

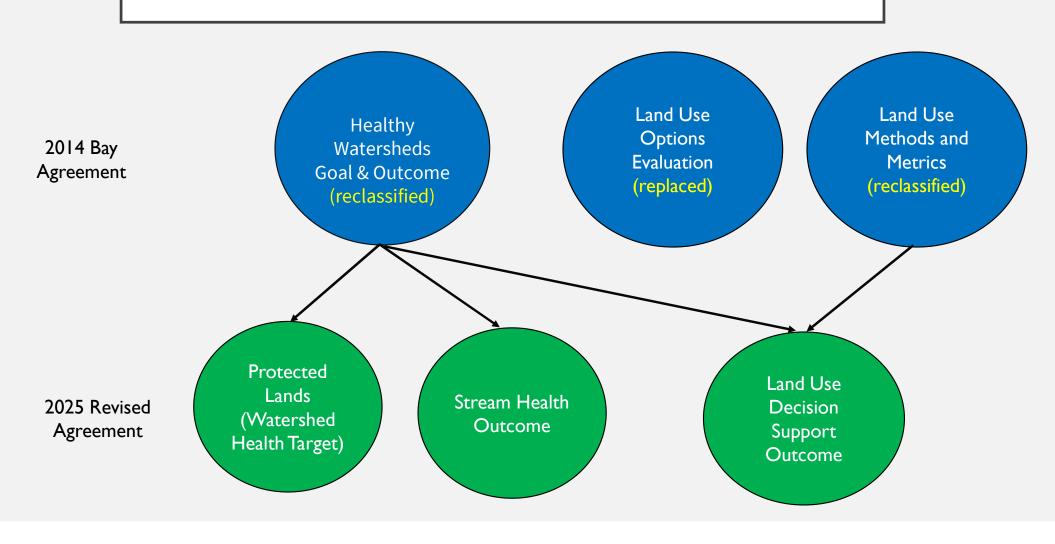


AGENDA

- 1. Where are "Healthy Watersheds" in the Revised Agreement?
- 2. Review & Discuss the Feedback Received from the Public Comment Period
- 3. Beyond 2025: Discussion on the Future of the HWGIT & Proposed Healthy Landscapes Goal



QUICK RECAP: HOW DID WE GET HERE?



MY1

WHY WAS THE HEALTHY WATERSHEDS GOAL "RECLASSIFIED"?

Concerns with the current outcome:

- Questionably measurable and not timebound
- Lacks partner commitment, resources, and monitoring of the conditions used to justify the original "healthy watershed" designation
- Variability in each state's definition of "healthy watersheds" prevents consistent and comparable assessments of both conditions and progress
- Confusion exists over the relationship between watershed health and stream health:
 - A watershed with streams impaired for acid mine drainage or toxics may be completely forested and therefore deemed "healthy" while some developed watersheds support cold water fisheries and other indicators of "health"

Why was this outcome reclassified?

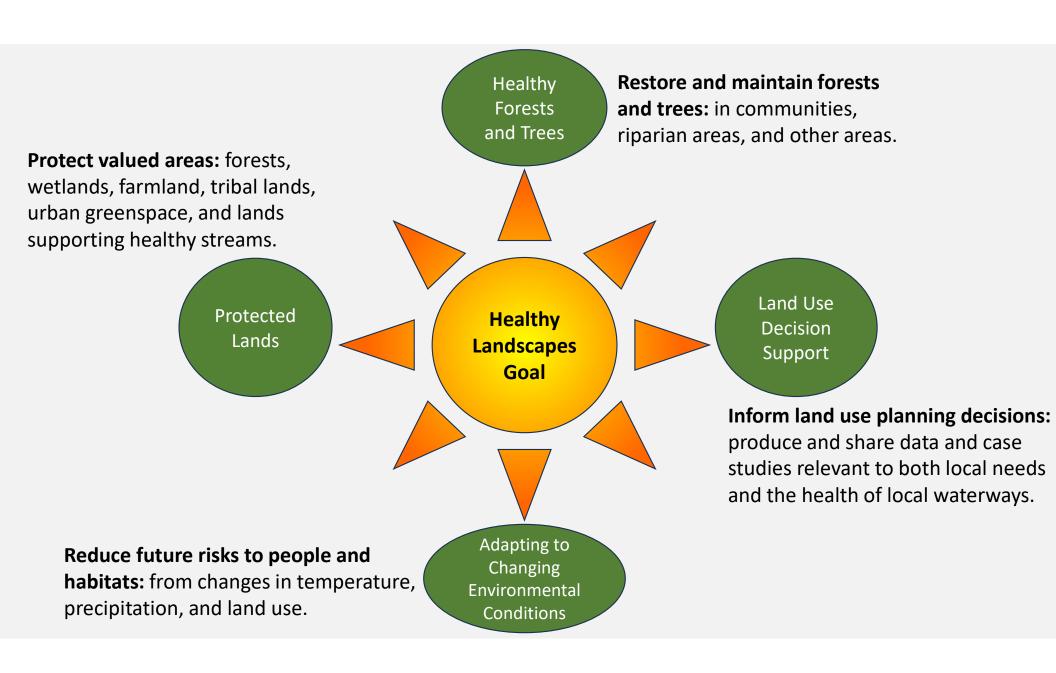
 Given the concerns with the current outcome and the EC charge to simplify and streamline structure and processes, during the March 27th MB meeting, they reached consensus to reclassify the Healthy Watersheds outcome as elements underneath the Protected Lands, Stream Health, and Land Use Decision Support outcomes

