

A large group of people, diverse in age and ethnicity, are seated in rows of chairs in a room, attending a public feedback session. Some individuals are looking towards the front, while others are looking down or to the side. The room has a simple, functional appearance with a plain wall and a door in the background. A white text box is overlaid on the center of the image, containing the title and date of the event.

PUBLIC FEEDBACK PROCESS AND INITIAL THEMES

Management Board Meeting

August 14, 2025



Overall process for reviewing feedback.



Who is on the Review Team?



Proposed timeline.



High-level feedback themes.



Feedback for Management Board discussion.

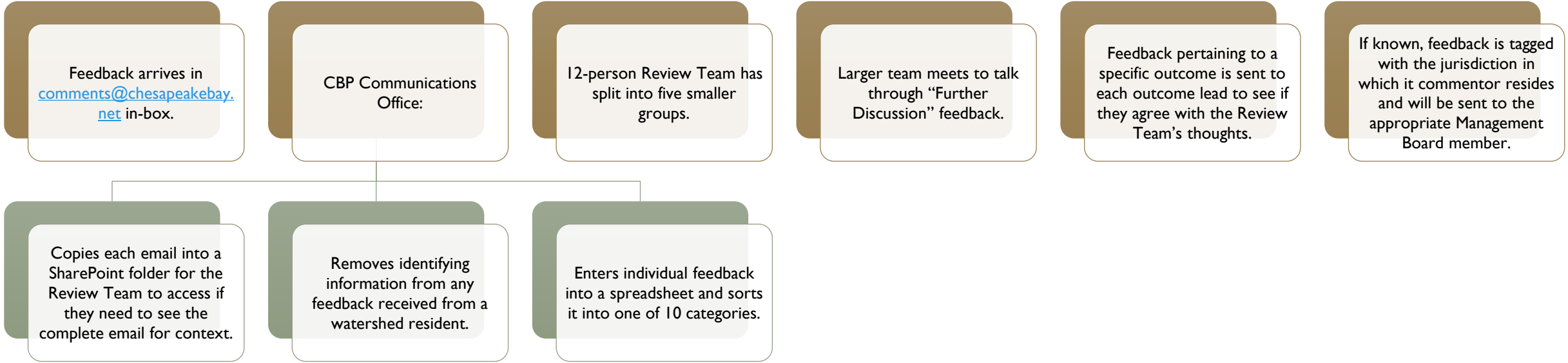


Questions?

AGENDA

REVIEW TEAM

Name	Organization
Jess Blackburn	Stakeholders' Advisory Committee
Meg Cole	Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee
Cassie Davis	New York DEC
Leila Duman	Maryland DNR
Amy Handen	EPA
Ken Hyer	USGS
Laura Cattell Noll	Local Government Advisory Committee
Lucinda Power	EPA
Bailey Robertory	Maryland DNR
Grayson Schultz	Virginia Secretary of Natural Resources' Office
Scott Settle	West Virginia DEP
Peter Tango	USGS



PROCESS

FEEDBACK SPREADSHEET

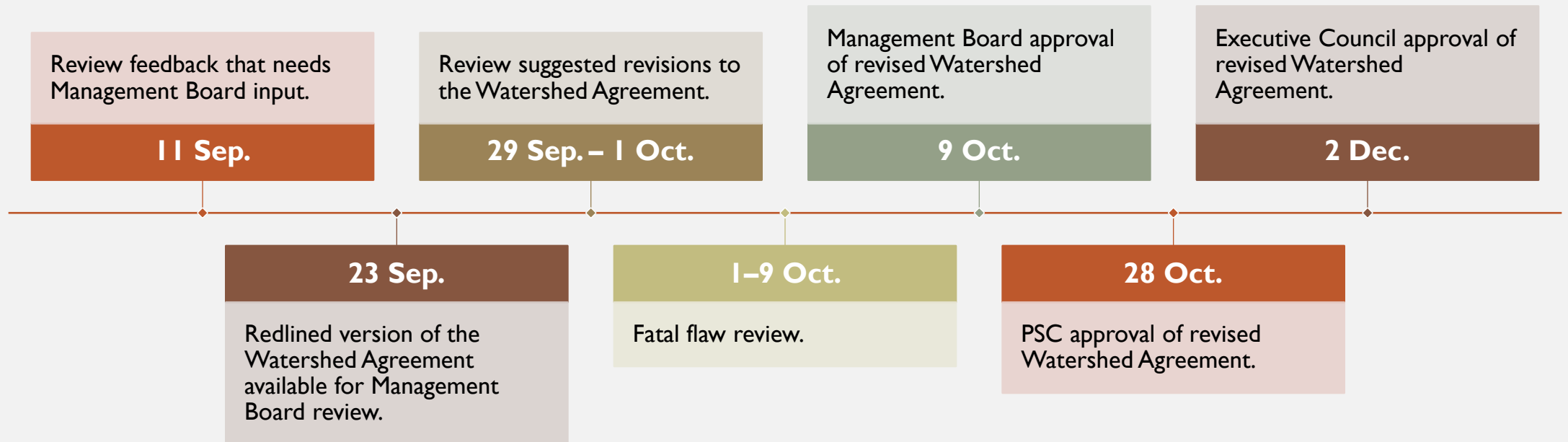
Feedback is categorized into the following:

- Full Agreement
- Thriving Habitats and Wildlife
- Clean Water
- Healthy Landscapes
- Engaged Communities
- Further Discussion
- Structure/Governance
- Editorial
- No Response Required
- Out of Scope

Review Team Thoughts

Recommended Action

PROPOSED TIMELINE





OVERVIEW

- 274 unique pieces of feedback
- 110 different commentors
- Two CBF action alerts generating 400 emails.
 - 110 different commentors includes action alerts with personalized feedback AND both sets of comments in the action alerts.
- Thriving Habitats and Wildlife Goal has currently received the most feedback.

