

ALLIANCE for the Chesapeake Bay

2023-2028 STRATEGIC PLAN

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

A MID POINT REVIEW & REFLECTION

August 2026

The mid-point updates to the Alliance's 2023–2028 Strategic Plan reflect a period of transformative growth, lessons learned, and the need for strategic resilience in a shifting external landscape. Due to the ever-changing world around us, we conducted a mid-point check-in to assess progress and make adjustments to better reflect organizational priorities.

Over the first three years of the plan, the Alliance significantly exceeded expectations in on-the-ground conservation and partner engagement. High-performing progress in forest restoration, tree planting, and agricultural implementation demonstrated our strong operational capacity and successful expansion into new regions. Consequently, we increased the six-year targets for these high-achieving areas to match our accelerated momentum.

Simultaneously, we refined our overarching Goals and Strategies to capture how our operational practices have matured. By emphasizing adaptive methods, cross-collaboration, and geographic "readiness," our plan now more accurately reflects how we maximize impact for cleaner water.



TAKING ACTION TODAY TO IMPROVE TOMORROW

The Chesapeake Bay watershed is home to over **18 million people** who rely on it for clean water, recreation, and economic opportunity. Our 64,000 square mile region is made up of vulnerable ecosystems and **thousands of species of plants and animals** who depend on it to survive. Pollution, habitat loss, and climate change consistently threaten our communities and the health of our local waterways.

Addressing these threats requires a collaborative and multi-faceted approach. We've made a big impact in our first five decades, but building resilience into changing landscapes takes **long-term, committed action**. For each tree we plant, barnyard we improve, or rain garden we install, more work needs to be done to **protect our streams and rivers for future generations**.

Implementing the Strategies described in this strategic plan will guide the Alliance in its continual pursuit of **protecting the environment for the many individuals** who live, work, and play throughout the watershed.



LOOKING AHEAD TO THE NEXT GENERATION OF CHESAPEAKE STEWARDSHIP

Every adventure starts with a plan.

The Alliance is excited to share the roadmap for our next adventure with the release of our **2023 - 2028 Strategic Plan**. Over the course of the last year, **70+ Alliance staff and board members** worked together to envision our path forward for the next six years.

As part of this process, the organization re-committed to our four Program areas of **Agriculture, Forests, Green Infrastructure, and Stewardship and Engagement**. Through these four pillars, the Alliance serves thousands of Chesapeake Bay watershed community members by providing **technical assistance** that moves projects from ideas to **implementation**, and also by helping **build the capacity of our partners** to support their dedicated work toward cleaner water.

We recognize that environmental burdens and benefits vary across the Chesapeake region. **Considering and collaborating** with the wide range of community voices across the watershed is **core to the Alliance's programmatic delivery**.

For 52 years, the Alliance has served as the 'backbone' for regional collaboration - and we are looking ahead to our role in the future of Chesapeake Bay restoration. We know that achieving our ambitious vision requires the support of our partners and generous supporters. **We thank you for joining us in our work of restoring clean water throughout the watershed!**

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



KATE FRITZ
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



DREW SIGLIN
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

THE NEXT 6 YEARS OF CHESAPEAKE BAY WATERSHED CONSERVATION

OUR VISION

Clean water and resilient landscapes, cared for by all the people who live, work, and play in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

OUR MISSION

The Alliance restores the lands and waters of the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Our collaborative and action-oriented approach delivers on-the-ground solutions, technical assistance, and builds capacity to achieve healthier lands and cleaner water.

OUR PRINCIPLES

Our work is guided by a set of **core principles** that reflect our broad impact, working together with the communities, companies, and conservationists of the 64,000 square mile Chesapeake Bay region. These principles guide us to make a more intentional, robust, multi-beneficial, and sustained impact with a wide range of community voices to achieve our vision.

ADAPTIVE *We design tactics to achieve common goals*

COLLABORATIVE *We partner across sectors and regions*

RESULTS-ORIENTED *We deliver efficient, measurable, and holistic programming*

OUR GOALS

1

Expanding the Restoration of Lands & Waters



2

Building the Capacity of Partner Organizations



3

Connecting More People to the Environment



4

Sustaining Funding for Programmatic Impact



5

Strengthening Internal Infrastructure



GOAL 1

Expanding the Restoration of Lands & Waters

We focus on program areas of Forests, Agriculture, Green Infrastructure, and Stewardship & Engagement, we intend to increase planning, installation, and maintenance of conservation and restoration practices in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. We utilize both proven and innovative, people-centered, and adaptive efforts to fill capacity gaps in the broader watershed movement.

