PLANNING FOR 2025 AND BEYOND

*Chesapeake Bay Program*

# Outcome Review Meeting

## Outcome Presentations

February 27, 2025

# STEWARDSHIP OUTCOME

OUTCOME DISPOSITION ADVICE TO MANAGEMENT BOARD:

**UPDATE**

**OUTCOME:** Increase the number and diversity of trained and mobilized volunteers who have the knowledge and skills needed to enhance the health of their local watersheds.

**GOAL:** Stewardship

**LEAD:** Stewardship GIT – Stewardship Workgroup

**Recommendation**:

- Reflect a current stewardship approach, with emphasis on social science best practices.
- Define stewardship actions and metrics to align with and directly support Water Quality, Tree Canopy, Forest Buffers, Wetlands, Land Conservation, and Stream Health outcomes.
- Use the unique power of CBP networks to focus and scale up stewardship efforts toward actions that achieve the greatest environmental impact.
- Make it SMART; focus on shorter-term milestones to achieve durable results in the very long term.

**Key factors**:

- EC Charge/intent calls for engaging all communities as active stewards.
- Public commitment (18M people) is critical to Bay conservation/ restoration success.
- ERG Beyond 2025 Evaluation: need to integrate social science to improve CBP effectiveness.
- CESR Report: example - implementation gaps in voluntary BMPs. More effective approaches with landowners could improve participation.
- Value-Added: CBP enables collective impact, accelerates success, breaks jurisdictional silos.
- Continue investment in work underway to understand best approaches to motivate stewards and to measure progress.

Presented by: Britt Slattery

# STREAM HEALTH OUTCOME

GOAL: Vital Habitats. LEAD: Habitat Goal Team (GIT2)

OUTCOME DISPOSITION ADVICE TO MANAGEMENT BOARD:

## UPDATE

**OUTCOME:** Continually improve stream health and function throughout the watershed. Improve health and function of ten percent of stream miles above the 2008 baseline for the watershed.

- Update the outcome to reflect a more holistic approach to improving ecological integrity of stream systems and stream corridors, based on sound science, coupled with land management, planning, and protection to improve and sustain stream health.
  - Outcome language will support the conservation, restoration, and management of natural resources in stream corridors and riparian areas.
  - Need additional indicators of stream health to measure changes in stream functions and identify stressors. A project is underway to determine the appropriate indicators or metrics of stream health by identifying existing datasets and the feasibility of using them to measure stream health (2026).

- Value
  - Key outcome to achieving fishable, swimmable, drinkable water
  - Incentivizes Bay jurisdictions to coordinate policies across the watershed

- Opportunities:
  - Incorporate the findings from the 2023 CESR report and our 2023 STAC workshop
  - Leverage work being done by related goal teams and consolidate data management and analysis

Presented by: Alison Santoro

# Brook Trout

GOAL: Vital Habitats. LEAD: Habitat Goal Team (GIT2)

OUTCOME DISPOSITION ADVICE TO MANAGEMENT BOARD:

## Update

**OUTCOME:** Restore and sustain naturally reproducing brook trout populations in Chesapeake Bay headwater streams, with an eight percent increase in occupied habitat by 2025.

- **Occupancy** restricts jurisdictional efforts. An update would facilitate targeted efforts in stronghold and other populations to increase **resiliency** or **abundance** that can be measured in shorter time frames.

- Brook trout connect and amplify BMPs across multiple outcomes. These can serve as indicators for Brook Trout resilience.

- Science supports brook trout survival in strongholds under worst climate change scenarios, **only champion for coldwater.**

- Brook trout serve as the only **Umbrella Species** included in the Bay Agreement and connects communities in the watershed.
- For 4/7 bay partners, brook trout is the state fish listed in State Wildlife Action Plans as in need of conservation.
- Brook trout is an **iconic** species for rural communities in remote headwater areas to protect streams and bay water quality
- Brook trout is an indicator species for the best water quality, which urban communities rely on for drinking water.

