



# News Release

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Chesapeake Bay Program Welcomes Public Input on Draft Management Strategies**

**Annapolis, MD** – Nine months after the signing of the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*, Chesapeake Bay Program partners are seeking public input on a collection of plans for achieving the goals and outcomes of the landmark accord. These twenty-five draft management strategies outline our plans for implementation, monitoring and assessing progress and coordinating partners and stakeholders in our work toward restoring the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Individuals, communities and local governments across Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia and Washington, D.C., will benefit from the achievement of the Agreement's ten goals and thirty-one outcomes and have critical roles in improving the health of local waters, sustaining abundant fish and wildlife populations, restoring critical habitats, protecting farmland and forests and increasing the climate resiliency of the region. Fostering a sense of engagement and connection between people and the environment by connecting with diverse communities, increasing public access and establishing strong environmental education programs is also vital to our collective success.

“These plans are the detailed outlines of what may be the most extensive collaboration in the nation,” said Molly Ward, Virginia Secretary of Natural Resources and Chair of CBP’s Principals’ Staff Committee. “The management strategies work in concert, reaching across issues and political boundaries within the 64,000 square mile watershed. Each one is connected to every other, just like our lands, river, streams and the Bay. As we move forward, we welcome people’s input so that we can strengthen those bonds, becoming even more focused, intentional and unified in our vision of a healthy Bay ecosystem.”

Our work to restore the Chesapeake Bay will benefit the entire watershed, generating on-the-ground results throughout the region. Goals and outcomes of our work include:

- **Sustaining fish and wildlife and restoring habitats.** Poor water quality, harvest pressure and habitat loss challenge the health of species across the region. Maintaining sustainable fish and shellfish populations and restoring habitats for native and migratory species will support a strong economy and a balanced ecosystem.
- **Improving water quality.** Excess nutrients, sediment and toxic contaminants harm the health of fish and wildlife and limit the amount of seafood people can consume. Reducing the impacts these pollutants have will create a safe environment for animals and people alike.

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- **Fostering engaged communities.** The long-term success of the Chesapeake Bay restoration effort depends on the work of individuals and communities throughout the watershed. Connecting with environmental stewards, reaching out to diverse communities and encouraging future local leaders helps build the network that will keep our work moving forward.
- **Conserving treasured landscapes.** Changes in land use and development can impair water quality, degrade habitats and alter culturally significant landscapes. Conserving lands with ecological, historical and community value is integral to maintaining a healthy ecosystem and vibrant culture.
- **Strengthening our resilience against climate change.** Storms, floods and sea level rise will have big impacts on coastal cities and towns. Monitoring, assessing and adapting to these changing environmental conditions will help our living resources, habitats, public infrastructure and communities withstand the adverse effects of climate change.

Bay Program Director Nick DiPasquale says, “Resiliency in nature comes from diversity. Like the natural ecosystem, our work draws strength from increasing the diversity of our partnerships, increasing local actions for watershed-wide results. When people from distinct communities across the region – from citizens to communities to local governments – join in the overall effort, everyone benefits. Like the Bay watershed, we become more effective and more resilient as a whole. While this scale of collaboration is challenging, it is the key to our success. And that success relies on us hearing from the people who live in the region and responding to their interests.”

In June 2014, representatives from across the region signed the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement, with the vision of fostering an environmentally and economically sustainable watershed with clean water, abundant life, restored habitat, conserved lands and access to the water, a vibrant cultural heritage, and a diversity of engaged citizens and stakeholders. Signatories include the governors of Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia; the mayor of the District of Columbia; the chair of the Chesapeake Bay Commission; and the administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on behalf of the Federal Leadership Committee for the Chesapeake Bay. This agreement marked the first time that the Bay’s headwater states participated as signatories and full partners of the Bay Program.

The Chesapeake Bay Program values stakeholder input: individual citizens, private businesses, watershed groups, civic organizations and local governments are key partners in the attainment of our restoration goals. Bay Program partners welcome comments on these draft strategies between **March 16** and **April 30, 2015**. Interested parties can offer input in two ways:

- Submitting an online comment at [www.chesapeakebay.net/managementstrategies](http://www.chesapeakebay.net/managementstrategies)
- Submitting an email to [agreement@chesapeakebay.net](mailto:agreement@chesapeakebay.net)

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*The Chesapeake Bay Program is a regional partnership that has coordinated and conducted the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay since its creation in 1983. Members of the Chesapeake Executive Council include the governors of Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia; the mayor of the District of Columbia; the chair of the Chesapeake Bay Commission; and the administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on behalf of the federal government. This group is responsible for setting the Chesapeake Bay Program’s policy agenda. To learn more, visit [www.chesapeakebay.net](http://www.chesapeakebay.net).*