

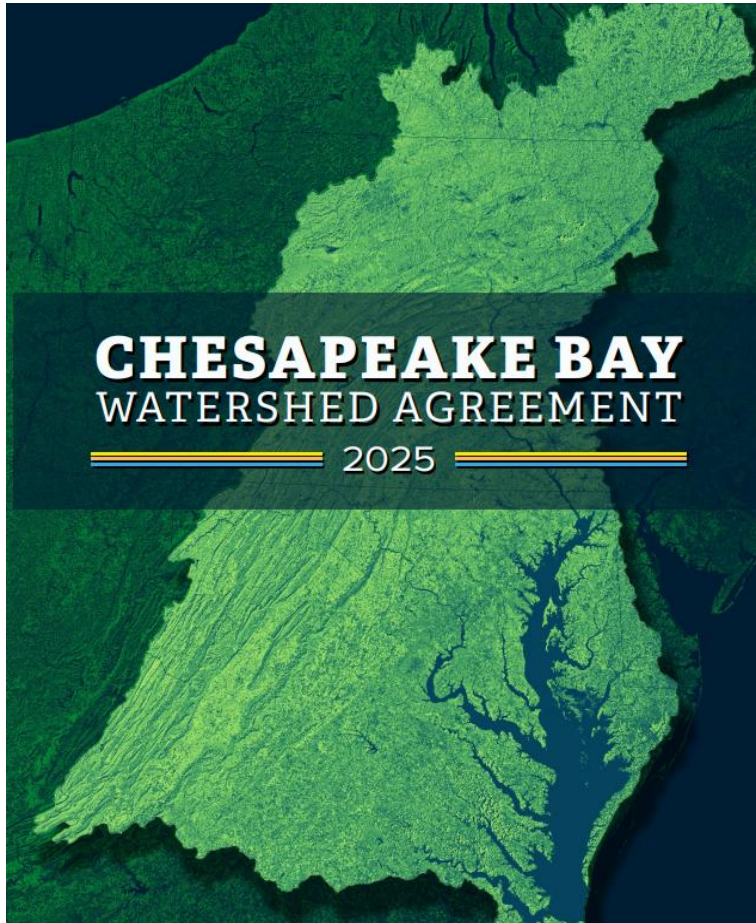


**Chesapeake Bay Program**  
*Science. Restoration. Partnership.*

# Chesapeake Bay Program Update

Keith Bollt, EPA Chesapeake Bay Program Office  
March 19, 2026

# Revised Watershed Agreement

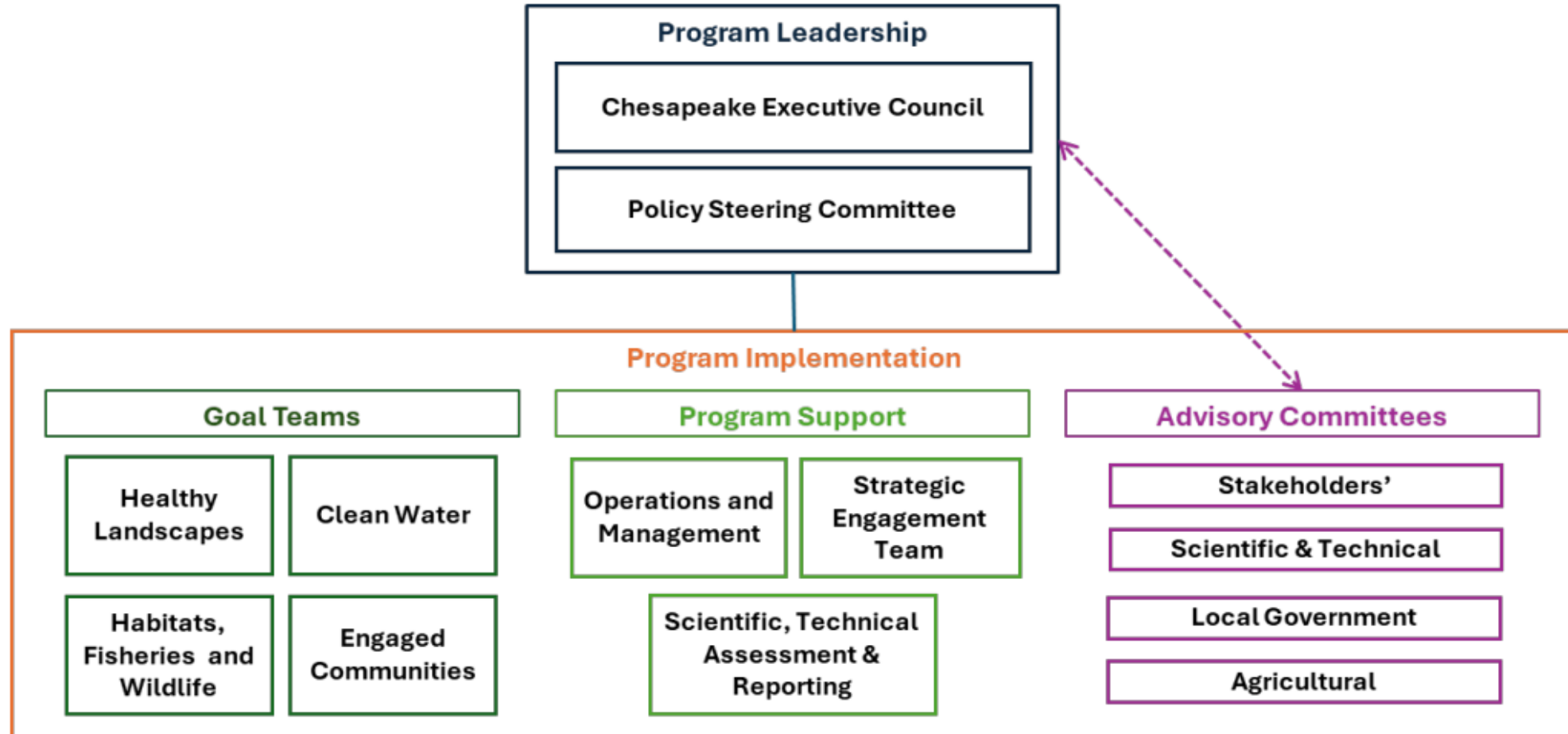


[Revised Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement](#)



Photo by Will Parson, Chesapeake Bay Program <https://flic.kr/p/2rJDUjg>

# Revised CBP Structure



# Structure and Governance EC Charge

**Chesapeake Bay Program Governance & Accountability Recommendations**

In response to the 2024 Chesapeake Executive Council *Charting a Course Beyond 2025 Charge* to strengthen and streamline the partnership, the ad hoc Governance and Accountability Team prepared—and the Principals' Staff Committee now recommends—the following actions to address its priority challenges, "Priority Setting and Decision-Making" and "Roles and Responsibilities."

The Governance and Accountability Team has also developed initial considerations for four additional challenges—"Complexity and Structure"; "Transparency"; "Accountability and Adaptive Management"; and "Communication and Coordination"—but these recommendations remain under deliberation and are therefore not included in this document.

**Priority-Setting and Decision-Making Recommendations**

- 1) A Policy Steering Committee should provide strategic direction for the partnership by establishing and implementing a collaborative priority-setting framework.
- 2) Clarifying decision-making authority is recommended to enhance operations across all levels of the governing structure, particularly when considering how best to streamline outcome implementation actions and delegate decision-making.
- 3) Federal agency coordination should be strengthened at each level of the governing structure, including transparency in decision making.
- 4) Consensus-based decision-making should be re-evaluated to determine whether alternative methods could be more effective at different levels of the partnership, while acknowledging the necessary balance between efficiency and egalitarianism.

