



# Agriculture Workgroup

December 2025

# Agenda

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**Program Updates**

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**Phase 7 Load Sources –  
Draft Mapping**

3

**Phase 7 Feed Space Acres  
Allocation**

4

**BMP Efficiency  
Evaluation; Remote  
Sensing**

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**Chesapeake Ag  
Networking Forum  
Reflections**



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# Program Updates



# What's happened – and what will be happening?

- Beyond 2025
- Phase 7
- Misc.



# Beyond 2025 Update

- September 30-October 2: Retreat to discuss Agreement amendments and interim structure and governance recommendations
- October 9: Finalized Agreement amendments and interim structure and governance recommendations for PSC review
- October 28: Finalized Agreement amendments and discussed structure and governance recommendations
- November 6: Materials finalized for EC
- December 2: Executive Council met and approved revised Agreement, interim structure and governance revisions (recommendation docs attached)

# Beyond 2025 Update – Revised Agreement

- Clean Water Goal: *Reduce pollutants entering the Bay and its rivers to achieve the water quality necessary to support aquatic life and wildlife, and support human health.*

- RENPS Outcome: **Reducing Excess Nitrogen, Phosphorous & Sediment**

Implement and maintain practices and controls to reduce nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment. These reductions are necessary to achieve the applicable water quality standards, as described in the Bay TMDL. Those water quality standards support living resources and protect human health, as required by the [Clean Water Act](#).

- Through 2030, signatories will continue to accelerate completion of all interim water quality planning targets through implementation of Chesapeake Bay [Watershed Implementation Plans](#), two-year milestone commitments and other innovative strategies to achieve and maintain reduced levels of nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment.
  - By December 31, 2030, revise the planning targets approved by the Principals' Staff Committee for nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment, incorporating the latest watershed modeling, monitoring data and research findings, and develop new or amended Watershed Implementation Plans to meet the updated targets by 2040.
  - Demonstrate net reductions in nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment through multiple lines of evidence, including modeling and monitoring data.



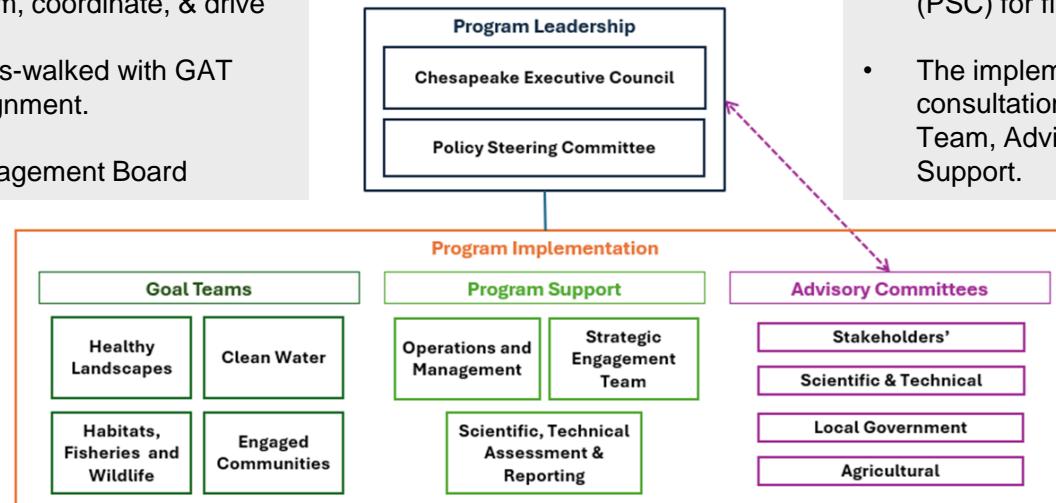
# **Beyond 2025 Update – Revised Agreement**

- Healthy Landscapes Goal
  - Protected Lands Outcome
- Engaged Communities Goal
  - Student Environmental Literacy Experiences Outcome
  - School District Environmental Literacy Planning Outcome
  - Workforce Outcome

# Key Concepts and Actions from Structure Recommendation

- Identified two primary structural elements:
  - Leadership:** Set strategic direction & priorities
  - Implementation:** Inform, coordinate, & drive
- Structure one-pager cross-walked with GAT recommendations for alignment.
- Framework sunsets Management Board

- A team of Signatory representatives (MB members or designees) will implement the structure and governance revisions and report progress to the Principals' Staff Committee (PSC) for final approval by July 1, 2026.
- The implementation process requires consultation with the existing PSC, Goal Team, Advisory Committees, and Program Support.

