

**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:*

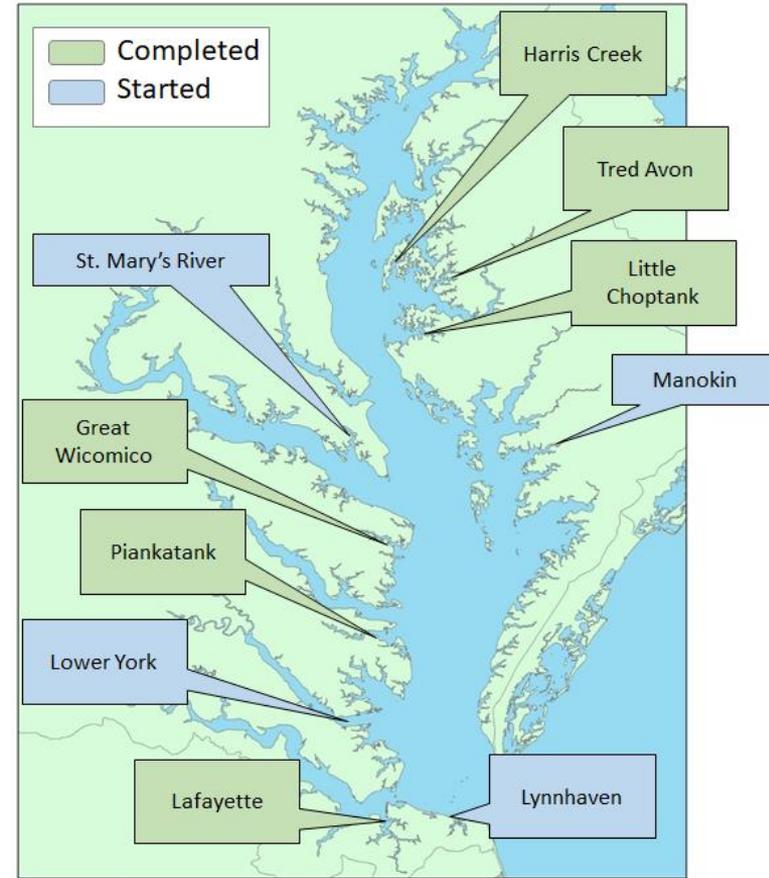
*Continually increase finfish and shellfish habitat and water quality benefits from restored oyster populations. Restore native oyster habitat and populations in 10 tributaries by 2025 and ensure their protection.*

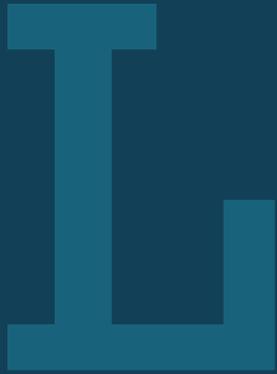


## What is our Expected and Actual Progress?

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.

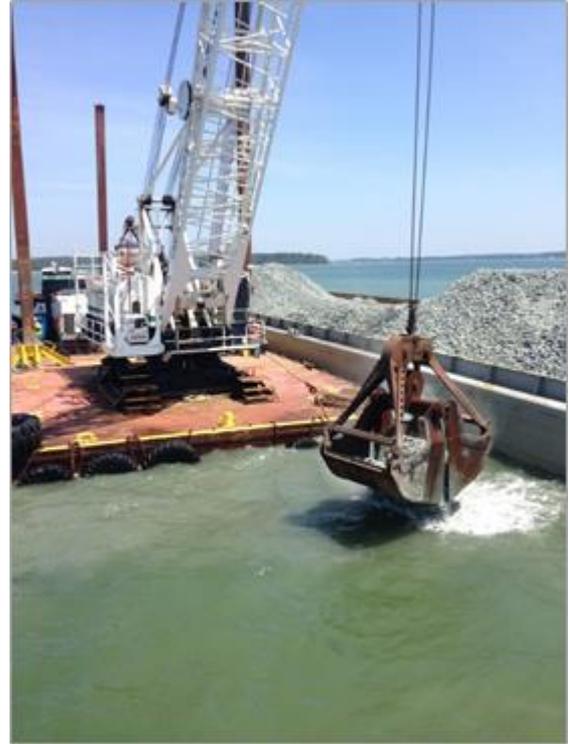
# Adapt

*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