which include their own water access site
- Swimming access: designated areas appropriate for swimming
- Fishing access: piers, bank fishing facilities or easements and parking adjacent to the water
- Viewing access for water, wildlife, and shoreline areas: nature trails, hiking or biking trails, waterfront trails, boardwalks and observation decks located at or leading to the water's edge.

The definition of "new" access sites to create consistency in tracking is as follows:

- Development of a new public access facility on a new site
- Development of a new type of access at an existing site. For example, if a fishing pier is developed at a site that currently has a boat ramp, the pier would count as a new public access toward the goal.

III. Participating Partners

The following partners have participated in the development of this strategy. A workplan to accompany this management strategy will be completed six months after this document is finalized. It will identify specific partner commitments for implementing the strategy.

Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement Signatories

- State of Delaware
- District of Columbia
- State of New York
- Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
- Commonwealth of Virginia
- Chesapeake Bay Commission
- State of Maryland
- State of West Virginia

Other Key Participants

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- National Park Service
- Nongovernmental organization (NGO) groups

Local Engagement

NGO's and local residents are often the catalyst for identifying needs and urging projects forward. State and federal agencies continue to work with local governments on public access on a case by case basis. Capacity varies greatly throughout the watershed making a one size fits all approach to local government involvement unrealistic. Local governments, however, can and do play multiple roles in creating new public access sites serving as planner, funder, coordinator of land acquisition, local land use regulator, permitting agency, property owner, construction contractor and often site manager.

IV. Factors Influencing Success

Through the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Public Access Plan³ a number of influential factors have been identified which could play a role and affect the ability of partners to reach the desired outcome. It is important to note that the relative significance of these factors depends on specific site circumstances. Each of the key factors is addressed as follows:

1. Public sector funding

Public sector funding for public access sites has become more limited in recent years. This has hampered the development of new sites and created a backlog of major maintenance projects. It is now harder for some public agencies to justify new site development when they cannot keep up with maintenance on existing sites. Maintenance problems have in turn reduced use of some sites that suffer from channel siltation or storm damage but lack funding to make necessary repairs. Of particular concern are reductions in federal funding for maintaining shallow water navigation channels. This may well result in the loss of some existing boating opportunities as channels fill in and recreational boats are no longer able to use existing facilities. Loss of these channels would have a major impact on power boating and the significant economic value it brings to the region. As existing sites are lost, the value of adding new sites is diminished. It is evident that the lack of a strong and stable funding source for both new facility development and maintenance of existing sites is a significant factor in meeting the access goal.

2. Land use and ownership

Land use and ownership plays a critical role in access development. In urban areas, commercially developed waterfronts and residential uses have limited public access development in some cities. Military installations and hydroelectric power facilities often restrict public access to miles of waterfront and waterways for security and safety reasons. In many rural areas, private landowners restrict access to maintain their privacy and exclusive use of the waterway. Liability concerns also deter private landowners from providing public access. This situation may be improved through continued education of landowners about applicable state statutes designed to address liability issues related to outdoor recreational use.

³ Chesapeake Bay Watershed Public Access Plan, p. 11-12

3. Public lands

Public land, whether held by local, state or federal government, provide many opportunities for access to streams, rivers and the Bay. Nonetheless, public workshops revealed considerable concern over the limitations imposed on some public lands. In some cases access is limited due to resource management concerns, insufficient staffing levels, or restrictions imposed by the type of funding used in the property's acquisition or development. There are also situations where obstructions, such as needlessly high guard rails, fences and the lack of safe shoulders or parking areas and even no parking signs along the public rights-of-way of roads and bridges in the watershed present major barriers. These barriers limit access to many rivers and streams in the watershed for fishing, kayaking and other hike-in or carry-in activities. Federal, state and local public lands with frontage on streams and rivers should be reevaluated on a unit-by-unit basis for their potential to add public access opportunities or remove any unnecessary restrictions.

4. Permitting requirements

Permitting requirements have been reported by many public access managers and advocates to have a major impact on the development of new access sites. New public access sites must be developed in a way that is sensitive to the environment. Federal, state, and local permitting authorities should consider expedited review procedures for some types of access site development. Permitting agencies should consider methods such as simplified permitting procedures, pre-approved design guidelines and a review of appropriate mitigation requirements.

5. Universal Accessibility

Universal Accessibility at public access sites is the goal of federal and state standards and guidelines for ensuring access by a population with diverse physical capabilities. It is the responsibility of access site managers to comply with the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended. The high visibility of the accessibility law has generated a wide range of public interest and pressure to bring facilities into compliance. Specific requirements will vary depending on the facilities and programs offered at the public access site. Early planning is important to evaluate opportunities to construct and operate the facilities and programs so they are accessible to, and useable by, persons with disabilities to the greatest extent reasonable. NPS staff and state public access coordinators can assist in evaluating accessibility accommodations.

