Understanding STAC's Perspectives on Environmental Decision Support Tools

Alex Gunnerson[1] and Sophie Waterman[1]

1. U.S. Geological Survey, Lower Mississippi Gulf Water Science Center

USGS science for a changing world

Chesapeake Bay Program
Science. Restoration. Partnership.

Agenda

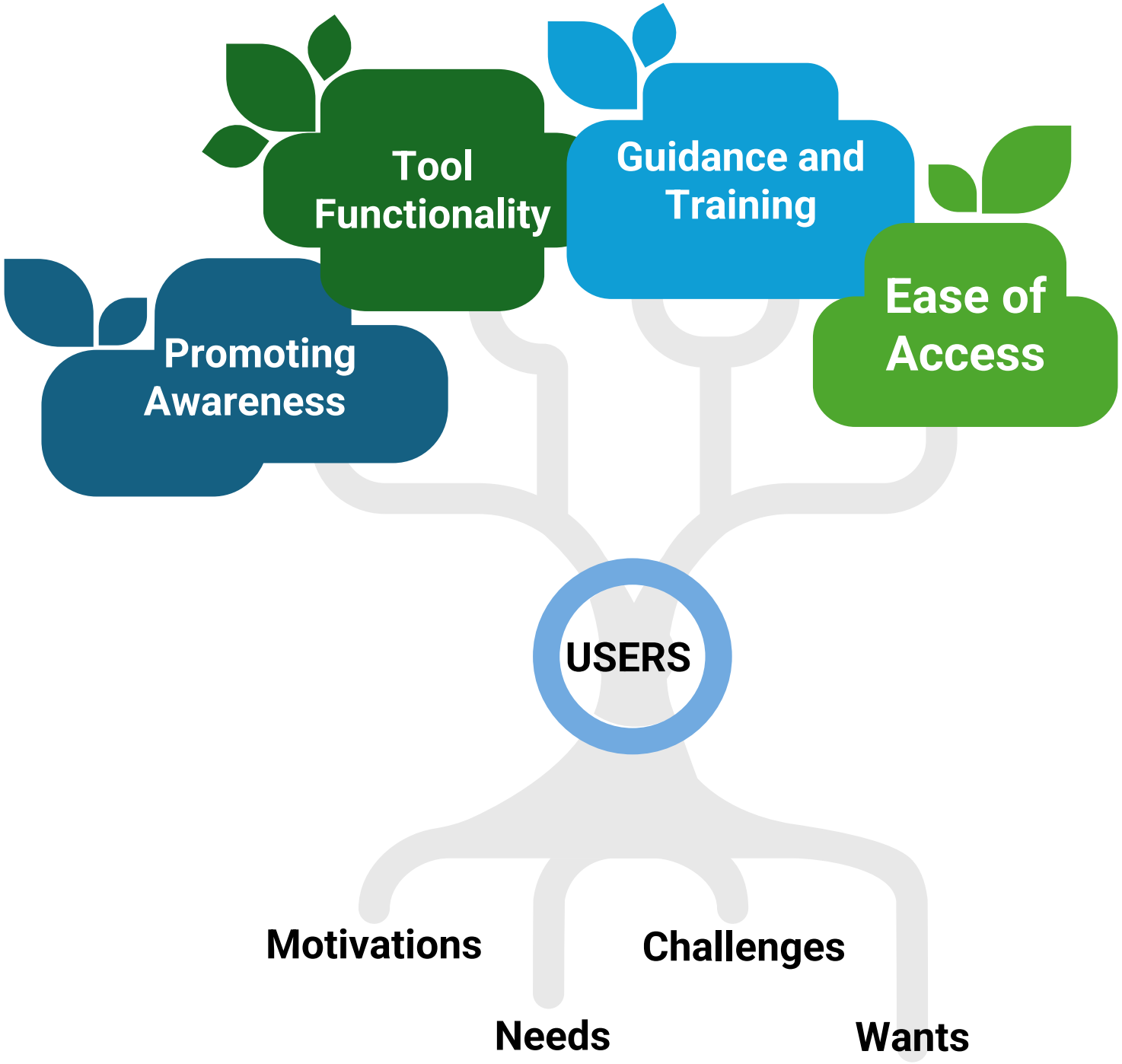
- Background
- Decision Support Tools
- User Research
- Discussion

Background

Why User Research? Why Now?

