



**Chesapeake Bay Program**  
*Science. Restoration. Partnership.*

# **The Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership: Charting a Course Beyond 2025**

EPA Mid-Atlantic Region 2024 Summit

May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2024

# Agenda



**1 Introduction to the Chesapeake Bay Program**

**2 Overview of Beyond 2025**

**3 Panel Discussion and Group Q&A**



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# **Introduction to the Chesapeake Bay Program**

# What is the Chesapeake Bay Program?

- Regional partnership guiding the restoration and protection of the largest estuary in the nation
  - ~40 jurisdictional agencies and programs
  - 19 federal agencies
  - ~1,800 local governments, represented through the Local Government Advisory Committee
  - >20 academic institutions, represented through the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee
  - >60 non-governmental organizations, including businesses, non-profits and advocacy groups.



Photo Credit: Will Parson/Chesapeake Bay Program

# The Bay Program is a *partnership*



NY



DC



VA



MD



PA



DE



WV



Chesapeake Bay  
Commission

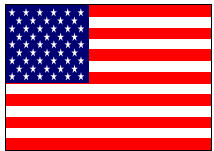


Chesapeake Bay Program



EPA

Federal  
Partners



# The Bay Program is a *partnership*

## Academic Partners

## Non-Governmental Partners



**Chesapeake Bay Program**



# A brief history of the Bay Program



- 1970s – MD Senator Mathias sponsored 5-year study to analyze **rapid loss of aquatic life in the Bay**
  - Identified excess nitrogen, phosphorus as the primary cause
- 1983 – First Bay Agreement (MD, VA, PA, DC, EPA, CBC)
  - “assess and oversee the implementation of coordinated plans to improve and protect the **water quality and living resources** of the Chesapeake Bay estuarine systems”

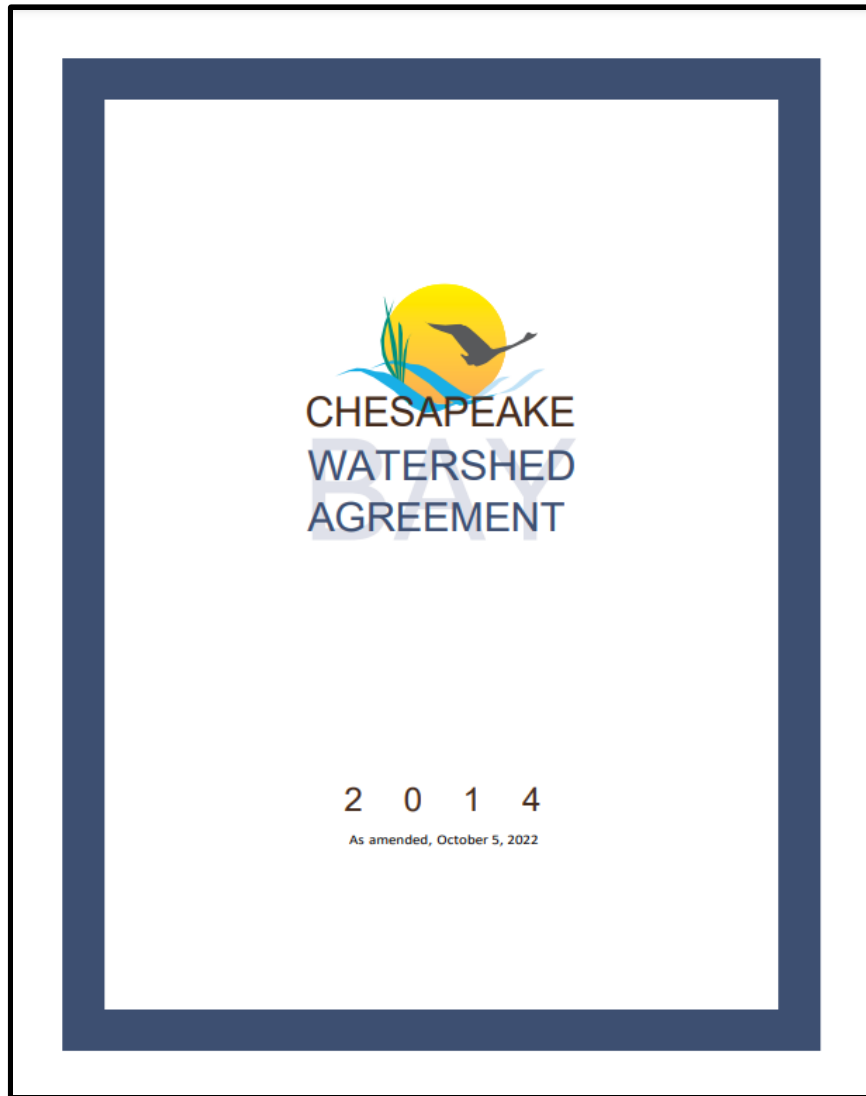
# A brief history of the Bay Program

- 1987 Chesapeake Bay Agreement
  - Set numeric goals for pollution reduction and Bay restoration
- Chesapeake 2000
  - Strategy for restoration through 2010
- Chesapeake Bay Executive Order (2009)
  - EO 13508
  - Called on federal government to renew restoration effort
- Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement (2014)
  - 10 goals, 31 outcomes to restore the Bay, its tributaries and surrounding land





