Chesapeake Bay Trust

Tidal Wetlands Strategic Planning Team

Chesapeake Bay Program
Science. Restoration. Partnership.

EPA Wetlands Capacity Building

Tidal Wetlands Workgroup Meeting
June 17, 2025

Agenda

- Draft Strategic Plan – *Version 1 uploaded!*
  - Overview and Purpose
  - Updates to Terminology Requested by EPA CBP
  - Draft Plan Requests & Caveats
  - Needs from Planning Committee
  - Next Steps and Schedule
- Other Objective Updates
- Updates/Thoughts?

Tidal Wetlands
Strategic Planning Team

Tidal Wetlands Strategic Plan Purpose & Update

Purpose:

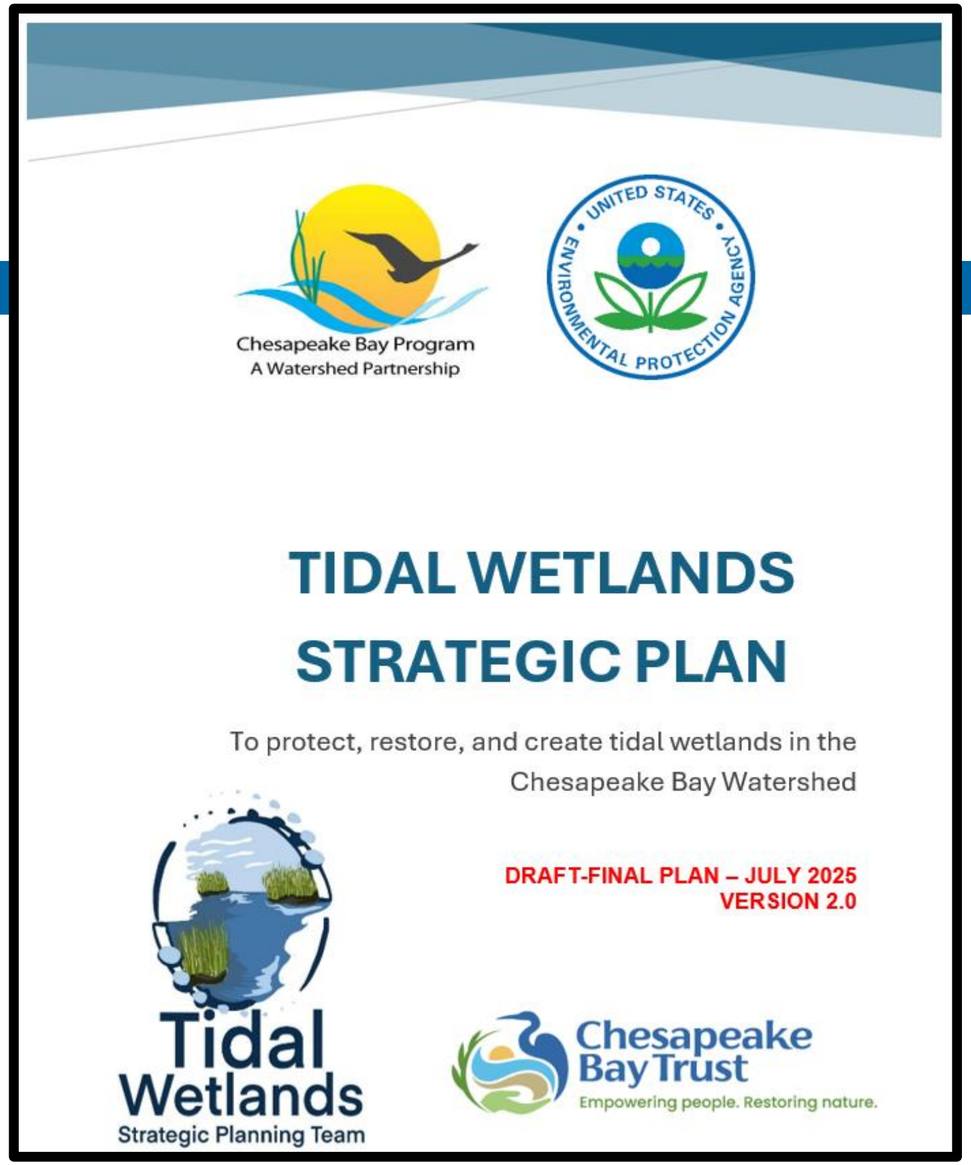
- Develop a single blueprint that outlines how to move forward with tools and priorities to develop coastal wetland siting criteria, including permit considerations.
- This plan is a landscape-level strategic vision for tidal wetlands in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.
- Incorporates the overlapping priorities within the Goals and Outcomes of the CB Watershed Agreement.

