

# THE BAY BEYOND 2025

Looking to the Future of Chesapeake Bay Restoration



**Chesapeake Bay Program**

*Science. Restoration. Partnership.*

# Agenda



**Why Beyond 2025**



**The Steering Committee's Process**



**The Draft Report**



**Public Feedback**



**Next Steps**



**Questions**

An aerial photograph of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel, showing its two parallel spans crossing the water. The bridge features a combination of suspension and trestle designs. The text "WHY BEYOND 2025?" is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font in the center of the image.

WHY BEYOND 2025?

# 2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement

## 1 Vision, 10 Goals, 31 Outcomes



Sustainable  
Fisheries



Toxic  
Contaminants



Land  
Conservation



Vital  
Habitats



Healthy  
Watersheds



Public  
Access



Environmental Literacy



Water  
Quality



Stewardship



Climate  
Resiliency

*Each goal included between one and five outcomes. While the goals focus on the big picture, the outcomes are specific, measurable targets that contribute to achieving each goal.*

 OUTLOOK <b>ON COURSE</b>	 OUTLOOK <b>OFF COURSE</b>
Blue Crab Abundance Outcome	Wetlands Outcome
<i>Blue Crab Management Outcome (Completed)</i>	Black Duck Outcome
Oysters Outcome	Brook Trout Outcome
Forage Fish Outcome	Submerged Aquatic Vegetation Outcome
Fish Habitat Outcome	Forest Buffers Outcome
Stream Health Outcome	Tree Canopy Outcome
<i>2017 Watershed Implementation Plans (WIPs) Outcome (Complete)</i>	2025 Watershed Implementation Plans (WIPs) Outcome
Fish Passage Outcome	Diversity Outcome
Water Quality Standards Attainment and Monitoring Outcome	Toxic Contaminants Policy and Prevention Outcome
Local Leadership Outcome	Toxic Contaminants Research Outcome
Protected Lands Outcome	Students Outcome
Land Use Methods and Metrics Development Outcome	Climate Adaptation Outcome
Land Use Options and Evaluations Outcome	 OUTLOOK <b>UNCERTAIN</b>
Public Access Outcome	Healthy Watershed Outcome
Sustainable Schools Outcome	Stewardship Outcome
Environmental Literacy Planning Outcome	
Climate Monitoring and Assessment Outcome	

## Outcome Attainability (as of 2023)

- 18 outcomes are considered on course.
- Two outcomes are uncertain pending upcoming data updates.
- 11 outcomes are off course and will not be met by 2025.



Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership  
Executive Council Charge to the Principals' Staff Committee: Charting a Course to 2025 and Beyond  
Adopted October 11, 2022

As the Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) partnership nears the 2025 date that the partnership set for several of the goals and outcomes under the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement (Watershed Agreement)*, there are many successes to celebrate. At the same time, emerging issues and changing conditions (e.g., climate change, growth, new scientific data) have impacted the levels of effort needed to meet our collective restoration priorities. We, as a partnership, remain committed to using the best available science in restoring the Chesapeake Bay as we accelerate toward the deadline and anticipate continued progress post-2025.

Thus, this Executive Council charges the Principals' Staff Committee (PSC) in recommending a critical path forward that prioritizes and outlines the next steps for meeting the goals and outcomes of the *Watershed Agreement* leading up to and beyond 2025. The PSC is to report back to the Executive Council at our 2023 annual meeting with recommendations on how to best address and integrate new science and restoration strategies leading up to 2025. At our 2024 annual meeting, the PSC is to prepare recommendations that continue to address new advances in science and restoration, along with a focus on our partnership for going beyond 2025.

In undertaking such a process, the PSC should address the following considerations:

**Science**

- Identify new and emerging scientific data and studies which could modify our progress reporting and adaptive management approach, as well as the goals and outcomes under the *Watershed Agreement*.
- Enhance our monitoring and reporting capabilities to improve our understanding of existing conditions and trends.
- Define the existing and emerging challenges (e.g., climate change conditions, increasing growth, diversity, equity, inclusion and justice considerations) to accomplishing the partnership's work under the *Watershed Agreement*, and how addressing those challenges might alter our collective restoration priorities, including the possibility of extending the target date for completing restoration of water quality beyond 2025.
- Identify opportunities to leverage action across multiple goals and outcomes of the *Watershed Agreement*.