# 2014 Bay Agreement



- 10 interrelated goals and 31 measurable, time-bound outcomes (1/3 have 2025 deadlines)
- Headwaters jurisdictions established as full signatories
- Increases scientific rigor, accountability, systemic learning through adaptive management (decision framework) and Strategy Review System

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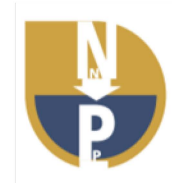
# 10 Goals from the 2014 *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*



1. Sustainable Fisheries



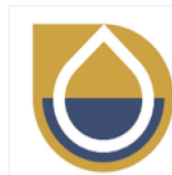
2. Vital Habitats



3. Water Quality



4. Toxic Contaminants



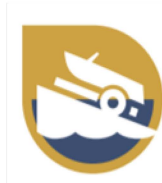
5. Healthy Watersheds



6. Stewardship



7. Land Conservation



8. Public Access



9. Environmental Literacy



10. Climate Resiliency

**2 million acres protected**



CHESAPEAKE  
PROGRESS



**Oysters restored in 10 tributaries**



# There is still work to be done!

Water Quality	Watersheds	Stewardship	Partnerships	CRWG
WIP 2017 WQ Monitoring WIP 2025 Forest Buffer Toxic P&P Toxic Research Tree Canopy	Land Use M&M Land Use Opt.	Environmental Literacy Public Access Sustainable Schools Public Lands Diversity Student Students	Local Leadership	Climate Monitoring Climate Adaptation
Habitat	Fisheries			
Fish Passage Stream Health Brook Trout Black Duck Wetlands SAV	Blue Crab Abundance Blue Crab Management Fish Habitat Forage Fish Oysters			

# Overview of Beyond 2025

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# Our path forward: to 2025, and beyond!

## 2023 Executive Council Charge:

“ Thus, this Executive Council charges the Principals’ Staff Committee (PSC) in recommending a critical path forward that prioritizes and outlines the next steps for meeting the goals and outcomes of the Watershed Agreement leading up to and beyond 2025. The PSC is to report back to the Executive Council at our 2023 annual meeting with recommendations on how to best address and integrate new science and restoration strategies leading up to 2025. At our 2024 annual meeting, the PSC is to prepare recommendations that continue to address new advances in science and restoration, along with a focus on our partnership for going beyond 2025. ”

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# Charting a course to 2025

*Charting a Course to 2025* Report



- Developed by the partnership with leadership from the partnership communications team and NOAA.
- Assesses status of the 31 watershed agreement outcomes; details challenges, lessons learned, and suggestions for progress.
- High-level Recommendations: Fast-track progress on existing action plans, accelerate investments, and integrate the latest science and monitoring.

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# Charting a course beyond 2025

- Preparing recommendations on a path forward to the Executive Council
- Two-step approach:
  - Step 1 – Scoping a plan of action (2023-2024)
    - Formation of Steering Committee
    - Review high-profile, cross-cutting topics
    - Develop & Implement Program Evaluation
  - Step 2 – Implementation (2025+)



# Asking big questions

## Where we are

*What have we, as a partnership, accomplished through our current theory of change, based on program reports and evaluations?*

## Where we want to be

*How do we define a healthy, sustainable, productive Chesapeake Bay and watershed, responding to climate change and community needs?*

## What we do

*What is our approach to the goals and outcomes we have achieved and those we have yet to meet; and to the monitoring and modeling we do to set strategies and measure progress?*

## How we work

*How do we improve our Partnership, Governance, Adaptive Management, Time and Resource Allocation, Public Engagement, Communication to do more, better, faster?*

## A path forward

*What is our plan with the Watershed Agreement post-2025? How can our Partnership structure, governance, and practices best enable the plan's success?*

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# High-profile, cross-cutting topics

- The topics:
  - Clean Water
  - Climate Change
  - Healthy Watersheds
  - People
  - Shallow Water Habitats
- The framework:
  - Vision - What do we want to hand to the next generation?
  - Value – What works, and what could be improved?
  - Vanguard – Transformational ideas for the Bay’s future.
- Independent review of Chesapeake Bay Program – ERG



# Next steps

- Outline and draft products for Principals' Staff Committee
- **Public outreach and engagement**
- Public feedback opportunity
- Presentation at Executive Council meeting





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# **Panel Discussion and Group Q&A**

# Panelists

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## **Charles Herrick**

Adjunct Faculty, New York University  
Chair, CBP Stakeholders' Advisory Committee



## **Larry Sanford**

Professor and Vice President for Education, University of Maryland Center  
for Environmental Science (UMCES)  
Chair, CBP Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC)



## **Jill Whitcomb**

Director, Bureau of Watershed Restoration and Nonpoint Source  
Management, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection  
Pennsylvania Representative, CBP Management Board



# Discussion

- Key takeaways from the planning stage: what are some of the most critical considerations that have been identified for the Bay Program moving forward?
- Which transformational ideas for the Bay's future (the “vanguard” part of the framework) stand out to you?
- What role do you see for residents of the Bay watershed and surrounding region in the next chapter of Bay restoration?



**Questions?**





# Thank you!

Contact [Hughes.Eric@epa.gov](mailto:Hughes.Eric@epa.gov) with any questions about the Bay Program or Beyond 2025!



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