How and Who?

- Monthly meetings with whole Planning Team
- Small groups created to develop pieces of plan

Schedule:

- Draft Version 1.0 released to planning team on April 9, 2025
- Planning team provided comments by June 2, 2025
- **Draft-Final Version 2.0 will be released on July 9, 2025**



Tidal Wetlands Planning Team Overview & Reminders

- Meet Monthly for focused discussions around Tidal Wetlands and Strategic Planning
- Includes experts in the field across the watershed committed to support this effort
- Current count: ~50 folks representing Bay jurisdictions w/tidal wetlands: DE/DC/MD/VA
- Shared and transparent space: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1fPkuyq0KsO5U7lPp-2J_0vqL3syQwiBA

PSC Meeting Purpose and Goals Reminder: work together to shape the Tidal Wetlands Strategic Plan for the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. Our goal is to have focused discussions that are action-oriented to move the Strategic Plan forward and stay on schedule.

PSC Charge Reminder: The Chesapeake Bay Trust is leading the Tidal Wetlands Capacity Building work supported by EPA CBPO for strategic planning, capacity building, landowner/community engagement, program sustainability/financing, and project design. We are completing strategic planning first so this can guide us on the other tasks. We are looking to you, the experts in this field, to realize the best outcomes together.

THANK YOU AND KUDOS TO OUR PLANNING TEAM!

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- This is a collaborative process
- This is YOUR plan
- We cannot do our work without your dedication
- Awards to thank Planning Team Members for comments!

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Draft Strategic Plan Terminology Changes Requested by the EPA CBP

- Replaced the words “climate change” with “changing environmental conditions” and/or “sea level rise” as applicable
- Replaced the words “climate resiliency” with “resiliency due to changing environmental conditions and sea level rise”
- Climate Resiliency Workgroup (CRWG) = now referred to as STAR Team (Scientific, Technical Assessment and Reporting)
- Removed reference to DEIJ
- ANY THOUGHTS OR OTHER UPDATES???

*The reference sections for citations and published resources in the Draft Plan have off-limit words/language in published documents, including the EPA CBP Climate Change weblink = **Citation Titles will remain unchanged***

Example Section References:

- *Chesapeake Bay Program. (2025). Climate Change - Chesapeake Bay. Available [online]: https://www.chesapeakebay.net/issues/threats-to-the-bay/climate-change*
- *U.S. Geological Survey. (2023). Learn how wetlands can naturally help with climate change impacts. Available [online]: https://www.usgs.gov/centers/whcmsc/news/learn-how-wetlands-can-naturally-help-climate-change-impacts*
- *World Economic Forum. (2023). Why wetlands are key to mitigating impact of climate change. Available [online]: https://www.weforum.org/stories/2023/12/wetlands-carbon-sink-climate-change-mitigation/*

Tidal Wetlands Strategic Planning Team

Draft Strategic Plan: Requests & Caveats

REQUESTS:

- **Review Draft Plan** content and language (~100 pages)
- Version 1 Draft has no photos, maps, visuals, illustrations (focus on content)
- Comment with proposed suggestions in track changes (vs. asking questions)
- Suggest where to simplify or reduce repetitiveness/duplication
- Add/suggest any missing Key Actions!
- Update numbers in the Wetland Acreages by jurisdiction

CAVEATS:

- We still need some items -add missing information if you can
- **Review the Case Study ideas** to highlight in plan – add in suggestions
- **Review Terminology Ideas** to magnify in plan – add/define suggestions
- NOTES:

Executive Summary and Key Recommendations [to be updated by the Trust after initial Draft approved]

References [see individual sections]

Appendices [to be updated]

Tidal Wetlands Strategic Planning Team

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Strategic Plan Table of Contents for Tidal Wetlands

Tidal Wetlands

Strategic Planning Team

Results of our Small Group Conversations:

Goals ▶

Strategies ▶

Objectives ▶

Timescale of Objectives:
1. Immediate Objective (1-year target)
2. Near-Term Objective (by 2030)
3. Long-Term Objective (by 2050)

▼

Key Actions

REMINDERS:

- Goals: Clearly defined, actionable, and measurable conditions and multiple timeframes.
- Strategies: Methods applied to achieve stated goals and outcomes. These are typically broad and encompass multiple goals.
- Objectives: Outcomes (i.e., changes in ecosystem condition, behavior, and policy) with a timescale that contributes to achieving goals.
- Key Actions: Specific activities that occur across the timespan of the plan.

