



Produced by the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay with support from the Chesapeake Bay Program
February 2002

Chesapeake Bay Program

A Overview of its History, Structure, Accomplishments and Goals

The Chesapeake Bay Program did not assume its responsibilities by default; it was created from the ground up to act as a catalyst and organizer for the solution of an extremely complex set of problems.

Since its inception in 1983, the Chesapeake Bay Program's highest priority has been the restoration of the Bay's living resources -- its shellfish, finfish, aquatic life, grasses and wildlife. Improvements include fisheries and habitat restoration, recovery of bay grasses, nutrient and toxic reductions and significant advances in estuarine science.



HISTORY

In 1976, the United States Congress directed the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to conduct a five-year, \$25 million study of the Chesapeake Bay. EPA was required to assess water quality problems in the Bay, establish a data collection and analysis mechanism, coordinate all the activities involved in Bay research, and make recommendations on ways to improve existing Chesapeake Bay management mechanisms. As a result, the first Chesapeake Bay Agreement was signed in 1983, and the Chesapeake Bay Program evolved as the means to restore this exceptionally valuable resource.

The Bay Program was created as a regional partnership to act as a catalyst for the management of the Bay for the benefit of all. The 1983 Agreement set in motion a coordinated campaign to reverse the decline of living resources in the Bay. It established the major elements of a cooperative structure to develop and coordinate the comprehensive Bay cleanup. The Chesapeake Executive Council, an Implementation Committee, and the EPA Chesapeake Bay Liaison Office was created, along with a Baywide monitoring program to gather basic data against which desired change could be measured.

STRUCTURE

The Bay Program partners, making up the **Chesapeake Executive Council**, include the governors of the states of Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia; the mayor of the District of Columbia; the chair of the Chesapeake Bay Commission; and the administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The Executive Council establishes policy direction for the restoration and protection of the bay and its living resources. It exerts leadership to marshal public support and is accountable to the public for progress made under the Agreements. Its Principals' Staff Committee meets as needed to facilitate communication among the Implementation Committee, the advisory committees and the Chesapeake Executive Council.

The **Principals' Staff Committee** acts as policy advisors to the Executive Council, accepting items for consideration and approval and setting agendas for Council meetings. Members arrange briefings to their principals, the Agreement signatories, and provide policy and program direction to the Implementation Committee.

The Chesapeake Bay is a powerful symbol. It is the subject of great science and an object of contemplation and wonder. It exists as an elemental piece of the natural world in total majesty and total indifference. It holds dreams for science; it holds realities for politics.

We will continue to marvel and we will continue to work, for losing the Bay is not a temporary setback, it would be losing a part of ourselves for generations to come.

Helpful Links

www.chesapeakebay.net

Chesapeake Bay Program
1-800-YOUR BAY

www.chesapeakebay.net/c2k.htm

Chesapeake 2000; 1983, 1987

Chesapeake Bay Agreement

www.chesapeakebay.net/committee.htm

Chesapeake Bay Program Organizational Structure

www.chesapeakebay.net/baypartners.htm

Chesapeake Bay Program Partners

www.chesapeakebay.net/pubs/sob/index.html

1999 State of the Bay including Chesapeake Bay Timeline

www.chesapeakebay.net/2001highlights.htm

2001 Restoration Highlights

www.bayeducation.net/site.html

ChesIE Environmental Education Site

The **Implementation Committee** is composed of representatives from Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, the District of Columbia, the Chesapeake Bay Commission, the US Environmental Protection Agency and other federal agencies and program participants. It is responsible for implementing the decisions and the technical studies of the Executive Council and coordinating restoration and protection activities under the Chesapeake 2000 agreement and subsequent amendments and directives. It is chaired by the Director of the EPA Chesapeake Bay Program Office, provides staff support to the Committee and its subcommittees and is responsible for the annual workplan and budget. It receives and acknowledges advice from the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee, the Local Government Advisory Committee and the Citizens Advisory Committee whose chairs are also members of the Implementation Committee.

