

## Quarterly Progress Meeting: Protected Lands

### Step 1: Summarize your outcome.

#### Outcome:

**By 2025, protect an additional two million acres of lands** throughout the watershed—currently identified as high-conservation priorities at the federal, state or local level—including 225,000 acres of wetlands and 695,000 acres of forestland of highest value for maintaining water quality.

#### Lead and Supporting Goal Implementation Teams (GITs):

The Fostering Stewardship Goal Implementation Team (GIT5), through the Chesapeake Conservation Partnership, leads the effort to achieve this outcome. They work in partnership with the Water Quality and Healthy Watersheds Goal Implementation Teams (GIT3 and GIT4).

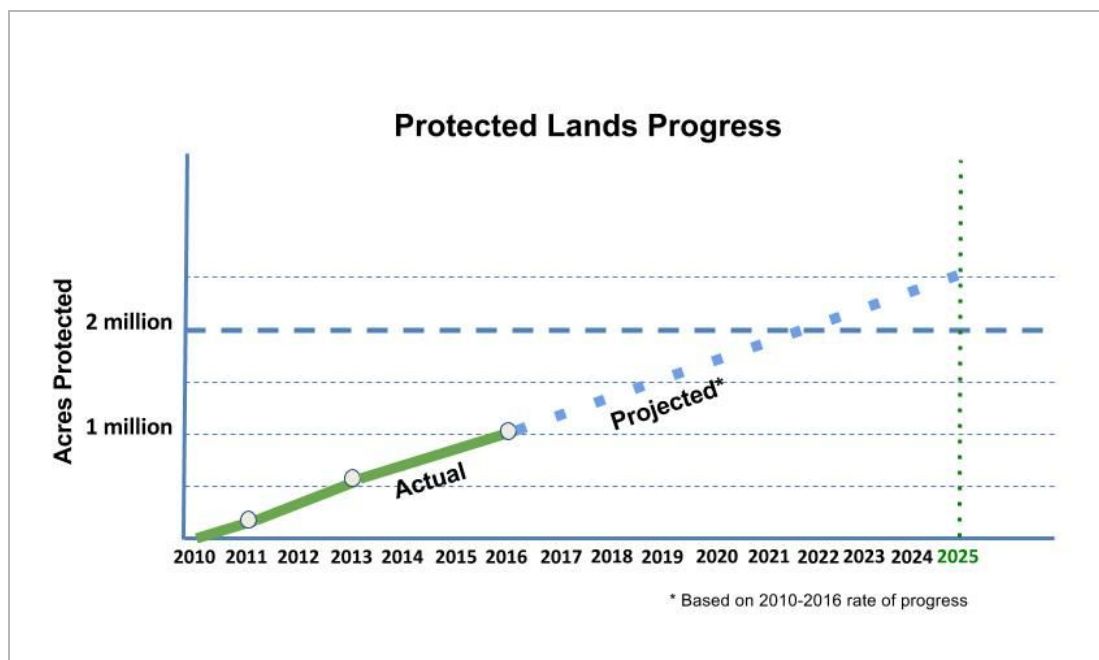
#### Participating Partners:

