



WETLANDS OUTCOME

HABITAT GIT/ WETLANDS WORKGROUP

2014 WATERSHED AGREEMENT: GOAL & OUTCOME LANGUAGE

WETLANDS OUTCOME: Continually increase the capacity of wetlands to provide water quality and habitat benefits throughout the watershed. Create or reestablish 85,000 acres of tidal and non-tidal wetlands and enhance the function of an additional 150,000 acres of degraded wetlands by 2025. These activities may occur in any land use (including urban), but primarily occur in agricultural or natural landscapes.

VITAL HABITATS GOAL: Restore, enhance and protect a network of land and water habitats to support fish and wildlife and to afford other public benefits, including water quality, recreational uses and scenic value across the watershed.

OUTCOME DISPOSITION ADVICE TO MANAGEMENT BOARD:

UPDATE

The Wetlands Workgroup (WWG) recommends the Wetlands Outcome be updated. The proposed updates are

- UPDATE: Separate tidal and nontidal wetlands into two outcomes because the current language lacks specificity with a broad acreage goal.
 - o UPDATE: Offset tidal wetlands loss to maintain tidal wetland acreage by 2050
 - o UPDATE: Increase nontidal wetlands (e.g. by 10 % every 25 years)
- INCLUDE: Consideration of changing environmental conditions (e.g. sea level rise, flooding, temperature change, and extreme weather)
- INCLUDE: Conservation/Protection and Anti-degradation (for prioritized/important wetlands)
- INCLUDE: Ecosystem services (other than water quality and living resources)
- KEEP: Enhancement/ Functional improvement
- MODIFY: Integrate a modified Black Duck outcome as an output and expand to other waterbirds

Consider if the Outcome is SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound):

The lack of specificity and interim metrics of the current outcome is a challenge. The updates proposed make the outcome(s) more specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound.

Consider how the outcome relates or could relate to the Bay Agreement, mission, vision, themes/pillars and goals.

The WWG also considered synergies with other CBP outcomes and goals. To begin the process of an improved management framework, the WWG created two teams, Tidal and Nontidal. This change reflects state and local governance differences, the science of wetland impact and restoration, and enables partners to focus voluntary efforts to make the greatest impact. We have initiated the process

to incorporate the Black Duck Outcome into the Wetland Outcome. Wetland dependent species are important indicators of wetlands outcome and can be considered an output in the logic mapping framework.

This outcome is critical to the Chesapeake Bay health and living resources according to the [CESR report](#). Wetlands are synergistically connected in the landscape and by processes to other critical habitats and provide living resources, water quality, flood and erosion benefits, recreation and cultural benefits. The WWG has identified several specific connections of wetlands and other Bay outcomes, notably: **Black Duck, Forest Buffer, Protected Lands, (Climate) Adaptation, Fish Habitat, Submerged Aquatic Vegetation, Stream Health, and Water Quality**. Many other outcomes are also influenced by the wetlands outcome, including blue crabs and healthy watersheds. The shallow water shorescape continuum Wetlands, SAV, Oysters and Forest Buffers create the ecosystem supporting living resources.

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

The engagement of the CBP provides **capacity, continuity and consistency** for tracking. Prior to a very strong recent re-commitment by the CBP in the requirement of [Action Plans](#), partners were struggling to engage in wetlands projects with gaps in funding and personnel needed to plan, site, design, and build wetlands. The value add is the opportunity to have **collaboration and leveraging resources**.

The Chesapeake Bay Program has provided strong support for this outcome and has harbored wetland working groups and workshops that provide an opportunity for **shared learning** and collaboration. CBP has also helped **fund several research, planning, and community outreach** projects to help track and identify strategies for increasing the pace and scale of voluntary wetland restoration and enhancement projects.

Consider how the Outcome, as written, benefits the public.

People in the Bay watershed rely on wetlands to maintain/ improve water quality, provide flood and erosion benefits, support recreational, commercial and subsistence fishing, outdoor recreation, wildlife and bird viewing, hunting, open space, and culturally important spaces particularly for Tribal Nations.