Beyond 2025 Phase 2--Draft Priority Project List
Chesapeake Bay Program

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Fisheries Goal Implementation Team (GIT 1)

Priority Living Resource Habitat Area – identification/quantification

Group Assigned	Fisheries GIT
Task Description	Develop Priority Living Resource Habitat Areas for 92 segments of the Tidal Bay
Task Rationale	CESR report suggests that focus should be given to shallow waters/living resources in addition to meeting the goals of the Bay TMDL. This activity will identify priority living resource areas and give scoring metrics to assist in prioritization of restoration and conservations efforts.
Task Outcome/ "End" User	WIP/Milestone Developers - Will provide critical information to allow/support **tiered implementation targets/focused restoration efforts**

Assignment (Objective)	Develop a habitat suitability model that focuses on shallow water
	• Select species/life stages representative of Bay LR
	• Determine appropriate habitat variables to evaluate for the above
	    • Water quality
	    • Physical characteristics
	    • Temperature
	    • Etc.
	• Develop habitat rating/scoring for geographic area's of the bay (all 92 segments)
	• Develop GIS based data visualization of LR habitat suitability at the highest resolution available.

MB Champion:	VA/MD/DC should have oversight
Coordination Requirements (MB check-in frequency)	• January 1, 2026 – draft habitat suitability model complete • July 1, 2026 – habitat suitability scoring matrix complete • January 1, 2027 - data visualization tool to utilize suitability model and scoring matrix complete • Should be reported on with Tiered Implementation Targets • Should be reported on with Priority Living Resource Scoring Matrix
Delivery Date (Month or Quarter / Year)	January 1, 2027
CBPO Support	GIS Team, Modeling Team, LR data manager

Priority Living Resource Habitat Scoring Matrix

Group Assigned	STAR /Fisheries GIT
Task Description	Develop scoring matrix for Priority Living Resource Habitat areas to be use it tiered (prioritized) targeting
Task Rationale	
Task Outcome/ "End" User	Overall Partnership, Developers/implementors of WIPs/milestones

Assignment (Objective)	Develop a habitat scoring matrix that utilizes the information developed by the fisheries goal team to equate habitat into a scoring mechanism for each of the 92 segments of the Bay and highlight variables that drive each segment. • Develop an analysis method to take the individual species/lifestage habitat information into some type of combined scoring result for a segment of the Bay • Develop and perform an analysis for each of the 92 segments that identifies which variables in each segment have the most impact. • Follow on with an analysis that show which variable we have the ability to control in that segment • Distill this analysis into a table that WQGIT can incorporate into tiered (prioritized) targeting.
Coordination Requirements (MB check-in frequency)	Quarterly check-in with MB on progress – includes presentation on methods pursued/project viability and project needs • Should be reported on with Priority Living Resource Habitat Areas • Should be Reported on with Tiered Implementation Targets
Delivery Date (Month or Quarter / Year)	January 1 2026 – draft construct of how scoring matrix can be employed January 1 2027 – Framework for scoring matrix completed
CBPO Support	Monitoring Team

Continuation of large-scale sanctuary oyster reef construction

Group Assigned	Fish GIT & workgroups
Task Description	Continue planning and implementing large-scale sanctuary oyster reef construction
Task Rationale	Work originated under the 2014 Bay Agreement oyster outcome, and continues as planning and construction extend beyond the original 10 Tribs targeted for oyster reef restoration
Task Outcome/ "End" User	**Fish GIT, oyster workgroups, partners**
Assignment (Objective)	Various members of the MD & VA workgroups have started planning for large-scale reef restoration work beyond the initial 10 tributaries (and beyond the 11th, bonus tributary). This work will evolve as a new outcome is determined, and partners collectively determine which work will fit under the revised outcome.
MB Champion:	Kevin Schabow
Coordination Requirements	TBD
Delivery Date (Month or Quarter / Year)	TBD/ ongoing as revised oyster outcome is clarified
CBPO Support	Fish GIT

Benchmark Quantitative Fishery Stock Assessment for Blue Crab in the
Chesapeake Bay

Group Assigned	Fish GIT- Chesapeake Bay Stock Assessment Committee (CBSAC)
Task Description	Complete analysis for each Term of Reference, conduct a peer review, and provide final Stock Assessment report to the Fish GIT Executive Committee
Task Rationale	The last benchmark stock assessment was 2011. This updated stock assessment will provide a critical science product at a time of partnership-wide strategic planning for the Chesapeake Bay Program and inform the next version of science-based Chesapeake Bay blue crab management and related policy and funding decisions.
Task Outcome/ "End" User	Fish GIT Executive Committee, CBSAC, and State Fishery Managers
Assignment (Objective)	• Contract awarded to stock assessment modeling team ● Draft analysis products reviewed by CBSAC ● Center for Independent Expert (CIE) Review conducted by NOAA ● CIE review feedback addressed by stock assessment modeling team ● Final stock assessment report provided to Fish GIT Executive Committee and CBSAC to inform management ● Fish GIT Executive Committee and CBSAC discuss application and next steps related to findings in the stock assessment report
MB Champion:	Maryland, Virginia and NOAA MB members
Coordination Requirements	A briefing will be provided on the final stock assessment report and implications will be discussed with MB in late 2025-early 2026.
Delivery Date (Month or Quarter / Year)	TBD
CBPO Support	Fish GIT staff, CBSAC members, possibly communications support from CBP to summarize and draft an article on the stock assessment findings