STRATEGIES

a. Continue to implement both proven best management practices (BMPs) and innovative technologies that deliver water quality, habitat restoration, and climate change mitigation and adaptation benefits.

b. Utilize tactics to ensure the maintenance and long-term success of practices implemented, including sustained funding, volunteer opportunities, and other related actions.

c. Prioritize efficiency, flexibility, and customization of our programming and cross-collaboration to meet the unique needs of the communities we engage in environmental conservation efforts to maximize impact.

d. Deepen impact within, and expand successful initiatives to geographies of greatest need, readiness, and opportunity beyond the Alliance's current geographic footprint.

e. Leverage and support co-beneficial initiatives established by funding entities (governments, foundations, and corporations) by providing technical support, strategic thought partnership, and the delivery of mission-supported projects.

GOAL 2

Building the Capacity of Partner Organizations



We will continue to establish and sustain mutually beneficial collaborations with communities, companies, conservation groups, and other stakeholder organizations in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. The Alliance provides technical assistance, drives partnership actions, and facilitates engagement and resource sharing. We create linkages between partner organization goals and restoration efforts that support people-centered approaches, create communities that are resilient to changing environmental conditions, and other sustainability efforts.

STRATEGIES

f. In partnership with local communities and organizations, co-design and implement approaches that bolster capacity to successfully align community priorities and environmental impact in project delivery.

g. Grow existing and establish new corporate partnerships to deliver water quality improvements that bolster environmental sustainability and mission-aligned goals.

h. Lead and facilitate forums for learning, resource sharing, and collaboration focused on organizational and technical capacity building supporting the restoration, conservation, and the protection of the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

i. Provide technical assistance and capacity to support local, state, and federal efforts in fulfilling the goals of the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* and related implementation and other coordinated watershed-focused frameworks.

GOAL 3

Connecting More People to the Environment



The Alliance will continue to engage watershed community members to build long-lasting stewardship of the lands and waters of the region. We intend to increase interactions with the environment through volunteerism, education, outreach, story sharing, and support of individuals who want to make a difference in their communities.

STRATEGIES

j. Support the growth of, and number of opportunities for, green jobs and workforce development through mission-aligned training and expanded employment opportunities within the Alliance and the broader conservation community.

k. Host volunteer and engagement opportunities that focus on education, water quality data collection, and hands-on improvements to natural resources, local habitats and waterways. Support individuals that lead long-term volunteer conservation efforts within their communities.

l. Build the next generation of environmental stewards' skills by educating students and working with teachers, faculty, and administrators of educational institutions on Chesapeake Bay watershed issues and opportunities for conservation and restoration.

m. Leverage consistent and prominent Alliance branding across all various communication tactics to create meaningful engagements that add value to our stakeholders and ultimately inspire action.

n. Showcase the impact of the Alliance's work by uplifting stories of partners and stakeholders in their own words, providing representative examples of how restoration projects benefit different communities.

GOAL 4

Sustaining Funding for Programmatic Impact



In addition to continued identification and securement of public dollars (typically through competitive grant programs), we will build sustained funding streams from private sources. This includes new foundation support, corporate sponsorships and fee-for-service contracts, fundraising efforts, and individual giving.

STRATEGIES

o. Continue to grow cost-effective project models and develop alternative conservation financing methods (such as revolving loans, fee for service, etc.) through existing and new partnerships.

p. Build corporate sponsorship and gift opportunities to support organizational efforts and/or deliver programmatic services directly to those corporate entities.

q. Solicit individual and foundation gifts to build internal infrastructure, flexible programmatic funding, and long-term financial resilience for the organization.

r. Continue to tell stories related to the impact and urgency around our work in order to increase engagement with and investment from funders, donors, and other supporters.

GOAL 5

Strengthening Internal Infrastructure



Maintain a high standard organizational structure through Staff and Board recruitment, retention and support; financial and administrative systems infrastructure, professional communications, development, and administrative services, processes and procedures.

