



Chesapeake Behavior Change focuses on increasing environmental stewardship

Chesapeake Bay Program launches new website to help individuals and organizations promote adoption of environmentally friendly behaviors

Annapolis, MD—The Chesapeake Bay Program, a regional partnership overseeing the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay and its surrounding watershed, announces the launch of [Chesapeake Behavior Change](#), an online tool designed to assist organizations and individuals in promoting environmentally friendly stewardship behaviors.

“The partnership is thrilled to launch a groundbreaking social science tool designed to help local partners and communities develop strategies to inspire their residents toward voluntary stewardship actions,” said Michelle Price-Fay, acting director of the Environmental Protection Agency’s Chesapeake Bay Program Office. “The tool builds on pioneering efforts to incorporate the principals and science of behavior change to design, build and implement actions to protect our natural resources, local waters and the Chesapeake Bay.”

Chesapeake Behavior Change integrates the data and findings from the groundbreaking [Stewardship Index](#), first published in 2017, into a platform that is easily accessible for organizations and individuals interested in using the data to build their own behavior change campaigns.

“In short, environmental problems are social problems,” said Kacey Wetzel, vice-president of programs for outreach and education at the Chesapeake Bay Trust. “We know our lands and waters will not be restored without the millions of residents in the watershed choosing to take civic action and adopt environmentally responsible practices in their everyday lives. Social science research has shown time and time again that people often need more than information to act. Regionally, thousands of community-based organizations, local governments and nonprofit groups seek to aid residents in taking environmentally responsible actions. Chesapeake Behavior Change is a tool rooted in social science that is designed not just to educate, but aid practitioners in designing participatory programming that centers people in their work.”

The Stewardship Index is the first comprehensive survey of stewardship actions and attitudes in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. It reveals what actions residents across the Chesapeake Bay watershed are taking to protect clean water and restore environmental health, as well as how much of the region has volunteered or spoken out on behalf of the environment. Additionally, it forecasts future stewardship by measuring the willingness of watershed residents to engage in actions and measures attitudes that motivate environmentally responsible behaviors. A refresh of this survey and updated data is planned for late 2022.

Chesapeake Behavior Change features the following:

- [About the Survey](#): Learn all about the Stewardship Index—how it was conducted, what it asked and the criteria used to select behaviors.
- [Survey Trends](#): Explore the survey trends uncovered through the Stewardship Index.
- [Survey Data](#): Review the survey results to help inform behavior change campaigns.

- [Behavior Change](#): Learn more about behavior change, why it is important and how to plan and implement a public outreach campaign. This section of the website also includes helpful links and worksheets.
- [Campaigns](#): View a database of completed behavior change campaigns to learn what has been successful, to connect with others and upload your own.

Behavior change is rooted in social science principles (e.g., behavioral economics, psychology), informed by insights into the attitudes and priorities of key audiences, and is focused on increasing the adoption of environmentally friendly behaviors, rather than simply raising awareness.

"Given the immediacy and gravity of the environmental challenges we face, we need to prioritize and freely share opportunities for catalytic change," said Ashley Traut, co-chair of the Chesapeake Bay Program's Stewardship Workgroup and senior advisor for the Greater Baltimore Wilderness Coalition. "Chesapeake Behavior Change is a perfect example of what is needed: a user-friendly, endlessly filterable, one-stop shop to learn about watershed residents' knowledge and motivations, with detailed descriptions of the campaigns that have inspired significant adoption of new stewardship behaviors. This is a game changer for anyone looking to really move the needle forward for community-level action."

Chesapeake Behavior Change was developed in coordination with the Chesapeake Bay Program's Stewardship Workgroup, Anne Arundel County Watershed Stewards Academy, Chesapeake Bay Trust, GreenFin Studios and OpinionWorks, LLC.

To access a webinar on how to use the website, please visit the Chesapeake Bay Program's YouTube site to view, [Inspire Local Stewardship with "Chesapeake Behavior Change"](#).