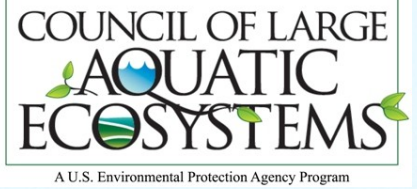


Chesapeake Bay Program

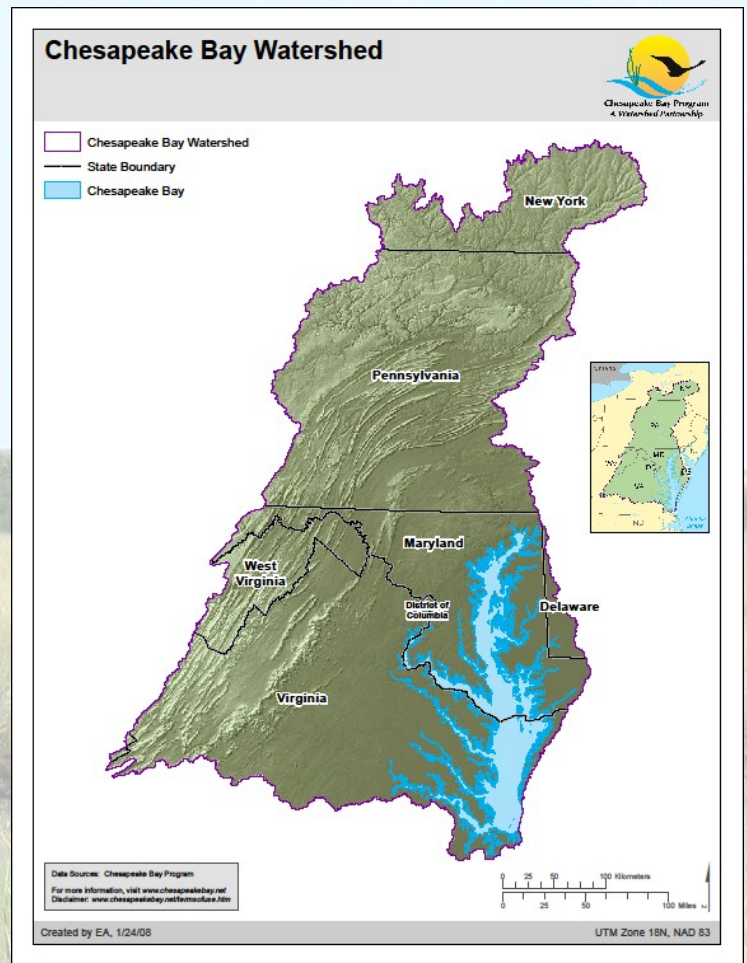
Large Aquatic Ecosystem (LAE)



The **Chesapeake Bay Program** (CBP) is a unique regional partnership that has led and directed the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay since 1983. Program partners include an array of Federal, State (Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Delaware, New York, and West Virginia), and local governments, including the District of Columbia, the Chesapeake Bay Commission and an array of public and private entities. The program is also informed by three independent advisory committees (local government, scientific and technical, and citizen). The Chesapeake Executive Council, comprised of the Governors, Administrator of EPA, Mayor of DC and others, leads the Bay Program.

The Bay Program has six goal areas: restoring water quality, restoring habitat, managing fisheries, protecting watersheds, fostering stewardship, and enhancing partnerships, leadership, and management. Bay Program partners have signed several agreements to reduce pollution and restore the Bay's living resources.

The Bay Program's annual health and restoration report, *Bay Barometer*, details the Bay's progress over the past 25 years. The report tracks 13 indicators of water quality, habitats, and fisheries and 20 indicators of restoration progress.



Challenges

Four centuries of population growth, resource depletion, increasing pollution levels and changes to the landscape make the restoration of the 64,000-square-mile Chesapeake Bay watershed ecosystem enormously complex. The land mass of the Bay watershed—home to nearly 17 million people—is 16 times the size of the Bay, a ratio higher than any other comparable watershed in the world. In addition, restoration and protection efforts must now adapt for climate change, which is projected to raise sea levels, warm the water and air, and affect the frequency and intensity of storms. A July 2008 report from the EPA Office of Inspector General stated, “EPA does not have the resources, tools, or authorities” to fully address the many challenges of restoring the Bay. Specifically, the report identified several key challenges: uncontrolled land development, limited implementation of agricultural conservation practices, limited control over air emissions, and consistent and sustained funding sources to meet all the Bay's needs.