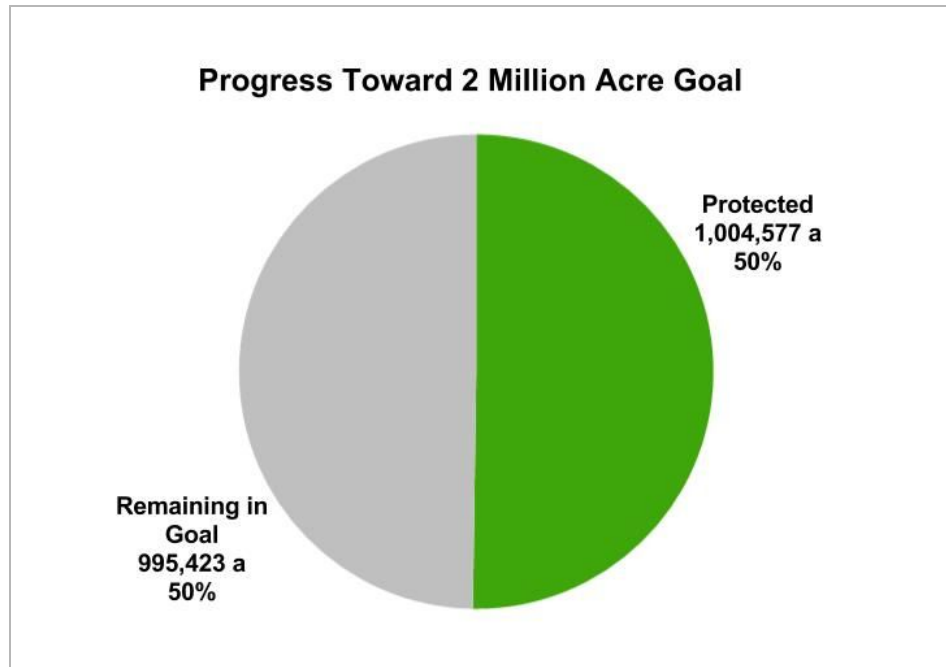
Participating partners include:

- Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (*State of Delaware*)
- Maryland Department of Natural Resources (*State of Maryland*)
- Maryland Department of Planning (*State of Maryland*)
- Maryland Historical Trust (*State of Maryland*)
- Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (*Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*)
- New York Department of Environmental Conservation (*State of New York*)
- New York Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (*State of New York*)
- Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (*Commonwealth of Virginia*)
- Virginia Department of Forestry (*Commonwealth of Virginia*)
- Virginia Department of Historic Resources (*Commonwealth of Virginia*)
- Chesapeake Bay Commission
- Bureau of Land Management
- National Park Service
- U.S. Department of Defense
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Forest Service
- Chesapeake Conservation Partnership
- Accokeek Foundation
- American Farmland Trust
- Appalachian Trail Conservancy
- Cacapon-Lost Rivers Land Trust
- Chesapeake Conservancy
- Chickahominy Indian Tribe
- Eastern Shore Land Conservancy

- James River Association
- Journey Through Hallowed Ground Partnership
- Journey Through Hallowed Ground Heritage Area
- Lancaster County Conservancy
- Land Trust Alliance
- Living Landscape Observer
- Maryland Environmental Trust
- Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs
- National Parks Conservation Association
- National Trust for Historic Preservation
- NatureServe
- Otsego Land Trust
- Pennsylvania Land Trust Association
- Piedmont Environmental Council
- Piscataway-Conoy Tribe
- Potomac Conservancy
- Rappahannock River Basin Commission
- Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation
- Susquehanna Gateway Heritage Area
- The Conservation Fund
- The Nature Conservancy
- Trust for Public Land
- Virginia Environmental Endowment
- Virginia Outdoors Foundation
- Wildlife Management Institute