Presented by: Dan Goetz

# Land Use Methods and Metrics Development Outcome

OUTCOME DISPOSITION ADVICE TO MANAGEMENT BOARD:

## RECLASSIFY

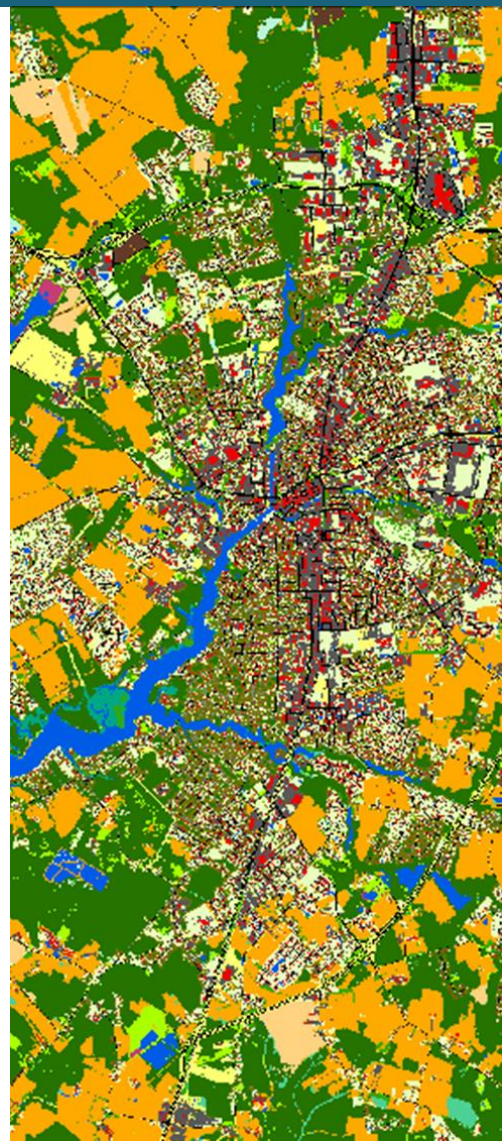
**OUTCOME:** *Continually improve our knowledge of land conversion and the associated impacts throughout the watershed. By December 2021, develop a watershed-wide methodology and local-level metrics for characterizing the rate of farmland, forest and wetland conversion, measuring the extent and rate of change in impervious surface coverage and quantifying the potential impacts of land conversion to water quality, healthy watersheds and communities. Launch a public awareness campaign to share this information with local governments, elected officials and stakeholders.*

**GOAL:** Land Conservation **LEAD:** Maintain Healthy Watersheds Goal Implementation Team (GIT 4) – Land Use Workgroup

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- **Reclassify** this outcome as an **"output"** that is part of the **management strategy** of the proposed **"Watershed Planning Outcome"**.

- Formally integrate land use mapping, monitoring, and derived metrics into the management strategies of relevant outcomes: Local Leadership, Healthy Watersheds, Protected Lands, Public Access, Environmental Literacy, Wetlands, Stream Health, Brook Trout, Forest Buffers, Tree Canopy, Water Quality Standards Attainment and Monitoring, and Monitoring & Assessment (climate resiliency).



**Presented By:** Peter Claggett, HWGIT Coordinator, U.S. Geological Survey

# Land Use Options Evaluation Outcome

OUTCOME DISPOSITION ADVICE TO MANAGEMENT BOARD:

**UPDATE**

**OUTCOME:** *By the end of 2017, with the direct involvement of local governments or their representatives, evaluate policy options, incentives and planning tools that could assist them in continually improving their capacity to reduce the rate of conversion of agricultural lands, forests and wetlands as well as the rate of changing landscapes from more natural lands that soak up pollutants to those that are paved over, hardscaped or otherwise impervious. Strategies should be developed for supporting local governments' and others' efforts in reducing these rates by 2025 and beyond.*

