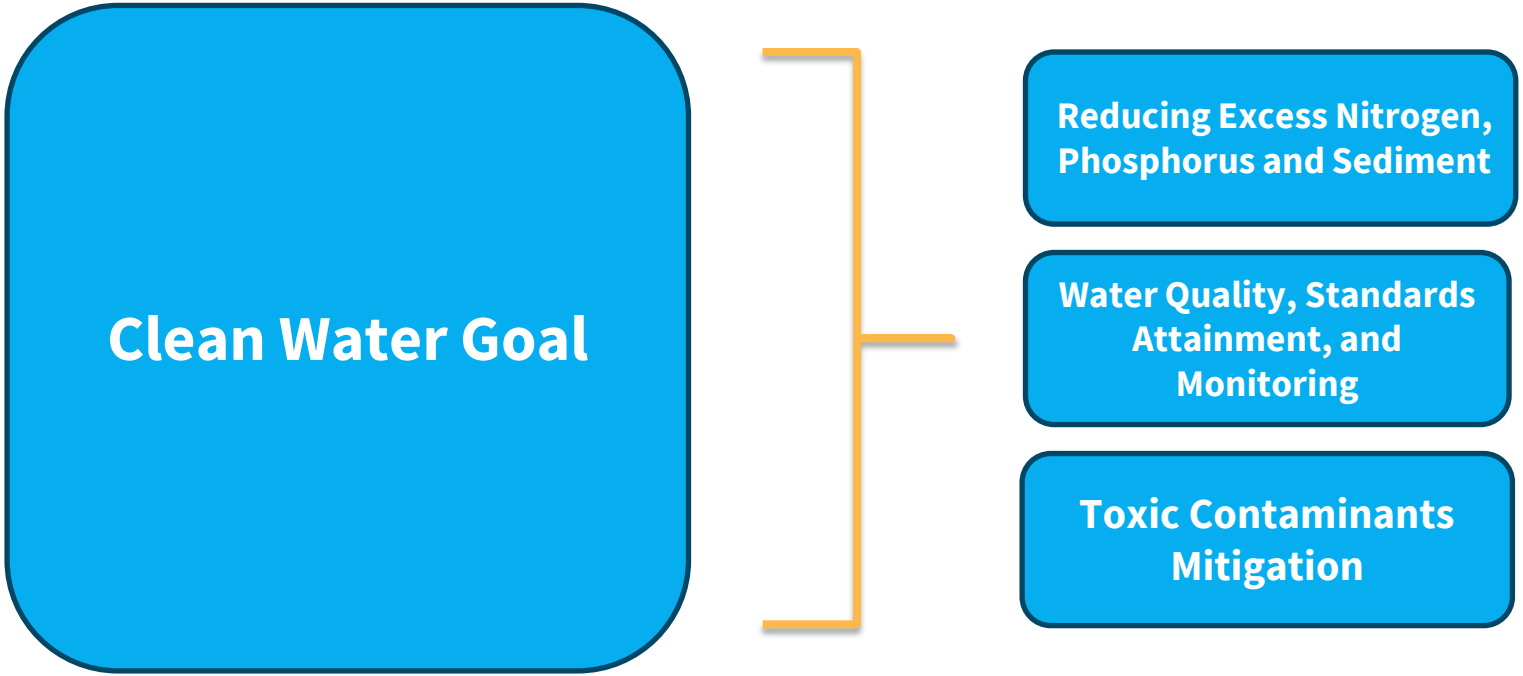
Chesapeake Bay Program
Science. Restoration. Partnership.

September 30, 2025

Clean Water Goal, Outcomes and Targets

How Public Feedback Influenced Revisions

Clean Water Goal and Outcomes



Overarching Public Feedback Themes

- Requests that outcomes and targets be presented using more plain language.
  - All outcomes and targets received dedicated editing to reduce jargon and aim for greater clarity with simpler, concise statements.
- Specify quantitative targets.
  - Explicit targets were removed.
- Clearly identify the work connected to the Bay TMDL.

Reducing Excess Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Sediment Outcome (July 1, 2025)

Implement and maintain practices and controls that will reduce excess nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment to support living resources and protect human health by achieving water quality standards.

