



# BEYOND 2025: THE FUTURE OF CHESAPEAKE BAY RESTORATION

The Vision for the Chesapeake  
Bay Program and Watershed  
*Agreement*





# WHAT IS BEYOND 2025?

The effort being undertaken by the Chesapeake Bay Program to:

- Determine the next steps in restoring and conserving the Chesapeake Bay post-2025.
- Streamline the structure and governance of the Chesapeake Bay Program.

# WHAT IS THE CHESAPEAKE BAY WATERSHED AGREEMENT?

Voluntary agreement between:

- Six watershed states
- District of Columbia
- Chesapeake Bay Commission
- Environmental Protection Agency on behalf of the federal government.

Contains 10 goals and 31 outcomes to advance the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay.

16







## WHY 2025?

2025 is the targeted completion date for many of the 31 outcomes in the 2014 *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*.

A 2023 assessment found:

- 18 of the Watershed Agreements were on-course to be completed by 2025.
- 13 of the Watershed Agreement outcomes were off-course.



# COMPLETED/ON-COURSE 2014 *WATERSHED AGREEMENT* OUTCOMES

- 2017 Watershed Implementation Plans
- Blue Crab Abundance
- Blue Crab Management
- Climate Monitoring & Assessment
- Environmental Literacy Planning
- Fish Habitat
- Fish Passage
- Forage Fish
- Land Use Methods & Metrics
- Land Use Options Evaluation
- Local Leadership
- Oysters
- Protected Lands
- Public Access
- Student
- Sustainable Schools
- Toxic Contaminants Policy & Prevention
- Water Quality Standards Attainment & Monitoring



# OFF-COURSE 2014 *WATERSHED* *AGREEMENT* OUTCOMES

- 2025 Watershed Implementation Plans
- Black Duck
- Brook Trout
- Climate Adaptation
- Diversity
- Forest Buffers
- Healthy Watersheds
- Stream Health
- Stewardship
- Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (SAV)
- Toxics Contaminants Research
- Tree Canopy
- Wetlands





# 2024 EXECUTIVE COUNCIL CHARGE



Members directed the Bay Program's Principals' Staff Committee to take the following actions by the end of 2025:



Revise the existing *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*.



Elevate conservation as a key pillar of the partnership.



Address both water quality and living resources (e.g., habitat, wildlife).



Place a greater emphasis in engaging all communities of the watershed.



Ensure goals and outcomes are measurable, time-bound and sufficient to complete the outcome as quickly as possible.



Ground revisions in the most current scientific understandings and issues.



# THERE'S MORE TO THE *WATERSHED AGREEMENT* THAN THE OUTCOMES...

Watershed Agreement Section	Revision Lead
Vision	Principals' Staff Committee
Preamble	Principals' Staff Committee
Principles	Principals' Staff Committee
Goals	Principals' Staff Committee, Management Board
Outcomes	Management Board, Outcome Leads
Management Strategies	Management Board

