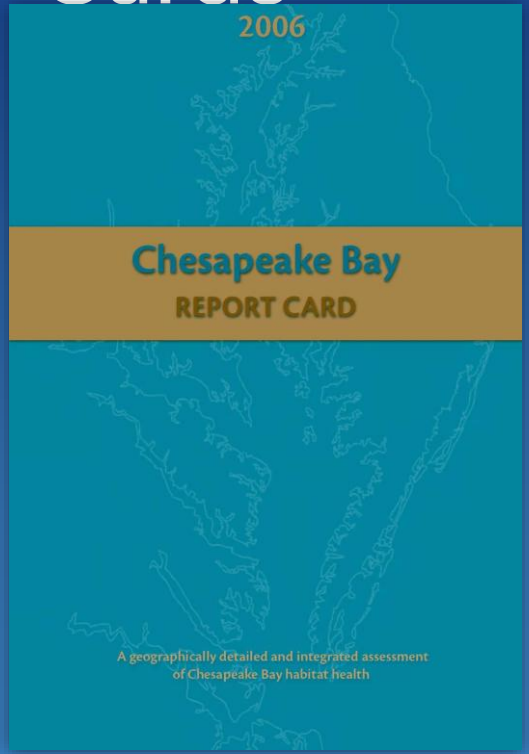
2026 Chesapeake Bay and Watershed Report Card

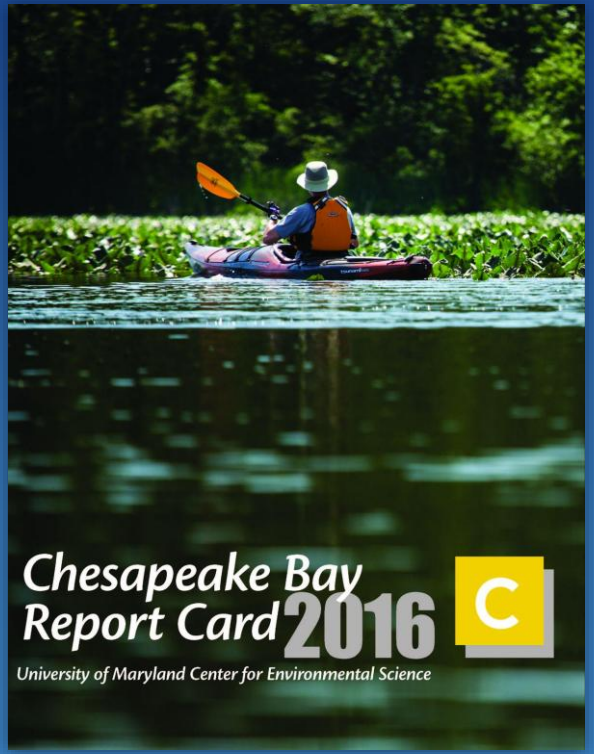
Alexandra Fries

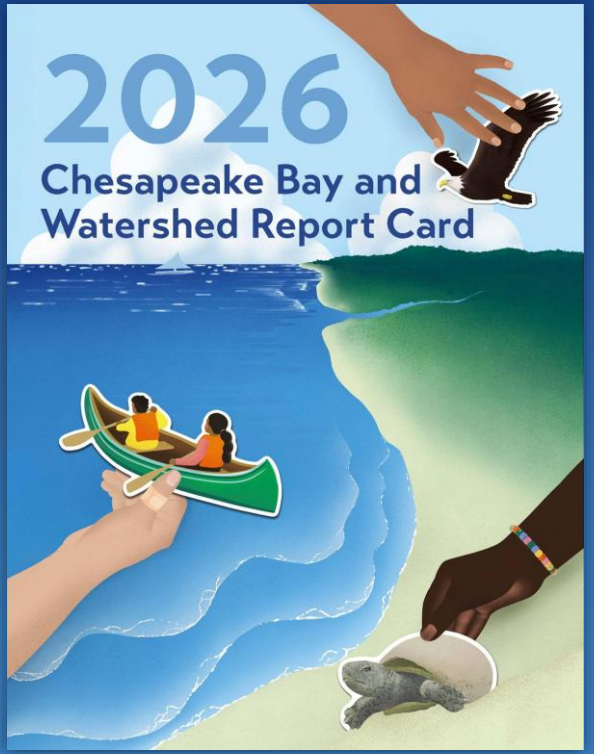
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments - Chesapeake Bay & Water Resources Policy Committee

