



Chesapeake Bay Program

Science. Restoration. Partnership.

CBSAC Beyond 2025 Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, December 4 · 3:30 – 4:30pm EST

Video call link: <https://meet.google.com/yqs-scpd-vfp>

Or dial: (US) +1 361-360-8353 PIN: 890 138 060#

Meeting Minutes

Task and Big Question:

Timeline

- Priority assessment Jan 3
- Fish GIT deadline to check in with Executive Committee- Jan 13th
- Outcome assessment Jan 30
- Management Board Feb 13

Discussion/Feedback on outcome assessment

- Review outcome attainability and SMART goal score
- Fill in [Outcome assessment template](#) with input from the workgroup

1. In reviewing your outcome, provide advice to the Management Board on whether "to consolidate, reduce, update, remove, replace or add new outcomes".
 - Alexa: I like the idea of keeping sustainability but craft it to the current situation. Measurable but not locking us into something that might change. Fine with removing the allocation outcome
 - Mandy: Okay with removing allocation. What is the overarching purpose of having the outcome?

- Bruce: That is something we are asked to answer. Is there value with this outcome being connected to the Bay Program? All of the work that goes into the outcome could be done outside of the bay program but higher visibility and transparency and accountability with being connected to the Bay Program.
- Alexa: Does having this as an outcome open up funding for future research for blue crabs?
- Bruce: It could. Hesitating because not quite sure- used to have goal team funding but future and criteria of goal team funding is under review currently so unsure what that will look like in the future.
- Ron: One thing referred to in the outcome is the idea about ecosystem related factors and that is something I would like to see put into the outcome. Maintain a sustainable blue crab population and the habitat that requires. More explicitly including habitat into outcomes would be helpful.
- Bruce: Based on stock assessment now, do you think we would make progress in incorporating habitat into that?
- Ron: I think we would get a sense into how influential habitats are in the population dynamics of blue crab. If we have it written in an outcome maybe it would get more funding to address that research
- Bruce: Today is about gathering ideas, we can draft actual language later.
- Mandy: I agree about the importance of habitat. But word of caution is how to put it in the outcome without it being very generic. Just like how forage outcome is so generic it threw us into a whole new ball game. How can we measure progress with that? We need specific or measurable things.
- Ron: I agree that there is not a very clear goal. We could take a step back and try to describe a clear goal in quantifying the value of these blue crab habitats.
- Bruce: I think there is an opportunity to do that without making it part of the outcome. There is also an outcome/output/indicator opportunity. Actions or outputs to complete an outcome could include habitat assessment/indicators etc.
- Ron: A specific goal is good. Worried that “196 million” in there is not good. Maybe say “sustainable blue crab population that is not overfished”.
- Mandy: I agree that we should not make it specific to those numbers (196) because that can change. Hesitant to put female numbers because we could find out that males are important too and then need to put male numbers in too.
- Bruce: That is something we could put in the assessment too. Raise the point that there are things we don’t know yet.
- Alexa: I agree with Mandy. I am hesitant to say “not overfished”. Because we could dust our hands off and call it a day. I want to make sure that we are striving towards a target.

- Brooke: Adding support. We can't have a target without a specific number. Based on biological reference points as determined...We can still have a specific outcome without specific numbers
 - Mandy: I agree. General language about reference points and adjusting reference points. You are saying that it is not a new agreement...is it going through a certain time frame again? 2025 until when?
 - Bruce: We don't really know. There are conversations that outcomes will be on different time scales. An outside agency did a report on the outcomes (ERG report). They said that a 10-15 time frame is too long. There should be a mix. Moreso shorter time frame than longer ones. So everyone is in consensus that the allocation framework would go away? Everyone agrees it makes sense that it still makes sense to still have sustainability an outcome? Does anyone believe it does not need to be an outcome? No one said anything- so assuming that elevating it to the bay program outcome makes sense.
2. Consider if the Outcome is SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound), and specifically, whether the current outcome meets the definition of an outcome, as described in the [2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement](#) ("Agreement"),
 - Bruce: Do we think the sustainability outcome is SMART?
 - Ingrid: thumbs up (in chat)
 3. Consider the challenges to and opportunities for achieving the outcome. You are encouraged to leverage past documentation and learnings from the Strategy Review System process, as well as Charting a Course to 2025 report and Beyond 2025 Small Group recommendations as they pertain to the outcome.
 - Bruce: Using new benchmark stock assessment to modify new reference points. There is still a need to address specific questions about what environmental drivers are impacting habitat.
 - Rom: I would add something about climate change and how we expect habitat needs to change because of climate change
 - Bruce: Do we think climate change is a risk for blue crabs?
 - Rom: I think it is both. We do not know if it will be net positive or negative at this point.
 4. Consider how the outcome relates or could relate to the Bay Agreement mission, vision, and themes/pillars and goals.
 5. Consider the timescale for completing the outcome (5, 10, 15 years). Determine if achieving the outcome is an incremental step or is it a final outcome.

