



# Outcome Review Meeting

Management Board  
February 13, 2025

Throughout 2025, the Chesapeake Bay Program will be revising the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* and restructuring the governance and decision-making processes of the partnership. The signatories of the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* include the states of Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia, the District of Columbia, the tri-state legislative Chesapeake Bay Commission and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on behalf of the federal government agencies that participate in the Chesapeake Bay Program.

On February 13, 2025, the Management Board held its first outcome review meeting, where 7 outcome leads presented recommendations on whether their outcome should be consolidated, reduced, updated, removed or replaced. The following provides a summary of the discussions that took place for each outcome presented at the February 13 Management Board meeting.

All 31 outcomes will be reviewed at the [March 27, 2025 Management Board meeting](#) and recommendations for revisions will be forwarded to the Principals' Staff Committee for discussion at their meeting on [March 28, 2025](#). The information presented below should not be considered final or a decision.

## **Blue Crab Abundance**

### **Current Outcome Language**

- Maintain a sustainable blue crab population based on a target of 196\* million adult females. Refine population targets through 2025 based on best available science.
- ChesapeakeProgress: [Blue Crab Abundance](#)

### **Outcome Lead Recommendation**

- The Chesapeake Bay Stock Assessment Committee recommends **updating** the Blue Crab Abundance Outcome and that it should remain under the Abundant Life theme and Sustainable fisheries goal.
- The blue crab stock assessment will be updated each year, and a more formal update to assess whether or not the partnership is meeting the outcome to sustain the blue crab population will be conducted every 5 years.
- [Blue Crab Abundance Outcome Review Two-Pager](#)

### **Management Board Opinion**

- Maryland, Virginia, the District of Columbia, the EPA and the Chesapeake Bay Commission support an update to the Blue Crab Abundance Outcome.



- Delaware, Pennsylvania, New York and West Virginia stood aside as they do not currently participate in this outcome.
- The EPA suggests consideration of an alternative term for climate change in the outcome language.
- Maryland would like to see discussion of larger changing environmental trends incorporated into this work.

## **Blue Crab Management**

### **Current Outcome Language**

- Manage for a stable and productive crab fishery including working with the industry, recreational crabbers and other stakeholders to improve commercial and recreational harvest accountability. By 2018, evaluate the establishment of a Bay-wide, allocation-based management framework with annual levels set by the jurisdictions for the purpose of accounting for and adjusting harvest by each jurisdiction.
- Chesapeake Progress: [Blue Crab Management](#)

### **Outcome Lead Recommendation**

- The Chesapeake Bay Stock Assessment Committee recommends **removing** the Blue Crab Management Outcome as it has been completed.
- Jurisdiction and management representatives have concluded that there is no need to continue the blue crab management outcome. The management board approved the completion of this outcome in June 2017.
- [Blue Crab Management Outcome Review Two-Pager](#)

### **Management Board Opinion**

- Maryland, Virginia, the District of Columbia, the EPA and the Chesapeake Bay Commission support removing to the Blue Crab Management Outcome.
- Delaware, Pennsylvania, New York and West Virginia stood aside as they do not participate in this outcome.

## **Fish Habitat**

### **Current Outcome Language**

- Continually improve effectiveness of fish habitat conservation and restoration efforts by identifying and characterizing critical spawning, nursery and forage areas within the Bay and tributaries for important fish and shellfish, and use existing and new tools to integrate information and conduct assessments to inform restoration and conservation efforts.
- Chesapeake Progress: [Fish Habitat Outcome](#)



### **Outcome Lead Recommendation**

- The Fish Habitat Action Team recommends **updating and consolidating** the Fish Habitat Outcome.
- The current outcome is too large in geographic scope and raises issues that are outside the control of fishery managers.
- Recommends tying updated outcome language more directly to the TMDL and to specific key fish species could lead to clearer champions, partnerships, public involvement, and collaboration across the Chesapeake Bay Program.
- [Fish Habitat Outcome Review Two-Pager](#)

### **Management Board Opinion**

- District of Columbia, Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Chesapeake Bay Commission and EPA all support updating and or consolidating this outcome.
  - DC supports the GITs disposition with a strong emphasis on making the Outcome SMART.
  - Delaware agrees with GIT justification, however, feels that it needs some work to make it a SMART outcome.
  - Maryland agrees with the recommendation and would like to see the Fish Forage work consolidated here.
  - Pennsylvania supports including Fish Passage and Brook Trout under more holistic Fish Habitat Outcome.
  - Virginia's disposition at this time is to update or consider a more holistic replacement.
  - Chesapeake Bay Commission agrees with continuation of a Fish Habitat Outcome.
  - The EPA agrees with GIT justification.
- New York and West Virginia stood aside as they do not currently participate in this outcome.