#### Progress:



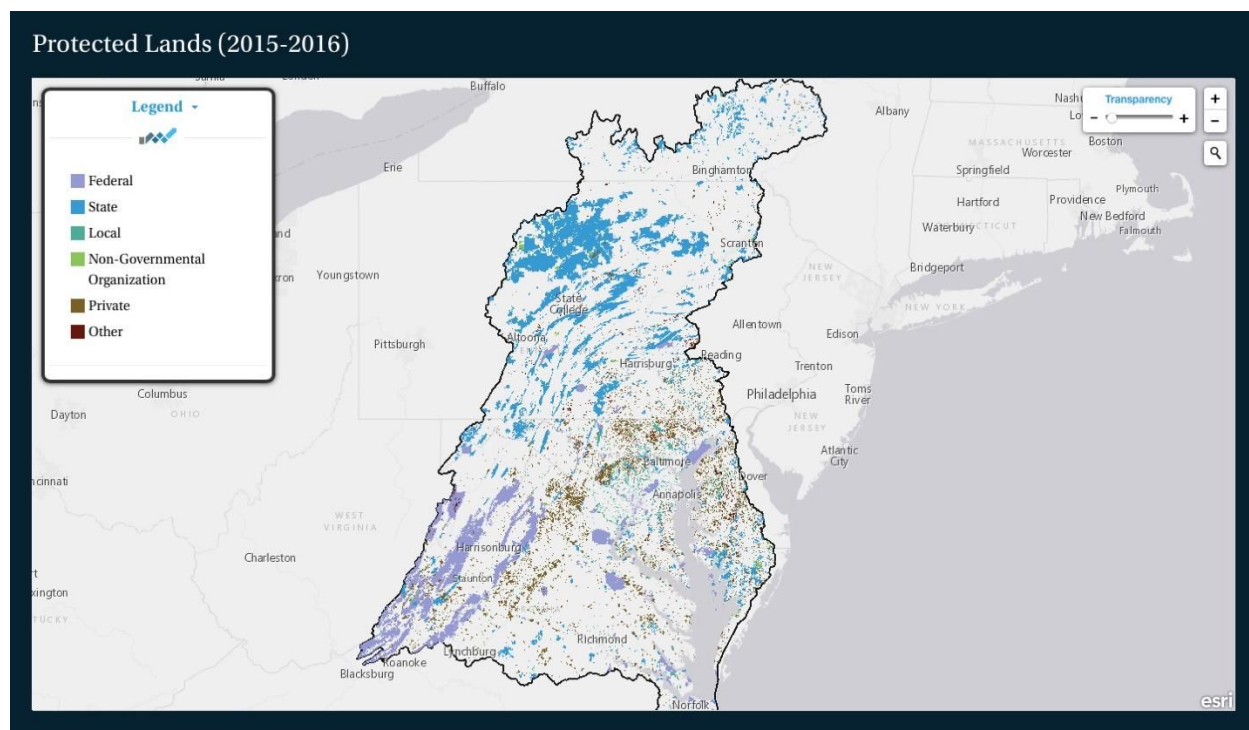


Data collected between 2015 and 2016 show that, **since 2010, approximately 1,004,577 acres of land** in the Chesapeake Bay watershed have been permanently protected from development. This marks an **achievement of 50 percent of the land conservation goal** adopted in the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* and brings the **total amount of protected land in the watershed to 8.8 million acres**.

Watershed-wide, protected lands have increased 13 percent since 2010. While some increases in acreage can be attributed to improvements in data collection—for instance, by reporting previously protected but newly digitized, corrected or refined parcels of land—other increases can be attributed to newly protected parcels of land. Because state and other protected lands databases do not consistently include the date of protection (i.e., the “date established”) for parcels, it is impossible to determine the extent to which either factor has influenced observed increases in acreage over time. Due to the changing nature of development pressure, conservation incentives, funding for land acquisition and political and public sentiment, experts anticipate some variation between the number of additional acres that are protected each year.

The 8.8 million acres of protected lands in the watershed—which account for 22 percent of the total land in the region—include: 3.3 million acres in Pennsylvania; 2.9 million acres in Virginia; 1.7 million acres in Maryland; close to 410,000 acres in West Virginia; close to 323,000 acres in New York; close to 108,000 acres in Delaware; and more than 11,000 acres in the District of Columbia.

State agencies are the largest entity contributing to land protection: they own approximately 46 percent of the protected acres in the watershed. Watershed-wide, the federal government holds approximately 25 percent of the protected acres. Private organizations, non-governmental organizations, local governments and other entities have also been extremely active in land conservation and will remain critical partners in land protection efforts.



For decades, our partners have permanently protected lands that have cultural, historical, ecological and agricultural value by holding easements, accepting donations and purchasing properties and development rights. Because protected lands can protect water quality, support fish and wildlife, and preserve our history, putting land under protection is one way to ensure the watershed withstands population growth and sustains the plants, animals and people that live here.

