

Chesapeake Bay Program Goals and Outcomes for Management Board Consideration 5-16-13

Background:

The Chesapeake Bay Program's Executive Council (EC) and the Federal Leadership Committee for the Chesapeake Bay (FLC) have called for coordinating and, where appropriate, integrating the goals, outcomes, and actions of the Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) with the goals, outcomes and actions described in the Executive Order Strategy. At the same time many of the dates and targets associated with outcome-oriented commitments made in the most recent blueprint for the Chesapeake Bay restoration effort - the *Chesapeake 2000 Agreement* – have largely expired, whether or not they were fulfilled. Additionally, some partners feel that there was insufficient collaboration with the states to develop the Executive Order strategy and outcomes. A path forward to address the goals and outcomes of the broader CBP Partnership, and to refresh the governance and leadership of that Partnership, has been initiated. The EC agreed on July 11, 2011 to use a four stage process as the path forward to update the commitments in the Chesapeake 2000 Agreement. For the first stage of this process, the Goal Implementation Teams developed a set of high level goals and outcomes. The Management Board has reviewed and commented on these goals and outcomes. Below is the updated version based on conversations with the GITs. The goals or outcomes in red were identified by the Management Board at their previous meeting as areas for further development. The attached annotated decision document identifies the specific issues identified by the Management Board and the actions the GITs have taken.

Goals and Outcomes:

Sustainable Fisheries Goal: Restore, enhance, and protect the finfish, shellfish and other living resources, their habitats and ecological relationships to sustain all fisheries and provide for a balanced ecosystem in the watershed and bay.

- **Blue Crab Outcome:** Maintain sustainable blue crab population based on the current 2012 target of 215 million adult females (1+ years old) and continue to refine population targets between 2013 through 2025 based on best available science.
- **Oyster Outcome:** Restore native oyster habitat and populations in 20 tributaries by 2025.
- **Fisheries Outcome:** Improve fisheries health and production by connecting land use decision making with ecosystem science and policy and creating a precautionary management approach to ensure the sustainability of Chesapeake bay fisheries resources across jurisdictions.

Vital Habitats Goal: Restore, enhance, and protect a network of land and water habitats to support priority species and to afford other public benefits, including water quality, recreational uses and scenic value across the watershed.

- **Wetlands Outcome:** Restore 30,000 acres of tidal and non-tidal wetlands, enhance function of an additional 150,000 acres of degraded wetlands, and protect an additional 225,000 acres of wetlands by 2025.
 - **Black Duck:** Restore wetland habitats to support a wintering black duck population in the watershed of 100,000 birds by 2025.

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- **Stream Restoration Outcome:** Restore stream health and function so that 70% of sampled stream sites throughout the watershed rate fair, good or excellent as measured by the Index of Biotic Integrity by 2025.
 - *Brook Trout:* Restore naturally reproducing brook trout populations with an 8% increase in total cumulative brook trout patch area by 2025 in Chesapeake headwater streams.
 - *Fish Passage:* During the period 2011-2025, restore historical fish migratory routes by opening 1,000 additional stream miles, with restoration success indicated by the presence of river herring, American shad, Hickory shad, Brook Trout and/or American eel.
- **Submerged Aquatic Vegetation Outcome:** Achieve and maintain 185,000 acres of SAV in the Chesapeake Bay to meet water quality standards.
- **Forests Outcome:** 1) Restore 900 miles per year of riparian forest buffer and conserve buffers until at least 70% of riparian areas are forested, and 2) Expand tree canopy in 120 communities by 2020.

Water Quality Goal: Restore water quality to achieve standards for DO, clarity/SAV, and chlorophyll-a in the Bay and its tidal waters as articulated in the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL).

- **2025 Watershed Implementation Plans (WIP) Outcome:** Have all controls installed by 2025 to achieve the Bay's DO, water clarity/SAV, and chlorophyll a criteria.
- **2017 WIP Outcome:** Have practices in place by 2017 that are expected to achieve 60 percent of the load reductions necessary to achieve applicable water quality standards compared to 2009 levels.

Healthy Watersheds Goal: Maintain local watersheds at optimal health across a range of landscape contexts.

- **Healthy Waters Outcome:** State identified healthy waters remain healthy

Land Conservation Goal: Conserve landscapes treasured by citizens to maintain water quality and habitat; sustain working forests, farms and maritime communities; and conserve lands of cultural, indigenous and community value.

- **Protected Lands Outcome:** Protect an additional two million acres of lands throughout the watershed currently identified as high conservation priorities at the federal, state or local level by 2025, including 695,000 acres of forest land of highest value for maintaining water quality.

Public Access Goal: Expand public access to the Bay and its tributaries through existing and new local, state and federal parks, refuges, reserves, trails and partner sites.

- **Public Access Site Development Outcome:** Increase public access by adding 300 new public access sites by 2025.

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Environmental Literacy Goal: *Every student in the region graduates environmentally literate having participated in meaningful watershed educational experiences in elementary, middle, and high school that were supported by teachers who have received professional development in environmental education and schools that are models of environmental sustainability.*

- **Education Outcome:** TBD

To Be Incorporated into Preamble:

Partnering and Leadership Goal: Continually improve governance and management to ensure Program effectiveness, efficiency, accountability and partner participation.

Stewardship Goal: Promote stewardship and assist citizens, communities and local governments in undertaking initiatives to achieve restoration and conservation in the Chesapeake region.

Identified Gaps: Toxic Contaminants, Social/Environmental Indicators