



# Strategic Plan 2019-2022

July 30, 2019

For our forests. For our streams. For our future.

# About This Plan

Building upon our five decades of leading and supporting restoration projects across our watershed, the Board and staff of the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay (the Alliance) developed this Strategic Plan to focus our efforts and clearly define our collective impact. Guided by Due East Partners, our planning process began with a comprehensive [Growth Capacity Assessment](#), which gathered input from nearly 270 internal and external constituents through surveys and interviews.

## Constituents engaged included:

- 23 Board
- 34 Staff
- 46 Watershed Groups
- 44 Homeowners
- 27 Business Leaders
- 27 Local Government Officials
- 30 Volunteers
- 24 Non-Profit Partners
- 14 Private Land Owners

Led by our Strategic Planning Committee (right), the Alliance's full Board and staff participated in multiple planning sessions from March-July 2019. The result is a broadly-owned Strategic Roadmap (p. 12) with a new mission, vision and values as well as four strategic priorities with corresponding strategies and progress indicators for measuring the Alliance's impact over the next four years. Recognizing the Alliance's leadership role and shared accountability for the health of our watershed, our Roadmap concludes with three ambitious goals to increase our collective impact over time.

## Alliance Strategic Planning Committee

- Nissa Dean (VA)
- Kate Fritz  
Executive Director
- **Bill Gill (VA)**
- **Kelly Gutshall (PA)**
- **Susan Johnson (MD)**
- **Steve Levitsky (MD)**
- **Deb Lucas (VA)**
- **Brian Macnamara (MD)**
- Jenna Mitchell (PA)
- Erin O'Grady (DC)
- **Steve Pattison (MD)**
- **Chris Sigmund (PA)**
- **Ginny Snead  
Board Chair (VA)**
- **Naomi Young (PA)**

## Additional Staff Strategic Planning Committee

- Adam Bray (VA)
- Rachel Felver (MD)
- Amy Hagerdon (VA)
- Craig Highfield (MD)
- Abbi Huntzinger (MD)
- Jaja Leroux (MD)
- Suzanne Martin (MD)
- Jenny McGarvey (VA)
- Marissa Spratley (MD)
- Corinne Stephens (MD)
- Will Parson (MD)

*(Board members shown in bold)*

# Mission and Vision



## Vision

Clean streams and rivers flowing through resilient landscapes, cared for by the people who live, work, and play in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

## Mission

The Alliance brings together communities, companies, and conservationists to improve our lands and waters.

## Values

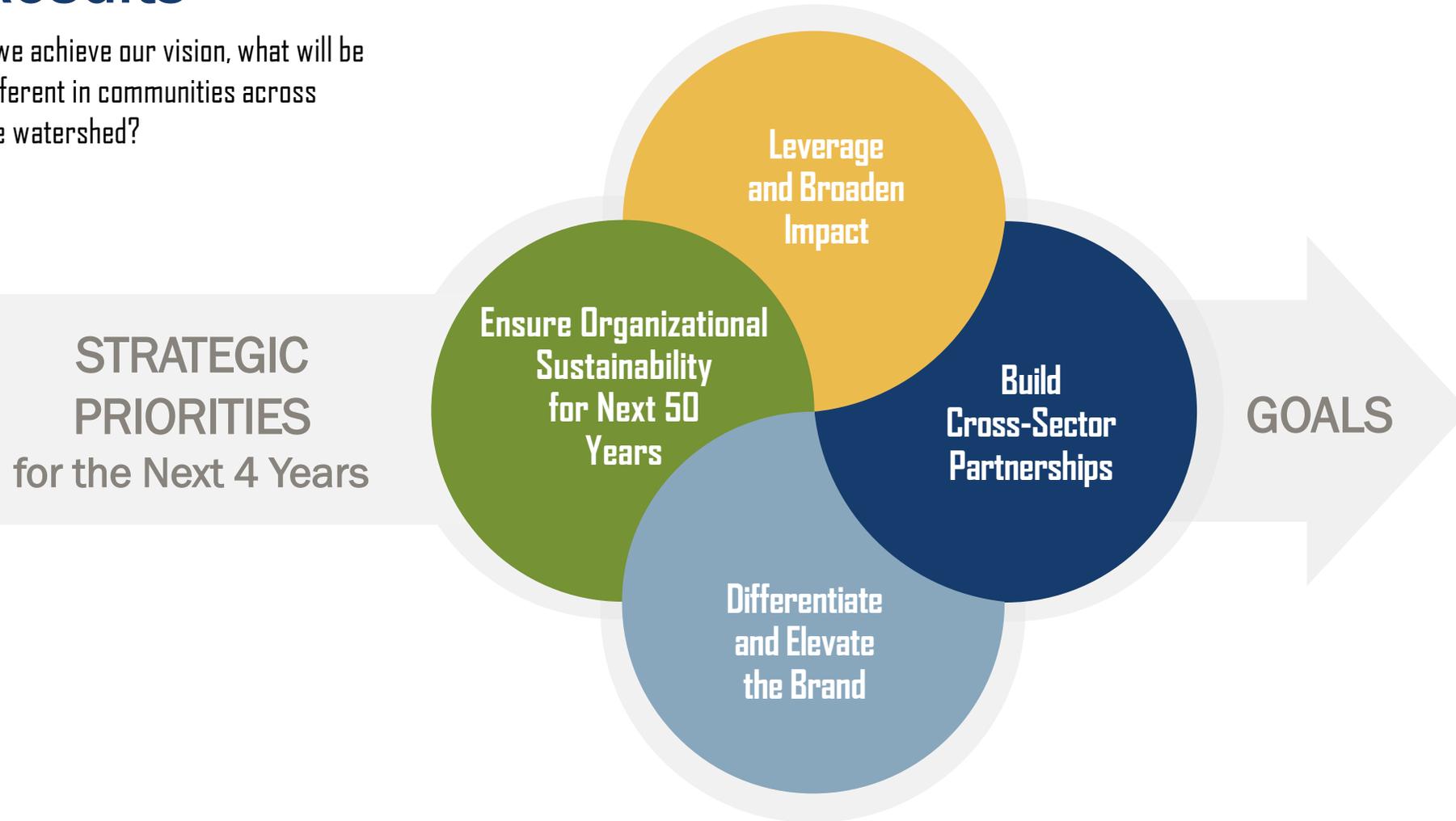
**Collaborative** – We believe in partnering across sectors and regions to achieve a larger, *collective impact*.

