

## What You Can Do to Help!

The success of the tributary strategy depends ultimately on everyone in the watershed assisting in developing and putting the plan into practice. The stakes are high, and we encourage you to assist in this window of opportunity to improve our local water quality which will in turn improve the water quality of the Chesapeake Bay. In particular, we suggest that you:

- **Get involved** in outreach meetings in your community;
- **Learn as much as you can** about practices and activities that can reduce the loads of nutrients and sediment pollution;
- **Limit your own fertilizer use** and apply only at appropriate times;
- **Control runoff and soil erosion** on your land;
- **Minimize the amount of trash** your household produces and start a compost pile;
- **Conserve water and energy**;
- **Encourage your local government** to incorporate forest conservation and stream corridor protection in local land use planning;
- **Maintain your septic system**; and
- **Ask your legislator** if he/she supports this voluntary approach.

### A voluntary approach will:

1. Target local problems,
2. Save us money, and
3. Protect us from new regulations.

For more information:

**Upper Susquehanna Coalition**  
[www.u-s-c.org](http://www.u-s-c.org)

**NYS Department of Environmental Conservation**  
[www.dec.state.ny.us](http://www.dec.state.ny.us)

**Chesapeake Bay Program**  
[www.chesapeakebay.net](http://www.chesapeakebay.net)

**Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay**  
[www.acb-online.org](http://www.acb-online.org)



## Chesapeake Bay Sources, Loads and Goals for NY

### Phosphorus

- Sources: .... Urban - suburban and agriculture
- Loads: ..... 1,020,000 pounds per year
- Goal: ..... 590,000 pounds per year

### Nitrogen

- Sources: .... Forests, urban - suburban and agriculture
- Loads: ..... 18,230,000 pounds per year
- Goal: ..... 12,580,000 pounds per year

### Sediment

- Sources: .... Urban - suburban, forests and agriculture
- Loads: ..... 145,000 tons per year
- Goal: ..... 131,000 tons per year



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# New York and the Chesapeake Bay

***EPA will require regulations in the Chesapeake Bay unless the Bay states, including New York, voluntarily reduce the sediment and nutrient loads in advance.***



## Should I be Concerned?

*If you live in the Upper Susquehanna River Basin or the Chemung River Basin (shown in the map on this page) you should be concerned.*

### Q. What are the major problems for the Chesapeake Bay?

A. Nutrients and sediments are polluting the Chesapeake Bay. And as the headwaters to the Chesapeake Bay, the upper Susquehanna River and the Chemung River Basins both can contribute sediment, nitrogen and phosphorus from urban runoff, sewage treatment plants, and agriculture.

### Q. How do nutrients and sediment impair the Chesapeake Bay?

A. Nitrogen supports algal blooms and uses up the oxygen in salt water when the algae dies and decays. Phosphorus supports algal blooms in fresh water and uses up the oxygen when the algae dies and decays. Sediment smothers aquatic plants and animals and reduces sunlight. These pollutants impact the Bay's unique ecosystem of over 2,700 plant species, 348 finfish, 173 species of shellfish. The Chesapeake Bay can produce up to 500 million pounds of seafood every year.

### Q. How did this impairment happen?

A. In the past 50 years, there have been changes in uses of the land, with growing suburbs, overfishing, intensive agricultural practices and increased populations in all Bay states (NY, PA, WV, VA, DE, MD, and DC). These changes have led

to a decline in water quality because of their nutrient and sediment load to the Bay.

### Q. How can loads of nutrients and sediment to the Bay be reduced?

A. Best management practices for agriculture, controlling erosion and sediments, maintaining septic systems, upgrading wastewater treatment plants, and collecting and treating stormwater are a few of the ways nutrients and sediment can be reduced. In 2011, EPA will require regulations in the Chesapeake Bay **unless** the Bay states, including New York, voluntarily reduce the sediment and nutrient loads in advance (see NY target numbers on the reverse).

### Q. What does New York have to do to reduce the loads assigned by the Chesapeake Bay Program?

A. In 2000, Governor Pataki, through a Memorandum of Understanding, agreed to:

- Work cooperatively toward agreed reductions as necessary;

- Provide for a comprehensive public participation process; and
- Use innovative, voluntary measures to achieve reductions.

### Q. What does this really mean in practice?

A. This good news means we all have the opportunity to assist. The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has the lead role in developing an action plan to for New York. The DEC is assisted by the Upper Susquehanna Coalition, whose members are engaging the public through community outreach to help to define management practices that will reduce the target loads for NY as part of the work plan. Plan to participate with your community in developing the tributary strategy.

### Q. What is a tributary strategy and how can it help?

A. New York's tributary strategy will be a framework to reduce pollution coming from land, air, nonpoint and point sources. It will help to reduce nutrient and sediments coming from nonpoint sources (like runoff from parking lots) and point sources (such as sewage treatment plants) for each watershed. Water flowing across city streets, suburban lawns and farm land can pick up pollution and carry it to creeks and streams that eventually flow into the Bay.