- The Beyond 2025 Steering Committee has expressed that the Chesapeake Bay Partnership needs to **target actions to effectively address local environmental and community concerns.**
  - There is a need to “better target and prioritize resources and to provide technical assistance and communication of outcomes.”1
- GSAT is reviewing existing resources and identifying potential new resources that can **address the needs** of stakeholders and target audiences.
- User research is needed to **better understand the motivations and needs** of target audiences related to conservation and restoration decisions as we pivot to Beyond 2025.

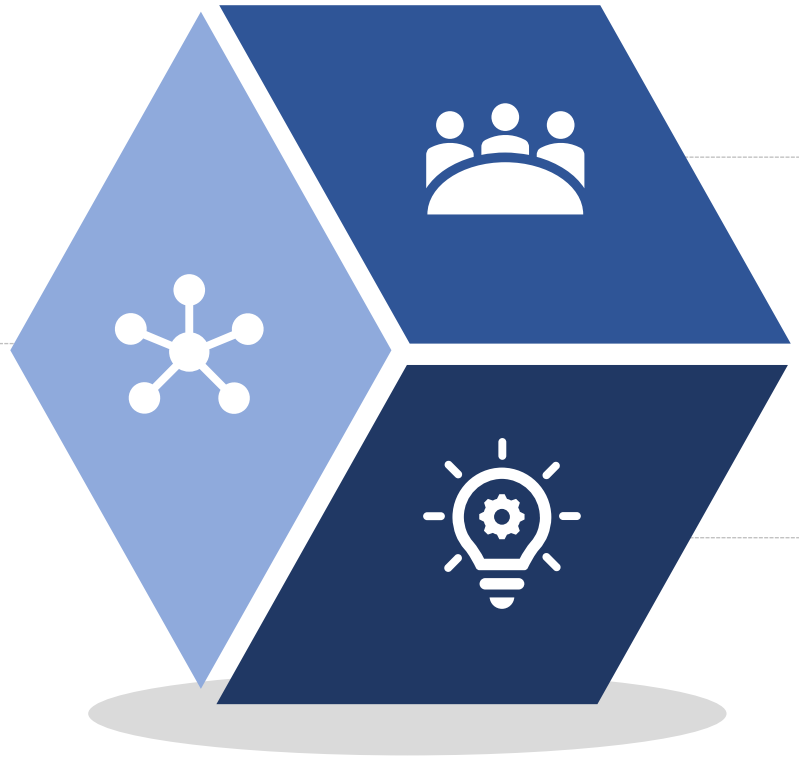
1. A Critical Path Forward for the Chesapeake Bay Program Beyond 2025, page 12.


Tool Functionality
Guidance and Training
Promoting Awareness
Ease of Access
USERS
Motivations
Challenges
Needs
Wants

