



Protected Lands Workgroup Meeting

February 3, 2026
2:00 - 4:00pm

[Visit the meeting webpage for meeting materials and additional information.](#)

Purpose: Learn about Bay Program happenings related to the Protected Lands Outcome; discuss 2026 Protected Lands Priorities and how the workgroup can be beneficial to members; and review and discuss the language drafted at the Greenspace Definitions Workshop regarding how to define greenspace and its tracking.

Meeting Materials:

- [Presentation Slides](#)

Meeting Minutes

I. Administrative Updates: Management Board and Governance/Structure (2:15 - 2:25pm)

Daniel provided an update on recent management board decisions regarding management strategies, governance and structure, and membership. Goal Team chairs will be assigned as the lead in the authorship of management strategies, with collaboration between workgroup members and goal team coordination.

Decisions: N/A

Actions: N/A

- Note that Management Strategies will be due 18 months after the signing of the Agreement

II. Review of proposed greenspace definition (2:25 - 3:05)

Sophie and Daniel shared what was discussed and drafted at the Greenspace Definitions Workshop in January, and the workgroup discussed the proposed definition components.

Decisions: N/A

Actions:

- **By February 13th, Fill out the feedback form to provide thoughts on two proposed definitions:** <https://forms.gle/bNmmrLA369JBikDi7>

Discussion Notes:

Three Proposed Definitions, refined from the workshop breakout groups:

1. Greenspace is a publicly accessible, human-centric outdoor place that supports active and/or passive recreation and provides exposure to nature. It may be fully or partially vegetated (e.g., lawns, trees, shrubs), and can include designed or improved areas such as parks, trails, gardens, athletic/sports fields, and community gathering open spaces.
2. Greenspace is an outdoor place that's open to everyone and gives people a chance to be in nature, whether for walking, playing, gathering, or relaxing. It includes parks, trails, gardens, sports fields, waterfronts, and natural areas.
3. Greenspace is a people-centric subset of Open Space that requires equitable public access and intentional community benefit.

Cassie Davis: I like how the second definition is easy to read. Don't have to know what people centric or human centric is trying to say; it is an accessible definition.

Sara Coleman: I like how the first and second ones have the listing of potential types of greenspaces so people know what we are talking about.

- **Michelle Campbell, in chat:** I agree about the second one.
- **Becky Gwynn, in chat:** I like the second definition - for clarity. The first one is good, but is a more technical wordy version of #2
- **Jillian Seagraves, in chat:** I like the second one for a public/communication standpoint. But I also like the passive/active recreation comment in the first.

Peter Claggett in chat: should sports fields be included?

- **Sophie Waterman:** Yes, people in the workshop decided that sports fields are a way for people to access outdoors, so they would be counted.
- **Jessie Rosenthal, in chat:** sports field can also double as open meadows when not in use by people
- **John Wolf in chat:** do sports fields include school properties?
 - **Sophie Waterman:** That's a good question. I think that has to do more with the publicly accessible part of it - can you access a schoolyard? TPL has info on that we can explore.

Ashley Rebert: I like the examples that point to a specific place. Where natural areas and waterfronts can get ambiguous; they might exist, but are they a place you can go to that is named? It is a location that exists that is safe and accessible.

Maggie Woodward: I like the second one a lot, but they all read recreation focused, and don't go into environmental benefits that also benefit health (heat island for example).

- **Peter Claggett, in chat:** the feds need to be cautious about including climate related variables in public facing definitions
- **Sara Coleman, in chat:** maybe something broad like 'human health benefit' ?

Ashley Rebert: I like the word 'community' and using that to filter spatially. When I think of community, I think of a place that has a more dense population vs. a broader more rural setting.

- **Sophie Waterman:** That is the meat of this too, how we track this. The bay program looks at where populations live in two ways: census places, and urban areas. We can use both to make it broader, which seems like what the consensus was from the workshop discussion.
- **Ashley Rebert:** I like both. You might live in a rural community, but not within walking distance to greenspace.
- **Cassie Davis:** I was an advocate for everything including rural areas, but understand we may have to limit it somehow. What will help me in my decision is that everything outside of the purple and yellow spaces in that map may still be counted in protected lands, just maybe not in the urban/community greenspace section. Is that correct?
 - **Sophie Waterman:** Yes that is right. This will just focus on the greenspace metric, and places outside of those two census places / urban areas will still be counted in general protected lands tracking.

