



FISH PASSAGE OUTCOME
HABITAT GIT | FISH PASSAGE WORKGROUP

CHESAPEAKE BAY WATERSHED AGREEMENT OUTCOME LANGUAGE

PROPOSED DRAFT OUTCOME LANGUAGE: Improving habitat, water quality, and creating more resilient and sustainable populations of fish and other aquatic organisms throughout the Chesapeake Bay Watershed's coastal and freshwater rivers and streams by removing barriers to restore aquatic organism passage and connectivity to at least 150 miles of aquatic habitat every two years.

PROPOSED TARGET	New or Update of Existing Target	WEstimated Date for Target Development
Restoring connectivity to at least 150 miles of aquatic habitat every two years	Update of Existing Target	n/a

EXISTING 2014 OUTCOME LANGUAGE: Continually increase access to habitat to support sustainable migratory fish populations in Chesapeake Bay freshwater rivers and streams. By 2025, restore historical historic fish migratory routes by opening an additional 132 miles every two years to fish passage, with restoration success indicated by the consistent presence of alewife, blueback herring, American shad, hickory shad, American eel and brook trout, to be monitored in accordance with available agency resources and collaboratively developed methods.

*As amended, January 28, 2020 by the Principals' Staff Committee. See p. 17 for details and online at https://www.chesapeakebay.net/what/what_guides_us/watershed_agreement.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Rationale and context for proposed draft outcome language:

There are two major differences between 2014 and 2025 outcome language:

1. Broaden target from migratory fish to aquatic communities.
2. Increase restoration goal from 132 to 150 miles every two years.

When looking at what constitutes healthy, well connected habitat, the presence of a few target fish species is not an accurate representation of the system's ecological potential. Understanding that other species such as amphibians, mussels, fish, and others are important members of the system allows attention to be given to those species when passage projects are being considered. This does not take away from the importance of alewife, blueback herring, American shad, hickory shad, American eel and brook trout presence, but rather provides the opportunity to strengthen passage project proposals that benefit multiple aquatic species and is more applicable for all jurisdictions.

Fish passage also provides ecosystem services such as improving water quality, stream health, and infrastructure resilience that support goals beyond the workgroup.

Due to the consistent success the Fish Passage Workgroup has had in reaching their restoration target of 132 miles every 2 years, the workgroup believes it is reasonable to increase the target. Due to the uncertainty of available federal resources, the Fish Passage Workgroup conservatively proposes a new

restoration target of reconnecting 150 miles of habitat every two years. This is an achievable target based on the average of stream miles restored for passage every two years.

Methodology for data collection and tracking of each Target (Optional):

1. [Chesapeake Fish Passage Prioritization Tool](#) tracks “upstream functional network” opened from a barrier removal.