Our Small Groups have defined 11 total strategies

Goals and Strategies to Protect and Restore Tidal Wetlands

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OVERARCHING GOAL

- Strategy 1: Develop specific goals and acreages for tidal wetlands in the Chesapeake Bay by jurisdiction, including comprehensive spatial and temporal outcomes.

GOAL: MANAGE AND RESTORE LARGE-SCALE TIDAL MARSHES

- Strategy 2: Actively manage existing publicly-owned large-scale tidal marshes in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed to support key indicator species, habitats, communities, and local economies.
- Strategy 3: Restore, enhance, and create large-scale tidal marshes in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed to support key indicator species, habitats, communities, and local economies.

GOAL: PROTECT TIDAL MARSHES AND CONSERVE MIGRATION CORRIDORS

- Strategy 4: Protect and expand marshes in the Chesapeake Bay, focusing on high-quality habitats to support the health of existing marshes
- Strategy 5: Conserve and facilitate the migration of tidal marshes in the Chesapeake Bay to minimize loss of function, benefits, and acreage as a result of sea level rise.
- Strategy 6: Protect existing and create new living shorelines to enhance community resilience to natural hazards, climate change, and provide protection, ecosystem services, and benefits to species.

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Goals and Strategies to Protect and Restore Tidal Wetlands

GOAL: IMPLEMENT CROSS-CUTTING APPROACHES: activities are multi-collaborative and motivating actions:

- Strategy 7: Build capacity to provide long-term program support
- Strategy 8: Cross-Collaboration (Policy Alignment + Coordinated Research), including leveraging and enhancing collaboration across partners and regions to further tidal wetland conservation, equitable expansion, and equitable distribution of impact.
- Strategy 9: Develop and implement effective engagement and outreach strategies to build long-lasting relationships with landowners to advance tidal wetland conservation efforts (including living shorelines) to provide resilience and ecosystem benefits to communities and species in the Chesapeake Bay.
- Strategy 10: Utilize the best available science to collect data, perform monitoring, and conduct mapping to advance tidal wetland protection and creation.
- Strategy 11: Evaluate, update, develop, and implement sustainable policy, planning, and funding mechanisms to ensure the long-term protection of tidal wetlands.

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Strategic Planning Key Terms

The core actionable components of the plan :

- **Goals**: What implementation of the plan is designed to achieve.
- **Strategies:** overarching approaches to achieve the larger goals
- **Objectives:** How the strategies are implemented and is operationalized. Can be defined as Outcomes (i.e., changes in ecosystem condition, behavior, and policy) in the near term that contribute to achieving goals,
- **Key Actions**: High-priority actions necessary to meet specific strategy objectives. These actions are not listed in any priority ranking. Specific activities that are assigned to teams, partners, and staff that occur across the timespan of the plan. Actions are specific steps that the small group will take to achieve the goals listed above. Actions should be forward-thinking (not a continuation of ongoing projects), realistic, and achievable based on the capabilities and capacities of the team.

Planning Team focused on specific review and input here:

- **Outputs:** The expected deliverables for each action
- **Success Indicator:** A description for how to measure success of each Key Action
- **Effective Example:** A useful similar project in progress or previously completed that could be used an example to meet outputs and move towards to success
- **Recommended Resource:** A useful resource that could be used to meet outputs and move towards success

EXAMPLE:

GOAL: MANAGE AND RESTORE LARGE-SCALE TIDAL MARSHES

Strategy 2: Actively manage existing and protected large-scale tidal marshes in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed to support key indicator species, habitats, communities, and local economies.

RATIONALE: Many large-scale tidal marshes are passively managed. ***Transitioning from passive to active management*** requires strategic interventions to enhance marsh functionality and ecosystem services. This cannot be achieved without a clear site-specific plan for marsh management.

