



Chesapeake Bay Program
Science. Restoration. Partnership.

Overview: The new *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*

The Chesapeake Bay Program has accomplished a great deal since the signing of the first *Chesapeake Bay Agreement* in 1983, but we still have much left to do.

In 2011, the CBP partners recognized the need to create a new, up-to-date agreement – one that would reflect improvements in our scientific knowledge, changes in the regulatory landscape and evolutions that have taken place within the partnership and the restoration effort overall. In particular, with the need to revisit outdated commitments of *Chesapeake 2000* (CBP’s last voluntary agreement) and the issuance of both the federal Chesapeake Executive Order (which now drives federal agency efforts) and the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL), the Bay Program’s partners realized a new agreement to better align the goals of federal, jurisdictional and non-governmental partners would be critical to our work together. Further, this *Watershed Agreement* recognizes the effort that must take place watershed-wide, challenging partners to improve the conditions and health of the many diverse habitats and water bodies within the entire 64,000 square mile region.

The CBP partners envision that the new *Watershed Agreement*, developed collaboratively over the last eighteen months and including two public comment periods, will:

- Lay out clear goals and measurable outcomes for sustainable fisheries, vital habitats, water quality, toxic contaminants, healthy watersheds, stewardship, land conservation, public access, environmental literacy, and resiliency of the Bay ecosystem;
- Give focus to our collective effort by bringing together federal, jurisdictional and non-governmental goals;
- Present a shared, high-level vision for our work;
- Create a set of principles from which the Chesapeake Bay Program will operate;
- Lay out timing, considerations and guidelines for creation and public review of specific management strategies under each goal that will enable us to meet the associated outcomes;
- Allow for flexibility to adapt and adjust our efforts with ever-evolving conditions and circumstances;
- Outline how the partnership will be accountable for its progress as we move ahead; and finally,
- Engage the headwater states of Delaware, New York and West Virginia as full members in the Chesapeake Bay Program partnership.

Like other agreements before it, the new voluntary *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* is the foundation for our collective restoration, conservation, protection and stewardship efforts across the Chesapeake Bay region. From the moment it is signed by the Chesapeake Executive Council, it will be the Chesapeake Bay Program partners’ guide for our work now and into the future.