Slide 5

MY1 Return back to this

Marilyn Yang, 2025-08-27T19:54:29.528

OUTCOMES UNDERNEATH THE PROPOSED HEALTHY LANDSCAPES GOAL



LAND USE DECISION SUPPORT OUTCOME

(TO REPLACE THE LAND USE OPTIONS EVALUATION (LUOE) OUTCOME):

DRAFT OUTCOME LANGUAGE:

Develop and disseminate relevant and actionable land use information to organizations and communities involved in local and regional land use planning. This information will include past, present and future conditions, as well as the potential environmental and socioeconomic consequences of changing conditions.

DRAFT TARGETS:

- Continually increase the number, variety and/or geographic scope of use cases (e.g., watershed protection, aquatic connectivity, stormwater, tree canopy, or redevelopment) to inform land-use decisions and maintain the ecological integrity of watersheds supporting good stream health.
- Highlight at least two widely applicable use cases annually to showcase best practices and share this
 information with local governments and partners through Story Maps and/or other communication
 products.

UPDATES RELATED TO THE PROTECTED LANDS OUTCOME

DRAFT OUTCOME LANGUAGE: By 2040, permanently protect a total of 10.8 or 11.3 million acres of land throughout the watershed at the federal, state, or local level, building on a 2025 baseline of 9.3 million acres already protected and continually increase the protection of forests, riparian forests, wetlands and adjacent areas, natural areas supporting healthy streams, agricultural lands, tribal homelands, and community green spaces.

MY1

Sophie submitted to Sarah that the watershed health target under the Protected Lands outcome would take until 2027 to finish - but at last week's MB meeting they requested to have all target proposals submitted by Sep 4th... will await further guidance from the MB on what this would mean for all the targets that need more time Marilyn Yang, 2025-08-18T16:58:43.881

PROTECTED LANDS OUTCOME

DRAFT OUTCOME LANGUAGE: Protect critical landscapes within the Chesapeake Bay watershed to protect water quality, enhance biodiversity, support sustainable livelihoods, ensure military readiness and national defense, and honor cultural heritage.

DRAFT TARGETS:

- Protected Lands: By 2040, permanently protect an additional 1.5-2 million acres of land throughout the watershed at the federal, state or local level.
- **Forests:** By 2040, permanently protect a total of _XX_ acres of forest, of which XX% are in riparian areas.
- **Wetlands**: By 2040, permanently protect a total of _XX_ acres of wetlands, focusing on the protection of buffer zones.
- **Watershed Health:** By 2040, protect a total of _XX_ acres of natural lands in watersheds that support good stream health.
- **Tribal Lands:** Support the sovereignty and duty of care of tribal nations and communities by securing protection status and/or co-management agreements for a total of _XX_ acres of tribal homelands.
- **Agricultural Lands:** By 2040, permanently protect a total of _XX_ acres of agricultural lands within the Chesapeake Bay watershed.
- **Community Greenspace:** By 2040, permanently protect a total of _XX_ acres of community greenspace.

HEALTHY FORESTS AND TREES OUTCOME

DRAFT OUTCOME LANGUAGE: Conserve and restore forests and tree cover to maximize benefits for water quality, habitat and people throughout the watershed, with a particular focus on riparian areas and communities.

DRAFT TARGETS:

Tree Canopy: Conserve and reduce the loss of existing canopy and plant and maintain 35,000 acres of community trees by 2035 to achieve a net gain in canopy over the long term.

Forest Buffers: Conserve and reduce the loss of existing buffers and plant and maintain 7,500 acres of forest buffers annually to achieve no less than 71% riparian forest cover by 2035 and 75% riparian forest cover over the long term.