**Restoration**

- Develop and begin to implement a communication strategy that identifies key partnership successes, associated ecosystem improvements and areas where more effort is needed.
- Provide snapshots of outcome attainability under the Agreement (e.g., which outcomes are likely to be met by the date(s) set by the partnership, which won't, and why) and options for communicating these snapshots to demonstrate progress in achieving our outcomes and the remaining work to be done, including gaps to be addressed.

**Partnership**

- Focus on moving beyond 2025 by seeking ways in which restoration can be relevant to all communities within the watershed.
- Assess the overall partnership to determine whether we
  - Are effectively hearing from and listening to all stakeholders, and
  - Have systems of evaluation and decision-making to enable meaningful action and allocation of partnership resources.
- Based on this assessment, develop recommendations for potential improvement.

# Chesapeake Executive Council Charge

Adopted by the Executive Council in October 2022, the charge directs the Principals' Staff Committee to **recommend a critical path forward** that prioritizes and outlines the next steps for meeting the goals and outcomes of the *Watershed Agreement* **beyond 2025.**



An aerial photograph showing a wide river curving through a lush green forest. A small settlement with several buildings and a parking lot is visible along the riverbank. The river's surface is dark, and a small boat is visible in the lower part of the frame.

# What is Beyond 2025?

The Beyond 2025 Steering Committee advises on the development of recommendations to meet the Chesapeake Executive Council charge on charting a course beyond 2025.

# Who is represented on the Steering Committee?

- Chesapeake Bay Commission
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- U.S. Forest Service
- U.S. Geological Survey
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
- National Park Service
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- Representatives from the six Goal Implementation Teams
- Stakeholders' Advisory Committee
- Local Government Advisory Committee
- Science and Technical Advisory Committee
- Maryland
- Virginia
- Pennsylvania
- Delaware
- New York
- District of Columbia
- West Virginia
- Two non-voting members (Chesapeake Bay Trust and Choose Clean Water Coalition)



A wide-angle photograph of a cornfield. The foreground is filled with young corn plants growing in rows, with dry straw mulch visible between them. The middle ground shows a flat expanse of the field stretching towards a line of trees. In the background, a range of dark, rolling hills or mountains is visible under a blue sky. A single, bright white lightning bolt strikes down from the sky, positioned slightly to the left of the center. The overall scene suggests a rural, agricultural setting during a storm.

# STEERING COMMITTEE'S PROCESS



# Our Aim...

- Provide recommendations for the Partnership to consider that speak to:
  - What we do—the goals and outcomes of the ***Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement***.
  - How we work together—the structure of the **Chesapeake Bay Program partnership**.

# Two Phases...

## **Phase One:**

By the end of 2024,  
determine the scope and  
breadth of what should be  
undertaken.

## **Phase Two:**

Beginning in 2025,  
implement the plan!

# What has happened so far?



Five small groups of subject matter experts were formed to develop findings to support the recommendation(s) the steering committee will make to the Principals' Staff Committee.



A contractor was retained to complete an independent evaluation of the partnership.



# Who are these small groups?

- Clean Water
- Climate Change
- Healthy Watersheds
- People
- Shallow Water Habitats



# Synthesizing Findings into Recommendations

- Highlight potential actions the Executive Council can take this year to propel the partnership and our *Watershed Agreement* into the next phase of work.
- High-level recommendations and considerations in each of the areas: Science, Restoration and Conservation, and Partnership.



# DRAFT REPORT



# Disclaimer

The public is invited to provide feedback on this draft report prepared by the Beyond 2025 Steering Committee, which reflects not only their thoughts and expertise, but also those of the many people who volunteered their time to help develop these recommendations. The report may be revised based on the received public feedback, prior to being presented to the Management Board and Principals' Staff Committee, as established in the [Governance and Management Framework for the Chesapeake Bay Program](#). The revised report will aid the Principals' Staff Committee in providing recommendations to the Chesapeake Executive Council, fulfilling the [charge](#) established in October 2022.

