



Washington, D.C. Milestones

2012-13 INTERIM PROGRESS



AT A GLANCE



Urban/Suburban

- ✔ Urban Tree Planting
- ✔ Traditional Stormwater Ponds
- ✔ Modern Stormwater Infiltration Practices
- ✔ Impervious Surface Reduction
- ✔ Urban Stream Restoration
- ✘ Street Sweeping

Washington, D.C.'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 dead-zone 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, the states, and Washington, D.C., 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.

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

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

Assessment of Washington, D.C.'s Progress on Selected Pollution-Reduction Targets for the 2012-13 Interim

 URBAN/ SUBURBAN	2013 TOTAL TARGET	1 YEAR PROGRESS/ 2 YEAR GOAL	% OF GOAL ACHIEVED ¹	LESSONS LEARNED
Urban Tree Planting <i>acres</i>	186	106/ 65	163% 	Though D.C. exceeded their milestone goal, they need to ramp up efforts significantly to achieve the Sustainable D.C. Plan goal of 40% tree canopy by 2035 (an increase of roughly 1,600 acres).
Traditional Stormwater Ponds <i>acres</i>	1,218	95/ 122	78% 	Performance standards within D.C.'s stormwater permit approved by EPA in 2011 contributed to successful implementation.
Modern Stormwater Infiltration Practices <i>acres</i>	1,480	211/ 71	297% 	D.C. has exceeded its 2025 Watershed Implementation Plan goals for infiltration practices with a steady increase over the last four years. Continued progress is important as a cost-effective, long-term solution to reduce stormwater pollution.
Impervious Surface Reduction <i>acres</i>	235	68/ 50	134% 	By late summer 2013, the District will finalize a new stormwater-management rule. Increased regulatory standards and site development plans should lead to increased impervious surface reductions.
Urban Stream Restoration <i>feet</i>	14,923	2,150/ 566	380% 	A recent U.S. Geological Survey report highlighted the economic benefits of urban stream restoration in Washington, D.C. ²
Street Sweeping <i>acres</i>	2,368	0/ 829	0% 	There was no increase in implementation from 2011. Washington, D.C., must not ignore the diffuse nature of stormwater and should focus some of their efforts on pollution mitigation.

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: www.fort.usgs.gov



On track



Not on track

Conclusion

Washington, D.C., has exceeded their 2013 goals for four out of six of the practices selected for evaluation, is on track for the fifth, and is behind on the sixth. In addition, DC Water's Blue Plains Wastewater Treatment Plant will undergo a large scale capital upgrade in 2015 that will result in the achievement of its 2017 nitrogen-reduction goals. The plant has already achieved its 2025 pollution-reduction goal for phosphorus. However, the D.C. Metro Area's population is projected to grow by approximately two million people over the next 20 years, which means that pollution from stormwater runoff will increase, if left unabated. For example, between 2012 and 2013, the District saw increases in sediment flowing into waterways and the District Department of the Environment has indicated that it will compensate for this setback in its 2015 milestones. This may prove to be a challenge, however, due to the proposed 18-month transition period before District Department of the Environment's implementation of its new stormwater management rule and soil erosion and sediment control rule. Washington, D.C. has made substantial long-term commitments to increased tree plantings, impervious surface reductions, and urban stream restoration and must consider adopting stronger milestone goals to meet them. The Nation's Capitol must redouble efforts to reduce water pollution to achieve its 2017 and 2025 Watershed Implementation Plan goals and strive to be a model for other major cities in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.



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