The Modular Approach

Connection

Connect the comments made by users to geospatial resources



Information Gathering

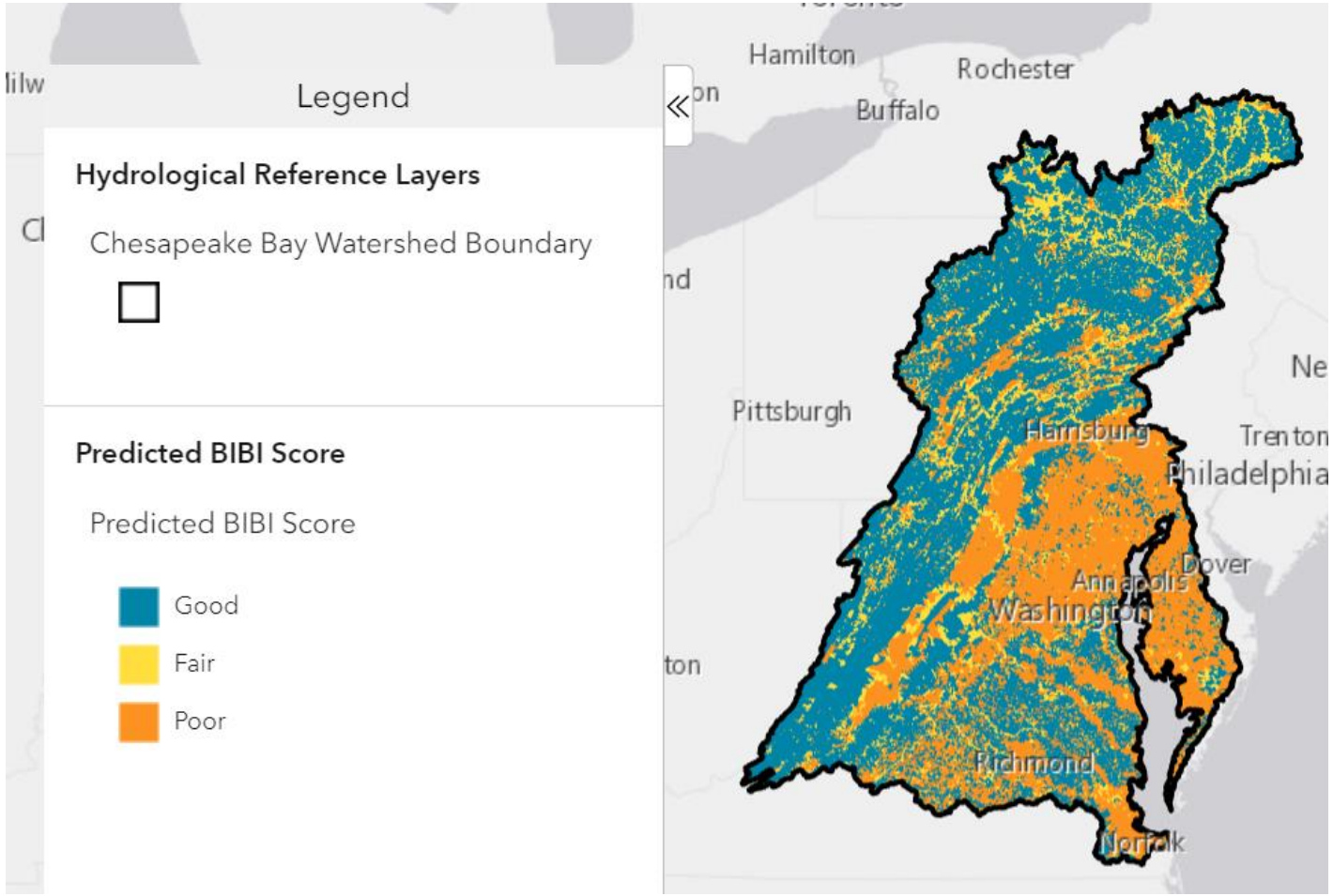
Learning about users' wants, needs, and challenges related to CBPO and outside DSTs

