



# Outcome Review Meeting

Management Board  
February 27, 2025

Throughout 2025, the Chesapeake Bay Program will be revising the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* and restructuring the governance and decision-making processes of the partnership. The signatories of the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* include the states of Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia, the District of Columbia, the tri-state legislative Chesapeake Bay Commission and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on behalf of the federal government agencies that participate in the Chesapeake Bay Program.

On February 13, 2025, the Management Board held its first outcome review meeting, where 11 outcome leads presented recommendations on whether their outcome should be consolidated, reduced, updated, removed or replaced. The following provides a summary of the discussions that took place for each outcome presented at the February 27 Management Board meeting.

All 31 outcomes will be reviewed at the [March 27, 2025 Management Board meeting](#) and recommendations for revisions will be forwarded to the Principals' Staff Committee for discussion at their meeting on [March 28, 2025](#). The information presented below should not be considered final or a decision.

## **Stewardship**

### **Current Outcome Language**

- Increase the number and diversity of trained and mobilized volunteers who have the knowledge and skills needed to enhance the health of their local watersheds.
- ChesapeakeProgress: [Stewardship](#)

### **Outcome Lead Recommendation**

- The Stewardship Workgroup recommends **updating** the outcome to reflect how the Chesapeake Bay Program's stewardship approach has evolved over the past decade.
- Outcome should be made specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timebound (SMART).
- Updates should include a wider definition of stewardship actions that align with the spectrum of *Watershed Agreement* goals and outcomes that would benefit from increased action by stewards, such as Water Quality, Tree Canopy, Forest Buffers, Wetlands, Land Conservation, and Stream Health.
- [Stewardship Outcome Review Two-Pager](#)

### **Management Board Opinion**



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- Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, New York, Delaware, the District of Columbia, the EPA and the Chesapeake Bay Commission support updating this outcome.
- West Virginia stood aside because they do not participate in this outcome.

## **Stream Health**

### **Current Outcome Language**

- Continually improve stream health and function throughout the watershed. Improve health and function of ten percent of stream miles above the 2008 baseline for the watershed.
- Chesapeake Progress: [Stream Health](#)

### **Outcome Lead Recommendation**

- The Stream Health Workgroup recommends updating the outcome to reflect a more holistic approach to improving ecological integrity of stream systems and stream corridors based on sound science, coupled with land management, planning, and protection to improve and sustain stream health.
- To determine additional indicators or metrics of stream health is part of the final phase of the Data Review and Development of Multi-Metric Stream Health Indicators – Physicochemical Metric Analysis project.
- [Stream Health Outcome Review Two-Pager](#)

### **Management Board Opinion**

- Maryland, Virginia, the District of Columbia, Delaware and the Chesapeake Bay Commission support **updating** the Stream Health Outcome.
- Pennsylvania recommends removing the outcome.
  - Portions of the Stream Healthy Workgroup’s work is duplicative and will continue outside of the workgroup.
- Virginia recommends consolidating this outcome.
  - Virginia recommends consolidating or removing the Healthy Watersheds Outcome. Virginia is struggling to identify the value that a Stream Health Outcome provides to support its work as a jurisdiction. Stream restoration work is incredibly important in Virginia, but the Outcome language is overly broad.
- EPA recommends consolidating or removing the outcome.
  - EPA supports the effort to develop appropriate indicators/metrics of stream health but have concerns about redundancy.
  - Consider consolidating with Brook Trout Outcome or reclassify brook trout as output or indicator.
- West Virginia stood aside because they do not participate in Outcome.

## **Brook Trout**



### **Current Outcome Language**

- Restore and sustain naturally reproducing brook trout populations in Chesapeake Bay headwater streams, with an eight percent increase in occupied habitat by 2025.
- ChesapeakeProgress: [Brook Trout Outcome](#)

### **Outcome Lead Recommendation**

- The Brook Trout Action Team advises **updating** the Brook Trout Outcome because it focuses solely on occupancy.
  - While occupancy is measurable and a useful indicator of brook trout presence, it alone fails to consider increases in brook trout abundance or habitat improvements, both measures of increased resiliency.
  - Incorporating outcomes for occupancy, abundance, and resiliency provides the Brook Trout Action Team with the ability to strategically address the primary threats that brook trout face.
  - Incorporating these metrics and considerations facilitates cross-GIT coordination (e.g., Fish Passage, Stream Health, Toxic Contaminants, and Forestry outcomes, etc.) and leverages funding to focus our initiatives in an efficient and strategic manner that supports multiple workgroups to achieve their outcomes.
- [Brook Trout Outcome Review Two-Pager](#)

### **Management Board Opinion**

- Maryland, New York, Virginia and the Chesapeake Bay Commission support updating this outcome.
- Pennsylvania recommends reclassifying this outcome.
- The District of Columbia, Delaware and West Virginia stood aside because they do not participate in this outcome.