Forest Conservation: Achieve a net gain in forests over the long term by reducing the rate of forest loss by conversion to other land uses by 33%, permanently protecting a total of 8.2 to 8.5 million acres of forested lands, and planting and maintaining 155,000 acres of new forests by 2035.

ADAPTING TO CHANGING ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS OUTCOME

DRAFT OUTCOME LANGUAGE:

Increase the capacity for pursuing nature-based solutions to improve planning and response to changing conditions while balancing long-term resiliency of watershed communities, economies and ecosystems.

DRAFT TARGETS:

- By 2035, at least seven subwatershed areas have benefited from knowledge-sharing and technical assistance to identify adaptation options with nature-based solutions. These solutions include restoration and protection projects that will help address risks to people, infrastructure and habitats from changes in temperature, precipitation and landscapes.
- By 2035, workgroup activities will inform and lead to an increase in the implementation of the identified adaptation options that integrate nature-based solutions in the above subwatershed areas.

ADDITIONAL OUTCOMES CONNECTED TO THE PROPOSED HEALTHY LANDSCAPES GOAL

STREAM HEALTH OUTCOME

FINAL DRAFT OUTCOME LANGUAGE:

• Continually 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.

FINAL DRAFT TARGET:

• Improve health and ecological integrity of at least 3% of non-tidal stream miles every 6 years

STREAM HEALTH ELEMENTS IN OTHER OUTCOMES

- Discussions have been occurring with members of the SHWG to help determine what "g(MY1) stream health" would mean for these related outcomes:
 - Land Use Decision Support Outcome (3rd Target): Promote land use data and tool applications that maintain the ecological integrity of watersheds supporting good stream health and address the needs of local communities.
 - Protected Lands Outcome (Watershed Health Target): By 2040, protect a total of _XX_ acres of natural lands in watersheds that support good stream health.

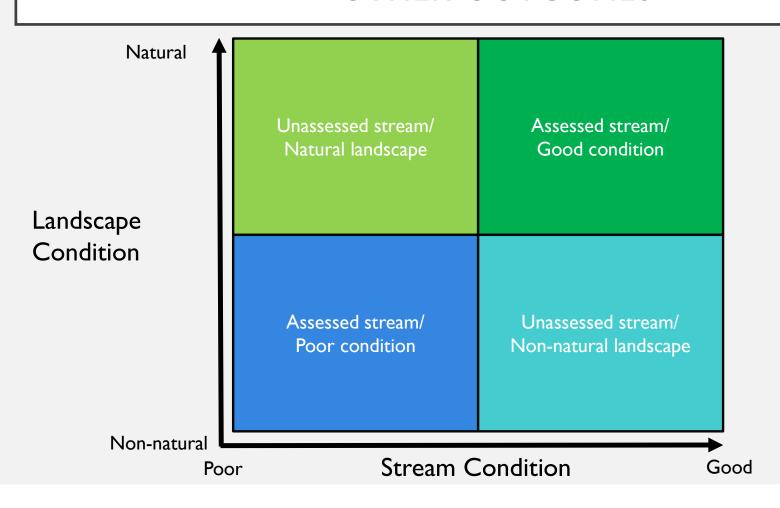
MY1 Sophie submitted that the watershed health target would take until 2027 to finish - but at last week's MB meeting they requested to have all target proposals submitted by Sep 4th... will await further guidance from the MB on what this would mean for all the targets that need more time

Marilyn Yang, 2025-08-18T16:53:19.726

MY2 Peter to add slide here explaining an update on multiple meetings with the SHWG to take different metrics to create 4 classes using different data

Marilyn Yang, 2025-08-27T19:26:02.775

UPDATES RELATED TO STREAM HEALTH ELEMENTS IN OTHER OUTCOMES



LOCAL LEADERSHIP OUTCOME

FINAL DRAFT OUTCOME LANGUAGE:

Continually increase the knowledge and capacity of local government leaders to empower them to make decisions and implement local actions that support the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement.

FINAL DRAFT TARGET:

 Increase the percentage of local government leaders reporting water resource management actions biennially.

PUBLIC ACCESS OUTCOME

FINAL DRAFT OUTCOME LANGUAGE:

Enhance new and existing public access sites to the Bay and its tributaries through a combination of actions aimed at improving recreational opportunities and accessibility while addressing barriers to access by increasing the number, quality and geographic distribution of sites.

