

2024-2025

Bay Barometer

Health and Restoration in
DELAWARE



Bay Barometer shares the most up-to-date information and data about our progress toward the goals and outcomes in the 2014 ***Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement***.

In Delaware, the Chesapeake Bay watershed spans approximately 455,156 acres and touches three counties. Four of the state's major rivers—the Choptank, Nanticoke, Pocomoke and Sassafrass—are tributaries of the Bay. Below is a snapshot of progress in Delaware's portion of the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Abundant Life

Black Duck

Between 2017 and 2024, Delaware enhanced 70 acres of wetlands deemed suitable habitat for black ducks. Watershed-wide, 18.3% of the goal to enhance black duck-suitable habitat has been achieved.

During the same time period, Delaware restored or created 253 acres of wetlands deemed suitable habitat for black ducks. Watershed-wide, 4.08% of the goal to restore or create black duck-suitable habitat has been achieved.

Wetlands

Since 2014, Delaware has enhanced 70 acres of wetlands, contributing to the watershed-wide total of 61,163 acres, which marks 40.77% of the 150,000-acre goal.

Additionally, Delaware has created or restored 491 acres of wetlands, contributing to the watershed-wide total of 4,862 acres, which marks a 5.72% achievement of the 85,000-acre goal.

Clean Water

Toxic Contaminants Policy and Prevention

As of 2024, 1.1% of tidal waters in Delaware are considered partially or fully impaired by toxic contaminants. Just over 80% of the entire Chesapeake Bay's tidal segments are considered partially or fully impaired by PCBs, PFAS, metals and other contaminants.



Read the **2024-2025 Bay Barometer** at
Chesapeakebay.net/what/publications

Conserved Lands

Forest Buffers

Delaware contributed 0.2 of the 227 miles of riparian forest buffers planted across the watershed in 2024, helping to achieve 25.2% of the watershed-wide goal to plant 900 miles each year.

Land Use Methods and Metrics

The Chesapeake Bay Program's 2021/22 [High-Resolution Land Use/Cover and Change Data](#) show that 2,066,925 acres, or approximately 4.7% of the watershed, is covered by impervious surfaces. In Delaware's portion of the Bay watershed, impervious surfaces cover 18,960 acres, or approximately 4.2% of the land.

Protected Lands

As of 2024, 131,105 acres of protected lands can be found across Delaware, an increase of 3.9% from 2022. Over 1.8 million acres of lands have been conserved across the watershed since 2010, achieving 90% of the goal to protect an additional two million acres.

Tree Canopy

Delaware planted 0.7 acres of trees in 2024, bringing the total amount of trees planted across the state since 2014 to 32 acres. Overall, 5,743 acres of trees were planted across the watershed in 2024, continually increasing tree canopy.

Despite these gains, the Chesapeake Bay Program's High-Resolution Land Use/Cover and Change Data show that from 2013/14-2021/22, an estimated 32 acres of tree canopy was lost in Delaware.

Engaged Communities

Environmental Literacy

In 2024, 15 local education agencies in Delaware voluntarily reported their preparedness to build environmental literacy, with 10 indicating they were well or somewhat prepared by having a comprehensive and systematic approach to environmental literacy in place.

Additionally, 15 local education agencies reported that 13% of elementary schools and 7% of middle schools have a system-wide [Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience \(MWEE\)](#) in place for at least one grade level, while 14 local education agencies reported that 14% of high schools have a system-wide MWEE in place for at least one grade level.

Public Access

Between 2011 and 2024, Delaware opened eight new sites to connect the public with the water. Overall, 1,451 new public access sites were opened across the watershed during this timeframe, completing the Public Access Outcome.



Read the revised *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* at Chesapeakebay.net/watershed-agreement