Water Quality Goal Implementation Team (WQGIT, GIT2)

Tiered Implementation Targets

Group Assigned	WQGIT/Modeling Workgroup
Task Description	Develop methods to employ tiered implementation targets for future Partnership planning, restoration, and conservation activities
Task Rationale	Recommendations from the CESR report and clean water small group recognize the value of pursuing planning restoration and conservation activities that will meet local objectives to restore improve local conditions for living resources in shallow waters of the Bay in addition to continued effort to meet the objectives of deep water/deep channel in the Bay TMDL.
Task Outcome/ "End" User	Overall Partnership, Developers and implementors of WIPs/milestones

Assignment (Objective)	Develop alternatives to implement a system of tiered implementation targets • Develop methods to incorporate methods to incorporate dual/multiple implementation targets into WIPs/milestones. o Methods should be based on evaluation results from all 92 Bay segments for D.O. Criteria; Priority Living resource habitat area scoring; SAV habitat area scoring • Develop an interactive geographic area-based analysis that demonstrates where work on the landscape will have the most effect in the tidal bay (looking downstream) • Develop an interactive geographic area-based analysis that shows what upland areas have the most significant impact on a portion of the tidal bay (looking upstream) • Incorporate the findings of the priority living resource habitat areas into a tool that assists resource managers with decision making. • Incorporate findings SAV habitat scoring that assists resource managers areas with decision making. • Develop boundary conditions that will insure that Deep Water Deep Channel D.O. Levels will not cause baywide harm
MB Champion:	
Coordination Requirements (MB check-in frequency)	Quarterly check-in with MB on progress – includes presentation on methods pursued/project viability and project needs • Should be reported on with Priority Living Resource Habitat Areas • Should be reported on with Priority Living Resource Scoring Matrix
Delivery Date (Month or Quarter / Year)	January 1 2026 – draft construct of how tiered targeting can be employed January 1 2027 – Framework for tiered targeting completed
CBPO Support	GIS Team, Modeling Team

Habitat Goal Implementation Team (GIT 3)

Strengthen communities' understanding and management of, and connection and accessibility to, shallow water habitats.

Group Assigned	ALL
Task Description	Residents in the Chesapeake Bay watershed lack awareness of the societal importance and benefits of shallow water habitats, and the Chesapeake Bay Program has not effectively linked shallow water habitats to the tangible benefits they offer to individuals who rely on local waterways for recreation, jobs, and cultural practices. This lack of public understanding and engagement is compounded by scientific jargon that fails to resonate with communities.
Task Rationale	Beyond 2025 small group recommendation
Task Outcome/ "End" User	Grounding in the most recent scientific understandings and issues that have emerged since the current Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement was signed in 2014; end user is Bay Program Partnership, and Stakeholder from the communities.
Assignment (Objective)	Communications and Engagement Planning:

	• Using social science, develop a plan to foster two-way communication with local partners and communities that focus management actions on identified quality of life issues. • Focus on polluted waterways while ensuring socio-economic and environmental justice dimensions are considered in managing access, use, and local economies. • Tailor messages to a community's priorities, economic and ecological values and history. Focus on making content accessible, engaging, and relevant. • Facilitate education about Best Management Practices (BMPs) and stewardship actions. This may in turn increase public engagement in habitat enhancement projects. Implementation of Communications and Engagement Plan: • Structured, targeted engagement with networks of partners utilizing a diverse suite of strategies to showcase ongoing restoration efforts and year-over-year improvements. • Increase public engagement in habitat enhancement projects, by understanding local priorities, seeking feedback at multiple touchpoints, and then adjusting course if needed. • Invest in training and regional technical assistance to strengthen outreach capacity. • Improve methods to connect people with shallow water habitats through trails, education, community science, and public access to water.
MB Champion:	All
Coordination Requirements (MB check-in frequency)	: Implementing this recommendation would require a shift in operations towards a more meaningful partnership with people and communities, including but not limited to adjusting membership, management actions, and funding decisions to prioritize benefits to people and communities. Expanding our communication capacity and stewardship role would also be necessary.
Delivery Date (Month or Quarter / Year)	This represents a transformative approach to how the Program communicates benefits to people and engages communities but does not create a new outcome.
CBPO Support	Effort is needed for developing new communication products and using existing networks. High effort is needed for building greater outreach capacity and for any direct engagement.