Immediate Objective (1-year target): Conduct a comprehensive inventory of jurisdictional-owned and federally-owned tidal marshes within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed that are passively managed and require a shift to active management.

Near-Term Objective (by 2030): Develop and implement detailed Wetland Management Plans (WMPs) for prioritized wetlands.

Long-Term Objective (by 2050): Achieve active management benchmarks for identified and prioritized tidal marshes through implementation of actions in WMPs.

Action 1: Develop Wetland Management Plans (WMPs)	**Description:** Write and adopt WMPs for prioritized marshes that encompass large-scale wetland conservation strategies, ensuring alignment with ecological and economic objectives and incorporation of shallow water habitat; add new marshes to list as applicable.	**Outputs:** Large-Scale WMPs **Success Indicator:** All identified priority marshes will be governed by comprehensive WMPs to ensure clear steps towards restoration **Effective Example:** Guinea Marsh Wildlife Management Area WMP in VA
Action 2: Incorporate shallow-water habitat in marsh management	**Description:** Evaluate opportunities to manage Shallow water habitat in wetland management to enhance local water quality and advance SAV recovery efforts; avoid shallow-water use conflicts and habitat trade-offs with SAV recovery and riparian buffer plantings.	**Outputs:** XXX **Success Indicator:** XXX **Effective Example:** XXX
Action 3: Manage tidal marshes, with a focus on hydrology and elevation	**Description:** Where proven to ensure the creation or maintenance of quality habitat through time. management strategies should include the following: runnels, weirs, tide gates, sediment additions (i.e., TLP), elevation control/grading, erosion control, remove physical barriers (i.e., berms, impervious surface), invasive species management (nutria, Phragmites, etc.), and vegetation: planting and/or stabilization controls.	**Outputs:** XXX **Success Indicator:** XXX **Effective Example:** Blackwater NWR
Action 4: Manage tidal marshes for invasive species	**Description:** Support effective management of invasive species, including practices to manage invasive aquatic and terrestrial vegetation plant and animal species, as well as other species that may become a future concern. Develop criteria in managed marshes and beyond for ongoing control and removal of invasive species detrimental to the health of wetlands.	**Outputs:** XXX **Success Indicator:** XXX **Effective Example:** Delmarva Nutria eradication
Action 5: Adopt tiered management approach	**Description:** Use a tiered/temporal approach to manage existing marshes for resiliency (improve hydrology, increase elevation, protect edge); focus on low-tech hydrological projects that can move forward in the short term.	**Outputs:** XXX **Success Indicator:** XXX **Effective Example:** XXX

Draft Strategic Plan – Example Action

GOAL 2: MANAGE AND RESTORE LARGE-SCALE TIDAL MARSHES

Strategy 3: Restore, enhance, and create large-scale tidal marshes in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed to support key indicator species, habitats, communities, and local economies

Strategy 3 Immediate Objective (1-year target): *Continue to move forward and expand the restoration of degraded or vulnerable large-scale marshes while exploring and advancing new measures for restoration and management.*

Action 2: Define shallow-water habitat in relation to restoration of marshes	**Description:** Evaluate opportunities to leverage Shallow water Restoration (shellfish and SAV restoration) in wetland restoration projects to enhance local water quality and advance SAV recovery efforts; describe the fish/shellfish perspective of shallow-water habitat with low-marsh restoration as well as benthos such as blue crabs, clams/mussels (epifauna in the low marsh system to be converted	**Outputs:** Define target species that are most sensitive to wetland loss and/or restoration **Success Indicator:** Develop design templates that consider shallow water habitat needs for target species **Recommended Resource:** Beyond 2025 Shallow Water Habitats Small Team Recommendations https://www.chesapeakebay.net/files/documents/Shallow-Waters_Recommendation-Narrative.pdf

