

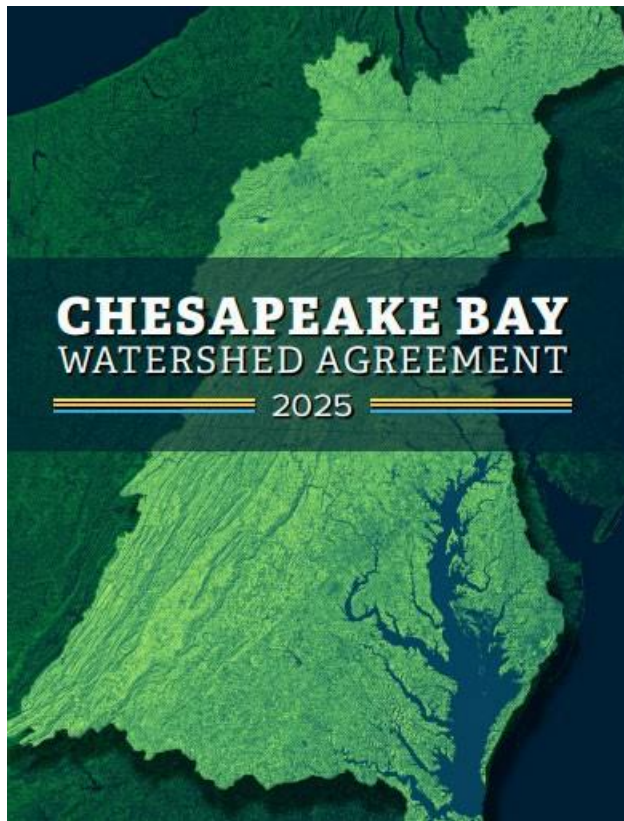


Chesapeake Bay Program
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Chesapeake Bay Program

Freshwater Mussels Workgroup

Becky Gwynn, Virginia Dept. of Wildlife Resources
Conowingo WIP Steering Committee Meeting
September 14, 2026



The 2025 Watershed Agreement

[You can access the 2025 Watershed Agreement here](#)

10 Goals



4 Goals

The Four Interconnected Goals of Watershed Restoration



31 Outcomes



21 Outcomes

Thriving Habitat, Fisheries, & Wildlife



Outcomes

Blue Crabs

Achieve a sustainable Bay-wide blue crab fishery through cross-jurisdictional coordination that supports healthy blue crab populations and thriving fish communities.

- Maintain blue crab abundance and harvest rate targets as determined by the most recent benchmark status assessment.
- Achieve cross-jurisdictional coordination by annually evaluating and communicating blue crab population status to resource managers and the public through the Blue Crab Advisory Report.

Brook Trout

Protect and enhance brook trout within the Chesapeake Bay watershed by increasing occupancy, abundance and resilience to changing environmental conditions.

- By 2040, increase brook trout occupancy by 1.5% (233 miles) in watersheds supporting healthy populations while achieving no net loss in other watersheds.
- By 2040, increase abundance at 10 long-term monitoring sites.
- By 2040, reduce identified threats by 15% to increase brook trout resilience in watersheds supporting healthy populations.

Fish Habitat

Achieve and maintain suitable shallow water fish habitat in tidal and nontidal areas for key species through focused water quality conservation and restoration improvements informed by assessments of habitat and fisheries information.

- Improve the quantity and quality of tidal shallow water fish habitat above baseline conditions as determined by a Bay-wide assessment of fish habitat conditions completed in 2026.
- Increase the consideration of forage species in fishery management decision-making for key predators by developing annual reports of prey status as good, uncertain or poor.
- Improve the quality of nontidal fish habitat by continuing to assess the overall condition and suitability in the watershed to support healthy communities and inform effective restoration, conservation and management actions.
- By 2040, improve 270 stream miles of waters impaired by acid mine drainage to continually increase available habitat supporting fish populations.
- Develop comprehensive freshwater mussel conservation plans for 10 tributaries and implement key recommendations from at least five of these plans by 2040.

Stream Health

Improve and protect local stream health and function, including their living resources and ecosystem services throughout the watershed, using the best available science to inform land management, planning and conservation.

- Improve the health and the ecological integrity of at least an additional 4,340 (approximately 3%) nontidal stream miles every six years.

Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (SAV)

Sustain and increase the habitat and ecosystem benefits of SAV in the Chesapeake Bay. Achieve and sustain the outcome of 196,600 acres of SAV Bay-wide necessary for a restored Bay.

- Measure progress against the following targets for each salinity zone:
 - Tidal Fresh: 21,700 acres.
 - Low Salinity: 13,100 acres.
 - Medium Salinity: 126,000 acres.
 - High Salinity: 35,800 acres.
- Measure progress toward this Outcome against interim targets of 90,000 acres by 2030, 95,000 acres by 2035 and 100,000 acres by 2040.