Priorities

- Implement the commitments established through the Executive Order 13508 Strategy for Protecting and Restoring the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.
- Reduce nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment pollution from agriculture, wastewater treatment plants, urban and suburban lands, and air deposition to meet pollution limits established by the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load.
- Enhance coordination and integration of restoration activities and accountability through *ChesapeakeStat*, a website that presents performance information geographically and supports adaptive management of the CBP.



Large Aquatic Ecosystems

Program Offices



The Chesapeake Bay Program was designated a member of the US Environmental Protection Agency's Large Aquatic Ecosystem Council (LAE) in 2008. The Chesapeake Bay Program joins nine other geographic-based efforts that focus on protecting and restoring the health of critical aquatic ecosystems. The LAE Council seeks to merge geographic-based efforts with national water programs to advance the health of the nation's large aquatic ecosystems and strengthen national water programs.

Accomplishments

The CBP has fostered unparalleled cooperation among stakeholders in the watershed. Cities, states, counties, and agencies have agreed to work together on Bay restoration and preservation issues, including:

- Adopting nutrient and sediment allocations for all parts of the watershed through the Chesapeake Bay TMDL and detailing tributary-specific pollution reduction and habitat restoration plans.
- Coordinating an NPDES permitting approach for the 483 significant wastewater treatment facilities in the bay watershed.
- Planting nearly 6,000 miles of streamside forests, restoring more than 12,500 acres of tidal and non-tidal wetland, and permanently preserving almost 7 million acres of parks, wildlife refuges and private lands.
- Removing blockages to over 2,000 miles of historic spawning grounds for shad and other migratory fish.

Despite these efforts, the overall state of the Chesapeake Bay remains severely degraded as program partners contend with the impacts of dramatic population growth and development and other major influences on water quality, habitats, fish and shellfish.

Future Direction

The Chesapeake Bay Program continues to build on its past success, adapt to developing circumstances, and implement new strategies to accelerate restoration of the Chesapeake Watershed and Bay, including:

- Meet the mandates of President Obama's Executive Order to accelerate protection and restoration through a new integrated federal-state strategy.
- Use the Chesapeake Bay TMDL to create a rigorous accountability framework for state and local water pollution control programs.
- Meet milestones set every two years for implementing pollution control measures needed to meet water quality goals, with all measures in place no later than 2025.
- Use *ChesapeakeStat*, a website that presents performance information geographically and supports adaptive management of the CBP, to better coordinate restoration efforts and increase accountability to the public.
- Better engage local governments and watershed organizations.

The Chesapeake Bay Program Facts

Watershed Size: 64,000 square miles

Waterbody Size: Surface area of the Bay and tributaries is 125 billion sq. ft. (4,480 sq. miles)

Population: 16.6 million people and growing ~170,000 more people each year

EPA Region: 3

Acting Director: James Edward

LAE Program Web Sites

Chesapeake Bay Program

www.chesapeakebay.net

Columbia River Basin

www.epa.gov/region10/columbia

Great Lakes

www.epa.gov/glnpo

Gulf of Mexico Program

www.epa.gov/gmpo

Lake Champlain Basin Program

www.lcbp.org

Long Island Sound Study

www.longislandsoundstudy.net

Pacific Islands Office

www.epa.gov/region09/islands

Puget Sound - Georgia Basin

www.epa.gov/pugetsound/index.html

San Francisco Bay Delta Estuary

www.epa.gov/region9/water/watershed/sfbay-delta/index.html

South Florida Geographic Initiative

www.epa.gov/region4/water/southflorida/index.html

EPA Office of Wetlands, Oceans,
and Watersheds

[www.water.epa.gov/aboutow/owow/
programs/large_aquatic.cfm](http://www.water.epa.gov/aboutow/owow/programs/large_aquatic.cfm)

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