

Chesapeake Bay Program | Indicator Analysis and Methods Document

Public Access | Updated July 1,2022

Indicator Title: [Public Access Sites](#)

Relevant Outcome(s): [Public Access Site Development Outcome](#)

Relevant Goal(s): [Public Access](#)

Location within Framework (i.e., Influencing Factor, Output or Performance): [Performance](#)

A. Data Set and Source

(1) Describe the data set. What parameters are measured? What parameters are obtained by calculation? For what purpose(s) are the data used?

[Number of public access sites in each state in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.](#)

(2) List the source(s) of the data set, the custodian of the source data, and the relevant contact at the Chesapeake Bay Program.

First Name	Last Name	Agency/Organization	Email Address:
Scott	Bollinger	PA Fish and Boat Commission	scbollinge@pa.gov
Vacant-Currently no replacement		US Fish & Wildlife Service - Rapp River National Wildlife Refuge	
Joanne	Goodwin	DC District Department of the Environment	Joanne.goodwin@dc.gov
Andy	Fitch	U S Geological Survey – Chesapeake Bay Office	afitch@chesapeakebay.net
Lisa	Gutierrez	MD Department of Natural Resources	lisa.gutierrez@maryland.gov
Mark	Hohengasser	NY State Parks	Mark.Hohengasser@oprhp.state.ny.us
Jackie	Kramer	National Park Service- John Smith Chesapeake	Jackie_kramer@nps.gov

		National Historic Trail	
Michael	Krumrine	DE Division of Parks and Recreation	Michael.Krumrine@state.de.us
Marcia	Pradines	US Fish and Wildlife Service – Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge	Marcia_pradines@fws.gov
Kristal	McKelvey	VA Department of Conservation and Recreation	kristal.mckelvey@dcr.virginia.gov
Kelly	McClary	VA Department of Conservation & Recreation	Kelly.Mcclary@dcr.virginia.gov
Kelly	Rossiter	PA DCNR - Bureau of Recreation and Conservation	krossiter@pa.gov
Mark	Scott	WV Division of Natural Resources	Mark.t.scott@wv.gov
Charlie	Stek	Citizens Advisory Committee	Charliestek@gmail.com
Tammy	Stidham	National Park Service - National Capital Region	tammy_stidham@nps.gov
John	Kirk	VA Department of Game and Inland Fisheries	John.Kirk@dwr.virginia.gov
Jake	Whalen	WV Division of Natural Resources	Jake.m.whalen@wv.gov
Erik	Zlokovitz	MD Department of Natural Resources-Fishing and Boating Services	Eric.zlokovitz@maryland.gov

- Chesapeake Bay Program Contact (name, email address, phone number): Jackie Kramer, Jackie_Kramer@nps.gov, 717-252-0229 ext. 4 or 410-271-8731 (cell)

(3) Please provide a link to the location of the data set. Are metadata, data-dictionaries and embedded definitions included?

- Data/metadata is available via the “Download Data” link provided at: <https://www.chesapeakeprogress.com/engaged-communities/public-access-site-development>
- Definitions, methods, and supporting materials are documented in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Public Access Plan. This plan is available at: <https://www.nps.gov/chba/learn/news/public-access.htm>.

More consistently-updated data can be found by accessing the following state-hosted sites:

Pennsylvania: <https://www.fishandboat.com/Pages/default.aspx>

Virginia: <https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/vopmapper>

Maryland: <https://dnr.maryland.gov/boating/pages/water-access/boatramps.aspx>

New York: <https://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/7832.html>

West Virginia: https://www.wvdnr.gov/fishing/public_access.asp?county=all&type=all

Washington, DC: <https://dpr.dc.gov/page/parks-and-recreation-facilities>

Delaware: <https://dnrec.alpha.delaware.gov/fish-wildlife/fishing/access/>

B. Temporal Considerations

(4) Data collection date(s): January 2021– December 2021

(5) Planned update frequency (e.g., annual, biannual, etc.):

- Source Data: annual
- Indicator: annual

(6) Date (month and year) next data set is expected to be available for reporting:
February 2022

C. Spatial Considerations

(7) What is the ideal level of spatial aggregation (e.g., watershed-wide, river basin, state, county, hydrologic unit code)? Watershed-wide

(8) Is there geographic (GIS) data associated with this data set? If so, indicate its format (e.g., point, line polygon). Data is in point format.

(9) Are there geographic areas that are missing data? If so, list the areas.
No, however states that did not have any new sites constructed do not appear in the spreadsheet.

- (10) Please submit any appropriate examples of how this information has been mapped or otherwise portrayed geographically in the past.

