



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 16, 2014

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Bay Program Partners Invite Watershed Groups, Citizens to Participate in Creating Plans for Restoring Chesapeake Lands and Waters

Chesapeake Bay Region - Today, Chesapeake Bay Program partners opened new [online avenues](#) for individuals, watershed organizations, community groups and other interested parties to become more engaged in the conservation, restoration and protection of their rivers, landscapes and the Bay. Over the next nine months, partners will be crafting the [management strategies](#) for meeting the goals of the recently-signed [Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement](#). Those who sign up to participate can find out about what is being done, what needs to be done and have the opportunity to offer their input in these plans for supporting thriving landscapes and clean waters throughout the region.

“Today marks an important milestone in Bay restoration, as all nine [partners have identified the specific management strategies they will be working on](#) and developing during the next year to protect and restore the Chesapeake Bay, its streams and rivers,” said Joe Gill, Principals Staff Committee Chair and Maryland Department of Natural Resources Secretary. “Moving forward we will be engaging citizens in every step of this process, broad participation that will be critical to developing and applying these plans.”

During the public input period before the Agreement was finalized, citizens and stakeholders across the region asked for more openness and clarity on how and when to participate in the Bay Program’s work. Now, through new online resources, citizens and groups can readily see how plans to meet the Agreement’s goals and outcomes are progressing. They can also choose to become more engaged in the actual creation of the Agreement’s management strategies, the supporting plans being developed over the next nine months. Involvement can range from simply staying informed about activities and events to joining the partners’ discussions on science, policies and issues related to getting the restoration, protection and conservation work done.

“The new Watershed Agreement brings an unprecedented level of transparency and accountability to the Bay restoration effort,” said Nick DiPasquale, Director of the Chesapeake Bay Program. “Now citizens have easier access to information about partners’ activities, the ability to track our progress toward meeting the Agreement’s goals and outcomes, and even the opportunity to influence the future.”

Three months ago, the [Chesapeake Executive Council](#)—a body that includes the governors of the six Bay watershed states, the Mayor of the District of Columbia and the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, representing the federal government—signed the new Agreement, thereby committing Chesapeake Bay Program partners to far-reaching goals for restoring the lands and waters that make up the 64,000 square-mile Chesapeake Bay watershed.

For more information about the Chesapeake Bay Program and the Watershed Agreement, visit www.chesapeakebay.net and www.chesapeakebay.net/watershedagreement.

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The Chesapeake Bay Program is a regional partnership that has coordinated and conducted the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay since 1983. Partners include the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, representing the federal government; the states of Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia; the District of Columbia; the Chesapeake Bay Commission; and advisory groups of citizens, scientists and government officials. To learn more, visit www.chesapeakebay.net.