

Public Access Plan Annual Sites Update Process

Background:

As a part of the continuing tracking and updating of the [Chesapeake Bay Watershed Public Access Plan](#) approved in January of 2013, it is necessary each year to determine what has been implemented in the plan and update the list of potential new sites. This process will help to assure that the plan continues to capture new potential sites that could help reach the goal of adding 300 new public access sites to the Bay and its tributaries by 2025.

The update process needs to determine if there are new sites to add to the list of potential sites and if sites currently on the list should be removed. Current potential sites could be removed because they have either been developed, replaced by another site developed in close proximity, which in effect negated the need for that site, or as a result of further review was found not suitable for development. New potential sites need to be added and could be the result of additional planning work by any of our governmental or organizational partners. Some recommendations may also come from area users. In any event, the goal is to annually update the list and keep it as complete as possible considering the opportunistic nature of public access development.

Process for Tracking Existing Sites:

As agreed to in Appendix A of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Public Access Plan, the Public Access Action Team, a partnership of all Chesapeake Bay states, federal agencies, and relevant nonprofit partners with National Park Service assistance, will continue to coordinate public access tracking updates. The call for the update of new sites will be made in early January of each year, with a final deadline for data submission in late January. It will cover the period from January through the end of December of the previous year (ex: the data call for sites opened to the public in 2013 will be issued in December of 2013 and completed in January 2014). Information for this effort will be collected annually from 2013 through 2025. For this data collection effort, designated state agency staff will use a simple, online system to input the geographic locations of newly developed access sites based on the established definitions of “new” and “public access,” and the agreed upon geographic scope for this effort. Designated state agency staff will also be provided with a spreadsheet template, or utilize the online system, to fill out a few fields of information (name, water body, access type, ownership, etc.) on each new site. Additional information, such as project cost, can also be collected if deemed necessary.

All new public access sites that were ***opened*** to public use during the specified calendar year will be counted as new access toward the goal. This process should also identify those new sites that were developed from the list of potential sites in the plan so that they can be removed from the potential site list. All new sites will then be added to the base map of existing sites maintained by NPS and the Chesapeake Bay Program. The total number of new sites will then be reported to the Chesapeake Bay Program and for the Chesapeake Bay Executive Order 13508

progress report as progress towards the goal of developing 300 new public access sites to the Bay and its tributaries by 2025.

Proposed Process for Tracking Potential Sites:

In August of each year a request would be made to all agency and organizational partners to provide updates to the list of potential access sites that will be maintained online in association with the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Public Access Plan. It is anticipated that each partner will be able to go to the online mapping tool and add any potential new sites for their area of interest. In addition, a spreadsheet of important information will be completed for each site. Sites should be identified by the plan's category of 1, 2, or 3 based on their readiness to be developed. (As a quick reminder, category 1 sites are those for which nearly all planning and permitting has been completed and only funding is needed to proceed to development; category 2 sites are those which have had some planning and site analysis completed and need only final plan development and possibly permitting before project could proceed; category 3 sites are those which have had only a cursory review and significant planning is needed to determine if site is truly suitable and access can be developed.) In addition, the website will be opened to the public for 3 weeks so they may suggest any potential sites they feel should be considered. The sites suggested by the public will then be vetted by the appropriate agency partner to see if it should be added to the potential site list. This entire process should be completed by the end of October of each year. This will allow the new potential site update to be available in the fall of each year for the following years funding opportunities. This process would be completed each year to help guide the development of needed new public access sites.