# VISION REVISIONS

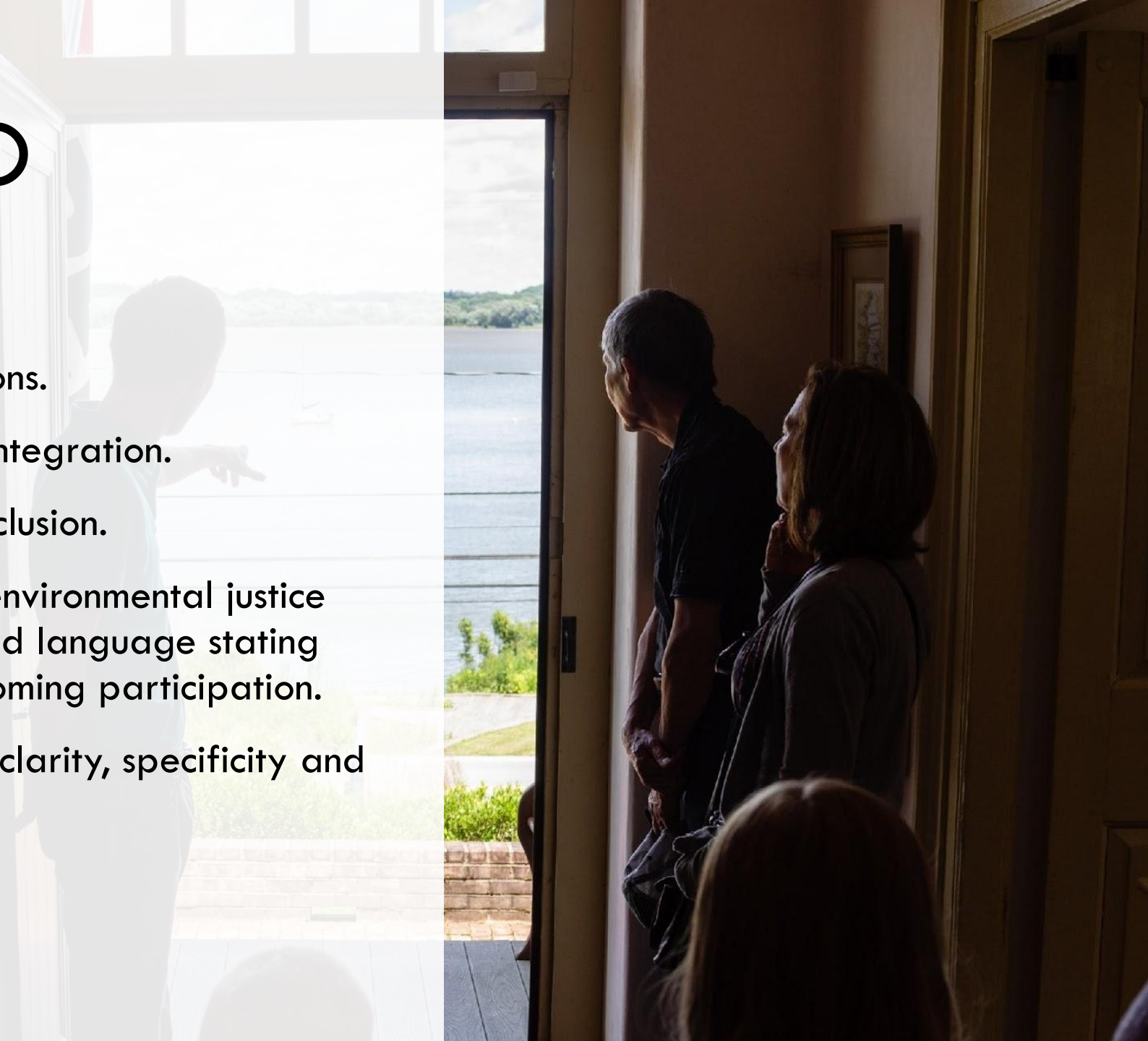
2014: The Chesapeake Bay Program partners envision an environmentally and economically sustainable Chesapeake Bay watershed with clean water, abundant life, conserved lands and access to the water, a vibrant cultural heritage and a diversity of engaged stakeholders.

2025: The Chesapeake Bay Program partners envision an environmentally and economically sustainable Chesapeake Bay watershed with clean water, abundant life, conserved and **healthy working** lands, a vibrant cultural heritage and a **wide range of engaged individuals whose communities enjoy access to the waters and natural landscapes of the region.**

