



**Chesapeake Bay Program**  
*Science. Restoration. Partnership.*

# Wetlands Workgroup Outcome Update

January 21, 2025



# Wetlands Outcome

Continually increase the capacity of wetlands to provide water quality and habitat benefits throughout the watershed. Create or reestablish 85,000 acres of tidal and non-tidal wetlands and enhance function of an additional 150,000 acres of degraded wetlands by 2025. These activities may occur in any land use (including urban), but primarily occur in agricultural or natural landscapes.

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# Wetlands Outcome Shortcomings (April 2024)

- The Wetlands Outcome is not realistic as is.
- It should:
  - include conservation/protection\*
  - be split between tidal and nontidal wetlands
  - account for tidal wetland loss & marsh migration, and
  - crosswalk with other habitat/fisheries outcomes.
- To come up with a *value*, a baseline of existing wetlands should be established, projected loss/gain from climate change should be accounted for, and the percentage of the current goal reached should be known.
- The outcome needs to be consistent with wetland goals/outcomes across jurisdictions and not only focus on agricultural land.

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# EC Charge –Change Goals

- A renewed and greater emphasis on **engaging all communities** of the watershed as active stewards of a healthy and resilient Chesapeake Bay and its watershed;
- Our mandate to address water quality **and living resources** throughout the Bay and watershed;
- **Elevating conservation** as a key pillar of the Chesapeake Bay Program, alongside science, restoration, and partnership;
- A grounding in the most **recent scientific understandings** and issues that have emerged since the current Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement was signed in 2014;
- Goals and outcomes that are **measurable and time bound**. Time frames should be sufficient to accomplish the outcomes as quickly as possible. In particular, our regulated nutrient and sediment load reductions, especially those within non-point sources;
- Acknowledgement that our scientific understanding is continuously evolving and that our efforts need to constantly adapt accordingly; and
- The fact that while each partner shares a common goal, we are all approaching this goal from different perspectives, challenges, and opportunities.

● [From: Executive Committee Charge to the Principals' Staff Committee: Charting a Course Beyond 2025](#)

# Connection to other outcomes

Monitoring and Assessment Outcome: (STAR)	Brook Trout: (GIT 2)	Toxic Contaminants Research Outcome: (GIT 3)
Adaptation Outcome: (STAR)	Diversity Outcome: (GIT 5)	Toxic Contaminants Policy and Prevention Outcome: (GIT 3)
Local Leadership Outcome (GIT 6)	Stewardship Outcome: (GIT 5)	Wetlands Outcome: (GIT 2)
Blue Crab Abundance Outcome: (GIT 1)	Stream Health Outcome: (GIT 2)	Black Duck: (GIT 2)
Oyster Outcome (GIT 1)	Forest Buffer Outcome: (GIT 3)	Environmental Literacy Planning Outcome: (GIT 5)
Forage Fish Outcome (GIT 1)	Tree Canopy Outcome: (GIT 3)	Student Outcome: (GIT 5)
Fish Habitat Outcome: (GIT 1)	Water Quality Standards Attainment and Monitoring Outcome (GIT 3)	Sustainable Schools Outcome: (GIT 5)
Fish Passage Outcome: (GIT 2)	2025 WIP Outcome: (GIT 3)	Protected Lands Outcome: (GIT 5)
	Healthy Watersheds Outcome: (GIT 4)	Public Access Site Development Outcome: (GIT 5)
	Land Use Methods and Metrics Development Outcome: (GIT 4)	Submerged Aquatic Vegetation Outcome: (GIT 2)
	Land Use Options Evaluation Outcome: (GIT 4)	

## Top Related Outcomes:

**Black Duck**

**Forest Buffer**

**Protected Lands**

**(Climate) Adaptation**

**Fish Habitat**

**Submerged Aquatic Vegetation**

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- Forest Buffer
    - Continually increase the capacity of forest buffers to provide water quality and habitat benefits throughout the watershed. Restore 900 miles per year of **riparian forest buffer** and conserve existing buffers until at least 70 percent of riparian areas throughout the watershed are forested.
  - Adaptation
    - Continually pursue, design and construct restoration and protection projects to **enhance the resiliency** of Bay and aquatic ecosystems from the impacts of coastal erosion, coastal flooding, more intense and more frequent storms and sea level rise

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- Fish Habitat
    - Continually improve effectiveness of fish habitat conservation and restoration efforts by **identifying and characterizing critical spawning, nursery and forage areas** within the Bay and tributaries for important fish and shellfish, and use existing and new tools to integrate information and conduct assessments to inform restoration and conservation efforts.
  - Protected Lands
    - 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. (2010 baseline year)

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- **SAV**

- Sustain and increase the habitat benefits of SAV (underwater grasses) in the Chesapeake Bay. Achieve and sustain the ultimate outcome of 185,000 acres of SAV Bay-wide necessary for a restored Bay. Progress toward this ultimate outcome will be measured against a target of 90,000 acres by 2017 and 130,000 acres by 2025.



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# Black Duck

- Current Outcome: By 2025, restore, enhance and preserve wetland habitats that support a wintering population of 100,000 black ducks, a species representative of the health of tidal marshes across the watershed. Refine population targets through 2025 based on best available science.
- Outcome vs. Output
  - Changing black duck to an output and include others that can be associated with wetlands (i.e. other bird guilds)

Questions?