November 20, 2026

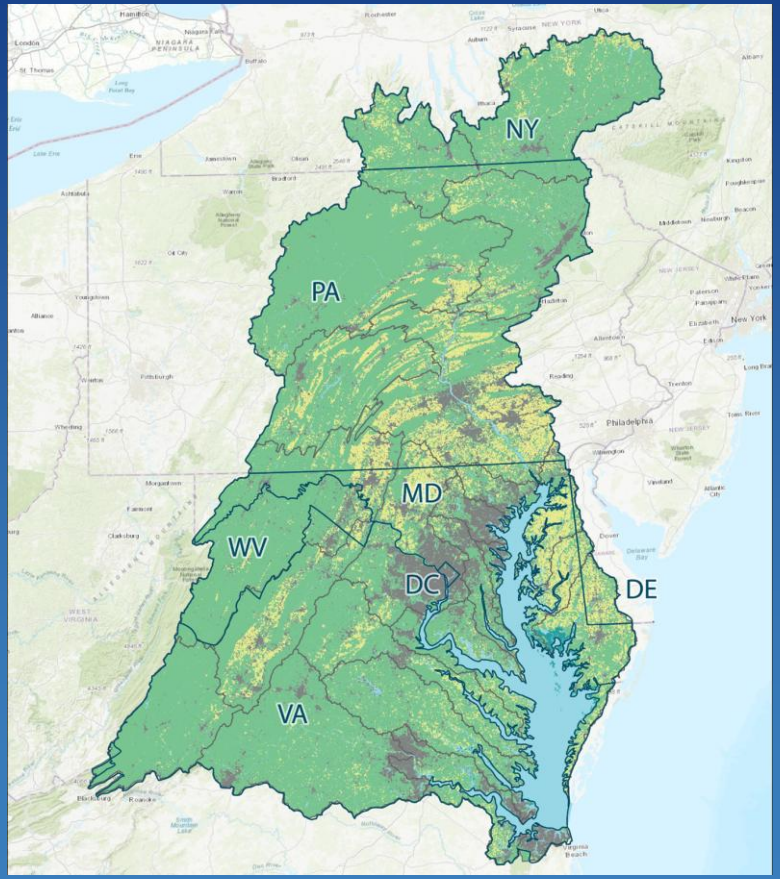
20 Years of Chesapeake Bay Report Cards



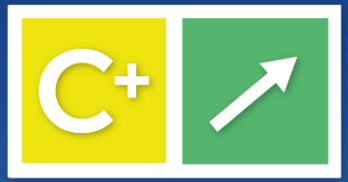




The Chesapeake Bay Watershed



Highest grade ever for Chesapeake Bay health



Indicator	Grade	Trend
Dissolved Oxygen	A	↗
Chlorophyll *a*	D+	↘
Benthic Community	C	→
Aquatic Grasses	C-	↗
Total Phosphorus	A-	↗
Total Nitrogen	B	↗
Water Clarity	D	↘



Grade Scale

A	100–80%
B	79–60%
C	59–40%
D	39–20%
F	19–0%

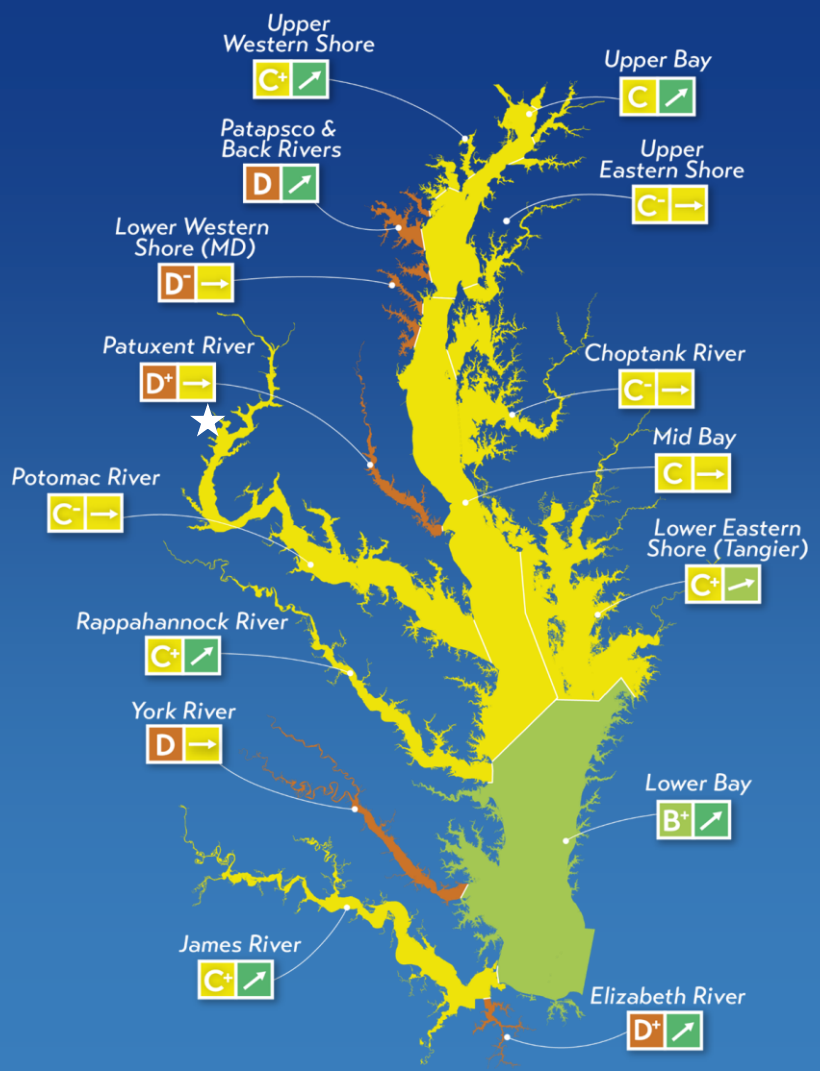
Bay health improved from the previous year

