

RIPARIAN FOREST BUFFER TARGET



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FORESTRY WORKGROUP MEETING

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PROTECTED LANDS OUTCOME

Development and land conversion are among the top stressors facing the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem. Permanently protecting lands from development is one way to combat the loss of forests, wetlands and other valuable wildlife habitat.

Outcome:

- Permanently protect critical landscapes within the Chesapeake Bay watershed to protect water quality, enhance biodiversity, support sustainable livelihoods, bolster local economies, honor cultural heritage and protect the mission and resilience of military installations.
 - By 2040, permanently protect at least an additional 2 million acres of land above the 2025 baseline of 9.3 million acres. The 2 million acres will include specific targets for: **riparian forests**; wetlands (including migration corridors); natural areas supporting healthy streams; agricultural lands; tribal homelands; and urban and community greenspace.
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PROTECTION TARGETS IN DEVELOPMENT

- **Riparian forests**
- Wetlands (including migration corridors)
- Natural areas supporting healthy streams
- Agricultural lands
- Urban and community greenspace

The Protected Lands Workgroup is in the process of putting together action teams to help develop the target options

HOW CBP DEFINES PROTECTED LANDS

As currently defined by the Chesapeake Bay Program, "protected lands" are understood as lands **permanently protected from development**, whether by purchase or donation, through a perpetual conservation or open space easement or fee ownership for their cultural, historical, ecological, or agricultural value.

This definition includes non- traditional conservation mechanisms, including transfer of development rights, programs that require a conservation easement for the "sending" property, and purchase of development rights programs. Lands protected through easements and the purchase of development rights typically remain private.

RIPARIAN BUFFER ZONE OVERVIEW (30-METER BUFFER)

4.7 million acres lie within the 30-meter riparian buffer zone

3.3 million acres of the buffer zone are **forested**

1 million acres of the buffer zone are **protected**

811,050 acres of the buffer zone are **protected forests**

Key Percentages

68% of the buffer zone is forested

78% of the **protected** buffer zone is forested

RIPARIAN BUFFER FOREST PROTECTION TARGETS (BY 2040)

- Increase Protected Forest Acreage in Buffers
 - Protect **200,000 additional acres** of forest in riparian buffer zones
 - Reach **~1 million acres** of protected forested buffers
 - Raise the Percentage of Protected Buffers That Are Forested
 - Increase forested share of protected buffers to **85%**
 - Achieve this by restoring or planting forest cover on **40,000 acres** within protected buffer zone
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DATA USED

- USGS Chesapeake Bay Watershed 1:24k 30-meter Riparian Buffer Zones
 - Chesapeake Bay Land Use/Land Cover (LULC) Database 2024
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QUESTIONS?

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