***Making the Case for Land Conservation:*** A priority for the Chesapeake Conservation Partnership is expanding the resources available for achieving long-term landscape conservation goals. There is a need for a new generation of land conservation financing. To achieve this we need be clear about long-term conservation goals, beyond 2025, and the resulting resources required in the decades to come.

The partnership has crafted a set of long-term landscape conservation goals inclusive of various goals set at regional, state and watershed levels. Initial mapping of these goals has recently been completed, with additional analysis to identify opportunity areas forthcoming. For more information see:

<http://www.landscape.org/chesapeake/Priorities/>

## **Step 2: Explain the logic behind your work toward an Outcome.**

After consultation with appropriate staff with the CBP, we have decided to revise and update the original Work Plan approved in May of 2016 to focus it on Bay watershed regional actions and key state and local actions.

And the Management Strategies for the Protected Lands Goal approved in 2015 do not link “ factors influencing success “ , “ gaps “ , “ management approaches “ , “ Work Plan actions “ etc, so the Logic Table will need to be completed after the Management Strategies have been revised to link the

foregoing elements together.

We have received the approval of appropriate CBP staff to submit the following revised documents as a package no later than 90 days from the May 11, 2016 Management Board Meeting ( or no later than August 11, 2017 ) : revised management strategies, revised work plan and the logic table.

### Step 3: Craft a compelling narrative.

*What are our assumptions?*

- (1) Are you on track to achieve your Outcome by the identified date? **Yes.**
  - a. What is your target? What does this target represent? **Our target is to permanently preserve an additional 2 Million acres in the Bay Watershed using a baseline of acres preserved as of 2010. Our target speaks for itself: another 2 Million acres permanently preserved.**
  - b. What is your anticipated deadline? What is your anticipated trajectory? **Our deadline is 2025 and the annual average acres needed to be preserved between 2010 and 2025 is 125,000. Since 2011 we have actually been preserving land at a greater annual average of approximately 167, 430 acres.**
  - c. What actual progress has been made thus far? **We have permanently preserved 1,004, 577 acres through 2016 using a baseline of acres permanently preserved through 2010.**
  - d. What could explain any existing gap(s) between your actual progress and anticipated trajectory? **As of the end of 2016, we have experienced no major or significant gaps in achieving this acreage total.**

*Are we doing what we said we would do? **Yes***

- (2) Which of your management actions have been the most critical to your progress thus far? Why? Indicate which influencing factors these actions were meant to manage.  
The following management actions have been the most critical to our progress to date:

**Land Protection Funding:** All the states and the District of Columbia have been able to date to sustain varying levels of funding for land preservation during most of the years since 2011. And in federal fiscal years 2015 and 2016 the Bay Region received a total of \$16M from DOI through the Land and Water Conservation Fund. And the Land Trust Alliance has established and funded through the Bay Funders Network, a new targeted effort in the Bay Watershed called the Land and Water Initiative. This effort funds a full time director and grants for both land preservation and capacity building for land trusts in the region. And other land trusts throughout the Bay watershed are strengthening their capacities and securing resources from non governmental sources to permanently preserve lands. To date, the foregoing funding sources have been essential to progress on land conservation. However, as we continue to forward toward our 2025 goal, reliance on these traditional sources will be less certain and so the Chesapeake Conservation Partnership will need to develop new measures of funding or revenues to meet these goals.

In addition a partial list of FY 18 approved budgets in 3 of the states for land preservation is as follows: in **MD**, the total budgeted for land preservation is **\$83M** exclusive of lands acquired by local governments,

land trusts and other non profits; in **VA**, the total for the same purposes is approximately **\$80 M**; and in **PA**, a total of **\$8M** has been budgeted for grants to land trusts for land preservation.