Overall Bay

C+ ↗

Grade Scale	
A	100—80%
B	79—60%
C	59—40%
D	39—20%
F	19—0%

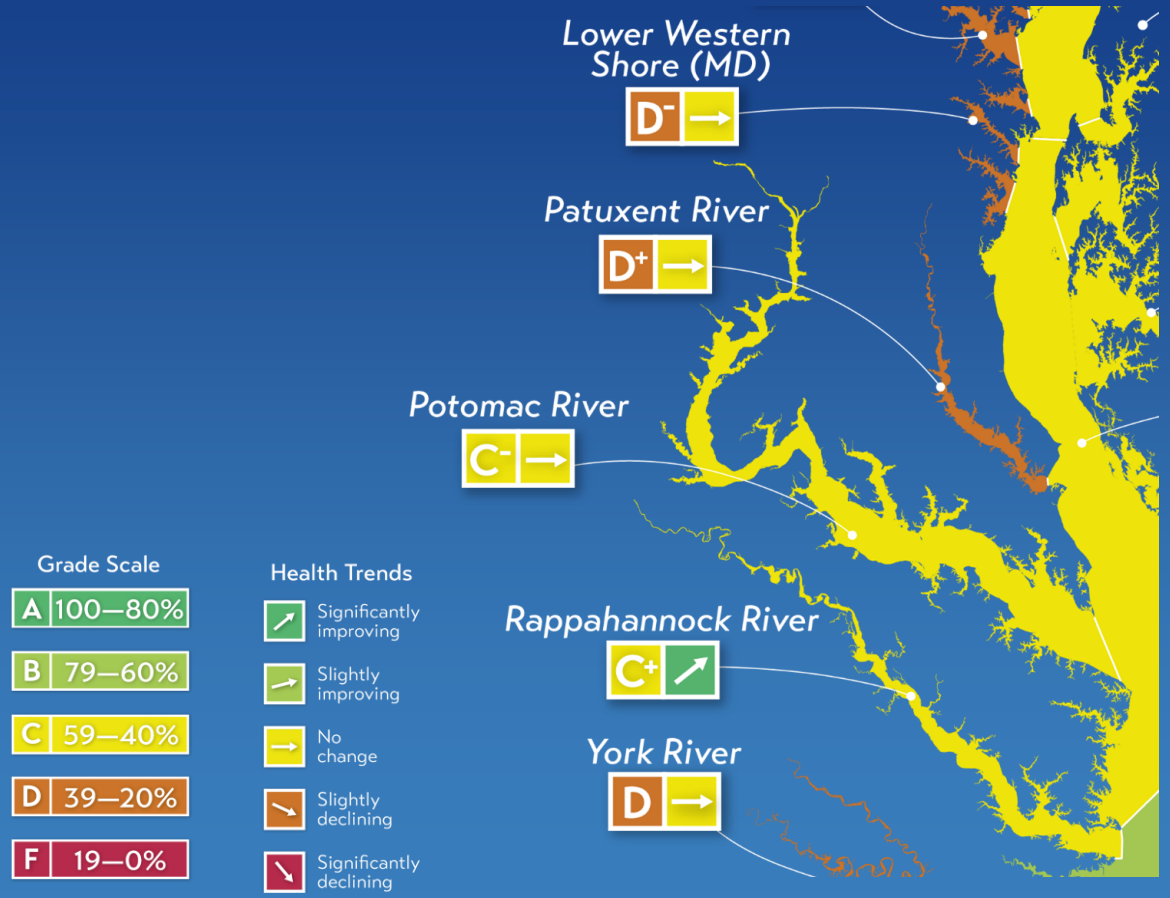
Health Trends	
↗	Significantly improving
↗	Slightly improving
→	No change
↘	Slightly declining
↘	Significantly declining



Bay health – MWCOG Region Results

Patuxent: 35%, D+
No trend

Potomac: 41%, C-
No trend



Bay health – Patuxent River

Overall Health Index = 35%, D+

Dissolved Oxygen = 74%, B
Nitrogen = 64%, B-
Phosphorus = 55%, C+
Chlorophyll *a* = 19%, F
Water Clarity = 19%, F
Aquatic Grasses = 1%, F
Benthic Community = 12%, F



