

Health and Restoration in Delaware

More than 700 square miles of Delaware sit within the Chesapeake Bay watershed, and four of the state's major rivers—the Choptank, Nanticoke, Pocomoke and Sassafras—flow into the Chesapeake Bay. Delaware has committed to achieving 22 of the outcomes in the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*. Its progress toward seven of these outcomes is highlighted below.

Forest Buffers

Outcome: Increase the capacity of forest buffers to provide water quality and habitat benefits throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Restore 900 miles of riparian forest buffers per year and conserve existing buffers until at least 70% of the watershed's riparian areas are forested.

Progress in Delaware: Between 2010 and 2019, 45 miles of forest buffers were planted along rivers and streams in Delaware; during this same period a total of 9,190 miles of forest buffers were planted across watershed jurisdictions.

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 Delaware: 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 Delaware, pollution controls have lowered nitrogen loads 11%, phosphorus loads 19% and sediment loads 42%.

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 Delaware: 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 watershed portion of Delaware to 108,522 acres, 24% of Delaware land in the watershed.

Delaware's Progress Towards Achieving its 2025 Targets

| | | |
|----------|------------|----------|
| 11% | 19% | 42% |
| Nitrogen | Phosphorus | 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 Delaware: Between 2010 and 2019, 194 boat ramps, fishing piers and other public access sites were opened on and around the Chesapeake Bay. Delaware is home to eight 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 Delaware: 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 Delaware: 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 eight public school districts in Delaware's portion of the watershed reported providing system-wide MWEEs to 6% of its elementary school students, 25% of its middle school students and 13% of its high 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 Delaware: 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. Delaware noted an increase of 8.3% of respondents who self-identified as being a person of color.