Overall: Support for using both census place and urban areas in the tracking, and there is more support for the second definition of the three proposed, with some revisions that Sophie and Daniel will work on.

III. Data Standardization Network (3:05-3:15)

- Sophie updated the workgroup on the Data Standardization Network and the work that they will be embarking on.

Decisions: N/A

Actions: N/A

IV. Protected Lands in 2026 (3:15 -3:50)

- Sophie presented on proposed Protected Lands Outcome priorities for 2026, and facilitated a discussion on how the workgroup members see their involvement in the Protected Lands workgroup moving forward. Probing questions included:
 - What do members want to get out of the bi-monthly meetings?
 - How could the Bay Program better support your work?

Key Workgroup Priorities:

- Find a chair
- Develop targets for remaining focus areas
- Provide watershed-wide data and analysis for identifying conservation priorities
- Engage the right groups of stakeholders and conservation partners

Discussion Notes

John Wolf, in chat: Somewhat related to your “collaboration” priority, I would like to see a priority of clarifying expectations regarding the relationship between the Protected Lands Workgroup and the Chesapeake Conservation Partnership, including membership, roles and responsibilities, etc.

Maggie Woodward: Those priorities look wonderful! I want to make sure there is a space to identify threats and emerging challenges, and how to confront them.

- **Andrea Reese, in chat:** Great idea to analyze threats as well as progress

Sara Coleman: Each meeting we have someone from different jurisdiction share a success story of something they recently protected / partnership they made / data they cleaned up to get inspiration from what folks are doing on the ground.

Jeff Lerner: I often think about where the money will come from for protection work, regardless of what the focus is. Having a jurisdiction talk about successes, and also talking about their programs and where the money comes from, could inspire other jurisdictions and localities to think about how they can do similar work. Understand how to leverage funds between federal and state.

- **Kevin DuBois, in chat:** Jeff, I would expand beyond jurisdictions to at least include DoD and a discuss of their REPI and Sentinel Landscape Partnership programs that leverage state, local, and NGO funding for land protection
- **Jeff Lerner, in chat:** Yes, agree with Kevin on REPI or Sentinel Landscapes and other traditional federal programs (LWCF, Forest Legacy, etc.) and maybe nontraditional like

SRFs, FEMA, etc.

- **Kevin DuBois, in chat:** ACOE Chesapeake Bay funding too maybe?

Katie Brownson: Looking at work around drinking water / source water protection; there are some new forest and drinking water groups that have stood up across watersheds. Northeast Mid-Atlantic partnership is cross-states, and WV and VA have their own statewide groups. There could be a nexus with this and following the money for strategies of funding this work across different connections of different sectors.

- [Northeast Mid-Atlantic Partnership for Forests and Water](#)
- This group is open to the public, and has grant funding for a coordinator.

V. Wrap-Up & Adjourn

- Next Meeting: April 7th, 2026

Attendees:

Sophie Waterman, USGS
Daniel Koval, CRC
Coral Howe, USGS
John Wolf, USGS
Peter Claggett, USGS
Samantha Cotten, DNREC
Kerri Batrowny, DNREC
Ashley Rebert, PA DCNR
Michelle Campbell, DC DOEE
Michelle Fonda, WV DNR
Cassandra Davis, NY DEC
Jessie Rosenthal, NY DEC
Sara Coleman, MD DNR

Jillian Seagraves, MD DNR
David Boyd, VA DCR
Becky Gwynn, VA DWR
Kevin DuBois, DoD
Katie Brownson, FS/CBP
Emily Heller, EPA/CBP
Katie Ayers, EPA/CBP
Jeff Lerner, EPA
Maggie Woodward, CBC
Chase Douglas, CCP
Aaron Knishkowsky, CCP
Andrea Reese, Chesapeake Conservancy