Grade Scale

A	100–80%
B	79–60%
C	59–40%
D	39–20%
F	19–0%

Bay health – Potomac River

Overall Health Index = 41%, C-

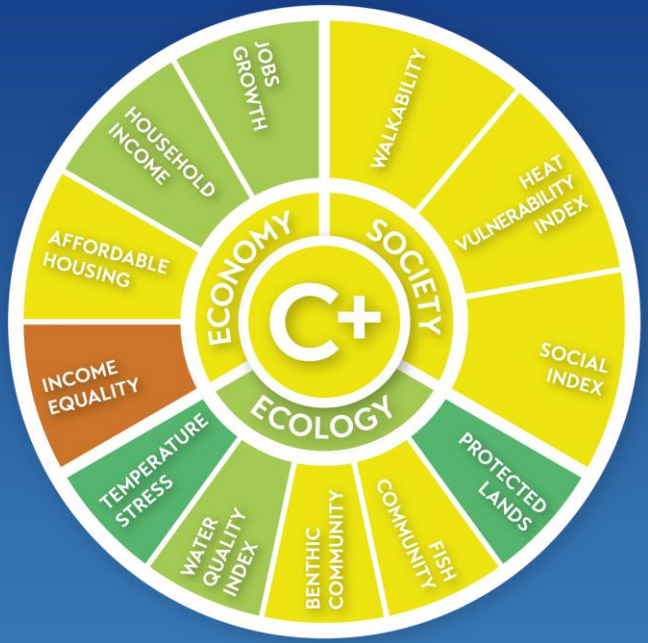
Dissolved Oxygen = 78%, B+
Nitrogen = 35%, D+
Phosphorus = 61%, B-
Chlorophyll *a* = 31%, D
Water Clarity = 22%, D-
Aquatic Grasses = 42%, C-
Benthic Community = 16%, F



Grade Scale

A	100–80%
B	79–60%
C	59–40%
D	39–20%
F	19–0%

Chesapeake Bay Watershed scores hold steady



Grade Scale

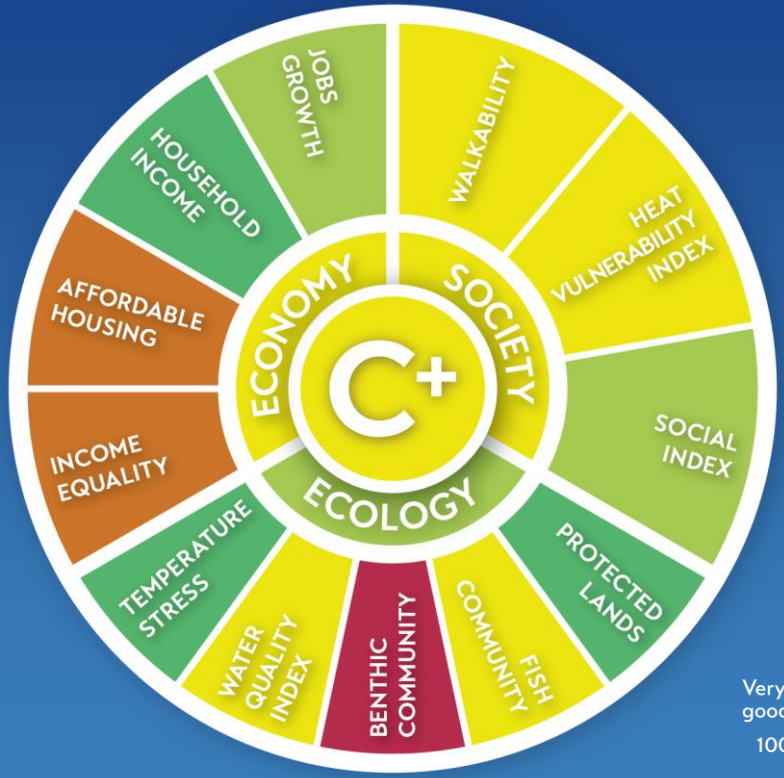
Very good | A | B | C | D | F | Very poor