**Inclusive** – We are partners who demonstrate integrity and amplify diverse voices for *equitable impact*.

**Results-Driven** – We drive with data, promote informed action, and hold ourselves and our partners accountable for *measurable impact*.

# Strategic Priorities for Population-Level Results

If we achieve our vision, what will be different in communities across the watershed?



# Priority 1: Leverage and Broaden Impact

Too often we focus on what's not working instead of what is. A central role of the Alliance is to lift up and disseminate best practices, replicate proven restoration programs and adapt effective solutions to address local needs. As we expand our work in new sectors and communities throughout the watershed, we are committed to engaging diverse voices, especially those most directly affected by polluted waters and eroding land. The health of our watershed is dependent on measurable progress in our local communities and waterways.

The Alliance will scale up the most effective restoration and engagement programs including:

- Green infrastructure implementation on developed lands
- Forest restoration on working lands
- Agricultural restoration and responsible agricultural production
- Capacity building at the local level

## Strategies

- Build adaptive programs to maximize restoration efforts.
- Broaden engagement in watershed restoration.
- Evaluate programs and leverage what's working.
- Replicate and/or scale effective programs in new sectors and geographies.



# Priority 2: Build Cross-Sector Partnerships

The level of transformational progress we envision over the next decade will require a cross-sector approach that engages multiple partners including businesses, local governments, farmers, conservation groups, houses of worship, community leaders, and private land owners. The Alliance connects these champions to each other through regional partnerships, convenings, and the Chesapeake Network (an online peer learning community) to share knowledge and foster collaboration. By building the capacity of local groups to assess and address critical gaps, the Alliance will accelerate progress on the ground in communities across the watershed. The long-term success of the Chesapeake Bay will ultimately depend on the actions and support of the 17 million residents who call the watershed home.



## Strategies

- Expand role as a capacity builder to close priority gaps.
- Connect and support champions in communities, companies, and conservation groups.
- Promote growth of regional partnerships.
- Accelerate action on the ground.

# Priority 3: Differentiate and Elevate the Brand

The Alliance's growing constituency is the heart of our work. We are defining our unique role and "value proposition" for how we accelerate progress throughout the watershed, including a robust menu of restoration programs, partnerships, and technical assistance for smaller conservation groups. With an active communications network that spans Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, and DC, we serve as a megaphone for groups to broaden awareness and engagement within and beyond their community. Over the next few years, the Alliance will invest in improved tools and technology to deliver consistent, yet customizable messaging through our network. By more effectively promoting our services, programs, and partnerships, the Alliance creates opportunities to engage our diverse network of champions, strengthening their individual and collective efforts to improve our lands and waters.



## Strategies

- Define, plan, and implement our value proposition.
- Improve internal communications to cross-promote programs, services, and success stories.
- Create inclusive, consistent external messaging and tailor for each region.
- Amplify messaging throughout our watershed to increase awareness and engagement of the organization.

# Priority 4: Ensure Organizational Sustainability for Next 50 Years



The sustainability of the Alliance and our partnerships is critical for a coordinated, enduring impact across the Chesapeake Bay watershed. As the Alliance looks ahead to our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2021, we are focused on the sustainability of our efforts into the next half century. This includes thoughtful, planned succession of our board and staff leaders as well as better systems to capture and share knowledge throughout our organization and the communities we serve.

Since most of the Alliance's current funding comes from restricted, program grants, we will need to diversify our revenue and significantly increase private fundraising. Our board plays a critical role in this shift, as we build a culture of philanthropy across the organization and further engage our networks. The strength of our business partnerships is key to our future success and sustainability and will be a major focus for expansion in the coming years.