The data is mapped and can be seen on the Bay Program web site at: (data is current through 2019) <https://www.chesapeakeprogress.com/engaged-communities/public-access-site-development>

D. Communicating the Data

- (11) What is the target or threshold measured by this indicator? How was it established?

The Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement established a watershed-wide public access goal to “By 2025, add 300 new public access sites, with a strong emphasis on providing opportunities for boating, swimming and fishing, where feasible.”

- (12) What is the current status in relation to the target established in the outcome?

Why? Would you define our outlook¹ toward achieving the outcome as on course, off course, uncertain, or completed? Upon what basis are you forecasting the outlook?

In 2021, 31 new public access sites were opened to the public, marking a total of 237 sites opened since the baseline year in 2010. These cumulative sites represent 79% completion of the goal. The outlook for achieving the goal is on course. To meet the target of 300 new access sites by 2025, 20 new sites had to be added each year. Because we had 36 new sites added in 2013, we have been ahead of the required new sites needed each year using the 20 new sites average. With 237 new sites, theoretically only 16 new sites are now needed each year to meet the goal. However, the rate of new access sites has varied considerably. Due to the opportunistic nature of public access development, lack of funding for new access, and an emphasis on maintenance, we cannot rely on past trends to indicate future trajectory.

- (13) Has a new goal, target, threshold or expected outcome been established since the last reporting period? Why?

No.

- (14) Has the methodology of data collection or analysis changed since the last reporting period? How? Why? No.

- (15) What is the long-term data trend (since the start of data collection)?

In order to meet the 300-site goal, an average of 20 new public access sites per year in the watershed are needed. The trend since we began the annual data count in 2011 has been an average of 21.5 sites per year.

- (16) What change(s) does the most recent data show compared to the last reporting period? To what do you attribute the change? Would you characterize that change in the recent progress² as an increase, decrease, no change, or completed for this outcome?

In 2021, states focused on paddle craft launches which tend to be more affordable to construct compared to motorized launches. All states have expressed reduced budgets for building new access sites so finding a less expensive alternative for the growing interest in paddle craft seems to be emerging as a trend. The addition of 31 new access sites in 2021 is an increase in recent progress for this outcome.

- (17) What is the key story told by this indicator?

This indicator tells us the number of existing public access sites to the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, and documents progress towards the creation of new sites. Physical access to open space and waterways can improve public health and quality of life. Increasing public access for our citizens fosters connections with our local resources and supports more engagement in stewardship and conservation efforts.

E. Adaptive Management

- (18) What factors influence progress toward the goal, target, threshold or expected outcome?

Development of public access is often opportunistic when a site manager, a good site, and funding all come together. Funding is generally tied into agency budgets at the federal, state, or local level and this can vary greatly from one year to the next. One of the key issues in meeting the access goal is consistent funding. Thus, there will likely be major variations between one year and the next in the number of new public access sites opened. To reach the goal the hope is that an average of 20 new sites will be opened each year. COVID-19 may have impacted development for part of 2021. Some states and local governments are focusing on maintenance of and upgrades to existing sites. COVID-19, age of infra-structure, climate change and budgets were all cited as the basis for this focus.

- (19) What are the current gaps in existing management efforts?

None

- (20) What are the current overlaps in existing management efforts?

None

- (21) According to the management strategy written for the outcome associated with this indicator, how will we (a) assess our performance in making progress toward the goal, target, threshold or expected outcome, and (b) ensure the adaptive management of our work?

Our performance is assessed each year when we inventory all new public access sites opened in the watershed. We will continue to gauge progress over the average

of sites added over several consecutive years, in relation to the anticipated average of 20 new sites annually. New access is a function of the ability of our partners, at both the governmental and non-governmental level, to be able to develop new access sites. We can adapt our strategy only to the extent that we look for and work with our partners in developing new sites as opportunities arise.

F. Analysis and Interpretation

Please provide appropriate references and location(s) of documentation if hard to find.

- (22) What method is used to transform raw data into the information presented in this indicator? Please cite methods and/or modeling programs.

None - raw number of sites developed is used as the indicator.

- (23) Is the method used to transform raw data into the information presented in this indicator accepted as scientifically sound? If not, what are its limitations?

N/A

- (24) How well does the indicator represent the environmental condition being assessed? **Accurate representation - raw number of sites.**

- (25) Are there established reference points, thresholds, ranges or values for this indicator that unambiguously reflect the desired state of the environment? **N/A**

- (26) How far can the data be extrapolated? Have appropriate statistical methods been used to generalize or portray data beyond the time or spatial locations where measurements were made (e.g., statistical survey inference, no generalization is possible)?