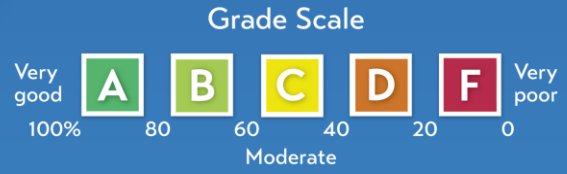
100% 80 60 40 20 0

Moderate

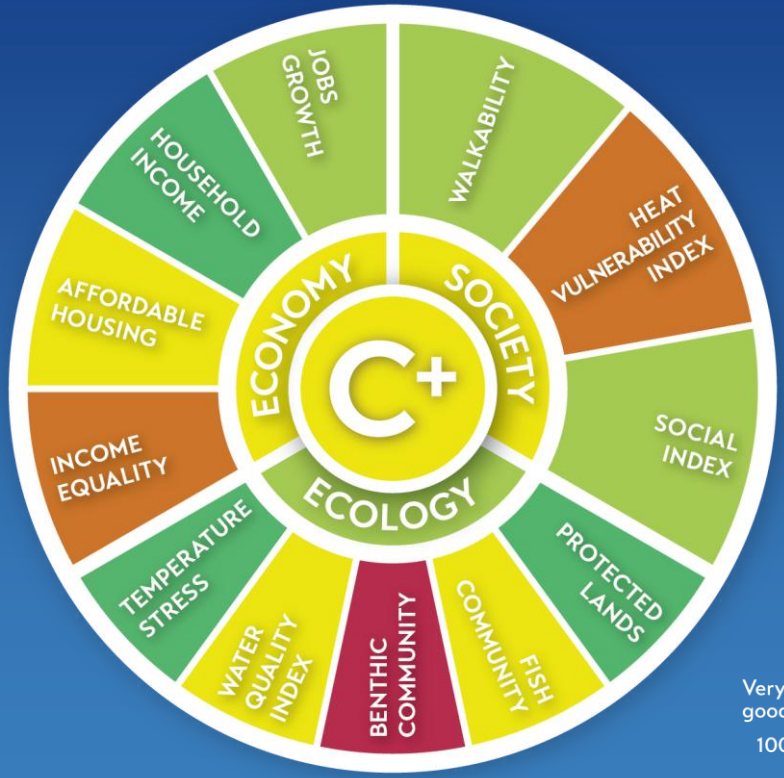


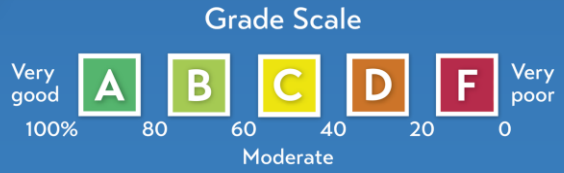
Watershed scores – Patuxent



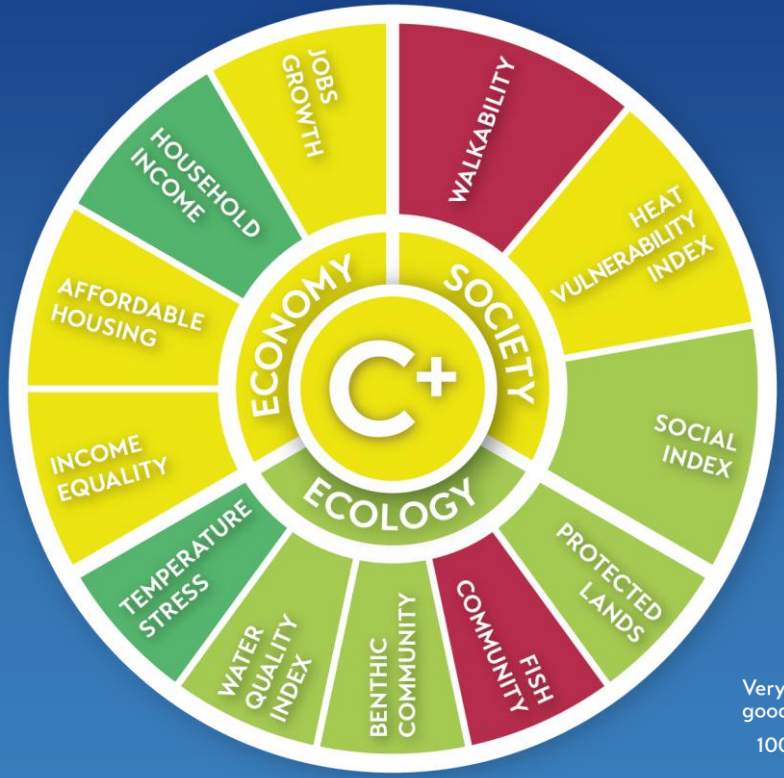


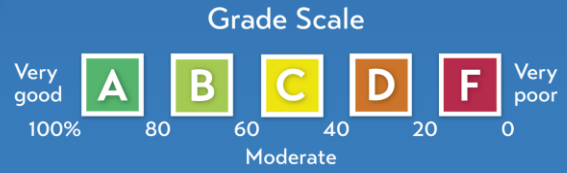
Watershed scores – Middle Potomac



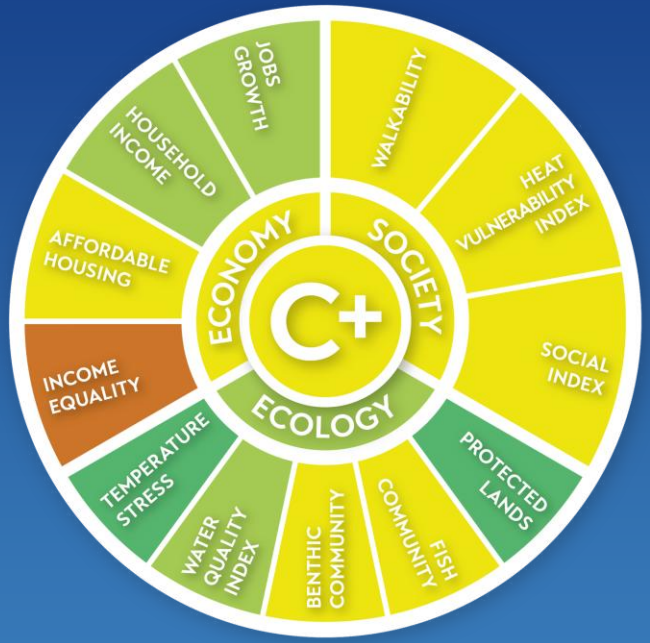


