



Stewardship Workgroup

Quarter 4 Meeting – December 15, 2025

An aerial photograph of a dense evergreen forest, likely a spruce or fir forest, with a large white circle overlay in the center. The trees are a mix of dark green and some lighter green, suggesting different species or perhaps some trees are starting to turn yellow. The circle is a solid, bright white, providing a high-contrast background for the text.

Icebreaker in the Chat

**What's your favorite
winter holiday food or
activity?**

Beyond 2025 Outcome Assessment Process

- **Dec 2024:** GIT 5 Outcome Assessment Survey & ask for workgroup feedback
- **Feb 2025:** Workgroup meeting feedback finalizes recommendation to update Outcome
- **Feb-May 2025:** Language drafting and revision process
- **May 8, 2025:** Report out to Management Board + Management Board feedback
- **May 8-13, 2025:** Language revisions with Leila Duman and Anna Killius
- **May 13, 2025:** New revised language submission
- **May 2025:** MB & PSC approved revised outcomes for public comment
- **July 1 - Sept 1:** 60 Day Public Comment period
- **Sept 1 - Oct 1:** Incorporate public comments
- **Dec 2:** Watershed Agreement signed by the Executive Council

2014 *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* Outcome Language

Stewardship Outcome:

Increase the number and diversity of trained and mobilized volunteers who have the knowledge and skills needed to enhance the health of their local watersheds.

<https://www.chesapeakeprogress.com/engaged-communities/stewardship>

What needed to be updated with this outcome?

2014 Watershed Agreement Language: Increase the number and diversity of trained and mobilized volunteers who have the knowledge and skills needed to enhance the health of their local watersheds.

Challenges with 2014 Watershed Agreement Language:

1. Not very Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, or Time-bound (SMART)
2. Overemphasizes training and mobilizing volunteers which:
 - a. Is not the direct role/responsibility of the Chesapeake Bay Program, thus making the outcome difficult to achieve;
 - b. Does not fully capture stewardship actions beyond volunteer-based programs, i.e., individual and community-scale stewardship actions.

Revised *Watershed Agreement*

Revised Stewardship Outcome:

Increase the public's participation in stewardship actions that contribute positively to lands, waters, wildlife, fisheries and communities throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

New Target:

Through 2040, build the capacity of leaders in the community and environmental professionals with the social science data, technical assistance and support needed to develop, improve and carry out individual- and community-level stewardship programs, including those that will help advance Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement Goals and Outcomes.

How do the revisions address the challenges?

Revised Stewardship Outcome: Increase the public's participation in stewardship actions that contribute positively to lands, waters, wildlife, fisheries and communities throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Revisions:

- **Replaces reference to training and mobilizing volunteers** with the **more inclusive** phrase, “increase the public’s participation in stewardship actions” to better reflect the breadth of stewardship activities represented across the Mid-Atlantic region.
- **Outcome language remains simple, accessible to the public, and inspirational** based on Management Board feedback from the March retreat.
- Acknowledges stewardship of lands, waters, wildlife, fisheries and communities.
- Target language incorporates SMART factors.

The Stewardship Target incorporates SMART factors.

New Target: Through 2040, build the capacity of leaders in the community and environmental professionals with the social science data, technical assistance and support needed to develop, improve and carry out individual- and community-level stewardship programs, including those that will help advance Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement Goals and Outcomes.

Specific, Relevant, Achievable:

- The target language describes **specific** activities – providing “social science data, technical assistance, and support” – that are **relevant** to the role of the Chesapeake Bay Program.
- These activities are **achievable** by the Chesapeake Bay Program.
- Target language focuses on stewardship programs that are **specific and relevant** to *Agreement* goal and outcome areas, *e.g., Water Quality, Tree Canopy, etc.*

Time-bound:

- “Through 2040” sets a year to assess target progress while acknowledging that increasing and normalizing public participation in environmental stewardship will take ongoing, long-term effort.

Measurable:

- Metrics to measure the success and progress of the target will need to be set.

Implementing Stewardship Work in 2025

Opportunities for engagement: *Action Teams!*

- Steward Map Ambassadors
- Stewardship Resource Library
- Community-Level Stewardship

2025 Action Teams

Steward Map Ambassadors

Assist with outreach and promotion of the map.

Help brainstorm new map uses and map design improvements.

View the map [here](#).

Stewardship Resource Library

Determine the key audience(s) and their resource needs/wants.

Help design, gather resources for, and eventually share an online stewardship resource hub for practitioners.

