# HEALTHY WATERSHEDS OUTCOME

## SRS 4TH CYCLE: 2024-2026 WORK PLAN

**GOAL:**

Sustain state-identified healthy waters and watersheds recognized for their high quality and/or high ecological value.

**OUTCOME:**

100 percent of state-identified currently healthy waters and watersheds remain healthy.

**Long-term Target:**

Sustain the health of Chesapeake Bay healthy waters and watersheds.

**Two-year Target:**

Track changes in land conversion to development and land protection within healthy watersheds. Develop a coupled stream and watershed health strategy based on shared data and understanding of stream impairments, watershed conditions, and future vulnerabilities. Better understand and improve the role of the Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership in supporting local capacity for land protection, land use planning, and targeting land conservation actions to maintain stream and watershed health. Set new acreage goals for healthy watersheds protection in collaboration with the CBP Protected Lands Workgroup.

| **MANAGEMENT APPROACH 1:** Align outcomes, science, data, policies, and management approaches related to healthy waters and watersheds | | | | |
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| **Action #** | **Description of Step** | **Responsible Party or Parties** | **Geographic Location** | **Expected Timeline** |
| 1.1 | Expand the scope of the healthy watersheds outcome to include all healthy waters and their watersheds based on a holistic accounting of stream and watershed conditions. | **HWGIT**, SHWG | Chesapeake Bay Watershed | 2024-2025 |

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| 1.2 | Identify shared goals, strategies, and information sources across workgroups and goal teams. | **HWGIT**, HGIT, SGIT, WQGIT, SHWG, PLWG, PAWG, FWG, LUWG, CRWG, WWG, BTAT, LLWG, and DWG. | Chesapeake Bay Watershed | 2024-2025 |
| 1.3 | Develop a better and shared understanding of the relationship between watershed and stream conditions. | **SHWG,** HWGIT | Chesapeake Bay Watershed | 2024-2025 |
| 1.4 | Develop substantive near-term actions that directly support diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice. | **HWGIT, DWG** | Chesapeake Bay Watershed | 2024-2025 |
| **How do we expect the action to fill the priority factor or gap? What do you expect to happen when the action is completed?** | | **What are the goals or metrics you will use to determine the impact of your action?** | **How will we collect and assess the data that we want to monitor and how will we use the data?** | **How will we communicate the results?** |
| These actions will improve efficiency and effectiveness of efforts to address the healthy watersheds outcome and other outcomes, leveraging the expertise in different workgroups and minimizing overlap and duplication. | | Revised and aligned management strategies and actions for multiple outcomes, particularly stream health, healthy watersheds, protected lands, riparian buffers, urban tree canopy, and wetlands. | Review updates of management strategies for the targeted outcomes. | GIT chairs meetings, SRS management strategies. |

| **MANAGEMENT APPROACH 2:** Track the status of healthy waters and watersheds | | | | |
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| **Action #** | **Description of Step** | **Responsible Party or Parties** | **Geographic Location** | **Expected Timeline** |
| 2.1 | Track changes in stream and watershed conditions and associated ecosystem services every 4-5 years based on an integrated stream/watershed assessment framework. | **HWGIT, SHWG**, LUWG, USGS LDT | Chesapeake Bay Watershed | Spring 2026 |
| 2.2 | Populate a “date of establishment” field for 90% of all protected lands records in each major Bay jurisdiction. | **PLWG** and CCP | Chesapeake Bay Watershed | Fall 2025 |
| 2.3 | Update the CHWA when new LULC data are available. | **HWGIT**, USGS Land Data Team | Chesapeake Bay Watershed | Fall 2024, Fall 2027 |

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| 2.4 | Update the CHWA vulnerability assessment informed by high-res LULC, sea-level rise data, and hyper-temporal spectral indices from satellite data. | **USGS LDT**, CRWG | Chesapeake Bay Watershed | Spring 2025 |
| **How do we expect the action to fill the priority factor or gap? What do you expect to happen when the action is completed?** | | **What are the goals or metrics you will use to determine the impact of your action?** | **How will we collect and assess the data that we want to monitor and how will we use the data?** | **How will we communicate the results?** |
| Tracking the health of waters, watersheds, and land protection efforts will enable accountability for this outcome. | | Maintained health of streams and increased land protection in watersheds with healthy streams. Ecosystem services benefits assessment on protected lands. | Implementing standardized stream monitoring protocols, analyzing high-resolution land use change data, and standardizing data on protected lands | Chesapeake Progress, Press releases |