## **Land Use Methods and Metrics**

### **Current Outcome Language**

- Continually improve our knowledge of land conversion and the associated impacts throughout the watershed. By December 2021, develop a watershed-wide methodology and local-level metrics for characterizing the rate of farmland, forest and wetland conversion, measuring the extent and rate of change in impervious surface coverage and quantifying the potential impacts of land conversion to water quality, healthy watersheds and communities. Launch a public awareness campaign to share this information with local governments, elected officials and stakeholders.\*
- ChesapeakeProgress: [Land Use Methods and Metrics](#)

### **Outcome Lead Recommendation**



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- The Healthy Watershed GIT recommends **reclassifying** the Land Use Methods and Metrics Outcome as an output of the partnership but not an outcome.
- The Outcome has resulted in a widely used High Resolution Land Use/Land Cover data.
- [Land Use Methods and Metrics Outcome Review Two-Pager](#)

### Management Board Opinion

- The District of Columbia, Delaware, Maryland, New York, Virginia, Chesapeake Bay Commission and the EPA support reclassifying the Land Use Methods and Metrics Outcome.
- Pennsylvania recommends consolidating the Land Use Methods and Metrics Outcome.
  - Consider the opportunity for reorganizing the Land Use Workgroup and Local Leadership Workgroup under LGAC to elevate this important information and bring more visibility and usability to the data being created.
  - Not supportive of new Outcome name suggestion—this is not Watershed Planning; rather, it is data in support of watershed planning.

## Land Use Options and Evaluations

### Current Outcome Language

- By the end of 2017, with the direct involvement of local governments or their representatives, evaluate policy options, incentives and planning tools that could assist them in continually improving their capacity to reduce the rate of conversion of agricultural lands, forests and wetlands as well as the rate of changing landscapes from more natural lands that soak up pollutants to those that are paved over, hardscaped or otherwise impervious. Strategies should be developed for supporting local governments' and others' efforts in reducing these rates by 2025 and beyond.
- ChesapeakeProgress: [Land Use Options and Evaluations](#)

### Outcome Lead Recommendation

- The Healthy Watershed GIT recommends **updating** the Land Use Options Evaluation Outcome.
- Consider moving this outcome under a new Conservation GIT or reconstituted Watershed Health GIT that would include outcomes and workgroups related to protected lands, watershed health, stream health, tree canopy, riparian buffers, wetlands and local leadership.
- [Land Use Options Evaluation Outcome Review Two-Pager](#)

### Management Board Opinion

- The District of Columbia, Maryland, Delaware, New York and the Chesapeake Bay Commission support updating the Land Use Options Evaluation Outcome.
- Pennsylvania recommends consolidating or reclassifying the outcome.



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- Virginia recommends reclassifying the outcome as output under the Protected Lands Outcome or Local Leadership Outcome.
- West Virginia stood aside because they do not participate in this outcome.
- EPA recommends removing the outcome because it is outside the scope of the partnership to influence.

## Healthy Watersheds

### Current Outcome Language

- Each jurisdiction in the Chesapeake Bay region has its own definition of healthy waters and watersheds, and its own programs to support watershed protection. Honoring state preference, the Chesapeake Bay Program's Maintain Healthy Watersheds Goal Implementation Team will not seek a single definition for healthy waters and watersheds but will strategically track and support the preservation of state-identified healthy waters and watersheds. These waters and watersheds as identified in 2017 will serve as the baseline from which we assess watershed health and measure progress toward this outcome. Currently, the necessary data is not available to evaluate progress toward the outcome.
- ChesapeakeProgress: [Healthy Watershed](#)

### Outcome Lead Recommendation

- The Healthy Watersheds GIT recommends **updating** the Healthy Watershed Outcome.
- The outcome lacks partner commitment, resources, and monitoring of the conditions used to justify the original "healthy watershed" designation.
- Variability in each state's definition of "healthy watersheds" prevents consistent and comparable assessments of both conditions and progress. Confusion exists over the relationship between watershed health and stream health.
- [Healthy Watershed Outcome Review Two-Pager](#)

### Management Board Opinion

- The District of Columbia supports removing the Healthy Watershed Outcome.
  - In its current form this Outcome is redundant of the Stream Health Outcome but in its new form it becomes redundant.
- Delaware supports reclassifying or consolidating the Healthy Watershed Outcome.
- Maryland supports updating the Healthy Watershed Outcome.
  - Maryland agrees with the recommendation that Healthy Watersheds Outcome resonates with the public and doesn't think it should be folded into another outcome.
- West Virginia supports removing or consolidating the Healthy Watershed Outcome.
- Virginia and EPA support consolidating the Healthy Watershed Outcome.
- Pennsylvania and the Chesapeake Bay Commission support reclassifying the Healthy Watershed Outcome.



