



Chesapeake Bay Program
Science. Restoration. Partnership.

January 15, 2025

Management Strategy

Purpose and Audience



Overview

- Review GAO findings that prompted CBP adoption of adaptive management and could inform the purpose and audience for CBP's next Management Strategy (MS)
- Review Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement MS text
- Discuss a potential definition of the CBP MS
- Determine if MB members agree/disagree on potential elements to include in the MS
- MB members make January MS Decisions

Overview: January Decisions

1. MB Decision on the number of Management Strategies (MS):

- I. One MS with Goal chapters or
- II. 4 MS (one per Goal)

2. MB Decision on when to finalize the MS Template:

- I. March
- II. June

Contingent upon rapid GIT-level structure & governance revisions:

3. MB Decision on MS Authorship Officials:

- I. GIT leadership?
- II. Others?

4. MB Decision on when to start drafting the MS:

- I. Wait for initial Structure/Governance decisions re GITs
- II. Current GIT Chairs begin drafting and transition authors later

5. MB Decision on the MS Approval Process:

- I. Sign-off on chapter draft: GIT?
- II. Decision-making authority on full document: PSC?





The Need for a Comprehensive Plan

“...in 2005 [the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO)] reported that **the Bay Program did not have a comprehensive, coordinated implementation strategy that would allow it to strategically target limited resources** to the most effective restoration activities”
(GAO, 2008a).



Many Plans vs a Comprehensive Strategy

“We also found that although the Bay Program had **developed numerous planning documents**, some of these documents were **inconsistent** with each other and some of the plans were **perceived to be unachievable** by stakeholders. While we recognized that the Bay Program often had no assurance about the level of funds that may be available beyond the short term, we **concluded that this large and difficult restoration project cannot be effectively managed and coordinated without a realistic strategy that unifies all of its planning documents and targets its limited resources to the most effective restoration activities**”
(GAO, 2008a).



Definition of Resources and Accountability

“In response to our recommendations, the Bay Program has taken several actions to improve the coordination and management of the restoration effort, such as **developing a strategic framework** to articulate how the partnership will pursue its goals. While these actions appear to be positive steps in the right direction, we believe that **additional actions, such as identifying resources and assigning accountability to partners for implementing the strategy, are needed** for the Bay Program to move forward in a more strategic and well-coordinated manner” (GAO, 2008a).

Activities, Resources and Responsibilities

“However, this framework provides only broad strategies for meeting the Bay Program’s goals, and does not **identify the activities that will be needed to reach the goals, resources needed to undertake the activities, or the partner(s) who will be responsible for funding and carrying out the activities**. Therefore, we continue to believe that additional work is needed before the strategy that the Bay Program has developed can be considered a comprehensive, coordinated implementation strategy that can move the restoration effort forward in a more strategic and well-coordinated manner” (GAO, 2008b).



According to the CBWA

“...[CBP] will update or develop Management Strategies for the Outcomes and their Targets that support the Goals of this *Watershed Agreement*. These strategies shall **outline the means for accomplishing each Outcome and its Targets** as well as **monitoring, assessing and reporting progress** and **coordinating actions** among partners and stakeholders as necessary.”



CBWA States That the MS Will Describe:

- How partners will address changing environmental conditions
- How signatories, other state and federal agencies, local governments, Indigenous representatives, nonprofit and private partners are engaged
- Where actions, tools, financial support and technical assistance are needed to empower local governments and others
- What steps are necessary to facilitate greater participation in achieving the Outcome



Prompts and MB Discussion: Purpose and Audience



Do We Agree? MS Purpose & Audience

CBP Management Strategy: a strategic planning document intended to coordinate partnership initiatives, prioritize resource and clearly describe the efforts that will be undertaken by partners over the next six-year period to make progress towards achieving CBWA Outcomes.

- Internal partnership audience

MS Executive Summary: a multi-page brochure that provides a succinct overview of the Management Strategy for interested, external audiences.



Do We Agree That the MS Should _____ ?

- Identify and address the most critical changing environmental conditions and other challenges/factors that will impact CBP's ability to achieve Goals and Outcomes



Do We Agree That the MS Should _____ ?

- State what initiatives partners will complete **over the next six years? 1-3 yrs?**, which signatory partners and stakeholders will participate, how initiatives will be supported, and what we expect to happen as the result of actions undertaken
 - List existing individual partner programs and resources committed to making progress towards Goals and Outcomes
 - Summarize collaborative implementation initiatives and identify the human and financial resources that are needed, that are committed by specific partners, and the potential sources that could fill gaps in capacity



Do We Agree That the MS Should _____ ?