| **MANAGEMENT APPROACH 3:** Strengthen state and local capacity to maintain healthy waters and watersheds | | | | |
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| **Action #** | **Description of Step** | **Responsible Party or Parties** | **Geographic Location** | **Expected Timeline** |
| 3.1 | Prototype an approach to assess local land protection and planning capacity to maintain stream and watershed health while working with regional conservation partnerships. | **Green Fin**, **LLWG**, PLWG, and CCP | Chesapeake Bay Watershed | Fall 2025 |
| 3.2 | Leverage the value-added capabilities of the Chesapeake Bay Partnership to improve local capacity to plan for green infrastructure, protect and maintain stream and watershed health.<br>Assist with promoting tools such as the Protect Local Waterways Guide | **HWGIT**, States, SHWG, LUWG, LLWG, PLWG | Chesapeake Bay Watershed | Fall 2025 |
| 3.3 | Disseminate information on Healthy Watersheds Consortium (HWC) and other grant opportunities. Build capacity for watershed protection within CBP using HWC approach. | **HWGIT** and USEPA | Chesapeake Bay Watershed | Fall 2024 - 2026 |

| How do we expect the action to fill the priority factor or gap? What do you expect to happen when the action is completed? | What are the goals or metrics you will use to determine the impact of your action? | How will we collect and assess the data that we want to monitor and how will we use the data? | How will we communicate the results? |
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| Local organizations lead efforts to protect land, improve land use planning, and raise awareness of potential threats to stream health. Empowering these groups with information, grants, and capacity assistance and incentivizing the targeting of land conservation will help maintain healthy waters and watersheds. | Record of groups using CBP data and assistance for maintaining healthy waters and watersheds. Use of limiting factors and grantees progress at overcoming them as metrics. Linking capacity support with progress on protection of acres and stream miles. | Third party evaluation of limiting factors and grantee ability to overcome them. Use the data to gauge how investments in capacity lead to action. | Local Leadership Workgroup, Watershed Forum presentation, Land Trust Alliance Conference. Chesapeake Progress. |

| **MANAGEMENT APPROACH 4:** Strategically inform land conservation decisions to maintain healthy waters and watersheds | | | | |
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| **Action #** | **Description of Step** | **Responsible Party or Parties** | **Geographic Location** | **Expected Timeline** |
| 4.1 | Provide information on stream and watershed health and associated ecosystem services to elected officials, land use planning staff, state agencies, local governments, and conservation organizations. | **LLWG**, HWGIT, SHWG, LUWG, PLWG | Chesapeake Bay Watershed | Summer 2025 |
| 4.2 | Encourage conservation in healthy watersheds by altering the incentive structure affecting land conservation decisions. | **HWGIT**, PLWG, CCP | Chesapeake Bay Watershed | Fall 2025 |
| 4.3 | Provide data and information relevant to proposed legislation impacting the management and protection of healthy waters and watersheds. | **HWGIT** and CBC | Chesapeake Bay Watershed | 2024-2026 |
| 4.4 | Explore ways to integrate the CHWA with conservation targeting tools to inform conservation priorities. | **HWGIT**, CCP, and FWG | Chesapeake Bay Watershed | Fall 2025 |

| How do we expect the action to fill the priority factor or gap? What do you expect to happen when the action is completed? | What are the goals or metrics you will use to determine the impact of your action? | How will we collect and assess the data that we want to monitor and how will we use the data? | How will we communicate the results? |
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| Targeting land conservation towards healthy watersheds requires altering and informing the incentive structures and frameworks for land conservation decision making. | Increased rates of land conservation within healthy watersheds. New legislation and planning ordinances to limit the conversion of natural lands to development. Existing or new land conservation funding deployed strategically toward healthy watersheds. | Tracking land conservation spatially and temporally. | Local Leadership Workgroup, Watershed Forum presentation, Land Trust Alliance Conference. |

**Bold and Underlined** names refer to the lead organization(s) for a particular action.

The following acronyms are used:

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| BTAT: | Brook Trout Action Team |
| CBC: | Chesapeake Bay Commission |
| CCP: | Chesapeake Conservation Partnership |
| CRWG: | Climate Resiliency Workgroup |
| DWG: | Diversity Workgroup |
| FWG: | Forestry Workgroup |
| HGIT: | Habitat Goal Implementation Team |
| HWGIT: | Healthy Watersheds Goal Implementation Team |
| LLWG: | Local Leadership Workgroup |
| LUWG: | Land Use Workgroup |
| PLWG: | Protected Lands Workgroup |
| SET: | Strategic Engagement Team |
| SGIT | Stewardship Goal Implementation Team |
| SHWG: | Stream Health Workgroup |
| USEPA: | United States Environmental Protection Agency |
| USGS LDT: | U.S. Geological Survey Land Data Team |
| WWG: | Wetlands Workgroup |