



# Chesapeake Bay Program federal agencies announce actions to counter climate change

## Federal commitments a direct response to watershed-wide climate directive signed by Chesapeake Executive Council

**Annapolis, MD**— Federal partners of the regional Chesapeake Bay Program unveiled an initial round of actions today that each plan to take to counter climate change impacts in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. The actions respond to [Directive 21-1 Collective Action for Climate Change](#) (Directive) approved and [signed by the Chesapeake Executive Council](#) in October 2021. The [Chesapeake Executive Council](#) establishes the policy direction for the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay and is made up of the governors of Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia, the mayor of the District of Columbia, the chair of the tri-state, legislative Chesapeake Bay Commission and the administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on behalf of the federal government.

Federal agencies partners of the Chesapeake Bay Program include the EPA, the Department of Interior (National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Geological Survey), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Department of Defense, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Department of Agriculture.

Included among each agency's actions are efforts to reduce flooding in communities, increase habitat resiliency with stream-side vegetation and shorelines protected by natural materials, and strengthen science and research to help target climate adaptation efforts.

The actions also highlight a commitment from each federal department and agency to advance environmental justice and commit to ongoing partnerships with tribes and underserved communities, to help build their climate adaptive capacity.

The actions are focused on the four major goals of the Directive: to address the threats of climate change in all aspects of the partnership's work; prioritize communities, working lands (forests, ranches and farms) and most vulnerable habitats; apply the best scientific, modeling, monitoring and planning capabilities; and connect restoration outcomes with emerging opportunities.

A snapshot of some of the commitments include:

- The **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service** will conduct pilot studies in Cambridge, Maryland and Williamsport, Pennsylvania, as well as in two tribal communities to prioritize natural resources, wildlife habitats and public infrastructure needs in underserved communities at risk due to climate change. These pilot studies are part of the partnership's *Targeted Outreach for Green Infrastructure* project.
- The **EPA** will enhance their understanding through research as to how best management practices respond to the increased intensity, frequency and duration of storms caused by climate change. The agency will also target actions to support local government implementation of climate-adapted practices and build resilience against storms and stormwater using a recently completed [web-based tool](#) designed to estimate future precipitation for every county in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

- The **National Park Service (NPS)** will conduct climate vulnerability assessments of all coastal park sites in the Chesapeake Bay region to generate recommendations for climate resiliency. The NPS has also started a dialogue with members of the [Underground Railroad Network to Freedom](#) about the impacts that sites face from climate change.
- The **U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)** will assess the potential effects of climate and land changes on freshwater streams and fish populations, as well as the vulnerability of coastal areas, to help agencies plan adaptation activities.

The specific commitments for each federal agency can be found on the Chesapeake Bay Program’s website at [https://www.chesapeakebay.net/documents/Climate\\_Directive\\_4.26.22.pdf](https://www.chesapeakebay.net/documents/Climate_Directive_4.26.22.pdf).

### Quotes:

“Climate change is the challenge of our time and our federal family is committed to taking collective action to minimize its adverse effects in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.”

- Adam Ortiz, Chair of the Chesapeake Bay Program Principals’ Staff Committee and Regional Administrator, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Mid-Atlantic Region

"As the federal government's largest and oldest manager of water resources, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has long successfully adapted its policies and operations to face the impacts of climate change and variability. We recognize how critical it is to design and construct infrastructure projects through an integrated and holistic water resources management approach that works with nature, not against it. Our aim, alongside our many key partners, is to maximize the environmental and social benefits, economic sustainability and climate resiliency for the many diverse habitats and communities throughout our treasured Chesapeake Bay watershed."

- Col. Estee Pinchasin, Commander, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District

“Today federal partners in the Chesapeake Bay Program announce our collective commitment towards actions to tackle climate change. These actions are some of the steps in the journey that will protect and restore the Bay for future generations.”

- Michelle Price-Fay, Acting Director, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Chesapeake Bay Program Office

“What USGS and partners learn in the Chesapeake can be applied to other important areas in the Northeast for adapting to a changing climate.”

- Michael Tupper, Northeast Region Director, U.S. Geological Survey

“Climate change is transforming lands and waters that people and wildlife depend upon, with disproportionate impacts on communities that are most vulnerable. Through our *Targeted Outreach for Green Infrastructure* project, we are working with underserved communities that face an elevated threat from climate change to develop shovel-ready projects that both meet their needs and support priority habitat for fish and wildlife in the Chesapeake Bay region.”

- Wendi Weber, Northeast Regional Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service