Reducing Excess Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Sediment Outcome (September 23, 2025)

Implement and maintain practices and controls, as described in the Bay TMDL, to achieve reductions of ~~that will reduce excess~~ nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment necessary to meet applicable water quality standards that support living resources and protect human health. ~~by achieving water quality standards.~~

Reducing Excess Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Sediment Targets (July 1, 2025)

Through 2030, continue to implement and maintain practices and controls to reduce excess nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment to achieve the interim water quality targets as determined by the Principals' Staff Committee. Partners may meet this target by implementing their Phase III Watershed Implementation Plans, two-year milestone commitments or other innovative strategies.

Reducing Excess Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Sediment Targets (September 23, 2025)

Through 2030, continue to rapidly progress toward achieving ~~implement and maintain practices and controls to reduce excess nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment to achieve the~~ all interim ~~water quality~~ planning targets as determined by the Principals' Staff Committee. Partners may meet this target by implementing their Phase III Watershed Implementation Plans, two-year milestone commitments ~~or~~ and other innovative strategies.

Reducing Excess Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Sediment Targets (July 1, 2025)

By December 2030, update this Outcome with revised targets that include a timeline to meet the updated water quality targets for nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment.

Reducing Excess Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Sediment Targets (September 23, 2025)

By December 2030, revise the planning targets approved by thte Principals' Staff Committee for nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment using the lastest watershed modeling, science and data, and set ~~update this Outcome with revised targets that include a~~ timelines and develop new or amended Watershed Implementation Plans to meet the updated targets. ~~to meet the updated water quality targets for nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment~~.

Reducing Excess Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Sediment Targets (July 1, 2025)

Demonstrate net reductions in nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment toward meeting the interim water quality targets as determined by the Principals' Staff Committee, through multiple lines of evidence, including annual progress reporting and monitoring data (in coordination with the Water Quality Standards Attainment and Monitoring Outcome).

Reducing Excess Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Sediment Targets (September 23, 2025)

Demonstrate ~~net~~ reductions in nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment ~~toward meeting the interim water quality targets as determined by the Principals' Staff Committee~~, through ~~multiple lines of evidence, including annual progress reporting~~ modeling and monitoring data (in coordination with the Water Quality Standards Attainment and Monitoring Outcome).

Overarching Public Feedback Themes

- A broad range of contaminants between nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment were of interest to see featured in our restoration work (e.g., microplastics, PFAS, chloride/salt, bacteria, pesticides, herbicides, thermal pollution, etc.)
  - A variety of contaminant management approaches including more monitoring and policy actions were offered as suggestions for Management Strategies.

- Interest expressed in the partnership accelerating our rate of improvement/providing more ambitious targets.
  - The targets provided reflect the best available science, capacity and resources.

Water Quality Standards Attainment and Monitoring (July 1, 2025)

Measure changing water quality conditions by maintaining core monitoring networks, evaluating attainment of established water quality standards (i.e., dissolved oxygen, clarity and chlorophyll-a) in the Bay and strengthening scientific understanding and communication of patternsin nitrogen, phosphorus, sediment and other parameters throughout the Bay and watershed.

Water Quality, Standards Attainment, and Monitoring Outcome (September 23, 2025)

Measure changing water quality conditions by maintaining ~~core~~ monitoring networks and tracking our collective progress toward achieving clean water, ~~evaluating attainment of established water quality standards (i.e., dissolved oxygen, clarity and chlorophyll-a) in the Bay and strengthening scientific understanding and communication of patternsin nitrogen, phosphorus, sediment and other parameters~~ throughout the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed.

Water Quality Standards Attainment and Monitoring Target (July 1, 2025)

- Maintain Monitoring Networks: Annually, maintain full core monitoring network operations to support analysis and communication of water quality loads, water quality trends and water quality standards attainment.

Water Quality, Standards Attainment, and Monitoring Target (September 23, 2025)

- ~~Maintain Monitoring Networks:~~ ~~Annually, m~~Maintain full core monitoring network operations (i.e., nontidal water quality, SAV, tidal water quality, benthic and community science) annually to support analysis and communication of water quality loads, ~~water quality~~ trends and ~~water quality standards~~ criteria attainment.

Water Quality Standards Attainment and Monitoring Target (July 1, 2025)

- Develop Methods for Water Quality Standards Attainment: Develop and expand partnership-approved approaches to support assessment of all dissolved oxygen, clarity and chlorophyll a criteria in all designated uses using all available data. For dissolved oxygen criteria assessment, have methods established and approved by 2028 and applied in reporting by the end of 2030.