6. Local government capacity

Local government capacity is expressed frequently by stakeholders as a reason for gaps in public access. Whether it is a lack of funding for land acquisition, capital improvements or ongoing maintenance, many local governments face serious financial challenges when trying to create or enhance public access. Ongoing maintenance is a particular concern because staffing is limited and grant funds, which are often obtained for initial construction, cannot be used for maintenance. In some cases, local governments have also expressed liability concerns about providing public access.

7. Conflicts among users

Conflicts can take many forms. They may develop when a site is designated or perceived to be designated for one use but is used in other ways. For example, anglers' use of a boat launch pier or parking area may be in conflict with those trying to launch or retrieve boats. Conflicts also arise

among users based on who is perceived to have paid for the access site. The great majority of boat ramps are paid for through registration fees or from the excise tax collected from power boat owners. With the rapid growth in paddle craft use, more paddlers are using facilities that were traditionally used by power boaters. Conflicts can occur when use of an access site impacts or may be perceived to impact adjacent landowners. For example, if the parking at an access site is full, users might park on the side of the road in a way that impacts local residents. Residents of some communities may also object to a proposed access site because they fear excessive noise, trespass, undesirable uses or litter. As news of real or perceived conflicts spread, the development of access sites can become more difficult.

8. Railroads

Railroads are a major barrier that limits access to many rivers in the watershed, sometimes on both riverbanks. Railroad companies are generally opposed to granting at-grade crossings of rail lines for either vehicles or pedestrians, stating liability as their primary concern. If approved, a fully developed road crossing must be provided. Such crossings are expensive to build and have long-term maintenance and operational costs, making development of many access sites prohibitively expensive. Some states have enacted legislation indemnifying railroads from liability when they grant an at-grade crossing for public access. Still railroad companies have argued this does not prevent a suit from being filed in another state should a user of the crossing be injured by a passing train.

9. Climate change

Climate change and sea level rise are growing concerns globally and in the watershed in particular. The transition zone between water and land is where public water access sites are located and it is also where the first impacts of sea level rise will become evident. While most marine or water-related facilities are designed to be able to survive the frequent storm events and—to a degree—hurricanes, less emphasis is given to designs which address sea level change which many perceive as being “down the road”. The mounting evidence, however, dictates that it is now important to consider strategies that can address this real and growing concern.

V. Current Efforts and Gaps

Current Efforts

In addition to tracking new public access sites as they are developed, watershed states, involved federal agencies and NGOs are all actively engaged in promoting and working to develop new public access sites. Federal and state grant programs often target projects that enhance existing or develop new public access. Localities have leveraged local funds and donations from private corporations to help with the development of new public access sites. These efforts have produced results—the average number of new sites brought on line in the past three years has slightly exceeded the minimum of 20 sites per year needed to reach the 300 site goal. The Public Access Action Team has also continued to work to identify additional potential sites that fill identified gaps in the access system. Currently, more than 400 potential new public access sites have been identified and the list continues to grow.

Another key effort by the states, NPS and their partners has been the active promotion of the development of water trails/blueways in the watershed. Designated water trails cover more than 3,200 miles of rivers and Bay shoreline in the watershed, many of these in relatively rural areas. The number of water trails has increased significantly over the past decade with many local groups, communities and government agencies playing a role in their development and promotion. Their increase in popularity can be tied to increased participation in paddle sports and a growth in use of trailer-able power boats as a means to explore the Bay and its tributaries. They are also of interest to outfitters and tourism businesses. Water trails that are well planned and thoughtfully developed can contribute to an area's eco-tourism opportunities, drawing people from throughout a region to spend time and money along the trail.

Successful water trails, in addition to providing visitors with support facilities and information on history, culture and natural resources, also provide appropriate public access at needed intervals along the route. Water trail managers inventory access locations and work with local partners to maintain those access points. The vast majority of potential access sites documented in the Access Plan are along existing water trails. State funding sources and the NPS's financial assistance awards prioritize funding for access projects that address gaps along water trails.

The National Park Service Chesapeake Office continues to carry out segment planning and implementation along the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail. The segment plans identify new public access sites as well as enhancements to existing public access sites. A segment plan has been completed for the James River, and the process is currently underway for the Potomac River and Lower Susquehanna River.