Watershed scores – Lower Potomac





Water Quality Index watershed trends



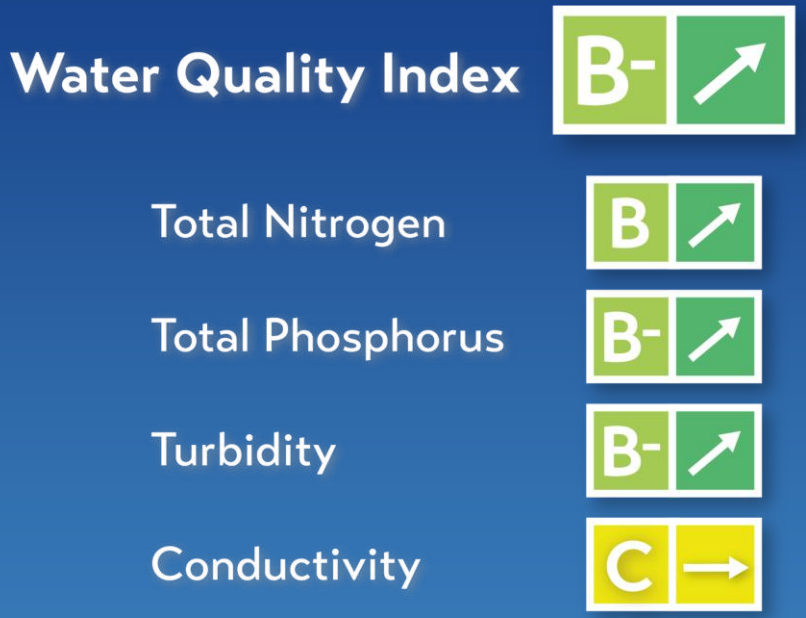
Water Quality Index watershed trends

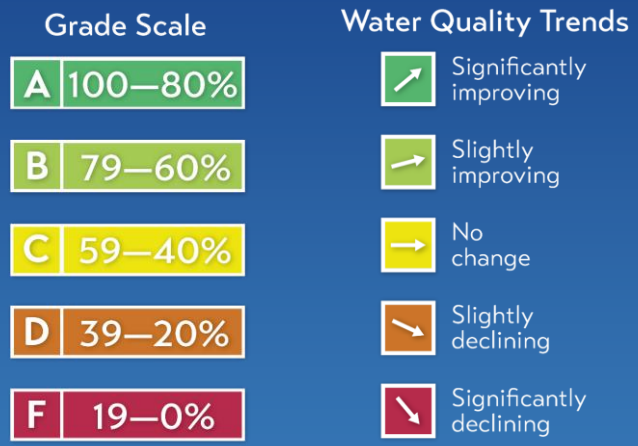


Grade Scale



Improving trends in the watershed

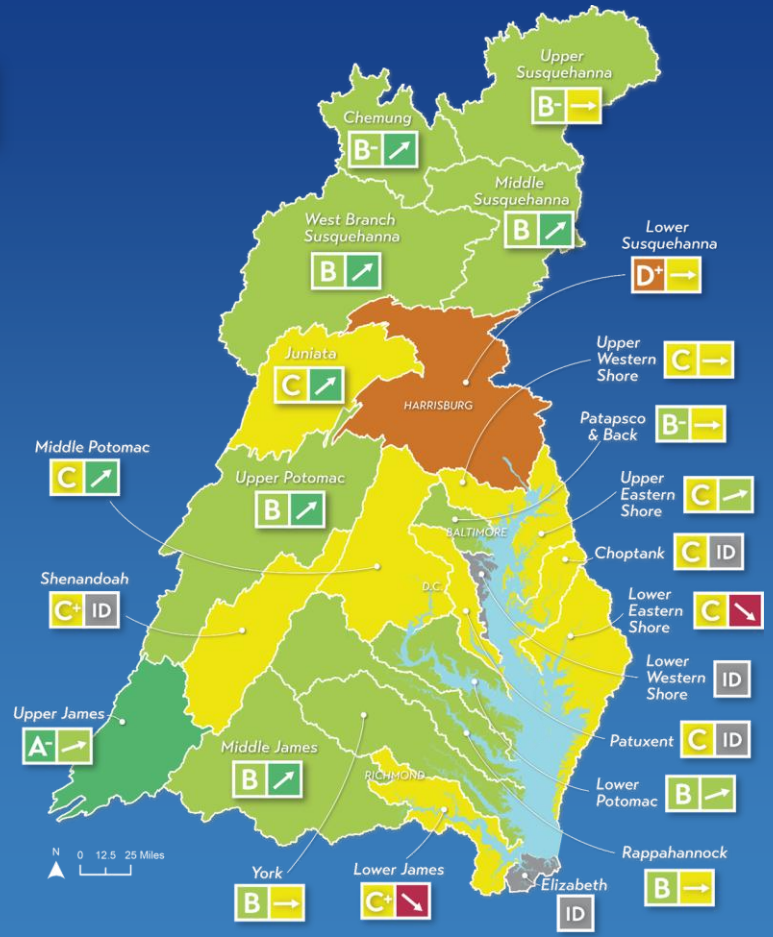




Water quality in the watershed is improving over time

