

Beyond 2025 Engagement Strategy and Feedback Plan

Draft April 25, 2024

Introduction and Purpose

In October 2022, the Chesapeake Executive Council [charged](#) the Principals' Staff Committee with recommending a critical path forward that prioritized and outlined the next steps for meeting the goals and outcomes of the [Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement](#) beyond 2025. To meet this charge, the Principals' Staff Committee directed the Management Board to form the Beyond 2025 steering committee, consisting of representatives from each signatory, core federal agencies, advisory committee chairs, Goal Implementation Team (GIT) representatives and two non-voting representatives with expertise in restoration and partnership.

In June 2023, a contractor was retained to assist in assessing the existing *Watershed Agreement* goals and outcomes, evaluate existing program implementation and processes described in resource documents (e.g., [Charting a Course to 2025](#), [Comprehensive Evaluation of System Response](#)), conduct an organizational assessment of the existing partnership structure and perform a functional review of the Chesapeake Bay Program to assess what works effectively and recommend opportunities for improvement where challenges and barriers are found.

A few months later, five small groups were formed to guide the steering committee in preparing findings for critical topics: Clean Water, Climate Change, Healthy Watersheds, People and Shallow Water Habitats. Leading up to a [two-day symposium](#) in February 2024, these small groups, consisting of experts in each of these areas, each presented their findings to help support the next steps for moving beyond 2025.

Prior to the two-day symposium at the end of February 2024, each of the five small groups held listening sessions for any interested parties to provide feedback on their findings. Additionally, the Beyond 2025 steering committee co-leads, small group leads and other steering committee members have presented on their activities in this process to several GITs and workgroups and conducted briefings to higher-level Bay leadership.

Currently, the [small group](#) and the contractual findings are being synthesized to support a high-level recommendation regarding the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* that will be made to the Executive Council at their December 2024 meeting.

The purpose of this engagement strategy and feedback plan is to document the approach the partnership plans to take in informing interested parties of the recommendation and supporting documentation that will go to the Executive Council in December 2024, as well as lay out the process for providing feedback to this document.

Goals

Taking advantage of opportunities throughout the May-June 2024 timeframe in which to inform interested parties about the process behind the Beyond 2025 effort, discuss the synthesized small group and contractual findings, as well as planned next steps, will help ensure that this process

is understood, positioning interested parties to provide thoughtful and meaningful feedback when the draft recommendation and supporting materials are made available.

Target Audiences

For this initial feedback phase, the primary audiences are those that have knowledge and interest in the Chesapeake Bay restoration and conservation effort. These include, but are not limited to:

- Chesapeake Bay Program GITs, workgroups and advisory committees.
- Federal and state agency partners involved with the Chesapeake Bay Program.
- Local elected officials, planners and staff.
- Academic partners, including the scientific community.
- Coalitions, partnerships, watershed organizations and nonprofits within the Chesapeake Bay region.

Messengers/Trusted Sources

The following groups and individuals will play a role in implementing this engagement strategy and feedback plan:

- Beyond 2025 Steering Committee co-leads.
- Beyond 2025 Steering Committee members.
- Leads of the five small groups.
- Chesapeake Bay Program Communications Office.
- Chesapeake Bay Program Advisory Committees.
- Chesapeake Bay Program GITs and workgroups.
- Choose Clean Water Coalition.

Opportunities for Engagement and Outreach (May-June 2024)

The Chesapeake Bay Program Communications Office will assist in developing the following products to support the May-June period of awareness building.

- Key Messages and Talking Points.
- Standardized PowerPoint.
- Recorded Webinar.
- Frequently Asked Questions.

The following identified activities provide an opportunity to inform interested parties of the process behind the Beyond 2025 effort, discuss the synthesized small group and contractual findings, as well as planned next steps. The steering committee, with assistance from the Chesapeake Bay Communications Office, can be added to these meeting agendas if they have not yet been already.