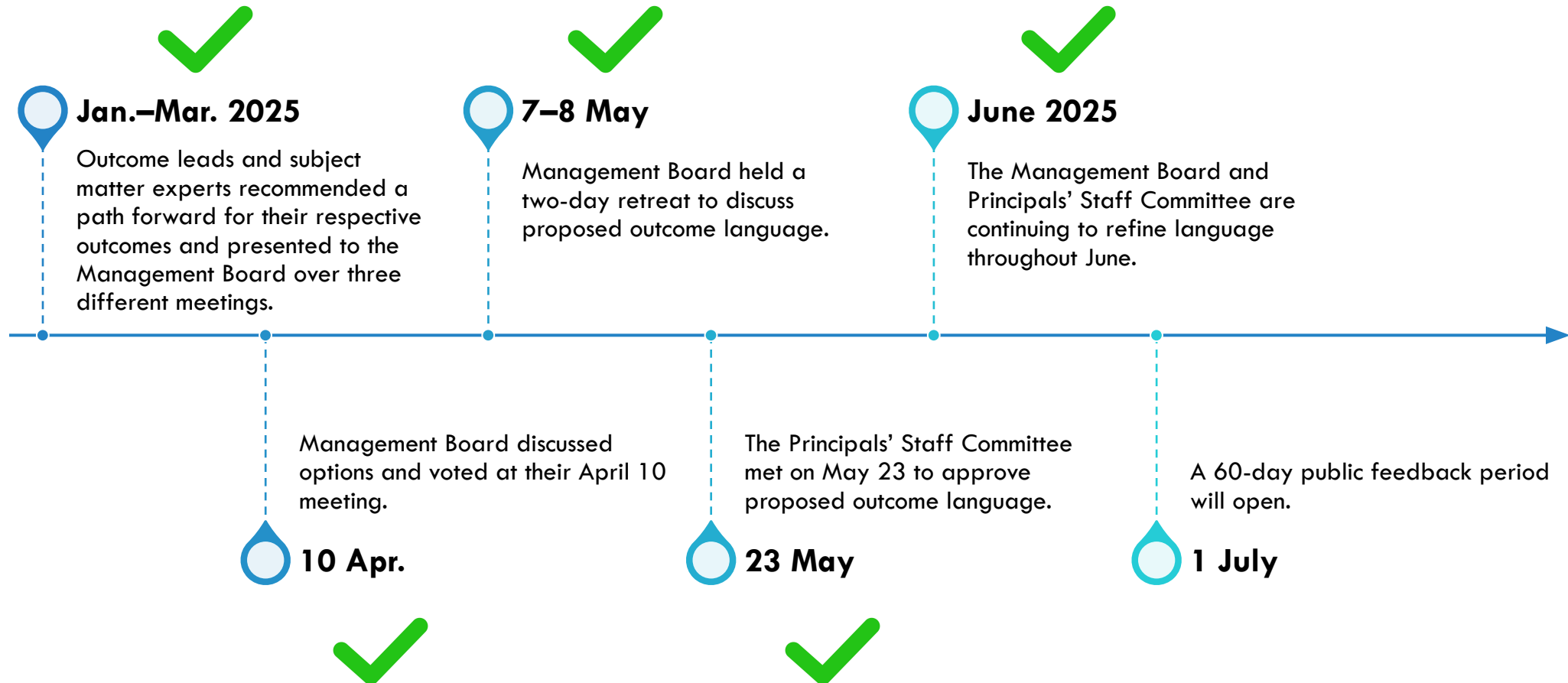


# REVISIONS TO PRINCIPLES

- Adds recognition of Tribal nations.
- Expands holistic social science integration.
- Strengthens local knowledge inclusion.
- Removes specific reference to environmental justice but is still implied through added language stating strong inclusion of all and welcoming participation.
- Several principles updated for clarity, specificity and impact.



# OUTCOME REVISIONS PROCESS





# Language subject to minor edits:

## 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.

Draft Available:

<https://www.chesapeakebay.net/files/documents/Outcome-Revision-Summary-Document-for-PSC-052025.pdf>



	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Outcome Assessment						We are here					
Outcome Disposition											
Language Revisions											
Approval of Draft											
Public Feedback											
Revise & Finalize											
EC Approval											





# What is after public feedback period?

SEPTEMBER	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Public feedback period ends	X																													
RT classify and review comments		X	X	X	X			X	X	X																				
<b>MB meeting:</b> RT presents on public feedback received											X																			
Expert input, as needed								X	X	X	X	X																		
RT consolidates & agrees on revision recommendations															X	X	X	X	X											
MB reviews recommendations																					X	X	X							
<b>PROPOSED MB Retreat:</b> RT presents suggested revisions. MB discuss & vote to approve or flag issues for negotiation																						?	?	?	?	?				
MB negotiates & resolves any remaining revisions																												X	X	

