



Chesapeake Bay Program
Science. Restoration. Partnership.

Agriculture Workgroup

May 2025

Agenda

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**Development of
Protected Ag Lands
Target**

2

**AgWG Planning
Document Review**

3

**Phase 7 Upland Buffer
Credit**

4

**New Business,
Announcements &
Updates**



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Protected Ag Lands Target for Protected Lands Outcome

Background

Beyond 2025 outcome review – update Protected Lands Outcome

PROTECTED LANDS OUTCOME

STEWARDSHIP GIT (GIT 5)

Protected Lands Workgroup

Presenter: Aurelia Gracia

PROPOSED DRAFT OUTCOME LANGUAGE:

Conserve and protect critical landscapes within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed to protect water quality, enhance biodiversity, support sustainable livelihoods and honor cultural heritage.

EXISTING 2014 AGREEMENT OUTCOME LANGUAGE:

By 2025, protect an additional two million acres of lands throughout the watershed—currently identified as high-conservation priorities at the federal, state or local level—including 225,000 acres of wetlands and 695,000 acres of forest land of highest value for maintaining water quality.

Background

- Proposed several “targets” under the outcome
 - Overall land protection target: preserve an additional 1.5-2 million acres of land throughout watershed
 - Forest- and wetland-specific target acreages (being discussed by relevant workgroups)
 - **Agricultural Lands: By 2040, protect a total of __ acres of agricultural lands within the Chesapeake Bay watershed.**
- Protected Lands Workgroup wants AgWG feedback on
 - Target language
 - Target acreage

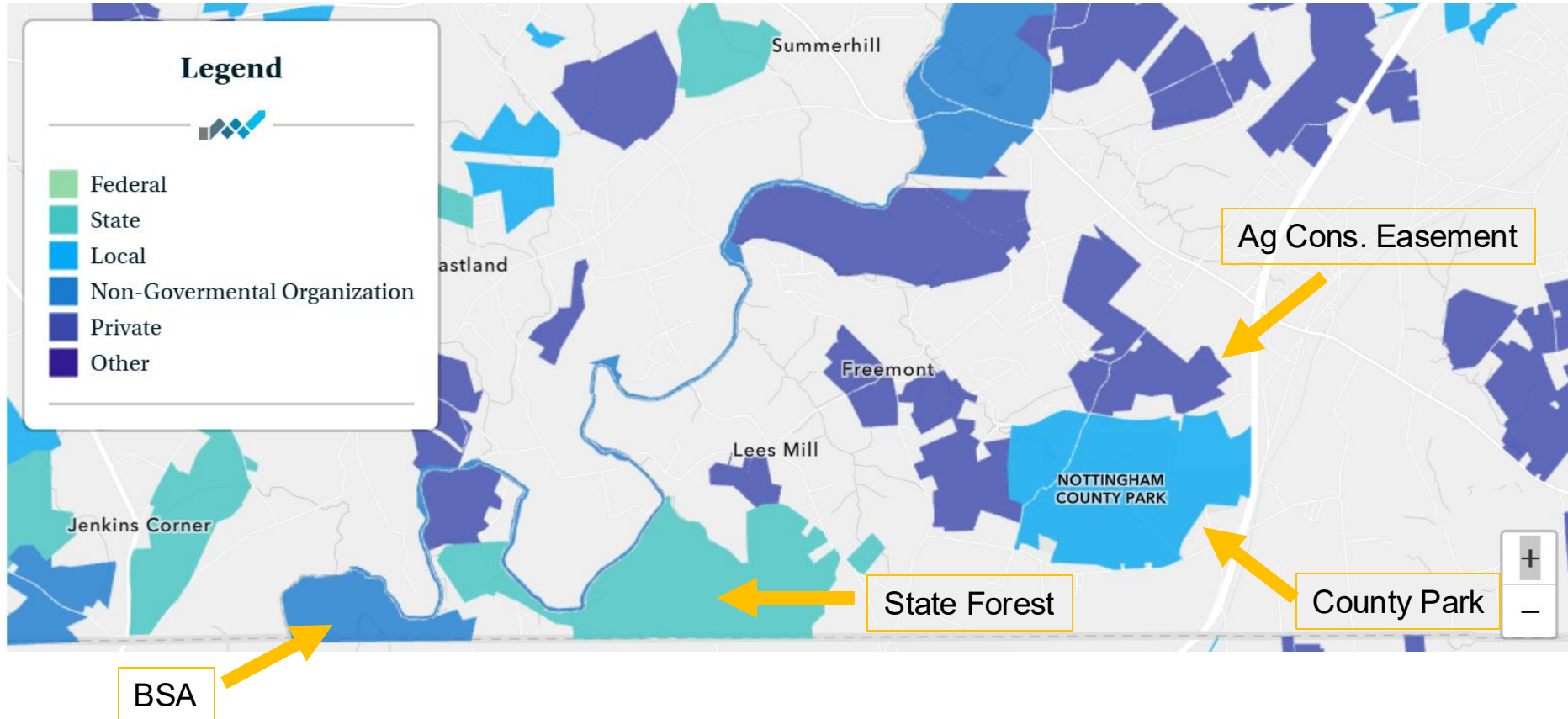
For today:

- Topic introduction
 - Overview of requested feedback
 - Preliminary discussion questions
 - Next steps
-

“Protected agricultural land”

- How does the Bay Program define protected lands?
 - Lands permanently protected from development, whether by purchase or donation, through perpetual conservation or open space easement or fee ownership for their cultural, historical, ecological, or agricultural value
 - Includes transfer/purchase of development rights
 - Protected through federal, state, county, municipal, township, tribal ownership
 - Pulled from several federal/state data sources
- How does the Bay Program track protected ag land?
 - We don't specify protected ag land – yet
 - Would be calculated through analysis using high-res land cover dataset (how much land designated as ag falls within boundaries of protected parcels?)
 - Would be helpful to know how many ag acres are currently protected

Protected Land Ownership (2022)



Feedback – Target Language

- Target language - By 2040, protect a total of __ acres of agricultural lands within the Chesapeake Bay watershed.
 - Thoughts from the group on the partnership working toward a target ag land preservation acreage?
 - Concerns with setting a watershed-wide target?

Feedback – Target Acreage

- Protected Lands WG would like input on the ag acreage that should be targeted for protection by 2040.
 - What do you consider to be “protected” ag land? All land under an ag easement?
Aligns with the previously described definition of protected land?
 - Does your jurisdiction have specific ag land preservation goals?
 - Use these to inform watershed-wide target? CB target complements/supports jurisdictional targets?
 - What additional information is needed to support the development of target acreage?
Do we feel comfortable suggesting a target?

Next Steps

- Discuss with relevant ag land preservation experts in your network
- Prepare to provide input on target acreage at subsequent meeting
- Protected Lands Workgroup estimated having targets finalized by August

Planning Document Review

Today's meeting

- Quick recap, overview of document
- Summary of comments
 - Feedback we received; changes being made in response
- In-meeting pulse-check: Mentimeter
- Next steps

Anatomy of the document

- Cover page
 - Background
 - Purpose
 - Request
- “Pillars”
 - Implementation
 - Crediting and Verification
- “Objectives”
- “Actions”

Summary of feedback

- High-level feedback
 - Generally reflects the interests expressed by the group
 - “I believe the document reflects the main areas where the committee has prioritized [its] needs”
 - “this list is a great start”
 - Don’t overwhelm the group with too many objectives
 - “a lot of objectives for a group that meets 12 times a year”
 - “we should make special efforts to not overcomplicate all of the efforts of the committee”
- Comments speaking to specific objectives
- Changes to text
 - Walkthrough of document with tracked changes