Better understand and predict climate impacts on, and adaptation options for, shallow water habitats and adjacent communities

Group Assigned	All
Task Description	There is a need to better understand and predict climate impacts on shallow water areas and adapt to future conditions since they are critical to both people and living resources. A clear process for assessing relative vulnerabilities both currently and in the future while engaging communities in the setting of priorities is necessary to provide the tools for climate adaptation decision-making and planning.

Task Rationale	Beyond 2025 small group recommendation
Task Outcome/ "End" User	grounding in the most recent scientific understandings and issues that have emerged since the current Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement was signed in 2014; end user is Bay Program Partnership, and Stakeholder from the communities.
Assignment (Objective)	• Co-develop adaptation strategies with partners and communities to take advantage of local knowledge and collaborate with local planning to provide a holistic approach that aligns with local priorities. • Use alternative future scenarios to provide decision-makers with options reflecting local community priorities. • Identify critical habitat areas in both tidal and non-tidal waters and develop targeting approaches aligned with maximizing shallow water habitat health. • Where possible, leverage and partner with other ecosystem habitat function projects, existing large-scale restoration efforts, and significant investments in best management practices (BMPs). • Train partners and planners in ecosystem services and tools for planning with habitat impact considerations. • Consider and provide incentives for preservation before restoration. • Pilot BMP implementation with local non-profits that seek to balance water quality improvements with improvements to habitats, living resources and communities. Identify successful local programs and initiatives and scale up these efforts across rivers, subwatersheds, and communities. • Formally and periodically assess effectiveness and implement learnings into updated vulnerability assessments, modeling, and planning.
MB Champion:	All
Coordination Requirements (MB check-in frequency)	This should be something that is continuous dialogue with Management Board. Not just at a Management Board meeting, however Key decisions may be brought up through the Management Board as needed.
Delivery Date (Month or Quarter / Year)	Immediate to ongoing.
CBPO Support	Level of effort is associated with the implementation of a new framework for collaboration and integrated assessment, along with development of expertise and capacity in vulnerability assessment and construction of alternative future scenarios. Requires implementation of a formalized adaptive planning process that includes community engagement elements and room to adapt goals within the context of changing conditions. Promote local engagement and utilize networks to share assessments and better understand local priorities

Healthy Watersheds Goal Implementation Team (GIT 4)

Tracking Protected Lands

Group Assigned	Healthy Watersheds GIT, Stewardship GIT (PLWG)
Task Desc Clear (Clear description of tasks)	To track protected lands in the watershed, develop: 1) a standardized reporting framework and schema; 2) a process to reconcile disparate data sources, focusing on the accuracy of the "date of establishment" attribute; 3) agreements on the level of protection afforded by different conservation mechanisms in coordination with PADUS. 4) support to implement these changes for federal and state agencies, land trusts, and others involved in land protection efforts.
Task Rationale (Why are we doing this, where did it originate)	The CBP Healthy Watersheds and Protected Lands Workgroup outcomes require accurate tracking of protected lands over time and promoting conservation as a pillar of the CBP requires understanding the benefits of recent conservation efforts to multiple ecological and societal endpoints. The USGS has created a Protected Areas Database (PAD-US) and updates these data every few years but discourages comparisons between dates because the data are not fully attributed with a "date of establishment" (DOE) field. In 2022, the USGS funded the Chesapeake Conservancy to explore the possibility of creating and consistently populating a DOE field for the Bay states and identified steps needed to accomplish the task. Currently, the DOE field is accurately populated for less than 65% of protected lands records. As the partnership reaches its 2 million acre protection outcome in 2025 a new set of protection targets will need to be set for the future that also incorporate protection goals for Healthy Watersheds. More accurate protected lands data is critical to help set new protection goals.
Task Outcome/ "End" User	Product deliverables will be relevant to the Stewardship GIT, Healthy Watersheds GIT, Chesapeake Conservation Partnership, and all organizations involved in land conservation with an interest in understanding collective progress towards meeting Bay-wide and state-wide conservation goals.
Assignment (Objective)	1) A standardized reporting framework 2) A process that will help reconcile older versions of the data. 3) An agreement on the level of protection afforded by different conservation mechanisms that would be included in the Protected Lands Indicator. 4) Support and approval from Bay Program Partners
MB Champion:	
Coordination Requirements (MB check-in frequency)	6 months
Delivery Date (Month or Quarter / Year)	December 2025
CBPO Support	Funding for assistance to states to enhance protected lands data attribution

Stewardship Goal Implementation Team (GIT 5)

Stewardship Outcome –

Title: Design and Offer Community-Scale Stewardship Projects

Description: A high priority need of the Stewardship Workgroup is to establish in 2025 a **series of Community-Scale Stewardship Assistance Pilots** to leverage and capitalize on the success and investments made in the ChesapeakeBehaviorChange.org platform and Stewardship Behavior Change training being offered in early 2025. The Stewardship Workgroup is seeking to collaborate with the Local Leadership Workgroup to develop a series of technical assistance at the local level to increase stewardship practices among communities, and to provide assistance to communities seeking support in the development of effective stewardship outreach and engagement efforts. **The workgroups would engage with local governments to help develop a set of pilot efforts at the local level that focus on specific local needs, developed in an inclusive way, emphasizing community-centric actions with a larger scale impact.** These community stewardship pilots can help to define and illustrate the best approaches at this scale, help other localities to follow suit, and build a community of practice as a means of support and expansion of technical assistance efforts over the longer term.