The **Chesapeake Bay Commission** was created in 1980 as a tri-state legislative commission to advise the members of the General Assemblies of Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia on matters of Bay watershed concerns. Seven member delegations from each state, including five state legislators (two from the Senate and three from the House), the Governor or designee and a citizen representative, make up the Commission which is involved in all Bay policy and implementation decisions. It is charged with the duties of identifying concerns, collecting and disseminating information, recommending legislation, providing arbitration and representing the common interests of the member states on issues of mutual concern regarding effective and cooperative management of the Chesapeake Bay.

The **Citizens Advisory Council** provides assistance to the Executive Council, Implementation Committee and all subcommittees as needed in implementing the Chesapeake Bay Agreement. Through the Citizens Advisory Council, the Chesapeake Bay Program has a unique pipeline for citizens to participate in policy decisions that drive the restoration of the Bay. Established in 1984, it provides grassroots assistance to the Executive Council and to all Bay Program committees. Membership is broad-based, with representatives from agriculture, business, conservation, industry and civic groups. The twenty-five citizens on the committee provide a non-governmental perspective on the Bay cleanup effort and on how Bay Program policies affect citizens who live and work in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

The **Chesapeake Bay Local Government Advisory Committee**, created in 1988, is a body of officials appointed by the Governors of Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and the Mayor of the District of Columbia to improve the role local governments play in Bay restoration efforts and develop strategies to broaden local government participation in the Chesapeake Bay Program. Improving communication, supplying technical assistance to local governments and providing a local government perspective on policy development within the greater Chesapeake Bay Program are the chief means it uses to enhance the participation of local governments in the Bay restoration effort. It advises the Executive Council and the Implementation Committee on matters relating to local governments.

The **Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee** is composed of members drawn from state and federal agencies, universities, research institutions and private industry representing diverse scientific and technical backgrounds in areas important to the Bay Program. Created in 1984, it works to enhance scientific communication and outreach. It provides scientific and technical advice through technical conferences and workshops, technical reports and position papers, assistance on merit reviews of subcommittee activities, and service on subcommittees and workgroups. It serves as a liaison between the scientific community and the Bay Program providing independent scientific and technical guidance.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In 1987, the second **Chesapeake Bay Agreement** set goals to reduce 40% of the nutrients nitrogen and phosphorus entering the Bay by the year 2000. In 1992, in amendments to the 1987 Agreement, the Executive Council continued the 40% reduction goal beyond 2000 and developed strategies to reduce nutrients at their upstream sources. Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia began to develop tributary strategies to achieve the nutrient reduction targets.

In June 2000, the Chesapeake Executive Council signed *Chesapeake 2000*, a new agreement designed to guide the next ten years of Bay restoration efforts. *Chesapeake 2000* is the third Bay agreement written to guide the actions of the multi-jurisdictional Chesapeake Bay Program. This agreement goes beyond the foundations of older agreements and recommits to specific goals for nutrient reduction, living resources and community involvement. Scientists, government officials, conservation leaders and citizens were all involved in the development of Chesapeake 2000.

Chesapeake 2000 has cutting-edge commitments in water quality—correcting nutrient and sediment problems in the Bay and its tidal tributaries and taking them off the impaired waters list by 2010. It addresses sprawl by committing to reduce the rate of harmful sprawl development of forest and agricultural land in the Bay watershed by 30% by 2012, and it commits to permanently preserving 20% of the Bay watershed by 2010. It outlines 93 commitments detailing protection and restoration goals critical to the health of the Bay watershed. Pledges to increase riparian forest buffers, preserve additional tracts of land, restore oyster populations and protect wetlands are some of the ways *Chesapeake 2000* strives to improve water quality -- the most critical element in the overall protection and restoration of the Bay and its tributaries.