Prototyping

Develop an interactive prototype for the Targeting Tools Portal

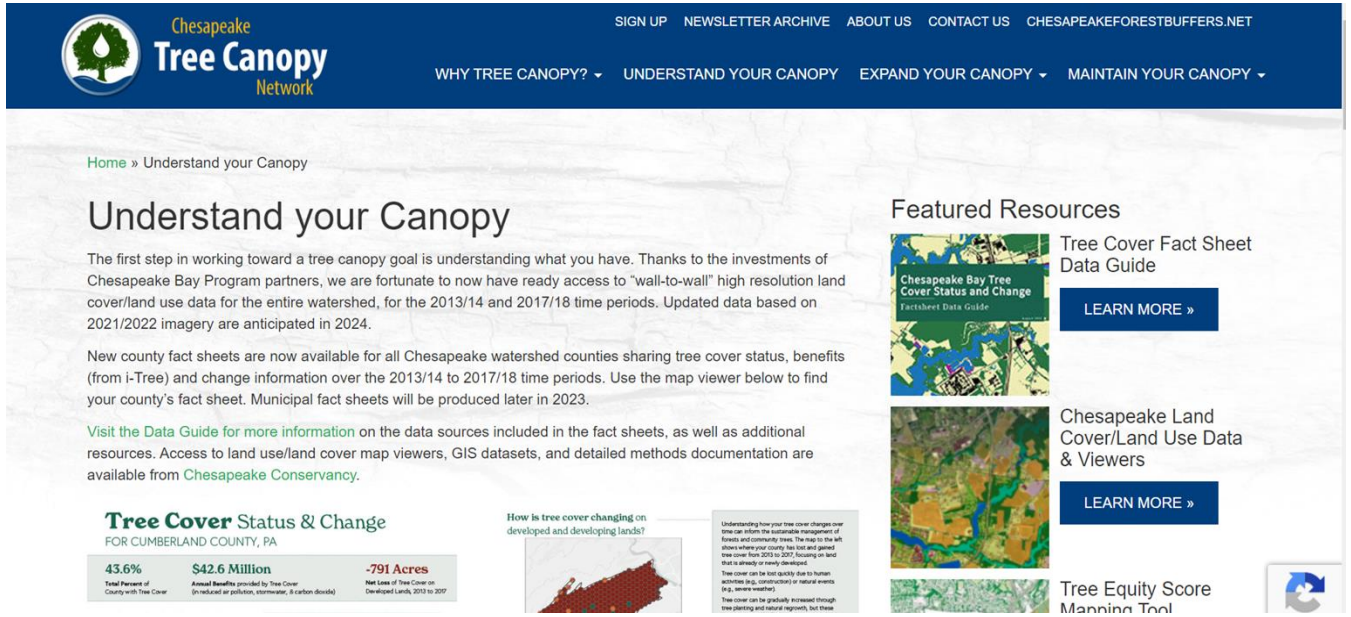
Decision Support Tools

Chesapeake Healthy Watersheds Assessment 2.0 (CHWA2.0)



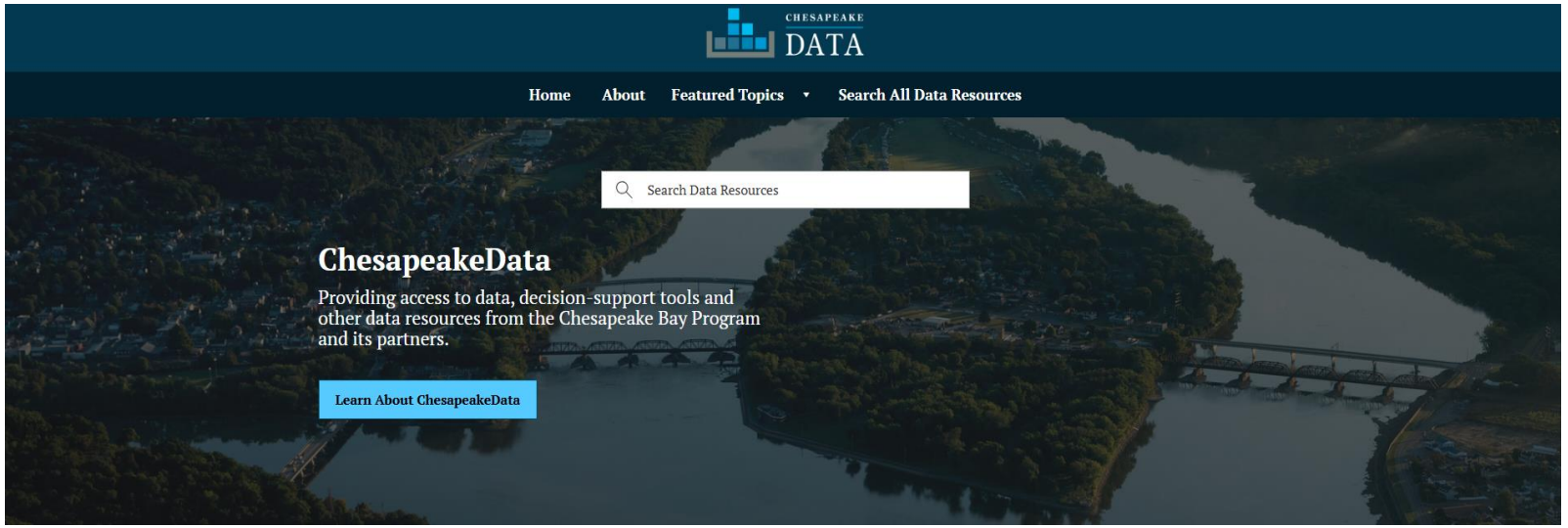
Assessment tool that explores the health and vulnerability of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.