Phase 1 recommendations addressed:

- **Beyond 2025 Phase 1 Recommendations under Partnership:** Recommendation 2, Recommendation 3

- **Beyond 2025 Small Group Recommendations:** People Recommendation 2, Shallow Water Recommendation 4, Clean Water Recommendation 5

Relevant Outcomes: *Depending upon specific stewardship actions chosen by local government partners, these efforts could support any of the outcomes under the CBP Partnership's suite of work (water quality, climate resiliency, tree canopy, riparian forest buffers, habitat, etc.).*

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Environmental Literacy Outcomes

Title: Expanded Environmental Literacy Indicators

Description: States and other partners have expressed the need to better understand and document the building blocks for environmental literacy planning and programming. This information will allow partners to better understand incremental progress toward the environmental literacy outcomes, which will be used to refine the outcomes to be SMART. It will also set the stage for a more complete set of indicators that better reflect incremental progress. This work will include a more thorough analysis of the data collected from school districts through the Environmental Literacy Indicator Tool (ELIT) and conversations with both the Workgroup and the Network Advisory Team (NAT). (Note: resources presently available will not allow for the depth of analysis necessary for identifying indicators of incremental progress).

Phase 1 recommendations addressed:

- Beyond 2025 Phase 1 Recommendations under **Restoration and Conservation**: Recommendation 1, Recommendation 3

- **Beyond 2025 Small Group Recommendations:** People Recommendation 2, People Recommendation 4.

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Public Access Outcome –

Title: Impact and Gap Analysis of Public Access Site Development 2010-2024

Description:

An essential project needed in 2025 is the analysis of the results, impacts and gaps of the Public Access Site Development Outcome which added 300 new water access sites between 2010 and 2024. The project will analyze not just the numbers of new access sites but the locations, types and uses to better equip the CBP partnership in identifying the next decade's focus for access coverage and pinpoint specific high priority areas for additional targeted access. This strategic project is urgently needed this year to support an updated Public Access Outcome and will serve as the basis for the development of an updated Chesapeake Public Access Strategic Plan with updated metrics and indicators (the current Public Access Plan was issued in 2013).

The project will involve a comprehensive review of the 300 new access sites against the 2010 baseline to help identify the locations, types, and uses that remain a priority to ensure public access is equitably distributed, serving diverse communities and meeting the recreational needs of the public, thereby meeting the intent of the Public Access Goal. The work group's efforts will contribute to the long-term sustainability and enjoyment of the Chesapeake Bay watershed for both current and future generations.

Lastly, the completion of this assessment will further support the broader catalog of ecosystem service mapping, including spatial data, service layers, newly identified metrics, or community use and value of services within the watershed. Ecosystem service mapping is currently an identified need of other GITs and Workgroups seeking to integrate public access and conservation. Ultimately, ecosystem service mapping helps us understand spatial distribution, inform land-use planning, assess the impacts of development, and provides a way to make the value of ecosystems more tangible to policymakers and the public.

Phase 1 recommendations addressed:

- Beyond 2025 Phase 1 Recommendations under **Partnership:** Recommendation 3.
- Beyond 2025 Phase 1 Recommendations under **Restoration and Conservation**: Recommendation 3
- **Beyond 2025 Small Group Recommendations:** Shallow Water Recommendation 4

Title: Benefits and Barriers Research - Personas Model

Description:

Following the first phase of recommendations from the Public Access Workgroup's Benefits and Barriers Research, the "personas model" will be used to better understand user experiences at two or three public access sites or local parks with low visitor numbers. This model, based on real data and insights, will help identify user motivations and challenges. Recommendations for facility and recreation improvements will be made based on the needs and interests of the surrounding community.

