



CHESAPEAKE BAY
FOUNDATION

Saving a National Treasure

Maryland Milestones

2012-13 INTERIM PROGRESS



Choose
Clean
Water
COALITION

AT A GLANCE



Agriculture

- Traditional Cover Crops
- Animal Manure Management Structures
- Nutrient Application Management
- Grass Buffers



Urban/Suburban

- Stormwater Retrofits



Wastewater/Septic

- Wastewater Treatment Plants
- Septic Practices

See the chart on the back of this sheet for more information.

For more detailed information on all of Maryland's milestone goals, go to: www.epa.gov/reg3wapd/tmdl/ChesapeakeBay/EnsuringResults.html.

Maryland's Plan for Clean Water: Are They Making Progress?

There are signs that the Chesapeake Bay and our local rivers and streams are starting to recover. Underwater grasses and oysters have expanded in some areas, and the 2012 oxygen-deprived deadzone was the smallest in decades—due, in part, to pollution-reduction efforts. But, the system is still dangerously out of balance. We must continue our efforts to address the causes: nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment pollution from a variety of sources including animal waste and fertilizer, runoff from urban and suburban development, wastewater treatment plants, and septic systems. In 2010, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Bay jurisdictions established science-based limits for these pollutants and state-specific plans to achieve them, together known as the Chesapeake Clean Water Blueprint. EPA and the states also committed to implement actions to achieve 60 percent of the needed pollution reductions by 2017 and 100 percent by 2025.

To ensure that restoration efforts remain on track to achieve these longer-term goals, the states and the District of Columbia have adopted two-year milestones that describe the practices and programs they commit to implement. The Chesapeake Bay Foundation and the Choose Clean Water Coalition are collaborating to evaluate and publicize milestone progress because accountability is critical to success. Our first report, issued last year, evaluated progress toward achieving the first set of milestones that expired in 2011. This year we are evaluating the interim progress toward achieving the 2012-13 milestone commitments. Progress will be deemed satisfactory if, for the chosen practices, implementation relative to the goal is at least 50 percent.

Milestone Selection

We selected a subset of implemented practices within three pollution source categories—agricultural runoff, urban/suburban sources, and wastewater treatment—based on their potential to provide substantial nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment pollution reductions and offer important lessons for implementation moving forward. Data were provided by EPA's Chesapeake Bay Program Office.











Verification and Transparency

The Bay restoration partners currently are developing tools for verifying implemented practices reported as part of progress toward Blueprint goals. This effort absolutely is needed. Our organizations continue to find evidence that calls into question the quality of the reported data. The public must have greater transparency of data sources, assurance that expired practices are no longer counted, and evidence that on-the-ground practices are actually verified. Verification of existing practices and a continued commitment to implementation are keys to success.

Local Level Accountability

To date, milestone commitments have been tracked only at the state level. Our organizations strongly believe that the 2014-15 milestones must be established at least at the basin level and ideally reported at the local (e.g., county) level. The states requested input from local partners on their clean-up plans so that they would better understand their role in the restoration process. Success will not happen without the knowledge of what is needed and what is being accomplished in our local communities to address both restoration of the Bay and our streams and rivers.

Assessment of Maryland's Progress on Selected Pollution-Reduction Targets for the 2012-13 Interim

 AGRICULTURE	2013 TOTAL TARGET	1 YEAR PROGRESS/ 2 YEAR GOAL	% OF GOAL ACHIEVED ¹	LESSONS LEARNED
Traditional Cover Crops <i>acres/year</i>	355,000	313,860/ 355,000 (1 year goal)	88% ² 	This practice is both highly efficient at nitrogen removal and verifiable because the data are based on yearly program registration. However, Maryland should evaluate the sustainability of this practice given the amount of funding needed to maintain it.
Animal Manure Management Structures <i>animal units</i>	230,744	7,920/ 4,256	186% 	This practice is critical to facilitate better manure management that will result in phosphorus pollution reductions.
Nutrient Application Management <i>acres</i>	1,219,566	-111,363/ 165,962	-67% 	A reduction in implementation from 2011 indicates the need for better tracking of plans and verification of on-the-ground implementation.
Grass Buffers <i>acres</i>	48,865	1,695/ 538	315% 	The milestone goal for this practice was weak. More aggressive goals should be set.
 URBAN/ SUBURBAN	2013 TOTAL TARGET	1 YEAR PROGRESS/ 2 YEAR GOAL	% OF GOAL ACHIEVED	LESSONS LEARNED
Stormwater Retrofit to Treat Impervious Areas <i>acres</i>	76,603	6,954/ 12,000	58% 	Maryland is on track to meet the 2013 goal. Future progress will rely on the protection and implementation of the stormwater utility fee bill along with stronger stormwater permits for our urbanized jurisdictions.
 WASTEWATER/ SEPTIC	2013 TOTAL TARGET	1 YEAR PROGRESS/ 2 YEAR GOAL	% OF GOAL ACHIEVED	LESSONS LEARNED
Wastewater Treatment Plants # of permits meeting Blueprint requirements	56	15/ 25	60% 	As of July 1, 2012, Maryland started to collect the new Bay Restoration Fund amount of \$60/year in order to keep upgrades of wastewater treatment plans on schedule.
Septic Practices <i>hook ups to sewage and advanced systems</i>	5,807	1,034/ 1,200	86% 	Maryland should consider increasing this goal. Increases to the Bay Restoration Fund may provide funding for upgrading existing systems, and, in 2012, significant policies were put in place to curb pollution from new septic systems.

1: Assessed by dividing the incremental progress from 2011 to 2012 by the incremental progress they committed to achieve between 2011 and 2013. If the number is negative, it means that implementation in 2012 was less than in 2011.

2: Cover crop process assessed by dividing 2012 implementation by 2013 goal.



On track



Not on track

Conclusion

Overall, Maryland has made important progress on agricultural conservation practices and is on track with implementation of urban stormwater retrofits. However, there are low-impact stormwater practices for which they have made substantial long-term commitments, but did not set milestone goals (e.g., bioswales, vegetated channels). Dedicated funding at the local level and more stringent stormwater permits are critical to achieving pollution reductions from urban stormwater. Maryland should consider increasing implementation goals for grassed and forested buffers because the current goals were easily achieved. These practices not only reduce pollution, but provide other environmental benefits such as wildlife habitat. EPA's interim assessment agrees with our concerns regarding data quality and verification, and we continue to monitor how adaptive management results in changed goals.



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