- Bruce: Any thoughts on if we would want the outcome to be a 5,10,15 year thing?
- Brooke: I am confused on the phrasing of “completing the outcome” because ours is to “sustain” doesn’t seem like something you complete. It is ongoing. Is timescale referring to how often we assess?
- Mandy: I had the same question. The way it is written is that we could continue this indefinitely. I was thinking if we had a set schedule of stock assessments, which wouldn’t happen for blue crabs, that would've been a nice time step. The way it is written there wouldn’t be an ending.
- Ron: Put something along the lines of “assess that the outcome is being measured every 5 years”. Some sort of evaluation of the stock assessment. Every year we update the stock assessment, a more formal update to assess whether or not we are meeting the outcome to sustain the blue crab population might be valuable.
- Bruce: So the outcome would be ongoing but have a timeframe for assessment?
- Ron: If we want to be risk averse we could do 3 year interval
- Brooke: I want clarity on the final interval?
- Bruce: Incremental step would be a short term goal to get to your final step. Ultimately it is about sustainability/long term.
- Alexa: I think it depends because we are aiming towards a target and we are not yet at the target. Short term could be to achieve the target and long term could be to sustain the target.
- Bruce: I push back a little on that because there has been some confusion about the reference points in the past that we are always trying to meet the top number (196) or above it. Some people have taken it as if we are below the reference point or above it then we have failed.
- Ron: I like the suggestion about the target. If what we are suggesting is a population that bounces around the target that is good. That definitely needs to be clarified. What do you mean about dancing around the target? Dan, are there other words that are used regarding maintaining population around the target?
- Dan: I can’t think of anything. We normally say we want to stay above the threshold. This falls into the management realm so it is not my strong suit.
- Alexei: The overarching goal of the ASFMC is to maintain the target
- Dan: I think Ron wanted clarification of what that means.
- Ron: Without a definition you are not going to have any legal bite. But we are talking about an outcome, which does not have to be necessarily legal.
- Bruce: It looks like using the term “target” or “legal” is something we will need to revisit. How specific do we want to be, and if we go with “target”, what do we mean?
- Mandy: Do we care about having an exploitation target that we are reaching? Idk. For this conversation do we just need to talk about the threshold and we

don't want to go below? Maybe still have this target that managers are aiming for, but for CBP we can specify more towards the threshold and less about the target?

- Ingrid: Inside the language that Rom referenced earlier, there are reference points and then when you want to know more you look at targets. Reference points are vague but then we would direct them to the document that would be more detailed.
- Alexei: We could define it as more qualitative as "maintaining sustainable population fluctuating around max productivity". Multiple ways of defining "target".
- Bruce: Exploitation has come up multiple times. I don't know if we need to raise exploitation as an outcome or use it as an input.

6. Consider resource needs to achieve the Outcome (high, medium, low) and availability/commitment of such resources

- Bruce: I would think that we would be at a high or medium
- Brooke: thumbs up (*in chat*)
- Dan: thumbs up (*in chat*)
- Rom: thumbs up (*in chat*)

7. Consider the risk or unintended consequences of removing or changing the Outcome.

- Bruce: I think minimal because this would continue but it would reduce the visibility and lead to less transparency
- Ingrid: How long has CBSAC been a group, has it existed before the agreement?
- Bruce: It was a group well before the outcome was established and before the agreement itself.
- Rom: Although the risk of removing the outcome (from under CBP) would not be significant, I think that the perception of removing it from the public would be terrible. I say keep the outcome and stick with it.
- Brooke: I agree with Rom. I would also say that the risk of removing this layer of accountability across jurisdictions is not without a potential consequence for state by state management.
- Bruce: That is good. I want to be clear on this that there are some people that want to cut outcomes. If we are wishy-washy then that could be a chance. We will say that we want to keep it. This is one of the few outcomes that are tied to a specific metric and resource change. This is an important one to keep.

8. What value is added by having the Chesapeake Bay Program work on the outcome?

- Bruce: We already touched on this a bit but it would add higher visibility, funding, transparency. Is there anything else to add?

- *(No response from the group)*

9. Consider how the Outcome, as written, benefits the public. Does the outcome reflect [public input already received](#) and have the potential to galvanize public support/engagement?

- Rom: I think the idea that having a healthy blue crab population goes hand in hand with having a healthy ecosystem and that helps the public.
- Mandy: Having dealt with blue crab things for a decade now, the media inquiries and the interest of people to know what is going on speaks to the importance of this species in the bay. It is not only that we are putting it out for people to see. People are actively looking out for that information.
- Rom: Yeah I agree, I think that the public perceives it as an important outcome as well.
- Bruce: Do you think that the outcome reflects public input? Would we want to seek additional input on what this outcome looks like moving forward?
- Rom: I think it would be valuable to contact CBF on this (Chris Moore) they could give you a good overview of what the public thinks about blue crab and maintaining its sustainability.

Next Steps

- Finalize the outcome assessment materials
- Check in with Excomm (January)

Background materials:

[CBSAC Background: Outcomes & SMART Score](#)