Another factor affecting the development of public access sites is the trend away from power boats, particularly larger ones, to more and more people acquiring paddle craft. This includes kayaks, paddle boards, wind surfboards and kite boards. This user population has had dramatic growth with approximately 24 million canoe, kayak and paddle boarding participants in 2012 from a report from the Outdoor Industry Association. These craft are much less expensive, are easy to transport and offer a variety of recreational opportunities. They also, however, need access facilities, parking and support amenities at suitable locations. A significant issue is that these craft are generally not registered or licensed in many jurisdictions as are power craft and thus do not contribute to the funding for public access. It is the fees generated by taxes and license requirements on power craft that often fund the access facilities. As this trend continues, funding for new access sites will potentially decline. In addition, those who own power craft feel the funding should be used to provide services for those who are paying. The upside is that the launch facilities for paddle craft are generally smaller in size and lay lighter on the land. The vessels can be hand launched and the needed launch facilities are usually less expensive to build than the launch ramps and associated trailer parking needed for larger power craft. The bottom line is that a system needs to be developed that spreads the cost of public access development and maintenance over the entire spectrum of users.

Gaps

The Chesapeake Bay Watershed Public Access Plan currently identifies more than 400 specific potential new access locations to help meet identified gaps. The highest demand for new public access sites is frequently concentrated around urban centers. With their close proximity to major

cities, the development of new public water access sites in these areas could provide increased public access for a large, diverse population. Providing urban residents with public access to waterways is also a federal priority that has been called out in the Urban Waters initiative, America's Great Outdoors report, and NPS's 'A Call to Action'. However, the nature of public access in urban environments is different from that of more rural settings. Development and urbanization of waterfronts, higher land values, economic and social influences, population density, transportation systems, concentrated water pollution and different levels of commitment to public access all combine to present substantially different circumstances and call for unique strategies.

Several specific stretches of waterways and Bay shoreline were identified in the Access Plan where there are significant gaps in public access. For example, the average distance between the public access sites along the tidal shoreline is over 15 miles. Along the east bank of the Susquehanna River, between the confluence of the West Branch and the town of Tunkhannock, there are only two sites along 96 miles of riverbank, resulting in an average distance of 32 miles between sites. To help refine the identification of gap areas, members of the Public Access Action Team are working on a process to show gap needs on river stretches where few potential new sites have been identified. The key is to have a process that would limit the length of a stretch to a manageable size and provide value in prioritizing high need areas for funding in future grant rounds.

Water trails are often the motivator for addressing gaps in access. When there is strong local support for a water trail, effort is directed towards finding and developing needed sites. They often lead to partnerships among user groups, localities, local businesses and state and federal agencies.

Finally, in addition to the high public demand for new water access sites for boating, fishing, swimming, beach use and viewing, there is also a strong interest in accessing camp sites from the water. A pilot study by the Chesapeake Conservancy of paddle-in camping on the Potomac River was undertaken in 2013. This pilot study will be used as a model for future analysis of other rivers in the watershed.

Making a multi-day trip down one of the Bay's rivers can be difficult without a place to go ashore and camp for the night. Time and again, members of the paddling public expressed a desire for small primitive campsites, picnic areas and restrooms at appropriate locations along water trails. Thus, in addition to gaps in the access system, there are also gaps for primitive camping sites along the water trails to allow for multi-day trips.

Actions, Tools and Support to Empower Local Government and Others

Local governments are a key component in the development and management of public water access sites. This is particularly important in the development of their comprehensive land use plans. The identification and inclusion of good potential sites in these plans is most helpful in their future development. Federal and state agency partners, within their resource capabilities, can provide technical assistance in planning for new public access sites and may be able to also provide funding assistance through a number of different programs.

VI. Management Approaches

The partnership will work together to carry out the following actions and strategies to achieve the Public Access goal. These approaches seek to address the factors affecting our ability to meet the goal and the gaps identified above.

Make funding for public access a priority: Sustain funding for development of new public access sites and maintenance of existing sites, including maintenance dredging of small channels. Relevant state and federal funding or matching grant programs should consider targeting or giving bonus points for projects that include new public access sites. For example, the National Park Service Chesapeake Office will continue to prioritize funding for public water access site development through its financial assistance awards as funding allows.

Carry out and support more detailed assessments and project design for potential sites: Most of the over 400 potential new public access sites identified in the plan require more detailed assessments and construction designs prior to implementation. Pre-planning and design of public access sites is a key step in their future development. This is an area in which funding is needed. Agencies at all levels should provide, within resource capabilities, technical assistance and funding for site analysis and design.

