

Protected Lands Outcome -- Proposed Updated Target

Background:

In the August 2021 Quarterly Progress Review presentation to the Management Board, the Protected Lands Workgroup reported that they expect that the current Outcome target -- by 2025, protecting an additional 2M acres above the 2010 baseline -- may be reached ahead of schedule. This was based on 2018 data, and the projection is contingent on updated data, which is expected by the end of 2021. Given the likelihood of achieving the current Outcome, and given that the land conservation community has embraced working toward a larger goal of protecting 30% of the watershed by 2030, the Workgroup has recommended that the Management Board endorse this extended goal for the Chesapeake Bay Program partnership. In response, the Management Board is considering updating the Outcome target to specify protecting 30% of valuable lands in the watershed by 2030. The Workgroup was asked to provide recommended language, conditions, and timeline for potentially updating the target.

Outcome Language:

- **Proposed new Outcome language** (proposed language to add to the current Outcome is in **bold**):

*By 2025, protect an additional two million acres of lands throughout the watershed – currently identified as high conservation priorities at the federal, state or local level – including 225,000 acres of wetlands and 695,000 acres of forest land of highest value for maintaining water quality. **Further contribute to supporting critical biodiversity, ecosystem health, community resiliency, working lands and public access by stretching to protect a total of 12 million acres by 2030 (an additional 2.4M acres above the 2025 target), through multi-sector collaboration.***

Conditions and Timing:

- The Management Board should consider the following factors:
 - 2030 is not that far away and there's a lot of work to do. The suggested language can and should be finalized as soon as possible with what we know now, so that planning and resource allocation can shift. However, it is smart to wait until we have the updated data before publicly releasing the revised Outcome. The updated data will be available by the end of 2021.
 - We need to engage the Workgroup members / Chesapeake Conservation Partnership, and in particular the jurisdictions, in developing a strategy to ensure implementation to achieve the new target for the watershed. This will be an action in the new 2-year Logic & Action Plan (in 2022).
 - Recognize that protecting 30% of the watershed will require conserving a combination of public and private lands.
 - Signatories should develop jurisdiction-specific plans for increasing programs, incentives, funding, partnerships, capacity, and landowner support to accommodate achieving the watershed target. This should include review of mapping resources and an assessment of available land to determine the potential to reach the target.
 - Planning should be done in concert with the Outcome Attainability effort to assess options to increase implementation toward other Outcomes. There are potential mutual benefits to be gained through coordination, contributing to protected lands targets as well as others such as wetlands, riparian forest buffers, water quality, and brook trout and other habitat.
- Timeline:
 - Fall 2021 -- CBP Leadership finalizes the Outcome language and provides guidance to signatories to contribute to planning and implementation toward the updated target.
 - End of 2021 -- Updated indicator data is available. Engage partners in considering actions needed to achieve the new target.
 - First quarter of 2022 -- Review updated data/ progress, prepare any needed supporting materials, announce the updated Outcome.
 - 2022 -- As part of the 2022-23 Logic & Action Plan, the partners will identify strategies and resources needed to extend to reach the new target. Planning will occur as expediently as possible, simultaneous with continued implementation toward the existing target.