**GOAL:** Land Conservation

**LEAD:** Maintain Healthy Watersheds Goal Implementation Team (GIT 4)

**UPDATED OUTCOME:** *Continually reduce the per-capita rate of land conversion to development in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Develop and disseminate locally relevant information to organizations involved in the planning process on the suitability of lands for conversion and associated environmental consequences.*

**WHY:** Future changes in land use are expected and impact progress on multiple outcomes. Land use planning and land conservation are the principal means of minimizing rates of land conversion while maintaining ecosystem services. Since its inception, the Executive Council has called for efforts to reduce the rate of land conversion to development.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- Rename as **"Watershed Planning Outcome"**.
- Consolidate the adaptive management of land use mapping and monitoring activities (LUMM) under this outcome.
- Implement the new CBP Land Use Strategy and develop a cohort of well-trained community ambassadors/liaisons to build local capacity for integrating environmental concerns into the planning process.
- Develop a framework for establishing SMarT outputs and indicators to support this outcome.

**Presented By:** Debbie Herr Cornwell, HWGIT Vice-chair, Maryland Department of Planning

# Healthy Watersheds Outcome

OUTCOME DISPOSITION ADVICE TO MANAGEMENT BOARD:

## UPDATE

**OUTCOME:** *100 percent of state-identified currently healthy waters and watersheds remain healthy.*

**GOAL:** Healthy Watersheds **LEAD:** Maintain Healthy Watersheds Goal Implementation Team (GIT 4)

**UPDATED OUTCOME:** *Maintain watershed processes and landscape conditions contributing to ecosystem services and healthy aquatic ecosystems. Support the conservation, restoration, and management of natural and working lands such as riparian areas, floodplains, and forests, including timberlands.*

**WHY:** Protecting water quality is the most frequent reason the public supports open space conservation. Future changes in land use are expected and impact progress on multiple outcomes. Land use planning and land conservation are the principal means of minimizing rates of land conversion while maintaining ecosystem services.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- **Revise** the goal as: **"Protect and sustain waters and watersheds with high ecological value"**.
- Rename the outcome as: **"Watershed Health Outcome"**.
- Align watershed and stream health metrics to achieve a more holistic and consistent characterization of landscape and stream conditions.
- Establish both short-term (5-year) and long-term (20-year) SMarT outputs and indicators for building local capacity and for protecting, maintaining and improving watershed health.

**Presented By:** Jeff Lerner, HWGIT Chair, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

# 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

**Assessment**

Outcome is foundational to water quality and other Bay Program goals, with many co-benefits for communities

Regional collaboration through CBP is a high priority and has yielded valuable data and resources for the network of state and local initiatives

**Recommendations**

Maintain outcome with minor updates to wording: shift “urban” to “community,” cite additional public benefits, and increase focus on conservation/maintenance of trees

Update to set new reasonable numeric target for the next 10 years, guided by latest watershed-wide tree canopy data

Presented by: Anne Hairston-Strang

# FOREST BUFFER OUTCOME

OUTCOME DISPOSITION ADVICE TO MANAGEMENT BOARD:

**UPDATE**

**OUTCOME:** Continually increase the capacity of forest buffers to provide water quality and habitat benefits throughout the watershed. Restore 900 miles per year of riparian forest buffer and conserve existing buffers until at least 70 percent of riparian areas throughout the watershed are forested.

RECENT PROGRESS
**INCREASE**

OUTLOOK
**OFF COURSE**

**GOAL**: Vital Habitats
**LEAD:** Water Quality Goal Team- Forestry Workgroup

**Assessment**

- Outcome is foundational to meeting multiple Bay Program goals, including water quality goals under the TMDL
- Inclusion of forest buffers in the Agreement has driven increased investments and programmatic focus towards the practice, while enabling greater regional coordination

**Recommendations**

- Maintain both a riparian forest cover target and an annual planting target in the updated outcome
- Update to re-establish reasonable targets and timelines that are grounded in science
- Update to reflect increased focus on conservation and maintenance

Presented by: Katie Brownson

**Water Quality Standards Attainment and Monitoring:** Continually improve our capacity to monitor and assess the effects of the management actions being taken to implement the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (Bay TMDL) and improve water quality. Use monitoring results to report annual progress being made in attaining water quality standards and trends in reducing nutrients and sediment in the watershed.