Fill strategic gaps in access along water trails: NPS will work with partners to identify, prioritize and develop sites that fill public access gaps along the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail, Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail, Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail and other state or locally recognized/designated water trails throughout the watershed. This will also include efforts to find and develop sites to support boat-in primitive camping along the trails.

Further examine urban public access issues and needs: Recognizing the complex factors associated with expanding access in urban communities, governments at the local, state and federal levels should support and pursue studies assessing specific urban access issues and needs.

Work with private sector funders to develop access: Public access managers and advocates should work with private sector funders where possible to develop access sites. Many companies and foundations often have objectives that can be advanced through partnerships to develop public access sites and facilities.

Engage in hydropower relicensing processes to expand public access: Relicensing of existing hydropower projects provides significant opportunities for expanding access to the water. Local, state and federal agencies should participate in re-licensing processes to make the case for specific public access projects as a part of new license agreements.

Explore options for resolving railroad crossing liability: Railroads along rivers—and associated liability concerns over track crossings—limit water access. Some states have indemnified railroads from liability at at-grade crossings for public access purposes, but it is suggested that federal action to limit liability may be needed to address the railroad companies' concerns.

Establish a process that ensures public access is considered in the planning of all appropriate transportation projects: Many road projects across or adjacent to streams or rivers could provide public access opportunities. Where they do not yet exist, a state's recreation and resources agencies and its

department of transportation (DOT) should consider establishing an MOU or other appropriate mechanism to ensure such opportunities are not missed. Also, where feasible, access should be given consideration in the comprehensive transportation plans developed by metropolitan planning organizations and their respective states. Funding under the Transportation Alternatives program of the new Federal Map-21 Act should be allocated by the states for this purpose as appropriate. At those bridge crossings where guard rails, fences, or lack of parking exist; groups should work with local governments and/or state DOTs to determine if public access can be accommodated safely.

Explore potential for additional access on public lands: Management objectives and practices on public lands may not account for recent changes in access needs and opportunities. As circumstances permit, managers of public lands fronting streams and rivers should re-evaluate these lands' public access potential. This can occur through regular master planning processes or as ad hoc assessments. When new opportunities are identified they should be included in the properties' master plan and scheduled for development as soon as resources allow.

Managing land control for water access using various instruments: Gaining control of water access sites can be accomplished using several "land or site acquisition" techniques or instruments. Land control can be achieved through fee simple acquisition of the land, recreational easements, leases and cooperative agreements. Even when sites are purchased in fee simple caution must be exercised to be sure the property does not contain restrictions that could make it difficult to achieve its intended use. Easements, leases and agreements should clearly state the uses that will be allowed and provided for on the property. In addition, they must clearly state the terms of use.

Prevent loss of access on public rights-of-way: Over the course of many decades roads leading to the water's edge for uses such as steamboat docks, ferrys or for other reasons have been abandoned as a part of the road system when newer facilities/infrastructure was developed. Many of these rights-of-way over time have been taken over by neighboring property owners or simply abandoned. It is important that each jurisdiction maintain control of such roads and rights-of-way since they can provide public access. Where clear legal grounds exist, those that may have been lost to other uses should be reclaimed.

Track progress towards the 300 new sites goal: At the end of each calendar year partners will compile a list of all new public access sites opened in their jurisdiction during the year. These sites will be tallied and tracked by NPS and counted towards the 300 new sites by 2025 goal.

Approaches Targeted to Local Participation

Incorporate identified proposed public access sites and actions in key plans: Elements of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Public Access Plan, including potential new public access sites and key actions, should be incorporated as appropriate into major state and local outdoor recreation and open space planning documents, such as Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plans (SCORPs) and local land use plans. Local units of government are encouraged to incorporate potential new public access sites and policies in local comprehensive and capital improvement plans.

Cross-Outcome Collaboration and Multiple Benefits

Enhance Public Access for a Diverse Population: As the population of the watershed grows, it becomes increasingly diverse. This diversity is evident in the increasing variety of ethnic, cultural, and language

backgrounds of the people. The ways that the public in general use and access water resources is growing and changing as well. Increasing opportunities for public access exposes people to resources and places that can inspire a sense of environmental awareness and build support for Chesapeake Bay conservation and stewardship. Methods for enhancing access for a diverse population include: looking at the location and kinds of access that exist, identifying gaps in service to underserved communities, and determining what is needed to enhance access opportunities. To be successful the Bay Program partners need to honor the culture, history and social concerns of local populations and communities and include them in the decision making processes. Additional steps may include creating and/or increasing information, signage, online resources and programs that target underserved populations. Signage, whenever possible, should use universal symbols and reflect the languages of diverse user groups.

