

# The Chesapeake Bay

**Restoring a  
National Treasure**



# THE CHALLENGE



**“Like Yellowstone or the Grand Canyon, the Chesapeake Bay is a national treasure. But unlike those places, it is home to nearly 20 million people who live, work, and play across the six-state watershed. The eyes of the world are watching the multi-state effort to restore the health of the Chesapeake and show if nature and people can thrive together. I believe the answer is an unqualified 'yes!'”**

— Mark Bryer, Chesapeake Bay Program Director





**Like many other ecosystems around the world,** the Chesapeake Bay’s health began to rapidly decline in the mid-1900s when a growing, industrialized population began consuming natural resources at an unsustainable rate. By the 1970s, the Bay’s aquatic life, and the communities who depended on it, were at a tipping point. In 1983, public and private organizations vowed to restore the Bay by establishing the Chesapeake Bay Program—a cleanup effort committed to using science to set priorities, guide policy and investments in conservation, and track progress. Today, the body of scientific knowledge within the Chesapeake Bay watershed is unrivaled. Forty years after the restoration effort began in earnest, there are promising signs of recovery. And there is still much work to be done to realize clean water goals and restoration of key habitats in and around the Bay. At the same time, climate change is here, as is a reckoning that conservation efforts have not benefitted communities equitably. With a pragmatic approach and a global network, TNC is working at the intersection of these challenges.

**The Nature Conservancy** is focused on conservation at the scale of entire ecosystems. As North America’s largest estuary, the Chesapeake Bay’s watershed covers approximately 64,000 square miles and includes thousands of streams and rivers across six states and the District of Columbia. Much of the Chesapeake Bay’s watershed lies within the Appalachians—another priority landscape for TNC. Due to their importance in tackling climate change and protecting biodiversity, we are committed to conserving these two globally important landscapes in this critical decade. And in order to succeed, we need your partnership and support.

# A HEALTHY CHESAPEAKE BAY NEEDS CLEAN WATER AND HEALTHY HABITATS

Using cutting-edge science, decades of hands-on experience, and diverse partnerships, TNC is working to secure clean water and healthy habitats in the Chesapeake region. To improve water quality in our streams, rivers, and the ultimately the Bay, we are working with farming communities to reduce runoff from cropland, and helping cities use the power of nature to reduce stormwater pollution. We also restore and protect critical habitats across the Chesapeake Bay watershed that not only clean and store water as it moves to the Bay, but also support a diversity of fish and wildlife. And as a global organization with boots on the ground in local communities, our work across the Chesapeake Bay watershed contributes to—and benefits from—learning exchanges happening around the world.

## WHAT WE DO:

- ▶ **We make agriculture more sustainable.** We work with businesses and farmers to increase the use of regenerative practices to grow our food. These practices improve the water leaving farm fields and are good for farmers' bottom lines. We also restore wetlands and floodplains in key locations that filter excess nutrients from farm fields while providing critical habitat for a diversity of plants and animals. Collectively these practices provide clean water to the Bay and increase resiliency to climate change. 
- ▶ **We work to create greener, healthier communities that are more resilient to climate change.** We partner with communities that have been historically underserved and underrepresented in environmental decision-making, helping bring new trees, rain gardens, and other green infrastructure that filter polluted runoff and store floodwaters. We also partner with large, commercial landowners to employ new technologies and approaches that improve water quality and resilience in the built environment. 
- ▶ **We build resilience along our coasts.** We are working in and around the Bay's vulnerable coastal communities to bring nature-based solutions that help these communities adapt to a changing climate. For example, we are actively working to restore and protect tidal marshes and oyster reefs. Both of these critical habitats reduce erosion, filter water, provide nursery habitat for fish, and are important cultural and economic priorities for coastal communities. 
- ▶ **We protect, connect, and restore headwater forests and streams.** In the Appalachians, we are creating a continental-scale network of connected, resilient forests and streams where animals and plants can move as the climate warms. These forests—at the headwaters of the Chesapeake Bay—are the water tower for the mid-Atlantic, delivering clean water to downstream communities, and ultimately, the Bay. 

The Susquehanna River is the longest river in the eastern United States and the largest tributary to the Chesapeake Bay. In the background is The Nature Conservancy's Hamer Woodlands at Cove Mountain Preserve—an approximately 1,300-acre property that connects to other conservation lands, creating a 14-mile corridor of protected land along the Kittatinny Ridge—a priority landscape for TNC in the Central Appalachians. © Matt Kane/TNC

# Our **2030** Goals for the Chesapeake Bay include:

Known regionally as “watermen,” Chesapeake Bay fishermen make a living by harvesting blue crabs, oysters, and various species of fish. The seafood industry of the Chesapeake Bay has been an important cultural identity for generations of families in the region, and will continue to play an important role in the Bay’s conservation. © Matt Kane/TNC

- > **2 million acres** of farmland managed with regenerative practices
- > **7,000 miles** of healthier streams and rivers
- > **500,000 people** with increased resilience to climate change
- > **1 million acres** of Chesapeake Bay habitat restored
- > **500,000 acres** of forests protected and sustainably managed



## PLEASE JOIN US

Together we find a way. With your support, TNC and our partners can make a huge impact on the Bay restoration effort.

<b>Make agriculture more sustainable.</b> Funding will support new incentive programs and policies developed in partnership with farmers and agribusinesses. These efforts will provide the support needed to enable change and accelerate the adoption of regenerative practices across Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia.	<b>\$50M</b>
<b>Create greener, healthier cities that are more resilient to climate change.</b> Funding will support the growth of projects and partnerships that work with communities to more equitably expand the benefits of nature in cities, including reduced heat and flood risks, and cleaner air and waters.	<b>\$20M</b>
<b>Build resilience along our coasts.</b> Funding will support new habitat restoration and protection projects and policies that help coastal communities and ecosystems adapt to climate change in Maryland and Virginia.	<b>\$20M</b>
<b>Protect and restore headwater forests.</b> Funding will support land protection, land management, and habitat restoration efforts in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia.	<b>\$45M</b>

*Once raised, private gifts will unlock hundreds of millions in public funding.*

The Nature  
Conservancy



Chesapeake Bay

To learn more about The Nature Conservancy's  
work in your state, [Nature.org/ChesapeakeBay](https://www.nature.org/ChesapeakeBay).

