



Oyster Restoration

Stephanie Reynolds Westby
NOAA
*Chair, MD & VA Oyster
Restoration Workgroups*

Through the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement, the Chesapeake Bay Program has committed to...



Goal:

Sustainable Fisheries- Oysters

Outcome:

Restore native oyster habitat and populations in 10 tributaries by 2025, and ensure their protection.

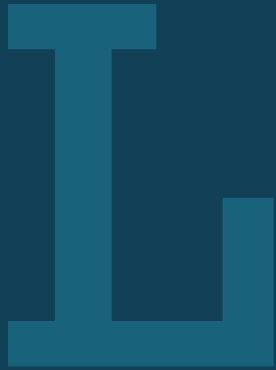


What is our Expected and Actual Progress?

On track to meet the 2025 deadline.

- 8 of 10 tributaries initially complete (plus a bonus trib in VA)
- More than 1450 acres of reef restored of just over 1800 planned (nearly 3 square miles)
- All funding and permits are in hand to complete remaining initial restoration.
- Unprecedented scale of shellfish restoration globally.
- Reefs provide N and P reduction, water filtration, fish habitat, broodstock for nearby harvest reefs.





Learn

What have we learned?



Successes and Challenges

Large-Scale Oyster Restoration ‘Secret Sauce’:

- Common goal setting (SMART goal)
- Common definitions of success
- Common planning
- Reef-level implementation by individual organizations
- Common progress tracking
- Communication around all facets of oysters by all partners

Partnerships are key:

- Only way to achieve restoration at this scale
- Maximizes strengths & contributions (financial, technical, policy, etc)
- Allows for durability through the rough patches



A large, stylized, blue letter 'A' is centered on a dark blue background. The letter has a thick, blocky font with a slight shadow effect. The background is divided into horizontal bands of color: a dark blue band at the top, a medium blue band in the middle, and a light green band at the bottom.

Adapt

How does all of this impact our work?



Based on what we learned, we plan to ...

Develop the Next Gen oyster outcome.

We want to:

- Create a SMART goal
- Continue momentum and success of the ‘secret sauce’
- Continue large-scale restoration
- Increase diversity & equity
- Increase integration across habitat types/ other Bay Agreement outcomes/ ecosystems/ human communities.

In preparation, we:

- Have done visioning around what we want
- Have developed a logic model
- Are honing in on a draft goal for 2026- 2035



Photo:
USACE



Equitable and inclusive restoration

- Reefs ideally serve many communities, through water filtration and provision of fish habitat.
- Partner organizations have been working with underserved communities on strategies that include oysters as well as other elements.
- Working on a Next Gen oyster goal that will increase opportunities to engage and benefit underserved communities.



Photo: CBF



Help

*How can the Management Board
lead the Program to adapt?*



Help Needed

- States (MD & VA) manage the oyster resource, making them essential partners in the effort.
- For the past decade, they have:
 - Developed pro-restoration policies in their jurisdictions
 - Provided key planning and technical expertise
 - Provided significant funding for reef construction and seeding
- State funding and pro-restoration policies have unlocked additional federal and private funding.
- We need this level of support to continue to the 2025 goal line. (And beyond?)

MD & VA



WE WANT YOU!



Discussion