Phase 1 recommendations addressed:

- **Beyond 2025 Phase 1 Recommendations under Partnership:** Recommendation 3: Strengthen the Chesapeake Bay Program's capacity to ensure watershed restoration is relevant to all communities.
- **Beyond 2025 Small Group Recommendations:** Shallow Water Recommendation 4

Enhance Partnering, Leadership, and Management Goal Implementation Team (GIT 6)

Shared Learning Series Initiative

Group Assigned	GIT6 Chairs, Coordinator and Staffer
Task Description	Develop a learning series to reinforce the Principles stated in the Watershed Agreement and to strengthen the collaborative culture of the CBP.
Task Rationale	The Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement is the guiding document for the Chesapeake Bay Program. In 2014, as a partnership, we committed to upholding the principles of collaboration and transparency, representing the

	interests of all people, using science-based decision-making, engaging the public, and expanding a network of trusted sources, all of which were highlighted in the Beyond 2025 Report. As a result, this project, developed to reinforce the principles of both 2014 and beyond 2025, will help us move ahead in our conservation and restoration goals. The intent of this project is not to be duplicative of the 2024 GIT Funding Network Science Project, but to work in tandem. The efforts of the SET funded project in improving the Partnership's literacy in network science will only allow for GIT6 to produce product that is more easily disseminated and digested by the entire partnership.
Task Outcome/ "End" User	Partners within the Chesapeake Bay Program
Assignment (Objective)	GIT6 Coordinator and Staffer will host opportunities at each quarterly meeting for Chesapeake Bay Program partners to weigh in on topics related to the guiding principles of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed agreement. GIT6 Coordinator and staffer will begin compiling the learning module Each learning module will have: - Recorded, interactive, self directed presentation - Worksheets and other tools to allow team engagement on the topic - Key topical references to provide additional learning resources There will be opportunities for GIT6 members and interested parties to interact with each component of the module to test its efficacy and evaluate its connection to the Program guiding principles. Once a module has been completed and reviewed by GIT6 membership and interested parties, the module will then be reviewed by GIT6 Chairs. Once internal review has been completed the module will then be previewed by the CBP Director and Deputy Director. Once approved by the Director and Deputy Director, the module will then be presented to the Management Board.
MB Champion:	TBD
Coordination Requirements (MB check-in frequency)	Once approved by the Director and Deputy Director, the module will then be presented to the Management Board. The check ins with the Management Board can be anytime quarterly to annually, depending on the time needed to complete the modules.
Delivery Date (Month or Quarter / Year)	No more frequent than quarterly check ins, although likely to be annually.
CBPO Support	Collaboration across the partnership to accurately produce learning modules that help the partnership foster and stay aligned with its guiding principles.

Scientific, Technical Assessment & Reporting (STAR)

Develop and Implement a Climate Resiliency Framework across the CBP
Partnership

Group Assigned	Management Board (MB) with support from STAR and EPA
Task Description	Improve the integration of climate resiliency throughout the partnership's existing and proposed outcomes, structure, and governance (Beyond 2025 Phase 2 Charge) by using existing climate change research and information to evaluate climate factors that could affect outcome attainment and devising a process to ensure climate resilience is built into the future structure, governance, and adaptive management framework of the partnership.
Task Rationale	Climate change has benefitted from elevated priority by the 2021 Executive Council Climate Directive: ● "Accordingly, the Chesapeake Executive Council will thoughtfully incorporate and prioritize climate resilience into each of the 2014 Watershed Agreement outcomes…" ● "Integrate climate science and adaptation to climate change throughout the work of the Chesapeake Bay Program and direct the Management Board to ensure the partnership's organizational structure effectively advances this integration." ● "We recognize that each partner has established policies and programs to embrace climate adaptation and resilience, but given the magnitude of the threats, we must build on existing efforts as a united partnership." The partnership at all levels is viewed as having struggled with full integration of assessing and addressing climate change impacts. The challenge is partly because the topic of climate science and policy has been treated as an add-on rather than being absorbed as an essential component of our work. In other words, while partners are thinking about climate change outside of the partnership, many of the existing outcomes have not integrated future climate conditions, and the partnership itself currently lacks the resources (staff time, money), processes (activities and outputs), and structure to achieve climate-smart outcomes. The Beyond 2025 effort is an opportunity to fulfill the 2021 EC Climate Directive and integrate climate science and adaptation into all the revised outcomes. The EC has clearly stated climate change as a priority, but the partnership needs to translate the words into action now and ensure the partnership's outcomes and organizational structure effectively advances this integration. Additional support and rationale for the task include: ● Climate is a Principal of the 2014 *Watershed Agreement* (p. 2).