Community-Level Stewardship

Develop a plan/methodology to identify what community-scale stewardship actions already exist across the watershed.

Help establish a baseline for future measurement.

Implementing Stewardship Work in 2025

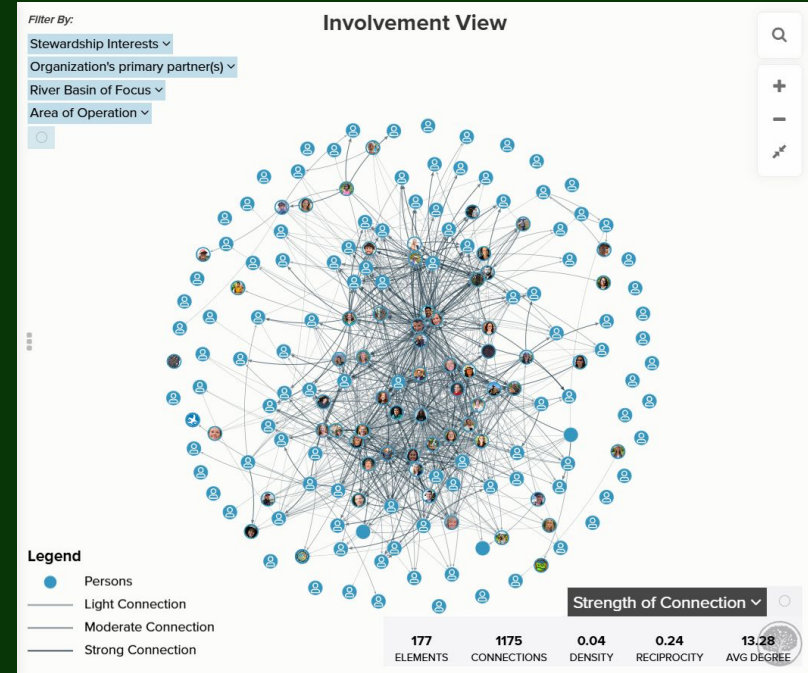
Chesapeake Steward Map

External Outreach

- Info Hours
- Watershed Forum Session

Internal Planning

- Ambassador Meetings



Implementing Stewardship Work in 2025

Community-Level Stewardship

DRAFT Definitions:

Community-Scale Stewardship Actions:

Habitual activities carried out by a group or network of people, that seek to improve, achieve, and/or socially norm the responsible use and protection of the natural environment through conservation and sustainable practices to enhance ecosystem resilience and human well-being (*based on a definition from Chapin et al. 2010*). These activities may benefit from technical assistance, social science data collection/analysis, and support from capacity building initiatives.

Community-Scale Stewardship Measures:

Quantifiable benefits to the environment that are a result of a community-scale stewardship action, project, or program (*based on a definition from Hajkowicz & Collins, 2009*).

Community-Scale Stewardship Actions:

Habitual activities carried out by a group or network of people, that seek to improve, achieve, and/or socially norm the responsible use and protection of the natural environment through conservation and sustainable practices to enhance ecosystem resilience and human well-being (*based on a definition from Chapin et al, 2010*). These activities may benefit from technical assistance, social science data collection/analysis, and support from capacity building initiatives.

Community-Scale Stewardship Measures:

Quantifiable benefits to the environment that are a result of a community-scale stewardship action, project, or program (*based on a definition from Hajkowicz & Collins, 2009*).

Planning for 2026

Scheduling Quarterly Meetings

- Proposal: 2nd Wednesdays starting in February, 10:00-11:30am
 - o Feb 11
 - o May 13
 - o Aug 12
 - o Nov 4 or Nov 10 (Tuesday because Nov 11 is veterans day)

Scheduling Action Teams

January check-ins to discuss progress, 2026 goals, and schedules.

- <https://www.when2meet.com/?33935539-VPskU>

Closing Announcements

**Reach out to Meredith if you
are interested in joining an
Action Team or becoming a
co-chair of the Stewardship
Workgroup!**



Meredith Lemke, lemkem@chesapeake.org

A scenic landscape featuring a calm lake in the foreground, surrounded by dense evergreen forests. In the background, majestic mountains are visible under a clear sky. A wooden bench sits on a grassy bank in the foreground. The scene is bathed in soft, golden light, suggesting early morning or late afternoon. Two dark green rounded rectangular overlays are present: one in the top right corner containing the word 'Thank' and another in the bottom left corner containing the word 'You'.

Thank

You