



Beyond 2025: Phase 2 Outreach and Communications Strategy

Program/Project Title: Beyond 2025: Phase 2 Outreach and Communications

Target Audience (*identify audiences that you are trying to reach/take intended action and any secondary audiences that may be affected*)

- **Primary Audiences** (*those that will be directly reached through Chesapeake Bay Program communications and outreach channels*):
 - Principals' Staff Committee.
 - Management Board.
 - Advisory Committees.
 - Goal Implementation Teams.
 - CBP Workgroups & Action Teams.
 - Nonprofits affiliated but not directly involved with the Chesapeake Bay Program.
 - Soil and Water Conservation Districts.
 - Media.
 - Interested public.
 - **Secondary Audiences** (*those that will be indirectly reached through Chesapeake Bay Program communications and outreach channels*):
 - Federal, state and local legislators.
 - Colleges and universities.
 - Agricultural organizations and coalitions.
 - Watermen organizations and coalitions.
 - Hunters, anglers and recreation organizations and coalitions.
 - Other business and industry groups.
-

Communications Objectives: What is the overall goal for your activity? (*For example, expand knowledge on a particular topic, encourage audiences to use a CBP tool/data, seek a change in behavior*)

- **Primary:**
 - Build primary audience awareness and support of the implementation of Beyond 2025: Phase 2, which entails revisions to the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* and streamlining of the structure and governance of the partnership.
 - Ensure audiences understand the process in which to provide thoughtful feedback on the revised *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* during the public feedback period in summer 2025.
 - Establish a mechanism to collect and incorporate feedback received into Beyond 2025: Phase 2 planning and decision-making.
- **Secondary:**

- Build greater awareness of the Chesapeake Bay Program and *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*.
- Demonstrate the value of the Chesapeake Bay Program to the residents, visitors, businesses and government entities throughout the watershed.

Summary of Tactics:

The Chesapeake Bay Program will utilize several different tactics in which to engage the primary audiences identified in this strategy.

- **Network of Networks:** The Chesapeake Bay Program will lean into established networks to share information about Beyond 2025: Phase 2. These will include:
 - Working with other Chesapeake Bay Program partners, namely Management Board members, to engage their networks.
 - Utilizing the networks already in place by coalition and non-profit partners throughout the watershed.
 - Working closely with Chesapeake Bay Program advisory committees to connect with members' already-established networks.
 - Connecting with established media outlets to assist in getting the word out and encouraging thoughtful public feedback.
- **Communications and Outreach Materials to Support Efforts:** The Chesapeake Bay Program Communications Office will take the following actions to further engage with primary audiences and support the network of networks approach outlined above.
 - Developing communications and outreach materials in order to ensure consistent messaging and reduce the burden on messengers.
 - Using the established communications channels of the Chesapeake Bay Program Communications Office to communicate with primary audiences throughout the process (e.g., webinars, blogs, social media).
 - Align content with 2025 indicator updates to bring further awareness to outcome revisions and the forthcoming public feedback period.
 - Additional content around indicator updates will share how these outcomes are vital to Chesapeake Bay restoration and the role the Chesapeake Bay Program plays in their progress. *(Example: Highlight the creation of wetlands on agricultural lands that was funded through a NFWF grant.)*

Subject Matter Experts – *(who has expertise to help inform messaging, product development? Who is available to answer questions, review materials?)*

- EPA CBPO leadership.
- Management Board and Principals' Staff Committee members.

- Outcome leads.
- Advisory committee, GIT and workgroup members.

Trusted Sources *(identify who is willing to deliver products/resources, engage local audiences, distribute our message, e.g., Jurisdiction reps, County/municipal reps, NGOs)*

- Management Board members.
- Chesapeake Bay Commission.
- Advisory Committees.
- Established coalition and non-profit partners (e.g., Choose Clean Water Coalition, Virginia Conservation Network, Upper Susquehanna Coalition, Chesapeake Conservation Partnership).
- Respected media outlets (e.g., Bay Journal, Maryland Public Television).
- Local government associations.
- Soil and water conservation districts.
- Planning district commissions.
- Chesapeake Research Consortium.
- Academic institutions currently affiliated with the Chesapeake Bay Program or invested in watershed restoration and conservation issues.
- Agricultural organizations and coalitions.
- Watermen organizations and coalitions.
- Hunters, anglers and recreation organizations and coalitions.