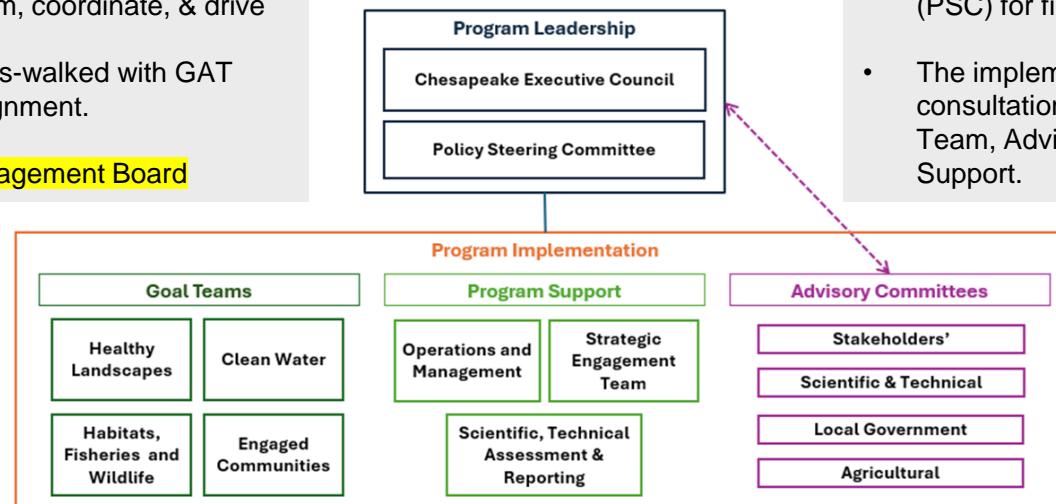


- Transition to a new four-Goal Team structure to ensure timely delivery of Management Strategies.
- Goal Team and Program Support elements are subject to revision – not predetermined.

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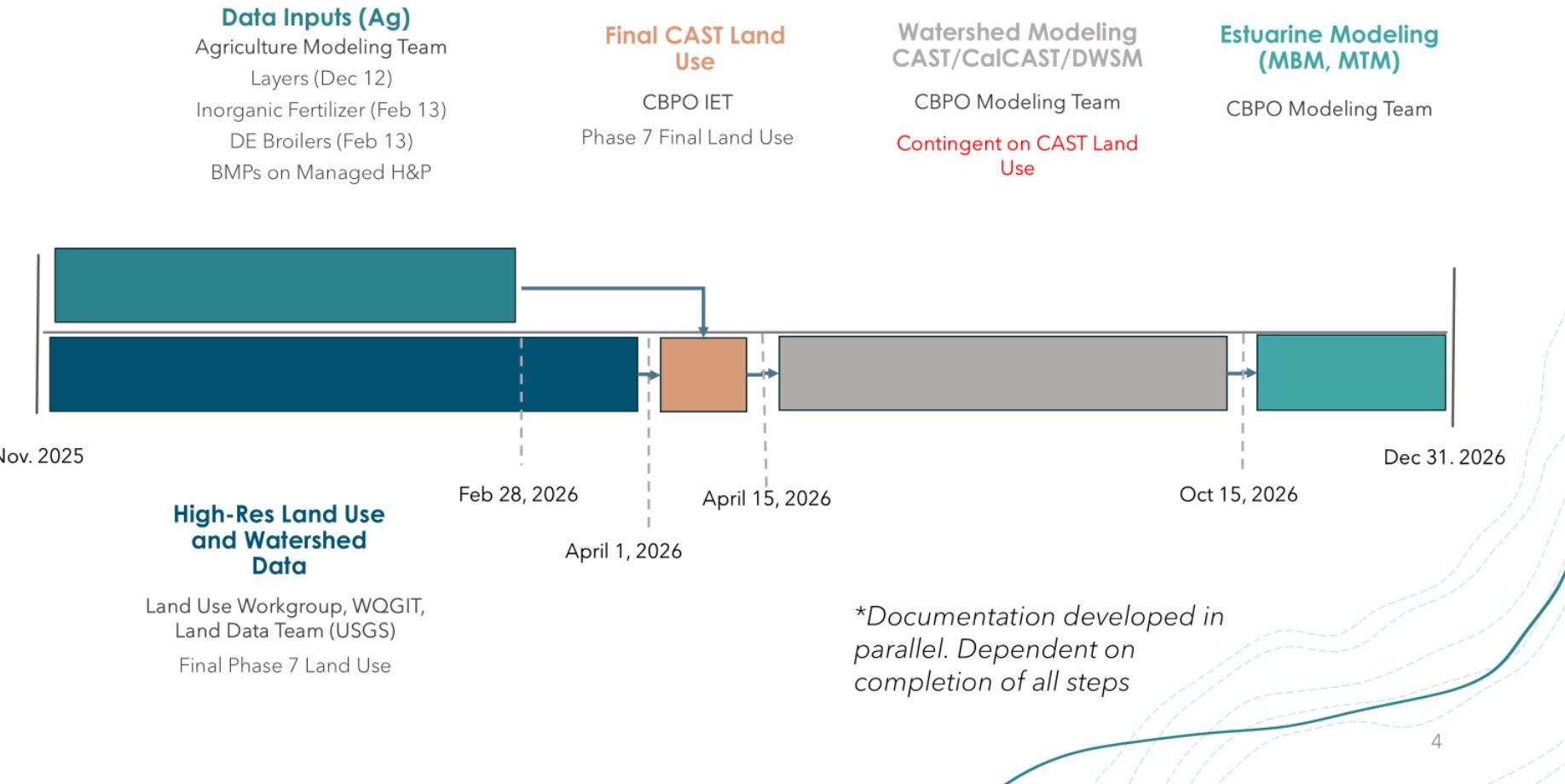
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## **Beyond 2025 Update – Structure and Governance**