Spotlight on Objectives



Implementation of Agricultural BMPs

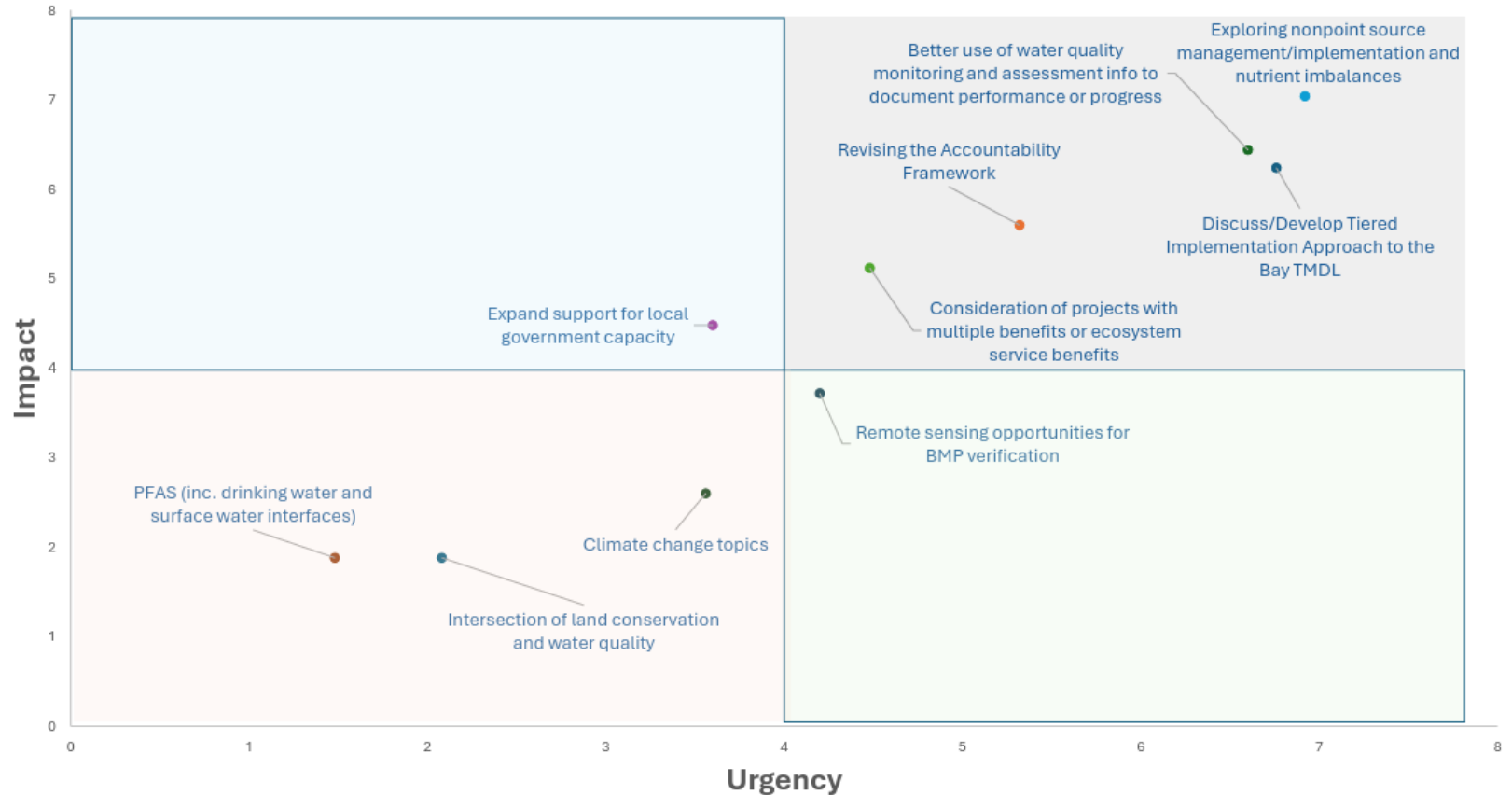
- 1) Understand and evaluate ag-sector WIP progress.
- 2) Accelerate BMP implementation.
- 3) Enhance cross-partner communication/idea-sharing.
- 4) Expand AgWG reach through external communication and education.
- 5) Track and understand agricultural industry trends.
- 6) Target BMP implementation.

