

Strategic Plan and Management Strategy Discussion

Goal Team Co-Chairs and Signatory Partners Meeting Notes

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM on Thursday, March 26, 2026

Meeting Purpose: Goal Team Co-Chair and Signatory partners will resolve outstanding comments and questions about specific elements that will be included in the Strategic Plan, Management Strategies, and Workplan and will recommend final templates to the Management Board for approval at its April meeting.

Context for Discussion: To provide context for these discussions, please refer to page 21, Management Strategies, of the [Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement](#) (CBWA); review Strategic Plan and Management Strategies feedback and proposals included on the following pages; and consider the following quote from page six of the CBWA document, “Details that articulate the actions necessary to achieve the Goals, Outcomes and Targets are laid out in Management Strategies.”

Feedback Received and Solutions Recommended for the Strategic Plan, Management Strategies, and Workplan

The feedback received from Management Board members on outstanding issues related to the Strategic Plan, Management Strategies, and Workplan templates has been summarized below. Goal Team chairs and signatory partners agreed to recommend the following revisions to address these identified issues.

- **TOPIC 1 -- Goal Situation Analysis - Goal Teams identify challenges that are critical for workgroups to begin addressing:** differences of opinion were expressed about Goal Team authority to identify priority challenges for Workgroups to address. Concerns about the balance of top-down versus bottom-up balance of prioritizing challenges were expressed. **The following revisions are recommended by Goal Team Chairs and Signatory partners to solve this issue:**
 - Add clarifying language to the Management Strategies template specifying that Workgroups should provide their Outcome-specific situation analysis and perspective on relative importance of the challenges their Outcome faces to the Goal Team. Update language to include the following underlined revision “the Goal Team and its Workgroups, as appropriate, identify those challenges (using bold font) that are critical for workgroups to begin addressing within the next six years via the development and implementation of Management Approaches: completion of a Workplan Project.” Goal Teams are encouraged to consider the following criteria when prioritizing challenges to be addressed by the partnership:
 - PSC priorities
 - Workgroup expertise and background materials provided
 - Whether or not the challenge is within CBP’s ability to influence
 - Where a partnership approach to addressing the challenge adds value
 - The relative importance and expected impact of addressing each challenge with respect to Outcome attainment
 - The partnership’s capacity to pursue work related to challenges within the next six years
- **TOPIC 2 -- Inclusion of Management Approaches:** Several members expressed a desire to build out content that would provide a connection between the situation analysis/challenges and the Workplan summary, specifically noting that something analogous to the previous Management Strategy template’s “Management Approaches” should be included. Management Approaches could be described in the Management Strategy and could replace the Project Titles in the Workplan template. **The following revisions are recommended by Goal Team Chairs and Signatory partners to solve this issue:**
 - Include Management Approaches for each Outcome, along with guidance to help standardize the level of detail included.

- Management Approaches will outline the general approach needed to fill existing gaps and identify the partnership’s role in that approach. These are the actions that the program will undertake to address the challenges to goal and outcome attainment that are described in the Situation Analysis. The Management Approach section should include how local governments and other stakeholders will be kept informed and involved.
 - Each Management Approach should seek to address *one or more* stated challenge(s)
 - Provide guidance indicating that Management Approaches should be specific enough to guide partnership efforts over the coming six years and to enable the partnership to determine if work related to the Management Approach has progressed at an appropriate pace. Example: a Management Approach would not be “communications and outreach,” but rather “Assess Blue Crab Stock Status and Communicate the Results to Managers and the Public.” Management Approaches should be specific enough to be meaningful and provide transparency about the work that partners will collaboratively undertake.
- Allow Goal Teams to opt to include an additional section for Goal-level Management Approaches, in addition to Outcome-specific Management Approaches.
- Remove the Workplan Summary from the Management Strategies.