HIGH-LEVEL THEMES: FULL AGREEMENT

Goals, outcomes and targets need to be more consistent and clearer.

- How will each goal be measured?
- Use the same format and deadline for each goal, outcome and target.
- Articulate what will happen if goals, outcomes and targets are not met.

Stronger commitment to science-based restoration needed.

- Keep and update Bay TMDL and WIPs; do not weaken them.
- Report openly on current progress toward pollution reduction and water quality targets.
- Adapting to changing environmental conditions should be reflected throughout the entire Agreement clearly.
- Conserve land to avoid larger problems and cost later down the line.

Need more accountability, engagement and support.

- Vision statement should be more inspiring and related to the public.
- Clarify what tools, funding or assistance will be given to partners.
- Hold jurisdictions and EPA accountable for missed targets and/or delays.
- Recognize the shared responsibility of local, state and federal partners.

HIGH-LEVEL THEMES: THRIVING HABITATS AND WILDLIFE



Restore and protect key species and food webs.

Address overfishing of menhaden.

Restore collapsed fisheries (e.g., shad) and protect spawning areas.

Include more species in management plans; applaud decision to protect all water birds.

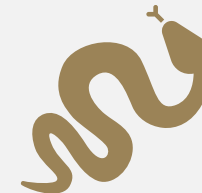


Set clear, measurable and faster goals.

Need more specific targets with timelines and interim checkpoints.

Accelerate habitat restoration rates for streams, wetlands and oyster reefs.

More plain language is needed.



Confront overlooked and emerging threats.

Better management of invasive species, particularly blue catfish and snakehead.

Reduce industrial and fishing-related pollution.

Address emerging risks from renewable energy projects and development.



HIGH-LEVEL THEMES: CLEAN WATER

- Feel the draft is weakening Bay TMDL and WIP requirements.
- Need goals, outcomes and targets to be more SMART with quantitative targets, timelines and accountability measures.
- Several mentioned that voluntary agricultural programs have not worked and call for mandatory, performance-based requirements.
- No penalties or binding timelines; call for urgent, enforceable actions to achieve ecosystem health and resilience.
- Draft lacks concrete measures to locate sources of toxic contaminants and control them.
- In regard to the toxic contaminants outcome, a call for more direct measures to reduce pollutants, not just “studies” or “increased understanding.”

HIGH-LEVEL THEMES: HEALTHY LANDSCAPES

- Stronger, more measurable targets needed for riparian buffers and tree canopy.
- Solar development, data centers and other land-intensive projects must be evaluated for potential environmental risks and align with *Watershed Agreement* goals.
- Interim benchmarks needed for Protected Lands and Healthy Forests and Trees outcomes.
- Emphasis on preventing further development in sensitive areas.
- Concern that previous outcome targets have been reduced from previous agreement: call for them to exceed 2014 targets.

HIGH-LEVEL THEMES: ENGAGED COMMUNITIES



Further clarification and expansion of the Stewardship Outcome.



All outcomes and targets should have interim milestones as they work toward 2040.



Provide more environmental education training to educators.



MWEEs should be extended to private, independent and parochial schools.



Consider addressing lack of public transit to public access sites; call for new sites to be distributed equally and near areas that are easily reachable.

MANAGEMENT BOARD THOUGHTS NEEDED

Feedback

Living on Virginia's Eastern Shore, I am surrounded by Watermen whose livelihoods depend on a healthy Chesapeake Bay and on leadership that honors its promises with measurable action. The draft revised 2014 Bay Agreement must move beyond aspirational language and into the realm of accountability—because what's measured is what's improved, and improvements that matter are built on clear targets.

You say at several points that “Local governments will continue to play a unique and critical role in helping the partnership realize this shared Vision for the Chesapeake Bay”, but there are no specifics. What exactly do you want local governments to do? I live in James City County, Virginia. What goals are set for my county apart from TMDL?

Proposed Action

We've made progress in our targets, making them more SMART. Can we add something that speaks to the balance of being aspirational versus realistic? It may be premature to answer the accountability question given that we are working on our structure and governance. Revising the SRS process is a major action of that group.

Should the Goals and Outcomes introduction language speak to the importance of including both aspirational and realistic targets?

This is very specific and may be better served to be in the Management Strategies, as they will be different for every jurisdiction. Is there a way to make watershed residents/local governments feel like they are a part of the new Agreement?

Flagging to show that local governments want to feel engaged and consider how to include when the Management Strategies are developed.

QUESTIONS?

Thank you!

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