	● Beyond 2025 Phase 1 Report encourages SMART outcomes, and outcomes cannot be "achievable" or "relevant" without considering changing climate conditions. ● Beyond 2025 Phase 1 Report: "The Steering Committee recommends enhancing the partnership's understanding of anticipated changes, and how conservation practices respond to those changes, by prioritizing climate science and research on land use change (EC Charge)." ● Beyond 2025 Phase 1 Report: "The Steering Committee also recommends modeling efforts integrate climate change projections to better understand changes across multiple indicators and inform strategic planning at the local and state level (C1, C2, C3, C4; HW1; SW2)." ● Beyond 2025 Phase 1 Report: "The Chesapeake Bay Program's capacity on climate and social science is constrained by limited personnel and funding. The partnership can enhance Chesapeake Bay Program knowledge and improve decision-making by expanding the Program's climate science support team and social science staff and dedicating resources for the strategic application of these topics (ERG C7; C1, C4; P5)." ● Beyond 2025 Climate Small Group Recommendation #1 ● Public Comments during Phase 1 supported by many organizations (Choose Clean Water Coalition, American Farmland Trust, Alliance for Aquatic Resource Monitoring, etc.) included statements such as considering our work based on the impact of climate change, prioritize climate change data, better address climate literacy, and account for emerging challenges like climate change.
Task Outcome/ "End" User	Chesapeake Bay Program utilizes the climate resiliency framework and the partnership benefits with more achievable and relevant outcomes.
Assignment (Objective)	This partnership-level priority needs to be discussed at MB meetings in Beyond 2025 Phase 2 and all MB Quarterly Progress Meetings (QPM) of the Strategic Review Process (SRS) for adaptive management after Phase 2. Beyond 2025 Phase 2 Outcome Assessment Step: Develop questions to integrate climate change in Outcome Assessment assignment. The Outcome Assessment 2-pager currently does not ask outcomes to consider climate change. This step would allow integration of climate change to be incorporated into the MB Outcome Review Meetings (February – March) and the Review Proposal/Gap Discussion (April): ● STAR and EPA will support GITs with discussing available climate change information during their workgroup meetings in preparing their outcome assessments. ● The MB requests that GITs answer climate change-related questions during the outcome assessment meetings, such as, "Are there known climate change impacts that could inhibit outcome attainment? Is there anything that the Bay Program can do to aid in making the outcome more climate-informed?

	• During the Review Proposal/Gap discussion in April 2025, the Management Board builds in discussions on how best to integrate climate-related impacts when considering outcome achievement and value added to the Bay Program. Beyond 2025 Phase 2 Structure and Governance Step (post April 2025): Develop process to integrate climate change in structure discussions at MB meetings (i.e., dedicate agenda time, share examples of different ways to address capacity issues, promote cross-partnership work, learn from outside CBP). • The Management Board works with the GITS on what a climate resiliency framework would look like under the structure and governance process. Incorporate in the framework an approach to modify outcomes over time so they are compatible with anticipated future climate conditions in support of a healthy, equitable, and resilient Bay. Post 2025 (after amendment of agreement): • Develop process to integrate the climate resiliency framework in future SRS/QPMs for all outcomes, or equivalent, to support adaptive management under changing climate conditions.
MB Champion:	Ken Hyer (USGS), Kevin Schabow (NOAA)
Coordination Requirement (MB check-in frequency)	Beyond 2025 Phase 2: Climate change integration should be discussed in all MB Outcome Review Meetings, future MB meetings on outcome language decisions, and Phase 2 discussions on the overall structure and processes. Post 2025: Climate change integration should be included in future SRS QPMs, or equivalent, to make sure the 2021 EC Climate Directive is being addressed and the CBP is supporting adaptive management under changing climate conditions for all outcomes.
Delivery Date	MB Beyond 2025 Phase 2 meetings, and future SRS QPM meetings (post 2025)
CBPO Support	MB, Breck Sullivan (STAR Coordinator), Keith Bollt (Climate Policy Coordinator), Julie Reichert-Nguyen (Climate Resiliency Workgroup Coordinator)

Iterative development of ecosystem service estimates to better inform partners' decision-making to maximize the benefits of conservation, planning and restoration efforts

Group Assigned	STAR/USGS (GSAT) to start
Task Description	To begin expanding tools and information available about the estimated value and multiple benefits associated with LULC or BMPs. This starts with the shorter-term Recommendations from the STAC Ecosystem Services Report (2023) as able with available resources and to build foundation for continued iterative work post-2025.
Task Rationale	**Many recommendations within the Steering Committee Report** and the small group recommendations refer to the cross-partnership benefits of developing approaches to better incentivize practices that maximize ecosystem services and their benefits to living resources and people. Over time, the iterative compilation and sharing of this information will enable

	conservation and restoration efforts to be translated into multiple benefits that are more likely to be salient to different audiences (see Science Recs 2 and 3; Restoration and Conservation 1 and 3; Partnership Rec 3). The approach could also support efforts to promote carbon stewardship actions to increase the carbon storage and sequestration benefits of watershed restoration, for example.
Related Outcome	Multiple outcomes
Task Outcome/ "End" User	Local or state planners and analysts; watershed or conservation organizations; communicators; by extension: funders; decision-makers or local officials
Assignment (Objective)	More information available in STAC (2023) 1. Development of methods to quantify priority ecosystem services across the watershed. This could include replicating Maryland's ecosystem service estimate methods based on land cover (Greenprint) to the full watershed (or state-by-state as able) 2. Continue incorporation of available BMP-specific data into CAST as able, e.g., carbon sequestration from USDA COMET
MB Champion:	TBD
Coordination Requirements	May require dedicated coordination and periodic check-ins based on MB interest and capacity
Delivery Date (Month or Quarter / Year)	First iterative steps by end of 2026 or sooner depending on start date
CBPO Support	USGS (GSAT) + other relevant staff as able