Fish Passage

Improve habitat and water quality while creating more resilient and sustainable populations of fish and other aquatic organisms by removing barriers throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed's coastal and freshwater rivers and streams.

- Restore passage and connectivity to at least 150 miles of aquatic habitat every two years.

Oysters

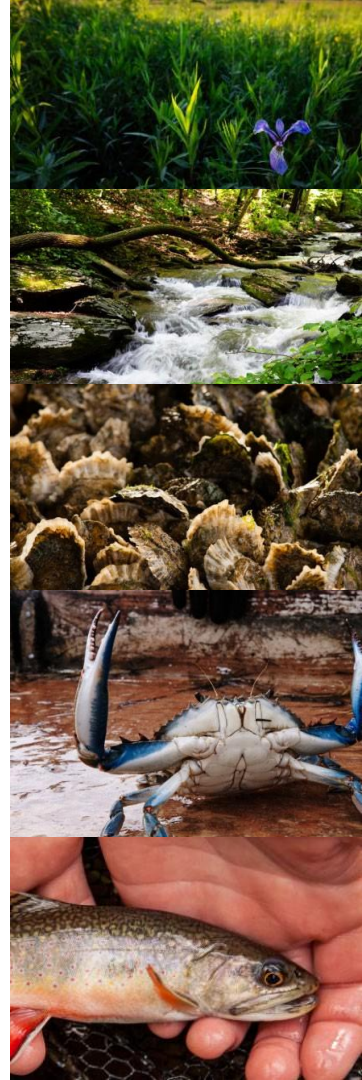
Increase ecosystem benefits from oysters through reef habitat restoration, sustainable harvest and aquaculture.

- By 2040, restore or conserve at least 2,000 additional acres of oyster reef habitat concentrated primarily in restoration focus areas to provide ecosystem service benefits.
- Maintain sustainable oyster abundance through oyster fisheries and aquaculture practices.
- Maintain reefs established under the 2014 *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* to achieve restoration success metrics.

Wetlands

Restore, create, enhance and protect wetlands to support people and living resources, including waterbirds and fish, and provide water quality, flood and erosion protection, recreation and other valuable benefits to people.

- Restore or create at least 3,000 acres and enhance 15,000 acres of tidal wetlands by 2040, focusing on habitats that support populations of waterbirds and represent healthy wetlands across the watershed.
- Restore or create at least 3,000 acres and enhance 15,000 acres of nontidal wetlands by 2040, focusing on habitats that support populations of waterbirds and represent healthy wetlands across the watershed.



Fish Habitat Outcome & Freshwater Mussel Target

Fish Habitat Outcome

Achieve and maintain suitable shallow water fish habitat in tidal and nontidal areas for key species through focused water quality conservation and restoration improvements informed by assessments of habitat and fisheries information.

Freshwater Mussel Target

Develop comprehensive freshwater mussel conservation plans for 10 tributaries and implement key recommendations from at least five of these plans by 2040.



Governance & Structure

Thriving Habitat, Fisheries, & Wildlife Coordination Team

Co-Chairs:



Kevin Schabow (NOAA)

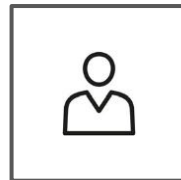


Becky Gwynn (VADWR)

Coordinators:



Chris Guy (UFWS)

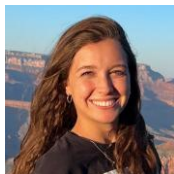


Bruce Vogt (NOAA)

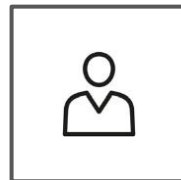


Keith Bollt (EPA)

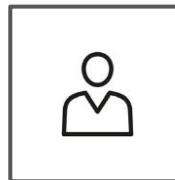
Staffers:



Christina Garvey (CRC)



Kami Lentzsch



Aleyna Loughran-Pierce

THFW Goal Team Structure



Workgroups

- Workgroups align with Outcomes
- Responsible for targets under the outcome
- Led by a chair or co-chairs (may also have vice-chairs)
- Signatory & at large voting members, interested parties
- Up to 15 voting members (votes in instances where unanimous consent cannot be reached)

Proposal to the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Region Freshwater Mussel Partnership

As a workgroup under the CBP, this group has the potential to...

- Fulfill the FWM target under the Fish Habitat Outcome & THFW Goal:
 - Define comprehensive freshwater mussel conservation plans for 10 tributaries
 - Develop key recommendations that will be implemented in at least five plans by 2040
- Collaborate with other workgroups & action teams
 - E.g. Fish Passage Workgroup; Non-Tidal Fish Habitat Target; Water Quality, Healthy Landscapes, and Engaged Communities Goal Teams
- Be part of this new opportunity for FWM expertise to be integrated into the work of the Chesapeake Bay

Thank you!



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