



## STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-2020

### Emerging Opportunities

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A variety of emerging issues and opportunities may affect future program development and success. These include new stormwater fees and growing local government programs that address polluted runoff, heightened regulation and the increased local role in BMP implementation, recognition of the value of trees and forests in sustaining watershed health, business's interest in sustainability and social responsibility, environmental literacy and community service in schools, growing cultural diversity and an untapped volunteer reservoir, growing number of local watershed organizations, the 2014 Chesapeake Watershed Agreement Management Strategies, and the need to accelerate BMP implementation related to stormwater and agriculture.

### Organizational Challenges

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The Alliance's ability to respond to emerging opportunities and address emerging issues has been challenged by a variety of factors.

**Lack of Unrestricted Funding:** First is a limited private donor base and insufficient unrestricted funds as a percentage of the Alliance budget. Unrestricted funding gives the Alliance flexibility to proactively build new partnerships and pilot new programs.

**Diversity of Grant Sources:** The Alliance also needs a greater diversify in grant funding and less dependence on federal sources where future spending may decline. New alliances, clear goals, creative and effective programs, and leveraging of resources are essential.

**Mature communications and development program:** The Alliance has not maintained a strong communications or development program and has limited resources and tools to implement it. Limited outreach and communications capability is a critical deficiency in an NGO environment that has grown (in the Bay watershed) to more than 500 groups who are working on some aspect of water quality and/or local conservation. The Alliance must translate its unique mission, communicate its results regularly, and deliver clear and compelling messages to successfully compete for available private funds and to tell our story to the public and potential supporters and funders.

**Diverse geography and audiences:** The Alliance also works across a large geography with very diverse audiences but with local areas of strength (the communities where Alliance offices are located). The Alliance faces the challenge of expanding its visibility and scaling up program delivery into broader portions of the watershed.

**Remaining Neutral:** Another challenge for the Alliance is continuing to maintain our neutral, non-political, collaborative posture while the public pays attention most often to confrontation and conflict and the trend in private foundation funding continues to move toward greater political advocacy.