FINAL DRAFT TARGET:

- New Access Sites: By 2040, add 100 new public access sites with a strong emphasis on providing opportunities for recreation where feasible.
- Improving ADA/ABA Accessibility: By 2040, improve 3% of existing public water access sites by adding ADA/ABA accessible features, where feasible, to meet the needs of communities.
- Access Upgrades, Maintenance and Expansion: By 2040, improve at least 100 existing public water access sites by upgrading or maintaining site grounds and structures—including signage, parking, seating and public facilities—and expanding the range of active and passive recreation opportunities, such as kayaking, boating, trails, courts, piers, wildlife viewing and picnic areas.
- **Expanding Access to Urban Lands**: By 2040, expand access to _XX_% of urban lands and community green spaces identified in the Protected Lands data set. An initial baseline study is to be conducted by 2025-2026 to determine appropriate numeric targets for this metric.

WETLANDS OUTCOME

FINAL DRAFT OUTCOME LANGUAGE:

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

FINAL DRAFT TARGET:

- Tidal Wetlands Target: Restore or create 1,000 acres and enhance 15,000 acres by 2035.
- Non-Tidal Wetlands Target: Restore or create 2,000 acres and enhance 15,000 acres by 2035.
- **Buffer Protection Target**: Same as the Protected Lands Outcome and will be tracked under that Outcome.
- Waterbirds represent wetlands functioning at its highest level; priorities for specific species will be developed over the next 12 to 18 months.



BEYOND 2025 TIMELINE FOR THE CHESAPEAKE BAY WATERSHED AGREEMENT REVISIONS

January - March:

 Outcome Assessment - Management Board decides whether to recommend consolidating, reducing, updating, removing, replacing or adding new outcome.
 PSC reviews agreement for additional revisions



April - June:

 Outcome Revision - Management Board recommends any new/revised outcome language. PSC approves language and Agreement revisions for public review



July - September:

- Public feedback and revisions
- Clarification of targets under each outcome



End of 2025:

Executive Council to review recommended revisions to the Agreement and its outcomes

FEEDBACK ON LAND USE DECISION SUPPORT OUTCOME

MY1

- **1.Strengthen Conservation Amid Development**: Urges intensified land conservation efforts in response to urban sprawl, solar farms, and data center expansion across the Chesapeake region.
- **2.Empower Local Governments**: Stresses the need for funding, technical assistance, and accessible tools to help local governments make informed land use decisions.
- **3.Broaden Use Case Visibility**: Suggests increasing the number and geographic diversity of annual land use case studies to improve public engagement and understanding.
- **4.Address Data Center Impacts**: Highlights environmental concerns from data center growth, calling for better modeling of water usage, effluent discharge, and land conversion effects.

- Quick summary of the main things, whether it was positive or negative mainly, any feedback from the group Marilyn Yang, 2025-08-27T19:40:50.462
- MY1 0 Ask the members I if they have any unexpressed comments on the language or feedback on the feedback itself Marilyn Yang, 2025-08-27T19:41:42.242

FEEDBACK ON PROTECTED LANDS OUTCOME

- 1. Set More Ambitious and Specific Targets: Many commenters urge increasing the protected lands goal to at least 2.5—3.5 million acres by 2035–2040, with clear, measurable targets for forests, wetlands, agricultural lands, tribal lands, and urban greenspace.
- 2. Expand Definitions and Metrics: There is strong support for defining terms like "community greenspace," "critical landscapes," and "permanently protected," and for including metrics that reflect ecological value, walkability, and access—especially in underserved and urban areas.
- **3. Elevate Conservation to Equal Restoration:** Conservation should be treated as a core strategy alongside restoration and science, with calls for better integration of land protection into water quality goals, habitat resilience, and climate adaptation.
- **4. Support Private Land Conservation and Land Trusts:** Emphasis is placed on the role of land trusts and voluntary conservation easements, with recommendations for stronger incentives, funding, and recognition of private land conservation as a Best Management Practice (BMP).
- **5. Improve Transparency, Equity, and Local Engagement:** Commenters request more transparency in setting targets, inclusion of local and tribal voices in planning, and consideration of equity impacts—such as promoting conservation leasing as an alternative to permanent easements.

FEEDBACK ON ADAPTING TO CHANGING ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS OUTCOME

- 1. Strengthen Climate Resilience Goals: Comments call for clearer, more robust climate resilience planning that directly addresses sea level rise, flooding, extreme weather, and warming waters, with stronger language and commitments.
- 2. Accelerate Timelines & Implementation: Many suggest moving the 2040 targets to 2035 and emphasize the need for actual implementation of adaptation strategies—not just identification—especially given the urgency of climate impacts.
- **3. Clarify and Expand Scope:** Recommendations include defining "subwatersheds" more clearly, broadening the focus beyond nature-based solutions to include hybrid and technological approaches, and incorporating disaster preparedness.
- **4. Make Targets SMART:** Feedback highlights that current targets lack specificity and measurable outcomes. Suggestions include setting firm project numbers and clearer metrics for success.
- **5. Support for Vulnerable Communities & Landscapes:** Emphasis on ensuring adaptation efforts benefit farms, coastal zones, and underserved areas, with calls for inclusive planning that considers cultural, economic, and environmental resilience.

