

**OYSTER RECOVERY PARTNERSHIP
2016 – 2021 STRATEGIC PLAN**



**OYSTER RECOVERY
PARTNERSHIP**
— ORP —

Overview

In the summer of 1993, Maryland convened the Oyster Roundtable, a coalition of 40 organizations, institutions, elected officials, businesses and individuals, to address the major concerns about oyster stocks in Maryland's Chesapeake Bay and formulate a plan for promoting and aiding in their recovery. The plan had three major objectives: 1) to maximize and enhance the ecological benefits of oysters; 2) to maximize and enhance the economic benefits derived from harvesting in the public and private oyster fisheries; and 3) to maximize the ability of government to respond effectively to these challenges. A major outcome of the action plan was the creation of the Oyster Recovery Partnership.

In 1994, the mission of the Oyster Recovery Partnership (ORP), formerly Chesapeake Appreciation (a Maryland based 501(C)(3) nonprofit organization created in 1972) was expanded to implement the objectives of the Oyster Roundtable Action Plan and coordinate efforts among its diverse group of program partners. Commissioned by a cause, the Oyster Recovery Partnership (ORP) is a successful co-venture of waterman, aquaculturists, environmentalists and government agencies, who all have an economic and cultural interest in the ecologic restoration of the Chesapeake Bay. ORP has been facilitating and performing most of Maryland's intensive, hands-on oyster restoration work to increase the number of oysters in the Chesapeake Bay in cooperation with a disparate group of partners, including scientists, watermen, government agencies and the environmental non-profit community. With its broad coalition of partners -- especially the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science (UMCES) Horn Point Hatchery -- ORP has been annually producing hundreds of millions of oysters and planting them into the Chesapeake Bay.

On the federal and state level, there is a renewed focus on restoring the Chesapeake Bay as highlighted by Executive Order 13508, the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement and Maryland's vision for restoring both the economic and ecological value of oysters in Maryland. At the core of this new direction is healthy large-scale oyster sanctuaries and a reinvigorated commercial oyster industry -- all of which have further galvanized the many Chesapeake Bay oyster restoration participants, as well as the public, with an urgent interest to lend knowledge, experience, science, equipment and brawn to rebuilding the Bay's native oyster population.

To address these future challenges, the Oyster Recovery Partnership will continue to provide innovative techniques and science to achieve greater efficiency, effectiveness and collaboration. Looking ahead, ORP, under the direction of its Board of Directors and in cooperation with a diverse set of partners and a talented staff, ORP will work to achieve these four strategic priorities:

1. Expand Oyster Restoration
2. Sustainable Oyster Harvests
3. Innovative Oyster Marketing and Outreach

Vision, Mission and Values

Vision Statement:

To have a self-sustaining oyster population for ecological and economic purposes that is characterized by a well-managed and growing commercial fishery and aquaculture industry in the Chesapeake and Coastal Bays and beyond.

Purpose Statement:

To increase the ecological and economic value of shellfish in the Chesapeake and Coastal Bays and beyond.

Mission Statement:

The Oyster Recovery Partnership is a 501(c)(3) non-profit that designs, promotes and implements consensus-based and scientifically-sustainable shellfish ecological restoration, aquaculture and commercial fishery activities to improve the environment and expand economic opportunities in the Chesapeake and Coastal Bays and beyond.

Guiding Principles:

- Supports a sustainable oyster population
- Supports achievement of Chesapeake Bay Program water quality goals
- Supports economic opportunities for local watermen
- Supports marketability and branding of local seafood products
- Leverages science and technology
- Leverages ORP's logistics infrastructure
- Improves internal operational efficiency
- Supports long-term, diverse funding models including private public partnerships

Values Statement:

The Oyster Recovery Partnership believes that shellfish are critical to reversing the Chesapeake Bay's poor water quality and declining habitats. Given oysters' critical ecologic role and keystone status in the Bay, oyster restoration and aquaculture are two of only a few strategies that provide restorative benefits to the Bay while also providing green jobs.

ORP recognizes that ultimately its job is about people – everyone can benefit from a restored oyster population. ORP needs partners to fulfill its mission and it needs the public to be engaged, energized and educated.

Priority #1

Priority #1: Expand Oyster Restoration

Restore, enhance and manage oyster reefs in the Chesapeake and Coastal Bays

Goals:

- a. Support federal, state and local government initiatives to restore oysters
- b. Annually produce 500 million to 1 billion spat on shell
- c. Increase shell collection and procurement programs to ensure ORP has adequate shell for recovery efforts.

Priority #2

Priority #2: Sustainable Oyster Harvests

Assist the Maryland oyster industry in achieving an annual harvest of one million bushels per year while supporting aquaculture practices in regional estuaries

Goals:

- a. Support the growth of the aquaculture industry to 200,000 bushels annually by expanding aquaculture development and distribution programs and services in Maryland
- b. Ensure the industry has adequate supplies of larvae, seed and shell to support growth
- c. Identify new revenue and cost-saving opportunities to augment watermen income
- d. Support ecosystem fisheries management strategies

Priority #3

Priority #3: Innovative Education and Outreach Programs

Expand ORP's community outreach efforts to increase awareness of its mission, Chesapeake Bay recovery efforts and Maryland produced and locally-harvested seafood

Goals:

- a. Leverage partnerships to generate awareness of the importance of ORP and its efforts

- b. Provide meaningful educational experiences regarding the importance of shellfish and the role they play in the Chesapeake Bay ecologically, economically and culturally
- c. Assist the commercial industry with programs and systems to provide consumers with traceable, sustainable and high-quality seafood