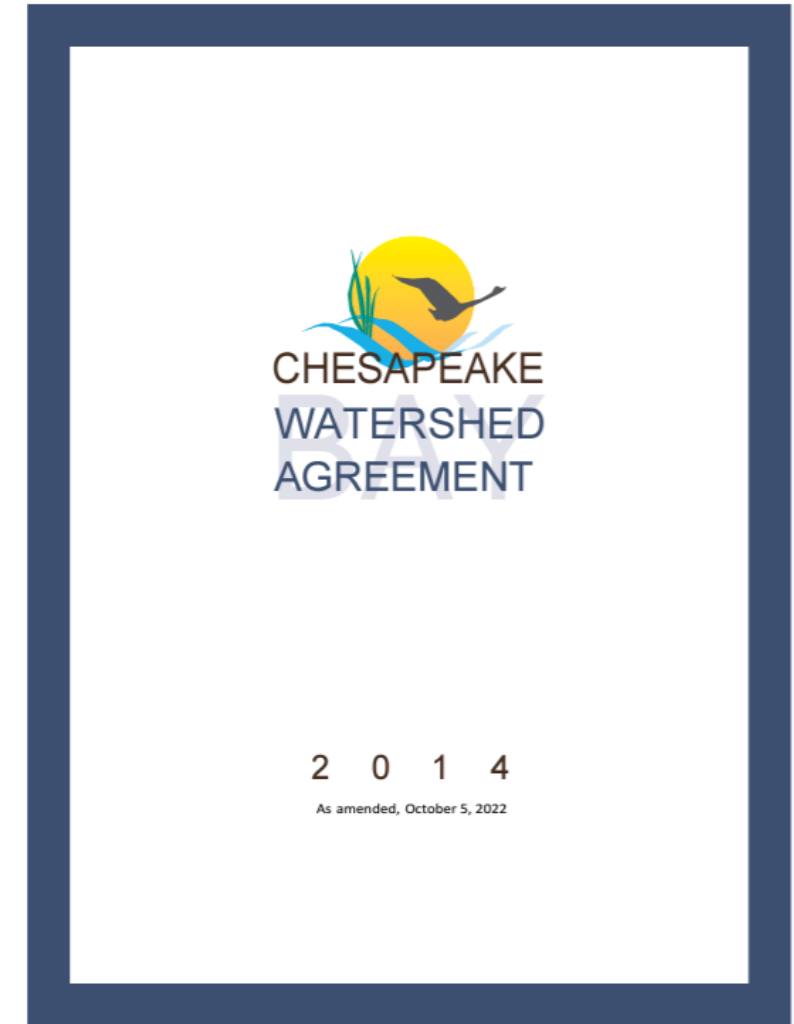


# Outline

- **Part I: Critical Path Forward Beyond 2025** (pp.1-5)
  - EC Charge & Beyond 2025 Steering Committee
  - Recommendations for the Executive Council's Consideration
  - Additional Background
  - Recognizing our Progress
- **Part II: High-Level Recommendations for the Chesapeake Bay Program** (pp.6-14)
  - Introduction & Steering Committee Process
  - High-level considerations related to Science
  - High-level considerations related to Restoration and Conservation
  - High-level considerations related to Partnership
  - *Summary of public engagement and outreach (to be added after public feedback period)*
- **Part III: Source material**
  - One-page briefs of Small Group Findings
  - ERG report
  - Other Partnership Reports

# What is the Steering Committee recommending?

Affirm the partnership's continuing commitment to meet the goals of the *2014 Watershed Agreement* and direct the Principals' Staff Committee to propose specific amendments necessary to improve efficacy.





## **What is the Steering Committee recommending?**

Strengthen the partnership by identifying ways to simplify and streamline the structure and processes to ensure partner commitments can be met.