Tree Canopy Fact Sheets



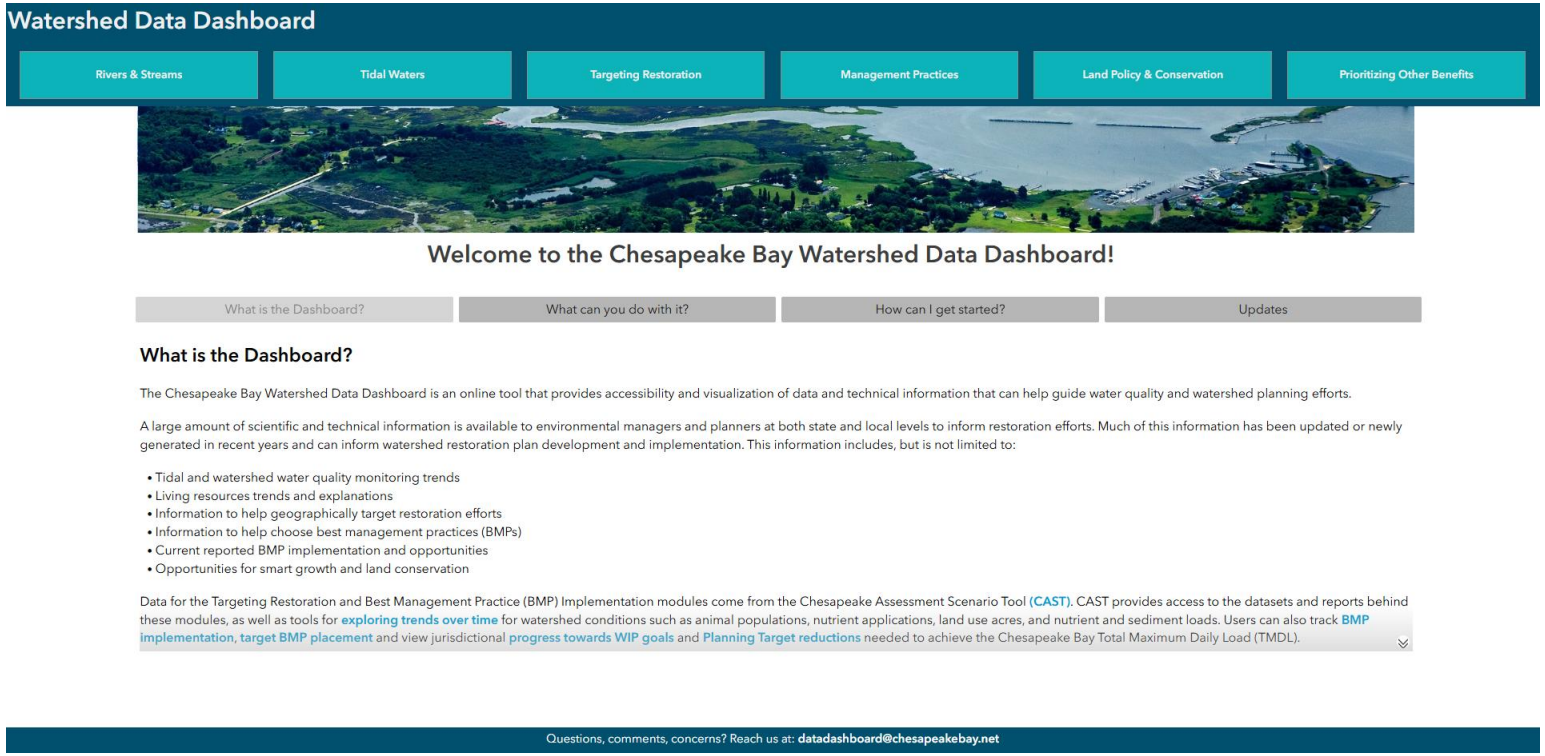
County fact sheets for Chesapeake watershed counties sharing tree cover status, benefits (from i-Tree) and change information over the 2013/14 to 2017/18 time periods.