- Bottom line: changes will be coming in 2026
- Activities related to the development of Management Strategies are to pause until MB/PSC provide direction
- However... Phase 7 = full steam ahead

# PHASE 7 DEVELOPMENT





# Timeline Updates (continued)

- 2025 Progress
  - NRCS/FSA data was delayed, but delivered to jurisdictions on Monday
  - Given the ~2-month delay on this dataset, there will be a commensurate delay in the 2025 progress release schedule
    - Progress BMPs, QAPPs, and the finalization of the progress scenario.
- Bay in the Balance/AgWG In-Person Meeting
  - Conference moved to March 2-4, 2026
  - AgWG will hold in person meeting on March 4 immediately following the lunch session on the final day of BITB
    - “Replacing” existing Feb/Mar AgWG meetings with one meeting on 3/4
- Our 2026 meetings
  - January getting pushed for MB and PSC (new date: 1/29)
  - February/March changed for BITB (new date: 3/4)
  - Juneteenth only impacting Fri, not Thurs?
  - May look to do another in-person later in year



# Personnel Changes

- Devereux Consulting is no longer contracted through EPA-CBPO
  - Olivia Martin
  - Helen Smith
- Official answers to CAST-related questions still come from CBPO – please direct all questions to [castteam@chesapeakebay.net](mailto:castteam@chesapeakebay.net)
  - See CBPO's [Office Staff page](#) for the most up-to-date list of contacts for Bay Program issues (Implementation & Evaluation section under the Science, Analysis and Implementation Branch is where you'll see many familiar faces!)



# Ag Modeling Team Updates



# Ag Advisory Committee Updates

- Recommendations to the Executive Council

- 1) Strengthen Farm Viability as the Foundation for Conservation
- 2) Accelerate Innovation and Target Investments
- 3) Celebrate Agricultural Progress and Build Public Trust
- 4) Support Land Preservation and Diverse Agricultural Systems
- 5) Cultivate Agricultural Literacy and Workforce Development

- On the horizon:

- Planning topics to tackle in 2026



# AgWG Leadership/Membership

- Leadership
  - One nominee for Vice Chair
- Membership
  - Remaining vacancies:
    - Dave Graybill (producer perspective)
    - Christi Hicks (USDA-NRCS/federal perspective)
- Nominations accepted through COB 12/30



**Questions?**



# 2

## **Phase 7 Load Sources: Preliminary Mapping to BMPs and Load Source Groups**



# Presentation



**Questions?**



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# Allocation of Feed Space Acres for Phase 7



