



Protected Lands Workgroup Meeting

October 6, 2026
2:00-4:00pm

[Visit the meeting webpage for meeting materials and additional information.](#)

Purpose: Discuss progress on the Management Strategy drafting, future focus meetings for target development, and source water protection in the Potomac.

Action Items:

- Send any projects, studies, or other relevant highlights your organization has worked on this year to be included in the 2026 Bay Barometer updates to Sophie Waterman
- If you are interested in being a non-voting member, reach out to Sophie or Daniel
- [Fill out this google form](#) by Oct 20th to express interest in joining an action team that will work on developing the targets for Wetlands, Greenspace, Natural areas supporting healthy streams, and agricultural lands.
- Consider uses for ICPRB's Land Prioritization for Source Water Protection [data tool](#) in your region, and how this could turn to implementation.

Meeting Minutes

I. Protected Lands Workgroup Membership

(2:10 - 2:25)

- Lead: Sophie Waterman, USGS, PLWG Coordinator
- Participants will review the workgroup's updated membership structure, and discuss participation expectations for non-voting members and interested parties.
- Materials:
 - Presentation Slides
 - [Governance and Management Framework](#).

Notes:

- All members (voting and non-voting) contribute to consensus discussion and consensus decisions. If consensus cannot be reached, then the Voting members cast votes.
 - Voting members include 1 rep from each signatory, plus up to 6 At - Large members
- **Action item:** Send any projects, studies, or other relevant highlights your organization has worked on this year to be included in the 2026 Bay Barometer updates to Sophie Waterman
 - Rob Schnabel: Example Success story - Agriculture Preservation in Maryland in

Frederick County. Planted a 20 acre 100' buffer on a mile of Catoctin Creek, while also protecting existing 15 acre 100' forest buffer. overall farm 150 acres but forest buffers were a key component to improving water quality / quantity. Ag Pres would ideally include 100 foot forested stream buffers. win/win given public dollars. Nonprofits worked with landowner, County and State to make this happen. Landowners proud of the overall conservation on the farm

- **Action item:** if interested in being a non-voting member, reach out to Sophie or Daniel

II. Updates on the Protected Lands Management Strategy Chapter (2:25-2:45)

- Lead: Sophie Waterman, USGS, PLWG Coordinator
- Participants will review the second draft of the Protected Lands Management Strategy, learn what has changed since the previous version, and take part in a consensus vote on whether to share this draft with the PSC. This draft represents the first opportunity for PSC-level review and is not the final version of the management strategy.
- Requested Action: **Decisional**, Members and interested parties are asked to review the re-worked draft Management Strategy.
- Materials:
 - Presentation Slides
 - Management Strategy Version 2
 - Indigenous Conservation Council Public Statement

Decision Status:

- The decision to send the re-worked draft Management Strategy to the Goal Team for their approval was approved through consensus.

Notes:

- Work on the tribal homelands target will be on pause due to the ICC's removal of themselves from engagement with the CBP. The Healthy Landscapes Goal Team will elevate this to the PSC to figure out how to move forward.
- Process of management strategy approval: If reached consensus, the Goal Team will package all of the outcomes together, get consensus from their members, and move it forward to the PSC.
- Specific Updates include:
 - Changes:
 - Challenges have been updated
 - Management Approaches have been consolidated into 3: Data, Tracking, and Targeting; Funding Conservation and Protection; and Engagement, Communication, and Outreach. See the presentation slides for more info on each approach.
 - Signatory programs will be moved to an appendix.
 - This step of moving to PSC is only one version of a draft. It will still go through public feedback and further revisions, so signatory programs can still be edited along the way.
 - **Action for PLWG leadership:** Add in the Land Preservation Tax Credit for Virginia, which is \$75 million a year

III. Target Development Action Teams

(2:45-3:00)

- Lead: Sophie Waterman, USGS, PLWG Coordinator
- Participants will learn about the effort underway to form action teams to aid in the development of our priority area targets.
- Requested Action: Non-decisional
- Materials:
 - Presentation Slides
 - [Action Team Information Doc](#)

Notes:

- **Action Item:** [Fill out this google form](#) by Oct 20th to express interest in joining an action team that will work on developing the targets for Wetlands, Greenspace, Natural areas supporting healthy streams, and agricultural lands.
 - 1-1.5 hr meetings every 2 to 3 weeks, light homework between each session
 - Work will continue until target options are finalized to be presented to the workgroup for workgroup consideration. It will go no later than 2027

IV. Advancing Source Water Protection

(3:00-4:00)

- Lead: Renee Thomson, ICPRB, Jeff Lerner, EPA, PLWG Chair
- Participants will learn about ICPRB's [Land Prioritization Mapping to Protect Drinking Water Quality](#) project and engage in a discussion about priority areas that may present opportunities for action.
- Requested Action: Non-decisional
- Materials:
 - Presentation Slides

