



Chesapeake Bay Program
Science. Restoration. Partnership.

April 22, 2025

Beyond 2025

The future of Bay restoration

What is the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement?

- The *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* is a Voluntary agreement between the six watershed states, the District of Columbia, the Chesapeake Bay Commission and the 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.



Current Chesapeake Bay Program Structure



Why 2025?

When the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* was signed in 2014, many of the 31 outcomes, or measurable restoration targets, listed 2025 as the intended date in which to meet these objectives.

What is Beyond 2025?

Beyond 2025 refers to the effort being undertaken by the Chesapeake Bay Program to determine the next steps in restoring and conserving the Chesapeake Bay post-2025.





**How did the Beyond 2025
effort come about?**

- 2022 Executive Council Charge
 - What outcomes will be met by 2025? What outcomes can we progress to be met by 2025?
 - Begin thinking beyond 2025.
- Formation of steering committees.
 - Reaching 2025
 - Beyond 2025
- 18 outcomes will be met by 2025.
- 13 outcomes will **not** be met by 2025.

*A CRITICAL PATH FORWARD
FOR THE CHESAPEAKE BAY
PROGRAM BEYOND 2025*



(Photo by Will Parson/Chesapeake Bay Program)

Chesapeake Bay Program

Beyond 2025 Steering Committee



**What did the steering
committees recommend?**

The first asked the Chesapeake Executive Council to do the following:

- Continued commitment to meeting the goals of the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*.
- Recommend revisions to the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*.
- Review outcomes.

The second recommendation calls for the partnership to propose ways to simplify its organizational structure and governance processes.



**What actions did the
Executive Council take?**

At the 2024 Chesapeake Executive Council meeting, members issued a [charge](#) to the Principals' Staff Committee, asking them to take the following actions:

- Revise the existing *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*, in accordance with the Chesapeake Bay Program's [Governance and Management Framework](#), by the end of 2025, including a review of the 31 outcomes.
- Reviews may call for an outcome to be consolidated, reduced, updated, removed or replaced, or new outcomes to be added.

The Chesapeake Executive Council asked that changes to the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* reflect:

- A renewed and greater emphasis on engaging all communities throughout the watershed.
- A mandate to address water quality and living resources.
- An elevation of conservation as a key pillar for the partnership, along with science, restoration and partnership.
- A grounding in the most current scientific understandings and issues.
- Goals and outcomes that are measurable, time-bound and sufficient to complete the outcome as quickly as possible.
- An acknowledgement that our scientific understanding is continuously evolving and our efforts should constantly adapt accordingly.
- The fact that while all partners share a common goal, it is being approached from different perspectives, challenges and opportunities.



Process for revising the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* outcomes

Process for revising *Watershed Agreement* outcomes

- Outcome leads and subject matter experts recommended a path forward for their respective outcomes and presented to the Management Board over three different meetings.
- Management Board discussed options and voted at their April 10 meeting.
- Outcome leads and subject matter experts are currently working on new outcome language.
- On May 7-8, the Management Board will hold a two-day retreat to discuss the proposed outcome language.
- The Principals' Staff Committee will meet on May 23 to approved recommendations on the outcome language from the Management Board.
- The Management Board and Principals' Staff Committee will continue to refine language throughout June.
- A 60-day public feedback period will open on July 1.



What does it mean if an outcome is recommended to be consolidated, updated, removed, replaced or reclassified?

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- An **updated** outcome will maintain its original intent, but language may be added to make it more specific, measurable, actionable, relevant or timely.
 - Outcomes may be **consolidated** together to form a single outcome, or activities underneath an existing outcome may be integrated into other outcomes.
 - Outcomes may be **removed** from the Watershed Agreement.
 - An outcome may be **replaced** by a new one that relates to the original's outcome intent or subject matter.
 - An outcome may also be **reclassified**, in which it could adopt a new structure or be changed to an output.

Outcome updates

- Sustainable Schools - Reclassify
- Environmental Literacy Planning - Update
- Student - Update
- Stewardship - Update
- Diversity - Replace
- Public Access – Update
- Protected Lands – Update
- Submerged Aquatic Vegetation –Update
- 2017 Watershed Implementation Plan – Remove
- 2025 Watershed Implementation Plan – Update
- Oysters
 - Oyster Restoration – Update
 - Sustainable Oyster Fishery - New
- Blue Crab Abundance – Update
- Blue Crab Management – Remove
- Toxics
 - Research– Consolidate
 - Policy and Prevention – Consolidate
- Water Quality Standards Attainment and Monitoring – Update
- 2017 Watershed Implementation Plan – Remove
- Local Leadership – Update

Outcome updates

- Adaptation – Update
- Monitoring and Assessment – Reclassify as Changing Environmental Conditions Support Team
- Land Use Methods and Metrics Development – Reclassify as Land Use Decision Support Outcome
- Healthy Forests and Trees
 - Forest Buffers – Consolidate
 - Tree Canopy - Consolidate
- Healthy Watersheds – Reclassify under Stream Health and Protected Lands
- Land Use Options Evaluation – Replace with Land Use Decision Support Outcome.
- Fish Habitat - update
- Forage Fish - Reclassify under Fish Habitat
- Brook Trout – update
- Stream Health – update
- Fish Passage – update
- Black Duck – Reclassify (under Wetlands)
- Wetlands – Update

But wait—there's more to the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement than the outcomes.

The Principals' Staff Committee is also discussing revisions to the Vision, Preamble and Principles portion of the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*.

How about streamlining the partnership structure and process?

The Chesapeake Bay Program's Enhancing Partnership, Leadership and Management Goal Implementation Team (GIT 6) is leading an informal process to aid the Management Board and Principals' Staff Committee in developing recommendations for streamlining the structure and governance process of the partnership.

Who ultimately approves the revised *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*?

The Chesapeake Executive Council will approve the revised *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* and recommendations for the partnership's structure and governance processes at their annual meeting in December 2025.

Where can I find information on the Beyond 2025 process?

The most up-to-date information on the Beyond 2025 process can be found on the Chesapeake Bay Program's [Beyond 2025 webpage](https://www.chesapeakebay.net/what/what-guides-us/planning-for-2025-and-beyond). The webpage includes the timeline, important documents, outcome review summaries and public feedback.

<https://www.chesapeakebay.net/what/what-guides-us/planning-for-2025-and-beyond>



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Thank you!

Any questions?

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