RT: Review Team who volunteered to consider public feedback

# What is after public feedback period?

OCTOBER		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
MB negotiates & resolves any remaining revisions		X	X	X																												
MB members <u>consult</u> PSC counterparts on revisions & incorporate feedback		X	X	X			X	X	X																							
	<b>MB Meeting:</b> vote to approve revision recommendations									X																						
MB members brief their PSC counterparts. PSC members review revisions. Comms Team finishes editorial review.															X	X	X	X														
	<b>PROPOSED PSC Meeting:</b> discuss and vote to approve Agreement revisions																				?	?	?	?	?							
Comms team designs revised Watershed Agreement																												X	X	X	X	X

RT: Review Team who volunteered to consider public feedback



# HOW WERE THE OUTCOMES REVISED?

**Updated:** Maintains original intent, language added to make it more specific, measurable, actionable, relevant or timely.

**Consolidated:** Outcomes merged to form a single outcome or activities underneath an outcome are integrated into other outcomes.

**Removed**

**Replaced:** Relates to original outcome's intent or subject.

**Reclassified:** Changed to a target or activity underneath another outcome.



# STRUCTURE OF THE REVISED WATERSHED AGREEMENT

**Goals:** Desired high-level aspects of the Watershed Agreement vision.



**Outcomes:** Long-term, high-level change that is desired or the difference made by the partnership's actions.



**Targets:** Direct products of the actions planned for and taken as partners.



**Activities:** Specific actions taken to achieve the targets.



Thriving Habitats and  
Wildlife

Sustainable Fisheries  
Vital Habitats



Clean Water

Water Quality  
Toxic Contaminants



Healthy Landscapes

Land Conservation  
Healthy Watersheds  
Climate Resiliency



Engaged Communities

Local Leadership  
Public Access  
Stewardship

# REVISED GOALS:

Previously 10  
Goals grouped  
into 4 new Goals



# SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES GOAL → THRIVING HABITAT AND WILDLIFE GOAL

What was...

Blue Crab  
Abundance

Update.

Blue Crab  
Management

Remove.

Oysters

Update and  
Add New  
Target.

Forage Fish

Reclassify as a  
target under  
Fish Habitat.

Fish Habitat

Update.

Is now...