## **Forage Fish**

### **Current Outcome Language**

- Continually improve the Partnership's capacity to understand the role of forage fish populations in the Chesapeake Bay. By 2016, develop a strategy for assessing the forage fish base available as food for predatory species in the Chesapeake Bay.
- ChesapeakeProgress: [Forage Fish](#)

### **Outcome Lead Recommendation**

- Forage Action Team recommends **removing** the Forage Fish Outcome.
- This outcome was specific and measurable but was not clear about what the partnership wanted to change or improve by focusing on forage. The Forage Outcome was not linked to a specific fishery or Bay Program management objective.



## Chesapeake Bay Program

Science. Restoration. Partnership.

- The work addressed under the Forage Outcome could serve as an output or indicator under the Fish Habitat Outcome.
- [Forage Fish Outcome Review Two-Pager](#)

### Management Board Opinion

- District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Chesapeake Bay Commission, and the EPA support reclassifying the Forage Fish Outcome.
- Delaware, New York and West Virginia stood aside because they do not participate in this outcome.
- Virginia supports removing this outcome.

## Oysters

### Current Outcome Language

- Continually increase finfish and shellfish habitat and water quality benefits from restored oyster populations. Restore native oyster habitat and populations in 10 tributaries by 2025 and ensure their protection.
- ChesapeakeProgress: [Oysters](#)

### Outcome Lead Recommendation

- The Maryland and Virginia Oyster Restoration Interagency Team recommends **updating** the Oysters Outcome.
- The outcome should stay under the abundant life theme and sustainable fisheries goal.
- [Oyster Outcome Review Two-Pager](#)

### Management Board Opinion

- The Chesapeake Bay Commission, Delaware, District of Columbia, EPA, Maryland, and Virginia support updating this outcome.
  - Virginia would like to see this outcome updated to incorporate broader reef restoration (i.e. artificial reef programs), coupled with an Oyster Abundance Outcome that focuses on increasing oyster abundance through sustainable fisheries management (allowing flexibility for how different jurisdictions do so).
  - Chesapeake Bay Commissions is interested to see further discussion of an oyster abundance outcome along with continued refinement of what conservation and protection mean in the context of the updated oyster habitat outcome.
  - EPA suggests that the outcome lead clarify what "conserve" means in context of oyster restoration. Suggest that outreach and education activities be included as an output or strategy rather than in the Outcome language.
- Delaware, New York, West Virginia and Pennsylvania stood aside as they do not currently participate in the outcome.

## Fish Passage

### **Current Outcome Language**

- Continually increase access to habitat to support sustainable migratory fish populations in the Chesapeake Bay watershed's freshwater rivers and streams. By 2025, restore historical fish migration routes by opening an additional 132 miles every two years to fish passage. Restoration success will be indicated by the consistent presence of alewife, blueback herring, American shad, hickory shad, American eel and brook trout, to be monitored in accordance with available agency resources and collaboratively developed methods.\*
- ChesapeakeProgress: [Fish Passage](#)

### **Outcome Lead Recommendation**

- The Fish Passage Workgroup recommends **updating** the Fish Passage Outcome.
- The workgroup recommends an increase from 132 to 150 miles every two years.
- The workgroup also recommends incorporating all fish (resident and migratory), and other aquatic dependent organisms (freshwater mussels, reptiles, amphibians, etc.) into the outcome.
- [Fish Passage Outcome Review Two-Pager](#)

### **Management Board Opinion**

- The Chesapeake Bay Commission, Delaware, the District of Columbia, EPA, Maryland, New York, and Virginia support the recommendation to update this outcome.
- Delaware and West Virginia stood aside as they do not participate in this outcome currently.
- Pennsylvania supported consolidating the Fish Passage Outcome with the Fish Habitat Outcome.
- Chesapeake Bay Commissions expressed concern about the movement of this outcome into other non-physical barriers and habitat elements like AMD and thermal.

## **Local Leadership**

### **Current Outcome Language**

- Continually increase the knowledge and capacity of local officials on issues related to water resources and in the implementation of economic and policy incentives that will support local conservation actions.
- ChesapeakeProgress: [Local Leadership Outcome](#)

### **Outcome Lead Recommendation**

- The Local Leadership Outcome recommends **updating** the Local Leadership Outcome.
- The Local Leadership Outcome should be updated to better support local governments in their critical role as implementers of projects and policies that support local needs and meet watershed goals.



## **Chesapeake Bay Program**

*Science. Restoration. Partnership.*

- Updates to the language should focus the Partnership's work to empower local governments to take actions that benefit their environment and economy.
- Revisions should position the outcome in a way that it can support state partners and all GITs and Workgroups in effectively engaging with local officials.
- [Local Leadership Outcome Review Two-Pager](#)

### **Management Board Opinion**

- The Chesapeake Bay Commission, Delaware, the District of Columbia, EPA, Maryland, New York and Pennsylvania support updating this outcome.
  - DC strongly emphasizes that this outcome needs improvements to be effective.
- Virginia suggests consolidating this outcome under the Local Government Advisory Committee.
- West Virginia stood aside because they do not participate in this outcome.