## Strategies

- **Diversify and expand the revenue model to increase unrestricted funding.**
- **Build a culture of philanthropy.**
- **Achieve full board engagement in fundraising.**
- **Strengthen and broaden business partnerships.**
- **Foster a learning organization for continuity of knowledge and leadership.**

# Program Focus Areas

Looking ahead to the next generation of Chesapeake Bay restoration challenges and opportunities, the Alliance has prioritized three program areas to focus our work. As we target our resources and grow internal capacity, this added focus will help the Alliance to better build and sustain our partner networks, support champions, and successfully execute restoration projects. Our shared goal for all of our programs is to build **resiliency** among our communities and landscapes to continually adapt to a changing world.



Agriculture



Forests



Green  
Infrastructure

Building Stewardship & Resilient Communities

WATERSHED-WIDE

Washington, DC

Virginia

Maryland

Pennsylvania

**AGRICULTURE**

<b>Implementation</b>	Responsible agricultural production		Riparian buffers on agricultural lands	Riparian buffers on agricultural lands	Plein Sect Agricultural Planning
<b>Capacity Building</b>					Responsible agricultural production

**FORESTS**

<b>Implementation</b>			Healthy Forests Healthy Waters Program, Healthy Forests Healthy Farm Stewardship Program	Woodland Crediting Platform	Riparian buffer planting on Working Lands
<b>Capacity Building</b>	Impact Investing, Forests for the Bay network		Chesapeake Forest Fund	Chesapeake Tree Stewards	Correctional Conservation Collaborative

**GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE**

<b>Implementation</b>					
Green Infrastructure Planning & Implementation		RiverSmart Rain Barrels, RiverSmart Landscaping, RiverSmart Permeable Pavement	RiverWise Schools, RiverWise Congregations		City of Lancaster Rebate Program (pending)
Large-Scale Restoration Planning & Implementation				Coastal Resilience Projects, Stream/Wetland Restoration	
<b>Capacity Building</b>	Chesapeake Watershed Forum, ForumPlus events	Contractor Training	Land Trust Round Tables	Contractor Workshops	Green Jobs Training

**STEWARDSHIP AND ENGAGEMENT**

<b>Implementation</b>	Project Clean Stream, Businesses for the Bay, Wild & Scenic Film Festival, Chesapeake Collective				
<b>Capacity Building</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chesapeake Bay Program support – Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), Local Government Advisory Committee (LGAC), Chesapeake Monitoring Cooperative (CMC), CBP Communications Team</li> <li>Networking and Resources online: Chesapeake Network, Reduce Your Stormwater website, Native Plant Center</li> <li>Chesapeake Watershed Forum, ForumPlus events</li> </ul>				

# Strategic Priorities and Progress Indicators

## Leverage Resources and Broaden Impact

- # of projects in target regions
- % of stakeholders engaged from underrepresented communities
- # of programs replicated or scaled
- Multi-disciplinary staff teams integrated to increase impact
- \$ from grant funding to perform capacity building work



## Build Cross-Sector Partnerships

- # of external individuals involved in capacity building efforts annually
- # of partner organizations engaged
- # successful regional partnerships
- # of Best Management Practices implemented
- # of trees planted



## Differentiate and Elevate the Brand

- % growth in constituency
- % of grant income that meets strategic priorities
- # of new donors annually



## Ensure Organizational Sustainability for Next 50 Years

- % of revenue is unrestricted
- \$ raised annually by board
- % unrestricted raised annually from businesses
- 3-month operating reserve
- Succession plans and regular reviews for key roles, programs and processes



**VISION:** Clean streams and rivers flowing through resilient landscapes, cared for by the people who live, work, and play in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

**MISSION:** The Alliance brings together communities, companies, and conservationists to improve our lands and waters.

For our forests.  
For our streams.  
For our future.

## VALUES

### Inclusive

### Collaborative

### Results Driven

## PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIES

#### Leverage Resources and Broaden Impact

- Build adaptive programs to maximize restoration efforts
- Broaden engagement in watershed restoration (diversity, equity and inclusion)
- Evaluate programs and leverage what's working
- Replicate and/or scale effective programs in new sectors and geographies

#### Build Cross-Sector Partnerships

- Expand role as a capacity builder to close priority gaps
- Connect and support champions in companies, communities and conservation groups
- Promote the growth of regional partnerships
- Accelerate action on the ground

#### Differentiate and Elevate the Brand

- Define our value proposition
- Improve internal communications to cross-promote programs, services, and success stories
- Create inclusive, consistent external messaging and tailor for each region
- Amplify messaging throughout our watershed to increase awareness and engagement

#### Ensure Organizational Sustainability for Next 50 Years

- Diversify and expand the revenue model to expand unrestricted funding
- Build culture of philanthropy
- Achieve full board engagement in fundraising
- Strengthen and broaden business partnerships
- Foster a learning organization for continuity of knowledge and leadership

## PROGRESS INDICATORS BY 2022

- # of projects in target regions
- % of stakeholders engaged from underrepresented communities
- # of programs replicated or scaled
- Multi-disciplinary staff teams integrated to increase impact
- \$ from grant funding to perform capacity building work

- # of external individuals involved in capacity building efforts annually
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## GOALS

Communities actively engaged in stewarding their land and water

Clean streams and rivers

Resilient landscapes