- Integrate the results of discussions about tradeoffs and prioritization to focus the selection of initiatives on those that are within CBP's capacity to complete and that will have the greatest impact on Goal and Outcome attainment



Do We Agree That the MS Should _____ ?

- Describe plans for monitoring, assessing and reporting progress towards initiative completion and outcome attainment
 - Did we complete the initiatives we said we would?
 - Did initiatives have the impact we thought they would?
 - What is the state of the ecosystem or resource?
- Document a process for managing adaptively



How and Where Do We Deal With Targets?

- What level of analysis is needed within the MS?
 - Cross-Outcome considerations at Goal-level?
 - Outcome-level?
 - Target-level?
- Do we address targets in the Implementation Initiative(s)/Workplan(s)?
- Topic for discussion and **decision at next meeting.**



MB Decisions



Decision: Number of Strategies

One Management Strategy?

- Executive Summary
- Introduction
- Accountability
- Goal 1: Thriving Habitat, Fisheries & Wildlife*
- Goal 2: Clean Water*
- Goal 3: Healthy Landscapes*
- Goal 4: Engaged Communities*
- Appendix: Implementation Initiatives

Four Management Strategies?

1. Goal 1: Thriving Habitat, Fisheries & Wildlife*
2. Goal 2: Clean Water*
3. Goal 3: Healthy Landscapes*
4. Goal 4: Engaged Communities*

Separate Workplan(s)

*Outcome sub-chapters or chapter under each Goal



Decision: MS Template Development

- A template will be circulated for Management Board input and approval by:
 - March 2026
 - June 2026
- MS Template Drafting Plan:
 - Convene meeting(s) of GIT Chairs
 - Monthly MB updates



Decision: When to Start MS Drafting

Contingent upon rapid GIT-level structure & governance revisions

- When should MS drafting begin?
 - MB could wait for initial Structure/Governance decisions regarding GITs roles, responsibilities and leadership to allow for consistent authorship
 - Current GIT Chairs could begin drafting and authors could transition later, if appropriate, to maximize time for drafting



Decision: Authorship Officials

Contingent upon rapid GIT-level structure & governance revisions

- IF MB approves one MS:
 - In consultation with GIT Chairs, MB Chair, and PSC Chair's representative, EPA drafts the Executive Summary, Introduction, and Accountability sections
 - GIT Chairs draft Goal chapters, delegating Outcome sub-sections as appropriate



Decision: MS Authorship Officials

Contingent upon rapid GIT-level structure & governance revisions

- IF MB approves four MS:
 - GIT Chairs draft Goal Introductions, delegating Outcome sections as appropriate
 - EPA will support coordination of drafting initiatives
 - In consultation with newly appointed GIT Chairs, MB Chair, and PSC Chair's representative, EPA can draft the Executive Summary



Decision: When to Start MS Drafting

Contingent upon rapid GIT-level structure & governance revisions

- When should MS drafting begin?
 - To allow for consistent authorship, CBP could wait for initial Structure/Governance decisions to be made regarding GITs roles and leadership
 - To maximize time for drafting, current GIT Chairs could begin drafting, with authors changing later, if appropriate



Decision: MS Approval Process

Contingent upon rapid GIT-level structure & governance revisions

- Review of content
 - Grammar, spelling, formatting: Rachel Felver & team
 - Content consistency: Sarah Brzezinski & GIT Chairs
- Sign-off on chapter draft: GIT leadership?
- Decision-making authority on full document: PSC?

Decisions for February

1. Where to Address Targets

- Decision officials: Management Board
- Decision:
 - I. In Outcome portion of MS
 - II. In Implementation Initiatives/Workplan
 - III. Through Indicator Updates (Outside of MS)
 - IV. Other

2. When to Address Targets

- Decision officials: Management Board
- Decision:
 - I. During the 18-month MS development period
 - II. Within X months of completing MS development
 - III. Other

Discussion in February

- MB members will provide feedback on MS template outline or draft
- Discuss elements of other estuary program MS that CBP could leverage
- As time allows, begin discussing drafting process





References

- [Chesapeake Bay Program: Improved Strategies Are Needed to Better Assess, Report, and Manage Restoration Progress](#) (GAO, 2005)
- [Chesapeake Bay Program: Recent Actions Are Positive Steps Toward More Effectively Guiding the Restoration Effort](#) (GAO, 2008a)
- [Recent Actions by the Chesapeake Bay Program Are Positive Steps Toward More Effectively Guiding the Restoration Effort, but Additional Steps Are Needed](#) (GAO, 2008b)
- [Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement](#) (CBP, 2025)