**Role & Responsibility Recommendations**

- 1) Minor updates to the roles and responsibilities of the Chesapeake Executive Council are recommended to emphasize their strategic direction, policy-setting and public-facing functions.
- 2) Major updates to the roles, responsibilities and operations of the existing Principals' Staff Committee are recommended to strengthen its functions as a body of politically appointed or organizational executives. This recommendation results in a significant shift in the focus of the Principals' Staff Committee to include strategic direction and priority setting, while focusing less on approving operational decisions.
- 3) Major updates to the roles and responsibilities of the program's operational and implementation-focused elements are recommended to strengthen workflow and coordination.
- 4) Updates to the roles and operations of the Advisory Committees are recommended to increase their engagement across the partnership and to encourage greater collaboration amongst themselves.

These governance recommendations were approved by the Principals' Staff Committee on November 6, 2025.

**Chesapeake Bay Program**  
1750 Forest Drive, Suite 130  
Annapolis, MD 21401  
[www.chesapeakebay.net](http://www.chesapeakebay.net)

**Chesapeake Bay Program Structure Recommendations**

To fulfill the 2024 Chesapeake Executive Council *Charting a Course Beyond 2025 Charge* to strengthen and streamline the partnership, the Principals' Staff Committee has identified two primary structural focus areas: **Program Leadership** and **Program Implementation**. Restructuring these areas will enhance the efficiency, coordination and effectiveness needed to implement the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*.

By **July 1, 2026**, the Principals' Staff Committee will finalize the membership, leadership, responsibilities and decision-making protocols associated with these two structural components. However, to align with the revised *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* and ensure timely delivery of Management Strategies, the partnership will begin preparing for—and transitioning to—the new Goal Team structure following the December 2, 2025 Executive Council meeting.

These structural components will reflect the partnership's governance recommendations to ensure both efforts are aligned to create a more effective and streamlined governance and structure.

```

graph TD
    subgraph Program_Leadership
        CEC[Chesapeake Executive Council]
        PSC[Policy Steering Committee]
    end
    subgraph Program_Implementation
        subgraph Goal_Teams
            HL[Healthy Landscapes]
            CW[Clean Water]
            HW[Habitats, Fisheries and Wildlife]
            EC[Engaged Communities]
        end
        subgraph Program_Support
            OM[Operations and Management]
            STR[Strategic Engagement Team]
            STRA[Scientific, Technical Assessment & Reporting]
        end
        subgraph Advisory_Committees
            ST[Stakeholders]
            SNT[Scientific & Technical]
            LG[Local Government]
            AG[Agriculture]
        end
    end
    CEC --- PSC
    CEC --- Program_Implementation
    PSC --- Program_Implementation
    
```

A team led by the Management Board Chair will implement the structure and governance revision and report progress to the PSC for final approval. Each signatory may, at their discretion, appoint a Management Board representative (or designee) to the implementation team. This team will determine roles and responsibilities, leadership and membership, duration of membership, and operations for the structural components below, consulting with the existing PSC, Goal Implementation Teams, Advisory Committees and Program Support teams as appropriate.

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strength of key functions in this proposal—and the federal leaders. The implementation groups and by Program discussion

progress and results reporting, the Strategic and Principals' Staff strength the natural

due on November 6,

Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) is a public-private partnership between the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the State of Maryland. CBP is the lead agency for the Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) and supporting Program

# Implementation Team

Signatory	Representative
Adv. Comm. Liaison	Marty Qually (LGAC)
CBC	Anna Killius
Co-Chair (CBPO)	Dan Coogan (EPA)
Co-Chair (PSC)	Jill Whitcomb (PA)
DC	Steve Saari
DE	Holly Walker
Federal	Kevin Schabow (NOAA)
MD	Leila Duman
NY	Cassie Davis
PA	Natahnee Miller
VA	Kevin Mclean
WV	Callie Sams

## Deliverable Milestones

1. The Implementation Team will brief the PSC on draft revisions to the Governance and Management Framework at the April 7<sup>th</sup> PSC Meeting.
2. The MB will seek consensus on the revised Governance and Management Framework at their June 11<sup>th</sup> meeting. Supermajority voting will take place if consensus is not achieved.
3. The Implementation Team will deliver a revised Governance and Management Framework by June 16<sup>th</sup> for acceptance at the June 30<sup>th</sup> PSC Meeting. Supermajority voting will take place if consensus is not achieved.