Water Quality Index B-

- Total Nitrogen: B
- Total Phosphorus: B-
- Turbidity: B-
- Conductivity: C



Grade Scale

A	100–80%
B	79–60%
C	59–40%
D	39–20%
F	19–0%

Water Quality Trends

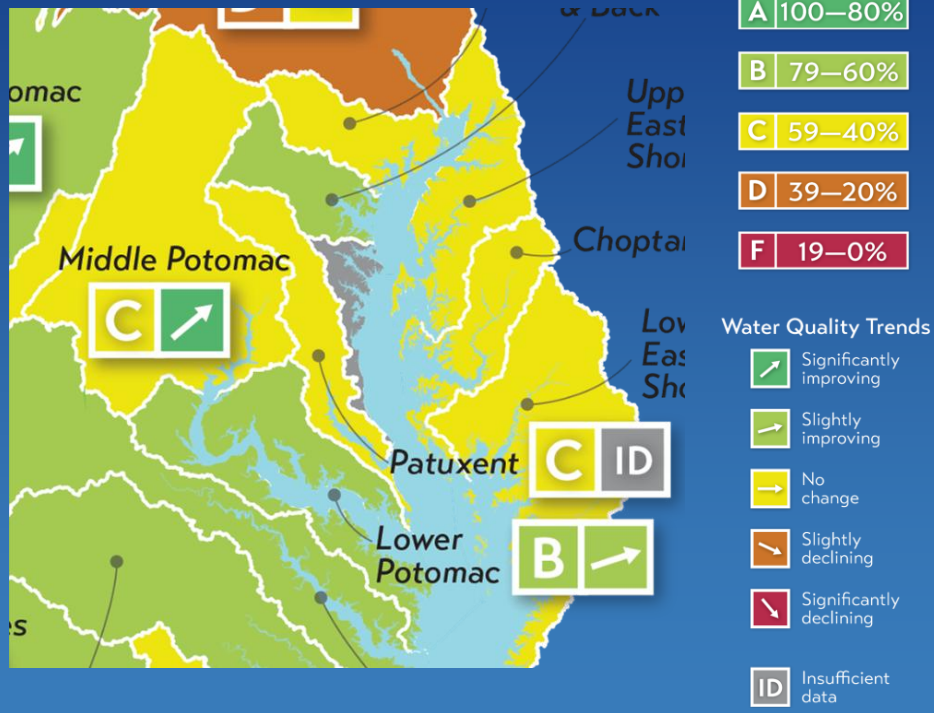
- Significantly improving
- Slightly improving
- No change
- Slightly declining
- Significantly declining
- ID: Insufficient data