Climate Change: As we move toward achieving the Chesapeake Bay Public Access goal we must identify how planning and implementation can be adapted to address climate change and sea level rise projections. Actions such as those listed below could be incorporated as the public access goal is pursued:

- Identify and assess existing public access sites that are at highest risk for negative impacts related to climate change and rising sea levels;
- Employ and encourage use of sustainable strategies that can help compensate or reduce the impact of rising water levels into the design, development, and/or retrofitting of public access projects so that investment equates to reasonable life expectancy of the project;
- Evaluate potential sites for vulnerability and sustainability; and
- Strive to achieve “no net loss” of existing public access sites.

Fully address accessibility at public access sites: Public access sites are subject to federal and state standards and guidelines for ensuring access by a population with diverse physical capabilities. Yet it is not always clear how some of these guidelines may apply, particularly to boating access sites. NPS should work with its partners to clarify approaches to addressing accessibility needs.

Build opportunities for citizen stewardship- It is important that new citizen stewards who care about the Bay watershed be cultivated through engagement at access sites and appropriate programming. Many public access sites are remote from regular maintenance staffs. Communities, user organizations, water trail managers and others should work to develop volunteer citizen stewardship programs to care for and maintain specific access sites.

VII. Monitoring Progress

A new process for monitoring progress toward the public access outcome was put in place in 2011 by NPS and the Public Access Action Team. In the new tracking process, designated state agency staff may use either an online system or a specially designed spread sheet to input the geographic locations of newly developed access sites (based on the established definitions of “new” and “public access”). Public access program staff can also use the spread sheet or online system to fill out a few fields of information, such as name, water body, access type and ownership on each new site.

VIII. Assessing Progress

New site information will be collected consistently in January of each year from 2013 through 2025. This updated tracking process is an improvement over prior efforts, because the location of new sites will be directly placed on the interactive map and it provides a significantly wider range of information. As new sites are developed, they will be tracked and reported annually as progress towards meeting the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* goal.

Lessons Learned

As a result of going through the adaptive management process, the Public Access Workgroup refined its key actions and performance targets towards meeting the 2025 Public Access Outcome under the Stewardship Goal. While 300 sites by 2025 remains the goal, more emphasis is being directed into two specific areas. First, efforts will be placed more on the quality and not just on the quantity of new access sites. This will help, where feasible, to ensure that there are ample parking spaces, needed amenities, and multi lingual signs to meet the needs of diverse communities. Second, efforts will be aimed at developing new access opportunities at existing managed public access sites. This should help ensure the sustainability of sites and can take advantage of existing infrastructure to support the new access facility. It should also be noted that with the reductions that state agencies and localities have experienced in the public access arena in recent years, the number of new sites developed each year will likely be affected.

A new endeavor of the public access workgroup is to engage new and diverse users at the public access facilities. Thus, more effort will be spent on looking at methods and programs to engage a new group of users and thus develop an expanded group of watershed stewards. Enhancing access for a diverse population is critical in meeting this outcome and the various methods include: looking at the location and kinds of access that exist, identifying gaps in service to underserved communities, determining what is needed to enhance access opportunities, and expanding programs to attract new users. Language in the management approaches was updated accordingly to account for these changes. The new actions and management approaches in the 2018-2019 workplan are reflected in the Management Strategy.

IX. Adaptively Manage

The Public Access Action Team convenes twice a year to discuss public access issues and tabulate new and potential access sites within the watershed. The assessment of progress, i.e., tabulating newly opened access sites; allows the Action Team to move on to new segments of the watershed that have gaps in access or address opportunities for meeting the expanding diversity in the Bay region. The Action Team will be able to identify new partners to address those gaps and potentially re-direct funding priorities. If the goal of 300 new public access sites is achieved prior to 2025, the Public Access Action Team will assess where gaps in access to the Bay and its tributaries still exist and will recommend a new goal if appropriate. Consideration will also be given to whether or not the goal should be adjusted to address the maintenance of existing access sites as well.

As pointed out in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Public Access Plan, maintaining existing and adding 300 new sites along streams, rivers and bays of the watershed is no small task. In addition to the biannual meetings of the Action Team and yearly data calls, the Access Plan spells out steps to move the

expansion of public access forward. These steps provide insight in how the goal will be managed and achieved.

X. Biennial Workplan

Biennial workplans for each management strategy will be developed by December 2015. It will include the following information:

- Each key action
- Timeline for the action
- Expected outcome
- Partners responsible for each action
- Estimated resources