**Public Support:** While continued progress on land conservation will require public support, some recent public opinion surveys suggest that public support remains very strong for this goal. For example, a survey commissioned by Virginia Environmental Endowment and published on April 5, 2017 ( Public Opinion and Environmental Policy in the Commonwealth , Views of Virginia Voters in 2017 ) found that 90% of voters either strongly or somewhat supported state tax credits for landowners who voluntarily preserve farmland, forests, open spaces and natural and historic sites. And the Nature Conservancy commissioned and published a public opinion survey of Maryland voters on February 9, 2016 that found 87% of voters supported strongly or somewhat continued funding for the state's premiere land acquisition program, Program Open Space.

3) Which of your management actions have will be most critical to your continued progress in the future? Why? What barriers must be removed ---and how, and by whom---to allow these actions to be taken? Indicate which influencing factors these actions will be meant to manage.

The management actions most critical to progress include: developing new sources of funding or revenues for land conservation and restoration; maintaining public support; continuing to build the capacities of land trusts to deliver projects on the ground; and using new GIS high resolution mapping and applications to efficiently and effectively provide stewardship of eased lands. Without progress in these areas going forward, the continued ability of the CCP and its partners to continue significant permanent land preservation and restoration on these lands will be compromised. And at least one critical next step within our collective ability to deliver is to create effective incentives for crediting land conservation and restoration thereon in the updates to the Bay models and TMDL this year.

Are our actions having the expected effect?

4) What scientific, fiscal or policy -related developments or lessons learned have changed your logic or assumptions ( eg., your recommended measure of progress; the factors you believe influence your ability to succeed; or the management actions you recommend taking ) about your Outcome?

The only major relatively new policy development is the likely retrenchment at the federal level not only in terms of funding for land conservation and restoration; but also in terms of general downsizing of the federal workforce and other funding streams to the states and local governments in the Bay region. One of the likely effects of this will be the loss of revenues ( income and sales tax ) especially in the greater Washington metropolitan area and this will force state and local governments to downsize as well making it more challenging for them to maintain funding for conservation and restoration. The net effect of all these possible actions will be challenging to our collective ability to maintain our progress.

5) What would you recommend changing about your management approach ? What new content will you include in your updated work plan?

As mentioned in Step 2 above, we will be revising our management plan, work plan and drafting our logic table for submission by August 11th. We will be assessing the implications of the above and adjusting our strategies and actions accordingly. This will likely involve more concerted efforts to find new measures to increase funding or revenues, scenario planning and more discrete focus areas for targeting our efforts.

6) What opportunities exist to collaborate across GITS? Can we target conservation or restoration work to yield co-benefits that would address multiple factors or support multiple actions across outcomes?

Absolutely the **Green Infrastructure** we already have permanently protected of approximately **8.8 M acres** and **the additions we are making to it each year** going forward provide a **Great Platform** for water quality restoration, habitat protection and many other co-benefits now being mapped by CBP. We should try to synchronize our LandScope conservation mapping with the restoration and conservation maps being developed by CBP. Discussions between the staff working on these 2 efforts have already taken place and need to continue.

How should we adapt?

7) What is needed from the Management Board to continue or accelerate your progress? Multiple asks of the Management Board should be prioritized where possible.

**Creating New Financing:** Land protection is a long-term effort spanning decades. Over the past century there have been a series of recurring innovations in financing land protection. More recent examples include dedicated funding streams, bond measures and tax credits. Supporting continued land protection and accompanying restoration requires developing new and innovative ways to leverage the significant growth in private capital available with the right incentives to invest in land protection and restoration.

**The placement of state of the art and science based bmps on lands permanently protected provides many advantages including: the likelihood of durability of the bmps over time without as sole reliance on field verification; provides the “additionality” beyond that which the land permanently preserved is already providing; provides the platform to address co-benefits as mentioned above.**

**The stewardship GIT and the Chesapeake Conservation Partnership have only one request to the Management Board as follows:**

**“ That the Management Board exercise its influence and demonstrate its support to effectively credit land conservation in the updates to the Bay models and TMDL by creating strong incentives going forward for:**

- a) The placement of science appropriate bmps on permanently protected lands; and**
- b) The permanent protection of large landscapes of resource lands from conversion in combination with other possible measures. “**