## **Forest Buffers**

### **Current Outcome Language**

- Continually increase the capacity of forest buffers to provide water quality and habitat benefits throughout the watershed. Restore 900 miles per year of riparian forest buffer and conserve existing buffers until at least 70 percent of riparian areas throughout the watershed are forested.
- ChesapeakeProgress: [Forest Buffer Outcome](#)

### **Outcome Lead Recommendation**

- The Forest Buffers Workgroup recommends updating the Forest Buffers Outcome.
- The Workgroup will consider whether to replace the annual mileage goal with an annual acreage goal to improve alignment with annual progress reporting.
- An updated Forest Buffer outcome would likely still fit well under the Vital Habitats Goal.
- [Forest Buffers Outcome Review Two-Pager](#)

### **Management Board Opinion**

- The District of Columbia, Delaware, Maryland, New York, Virginia, West Virginia, the Chesapeake Bay Commission and the EPA support updating the Forest Buffers Outcome.
- Pennsylvania supports updating and consolidating the Forest Buffers Outcome with the Tree Canopy Outcomes for a more holistic, ecosystem-based approach.
  - Pennsylvania asks that miles be switched to acres for Forest Buffers Outcome goal.

## **Tree Canopy**

### **Current Outcome Language**

- Continually increase urban tree canopy capacity to provide air quality, water quality and habitat benefits throughout the watershed. Expand urban tree canopy by 2,400 acres by 2025.
- ChesapeakeProgress: [Tree Canopy Outcome](#)

### **Outcome Lead Recommendation**

- The Tree Canopy Workgroup recommends **updating** the Tree Canopy Outcome.
- [Tree Canopy Outcome Review Two-Pager](#)

### **Management Board Opinion**

- The District of Columbia, Delaware, Maryland, New York, Virginia, West Virginia, Chesapeake Bay Commission and EPA support updating this outcome.



- Pennsylvania recommends updating and consolidating the Tree Canopy Outcome with the Forest Buffers outcome for a more holistic, ecosystem-based approach.

## **Water Quality Standards Attainment and Monitoring**

### **Current Outcome Language**

- Continually improve our capacity to monitor and assess the effects of the management actions being taken to implement the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (Bay TMDL) and improve water quality. Use monitoring results to report annual progress being made in attaining water quality standards and trends in reducing nutrients and sediment in the watershed.
- ChesapeakeProgress: [Water Quality Standards Attainment and Monitoring Outcome](#)

### **Outcome Lead Recommendation**

- The Scientific, Technical Assessment and Report (STAR) recommends **updating** the Water Quality Standards Attainment and Monitoring Outcome.
- STAR stated that the outcome language is neither quantitative nor SMART. “Continually improve,” makes it difficult to assess progress.
- [Water Quality Standards Attainment and Monitoring Outcome Review Two-Pager](#)

### **Management Board Opinion**

- The District of Columbia, Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, the Chesapeake Bay Commission and the EPA support updating the outcome.
  - Maryland is supportive of exploring ways to incorporate factors that impact living resources and human health.
  - Pennsylvania stated a need to incorporate shallow waters and non-tidal habitats into the outcome to account for nonpoint source efforts like AMD remediation and small agricultural watershed restoration in Pennsylvania.
  - Virginia supports updating the outcome with an emphasis on verifying modeled data and outputs with real world monitoring data and achieving a monitoring/modeling balance.

## **2017 Watershed Implementation Plans**

### **Current Outcome Language**

- By 2017, have practices and controls in place that are expected to achieve 60 percent of the nutrient and sediment load reductions necessary to achieve applicable water quality standards compared to 2009 levels.
- ChesapeakeProgress: [2017 Watershed Implementation Plans Outcome](#)

### **Outcome Lead Recommendation**





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- The Water Quality GIT recommends removing the 2017 Watershed Implementation Plans Outcome.
- [2017 Watershed Implementation Plans Outcome Review Two-Pager](#)

### **Management Board Opinion**

- The District of Columbia, Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia and the EPA support updating the outcome.
- New York and Chesapeake Bay Commission recommend updating the Outcome.
  - NY: Update with new WIP Target.
  - CBC: Would like to see both tiered targets and an interim deadline for meeting existing WIP load reduction targets. Whether that means retaining both WIP outcomes or combining under one.

## **2025 Watershed Implementation Plans**

### **Current Outcome Language**

- By 2025, have all practices and controls installed to achieve the Bay's dissolved oxygen, water clarity/submerged aquatic vegetation and chlorophyll a standards as articulated in the Chesapeake Bay TMDL document.
- ChesapeakeProgress: [2025 Watershed Implementation Plans Outcome](#)

### **Outcome Lead Recommendation**

- The Water Quality GIT recommends **updating** the 2025 Watershed Implementation Plans Outcome to reflect the continued commitment across the Chesapeake Bay Program partnership to implement practices and systems to reduce nutrients and sediment to meet the Bay's dissolved oxygen, water clarity/submerged aquatic vegetation, and chlorophyll-a standards.
- The Water Quality GIT also recommends renaming this outcome to recognize either the focus of tracking (BMP implementation), or, that the measure of success is change in nutrient/sediment loads or, ultimately, water quality.
- [2025 Watershed Implementation Plans Outcome Review Two-Pager](#)

### **Management Board Opinion**

- The District of Columbia, Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, the Chesapeake Bay Commission and the EPA support updating the 2025 Watershed Implementation Plans Outcome.