Fish Passage Outcome

Habitat GIT

Fish Passage Workgroup

Presenter: Nick Staten (WG Staffer)

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.

EXISTING 2014 AGREEMENT 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 .

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PROPOSED TARGET	New Target / Update of Existing Target	Date estimate for target being developed
Restoring connectivity to at least 150 miles of aquatic habitat every two years	Update of Existing Target	n/a

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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.

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1. Broaden target from migratory fish to aquatic communities.
    a. 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**.
    b. 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.**

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2. Increase restoration goal from 132 to 150 miles every two years.
   a. **Consistent success of opening 132** miles every two years.
   b. Due to **uncertainty of available federal resources** and **professional judgement** of State Fish Passage Coordinators, the Workgroup **conservatively proposes an increase to reconnecting 150 miles** of habitat every two years.

Fish Passage Outcome

Methodology for data collection and tracking of each Target:

- Chesapeake Fish Passage Prioritization Tool tracks “upstream functional network” opened from a barrier removal.