



**CHESAPEAKE BAY
FOUNDATION**
Saving a National Treasure

West Virginia Milestones

2012-13 INTERIM PROGRESS



**Choose
Clean
Water**
COALITION

AT A GLANCE



Agriculture

- Nutrient Application Management
- Forest Buffers
- Cover Crops
- Stream Access Control with Fencing



Wastewater/Septic

- Wastewater Treatment Plants

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

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

West Virginia'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 West Virginia'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
Nutrient Application Management <i>acres</i>	126,000	8,977/ 81,367	11% 	To accelerate progress on this practice and achieve the Phase 2 Watershed Implementation Plan goals of 90,000 acres in 2017 and 2025, the West Virginia Department of Agriculture hired two additional nutrient management planners.
Forest Buffers <i>acres</i>	4,011	311/ 380	82% 	The success of this practice is largely due to the Farm Bill Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, which incentivizes conservation uses of land. This is a highly successful voluntary program.
Cover Crops <i>acres/year</i> <i>(Includes both commodity and traditional)</i>	3,991	4,037/ 3,991 (1 year goal)	101% ² 	This is an annual practice. Assuming implementation in 2013 will be similar to 2012, the milestone should be reached. This is one of the most highly demanded programs by landowners. It is important that funding is available to meet this demand.
Stream Access Control with Fencing <i>acres</i>	10,856	1,016/ 1,457	70% 	This is a highly successful voluntary program made possible by Farm Bill programs like Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program and the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, the state Agriculture Enhancement Program, and innovative partnerships with non-governmental groups like Trout Unlimited.
 WASTEWATER/ SEPTIC	2013 TOTAL TARGET	1 YEAR PROGRESS/ 2 YEAR GOAL	% OF GOAL ACHIEVED ¹	LESSONS LEARNED
Wastewater Treatment Plants <i># of permits meeting Blueprint requirements</i>	6	3/ 6	50% 	Three of six wastewater plants have been upgraded and the remaining three are scheduled to be completed for the 2013 milestone. New construction and upgrades are made possible through a funding bill passed by the West Virginia Legislature.

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

West Virginia has made good progress on four of the five practices selected for evaluation: forested buffers, cover crops, wastewater treatment upgrades, and stream access control with fencing, while nutrient application management efforts must be increased to reach the 2013 milestone. Tracking tools and data collection must be improved to reflect progress accurately made towards the 2025 goals.



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION
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6 Herndon Avenue | Annapolis, Maryland 21403
 888/SAVEBAY | cbf.org



Choose Clean Water
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706 Giddings Avenue 2-C | Annapolis, Maryland 21401
 443/759-3407 | choosecleanwater.org