

PROTECTED LANDS OUTCOME

STEWARDSHIP GIT (GIT 5)
Protected Lands Workgroup
Presenter: Aurelia Gracia

PROPOSED DRAFT OUTCOME LANGUAGE:

Conserve and protect critical landscapes within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed to protect water quality, enhance biodiversity, support sustainable livelihoods and honor cultural heritage.

EXISTING 2014 AGREEMENT OUTCOME LANGUAGE:

By 2025, protect an additional two million acres of lands throughout the watershed—currently identified as high-conservation priorities at the federal, state or local level—including 225,000 acres of wetlands and 695,000 acres of forest land of highest value for maintaining water quality.

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PROPOSED TARGET

	New or Update of Existing	Date estimate for target
Protected Lands: By 2040, permanently protect an additional 1.5M-2M acres of lands throughout the watershed at the federal, state or local level.	Update Existing	August 2025
Forests: By 2040, conserve a total of ___ acres of forest, ___% of which are in riparian areas.	Update Existing	August 2025
Wetlands: By 2040, conserve a total of ___ acres of wetlands focusing on the protection of buffer zones.	Update Existing	August 2025
Watershed Health: By 2040, maintain the health of ___% of the highest functioning sub-watersheds by targeting ___% of the protected lands' outcome acreage in those areas.	New Target	August 2025
Tribal Lands: Support the sovereignty and duty of care of Tribal Nations and communities by securing protection status and/or co-management agreements for a total of ___ acres of tribal homelands.	New Target	August 2025
Agricultural Lands: By 2040, protect a total ___ acres of agricultural lands within the Chesapeake Bay watershed.	New Target	August 2025
Urban Lands: By 2040, protect a total ___ acres of urban and near-urban lands within the Chesapeake Bay watershed.	New Target	August 2025

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- State representatives have identified a total acreage goal of 1.5 million to 2 million acres, considering current challenges related to funding, staffing capacity, and administrative priorities.
- We have decided to expand the outcome language to include targets for specific conservation areas, such as forests, wetlands, agricultural lands, urban lands, tribal lands, and watershed health. Workgroup members and stakeholders are continuing to discuss the numerical metrics for each target.
- We estimate that by August 2025, the workgroup will be able to confirm the numerical metrics for each target, and the most appropriate methods for tracking and reporting. The 2024 Protected Lands Indicator data is expected to be completed by June 2025, and it will inform this process.