Outcome Revisions Summary

Tuesday, May 20, 2025

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GOAL: Conserved Lands

Land Use Decision Support

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

- Continually increase the number, variety, and/or geographic scope of use cases (e.g., watershed protection, aquatic connectivity, stormwater, tree canopy, stream health, or redevelopment) for landscape information.
- Highlight two use cases annually to showcase best practices and share this information with local planning officials and partners through Story Maps and/or other communication products.
- 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

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.

- **Protected Lands:** By 2040, permanently protect and additional 1.5M-2M acres of lands throughout the watershed at the federal, state or local level.
- **Forests:** By 2040, permanently protect a total of _XX_ acres of forest, _XX_ % of which 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 supporting 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

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.

- **Tree Canopy**: 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**: 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**: Reduce the loss of existing forests to development through planning and conservation and plant and maintain _XX_ acres of new forests by 2035 to achieve a net gain in forests over the long term.

Adapting to Changing Environmental Conditions

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.

- By 2040, 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 2040, workgroup activities will inform and lead to an increase in the implementation of adaptation strategies that integrate nature-based solutions in the above subwatershed areas.

GOAL: Clean Water

Water Quality Standards Attainment and Monitoring

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 patterns in nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus), sediment, and other parameters in the watershed and Bay.

- **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.
- **Develop Methods for Water Quality Standards Attainment**: Develop and expand partnership approved approaches to support assessment of all dissolved oxygen, clarity, and chlorophyll 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.
- **Evaluate Water Quality Standards Attainment**: Through management actions in support of the WIP 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 multimetric water quality standards indicator between 1985 and 2022. Update the water quality standards attainment indicator annually.
- **Calculate Water Quality Loads and Trends**:
    - Watershed: In coordination with the WIP, compute and communicate loads and trends in nitrogen, phosphorous, and sediment respectively 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 nontidal 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.

Reducing Excess Nitrogen, Phosphorous and Sediments

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.

- 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 PSC. Partners may meet this target by implementing the Phase III Watershed Implementation Plans (WIPs), the two-year milestone commitments, or other innovative strategies.
- By Dec. 2030, update this outcome with revised targets including a timeline to meet the updated water quality targets for nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment.
- Demonstrate net reductions in nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment toward meeting the interim water quality targets as determined by the PSC, through multiple lines of evidence, including annual progress reporting and monitoring data [in coord w/ WQSAM]

Toxic Contaminants Mitigation

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.

- 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.

GOAL: Thriving Habitat and Wildlife

Submerged Aquatic Vegetation

Sustain and increase the habitat and ecosystem benefits of SAV in the Chesapeake Bay. Achieve and sustain the outcome of 196,000 acres of SAV Bay-wide necessary for a restored Bay.

- Progress toward this outcome will be measured against interim targets of 90,000 acres by 2030 and 95,000 acres by 2035.
- Progress will also be measured against the following targets for each salinity zone:
  - Tidal Fresh: 21,330 acres
  - Low Salinity: 13,094 acres
  - Medium Salinity: 126,032 acres
  - High Salinity: 35,790 acres

Brook Trout

Protect and enhance brook trout within the Chesapeake Bay watershed by increasing occupancy, abundance and resilience to changing environmental conditions.

- By 2035, increase brook trout occupancy by 1% in watersheds supporting healthy populations while achieving no net loss in other watersheds.
- By 2035, increase abundance at 10 long-term monitoring sites.
- By 2035, reduce identified threats by _XX_% to increase brook trout resilience in watersheds supporting healthy populations.

Fish Habitat

Achieve and maintain suitable shallow water fish habitat in tidal and non-tidal areas for key species through focused water quality, conservation and restoration improvements informed by a synthesis of fisheries science and habitat assessments.

- Continually improve the quantity and quality of shallow water fish habitat in tidal areas above baseline conditions as determined by a Bay-wide assessment of fish habitat conditions completed in 2026.
- Increase the consideration of forage species in fishery management decision making for key predators by annually developing reports of prey status as good, uncertain, or poor.
- Establish a baseline and assess the overall condition and suitability of fish habitat in the watershed to support healthy communities and inform effective restoration, conservation and management actions.
- Develop an acid-mine drainage target, in collaboration with the Brook Trout outcome, that strives to better understand the impacts and mitigation opportunities for Acid Mine Drainage throughout the watershed.
- Develop freshwater mussel conservation plans for 5 tributaries and begin implementation by 2035.

Wetlands

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.

- **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 goal.
- Waterbirds represent wetlands functioning at its highest level, specific species priorities will be developed over the next 12 to 18 months.

Fish Passage

Improve habitat, water quality and create more resilient and sustainable populations of fish and other aquatic organisms by removing barriers throughout the Chesapeake Bay Watershed's coastal and freshwater rivers and streams.

- Restore passage and connectivity to at least 150 miles of aquatic habitat every two years.

Stream Health

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.

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

Blue Crab Sustainability

Achieve a sustainable bay wide blue crab fishery through cross jurisdictional coordination that supports healthy blue crab populations and thriving fishing communities.

- Continually maintain abundance and harvest rate targets as determined by the 2026 benchmark stock assessment.
- Achieve cross jurisdictional coordination by jointly evaluating and communicating stock status annually through the blue crab advisory report and refining targets, as needed, through the next stock assessment.

Oysters

Increase ecosystem benefits from oysters through reef habitat restoration, sustainable harvest, and aquaculture.

- Restore or conserve at least 1800 additional acres of oyster reef habitat concentrated primarily in restoration focus areas to provide ecosystem service benefits.
- Maintain sustainable oyster abundance through oyster fishery and aquaculture practices.
- Maintain reefs established under the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement to achieve restoration success metrics.

GOAL: Engaged Communities

Public Access

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.

- **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 the 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.

School District Planning

Continually increase the number of school districts that have policies and practices in place that support environmental education and sustainable schools.

- By 2040, all jurisdictions reach their target for the number of school districts that are well prepared to deliver a comprehensive and systemic approach to environmental literacy.

Student Experiences

Continually increase the number of students who participate in inquiry-based environmental literacy instruction working towards at least one Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience in each elementary, middle, and high school.

- By 2040, state targets are reached that result in 75% of public-school students being enrolled in a school district that offers a MWEE for all students.

Stewardship

Increase public participation in stewardship actions that contribute positively to the lands, waters, living resources and communities throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

- Through 2040, better equip practitioners with the social science data, technical assistance and support needed to develop, improve and carry out individual and community-level stewardship programs, including those that will help advance *Agreement* goals.

Workforce

Increase the ability of all job seekers in the watershed to understand, participate in, and succeed in environmental career pathways.

- **Understanding**: By 2035, inform and grow implementation of strategies that help students, educators and job seekers to become aware of and understand environmental careers and the pathways to them.
- **Participating**: By 2035, increase the number of post-secondary institutions and training providers offering industry-recognized credentials that support *Agreement* outcomes.
- **Succeeding**: By 2035, inform and support greater hiring and retention of workers trained in fields necessary to support *Agreement* outcomes.

Local Leadership

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.

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

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