# Science

- **Optimize monitoring, modeling and analysis.**
- Integrate existing and new science findings in decision making, resource allocation and communication strategies.
- **Prioritize research that addresses knowledge gaps in existing and emerging challenges.**



# Restoration and Conservation

- Support system-scale conservation and restoration planning and implementation for habitats and communities.
- Review, and where necessary, revise existing goals, outcomes and management strategies to more effectively guide the partnership's restoration and conservation efforts beyond 2025.
- **Improve the partnership's holistic approach to planning, prioritization, progress-tracking and accountability.**



# Partnership

- Adopt a systems approach to streamline governance and structure.
- **Enhance capacity building and administrative/technical assistance through local networks.**
- Strengthen the partnership's capacity to ensure watershed restoration is relevant to all communities.
- **Enhance communications and transparency to foster long-term success.**

# Part III: Source Material

- ERG report, other partnership reports, and one-page briefs of Small Group Findings
- Small Group Findings relevant to AgWG:
  - Clean Water Small Group Recommendation 4
  - Climate Small Group Recommendation 5





**PUBLIC FEEDBACK**



# Public Feedback Process

- The public feedback period opened on Monday, July 1, 2024 and closes on Friday, August 30, 2024 at 11:59 p.m. ET
- **Anyone** is welcome to provide feedback.
- Public feedback will **only** be received through email to [comments@chesapeakebay.net](mailto:comments@chesapeakebay.net). You will receive an email confirming your feedback.
- All comments will be posted on the Beyond 2025 Steering Committee page on chesapeakebay.net but will not be responded to individually.
- Comments will be categorized and reviewed by a team of subject matter experts from the Beyond 2025 Steering Committee.
- A red-lined version of the revised document will be posted online after the public feedback period closes.
- After the public feedback period, a final revised document will be submitted to the Management Board and Principals' Staff Committee in preparation for the Executive Council meeting.

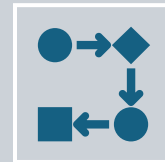
# What feedback would be most helpful?



Focus comments on Part I and Part II. The source materials in Part III will **not** be revised.



Focus on *what* the recommendations suggest, where they could be improved and what may be missing.



Save ideas for how to implement the recommendations for the next phase of work.



Consider grouping your comments under the categories of Science, Restoration and Conservation, Partnership, the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* and Miscellaneous.





# NEXT STEPS



## 2024 Timeline

July 1 – August 30	September	October	December
Public Feedback	Revisions	Management Board & Principals' Staff Committee Review	Executive Council Review
A draft of the report will be published for a 60-day public feedback period.	Revisions based on public feedback will be incorporated into the report.	The Management Board and Principals' Staff Committee will receive and review the final report.	The Executive Council will be presented with the findings of the report and have the opportunity to take action in response to the PSC's recommendations as a path forward for the Chesapeake Bay Program.

Submit comments to  
[comments@chesapeakebay.net](mailto:comments@chesapeakebay.net) by  
August 30, 2024

# Clean Water Small Group Rec. #4

- **Increase and incentivize nonpoint source management implementation and identify, track, and address nutrient mass imbalances.**
  - Provide opportunities to increase nonpoint source implementation.
  - Incentivize effective and innovative nonpoint source management across all sectors.
  - Target and empower small-scale watershed restoration that addresses the needs of the community.
  - Promote outcome-based efforts.
  - Address known challenges associated with nutrient mass imbalances to include fertilizers and unknown sources.