Communications and Outreach Products *(What products will be created and maintained throughout this effort?)*

- Feedback Database
 - Includes feedback collected from Management Board members, advisory committee members and other partners, received through comments@chesapeakebay.net and other public feedback mechanisms (including from outreach meetings).
 - Schedule of upcoming events in which Management Board members and other partners can engage with networks on Beyond 2025: Phase 2.
 - Available via SharePoint.
- Outreach Database
 - Includes a summary of information from meetings held by the CBP Outreach Specialist, requests for communications and outreach products, when meetings occurred and follow-up actions. Specific feedback on Beyond 2025: Phase 2 materials will be included in the Feedback Database.
 - Available via SharePoint.
- Synthesis of Public Feedback
 - Public feedback will be synthesized on a monthly basis, shared with Management Board members and posted to the Beyond 2025 web page on chesapeakebay.net.
 - Available via SharePoint and on chesapeakebay.net.
- High-level summary of Management Board meetings

- A high-level summary from each Management Board meeting will be shared with Management Board members and posted to the Beyond 2025 web page on chesapeakebay.net following each Management Board meeting.
- Available on chesapeakebay.net.
- Talking points
 - A general set of talking points that will be updated throughout the life of this process.
 - Tailored talking points for different audiences.
 - Talking points geared toward specific programs, projects and initiatives under Beyond 2025: Phase 2.
 - Available via SharePoint.
- Standardized PowerPoint Template
 - Available via SharePoint.
- Information collection form
 - Available via SharePoint.
- Blogs
 - Available on chesapeakebay.net.
- Press release
 - Press release will be issued on July 1 announcing the start of the public feedback period.
 - Press releases announcing specific indicator updates throughout the year.
 - Available on chesapeakebay.net.
- Social media posts
 - Information to be posted throughout 2025 on the status of Beyond 2025: Phase 2 on CBP social media accounts (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube).
 - Available on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube.
 - Provided to stakeholders as requested; available on SharePoint.
- Communications toolkit (for public feedback period)
 - Will include blogs, social media posts, high-level talking points and photos/videos as appropriate to share with communications professionals and partners to highlight the Beyond 2025: Phase 2 process.
- Media Toolkit
 - Will include press release, blog, social media posts, photos and videos as appropriate and high-level talking points to be shared with media and other communications professionals when the public feedback period opens.
 - Available on chesapeakebay.net.

Detailed Timeline

February—March 2025

- What is happening during this time period?
 - Outcome leads are working on assessing the current status of their outcomes to determine if they should be consolidated, reduced, updated, removed or replaced, or if new outcomes should be created.
 - At Management Board meetings on February 13, February 27 and March 13, Management Board members will be briefed on the recommendation for the future of each outcome, have the opportunity to ask questions and engage the outcome leads in discussion.
 - The Principals' Staff Committee will begin working on revisions to the Vision, Preamble and Principles of the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*.
 - The Enhancing Partnering, Leadership and Management Goal Implementation Team (GIT 6) will lead efforts to streamline the partnership's structure and governance.
- What is needed during this time period?
 - A mechanism for collecting and integrating feedback received from partners regarding the Beyond 2025: Phase 2 process.
 - External communications strategy for informing the interested public about opportunities for providing feedback.
- Detailed Process for Collecting and Integrating Feedback
 - Develop a [template](#) for partners to collect feedback from their respective networks.
 - Lead: CBP Communications Office
 - Status: Complete.
 - Develop a database in which to record feedback collected from partners' networks.
 - Lead: CBP Communications Office
 - Status: In-progress.
 - Populate database with feedback returned from partners.
 - Lead: CBP Communications Office.
 - Status: Ongoing.
 - This spreadsheet will be made available to Management Board members so they may review feedback.
 - At the end of each month, collected feedback will be synthesized and a one-page report of highlights will be shared with Management Board members and other interested parties, as well as posted on the Beyond 2025 webpage.
 - Develop general [talking points](#) about the Beyond 2025: Phase 2 process that can be shared with partners.
 - Lead: CBP Communications Office.
 - Status: Complete with regular updates planned as necessary.

