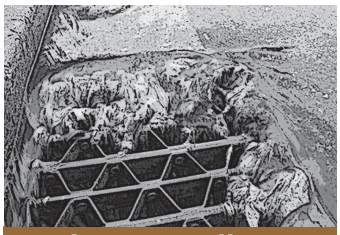
2025 Chesapeake Bay goals
Where do they really stand?

The Chesapeake Bay restoration is about more than the Bay itself. The 2014 *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* spells out 31 desired outcomes in support of 10 broad goals. They cover a wide range of issues that support a healthy regional ecosystem, from clean water and wildlife habitat to an increasingly diverse public participation in the restoration effort.

According to the state-federal Chesapeake Bay Program, which leads the restoration effort, several outcomes with a 2025 deadline have either been met or appear to be on track. Seven have been deemed unlikely to be achieved and at least five more are challenged with minimal or negative progress or a lack of data. The status of others is unclear because they lack number-based targets or resources to check their status.

This status summary of key outcomes is produced by the *Chesapeake Bay Journal*. The Bay Program's accounting of progress and challenges can be found at chesapeakeprogress.com.

UNLIKELY



Nutrients & sediment

GOAL: Have all practices and controls in place to reach nutrient and sediment reduction targets to meet water quality standards for the Bay

CHALLENGES: Costs of pollution practices, limited funding, competing priorities, unwilling landowners, additional challenges from climate change, filling of Conowingo Dam reservoir

Forest buffers

GOAL: Seventy percent of stream and river shorelines are forested

CHALLENGES: Unwilling landowners, lack of technical assistance, inconsistent government buffer programs that are difficult to use, competing water quality practices, low incentives

Urban tree canopy

GOAL: Expand by 2,400 acres

CHALLENGES: Conflicting priorities; inadequate or patchy funding or outreach; losses to development, storms and pests

Diversity & inclusion

GOAL: Increase participation by people of color in the Bay Program to 25% and increase their presence in leadership positions to 15%

CHALLENGES: Low survey response rate (38% in 2019) undermines data reliability, lack of effective outreach and communication, lack of opportunities to gain training and employment in relevant occupations, need for systemic change slows progress

Wetlands

GOAL: Create or re-establish 85,000 acres of tidal and nontidal wetlands and enhance 150,000 acres of degraded wetlands

CHALLENGES: Conflicting priorities, unwilling landowners, limited funding, lack of training, reporting gaps

Brook trout

GOAL: Increase in-stream habitat occupied by wild brook trout by 8%

CHALLENGES: Unwilling landowners, limited funding, restoration priorities are often outside Bay watershed, reporting gaps, habitat loss

Black duck

GOAL: Restore, enhance and preserve enough wetlands to support 100,000 overwintering black ducks

CHALLENGES: Reporting and information gaps, continued habitat loss and degradation, shoreline disturbance, unwilling landowners

Progress varies

While seven Bay restoration outcomes have been deemed unlikely to be met, the status of others vary. A few have been achieved, and some appear to be on track for success by 2025. Others face challenges yet to be resolved. Here's a look at some of them.

CHALLENGED

Far below goal, with minimal or negative progress, or lacking data

- **Increase underwater grasses**
- **Improve stream health**
- **Keep existing healthy watersheds**
- **Suggest ways to limit sprawl**
- **Engage more local leaders**
- **Increase fish passage**

ON TRACK

Progress rate and funding levels seem adequate

- **Restore oysters in 10 rivers**
- **Maintain a sustainable blue crab population**
- **Protect more priority lands**
- **Increase public water access**
- **Track losses of farmland, forest and wetlands**

ACHIEVED

Currently at target levels

- **Manage a stable blue crab fishery**

Photos by Dave Harp with the exception of urban tree canopy by Donna Morelli; diversity by Will Parson/Chesapeake Bay Program; brook trout by U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service; and black duck by Gene Nieminen/USFWS).