● **TOPIC 3 -- *Timeline issues***

- ***Deadline for Completion of Workplans:*** differences of opinion were expressed about whether workplans should be completed during or after the 18-month timeline established for Management Strategies. Concerns were raised about Goal Team and Workgroup capacity if they needed to complete workplans concurrently with Management Strategies. Concerns have also been raised that delaying the completion of Workplans may result in planning documents not fully meeting the description set out in CBWA and could be seen by the public and stakeholders as the partnership lacking urgency and sufficient details to support conservation and restoration initiatives. With either of the proposal deadlines, workplan development could commence following (and informed by) the Public Feedback Period. **Goal Team Chairs and Signatory partners made the following recommendations to solve this issue:**
 - Complete workplans *within* the 18-month timeline established for finalizing the Strategic Plan and Management Strategies (by June 2027).
 - The Strategic Plan / Management Strategies will be released for public feedback. Per the Management Board’s March decision, Workplans will not be released for public feedback. Public feedback on will be used to develop the Workplans. The public should be invited to participate in workplan development, at the discretion of the Goal Teams and workplans.
 - Some outcomes will have a heavier lift and may require additional capacity and/or assistance. Action Teams could be developed to support workplan development by bringing in additional expertise to help develop workplans. This additional expertise could also be leveraged within workgroups. This will also be an opportunity to engage local governments, NGOs and additional stakeholders.
 - Goal Team and signatory partners will help identify co-chairs for workgroups that are currently lacking them.
 - The workplan development process may look different across CBP Goal Teams. Some Goal Team chairs recommended that Workgroups begin drafting their workplans concurrent with strategic plan development. Other Goal Team chairs recommended that Workgroups develop their workplans during and after the public feedback period.

- The Workplan Summary will be removed from the Management Strategies. Hyperlinks to where workplans are posted will be included in the Management Strategies.
- Workplans will not be included in the Strategic Plan document and can be updated as needed. Workplan revisions are consistent with CBP’s use of adaptive management.
- A date of development or revision should be included in all workplans.
- There will be a single, consistent location on the CBP website where Workplans will be posted
- The Strategic Plan will be approved by the PSC. The Workplan will be approved by the Goal Team.
- **Public Feedback Period:** differences of opinion were expressed about when to hold the Public Feedback Period. Goal Team Chairs and Signatory partners were presented with three proposals for the timing of public feedback. **Goal Team Chairs and Signatory partners made the following recommendations to solve this issue:**
 - Have the Public Feedback Period run from Tuesday, January 5, 2027 through Sunday, January 31, 2027.
 - This recommendation responds directly to stakeholder requests to avoid scheduling the public feedback period when it would conflict with major winter holidays.
 - This recommendation seeks to create additional frontend drafting time.
 - It was recognized that time for final revisions following public feedback would be limited.
 - Goal Team Chairs and Signatory partners recommend that authors seek to incorporate advisory committee and stakeholder feedback as possible early in the drafting process (before the public feedback period, when possible).
 - It was also clarified that the final period of revision and editing is intended to be achieved through a cross-Goal Team meeting, not through an editorial review by a third party.
 - A cross-Goal Team meeting in March 2027 is recommended.
 - A PSC meeting in *late* April 2027 is recommended.
- **TOPIC 4 -- Snapshot of Signatory Resources:** Concern was expressed with calling out appropriations for any given fiscal year, given that budgets are subject to change. If we include appropriations for a fiscal year, are we setting the expectation that this funding will be available every year? **The following revisions are recommended by Goal Team Chairs and Signatory partners to solve this issue:**
 - Rebill this section as a “Snapshot of Signatory Programs.” Each featured program will still include a financial figure (Ex: FY 26 appropriations), but the change of title will place a greater emphasis on the programs themselves.
 - Define the specific time period (a specific fiscal or calendar year) for which appropriations will be reported at a future meeting.
 - Heavily caveat the text. Introductory language will:
 - acknowledge that managing a large and difficult restoration and conservation program with “no assurance about the level of funds that may be available beyond the short term” (GAO 2028) is a challenging undertaking that requires individual and collaborative action from signatory partners, as well as the many communities and individuals who live, work, play and learn in our region.
 - better recognize the significant contribution that individual signatory partners make towards outcome attainment

- underscore that this section reports funding from a single point in time and is not representative of future investments.
 - emphasize that the listed programs and funding are not intended to represent the full range of resources available or required to support partner progress; only the “biggest ticket” programs are spotlighted for each outcome and signatory
 - recognize that identifying the most critical programs and resources that exist at a particular moment in time can help the partnership focus its collaborative efforts on activities that have the greatest impact, and which don’t duplicate the work of existing programs.