- Begin engaging with coalitions and watershed organizations¹ with established networks and develop a [database](#) to track their communications and outreach needs, questions and other general information regarding the Beyond 2025: Phase 2 process.
 - Lead: CBP Outreach Specialist
 - Status: Ongoing.
 - CBP Outreach Specialist will prioritize meeting first with coalitions and watershed organizations with established networks in the Chesapeake Bay watershed to build/enhance relationships and begin conversations around needs related to Beyond 2025: Phase 2.
 - The first group of targeted organizations include Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Choose Clean Water Coalition, Delaware Association of Conservation Districts, Envision the Choptank, Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake, Interstate Commission for the Potomac River Basin, Lancaster Clean Water Partners, Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts, Nanticoke Watershed Alliance, Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts, Pennsylvania Organization for Watersheds and Rivers, Susquehanna Greenway Partnership, Susquehanna River Basin Commission, Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Upper Susquehanna Coalition, Virginia Conservation Network, Waterkeepers Chesapeake, We Conserve PA and West Virginia Rivers Coalition.
 - The second group of targeted organizations are specific to certain regions or sectors in the watershed and include Anacostia Watershed Society, Arundel Rivers Federation, Blue Water Baltimore, Cacapon Institute, Chesapeake Conservancy, Chesapeake Stormwater Network, Eastern Shore Land Conservancy, Elizabeth River Project, Gunpowder Valley Conservancy, James River Association, Lancaster Conservancy, Lynnhaven River Now, Nature Forward, Oyster Recovery Partnership, Pennsylvania Environmental Council, Penn Future, Piedmont Environmental Council, Potomac Conservancy, Potomac Riverkeeper, Rock Creek Conservancy, ShoreRivers and Stroud Water Research Center.
- Engage with Management Board members to share the information collection template and talking points, request their assistance in collecting feedback and describe what that process entails, and request a POC in which to work with to share information and request support in network development.
 - Lead: CBP Communications Director
 - Status: Ongoing.
- External Communications Strategy for Informing the Interested Public about Opportunities for Providing Feedback
 - Lead: CBP Communications Office
 - Status: Ongoing

¹ This is not an exhaustive list and can be added to at any time.

- The Management Board will make 30 minutes available at meetings throughout the year for public feedback.
 - The email address, comments@chesapeakebay.net, was reactivated to collect public feedback.
 - Prior to the Management Board meetings, the CBP Communications Office will utilize the partnership's [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#) accounts to inform the public of the availability of the open feedback session, including linking to the agenda for more information and sharing what outcomes will be discussed.
 - The CBP Outreach Specialist will continue to engage with coalitions and organizations that have an interest in the Beyond 2025 process to remind them about these open public feedback sessions, particularly when certain topics of their interest are on the agenda.
 - Notices about the public feedback sessions will be shared to partners so they may make the information available to their networks.
 - Information about the public feedback sessions has appeared in the following newsletters and/or social media profiles: Chesapeake Conservation Partnership, Chesapeake Research Consortium and Choose Clean Water Coalition.
 - All public feedback received to the comments@chesapeakebay.net will be posted on the [Beyond 2025 website](#) on a weekly basis.
 - On a monthly basis, collected feedback will be synthesized and a one-to-two-page report of themes will be posted to the [Beyond 2025 website](#).
 - *Note: If the decision is made to continue having time for the public to provide feedback at upcoming Management Board meetings, this same process will be followed and tailored to include those groups that have an interest in the topics being presented.*

March—June 2025

- What is happening during this time period?
 - March 27: The Management Board is approving recommendations to send to the Principals' Staff Committee on outcome revisions and new outcomes to be added to the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*.
 - March 28: The Principals' Staff Committee will approve the recommendations of the Management Board and direct them to begin working on revised outcome language. They will also approve any proposed changes to the Vision, Preamble and Principles.
 - May 23: The Principals' Staff Committee will approve the revisions to the outcome language recommended by the Management Board and discuss needed changes to

the Goals and Management Strategies, as well as the streamlining of the partnership governance and structure.

