



Tree Canopy

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**What is the
value-add of
having this as
a Chesapeake
Bay Program
outcome?**



Successes

- Increased state and federal investment
- Growing focus on co-benefits to people/communities
- Access to state-of-the-art datasets, putting data to use
(E.g. [Tree Cover Status & Change Fact Sheets](#))
- **MANY** partnership projects –Summits, [TC Network website](#), [funding guide](#), [schools guide](#), [local government guide](#), [Funding & Policy Roundtable](#), [Urban Tree Supply Forum](#), etc.

Menti Responses: Value of the Tree Canopy Outcome

- **Improves water quality:** Referred to as the “gold standard” for water quality through filtration and reducing erosion
- **Improves air quality:** Naturally filters air pollutants
- **Increases resilience:** Helps with urban heat island, reducing stormwater erosion, etc.; carbon sequestration
- **Improves public health and wellbeing:** Access to green space, co-benefits of reduced heat, cleaner air, mental-health benefits, increased opportunities for social connection
- **Education:** opportunities for environmental education and stewardship
- **Ecosystem health:** watershed forestry is critical to supporting healthy habitats, particularly stream health, and wildlife and biodiversity



Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges

- Overriding trend of tree canopy loss from many factors (age, storms, development, pests/disease, etc.)
- Still high need for local funding and policy enhancements, including sustained state and federal support
- Critical focus needed on low-canopy areas, workforce, maintenance (beyond planting), and community-based action

Insights from Menti

- **Coordination and Collaboration:** Improved coordination between federal, state, private sectors, and CBP; integrate outcomes across the Bay Program
- **Measurable Goals and Accountability:** Establish specific, attainable numeric goals with clear, actionable steps to achieve them
- **Holistic Approach:** Take a more holistic approach; weave connections to the co-benefits for the environment, public health, etc.
- **Think Longer-Term and Elevate Conservation:** Emphasize the need for long-term maintenance and conservation, not just planting; include considerations for continued resources and sustaining forestry workers
- **Target Efforts:** Target efforts in low canopy areas to increase public benefits

What should we recommend to the Management Board for this outcome in a revised watershed agreement?



Recommendation options

- **Update:** Outcome intent is largely kept intact. Unique language may be necessary if it is more than just a SMART update. Key principle is maintaining the intent.
- **Consolidate** (i.e., Combine): Multiple Outcomes would be combined in a single Outcome, or activities contributing to an Outcome are dispersed across others
- **Remove:** The Outcome is removed from the 2014 Agreement.
- **Reclassify:** Outcome is changed to output or a different structure is adopted.
- **Replace:** This language suggests that a novel Outcome replaces a current one and that it relates in its intent or subject area.

**Could this
outcome be
improved? If so,
how?**

Opportunities to improve the Tree Canopy Outcome

- Shift “urban” to “community”
- Emphasize additional co-benefits to communities
- Add wording on conservation and maintenance/stewardship for achieving net gain
- Use latest tree canopy change data to help set clear, attainable targets for next period



Key Messages for the Management Board

TREE CANOPY OUTCOME

OUTCOME DISPOSITION ADVICE TO
MANAGEMENT BOARD:

UPDATE

OUTCOME: Continually increase urban tree canopy capacity to provide air quality, water quality and habitat benefits throughout the watershed. Expand urban tree canopy by **2,400 acres by 2025**.



RECENT PROGRESS

INCREASE



OUTLOOK

OFF COURSE

- GOAL: Vital Habitats
- LEAD: Water Quality Goal Team- Forestry Workgroup
- Outcome is foundational to meeting multiple Bay Program goals, including water quality, with many co-benefits for communities
- Regional collaboration through CBP has yielded valuable data and resources for the network of state and local initiatives
- Updates are needed to set reasonable targets and timelines, guided by latest watershed-wide tree canopy data
- Minor updates to outcome wording may include shift from “urban” to “community,” citing additional public benefits, and increased focus on conservation and stewardship/maintenance of trees

Presented by: Julie Mawhorter



Discussion