STRATEGIES

s. Center responsiveness, opportunity, accountability, and transparency in decision making, policies, procedures, and planning efforts across the organization, including in administrative, fundraising, communications, and program functions.

t. Foster a workplace environment of continuous learning and individual growth, including curated leadership and development opportunities that promote a workplace culture of appreciation and belonging. Offer tools and resources for the achievement of individual professional aspirations.

u. Scale administrative, financial, and human resources capacity (inclusive of technology, systems, and personnel) to effectively and efficiently support the organization's mission and vision.

v. Recruit Board Directors who provide broad regional perspectives and skills to carry out the fiduciary responsibilities of the Board, and recruit staff that have the skills to conduct their job duties while having the understanding needed to engage effectively with community partners.

THE WORK WE DO

For more than 50 years, the Alliance has served as the ‘backbone’ for action-oriented impact and collaboration across our watershed.

With four strategically placed offices and four focused programs, we’re positioned to solve downstream problems with upstream solutions. Through boots-on-the-ground solutions, technical assistance, and expertise, we prevent pollution where it begins – on the land – before it reaches our rivers and the Chesapeake.

By collaborating with like-minded individuals and organizations, the Alliance becomes a catalyst, building the capacity of others to join and accelerate clean water efforts in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

RESULTS-DRIVEN IMPACT AND COLLABORATION FOR CLEAN WATER



Watch the full video at allianceforthebay.org/WhatWeDo

FOSTERING PARTNERSHIPS AND BUILDING RESILIENCY

Making a difference in our watershed means building relationships with the individuals who live, work, and play throughout its lands and waters. Through a wide variety of projects, we connect people to their local rivers and streams, where they become directly involved in local restoration efforts.

Our combined approach of action and collaboration builds resiliency among our communities and landscapes to continually adapt to an ever-changing world. Staying true to our mission we remain results-driven and focused on the needs of our beloved watershed. ***For our Forests. For our Streams. For our Future.***



AGRICULTURE

FORESTS

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

STEWARDSHIP & ENGAGEMENT



AGRICULTURE

The Alliance supports farmers in implementing agricultural best management practices to restore the health of local rivers and streams.

KEY AGRICULTURE TARGETS BY 2028

750 agricultural best management practices (BMPs) installed or implemented

25 new or sustained corporate food supply chain partnerships

FORESTS

The Alliance works collaboratively to improve forest health, create new forests and tree canopy, inform and support private woodland owners, and communicate to the public benefits provided by the woodlands and trees in our landscape.

KEY FORESTS TARGETS BY 2028

3,000 acres of land converted to new forests or restored existing forest land

1,000,000 trees or woody shrubs planted

675,000 linear feet of streams or rivers protected with forested buffers





GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

The Alliance reduces stormwater runoff by implementing conservation landscaping practices that improve water quality and support healthy landscapes throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

KEY GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE TARGETS BY 2028

6,000 small-scale urban/suburban stormwater BMPs installed or restored

35 large-scale green infrastructure BMPs designed, permitted, and/or implemented



STEWARDSHIP & ENGAGEMENT

The Alliance engages communities, companies, and conservationists to build a more resilient landscape and foster a deeper commitment to improving our local lands and waters in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

KEY STEWARDSHIP & ENGAGEMENT TARGETS BY 2028

750 training sessions and workgroups

825 partner entities represented at programmatic events, presentations, or forums

1,750 individual water quality monitoring sites





KEY STEWARDSHIP & ENGAGEMENT TARGETS BY 2028 CONTINUED

16,000 volunteers engaged

15,000 students of all ages reached

1,800 local officials engaged in learning about watershed challenges and opportunities