Watershed water quality index – MWCOG Region Results

Patuxent: 54%, C
Insufficient data

Middle Potomac: 54%, C
Significantly improving

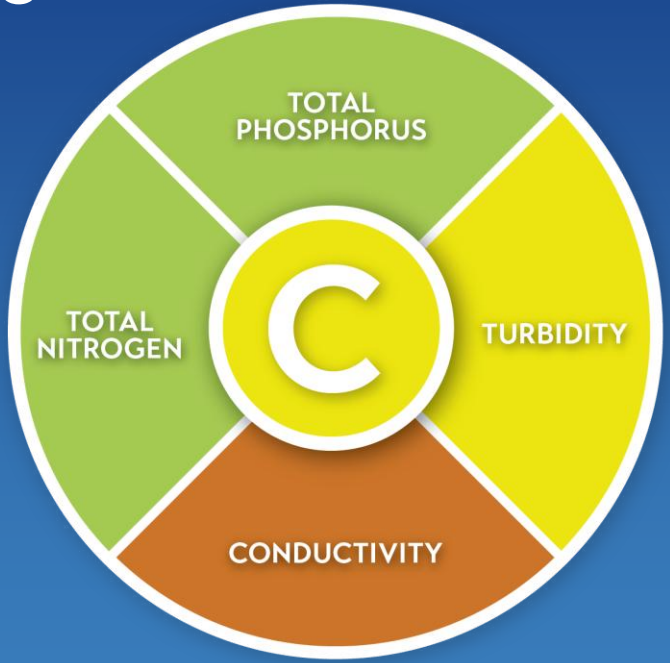
Lower Potomac: 68%, B
Slightly improving



Watershed water quality - Patuxent

Water Quality Index = 54%, C

Nitrogen = 68%, B
Phosphorus = 60%, B-
Turbidity = 54%, C
Conductivity = 32%, D



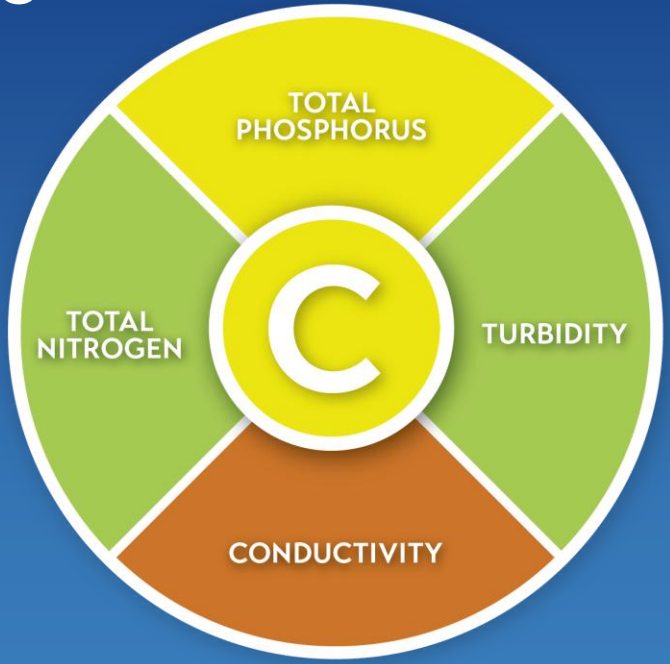
Grade Scale

A	100—80%
B	79—60%
C	59—40%
D	39—20%
F	19—0%

Watershed water quality - Middle Potomac

Water Quality Index = 54%, C

Nitrogen = 75%, B+
Phosphorus = 50%, C
Turbidity = 69%, B
Conductivity = 21%, D-



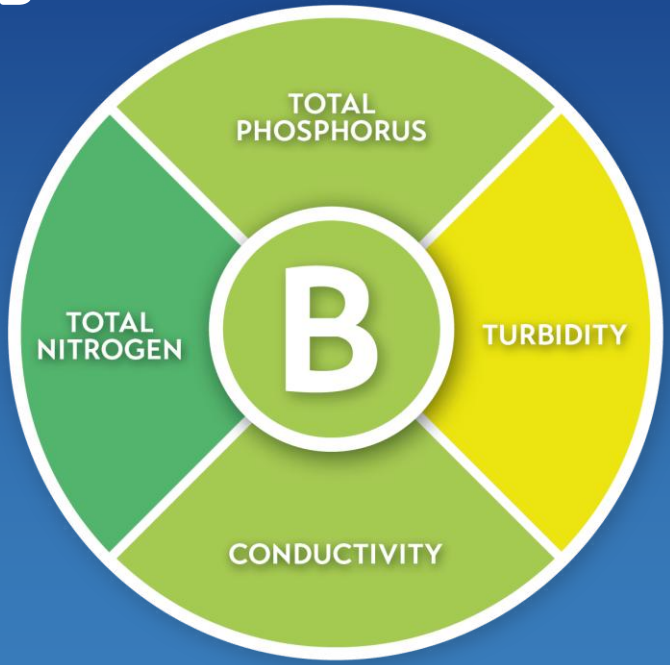
Grade Scale

A	100–80%
B	79–60%
C	59–40%
D	39–20%
F	19–0%

Watershed water quality - Lower Potomac

Water Quality Index = 68%, B

Nitrogen = 97%, A+
Phosphorus = 72%, B
Turbidity = 40%, C-
Conductivity = 63%, B-



Grade Scale

A	100—80%
B	79—60%
C	59—40%
D	39—20%
F	19—0%

Find more information about the results online



Thank you



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