Water Quality, Standards Attainment, and Monitoring Target (September 23, 2025)

- ~~Develop Methods for Water Quality Standards Attainment~~: Develop and expand partnership-approved approaches for assessing whether water quality ~~to support assessment of all dissolved oxygen, clarity and chlorophyll a~~ criteria are being met for ~~in~~ all designated uses ~~using all available data~~. For dissolved oxygen criteria, establish approved ~~assessment, have~~ methods ~~established and approved~~ by 2028 and apply~~ied~~ the method for data analysis and ~~in~~ reporting by the end of 2030.

Water Quality Standards Attainment and Monitoring Target (July 1, 2025)

- Evaluate Water Quality Standards Attainment: Through management actions in support of the Reducing Excess Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Sediment Outcome, maintain a long-term trend of improvement in the water quality standards attainment indicator at a rate of at least 0.2% per year, aligned with the historical baseline trend of the multi-metric water quality standards indicator between 1985 and 2022. Update the water quality standards attainment indicator annually.

Water Quality, Standards Attainment, and Monitoring Target (September 23, 2025)

- ~~Evaluate Water Quality Standards Attainment:~~ Maintain and accelerate ~~Through management actions in support of the Reducing Excess Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Sediment Outcome, maintain a~~ the long-term ~~trend~~ rate of improvement in the water quality standards attainment indicator ~~at a rate of at least 0.2% per year, aligned with the historical baseline trend of the multi-metric water quality standards indicator between~~ relative to the 1985 and 2022 baseline. ~~Update the water quality standards attainment indicator annually.~~

Water Quality Standards Attainment and Monitoring Target (July 1, 2025)

Calculate Water Quality Loads and Trends:

- Watershed: In coordination with the Reducing Excess Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Sediment Outcome, compute and communicate loads and trends in nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment for the watershed. On an annual basis, produce the load and trend analyses and communication results for the nine major river system river input monitoring sites. Conduct the same analysis for the complete non-tidal network on a biennial basis.

- Tidal Bay and tidal tributaries: On an annual basis for the tidal Bay and tributary stations, compute and communicate trends for physical, chemical and biological measures.

Water Quality, Standards Attainment, and Monitoring Target (September 23, 2025)

~~Calculate Water Quality Loads and Trends:~~

- ~~Watershed: In coordination with the Reducing Excess Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Sediment Outcome, compute and communicate loads and trends in nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment for the watershed. On an annual basis, produce the load and trend analyses~~ Analyze and ~~communication~~ report status/loads, trends and factors affecting those trends for nontidal and tidal water quality. ~~results for the nine major river system river input monitoring sites. Conduct the same analysis for the complete non-tidal network on a biennial basis.~~

- ~~Tidal Bay and tidal tributaries: On an annual basis for the tidal Bay and tributary stations, compute and communicate trends for physical, chemical and biological measures.~~

Overarching Public Feedback Themes

- Create a better connection between outcome and target for the Toxics Outcome.

- Remove “Mitigation” from the title of the Toxics Outcome.
  - Accepted recommendation.

Toxic Contaminants Mitigation Outcome (July 1, 2025)

Reduce the amount and effect of toxic contaminants, such as PCBs, plastics, mercury and PFAS, on the waters, lands, living resources and communities of the Chesapeake Bay watershed by facilitating an increased understanding of their impacts and mitigation options.

Toxic Contaminants ~~Mitigation~~ Outcome (September 23, 2025)

Reduce the amount and effect of toxic contaminants, such as PCBs, plastics, mercury and PFAS, on the waters, lands, ~~living resources~~ fisheries, wildlife and communities of the Chesapeake Bay watershed through ~~by facilitating~~ an increased understanding of their impacts and mitigation options.

Toxic Contaminants Mitigation Target (July 1, 2025)

Promote continuous information sharing between researchers, program managers and policymakers on the lessons learned, best practices and most up-to-date science, policy and communications around the toxic contaminants impacting the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

(No recommended revisions for the September 23, 2025 version.)

Peter Tango

&

Clean Water Review Team
Jess Blackburn
Bailey Robertory
Scott Settle

Thank you!

Any questions?
You can contact me at ptango@chesapeakebay.net.

Chesapeake Bay Program
Science. Restoration. Partnership.