OUTCOME DISPOSITION ADVICE TO MANAGEMENT BOARD:

# UPDATE

GOAL: Water Quality; LEAD: STAR

## Current Language:

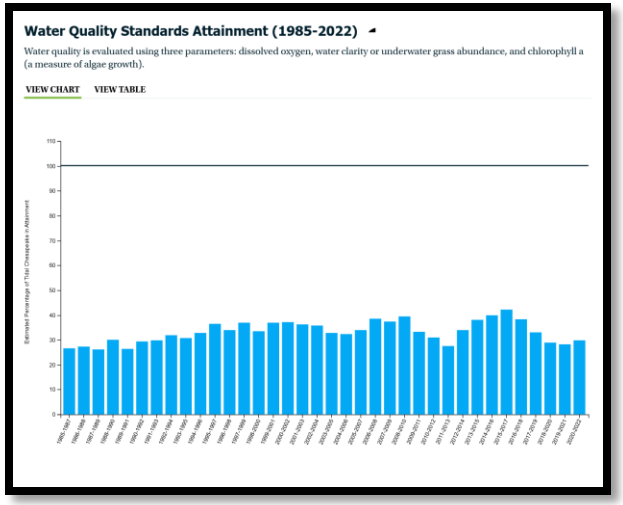
- Not SMART
- Refers to activities and outputs rather than ecosystem change
- Does not address the attainment of water quality standards (WQS)
- Does not closely align with the goal text

## Value:

- Common monitoring and analysis framework
- Assess and evaluate progress
- Accountability
- Commitment to fund and use monitoring data

## Considerations:

- Directly connect to attaining WQS
- More comprehensive assessment of water quality with living resources and public interest
- Strengthen connection to WQGIT and WIP Outcome



# 2017 WIP Outcome

Advice:
Remove

**OUTCOME:** By 2017, have practices and controls in place that are expected to achieve 60 percent of the nutrient and sediment pollution load reductions necessary to achieve applicable water quality standards compared to 2009 levels.

- **GOAL: WATER QUALITY**
- **LEAD:** *Water Quality Goal Implementation Team*

- Moving forward the WQGIT recommends incremental check points be included as outputs under an updated 2025 WIP outcome.

- In 2017 the goals for phosphorus and sediment were achieved.

- Nitrogen goals for 2017 were not met.

- Partners developed Phase III WIPs to identify strategies to meet the water quality goals for nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment by 2025.

OUTLOOK
**COMPLETED**

Presented by: Suzanne Trevena (EPA Region 3; WQGIT Chair)

# 2025 WIP Outcome

Advice:
UPDATE

**OUTCOME:** By 2025, have all practices and controls installed to achieve the Bay's dissolved oxygen, water clarity/submerged aquatic vegetation and chlorophyll a standards as articulated in the Chesapeake Bay TMDL document.

- **GOAL: WATER QUALITY**
- **LEAD:** *Water Quality Goal Implementation Team*
- Continued commitment from partnership to achieve Baywide reduction targets for nutrients and sediment
- Create stronger connection between modeling and monitoring
- Model and monitoring work supporting this outcome remains a key pillar of partnership cutting edge contributions to science and management

- Recommend a new outcome name
- Output details and deadlines depend on multiple priorities/projects, e.g., development of Phase 7 modeling tools; tiered implementation target discussions, and pre-requisite projects

RECENT PROGRESS
**INCREASE**

OUTLOOK
**OFF COURSE**

Presented by: Suzanne Trevena (EPA Region 3; WQGIT Chair)