# Presentation



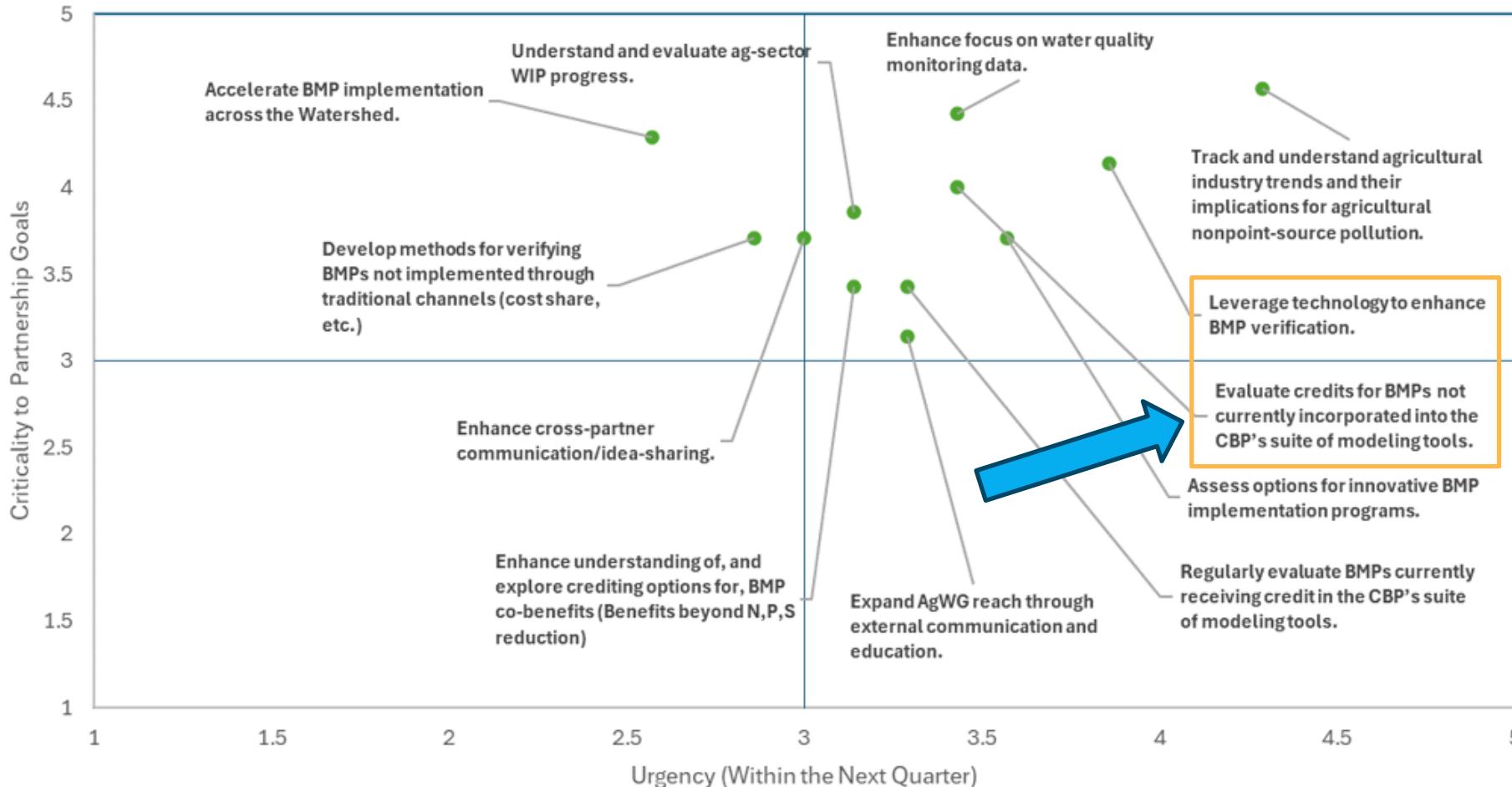
**Questions?**



# 4

## **Next Steps: BMP Efficiency Evaluation and Remote Sensing-based Verification**

## "Urgency vs. Impact" of AgWG Objectives





# BMP Efficiency Evaluation

- Compile a list of partner-requested ag BMPs to:
  - Establish as creditable BMPs in CAST
  - Revisit/update (existing practices that are considered outdated, “inaccurate”, etc.)

NOTE: Immediate action not necessarily going to be taken (unless requested), but need to understand our starting point – then we discuss next best steps

- Member feedback

# Remote Sensing

- Review all ag BMPs for feasibility
  - Can we identify these BMPs on the landscape remotely?
  - What would verification needs be?
- For those we can't... cut them *[from list of BMPs suitable for remote sensing-based tracking/verifying]* Consult experts to confirm the BMPs in the “maybe” and “yes” categories
- Of the list of BMPs that are feasible, sort by levels of implementation and partner interest
  - Need to understand the work already being done in the watershed to track these BMPs remotely
- Simultaneously conduct an assessment of savings associated with adopting an RS-based tracking/verification method supported by CBPO
  - Reduced field visits? Staff time?

# Reflections from Chesapeake Ag Networking Forum



# CANF Takeaways

- Exit Menti – Next Steps for participants (top 4 categories)
  - Collaboration Follow-up
  - Partnership Outreach
  - Farmer Engagement
  - Explore novel funding opportunities
- Standout talk: Eric Rosenbaum
  - “Agronomists” entering a room of “conservationists” can be intimidating, and vice versa
  - Should make sure we understand each other
- AgWG participants’ thoughts
- Can we derive any clearer sense of direction from Forum discussions?



# Knowledge Gaps?

What do we still need to know in order to effectively progress toward achieving our goals?

Ideas for research opportunities, data calls, pilot projects:  
Which would be appropriate for the partnership to address together?  
Which could be addressed by individuals or small groups of partners?



# Anything else?

- Send to Caroline Kleis ([Kleis.Caroline@epa.gov](mailto:Kleis.Caroline@epa.gov)) for inclusion in “Recap” email

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# Thank you!

Any questions?

You can contact me at [Hughes.Eric@epa.gov](mailto:Hughes.Eric@epa.gov)

