

**Report on the Implementation of the 2014 Chesapeake Bay
Watershed Agreement**

Prepared pursuant to § 2.2-220.1 of the Code of Virginia

Prepared by the Secretary of Natural Resources

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This report fulfills the requirement of § 2.2-220.1 of the Code of Virginia that states: “By November 1 of each year, the Secretary of Natural Resources shall report to the Governor and the Chairs of the House Committee on Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources and the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources on the implementation of the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement. The Secretary may use documents, reports, and other materials developed in cooperation with other signatories to the agreement, including the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and other relevant federal agencies or nongovernmental organizations, to fulfill this reporting requirement.”

Content, Status and Timeframe

On June 16, 2014, the members of the Chesapeake Executive Council¹ signed the 2014 Chesapeake Watershed Agreement (the Agreement). The Agreement sets forth goals and outcomes for the restoration of the Bay, its tributaries and the lands that surround them. The Agreement contains 10 goals that are each linked to a set of outcomes or measurable targets that will directly contributed to the achievement of the goals.

The Agreement called for, within one year, the development of management strategies to guide the actions necessary to achieve the specific outcomes contained in the Agreement.

Over the course of 2014 and the first half of 2015, management strategies were written, reviewed by the signatories to the Agreement, stakeholders and the public, and finalized according to the deadline established in the Agreement. In July, 2015, the strategies were presented to the Executive Council at their annual meeting.

Each management strategy addresses one or more of the Agreement’s thirty-one outcomes by reducing nutrient and sediment pollution; reducing the effects of toxic contaminants on living resources and human health; sustaining blue crabs, oysters and forage fish; restoring wetlands, underwater grass beds and other vital habitats; conserving farmland and forests; boosting public access to and education about the Bay and its tributaries; and increasing the climate resiliency of the watershed’s resources, habitats and communities.

¹ The Chesapeake Executive Council is composed of the Governors of Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New York, West Virginia and Delaware, the Mayor of the District of Columbia, the Chairman of the Chesapeake Bay Commission and the Administrator of the United States Environmental Protection Agency.

The strategies were prepared through a collaborative effort between Bay Program signatory agencies, academic institutions, local governments, non-governmental organizations, businesses and citizens. Citizens and stakeholders from throughout the watershed participated in the development of the management strategies and submitted hundreds of comments during the public review period.

As part of the continuing work toward accomplishing the goals of the Agreement, Bay Program partners are currently drafting two-year work plans that summarize the specific commitments, short-term actions and resources required for success.

In Virginia, a variety of agencies have been engaged in the development of the strategies and the ongoing development of necessary and more specific workplans. Agencies from the Natural Resources, Agriculture and Forestry, Education and Health and Human Resources secretariats have been engaged in the strategies and the subsequent work plans.

Complete information about each management strategy can be found on the Chesapeake Bay Program website at:

<http://www.chesapeakebay.net/managementstrategies>

The Secretary of Natural Resources' office, agencies from the various secretariats and other Chesapeake Bay Program partners are now engaged in the development of the implementation plans for each strategy. The implementation plans will detail specific actions that each participating agency will undertake and will be released by the Chesapeake Bay Program in January, 2016 for a public comment period. At this time, implementation plans are expected to be completed in April 2016.