

Public Access Workgroup

November 2025 Meeting

Outcome Language Update

- Language for the Revised Watershed Agreement has been approved by the Management Board and the Principal Staff Committee
- Awaiting Executive Council approval at their December 2nd Meeting

Public Access Outcome Language

Create new and enhance existing public access sites in the Chesapeake Bay watershed through a combination of actions aimed at improving recreational opportunities and accessibility while addressing barriers to access by increasing the number, quality and geographic distribution of sites.

Target Language

- By 2040, add at least 100 new sites providing access to natural lands and waters with a strong emphasis on providing opportunities for recreation where feasible.
- By 2040, improve at least 100 of the 1,451 existing public water access sites by upgrading or maintaining site grounds and structures and expanding the range of active and passive recreation opportunities, such as paddling, boating, trails, courts, piers, wildlife viewing and picnic areas.
- By 2040, improve at least 40 of the existing public water access sites by adding Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) accessible features.
- Increase access to existing urban and community greenspaces identified in the protected lands dataset.

What's Next for Beyond 2025?

CBP-wide actions:

- Executive Council Approval of Revised Agreement
- Begin work on Management Strategies and Work plans

PAWG specific actions:

- Define necessary metrics regarding greenspace and tracking access for land-based sites
- Work with Protected Lands Workgroup to identify the baseline of existing land-based sites
- Discuss strategies for addressing the maintenance and accessibility targets

Definitions Workshop

Workshop Details

When - **Thursday, January 29th**, 10am - 3pm (might not take the entire time)

Where - **HYBRID** - in person attendees will meet at the Chesapeake Bay Program Office (1750 Forest Drive, Suite 130, Annapolis MD, 21041)

What will be discussed?

- Existing definitions of greenspace across the watershed
- LWCF requirements for funding (recreation and amenities)
- Scope of work for the Public Access Workgroup
- Possible methods for tracking access to land-based sites

Please forward the invitation to anyone you work with who could contribute!

From the 2013 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Public Access Plan:

"...public access sites are defined as those sites owned, operated, and/or managed expressly for a type of public access by:

1. Any unit of federal, state, or local government; or
2. A non-governmental organization operating under an agreement with a governmental agency.

Informal sites—those that may be on public land and used by the public but which are not managed by an agency for access—are not counted as public access sites.

To be counted, a site must be developed and expressly managed for a type of public access. The types of access included in this plan are as follows:

- Boat-related access: boat ramps, car-top boat launches, soft launches (supporting paddle craft, motor, and/or sail boats)
- Swimming access: designated areas appropriate for swimming
- Fishing access: piers, bank fishing facilities or easements, and parking adjacent to the water
- Viewing access for water, wildlife, and shoreline areas: nature trails, hiking or biking trails, waterfront trails, boardwalks, and observation decks located at or leading to the water's edge."

Scope was limited to sites along 5th order streams or higher

Eligible Recreation Facilities for LWCF* Funding

- Sports and playfields
- Picnic facilities
- Trails
- Swimming facilities
- Boating facilities
- Fishing/hunting facilities
- Public target range facilities
- Outdoor Winter sports facilities
- Camping facilities
- Outdoor exhibit / interpretive facilities
- Spectator facilities
- Community gardens
- Renovated facilities
- Professional facilities for arts or athletics
- Accessible features on outdoor recreation facilities
- Mobile recreation units
- Zoo facilities

Discussion

- How does your jurisdiction/organization define greenspace (aka open space)?
- What kinds of boundaries could be set for tracking within the workgroup?

Possibilities that have been mentioned include:

- Presence of recreation amenities (and if so, what kinds of amenities?)
- Size of parcel
- Characteristics of the the greenspace
 - Do athletic fields or parks that only have lawn grass count?
- Extent of accessibility
 - Within 10 minute walk of a certain percentage of people (Trust for Public Land)