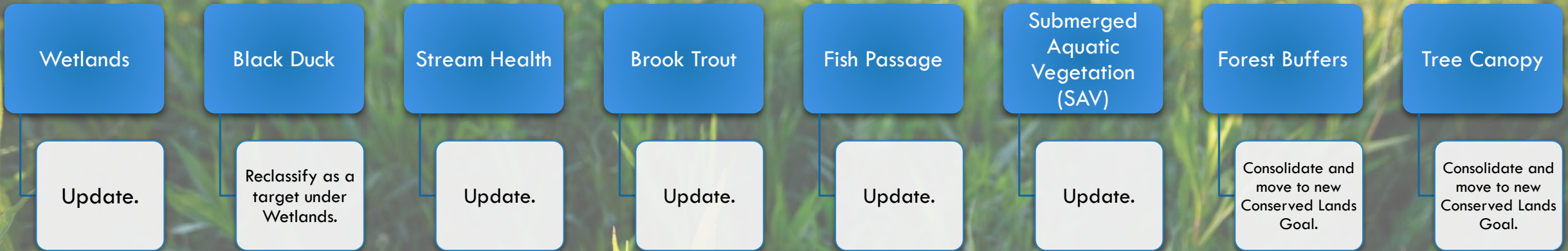
Blue Crab  
Sustainability

Oysters

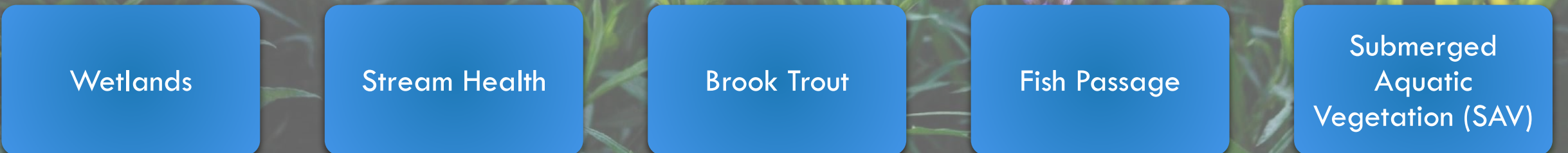
Fish Habitat

# VITAL HABITATS GOAL → THRIVING HABITAT AND WILDLIFE GOAL

## What was...



## Is now...





# WATER QUALITY & TOXIC CONTAMINANTS GOALS → CLEAN WATER GOAL

## What was...



## Is now...



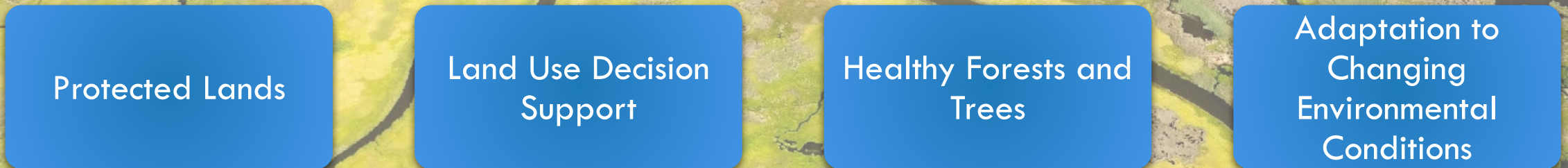


# HEALTHY WATERSHEDS, LAND CONSERVATION & CLIMATE RESILIENCY GOALS → HEALTHY LANDSCAPES GOAL

What was...



Is now...





# STEWARDSHIP, PUBLIC ACCESS & ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY GOALS → ENGAGED COMMUNITIES GOAL

What was...

Student

Update.

Sustainable  
Schools

Reclassify as a  
target under  
Environmental  
Literacy Planning.

Environmental  
Literacy  
Planning

Update.

Public Access  
Site  
Development

Update.

Stewardship

Update.

Local  
Leadership

Update.

Diversity

Replace with  
Workforce.

Is now...

Public Access

School District  
Planning

Student  
Experiences

Stewardship

Workforce

Local  
Leadership

# REVISED OUTCOMES

## Healthy Landscapes

- Adaptation to Changing Environmental Conditions
- Healthy Forests and Trees
- Land Use Decision Support
- Protected Lands

## Clean Water

- Reducing Excess Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Sediment
- Toxic Contaminants Mitigation
- Water Quality Standards Attainment and Monitoring

## Thriving Habitat and Wildlife

- Blue Crab Sustainability
- Brook Trout
- Fish Habitat
- Fish Passage
- Oysters
- Stream Health
- Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (SAV)
- Wetlands

## Engaged Communities

- Local Leadership
- Public Access
- School District Planning
- Stewardship
- Student Experiences
- Workforce

\*Climate Monitoring and Assessment will be replaced with Climate Science Integration and become a support function across all levels of the partnership.



# THRIVING HABITAT AND WILDLIFE

The fisheries of the Chesapeake Bay watershed are the backbone of the region's ecology, economy and heritage. However, impaired water quality, invasive species and habitat loss place pressure on fish and wildlife populations across the region.

Meanwhile, our increasing use of land and resources can fragment and degrade the habitats they depend on. Maintaining sustainable fisheries and restoring habitat for native and migratory species will support a strong economy and a balanced ecosystem.

## GOAL:

**Protect, restore and sustain fisheries and wildlife, as well as the network of land and water habitats they depend on, to promote a balanced and resilient ecosystem and support local economies and recreational opportunities.**



**WE WANT ALL THE  
FEEDBACK!**

- Public feedback period will open on Tuesday, July 1 and run for 60 days until Monday, September 1.
- Everything you need to know can be found at <https://www.chesapeakebay.net/what/what-guides-us/planning-for-2025-and-beyond>
- Feedback can be emailed to [comments@chesapeakebay.net](mailto:comments@chesapeakebay.net).
- Chesapeake Bay Program staff is available to talk with any SHWG members or groups about Beyond 2025.