



Public Access Site Development

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Through the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement, the Chesapeake Bay Program has committed to...



Goal: *Public Access*

Outcome: By 2025, add 300 new public access sites, with a strong emphasis on providing opportunities for boating, swimming and fishing, where feasible.

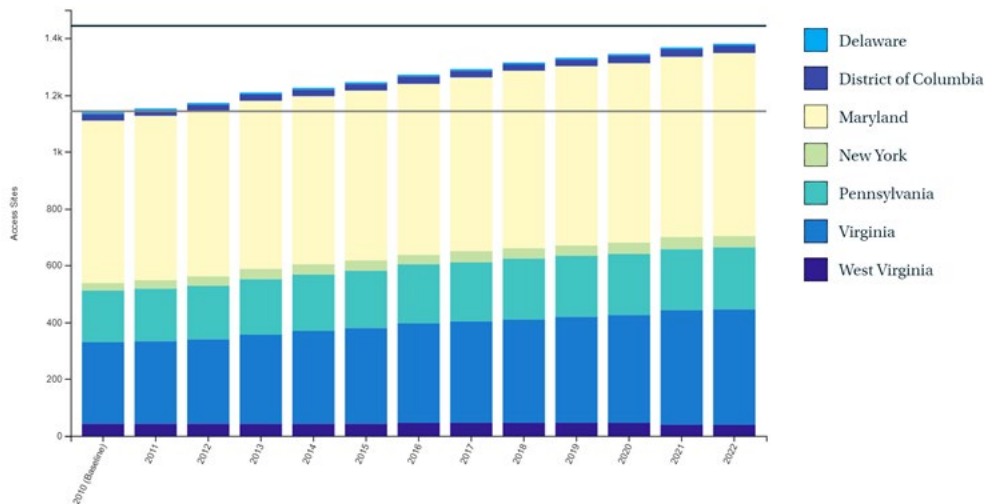


What is our Outlook and Recent Progress?



Public Access Sites in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed (Cumulative) (2010-2022) ↗

[VIEW CHART](#) [VIEW TABLE](#)





Lessons Learned

Over the last two years?



Successes

- Completed the Benefits and Barriers Study
- Refreshed workgroup membership to ensure representation of all states and federal partners
- Updated the annual inventory of new public access sites in the Chesapeake Bay watershed with 12 sites opened in 2020.

Benefits and Barriers Research

Increase knowledge around how residents in the watershed utilize public access sites and their relationship between usage and barriers.

1. Prioritize investments in infrastructure
2. Experiment with education and engagement programs
3. Extend a sense of welcome and belonging
4. Gain an understanding of who is visiting and who is not

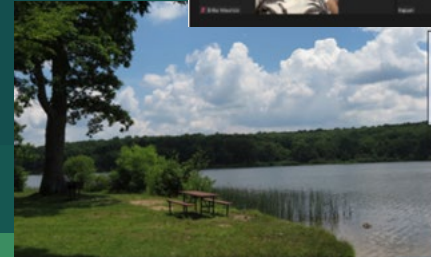


Photo courtesy Chesapeake Bay Program

"I worked in downtown Binghamton, and behind the building was a bunch of these benches that overlooked the river. And I'd go out on my break and would just kind of de-stress. I had a crummy job. ...I would just sit there for my whole break, my whole lunch." – Focus Group Participant

**Infrequent and non-visitors gravitated here:
Near, but not on or in the water.**



Photo courtesy Pennsylvania DCNR



Challenges

- Covid-19 increased demand for, and visitation to, public water access sites, resulting in overuse and/or damage
- Delayed maintenance, inflation and supply chain issues have impacted the cost of materials and construction of new sites
- Funding for operations and maintenance of existing sites is limited and the ability to secure funding and implement projects is a challenge
- Climate change



Moving Forward

Towards achieving the goal



Over the next two years we plan to ...

- Improve the quality and accuracy of data collected annually. Jurisdictions that have gaps in access or have been unable to make meaningful progress will be an area of focus.
- Explore and pursue efforts to improve existing State and Federal programs that fund public access.
- Look for opportunities to coordinate with other GIT 5 workgroups and expand partnerships among goal teams within the Bay Program.



Examples of activities supporting our work ...

- SCORP & LPPRP plans include demographic and inventory data
- Equity and Mapping Tools are evolving and identify areas that are underserved or lack access
- Several jurisdictions have hired staff or created offices dedicated to DEIJ, Outdoor Recreation and/or Sustainability and Climate. Information from these sources should be utilized to inform and support public access efforts



Discussion