

The Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) launched in July a geographic information system (GIS)-enabled web site, CHesapeakeStat, to provide the public, decision makers, and restoration stakeholders with up-to-date information about the progress of government-funded restoration and conservation projects for the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Apart from promoting accountability, the site, which was developed in collaboration with Esri is used by CBP partners to analyze data so they can better assess progress and adapt new strategies and tactics.

"GIS is a tool that can be used to show people what agencies are doing and how they are spending money," said John Wolf, USGS, and GIS team leader of CBP. "But this project takes

it a step further. People can see in a geographic context how an agency's goals, strategies, and outcomes are being accomplished."

Developed as part of the Strategy for Protecting and Restoring the Chesapeake Bay Watershed initiated in response to President Barack Obama's May 2009 Executive Order 13508, CHesapeakeStat organizes information around the CBP goal areas of sustainable fisheries, healthy habitats, water quality, healthy watersheds, and Chesapeake stewardship.

"The Chesapeake Bay affects 64,000 square miles of habitat and 17 million people. Restoration efforts are crucial," says Robin Smith, Ph.D., Esri's environmental management solutions manager. "CBP's CHesapeakeStat makes government information

easily discoverable and simple to use. Tracking expenditures and progress with GIS is another step forward in geo-enabling government programs to meet their goals."

The site meets various levels of consumer need. The public and media may only want to see aggregated interpreted data for general information, whereas a scientist can access highly detailed data for research. Local watershed groups can use the site to better understand how their actions relate to the overall restoration efforts for the bay. A government agency may want to use the site as an adaptive management tool to evaluate success and decide if resources should be shifted from one location to another or possibly even from one program to another. ■