- 1) Understand and evaluate ag-sector WIP progress.
- 2) Accelerate BMP implementation [across the Watershed](#).
- 3) Enhance cross-partner communication/idea-sharing.
- 4) Expand AgWG reach through external communication and education.
- 5) Track and understand agricultural industry trends [and their implications for agricultural nonpoint-source pollution](#).
- 6) [Assess options for innovative BMP implementation programs](#).

Crediting and Verification of Agricultural BMPs

- 1) Establish credit for BMPs not currently incorporated into the CBP's suite of modeling tools.
 - 2) Evaluate BMPs currently receiving credit in the CBP's suite of modeling tools.
 - 3) Develop methods for verifying BMPs not implemented through traditional channels (traditional channels being cost-share, etc.).
 - 4) Leverage technology to enhance BMP verification.
 - 5) Enhance understanding of, and explore crediting options for, BMP co-benefits (benefits beyond N, P, S reduction).
 - 6) Emphasize focus on water quality monitoring data.
- 1) **Evaluate credits** for BMPs not currently incorporated into the CBP's suite of modeling tools.
 - 2) **Regularly** evaluate BMPs currently receiving credit in the CBP's suite of modeling tools.
 - 3) Develop methods for verifying BMPs not implemented through traditional channels (traditional channels being cost-share, etc.).
 - 4) Leverage technology to enhance BMP verification.
 - 5) Enhance understanding of, and explore crediting options for, BMP co-benefits (benefits beyond N, P, S reduction).
 - 6) **Enhance** focus on water quality monitoring data.

Urgency vs Impact for Priorities



Mentimeter Pulse-check

- Questions:
 - To what extent is the Agriculture Workgroup capable of achieving this objective?
 - To what degree would achieving this objective benefit the partnership?
- Mentimeter activity

Next Steps

- Incorporation of additional feedback from today and posting of updated document
 - Includes response to questions
- Google Form to formally capture impact x capability
- Call for input on actions, similar to call for feedback on objectives

Application of Upland Buffer Credit for Phase 7 Model



Presentation





Questions?



New Business, Announcements & Updates

Thriving Ag Workshop – May 28th-29th

- Thriving Ag Project hosting [two-day event](#) to discuss the key findings of their project. Participants able to join in field tours on May 28th; full workshop will take place on May 29th. Workshop will cover opportunities and key findings that the Thriving Ag project has provided for economically and environmentally thriving agriculture in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. **Draft agenda [here](#).**
- Workshop will take place at Nittany Lion Inn in State College, PA. Additional details, including information on hotel accommodations, can be found on [workshop page](#).
- Registration for this event is free. **Register using this [link](#).**
- Strong AgWG representation at previous Thriving Ag workshop!

Beyond 2025 Update

- In the weeks following the March 27th Management Board meeting, WQGIT leadership worked to incorporate GIT feedback into the updated 2025 WIP outcome language submitted to the Management Board. Included in the [updated outcome language](#) was a proposed name change from the 2025 WIP Outcome to the “Reducing Excess Nutrients and Sediment” outcome.* WQGIT leadership presented the updated [outcome language](#) and [slides](#) to the Management Board at their retreat on May 8th. Using the feedback from the Management Board meeting, WQGIT leadership will work to refine the proposed outcome language and targets before submitting updated materials to the Management Board by May 15th. Outcome language presentations from the May 7th and 8th Management Board retreat can be found [here](#) for all outcomes.

*Note: The proposed name, updated outcome language, and targets are subject to change based on Management Board feedback.

Anything else?

- Send to Caroline Kleis (Kleis.Caroline@epa.gov) for inclusion in “Recap” email

Thank you!

Any questions?

You can contact me at Hughes.Eric@epa.gov



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