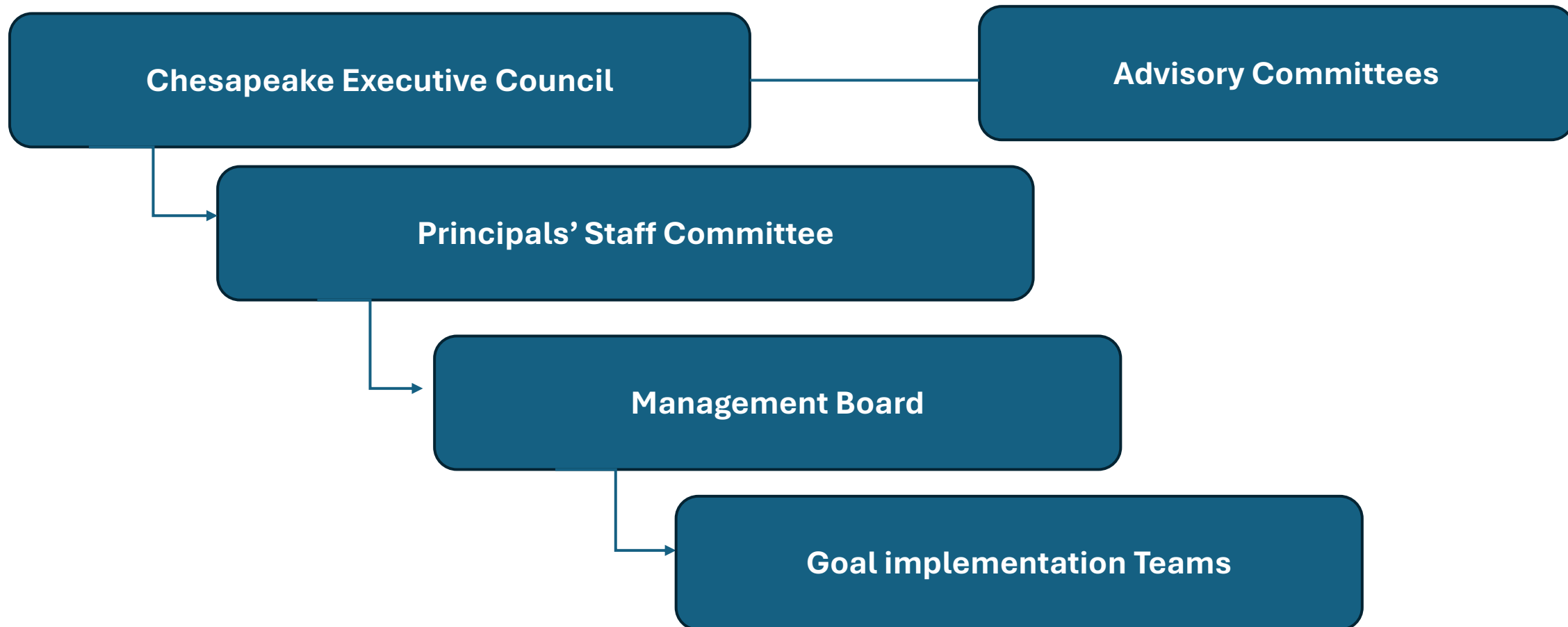
# Climate Small Group Rec. #5

- **Promote regenerative agricultural production and regionally based food systems in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.**

# Questions?

*Images courtesy of the Chesapeake Bay Program*

# Partnership Structure





## What materials informed the discussions and evaluations?

- Charting a Course to 2025
- Rising Watershed and Bay Water Temperatures: Ecological Implications and Management Responses
- Enhancing the Chesapeake Bay Program Monitoring Networks
- Chesapeake Governance Study: Report of 2021 Decision-Maker Interview Results
- Recognizing Political Influences in Participatory Socio-Ecological Systems Models
- Linking Soil and Watershed Health to In-Field and Edge-of-Field Water Management
- Using Local Monitoring Results to Inform the Chesapeake Bay Program's Watershed Model
- Cafe Summaries and Report Products from the Chesapeake Bay Program Strategy Review System's 3rd Cycle Biennial Meeting
- *2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*
- Chesapeake 2000
- Governance and Management Framework for the Chesapeake Bay Program
- Achieving Water Quality Goals in the Chesapeake Bay: A Comprehensive Evaluation of System Response
- Enhancing Chesapeake Bay Partnership Activities by Integrating Social Science
- Retrospective on Lessons Learned from the Chesapeake Bay Program Strategy Review System's 3rd Cycle with Suggested Adaptations to Address Issues
- Advancing Monitoring Approaches to Enhance Tidal Chesapeake Bay Habitat Assessment
- Using Ecosystem Services to Increase Progress Toward, and Quantify the Results of, Multiple Chesapeake Bay Program Outcomes

# PROCESS

