

2024 PRC Annual Action Plan (approved by the Patuxent River Commission, Jan. 10, 2024)

The Annual Action Plan will guide the PRC agenda in 2024 as it works to implement the strategies of the Patuxent River Policy Plan¹

Short-term actions

1. Meet with Governor Moore and the Secretaries of Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), Maryland Department of Natural Resources (MD DNR), Maryland Department of Planning (MDP), and Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA); and a representative of the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs in 2024 to discuss the PRC's mission and achievement of its goals, which includes identifying needed changes (laws, regulations, policies, science, etc.) to achieve restoration of the Patuxent River and its tributaries by 2040.

Implements *Patuxent River Policy Plan*:

- a. *Strategy A3: Keep elected and appointed officials aware of the issue and opportunities facing the river and seek their support when appropriate.*
 - b. *Strategy A4: Recommend changes to policies, program, legislation and/or regulations to improve and restore water quality in the river and its watershed.*
2. Identify and assemble several Patuxent River-specific projects for possible funding (e.g., DNR Resiliency through Restoration, Maryland Sea Grant) that focus on both resiliency and river restoration.

Implements *Patuxent River Policy Plan*:

- a. *Strategy P1: Maintain and improve the health of the Patuxent River so it can support sustainable commercial and recreational fishing and seafood harvesting.*
 - b. *Strategy P2: Identify preservation and conservation priorities for the critical natural resources within the Patuxent River Watershed in county and municipal land use documents.*
 - c. *Strategy P4: Restore the health of the river by actions such as encouraging acquisition of properties or easements in sensitive resource areas, planting stream buffers, and controlling invasive plants, focusing on stream buffers.*
 - d. *Strategy P6: Support the work of local jurisdictions and the state in meeting their respective water quality goals as stated in approved plans and permits.*
 - e. *Strategy P7: Preserve and restore the movement of water, fish and wildlife through identifying and removing barriers.*
6. In 2024, reach consensus on a scope of work for a Patuxent River report card, then obtain funding for the creation and periodic updates of a Patuxent River report card.

Implements *Patuxent River Policy Plan*:

- a. *Strategy A3: Keep elected and appointed officials aware of the issues and opportunities facing the river and seek their support when appropriate.*

7. Support April/May spring clean-ups of the Patuxent River and its tributaries.

Implements *Patuxent River Policy Plan*:

- a. *Strategy P1: Maintain and improve the health of the Patuxent River so it can support sustainable commercial and recreational fishing and seafood harvesting.*
- b. *Strategy X2: Ensure and encourage public access to the river, its tributaries, and recreational opportunities within the watershed.*

8. As an ongoing activity, the Tourism Workgroup will work with State agencies and local governments to support and expand the Patuxent Challenge, which highlights access to recreational and tourism Patuxent River-related opportunities within the watershed.

Implements *Patuxent River Policy Plan*:

- a. *Strategy X1. Maintain, create and encourage opportunities for river-related economic activities within the Patuxent River Basin.*

Long-term actions (those that require one or more years to accomplish; establish a second Workgroup that can explore each of these issues and report back to the PRC) PRC long-range workgroup members include PRC members Frank Allen, John Denniston, Jennifer Greiner, Alison Santoro, Fred Tutman, Scott Knoche and Solange Filoso; and Barbara Sollner-Webb.

1. Determine what needs to change (laws, regulations, policies, science, etc.) to achieve restoration of the Patuxent River by 2040. This should include an analysis of existing requirements that discourage removal of invasive species to facilitate tree plantings.

Implements *Patuxent River Policy Plan*:

- a. *Strategy P1: Maintain and improve the health of the Patuxent River so it can support sustainable commercial and recreational fishing and seafood harvesting.*
- b. *Strategy A4: Recommend changes to policies, programs, legislation and/or regulations to improve and restore water quality in the river and its watershed.*
- c. *Strategy P2: Identify preservation and conservation priorities for the critical natural resources within the Patuxent River Watershed in county and municipal land use documents.*

2. Develop a Patuxent River report card that can be used to assess water and living resources conditions in each major part of the river and its tributaries, both tidal and nontidal. The Workgroup will determine the process for developing the report card, identify potential formats and potential funding opportunities. Over time, a report card should discuss the river's social and ecological responses to new actions to inform possible changes to those actions.

