

Health and Restoration in the District of Columbia

All of Washington, D.C. sits within the Chesapeake Bay watershed, which means all the District's rivers—including the Anacostia and the Potomac—flow into the Chesapeake Bay. The District has committed to achieving 22 of the outcomes in the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*. Its progress toward seven of these outcomes is highlighted below.

Submerged Aquatic Vegetation

Outcome: Sustain and increase the habitat benefits of submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) 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.

Progress in the District of Columbia: According to data from the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, 66,387 acres of underwater grasses were mapped in the Chesapeake Bay in 2019. This is 51% of the Chesapeake Bay Program's 2025 restoration target of 130,000 acres and 36% of the partnership's 185,000-acre goal. Just under 48 acres of underwater grasses were observed in the Anacostia River, a 269% increase from 2017.

2025 Watershed Implementation Plans

Outcome: By 2025, have all practices and controls in place to achieve applicable water quality (i.e., dissolved oxygen, water clarity/submerged aquatic vegetation and chlorophyll a) standards as articulated in the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load.

Progress in the District of Columbia: According to the Chesapeake Bay Program's Watershed Model, pollution controls put into place across the Chesapeake Bay watershed between 2009 and 2019 have lowered nitrogen loads 11%, phosphorus loads 10% and

sediment loads 4%. In the District of Columbia, pollution controls have lowered nitrogen loads 26%, phosphorus loads 11% and sediment loads 19%.

Protected Lands

Outcome: 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 forestland of highest value for maintaining water quality.

Progress in the District of Columbia: According to data collected from 2011—2018, almost 1.4 million acres of land in the Chesapeake Bay watershed have been permanently protected from development. This brings the total amount of protected land in the District of Columbia to 10,292 acres, 26% of D.C. land in the watershed.

The District of Columbia's Progress Towards Meeting its 2025 Targets

26%

Nitrogen

11%

Phosphorus

19%

Sediment

Public Access

Outcome: By 2025, add 300 new public access sites to the Chesapeake Bay watershed, with a strong emphasis on providing opportunities for boating, swimming and fishing, where feasible.

Progress in the District of Columbia: Between 2010 and 2019, 194 boat ramps, fishing piers and other public access sites were opened on and around the Chesapeake Bay. The District of Columbia is home to 24 public access sites in all.

Environmental Literacy Planning

Outcome: Each participating Chesapeake Bay jurisdiction should develop a comprehensive and systemic approach to environmental literacy for all students in the region that includes policies, practices and voluntary metrics that support the environmental literacy goals and outcomes of the Watershed Agreement.

Progress in the District of Columbia: In 2019, the Chesapeake Bay Program issued its third survey to measure environmental literacy preparedness in public schools. Of the 290 responding school districts, 58 identified as well-prepared and 155 identified as somewhat prepared to deliver high-quality environmental literacy programming to their students. Thirty-one percent of the 16 public school districts in Delaware's portion of the watershed identified as somewhat prepared and 13% identified as not prepared to put environmental literacy programs in place.

Student

Outcome: Increase students' age-appropriate understanding of the watershed through participation in teacher-supported Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEEs) and rigorous, inquiry-based instruction, with a target of at least one MWEE in elementary, middle and high school depending on available resources.

Progress in the District of Columbia: In 2019, the Chesapeake Bay Program issued its third survey to measure the extent of Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEEs) in public schools. Of the school districts that responded to this survey, 35% reported providing system-wide MWEEs to their elementary school students, 39% reported providing system-wide MWEEs to their middle school students and 35% reported providing system-wide MWEEs to their high school students. The public school district in Washington, D.C., reported providing system-wide MWEEs to its elementary school students and some MWEEs to its high school and middle school students.

Diversity

Outcome: Identify stakeholder groups not currently represented in the leadership, decision-making or implementation of current conservation and restoration activities and create meaningful opportunities and programs to recruit and engage these groups in the partnership's efforts.

Progress in the District of Columbia: In 2019, the Chesapeake Bay Program's diversity survey indicated a slight increase in the number of respondents that self-identified as people of color from 13.7% in 2016 to 14.6% in 2019. The District of Columbia noted a decrease of 22.1% of respondents who self-identified as being a person of color.