Tidal Wetlands Strategic Planning Team

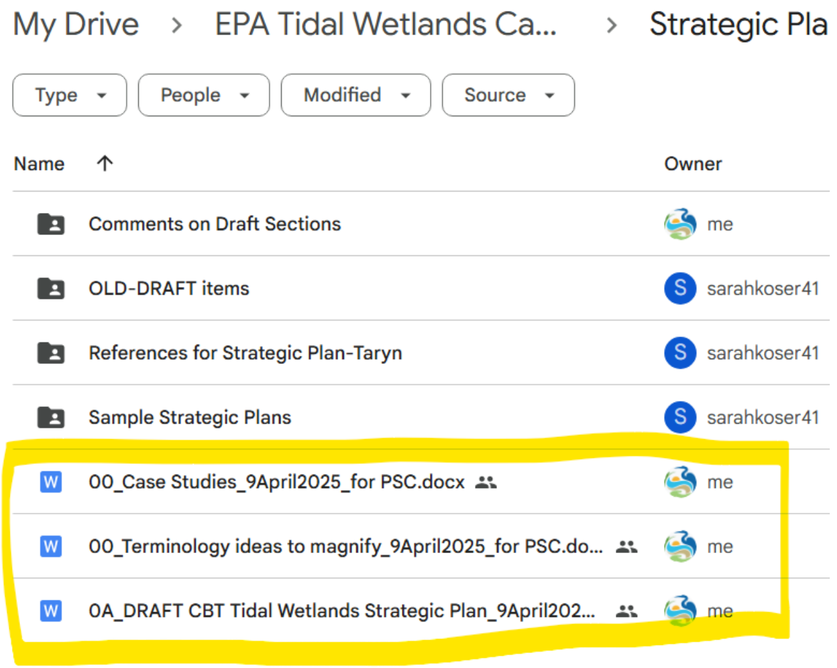
Draft Strategic Plan Next Steps & Schedule

Schedule:

- Draft Version 1.0 released to planning team on April 9, 2025
- Planning team provided comments by June 2, 2025
- **Draft-Final Version 2.0 will be released on July 9, 2025**

GOOGLE DRIVE HERE:

https://drive.google.com/drive/u/1/folders/1gqnL7xscK4RID9fDyT9RmQIDj0v0Vh7c



Tidal Wetlands Strategic Planning Team

Objective #2

Developing Capacity – Monitoring

Developing standardized tidal wetland restoration techniques and monitoring will allow continuity within the jurisdictions and help maintain expertise through changing staff.

The Trust is drafting monitoring protocols for when we would monitor a project and when we would monitor a practice

- Project monitoring – What were the project goals? What monitoring is needed to assess successful implementation?

- Practice monitoring – What do we need to know to determine if the practice is working? Using the "Pooled Monitoring Initiative" approach – state research question(s), pool funding sources, and support research to answer those question(s). The research has monitoring that is needed per the experimental design.

Lead Contact: Sadie Drescher
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Objective #3

Landowner & Community Engagement

- Contract Awarded to Green Fin Studio
  - ***Explore the best ways in which landowners and those who influence landowners obtain information then develop a landowner engagement strategy.*** Because most land on which tidal wetlands can be created or restored in the Chesapeake Bay is owned by individuals or private landowners, much of the success in achieving the wetlands outcome is related to landowner acceptance of tidal wetland restoration/creation.
- Completion of all work is expected by: Oct 1, 2025
- Support from Maryland SeaGrant for a “Gap Analysis”
- Key Deliverables:
  - 🗓️ Kickoff Meeting (COMPLETED)
  - 📑 Stakeholder Research (COMPLETED)
  - 📢 Outreach & Materials
  - 🤝 Community Engagement
  - 📊 Progress & Final Reports
  - 🌱 Sustainability Blueprint

Lead Contact: Megan Diehl – MDiehl@cbtrust.org

Objective #4

Innovative Financing

- Contract Awarded to EPIC!
- Completion of Work is expected by October 1st, 2025
- Looking for Small Group Members
- Key Deliverables:
  - Kick Off Meeting – April 2025 (COMPLETED)
  - Summary of Blue Carbon Crediting – May 2025 (COMPLETED)
  - Expansion of Known Funding Sources Inventory – June 2025
  - Development of a "How-to Guide" – July 2025
  - Effective Examples and Leverage Strategy – August 2025
  - Final Report – September 2025

Kayleigh Katzenberger is the lead:
KKatzenberger@cbtrust.org

- Any Questions from the group?
- Next PSC Meeting: 7/9/2025 (12pm-1pm)
- SWS presentation at July Annual Conference in July 2025:

  “Developing a Tidal Wetland Strategic Plan for the Chesapeake Bay Watershed and the Consideration of Innovative and Sustainable Funding Sources”

Thank You!

For more information visit
cbtrust.org