Implements *Patuxent River Policy Plan*

- a. *Strategy A3: Keep elected and appointed officials aware of the issues and opportunities facing the river and seek their support when appropriate.*
- b. *Strategy A1: Keep abreast of issues facing the river in communities within the*

Patuxent River watershed and share experiences and challenges with the PRC.

3. Establish one new wetland park in each county by 2027. Compile background materials that highlight the benefits and opportunities wetland parks offer. Work with county staff to identify potential locations. Provide recommendations for potential funding opportunities.

Implements *Patuxent River Policy Plan*:

- a. *Strategy P4: Restore the health of the river by actions such as encouraging acquisition of properties or easements in sensitive resource areas, planting stream buffers, and controlling invasive plants, focusing on stream buffers.*
- b. *Strategy P6: Support the work of local jurisdictions and the state in meeting their respective water quality goals as stated in approved plans and permits.*
- c. *Strategy X2: Ensure and encourage public access to the river, its tributaries, and recreational opportunities within the watershed.*

4. Help identify technical and financial assistance opportunities for other jurisdictions and/or unincorporated areas (2-3) in the watershed, similar to project identification and funding forum approach used for the 2022-2023 PRC assistance to the Town of Eagle Harbor.

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- a. *Strategy P1: Maintain and improve the health of the Patuxent River so it can support sustainable commercial and recreational fishing and seafood harvesting.*
- b. *Strategy P2: Identify preservation and conservation priorities for the critical natural resources within the Patuxent River Watershed in county and municipal land use documents.*
- c. *Strategy P4: Restore the health of the river by actions such as encouraging acquisition of properties or easements in sensitive resource areas, planting stream buffers, and controlling invasive plants, focusing on stream buffers.*
- d. *Strategy P6: Support the work of local jurisdictions and the state in meeting their respective water quality goals as stated in approved plans and permits.*
- e. *Strategy A2: Pursue resolution of pollution concerns for communities within the Patuxent River watershed.*
- f. *Strategy X2: Ensure and encourage public access to the river, its tributaries, and recreational opportunities within the watershed.*

5. Determine potential climate change impacts to the Patuxent River and its tributaries so that we can plan for needed resilience measures. Work with UMCES and PEARL researchers and others to achieve this goal.

Implements *Patuxent River Policy Plan*:

- a. *Strategy A3: Keep elected and appointed officials aware of the issues and opportunities facing the river and seek their support when appropriate.*
- b. *Strategy P5: Preserve the Patuxent River headwaters as a permanent and reliable source of drinking water, and improve and restore water quality in the tributaries feeding the reservoirs.*
- c. *Strategy X3: Support economic and scientific research projects on the river and seek*

- or support funding where possible.*
- d. *Strategy X4: Create and support educational and stewardship opportunities for all communities within the watershed.*
 - e. *Strategy X5. Protect valuable cultural resources and historical properties within the watershed.*
6. Raise public awareness of the work of the PRC through increased outreach and opportunity for public feedback.

Implements *Patuxent River Policy Plan*:

- a. *Strategy A3: Keep elected and appointed officials aware of the issues and opportunities facing the river and seek their support when appropriate.*
7. Identify opportunities to establish and connect biking and hiking trails in the watershed. Facilitate conversations between state and local governmental jurisdictions, and non-governmental organizations to accomplish the establishment of one new trail or connection in each county within five years.

Implements *Patuxent River Policy Plan*

- a. *Strategy X1: Ensure and encourage public access to the river, its tributaries, and recreational opportunities within the watershed.*
- b. *Strategy X4: Create and support educational and stewardship opportunities for all communities within the watershed.*
- c. *Strategy P3: Embrace smart growth and smart conservation practices in the counties and municipalities in the Patuxent River watershed to reduce sprawl and preserve irreplaceable resources.*

Goal for Workgroup meetings during 2024: 4 meetings of the long-range workgroup.

¹ The 2015 policy plan was adopted on May 14, 2014 by the commission and later in 2014 by the elected bodies of the eight local governments represented on the commission. The Maryland General Assembly adopted the 2015 policy plan during the 2016 legislative session through Joint Resolution 1. The plan provides a policy framework for local jurisdictions and the state in preserving and restoring the river, raising awareness of the river through advocacy, and creating excitement about the multiple opportunities for interaction with the river.