Alignment of Master Students' Projects to Support Chesapeake Bay Coastal Marsh Adaptation Efforts

Group Assigned	STAR/Climate Resiliency Workgroup (CRWG)
Task Description	Provide guidance and input during the development of Master students' scopes of work for marsh adaptation products as part of an awarded project with the University of Michigan SEAS Master's Student Program to build on collaborative, large-scale coastal marsh adaptation in the Chesapeake Bay.
Task Rationale	The CRWG, in collaboration with the Wetland Workgroup, submitted the proposal, "Advancing large-scale marsh adaptation projects through multi-disciplinary communication and landscape change visualization products" to the University of Michigan SEAS Master's Student Program during the Fall of 2024. Four Master students and two professor advisors selected the proposal. There is an immediate need to align the development of the students' scopes of work with Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) jurisdictional and other partner needs related to marsh adaptation. Development of student scopes of work will occur from January to April 2025. Project support from the University of Michigan goes to April 2026.

	This priority action is an extension of work supported by the GIT-funded project, "Partnership-building and identification of collaborative tidal marsh adaptation projects," (completed in August 2024). During the GIT-funded project, six marsh adaptation focus areas in Maryland and Virginia were identified to target large-scale marsh protection and restoration projects. The marsh adaptation focus areas were identified by developing a mapper that integrated various GIS data on marsh condition and potential marsh migration corridors, future sea level rise projections, social vulnerability indices, and ecosystem and living resource metrics. Additionally, extensive input was collected from natural resources practitioners. The CRWG, in collaboration with the Wetlands Workgroup and the CBP Geospatial Science and Applications Team (GSAT), is actively supporting three of the focus areas: Middle Peninsula, VA (hosted one-day workshop, small group meetings, and continuing engagement with the York River and Small Basins Habitat Restoration Steering Committee), Wicomico River/Deal Island, MD (hosted one-day workshop and supported follow-up activities with Audubon Marshes for Tomorrow), and Choptank River, MD (hosted one-day workshop with Envision the Choptank Advancing Large-Scale Restoration Working Group). Aligning student projects with partner needs will benefit overall efforts to advance collaborative, large-scale coastal marsh adaptation to changing climate conditions. This priority action aligns with partnership-wide strategic wetland planning by the Chesapeake Bay Trust and CBP, wetland-related actions in the Executive Council Climate Change Directive Workplan, and the Climate Resiliency Goal in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement. The project addresses several recommendations in the Beyond 2025 Phase 1 report, "A critical path forward for the Chesapeake Bay Program beyond 2025," including: - Optimize monitoring, modeling, and analysis: integrating climate change projections to better understand changes across multiple indicators and inform strategic planning at the local and state level (small group: C1, C2, C3, C4, HW1, SW2). - Prioritize research that addresses knowledge gaps in existing and emerging challenges: prioritizing climate science and research on land use (EC Charge) to enhance the partnership's understanding of these anticipated changes, and how conservation practices may respond (small group: C2, C3, C4, HW2, CW2, SW1, SW3). - Support system-scale conservation and restoration planning and implementation for habitats and communities: planning for the restoration and conservation of nearshore habitats (CESR; small group: P2, SW1, SW4, C1).
Task Outcome/ "End" User	Alignment of students' scopes of work with CBP Partnership needs to advance collaborative, large-scale coastal marsh adaptation in identified focus areas.

	End users are partner organizations implementing marsh protection and restoration projects.
Assignment (Objective)	Student scopes of work will be guided by input from partners within identified focus areas. Products could include, but not limited to, developing coastal marsh resilience plans, supporting geospatial climate, ecosystem, and social vulnerability assessments, development of marsh adaptation communication and/or educational materials (including potential visualization products representing inundation and marsh migration under various scenarios), conducting landscape change analyses, or creating a public-facing Marsh Adaptation Mapper. 1. One-on-one meetings with Virginia and Maryland jurisdictional and other partners to learn what their marsh adaptation product needs are within the identified focus areas. 2. Facilitate alignment of product development by Master students and professors with partner needs
MB Champion:	Kevin Schabow (NOAA)
Coordination Requirements **(MB check-in frequency)**	Coordinate with MD and VA jurisdictional partners to learn what their marsh adaptation priorities are within marsh adaptation focus areas to align with proposed work products. Coordinate with the Chesapeake Bay Trust's wetland capacity building engagement. The Management Board will help provide information on who to coordinate with from their staff. There would not be a need for updates at Management Board meetings during the January-April 2025 scopes of work development timeframe.
Delivery Date (Month or Quarter / Year)	March 2025 - complete one-on-one meetings with partner organizations to gather input on desired marsh adaptation products in identified focus areas; April 2025 - completion of Master students' scopes of work.
CBPO Support	STAR/Climate Resiliency Workgroup, Habitat GIT/Wetlands Workgroup, CBP GSAT, and state and federal agencies and nonprofits supporting coastal wetland protection and restoration planning and implementation.