- **TOPIC 5 -- Participating Partners:** Revisions were requested to clarify when and where the public and stakeholders will get to see which signatories will participate in each outcomes. **The following revisions are recommended by Goal Team Chairs and Signatory partners to solve this issue for inclusion in the Strategic Plan/Management Strategies:**
 - Add language to the “Introduction - Strategic Plan Development and Implementation” section of the Strategic Plan quoting the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement by saying, “participation in developing Management Strategies or in the achievement of Outcomes varies by signatory based on differing priorities across the watershed. This participation may include commitments such as sharing knowledge, data or information, educating the public, working on future legislation and developing or implementing programs or verified practices” (2025).
 - Add the following underlined language to the “Participating Partners” section of each Outcome subsection in the Management Strategy, “The following partners participated in the creation of this Management Strategy and expressed their intention to collaborate on Management Strategy implementation over the next six years. Signatory partners may join implementation efforts at any time. Partners also recognize that Signatory participation is voluntary and may vary accordingly.”
 - Lead(s), Signatory Partners, and Other Partners are included in the Workplan for each Activity.
 - With the revisions described above, no concerns were expressed about including a “Participating Partner” section in the Management Strategies subsection for each Outcome.
 - However, discussion participants noted the need to **plan and convene an additional discussion**, either in the context of the Governance and Management Framework or related to Strategic Plan development, to decide what it means to “sign up” for an outcome and what it means to “not sign up” for an outcome.” This discussion should clarify expectations what it means for signatory partners to participate in Management Strategy implementation and whether “participating” requires regular attendance at Workgroup and/or Goal Team meetings. After decisions on these topics are reached, the partnership will revisit the following question: Can we draft a summary document similar to the Management Strategy Participation one-pager that was published in association with the 2014 CBWA for release with the Public Feedback Period? This document would be updated and finalized alongside the Strategic Plan.

- **TOPIC 6 -- Local Government:** The CBWA states that Management Strategies will “describe how signatories, other state and federal agencies, local governments, Indigenous representatives, nonprofit and private partners are engaged; where actions, tools, financial support and technical assistance are needed to empower local governments and others to do their part; and what steps are necessary to facilitate greater participation in achieving the Outcome.” Where in this framework are these details included? **The following revisions are recommended by Goal Team Chairs and Signatory partners to solve this issue:**
 - Add the following language to the “Introduction - Strategic Plan Development and Implementation” and in outreach efforts for MS development, “Signatories, other state and federal agencies, local governments, Indigenous representatives, nonprofit and private partners are welcome and encouraged, as they are able, to contribute to the development and

implementation of the Management Strategies through workgroup discussions and public feedback time allotted during Goal Team meetings.”

- Entities that choose to engage in this way would be listed as “Participating Partners” in the relevant Outcome-specific subsection(s).
 - Include Management Approaches at the Goal and/or Outcome-level “to describe how local governments and others are engaged; where actions, tools, financial support and technical assistance are needed to empower local governments and others to do their part; and what steps are necessary to facilitate greater participation in achieving the Outcome.”
 - Add language to the Workplan template specifying that Authors should include Management Approaches/Workplan projects and related action(s) that describe and seek to address where actions, tools, financial support and technical assistance are needed to empower local governments and others to do their part and what steps are necessary to facilitate greater participation in achieving the Outcome.
 - In instances where specific approaches, projects or actions are not planned, Authors should include a narrative description at the end of their Workplan to describe how partnership meetings related to their Outcome and Target(s) will incorporate consideration of these topics.
- **TOPIC 7 -- Signatory Statutory Authorities:** There are differences of opinion about the importance and utility of including Signatory Statutory Authorities. **The following revisions are recommended by Goal Team Chairs and Signatory partners to solve this issue:**
 - Make minor revisions to the introductory language.
 - Authors will draft the Signatory Statutory Authorities section as an Appendix of the Strategic Plan. Goal Team Chairs and Signatory partners agree that this content will be included in the final document. However, this content’s ultimate location be discussed at future Cross-Goal Team meetings as drafts are developed to see if there are opportunities to streamline content by combining the sections on the Signatory Statutory Authorities and the Snapshot of Signatory Programs.

Reference Materials:

- Quick links from the March 2026 Management Board Meeting:
 - [Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement](#)
 - [Management Strategy Template Outline 2026.03.10](#)
 - [Management Strategy Example – Backyard Birds](#)
 - [Management Strategy Template](#)
 - [Workplan Example - Backyard Birds](#)
 - [Workplan Template](#)
 - [2026-03 MB Presentation – Management Strategies.pptx](#)
- Links associated with the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement:
 - [2014 Key Elements of Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement Management Strategies](#)
 - Oyster Restoration Outcome Example – [Management Strategy](#) and [Workplan](#)
 - Brook Trout Outcome Example – [Management Strategy](#) and [Workplan](#)