

# High Level Updates

**Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement**

**October 2025**

Removed

Added

To be Discussed at future meeting

# Principles:

## **Intro Text:**

The Chesapeake Bay Program commits to operate under the following principles, which reflect the partners' collective, core values. The principles guide the work of the partnership **in our governance and** as we develop policy and take action to achieve the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement's* Goals and Outcomes. The partnership will:

# Principles: Cont.

## **Science:**

- Use place-based approaches, where appropriate, to target specific geographic areas and produce recognizable benefits to local communities while contributing to larger ecosystem goals.
- Maintain and enhance a coordinated watershed-wide monitoring, modeling and research program to support decision-making, track progress and assess the effectiveness of management actions.
- Integrate social science holistically throughout the partnership to support adaptive management, more effectively engage with communities and incentivize individual and collective behaviors that support partnership goals.
- Adaptively manage at all levels of the partnership to foster continuous improvement informed by the best available science and strong working relationships.
- Use science-based decision-making, consider Indigenous and local knowledge and seek out innovative technologies and approaches to support sound management decisions in a changing system.

## **Principles: Cont.**

### **Restoration and Conservation:**

- Achieve Goals and Outcomes in a measurable and timely way (with the most economic benefit) and at the least possible cost to the public.
- Conserve working lands and support economically viable forests and farms to best position landowners to help protect the Chesapeake Bay.
- Acknowledge, support and engage local governments and other local entities in watershed restoration, conservation and protection activities.
- Anticipate and respond to changes in the landscape and environmental conditions, including long-term trends in sea level, temperature, precipitation, land use and other variables.

## Principles: Cont.

### Partnership:

- Represent the interests of all communities throughout the watershed fairly and effectively.
- Meaningfully engage the public to foster collaboration and grow the partnership to support and carry out the restoration, conservation and protection activities necessary to achieve the Goals and Outcomes of this *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*.
- Facilitate outreach to and welcome participation by all communities regarding the partnership's activities, decisions and implementation.
- Collaborate to achieve the Goals and Outcomes of this *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*.
- Operate with transparency and accountability in program decisions, policies, actions and reporting on progress to strengthen public trust and confidence in our efforts.
- Strive for consensus across the partnership when making decisions.
- Include (replaced “integrate”) tribal nations in the partnership in a manner that appropriately considers their unique status as independent sovereign nations and as original stewards of the land.

## Goals & Outcomes:

### **Healthy landscapes Goal (Introductory Text):**

The well-being of the Chesapeake Bay depends on the health of the lands that make up its watershed. As communities within the region continue to grow, the demand for land and resources can put our waters and habitats at risk. Encouraging sound land use management and conservation of areas with ecological, historic and cultural value can reduce or prevent pollution, maintain healthy ecosystems and ensure the health of forests, farms and open spaces, all while supporting growing economies {potential space to include military readiness – discussion between DoD, GIT 5, and CBC.} and sustainable food production. These cost-effective strategies will help communities adapt to changing environmental conditions and ensure clean water for future generations.

## **Goals & Outcomes:**

### **Healthy landscapes Goal (Goal Language):**

Conserve, protect, restore and enhance landscapes of ecological, economic, recreational and cultural value to improve water quality, provide habitat for wildlife and increase resilience.

**Passed without revisions!!**

## **Goals & Outcomes:**

### **Healthy Forests and Trees Outcome (Outcome Language):**

Conserve, manage and restore forests and tree cover to maximize benefits for water quality, habitat and people throughout the watershed, with a particular focus on riparian areas and communities.

**Passed without revisions!!**



# Goals & Outcomes:

## Healthy Forests and Trees Outcome (Outcome Targets):

- Conserve tree canopy within communities by reducing the rate of loss of existing canopy, and planting and maintaining 35,000 acres of trees (removed “within communities”) by 2035 (45,000 acres by 2040) to achieve a net gain in canopy over the long-term.
- Conserve riparian forest by reducing the rate of loss of existing (removed “riparian forest”) buffers, and planting and maintaining 7,500 acres of buffers annually to achieve no less than 71% riparian forest cover by 2035 (71.5% by 2040) and 75% riparian forest cover over the long-term.
- Achieve a net gain in forests over the long-term by reducing the rate (removed “of loss”) of forest conversion to other land uses by 33%, permanently protecting a total of 8.6 million acres of forested land (nine million acres by 2040), and planting, maintaining and managing 155,000 acres of new forests by 2035 (202,000 acres by 2040).

# Some additional Context

## Protected Lands Outcome:

- Target “By 2027, develop numeric targets for the protection of riparian forests, wetlands (including migration corridors) and adjacent areas that facilitate future wetland expansion, natural areas supporting healthy streams, agricultural lands, tribal homelands, and urban and community greenspace.” was removed
- Target “By 2040, permanently protect a total of 11.3 million acres of land throughout the watershed, building on a 2025 baseline of 9.3 million acres already protected to work 11 towards protecting at least 30% of all land in the watershed over the long-term. (a total of 10.8 million acres by 2035)”

.... Was changed to...

“By 2040, permanently protect at least an additional 2 million acres of land above the 2025 baseline of 9.3 million acres. (an additional 1.5 million acres by 2035) The 2 million acres will include specific targets for: riparian forests; wetlands (including migration corridors); natural areas supporting healthy streams; agricultural lands; tribal homelands; and urban and community greenspace.”