

Draft Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement Goal Introductions and Statements Friday, May 16, 2025

Conserved Lands

Introduction: The health of the Chesapeake Bay depends on the well-being of the lands that make up its watershed. As communities within the region continue to grow, the demand for land and resources can put our waters and habitats at risk. Sound land use decisions and conserving lands with ecological, historic and cultural value can reduce pollution, maintain healthy ecosystems and support growing economies. These cost-effective strategies will help communities adapt to changing environmental conditions and ensure clean water for future generations.

Goal Statement: Conserve, restore and enhance landscapes of ecological, economic and cultural value to maintain water quality, provide habitat for wildlife and increase resilience.

Outcomes: Land Use Decision Support; Protected Lands; Healthy Forests and Trees; Adaptation to Changing Environmental Conditions

Clean Water

Introduction: Clean water is the foundation of healthy fisheries, habitats and communities across the watershed. However, excess nitrogen, phosphorus, sediment and toxic contaminants can degrade our waterways, harm wildlife and pose risks to human health. The Chesapeake Bay Program partners use a variety of tools to reduce excess nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment, address toxic contaminants and monitor progress toward achieving water quality standards.

Goal Statement: Reduce pollutants entering the Bay and its rivers to achieve the water quality necessary to support our aquatic wildlife and protect human health.

Outcomes: Water Quality Standards Attainment and Monitoring; Reducing Excess Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Sediment; Toxic Contaminants Mitigation

Thriving Habitat and Wildlife

Introduction: The fisheries of the Chesapeake Bay watershed are the backbone of the region's ecology, economy and heritage. However, impaired water quality, invasive species and habitat loss place pressure on fish and wildlife populations across the region. Meanwhile, our increasing use of land and resources can fragment and degrade the habitats they depend on. Maintaining sustainable fisheries and restoring habitat for native and migratory species will support a strong economy and a balanced ecosystem.

Goal Statement: Protect, restore and sustain fisheries and wildlife, as well as the network of land and water habitats they depend on, to promote a balanced and resilient ecosystem and support local economies and recreational opportunities.

Outcomes: Submerged Aquatic Vegetation; Brook Trout; Fish Habitat; Wetlands; Fish Passage; Stream Health; Blue Crab Sustainability; Oysters

Engaged Communities

Introduction: The long-term success of the Chesapeake Bay restoration effort depends on individuals and communities throughout the watershed understanding their connection to the local environment and making choices that support its health. Stewardship begins with increasing access to outdoor recreation, providing learning opportunities to students, adults and job seekers, and empowering local decision-makers to support conservation actions.

Goal Statement: Engage and grow a community of local stewards and leaders through education, recreation and professional opportunities.

Outcomes: Public Access; School District Planning; Student Experiences; Stewardship; Workforce; Local Leadership