- June 12: The Management Board will finalize revisions from the Principals' Staff Committee and prepare a revised *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* for public feedback.
- Week of June 23: The Principals' Staff Committee will approve the revised *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* and move forward with a 60-day public feedback period.
- What is needed during this time period?
 - Continue to collect, post and synthesize public feedback.
 - Develop requested communications and outreach products to share with networks as they carry the messages and process of Beyond 2025: Phase 2 to their partners.
 - Increase outreach to primary audiences to enhance their understanding of the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* revisions and partnership streamlining.
- Detailed Process for Increasing Outreach to Primary Audiences
 - Identify opportunities, such as conferences, webinars or meetings for Management Board members, EPA CBPO leadership and other partners to engage with primary audiences.
 - Lead: CBP Communications Office with Management Board support.
 - Status: In-progress.
 - Information on upcoming opportunities for which to engage primary audiences will be collected and added to the existing feedback database.
 - Speakers will be provided with the necessary communications materials (i.e., PowerPoint template, talking points) to assist them in speaking about Beyond 2025: Phase 2.
 - Presenters will be asked to send collected feedback using the Information Collection Form back to the CBP Communications Office.
 - The CBP Communications will assess any requested communications and outreach products as requested from these events and develop as appropriate.
 - Continued engagement with coalitions and watershed organizations to build relationships and connect on Beyond 2025: Phase 2.
 - Lead: CBP Outreach Specialist
 - Status: Not started.
 - The CBP Outreach Specialist will begin a second round of meetings in late April to further engage with the organizations met with in late February—early March. These meetings will be more focused on how these groups can

help support the Beyond 2025: Phase 2 efforts by further engaging their networks.

- Groups will be asked if they can pass information to their networks, hold meetings or webinars, or have any upcoming events in which the partnership can connect into.
- Groups will be asked to share information back to the Chesapeake Bay Program and it will be added to the feedback and outreach databases.
- Amplify updates to existing outcomes and connect to on-the-ground restoration projections directly impacted by the Chesapeake Bay Program.
 - Lead: CBP Communications Office and CBP Indicators Team.
 - Status: In-progress
 - Throughout 2025, at least 14 existing outcomes will be updated with the most up-to-date data and information. These updates provide the opportunity to share progress on existing outcomes and detail upcoming revisions to that outcome.
 - The CBP Communications Office is reviewing spreadsheets of grants that have been awarded through NFWF INSR and SWG, ChesapeakeWILD and the Chesapeake Bay Trust, as well as other CBP-affiliated organizations.
 - The CBP Communications Office will draft at least three blogs per month on restoration projects that highlight the updated outcomes, to continue telling the story of why particular outcomes are necessary for a healthy watershed and making the connection to the public feedback process.
- Provide updates through the Chesapeake Bay Program blog and social media.
 - Lead: CBP Communications Office
 - Status: Ongoing
 - The CBP Communications Office will draft one blog per month dedicated to updates around the Beyond 2025: Phase 2 process (if necessary, we can add more). These blogs are then amplified across our social media channels for a wider audience.
- Webinars to highlight *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* revisions.
 - Lead: CBP Communications Office with Management Board and outcome lead support.
 - Status: Not started.
 - The CBP Communications Office will hold four webinars after the June PSC meeting to highlight the revisions to the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*, geared toward primary audiences and their networks. Each webinar will cover different outcomes and to the best extent possible, will group them together so they are relevant to similar audiences.
 - It is recommended that these webinars be held in the evening to further engage primary audiences and their networks.