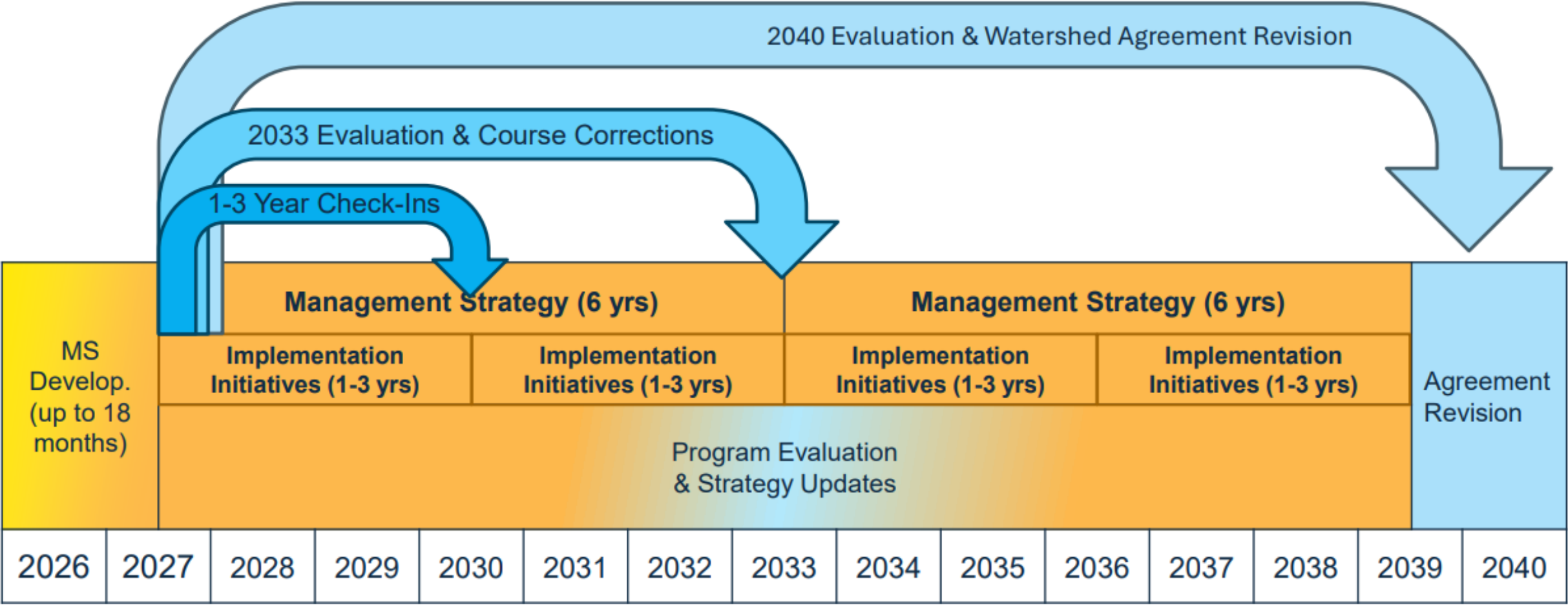
# Accountability: CBWA Time Horizon

The MB agreed via consensus to adopt a six-year cycle for Management Strategy implementation.

MS Develop. (up to 18 months)	Management Strategy (6 yrs)						Management Strategy (6 yrs)						Agreement Revision	
	Program Evaluation & Strategy Updates													
2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040

The Program will report progress to the public and update work plans on a shorter-term basis for each Outcome in accordance with adaptive management.

# Time Horizon & Adaptive Management



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# MS: Recommendations for Getting Started

- Goal Team Chairs:
  - Identify and designate outcome authors, as appropriate
- With Workgroup support, outcome authors:
  - Gather background information (existing MS, WP, where they exist)
  - Brainstorm and draft outcome-level situation analysis
  - Determine each outcome's current condition and/or baseline
    - Does the outcome need a baseline?
    - Do we have the information needed to determine the baseline and/or current condition? If not, what is the plan to get it?