



BACKGROUND

Phase III Watershed Implementation Plans

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Established in 2010, the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (Bay TMDL) set allocations for major sources of nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment entering the Chesapeake Bay. This represents the maximum amount of those pollutants that can enter the Bay while still meeting water quality standards.

These pollutant allocations were divided across the seven Chesapeake Bay watershed jurisdictions (Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia) and were set using state-of-the-art modeling tools, extensive monitoring data and peer-reviewed science.

Watershed Implementation Plans (WIPs) outline the detailed, specific steps each watershed jurisdiction will take to reduce their pollutant loads. The Phase I WIPs supported development of the Bay TMDL. The Phase II WIPs further refined the Phase I WIPs based on additional scientific information and outreach to local communities.

The Phase III WIPs include the specific steps each watershed jurisdiction intends to implement between 2019 and 2025 to meet Bay restoration goals. The plans consider such things as ecological restoration and sustainability while allowing for greater transparency and accountability for improved performance.

Local Engagement During the Phase III WIP Process

The seven watershed jurisdictions are expected to carry out WIP development and implementation in partnership with federal agencies, regional and local governments, non-governmental organizations and the private sector, including businesses, farmers and individual citizens. The Phase III WIPs should clearly document how local, regional and federal partners will be engaged in implementation.



Photo by Will Parson/Chesapeake Bay Program



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Elements in a WIP

In June 2018, the Environmental Protection Agency provided expectations for each watershed jurisdiction's Phase III WIP to maintain accountability, encourage continued adaptive management to the new information generated during the Bay TMDL midpoint assessment and lay the groundwork for implementation of the next generation of innovative practices.

The seven watershed jurisdictions agreed to describe in their respective WIPs how they, in collaboration with federal and state partners, will:

- Specify the programmatic and numeric implementation commitments between 2019 and 2025 need to achieve their 2025 goals.
- Commit to comprehensive strategies for engagement of the full array of their local, regional and federal partners in WIP implementation.
- Account for changing conditions due to climate change, Conowingo Dam infill, all population growth and changes in land use—and offset all resultant new or increased pollutant loads.
- Consider adjusting their existing source sector goals to factor in the new information developed through the Bay TMDL midpoint assessment.
- Develop and implement local planning goals at the scales and in the form best suited for directly engaging local and federal partners in WIP implementation.

Keeping WIP Progress on Track

Under the Bay TMDL, the seven watershed jurisdictions and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency agreed to develop short-term goals, called two-year milestones to check in on progress.

The Bay TMDL midpoint assessment was conducted to review progress toward meeting pollutant load reductions identified in the Bay TMDL, Phase I and Phase II WIPs and two-year milestones. The midpoint assessment looked at each of the watershed jurisdiction's final 2016-17 milestones and 2017 progress data to determine if the jurisdictions had the necessary practices in place to achieve 60 percent of their pollutant reductions. The data and feedback gathered during the midpoint assessment helped the jurisdictions to prepare their Phase III WIPs.

View Phase III WIP information at

www.chesapeakebay.net/what/programs/watershed_implementation