Date	Audience	Who will conduct the outreach?	On Agenda
May 1-2	Habitat GIT Spring Meeting		N

May 2-3	Chesapeake Bay Commission Quarterly Meeting	Anna Killius	Y
May 9	May Management Board Meeting		Y
May 13	Water Quality GIT Meeting		
May 14	Local Leadership Workgroup Meeting		
May 16	Stewardship Workgroup Meeting		
May 16	Mid-Atlantic EPA Summit		Y
May 20	Kick-Off Event at Choose Clean Water Coalition Conference	Kristin Reilly Anna Killius Martha Shimkin	Y
May 22-23	Stakeholders Advisory Committee Meeting		
May 23	STAR Meeting		
May 29	GIT Chairs Quarterly Meeting		Y
May 30	Beyond 2025 Steering Committee Meeting		Y
June 4-5	STAC Quarterly Meeting		
June 4	Choose Clean Water Coalition TMDL Workgroup		Y
June 10	Healthy Watersheds GIT Meeting		
June 10-12	CRC Chesapeake Community Research Symposium		
June 20	GIT 6 Quarterly Meeting		
June 20	Climate Resiliency Workgroup Meeting		
June 24	Water Quality GIT Meeting		
June 25	Principals' Staff Committee Meeting		Y
June 25	Quarterly Strategic Engagement Team Meeting		
June 27	STAR Meeting		
June 27	Beyond 2025 Steering Committee		

	Meeting		
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It is recommended to reach out to the following organizations to inform them and their partners about the Beyond 2025 process and upcoming public feedback period. *(Note: This is not an exhaustive list. Even if there is not an opportunity to present to these groups, it is recommended that outreach in the form of a phone call or an email take place.)*

- County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania
- Delaware Association of Conservation Districts
- Delaware League of Local Governments
- Eastern Panhandle Regional Planning and Development Council
- Lancaster Clean Water Partners
- Maryland Association of Counties
- Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts
- Maryland Municipal League
- Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
- Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts
- Pennsylvania Municipal League
- Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs
- Pennsylvania State Association of Elected County Officials
- Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors
- Upper Susquehanna Coalition
- Virginia Association of Counties
- Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts
- Virginia Conservation Network
- Virginia Municipal League
- West Virginia Association of Conservation Districts

Future Outreach Opportunities

Date	Activity	Responsible Party	On Agenda
July 11, 2024	LGAC meeting		Y
July-August 2024 (TBD)	Three local government roundtables in Lancaster, Pa. , Prince George's County, Md. and the Delmarva peninsula		Y
October 6-10, 2024	Restoring America's Estuaries Conference		
October 18-20, 2024	Chesapeake Watershed Forum		

Planned Communications Activities (July-August 2024)

The draft Beyond 2025 recommendation document that will go to the Executive Council in December 2024, will be made available for a 60-day public feedback on July 1, 2024. The following activities will support awareness of this feedback period.

Date	Activity	Responsible Party
Monday, July 1	Draft Document Posted to Chesapeakebay.net	Jake Solyst Communications Office
Monday, July 1	Blog Post explaining how to submit feedback and introducing the document.	Rachel Felver Communications Office
Monday, July 1	Social Media promoting public feedback session	Jake Solyst Communications Office
Monday, July 1	Posting in Chesapeake Currents newsletter	Bianca Martinez Penn Communications Office
Monday, July 1	Communications toolkit to be disseminated to Bay partners. Toolkit will contain the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Talking points. - Blog. - Social media posts. - FAQ. - Email template to send to partners. 	Rachel Felver Communications Office
Monday, July 1	Emails sent to Principals Staff Committee, Management Board and Beyond 2025 Steering Committee announcing the public feedback period is open.	Drafted by Rachel Felver, Communications Office Sent by Anna Killius, Martha Shimkin
Wednesday, July 3	Posting in Bay Brief newsletter	Bianca Martinez Penn Communications Office
Thursday, August 2	One-month reminder social media	Jake Solyst Communications Office
Friday, August 16	Two-week reminder social media	Jake Solyst Communications Office
Friday, August 30	Last day to provide feedback social media reminder	Jake Solyst Communications Office