



Case Studies

Several watersheds in the US face similar challenges as Falls Lake:

- Watershed loading of nutrients is difficult to manage, especially when natural areas make up the majority of the basin
- Nutrient loads are often not the only driver of water quality
- Water quality standards may not be attainable

To address these challenges, researchers across the country are encouraging innovative policies with new goals established to protect designated uses and incrementally improve water quality. These policies are similar to the UNRBA [recommendations](#):

Chesapeake Bay

Chesapeake Bay researchers released a [Comprehensive Evaluation of System Response](#) in May 2023. The report concludes the following:

- “Current efforts to reduce nutrient loads will not meet the TMDL targets.”
- “Water quality has been slow to respond to realized nutrient and sediment reductions.”
- “Additional nutrient reductions will improve water quality”
- “Water quality criteria may be unattainable.”
- Legal requirements “divert attention away from... improving living resources (support of aquatic life).”

Lake Okeechobee

[Lake Okeechobee](#) in Florida is a relatively shallow lake like parts of Falls Lake. Phosphorus concentrations in Lake Okeechobee are high relative to standards set by the State of Florida. Lake experts state that “legally mandated eutrophication restoration goals for Lake Okeechobee are unachievable.” They describe the goals as “mission impossible.” Large storms and wind action increase phosphorus concentrations in the lake. The authors conclude that Lake Okeechobee cannot be restored to its natural condition. They suggest goals should “focus on ensuring the maintenance of key ecosystem functions.”

Lake Lanier

A “phosphorus diet plan” was developed in 2013 for Lake Lanier in Georgia. While significant progress occurred, an updated plan is needed. A group of local leaders and researchers proposed a [five-year study plan](#). This research and stakeholder input will be used to develop an updated management plan.