

**Executive Order 13508**  
**Strategy for**  
**Protecting and Restoring**  
**the Chesapeake Bay Watershed**

# Highlights

## The vision for the Chesapeake is a watershed with:

Clean water that is swimmable and fishable in streams, rivers and the Bay;

Sustainable, healthy populations of blue crabs, oysters, fish and other wildlife;

A broad network of land and water habitats that support life and are resilient to the impacts of development and climate change;

Abundant forests and thriving farms that benefit both the economy and environment;

Extensive areas of conserved lands that protect nature and the region's heritage;

Ample access to provide for public enjoyment; and

Cities, towns and neighborhoods where citizens are stewards of nature.

## Chesapeake Bay Watershed

The Chesapeake Bay is our nation's largest estuary. Its vast watershed network of streams, creeks, and rivers covers 64,000 square miles. Unfortunately, the Chesapeake Bay and many of its tributaries remain in poor health.

On May 12, 2009, President Obama issued an Executive Order to protect and restore the health, heritage, natural resources, and social and economic value of the Chesapeake Bay watershed. As a result of the Executive Order, a strategy was developed to focus effort to restore and protect the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.

The Executive Order acknowledges that although the federal government should assume a strong leadership role in the restoration of the Bay, success depends on a collaborative effort involving state and local governments, businesses, non-governmental organizations, and the region's residents. To develop the strategy, federal agencies consulted with the six Bay watershed states, the District of Columbia, and the Chesapeake Bay Commission; engaged key stakeholders and held public meetings.

Federal agencies have focused on achieving the most essential priorities for a healthy Chesapeake ecosystem:

- Restore Clean Water
- Recover Habitat
- Sustain Fish and Wildlife
- Conserve Land and Increase Public Access

## Restore Clean Water

**Goal: Reduce nutrients, sediment and other pollutants to meet Bay water quality goals for dissolved oxygen, clarity and chlorophyll-a and toxic contaminants.**

### OUTCOMES

**Water Quality:** Meet water quality standards in the Bay and tidal tributaries by implementing 100 percent of pollution reduction actions for nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment no later than 2025.

**Stream Restoration:** Improve the health of streams so that 70 percent of sampled streams throughout the Chesapeake watershed rate fair, good, or excellent, as measured by the Index of Biotic Integrity, by 2025.

**Agriculture Conservation:** Work with producers to apply new conservation practices on 4 million acres on agricultural working lands in high priority watersheds by 2025 to improve water quality.

## Recover Habitat

**Goal: Restore a network of land and water habitats to support priority species and to afford other public benefits, including water quality, recreational uses and scenic value across the watershed.**

### OUTCOMES

**Wetlands:** Restore 30,000 acres of wetlands and enhance the function of an additional 150,000 acres of degraded wetlands.

**Forest Buffers:** Restore riparian forest buffers to 63 percent or 181,400 miles, of the total riparian miles (streambank and shoreline) by 2025.

**Fish Passage:** Restore historical fish migratory routes by opening an additional 1,000 stream miles by 2025.

**Additional Habitat Actions:** Combat invasive species, restore forest habitat, restore living shorelines, restore island habitats, and mitigate impacts of highway projects on habitats.

## Sustain Fish and Wildlife

**Goal: Sustain healthy populations of fish and wildlife which contribute to a resilient ecosystem and vibrant economy.**

### OUTCOMES

**Oysters:** Restore native oyster habitat and populations in 20 out of 35 to 40 candidate tributaries by 2025.

**Blue Crabs:** Maintain sustainable blue crab interim rebuilding target of 200 million adults in 2011 and develop a new population target for 2012 through 2025.

**Brook Trout:** Restore naturally reproducing brook trout populations in headwater streams by improving 58 subwatersheds from reduced classification to healthy by 2025.

**Black Duck:** Restore a three-year average wintering black duck population in the Chesapeake Bay watershed of 100,000 birds by 2025.

## Conserve Land and Increase Public Access

**Goal: Conserve landscapes treasured by citizens to maintain water quality and habitat; sustain working forests, farms, and maritime communities; and conserve lands of cultural, indigenous and community value. Expand public access to the Bay and its tributaries through existing and new local, state and federal parks, refuges, reserves, trails and partner sites.**

### OUTCOMES

**Land Conservation:** Protect an additional two million acres of lands throughout the watershed currently identified as high conservation priorities at the Federal, state or local level by 2025, including 695,000 acres of forest land of highest value for maintaining water quality.

**Public Access:** Increase public access to the Bay and its tributaries by adding 300 new public access sites by 2025.

## Supporting Strategies

- Expand Citizen Stewardship
- Develop Environmental Markets
- Respond to Climate Change
- Strengthen Science
- Implementation and Accountability