

## What is the Chesapeake Bay TMDL?

The Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) is designed to ensure that all pollution control measures needed to restore the Bay and its tidal rivers are in place by 2025. According to the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), despite extensive restoration efforts, the TMDL was prompted by insufficient progress and continued poor water quality in the Chesapeake Bay and its tidal tributaries. The TMDL is required under the federal Clean Water Act and responds to consent decrees in Virginia and the District of Columbia from the late 1990s.

Each of the six Chesapeake Bay states and the District of Columbia were required to develop Watershed Implementation Plans (WIP) that detail how and when they will meet the pollution allocations. In Virginia, the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), together with the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation were tasked with developing the WIPs, three of which have been developed in 2010, 2012 and 2019. EPA assesses state progress in meeting pollution goals at interim 2-year milestones.



## How do the local TMDLs relate to the Chesapeake Bay TMDL?

The local TMDLs have been completed to address local water quality issues, while the Bay TMDL was developed to address the larger Bay watershed. While some previously approved local TMDLs were based on reducing nutrients or sediment, most were written for other pollutants. In contrast, the Bay TMDL is intended to protect the Chesapeake Bay and its tidal waters from excessive nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment. For waters with both local and Bay TMDLs for nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment, the more stringent TMDL applies. In waters within the Bay watershed where TMDLs have been developed for other pollutants, those TMDLs will remain active alongside the Bay TMDL to address the nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment impairments.

## RRRC's Chesapeake Bay TMDL Efforts

The Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission (RRRC) was contracted by DEQ to coordinate the region's urban sector stakeholder input process for development of the Phase II and Phase III WIPs. This included topic areas such as stormwater management, septic systems, and urban forestry. For the Phase III WIPs, the Commission compiled lists of proposed Urban Best Management Practices, implementation strategies and resource needs to meet the region's nitrogen reduction goal. DEQ then aggregated the regional information from each Planning District into a state level plan.

Following the region's WIP III efforts, DEQ has contracted RRRC to provide coordination and technical assistance to local governments and other stakeholder groups in the region with urban sector implementation efforts. Upcoming meeting information and past meeting materials can be found on RRRC's website at [www.rrregion.org/chesbaytmdl.html#meeting](http://www.rrregion.org/chesbaytmdl.html#meeting).

For more information on RRRC's regional WIP III efforts please contact Michelle Edwards at [medwards@rrregion.org](mailto:medwards@rrregion.org) or 540-829-7450.

## Proof Virginia's Bay Effort is Working



In 2014-2015, Submerged Aquatic Vegetation increased by 21%, to the highest levels in the last three decades. Abundance of underwater grasses is a good indicator of water quality because they require clear water and sunlight.



Blue crab, shad, rockfish and oyster fisheries have all increased, especially blue crabs, whose number of adults have tripled since 2014.

### Good Water Quality Matters to:

- Recreational activities such as fishing, boating, and swimming
- Wildlife and vegetation
- Local tourism
- Economic development
- Seafood lovers

### Indirect effects of the Chesapeake Bay Effort

- Reduced flooding
- Groundwater protection
- Less frequent dredging of ponds and lakes
- Mainstreet beautification from street tree planting and rain gardens



### 5 Non-regulatory Examples of What Local Governments Can Do

1. Apply for Stormwater Local Assistance Funding to implement stormwater best management practices on locality-owned property, or contact RRRC for grant writing assistance
2. Work with non-profits to organize volunteer tree plantings at local parks
3. Distribute the Rappahannock-Rapidan Homeowners Guide to a Watershed-Friendly Backyard to your citizens
4. Encourage citizens to pump out their septic tanks and contact their Soil and Water Conservation District for financial assistance
5. Incorporate rain gardens and other bioretention facilities into Main Street projects and building renovations