

# HABITAT Goal Implementation Team



## Who is the Habitat Goal Implementation Team?

The Habitat Goal Implementation Team (GIT) is led by Jeff Horan of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), currently working on detail as a Strategic Habitat Conservation Liaison with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), and coordinated by Jennifer Greiner of FWS. The Habitat GIT includes representation from federal and state agencies, non-profits, and academic institutions across the watershed and is looking to greatly enhance and emphasize its connection with State natural resource agencies and in particular the State fish and wildlife directors and their staff. The GIT facilitates the implementation of projects to restore and enhance fish and wildlife habitats across the Chesapeake Bay watershed by coordinating the efforts of Chesapeake Bay Program partners and catalyzing actions at the State and local level through involvement with local action teams. Being part of the Habitat GIT is not about attending meetings but about facilitating habitat restoration work.

The GIT oversees workgroups covering four main focus areas including: Wetlands, Stream Health, Fish Passage and Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (SAV). The GIT and its workgroups often work closely with outside partners on science and restoration projects including: the Black Duck, Atlantic Coast, and Eastern Brook Trout and Atlantic Coast Joint Ventures, the North Atlantic and Appalachian Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCCs), regional climate centers and others.

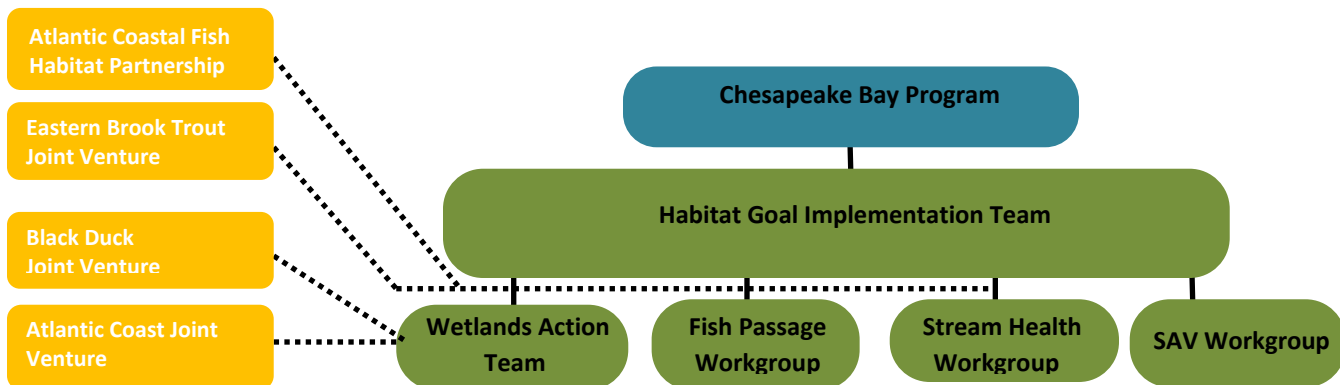
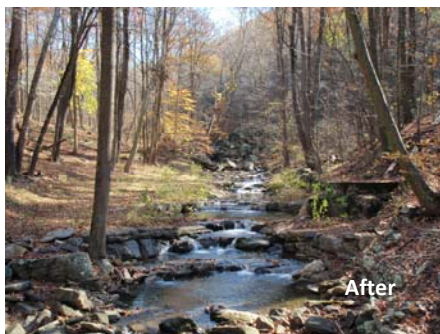
### Team Goal

Restore a **network** of land and water habitats to **support priority species** and afford other public benefits including water quality, recreational uses, and scenic value across the watershed. These habitats include:

- coastal ecosystems
- tidal and non-tidal wetlands
- living shorelines
- submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV)
- islands
- forests and upland habitats
- riverine ecosystems
- freshwater streams

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The **Wetlands Action Team** is restoring 30,000 acres of tidal and non-tidal wetlands, and enhancing 150,000 acres of degraded wetlands by 2025. In cooperation with other GITs and Chesapeake Bay Program partners, the team aims to protect an additional 225,000 acres of wetlands within the Bay watershed. They are working with State natural resource agencies and other partners such as the ACJV and DU to identify and develop tools to prioritize and improve wetland restoration, enhancement, and protection activities, as well as correlate water quality and wildlife habitat accomplishments. Restoration efforts are focused on projects that benefit species requiring high-quality wetland habitats (including American black duck), and incorporating water quality benefits where possible.

The **Fish Passage Workgroup** is restoring 1,000 additional miles of historical fish migratory routes during the period 2011-2025. They work with partners to evaluate projects by documenting the presence or absence of target fish species (river herring, American shad, hickory shad, brook trout, and/or American eel) to unopened stream reaches, or by documenting changes to physical habitat and overall diversity of fish and macro-invertebrate assemblages. The group continues development of the Chesapeake Bay Fish Passage Prioritization Framework to implement high priority projects.

The **Stream Health Workgroup** is the newest workgroup. Habitat GIT and workgroup members are working closely with States and the EBTJV on the Bay Executive Order Goal of

restoring naturally reproducing brook trout populations in headwater streams by improving 58 sub-watersheds. The GIT is evaluating an EBTJV proposal based on research on catchments instead of larger sub-watersheds. The workgroup is also working with natural resource and transportation agencies and their partners on restoration techniques, funding options, and priority targets for natural channel and riparian design.

The **Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (SAV) Workgroup** guides managers on the protection and restoration of SAV, and applying research findings to issues impacting SAV in the Bay. The workgroup supports work towards the attainment of water clarity criteria in areas designated for SAV use by MD, DC, and VA. They continue to perform aerial surveys using data for criteria assessment and management actions.