Enhancing Decision Support Tools Through User Research

Group Assigned	STAR/Geospatial Science and Applications Team (GSAT)
Task Description	Conduct user research to enhance the functionality, interface, and access of geospatial conservation and restoration decision support tools, including but not limited to those currently in the Targeting Tools Portal.
Task Rationale	The GSAT has started to conduct a comprehensive assessment of existing geospatial tools and resources for informing conservation and restoration decision making, but user research is needed to better understand the motivations and needs of target audiences as we pivot to Beyond 2025. Through a user research study, the GSAT will identify the needs of

	partners, understand their priorities, and what they are interested in targeting for conservation and restoration purposes. Based on partner feedback, the GSAT will enhance and organize resources tailored to identify and leverage cross-outcome opportunities for strategic conservation and restoration. Related to the following Beyond 2025 Steering Committee Recommendations: • *The partnership continues its concerted effort to do more and **target actions** to accomplish as much as possible leading up to and beyond 2025.* • *Ecosystem services benefits can be achieved in conjunction with water quality benefits if **"their implementation is prioritized and targeted to effectively address local environmental and community concerns".*** • *Improving progress-tracking and accountability will further support efforts to adaptively manage, including **"better target and prioritize resources and** to provide technical assistance and communication of outcomes". This includes **targeting to help address "lagging outcomes and critical or vulnerable habitats".*** • *Increase emphasis on measured outcomes and incentivize innovative approaches to address stressors and **target nonpoint sources of pollution***.
Task Outcome/ "End" User	Scientists, Federal and state and local jurisdictional agencies, grant applicants and administrators, CBP workgroup members, riverkeepers/watershed non-profits, land use and conservation planners, students
Assignment (Objective)	1. Conduct user research through interviews, working sessions, or other techniques to understand the wants and needs of our target audiences 2. Iteratively revise the structure and functionality of decision support tools and resources to meet the requirements of our intended partners based on user testing and individual interviews 3. Engage with partners and communicate relevance for decision making
MB Champion:	Anna Killius (provisionally), Ken Hyer (back-up)
Coordination Requirements (MB check-in frequency)	Annual check-in with the MB - 2025: Request for MB members to encourage reps from their agency to participate in user research. Brief presentation summarizing the effort and why participation is beneficial. - 2026: Request for MB members to share the new decision support resources within their organizations. Presentation on new portal, functionality, and use cases.
Delivery Date (Month or Quarter / Year)	January 2026 – Soft release of decision support resources and platform July 2026 – Deploy decision support resources and platform
CBPO Support	CBP Geospatial Science and Applications Team (GSAT)

Submitted by Multiple Goal Teams

Identifying strategic needs to support embedding diversity, equity, inclusion, justice, and accessibility (DEIJA) in CBP work across all GITs and Outcomes

Group Assigned	Cross-Goal Team Initiative
Task Description	Develop more comprehensive logic model aligned with the DEIJ Implementation Plan, including clarifying roles and structure among CBP entities.
Task Rationale	During 2025, the CBP partnership needs to invest time, resources, and expertise across multiple sectors and outcome areas to come to a determination about how we will structure and support DEIJA work across the network. This work is essential in order to engage and retain a diversity of constituents in decision-making and in carrying out actions to more successfully achieve conservation, restoration, and stewardship across the watershed. To provide guidance and establish accountability, the CBP (DEIJ coordinator) will work with leadership and others across GITs to develop a more comprehensive logic model aligned with the DEIJ Implementation Plan, including clarifying roles and structure among CBP entities. This work will provide shared guidance on the following: What is the change we want to see, who is responsible for that change, how will we accomplish that change, and how will it be measured? To do this well, careful thought is needed around a meaningful impact, what can be reasonably achieved, and what people, resources, and activities we will need to reach that impact.
Task Outcome/ "End" User	Partnership entities
Assignment (Objective)	The result of this work in 2025 will be to build consensus and guidance for a way forward on: • How to articulate our goals clearly in updated language for the Agreement that will resonate well and broadly, • How these principles can be embedded throughout all areas of CBP work, • Metrics that can be achieved in a given time, and How we should guide and structure the work to support this across the CBP Partnership as a new way of doing business in all outcome areas.
MB Champion:	TBD
Coordination Requirements	Regular check-ins with the MB, coordination across partnership bodies and Goal Teams Chairs.
Delivery Date	July 2025
CBPO Support	Diversity Workgroup Coordinator, DEIJ Consultant