FEEDBACK ON HEALTHY FORESTS AND TREES OUTCOME

- 1. Strengthen Forest Protection Goals: Calls for reinstating the 900-mile riparian buffer goal, enacting "no net loss" forest laws, and setting ambitious targets for forest conservation, including protecting half of the Bay watershed's forests.
- 2. Increase Tree Canopy Targets: Suggests raising the tree planting goal from 35,000 to 50,000 by 2035, with emphasis on urban and underserved areas, and clarifying definitions like "community trees."
- **3. Add Specific, Measurable Targets:** Recommends intermediate milestones before 2035, clearer metrics for forest loss reduction, and consistent deadlines across all objectives to ensure accountability and progress tracking.
- **4. Boost Incentives for Conservation:** Highlights the need for stronger, innovative incentives to encourage voluntary conservation actions, especially in high-development areas like urban counties.
- **5. Broaden Scope of Forest Management:** Advocates for inclusion of forest age diversity, sustainable harvest plans, native species adaptation, and restoration of early-successional habitats to support wildlife and ecosystem resilience.

NEXT STEPS

Based on the public feedback, what should the HWGIT communicate to the Management Board and public comment review team?

Upcoming meetings during which the public feedback will be reviewed and discussed:

- September 11th, 2025 Management Board Meeting
- <u>September 30th October 2nd</u>, <u>2025</u> Management Board Retreat



BACKGROUND: CURRENT ORGANIZATION



1. Sustainable Fisheries



6. Stewardship



2. Vital Habitats



7. Land Conservation



3. Water Quality



8. Public Access



4. Toxic Contaminants



9. Environmental Literacy



5. Healthy Watersheds



10. Climate Resiliency

- 31 Outcomes
- 10 Goals
- 6 GITS
- 5 Themes
 - Abundant Life
 - Clean Water
 - Conserved Lands
 - Engaged Communities
 - Climate Change

PROPOSED REORGANIZATION

4 GOALS:

1. Healthy Landscapes

- 1. Land Use Decision Support
- 2. Protected Lands
- 3. Healthy Forests and Trees
- Adaptation to Changing Environmental Conditions

2. Clean Water

- Water Quality Standards Attainment and Monitoring
- 2. Reducing Excess Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Sediment
- 3. Toxic Contaminants Mitigation

3. Thriving Habitat and Wildlife

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

4. Engaged Communities

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

Draft Revised Watershed Agreement for Public Comment (Link)

HOW WILL OUR GROUPS BE CONNECTED UNDERNEATH THIS NEW STRUCTURE?

Creates and communicates actionable information relevant to land use to organizations involved in the planning process.

Land Use Workgroup Stream Health WG Characterizes stream and river corridor conditions; identifies opportunities for restoration and conservation; improves stream health

Increase knowledge and awareness of local elected officials.

Shares information among local officials and between local officials and CBP Partners Local Leadership Workgroup

> Healthy Landscapes Goal

Local Government Advisory Committee

> Protected Lands Workgroup

Promotes and incentivizes land conservation efforts

Adapting to
Changing
Environmental
Conditions
Workgroup

Forestry

Workgroup

Characterizes risks and opportunities associated with coastal resilience.

Reforests riparian areas, promotes increased tree canopy, and preservation and management of forested lands.

Internal to the Healthy Landscapes Goal

External but necessary for success of the Healthy Landscapes Goal

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Re-organization and Role:

- What should be the role of the new Healthy Landscapes Goal?
- How can it build upon or evolve from the work of the HWGIT?
- What role can we play in bridging together the outcomes currently drafted underneath this goal (Land Use Decision Support, Healthy Trees and Forests, Changing Environmental Conditions, and Protected Lands)?

Membership:

- How might the membership change with this transition? Are current members interested in leaving or staying involved?
- What new groups or individuals should we encourage to join?

Future Topics:

- What projects or initiatives would you like to see this new group pursue?
- Are there emerging challenges or opportunities members would like to explore under this new framework?



MY1 Potential ideas to suggest

- Ecosystem services
- How can we support creating a geographic focal area or layout of priorities (state forest action plans, land use plans, adaptation plans, etc.) We have these largescale watershed projects starting to gear up with multiple parties and use those as opportunities to engage with everything coming out of these workgroups (essentially how can we help them with their management strategies)

Marilyn Yang, 2025-08-27T20:04:01.042