Chesapeake Data Portal



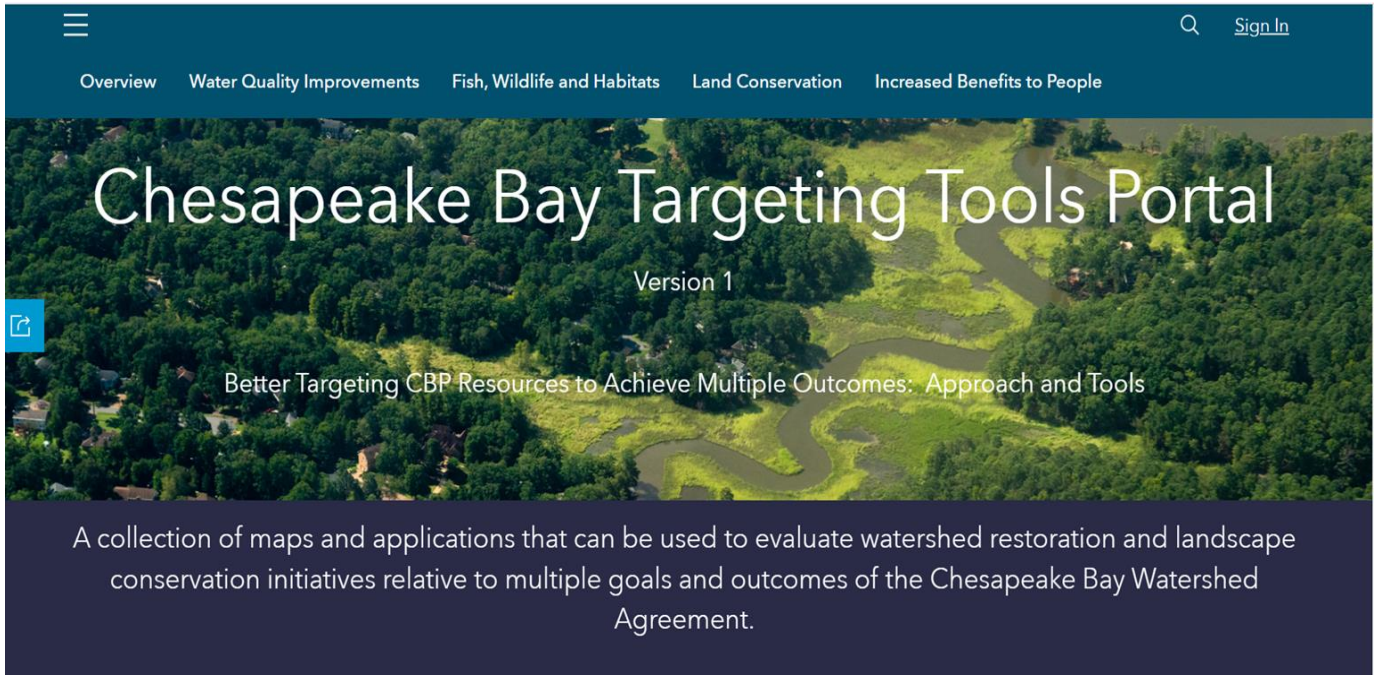
Collection of the latest data and geographic content from Chesapeake Bay Program Partners.

Watershed Data Dashboard



A tool that provides accessibility and visualization of data and technical information that can help guide water quality and watershed planning efforts.

Chesapeake Bay Targeting Tools Portal



A collection of maps and applications that can be used to evaluate watershed restoration and landscape conservation initiatives relative to multiple goals and outcomes of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement.

User Research

Who are we talking to?

State governments

Local governments

Land trusts

Non-profits/NGOs/Advocacy Organizations

Scientists

Common Themes (Preliminary)

- Strong interest in parcel scale metrics
- Interest in BMP implementation suitability maps
- Desire for greater recognition of implemented conservation and restoration actions, through increased spatial representation
- Relatively frequent use of CBP/CIC 1m LULC data
- Request for datasets to include case studies and lessons learned in how to apply each resource

Next steps

- Final report – Summer 2025
- Share findings with partners – Summer 2025
- Prototyping of new decision support portal – Summer and Fall 2025
- User testing of new decision support portal – Fall and Winter 2025

Discussion

Discussion Questions

1. What Bay Program resources (including, but not limited to geospatial tools) do you currently use, if any?
2. What factors motivate you to use decision support tools in general?(e.g., spatial scale, ease of use)
3. What type of technical assistance do you like to have when learning a new dataset or tool?
4. How can the Bay Program better support your work?