- Webinars will be recorded and available on chesapeakebay.net.
- Enhanced Engagement with Advisory Committees
 - Work with advisory committee coordinators and staffers on how best for advisory committee members to bring the Beyond 2025: Phase 2 messaging and process to their networks.
 - Lead: CBP Communications Director and CBP Outreach Specialist
 - Status: In-progress
 - Meetings will be requested with each advisory committee to set a plan for their members to assist in bringing the Beyond 2025: Phase 2 messaging and process to their networks. The following will be asked for the advisory committees to consider:
 - How Beyond 2025: Phase 2 can be integrated into upcoming advisory committee meetings.
 - What opportunities exist for advisory committee members to bring the messaging and process of Beyond 2025: Phase 2 to their networks.
 - Ask to set regular touchpoints to follow-up on collected feedback and any communications and outreach needs arising from network meetings.
- Develop Requested Communications and Outreach Products²
 - Create a standard, editable PowerPoint template that can be shared with networks to ensure consistent messaging about Beyond 2025: Phase 2.
 - Lead: CBP Communications Office
 - Status: Not started.
 - Develop tailored talking points to support meetings with different targeted audiences.
 - Lead: CBP Communications Office
 - Status.: Not started.
 - Using the list of collected speaking opportunities and what feedback is being collected, the CBP Communications Office will develop talking points that are targeted to specific primary audiences (e.g., farmers, watermen).
 - Draft tailored talking points to support programs, projects and initiatives that support Beyond 2025: Phase 2 as appropriate.
 - Lead: CBP Communications Office
 - Status: Ongoing
 - Talking points will be developed on a case-by-case basis and as appropriate.
 - Drafted or in-progress: Tiered approach to the Bay TMDL.

July—September 2025

² More content will be added to this section as additional requests for materials are made.

- What is happening during this time period?
 - The formal public feedback period opens on July 1.
 - Work continues on the restructuring of the partnership's structure, governance and decision-making processes.
- What is needed?
 - Communications strategy for the duration of the public feedback period that encourages thoughtful, appropriate comments.
 - A plan to begin integrating public feedback into the revised Watershed Agreement.
- Communications Strategy for Formal Public Feedback Period
 - Lead: CBP Communications Office
 - Status: Not started.
 - The following activities will take place on July 1, 2025 to announce the opening of the formal public feedback period.
 - Press release will be issued announcing the opening of the public feedback period.
 - Social media posts across all CBP channels.
 - Email template announcing the opening of the public feedback period will be shared with EPA CBPO management to disseminate to Principals' Staff Committee and Management members, GIT and workgroup leads, advisory committees and coalitions and watershed organizations engaged throughout the process. It will be tailored to these audiences as appropriate and contain the ask to share information with their networks.
 - A media toolkit will be developed and shared with members of the media (linked in the press release), communications professionals and other interested parties to further promote the opening of the public feedback period.
 - Develop an FAQ in collaboration with EPA CBPO to be included in the media toolkit and posted on chesapeakebay.net to address common questions.
 - Outreach Specialist will reach out to coalitions and watershed organizations engaged with earlier in the year in mid-to-late July to remind them of the open public feedback period, discuss any challenges or opportunities with the feedback period and collect any requests for additional information or products.
 - This information will be added to the Outreach Database and shared with EPA CBPO leadership and Management Board as appropriate.

September-December 2025

What is happening during this time period?

- Public feedback is being integrated into the revised *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*.
- Revised Watershed Agreement and structure and governance recommendations are being prepared for the Executive Council meeting.

What is needed?

- A plan for integrating and responding to public feedback.
- Communications strategy for sharing updates on Beyond 2025: Phase 2 leading up to the December Executive Council meeting.

Communications Strategy to Share Beyond 2025: Phase 2 Updates

- Lead: CBP Communications Office
- Status: Not started.
- The CBP Communications will continue to use its blog and related social media to share updates on Beyond 2025.
 - One blog per month sharing progress.
 - As existing outcomes are updated, use a blog to highlight restoration projects and proposed revisions to that outcome.

Measures of Success

- Number of comments received.
 - If possible, further breakdown of comments received per primary audience type to gauge success of network of networks approach.
- Number of webinar participants.
- Number of visitors to Beyond 2025 web page on chesapeakebay.net
- Number of events, conferences and meetings in which Beyond 2025 was a topic.
- Number of media articles written about Beyond 2025.
- Engagement on social media channels when Beyond 2025 is mentioned.
- Number of information collection forms returned to the CBP Communications Office.
- Number of outreach meetings held by CBP Outreach Specialist.