

Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership Expectations for Near-Term Milestones

2026 – 2027

Purpose

The Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) partnership is committed to continuing to make progress toward meeting the nutrient and sediment goals in the Phase III Watershed Implementation Plans (WIPs) while the partnership is updating its modeling tools and the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Agreement. During this transition period, the CBP partnership agreed to use the two-year milestones to maintain continuity and accountability under the Phase III WIPs.

Background

In January 2025, the Principal's Staff Committee (PSC) approved the recommendation to use "near-term" milestones to demonstrate the Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) partnership commitment to meeting the water quality goals for nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment.

At both the Management Board (MB) and PSC meetings, there was a charge to the Water Quality Goal Implementation Team (WQGIT) to develop a set of expectations for the two-year milestones. In turn, the WQGIT charged the Milestones Workgroup to reach agreement on and develop a set of guidelines or expectations for "near-term" two-year milestones.

Partnership Expectations

Ideas from the April 7, 2025 Milestones Workgroup Meeting:

- Milestones should be streamlined to reduce the complexity of the current set of milestones.
- Milestones could reflect agency priorities/legislative priorities that may be aspirational in nature, while including information around what actions are expected in the two-year period.

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Draft, Deliberative, Do Not Cite

- Examples of high-level milestones should be shared or included in an “expectations document” (Note state partners shared links in the chat).
 - [Maryland](#), [Pennsylvania](#), [New York](#), [Virginia](#), [Delaware](#)
 - [All Milestones](#)
- Milestones should include innovation as well as leverage existing program activities that reduce nutrients and sediments (e.g., permitting program, nonpoint source program etc.).
 - Opportunities should be built in to highlight success stories.
- Expectations should be set for the milestones and for what should be included in the progress report/fact sheet.
 - Templates should be developed but not required to be used.
 - The opportunity should exist for jurisdictions to enhance the template as they see fit.
 - Expectations and templates should lay out common elements to include for milestones development and progress reporting/factsheets.
 - Templates should be simple to use and easy to use for reporting.
 - Milestones should also serve as a public facing document, reducing duplicative communication efforts. Consider working with SET on developing templates that are public/user friendly.
- Be mindful that work may span a longer period than 2 years.
- Milestones could encompass more than water quality, but that would be at the jurisdictions discretion to tell the story of progress.

EPA’s Assessment of Progress

The expectations document should include how the milestones/progress will be evaluated by the EPA once the partnership has established the content for expectations.

Schedule

An update to the schedule should also be considered to better align with partnership reporting.

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Ideas include:

- Schedule could align with the timing for numeric milestones (State fiscal year)
- Schedule could more closely align with release of numeric progress information (submit milestones/progress in Feb/March)
- Schedule could align to inform EC meetings (challenge: the date of the EC meeting can vary from year to year)