

OUTCOME: Continually improve stream health and function throughout the watershed. Improve health and function of 10% of stream miles above 2008 baseline for watershed.

PROGRESS AS OF 2021: The [Stream Health Outcome](#) is uncertain. While the Stream Health Workgroup is currently on track to meet the majority of activities in their most recent Logic and Action Plan, the status of the outcome remains uncertain due to the timing of data collection and analysis. This makes it difficult to assess progress on an annual basis. The first data update since the baseline covers the period between 2012 and 2019; this data is currently being finalized and will hopefully be released in December 2021. The workgroup is implementing a plan to develop additional metric(s) to measure stream health. These metrics are intended to be established over the next five years and will fill gaps in our assessment of stream health.

BACKGROUND: Restoring health to local rivers and streams not only benefits the fish, wildlife and people using them, but is a necessary step toward meeting water quality standards in the Chesapeake Bay. Over 100,000 stream miles drain from the watershed into the Chesapeake Bay. The Stream Health Outcome was initially derived using an existing Chesapeake Bay Program indicator that used an index to measure stream quality—the Chesapeake Basin-wide Index of Biotic Integrity (Chessie BIBI). This index was mentioned specifically as a measure of stream restoration in the [Strategy for Protecting and Restoring the Chesapeake Bay](#) and featured in the 2007-2009 Chesapeake Bay Program Bay Barometer reports. In 2018, the Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin and an ad-hoc team of other experts from the Chesapeake Bay Program established the six years between 2006 and 2011 as the baseline for this outcome. Between 2000 and 2010, more than 14,000 stream sites across the Chesapeake Bay watershed were sampled and rated for biological integrity. The data from this research that fell under the years of 2006 to 2011 were used to inform the baseline.

BASELINE: The Chessie BIBI describes the quality of assessed streams in relation to all the streams throughout the Bay region. During the baseline time period of 2006-2011, the Chessie BIBI ranked 25% of the watershed as having fair, good or excellent stream conditions, while 21% showed poor or very poor conditions. Fifty-four percent of the watershed was not included in the baseline assessment due to insufficient or absent data.

DATA SOURCE: Data to inform the Stream Health Outcome is collected every five years through the Chessie BIBI. The benthic macroinvertebrate and water quality data that informs the Chessie BIBI comes from multiple federal, state, county and volunteer monitoring groups and is based on a common methodology agreed to by the Chesapeake Bay Program's [Nontidal Water Quality Monitoring Program](#).