



OYSTER RECOVERY
PARTNERSHIP®
— ORP —

Strategic Narrative

2026-2030





Leadership Message

Dear Friends and Partners of the Bay,

For decades, the Chesapeake Bay has been a symbol of resilience, renewal, and deep connections between people and place. At Oyster Recovery Partnership (ORP), we are proud to play a vital role in restoring this national treasure through science-based oyster restoration, shell recycling, sustainable fisheries support, and community engagement.

Oysters are essential to the health of the Bay. They naturally filter the water, provide critical habitat for marine life, and support vibrant local economies. Our work planting billions of oysters, recycling millions of oyster shells, and advancing aquaculture is helping to rebuild the Bay from the bottom up.

Today, the challenges facing the Bay are significant—from climate change to pollution to habitat degradation. But thanks to the tireless efforts of partners like you—watermen, scientists, restaurateurs, educators, policymakers, and volunteers—we are making a difference. Together, we're restoring ecosystems, strengthening communities, and ensuring that future generations can enjoy a cleaner, healthier Bay.

Thank you for being part of this work and this movement. The Bay's future depends on all of us, and we're honored to have you alongside us.

With gratitude,
Ward Slacum

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Ward Slacum".



About Our Strategic Plan

At the Oyster Recovery Partnership, our strategic planning process has been grounded in our collaborative spirit, willingness to reflect, and our deep commitment to restoring the Bay's oyster population and strengthening the health of our coastal communities.

Led by our Strategic Planning Committee, we engaged in visioning and strategy sessions that tapped into the insight and dedication of our staff, whose voices have been central in shaping our path forward. We've also taken a community-centered approach by listening closely to those impacted by our work. Through interviews, surveys, and targeted feedback sessions, we connected with a range of partners, constituents, and community members to ensure this plan reflects shared priorities, real-world needs, and long-term aspirations.

This inclusive process was made possible through the contributions of:

- **Partners & Community Members**
- **Staff & Program Leads**
- **Board of Directors**
- **Strategic Planning Committee:**

Ward Slacum

Allison Albert-Guercio

Olivia Caretti, PhD

Beth Franks

David King

Rebecca Morlock

Paul Schurick

Jen Walters

Tighe Merkert

Bill Gibbons-Fly

Shannon Lyons, PhD

Katie Matthews, PhD

Jason Ruth

Russell Smith

Robert T. Brown

Chris Desautelle

Hilary Falk

Jim Perdue

Mike Sieracki, PhD



Vision

A healthy Chesapeake Bay that supports local ecosystems, economies, and communities

Mission

We restore the Chesapeake Bay by revitalizing oysters through collaboration, innovation, and action



Results



Healthy Chesapeake Bay habitats and waterways



Sustainable fisheries and a thriving seafood economy



Resilient Chesapeake Bay communities



Values

We value...



Visionary Leadership: We lead with purpose, inspiring others through our expertise, efficiency, and commitment to impactful action.



Collaboration: We work with people and partners from all backgrounds to achieve shared goals.



Science: We use evidence-based solutions, combining local knowledge and traditional practices with scientific research, to guide our work.



Innovation: We embrace pioneering ideas and technology to increase our impact.



Resilience: We adapt to meet the needs of today and the future, while remaining steadfast in our mission.



Environmental Stewardship: We responsibly deploy resources for the well-being of both people and the environment.



Priorities

1



Promote our unique role in Chesapeake Bay recovery

By amplifying the critical role oysters play in cleaning our waters, rebuilding habitat, and protecting working shorelines—and by highlighting ORP’s hands-on role—we will rally action, galvanize support, and accelerate efforts to restore oysters and the Chesapeake Bay.

2



Restore oysters and support sustainable fisheries

Through restoration, innovation, and collaboration, we will strengthen sustainable fisheries, elevate the seafood industry, improve ecosystem health, and engage communities in lasting stewardship—working not to replicate the past, but to restore ecological function and build a healthier, more resilient Bay for generations to come.

3



Grow funding and strengthen organizational resilience

With expanded revenue streams, stronger donor and partner relationships, and internal capacity aligned with mission-driven goals, we will build a resilient organization equipped to drive lasting impact for the Chesapeake Bay and its communities.

Vision

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- **Collaboration:** We work with people and partners from all backgrounds to achieve shared goals.
- **Science:** We use evidence-based solutions, combining local knowledge and traditional practices with scientific research to guide our work.
- **Innovation:** We embrace new ideas and technology, pioneering proven and promising solutions to increase our impact.
- **Stewardship:** We responsibly manage resources for the well-being of both people and the environment.

2026-2030 Strategic Roadmap



OYSTER RECOVERY®
PARTNERSHIP | ORP

Priorities and Strategies

Promote our unique role in Chesapeake Bay recovery

- Increase outreach to partners and the public
- Strengthen advocacy for oyster restoration and Chesapeake Bay resilience
- Inspire community involvement in ORP's oyster restoration efforts
- Expand Shell Recycling Alliance participation

Restore oysters and support sustainable fisheries

- Plant more oysters in the water
- Develop tools and strategies to advance sustainable fisheries
- Monitor and report on outcomes

Grow funding and strengthen organizational resilience

- Identify organizational needs and the financial resources required to support them
- Explore new revenue sources
- Expand board engagement in fundraising
- Deepen engagement with existing donors

Cross-Cutting Strategy: Strengthen and leverage strategic partnerships

Performance Measures

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| ▪ # of followers on social media networks | ▪ # of acres of oyster reefs restored | ▪ % growth in revenue |
| ▪ # of people attending ORP events | ▪ # of commercial harvest trips reported electronically | ▪ % of board members participating in fundraising activities |
| ▪ # of participants in ORP's community restoration programs | ▪ # of outcome-focused restoration stories and publications disseminated | ▪ % donor retention year-over-year |
| ▪ # of participants recycling shells | | |

Results



Healthy Chesapeake Bay habitats and waterways



Sustainable fisheries and a thriving seafood economy



Resilient Chesapeake Bay communities



Oyster Recovery Partnership
1805A Virginia Street | Annapolis, MD 21401
410-990-4970 | info@oysterrecovery.org

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