Notes

- ICPRB is an interstate coalition working towards protecting and preserving the Potomac River Basin lands and waters
- Potomac River Drinking Water Source Partnership started to understand how forest cover lays in keeping costs down related to water treatment for source water protection
- 2025 tool includes all jurisdictions in the area (DC, MD, VA, PA, WV, DE) showing land prioritization areas
 - Asks where is the land, how important is it for source water, and where can protection make a difference
 - [Land Prioritization Map to Protect Drinking Water Quality](#) StoryMap
- Baseline is to make Opportunity areas: the forests and agricultural lands that aren't protected already.
 - Metrics included: Distance from Waterways; Percent of Parcel within Source Water Protection Area, Distance from Urban Areas, Karst Transmissivity, Future Land Use (2050), Distance from High-Quality Streams, Distance from Floodplain/Riparian Areas, and Opportunity Area in Parcel
 - Counties are ranked relatively across all counties, so values could vary as you move

across the region. Looking at one small region may show different color breakdowns compared to the same region zoomed out over the entire watershed.

- Application of maps:
 - Local planning: Prince William Conservation Alliance identified priority lands overlapped with their conservation goals and ICPRB's source water goals. The data was overlapped, and high priority areas were found (16% of the forest land, 27% of ag lands, and .5% of developed area intersected). Helped them identify some areas to target for protection because they are also important for source water protection
 - State planning: Virginia NRCS found high priority areas again overlapping ICPRB's source water protection priority areas, and VA's priority areas. This resulted in 3 areas being selected for including in the VA Expanded Source Water Protection Program.
 - WV Forest Service: evaluated their parcels of interest with source water protection benefits, and provided a letter of support with this data for the Forest Legacy proposal

Discussion

- **Sophie Waterman:** When it came to working with different stakeholder groups and their perceptions of your data, what was the most valuable feedback? Where do you think as a group, we could utilize that kind of expertise to make our data better?
 - **Renee Thompson:** Listening to the stakeholders and their challenges, and meeting them where they are at, rather than creating a tool and expecting people to use it. We had more detailed user group meetings with one-on-one meetings to understand what their tools are they use, what staff they have who use GIS, where they go for data, etc. And smaller-region groups will have different challenges than larger-region groups, in terms of what data they use, the staff capacity, and how they use the data.
- **Jeff Lerner:** What do you know about water utilities' appetite to collaborate on NRCS funding applications?
 - **Renee Thompson:** This dataset could be utilized as a tool for targeting funding, but the water utilities may not be in land conservation business; that could be an opportunity or disconnect or capacity issue. It is something we could explore to see how to be more actively engaged for protecting source water vs. just putting out a tool for others to use.
 - **Jeff Lerner:** NYC water supply is one example of the city working to protect land upstream of them in order to protect drinking water quality. They aren't the landowners, but they value that.
 - Does anybody here have programs working in these priority areas that Renee shared?
 - **Hilary Bell:** We have a variety of statewide programs and I know we look at water quality data when reviewing potential acquisitions. Interested in digging into this more to see how it corresponds to our targeted areas
 - **Rob Schnabel:** Curious, given we need funding for more protected lands, if some of this info is given to MS4 managers; they could look at tree plantings for land preservation so folks prioritize the most important areas for water quality. Perhaps the program for incentives could be modified: maybe it counts as two acres of impervious acre credit if you're reforesting headwater streams that provide drinking water. Curious how your data is used as people make decisions and leveraging current programs to really maximize community and conservation benefits.

- **Renee Thompson:** That is a great opportunity to better engage with MS4 managers; we have an urban and industrial issues workgroup within the Drinking Water Source Protection Partnership, where they are mostly focused on new NPDS permits and industrial sources of PFAS. I love the idea of adding a little more credit for protecting areas that could help with recharge and upstream.
- **Jeff Lerner:** If we can identify places on this map that you have relationships with, we could combine resources to make protection happen. Hopefully we can follow up on this discussion with ICPRB to further conservation on implementing this overlap and co-benefits of protection to target high priority areas.

V. Adjourn

(4:00pm)

- **Next Meeting: December 1, 2:00-4:00pm**
 - **Exchange positive updates, including new initiatives, grant opportunities, program successes, and emerging resources that support protection work.**

Attendees

Daniel Koval
Jeff Lerner, EPA
Sophie Waterman, USGS
Cass Klingamen, NY DEC
Kerri Batrowny, DE DNREC
Cassie Davis, NY DEC
Michaela Kuykendall, MDA
Maggie Woodward, CBC
Megan Beever, CBC
Sarah Brzezinski, EPA
Ellen Shepard, VaULT
Jenna Talbot, DE DNREC
Coral Howe, USGS
John Wolf, USGS
Elizabeth Hoffman, MDA

Andrea Reese, Chesapeake Conservancy
Emily Merrill, Cacapon & Lost Rivers Land
Trust
Katie Brownson, USFS
Renee Thompson, ICPRB
Hilary Bell, MD DNR
Danny Bennett, WV
Jennifer Perkins, American Farmland Trust
Michelle Campbell, DC DOEE
Rob Schnabel, CBF
Emily Heller, EPA
Anna Killius, CBC
Aurelia Gracia, NPS
Ashley Rebert, PA
Peter Claggett, USGS