N/A

G. Quality

Please provide appropriate references and location(s) of documentation if hard to find.

- (27) Were the data collected and processed according to a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency-approved Quality Assurance Project Plan? If so, please provide a link to the QAPP and indicate when the plan was last reviewed and approved. **If not, please complete questions 28-30.**

No.

- (28) *If applicable:* Are the sampling, analytical and data processing procedures accepted as scientifically and technically valid?

N/A

(29) *If applicable:* What documentation describes the sampling and analytical procedures used?

All definitions associated with this Public Access tracking effort and details on the geographic areas included are provided in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Public Access Plan: <https://www.nps.gov/chba/learn/news/public-access.htm>.

(30) *If applicable:* To what extent are procedures for quality assurance and quality control of the data documented and accessible?

N/A

(31) Are descriptions of the study design clear, complete and sufficient to enable the study to be reproduced?

Yes.

(32) Were the sampling, analytical and data processing procedures performed consistently throughout the data record?

- Data collection methods changed in 2010/2011 with the establishment of the new Public Access Indicator goal to “increase public access to the Bay and its tributaries by adding 300 new public access sites by 2025.”
- Based on the new goal, the geographic area covered has been greatly expanded to include stream order 5 and larger streams in the entire Chesapeake Bay watershed.
- Previous tracking efforts in support of the Chesapeake 2000 commitment were coordinated through the Chesapeake Bay Program each year through a simple data-call process. Representatives from Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia (the states included in the process at that time) would annually report the number of public access sites that were developed in their jurisdictions to the Chesapeake Bay Program. It should be noted that the area inventoried included only the tidal portion of the Bay and its Tributaries in VA and MD and just the main stem of the Susquehanna in PA. The cumulative sum of baseline data and annual updates from state partners were reported as the number of public access sites within the covered area.
- The Chesapeake Bay Program’s Public Access Workgroup, a partnership of all Chesapeake Bay states, the District of Columbia, federal agencies, and relevant nonprofit partners with National Park Service leadership, will continue to coordinate public access tracking updates. In the new tracking process, designated state agency staff will use either a spread sheet or a simple, on-line system to input the geographic locations of newly developed access sites, based on the established definitions of “new” and “public access.” Public access program staff will also use this process, to provide a few fields of information (name, water body, access type, ownership, etc.) on each new site. Additional information, such as project cost, could also be collected if deemed necessary.

- This updated tracking process will be an improvement over past efforts, because it gathers the location of new sites via the GPS coordinates on the spreadsheet or directly on an interactive map and provides a significantly wider range of information. As new sites are developed, they will be tracked to meet the 2014 Agreement goal while allowing the public to follow the progress. New tracking methods have also expanded the study area to include public access sites in Delaware, New York, and West Virginia as well as greatly expanded the area covered in MD, PA and VA. The collaborative process used to establish the new tracking methods also clarified tracking definitions and further defined the study area.
- More data was requested from states in 2018 as the Public Access Workgroup began to incorporate quality of sites into measures as a result of the SRS adaptive management process. This is reflected in the current workplan and management strategy.
- 2021 didn't add new criteria and used the 2019 form so the collection method was the same.

(33) If data sets from two or more sources have been merged, are the sampling designs, methods and results comparable? If not, what are the limitations?

N/A

(34) Are levels of uncertainty available for the indicator and/or the underlying data set? If so, do the uncertainty and variability impact the conclusions drawn from the data or the utility of the indicator?

N/A

(35) For chemical data reporting: How are data below the MDL reported (i.e., reported as 0, censored, or as < MDL)? If parameter substitutions are made (e.g., using orthophosphate instead of total phosphorus), how are data normalized? How does this impact the indicator?

N/A

(36) Are there noteworthy limitations or gaps in the data record?

No.

H. Additional Information (*Optional*)

(37) Please provide any further information you believe is necessary to aid in communication and prevent any potential misrepresentation of this indicator. N/A

¹*Outlook:* Outlook is the forecasted trajectory for whether the Chesapeake Bay Program is on course to achieving the outcome. An outcome's outlook may be on course, off course, uncertain, or completed. This information will be incorporated into the outcome's progress page. An outcome's course outlook is reviewed and updated during

the outcome's Strategy Review System (SRS) Quarterly Progress Meeting in addition to when recent progress is assessed.

²*Recent Progress:* Recent Progress describes the change in the indicator based on the most recent data collected since the last reporting period. The recent progress icon will reflect this change as an increase, decrease, no change, or completed, depending upon this progress. This information will be discussed at the outcome's Strategy Review System (SRS) Quarterly Progress Meeting.