GOALS

Since its inception in 1983, the Chesapeake Bay Program's highest priority has been the restoration of the Bay's living resources -- its shellfish, finfish, aquatic life, grasses and wildlife. Improvements include fisheries and habitat restoration, recovery of bay grasses, nutrient and toxic reductions and significant advances in estuarine science. Current programs and action plans administered through the Chesapeake Bay Program include:

- **Toxic 2000 Strategy:** A new action plan sets comprehensive goals for preventing the release of chemical contaminants into the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. The Toxics 2000 Strategy marked the fulfillment of the first major commitment of Chesapeake 2000 and committed Bay Program partners to surpass current regulatory requirements and strive to achieve "zero release" of chemical contaminants into the Bay. Through improved pollution prevention and other measures, the strategy calls for the voluntary phase-out of chemical mixing zones and the adoption of new measures to ensure that finfish and shellfish are safe to eat. For the first time, the Bay Program set specific numerical goals to reduce toxics from nonpoint sources such as agricultural and storm water runoff. By focusing on areas most impacted by chemical contaminants, including the three major Regions of Concern – the Anacostia River, the Elizabeth River and Baltimore Harbor – the strategy calls for implementing plans to clean up existing contaminated sediments and accelerating cooperative efforts to prevent future contamination.

- **Storm Water Directive:** A commitment was signed in December 2001 by the Executive Council to set a model for local governments and private land owners demonstrating how to develop, fund and implement innovative storm water management approaches and technologies. The goal of this directive is to address improvement of water quality issues within *Chesapeake 2000* by preventing storm water problems in the face of increased growth and development, remediating storm water problems on developed lands, and monitoring and sharing the results with landowners. It strives to address all storm water issues including flow volume, velocity, pollution loads, stream channel integrity, groundwater recharge and flooding.
- **Chesapeake Bay Small Watershed Grants:** In August 2001, Bay Program partners presented more than \$1.5 million in Chesapeake Bay Small Watershed Grants to 59 community-led organizations and local governments from across the Bay watershed. The grants support communities in developing and implementing watershed management plans and encourages innovative, local programs that improve water quality and restore important habitats within the Chesapeake Bay basin. By promoting community-based stewardship of local lands, the program provides citizens a greater understanding of the relationship between the condition of their local watersheds and the health of the Bay. Funded projects parallel commitments set forth in *Chesapeake 2000* and highlight the need for federal and state governments to work with watershed organizations to restore local water quality. Small watershed projects assist local groups in gaining experience and technical expertise needed to improve watershed protection in their communities. Projects range from citizen water quality monitoring and riparian buffer restoration to oyster gardening in Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia and the District of Columbia.
- **Businesses for the Bay:** A voluntary, non-regulatory pollution prevention program developed by the Chesapeake Bay Program in cooperation with industry. The goal of the program, which began in 1996, is prevention of toxic chemicals from point sources. Businesses, as well as federal, state and local government facilities, are encouraged to develop their own pollution prevention commitments ranging from educating employees about pollution prevention to changing manufacturing processes to reduce wastes. Businesses for the Bay spreads the pollution prevention message through a mentor program. Mentors from participating facilities volunteer their pollution prevention expertise to help facilities in need of technical assistance.

Chesapeake Bay Program Online Resources

The Bay Program website at www.chesapeakebay.net is a comprehensive resource for Bay publications, datasets, watershed profiles, animal and plant identification, habitat, pollutant facts and issues, restoration information and daily Chesapeake Bay newsclips. Its highlights include:

- **Watershed Profiles** introduces a method of creating online maps, charts and information that portrays the environmental condition of Chesapeake Bay watersheds at a variety of scales from the entire 64,000 square mile Chesapeake Bay watershed down to small tributary watersheds.
- **ChesSIE** (Chesapeake Science on the Internet for Educators) supports K-12 Bay science education through teaching resources and online data.
- **Bay Atlas**, an interactive mapping application allows creation of customized maps.
- **Data Hub** provides access to Bay information through user defined queries based on region and date.