GOALS	INDICATORS	TARGETS BY 2028	
1 Expanding the Restoration of Lands & Waters	Forest Restoration	3,000	acres of land converted to new forests or restored existing forest land
	Trees Planted	1,000,000	trees or woody shrubs planted
	Streams with new Forest Buffers	675,000	linear feet of streams or rivers protected with forested buffers
	Agriculture BMPs	750	agricultural best management practices (BMPs) installed or implemented
	Agriculture Supply Chain Partners	25	new or sustained corporate food supply chain partnerships
	Urban Stormwater BMPs	6,000	small-scale urban/suburban stormwater BMPs installed or restored
	Large Scale Green Infrastructure BMPs	35	large-scale green infrastructure BMPs designed, permitted, and/or implemented
2 Building the Capacity of Partner Organizations	Training & Workgroup Contribution	750	training sessions and workgroups
	Partners Represented	825	partner entities represented at programmatic events, presentations, or forums
	Water Quality Monitoring Sites	1,750	individual water quality monitoring sites
3 Connecting More People to the Environment	Landowners Making Change	4,500	landowners making change
	Volunteers	16,000	volunteers
	Students Reached	15,000	K-12 and college students engaged
	Local Officials Engaged	1,800	local officials engaged in learning about watershed challenges and opportunities
	Audience Engagement Rate	4%	rate of people engaging with online content
	Audience Growth	206,000	audience members
4 Sustaining Funding for Programmatic Impact	Funding Diversification	300% increase	in secondary funding sources
5 Strengthening Internal Infrastructure	Staff Retention	92.5%	average annual retention rate
	Total Staff & Interns	35% increase	in staff and interns

FORESTS · AGRICULTURE · GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE · STEWARDSHIP & ENGAGEMENT · INTERNAL SUPPORT

SUPPORT A FUTURE WITH CLEAN WATER AND RESILIENT LANDSCAPES

With so much at stake in the future, the time is now for us to continue to join together to take action for cleaner rivers and streams in the Chesapeake Bay. There are many ways that you can take action in your everyday life, and we invite you to get involved!

- Our website offers many **resources and tools** for ways to make your home more watershed-friendly; you can find information on how to design and install your own rain garden, assess your property's natural resources, research native plants for your home, and so much more. Visit allianceforthebay.org/resources to explore them all today.

- We are looking for great people to become volunteers! Help out at a cleanup site, collect local water quality samples, or organize the planting of native trees in your community. Alliance volunteers are one of our most important resources. Stop by allianceforthebay.org/volunteer to learn more.

- **Support our work** with a financial gift to the Alliance at allianceforthebay.org/donate. Every dollar we raise from individuals is matched over 5x through public funding. Your gift is an effective way to make a positive contribution to the future of the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

We hope you will join the Alliance in our mission to restore the lands and waters of the Chesapeake Bay watershed!

VISIT ALLIANCEFORTHEBAY.ORG TO GET INVOLVED



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to express our deepest gratitude to the dedicated members of our staff and board who have contributed their time, expertise, and passion to the development of our strategic plan. Their commitment to the Alliance and its mission is invaluable, and their collective voice paints a vision the organization looks forward to bringing to life in the future.

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ALLIANCE for the Chesapeake Bay

THE ALLIANCE'S 2023-2028 STRATEGIC PLAN

OUR VISION

Clean water and resilient landscapes, cared for by all the people who live, work, and play in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

OUR MISSION

The Alliance restores the lands and waters of the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Our collaborative and action-oriented approach delivers on-the-ground solutions, technical assistance, and builds capacity to achieve healthier lands and cleaner water.

OUR PRINCIPLES

- Adaptive
- Collaborative
- Results-oriented

2023-2028 GOALS

1. **Expanding the Restoration of Lands & Waters**
2. **Building the Capacity of Partner Organizations**
3. **Connecting More People to the Environment**
4. **Sustaining Funding for Programmatic Impact**
5. **Strengthening Internal Infrastructure**

KEY INDICATORS

- Acres of land converted to new forests or restored existing forest land
- Number of trees or woody shrubs planted
- Linear feet of streams or rivers protected with vegetated buffers
- Number of agricultural best management practices (BMPs) installed or implemented
- Number of new or sustained corporate food supply chain partnerships
- Number of small-scale urban/suburban stormwater BMPs installed or restored
- Number of large-scale green infrastructure BMPs designed, permitted, and/or implemented
- Number of training sessions and workgroups
- Number of partner entities represented at programmatic events, presentations, or forums
- Number of individual water quality monitoring sites
- Number of landowners making change
- Number of volunteers engaged
- Number of K-12 and college students engaged
- Number of local officials engaged in learning about watershed challenges and opportunities
- Percent of people engaging with online content
- Number of website users, newsletter recipients, and social media followers
- Percentage of different revenue sources
- Average annual retention rate
- Total staff and interns

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For our forests, for our streams, for our future