



## Forestry Workgroup March Meeting

March 4th, 2026  
9:00am - 11:00am

[Visit the meeting webpage for meeting materials and additional information.](#)

**Purpose:** Learn about recent research on the role of trees in mitigating urban heat and a community science effort to monitor urban heat

- Share timely partner updates
- Review previous watershed forestry Management Strategies and begin discussing our approach for developing a new Management Strategy for the Healthy Forests and Trees outcome

### Minutes

#### I. Announcements

Lead: Katie Brownson (USFS, FWG Coordinator)

#### Decisions [required]:

1. N/A

#### Actions [required]:

1. N/A

#### Discussion Notes [optional]:

- Update on STAC workshop: [Healthy Forests: Proactive Strategies for Managing Threats and Promoting Conservation](#) (Feb 24-25 in Frederick, MD)
  - Workshop was well-attended and had good engagement. The Steering Committee will be working on developing the workshop report over the coming months and will share out the workshop recommendations at a future meeting
- Updates from the Bay Program on Goal Team leadership
  - Claire Jantz (PA DCNR) and Ken Hyer (USGS) were selected by the Management Board to lead the Healthy Landscapes goal team. Claire joined the meeting and introduced herself.
- Multiple NFWF funding opportunities available
  - [Small Watersheds Grants](#)- Proposals due April 2nd
  - [Chesapeake WILD Grants](#)- Proposals due April 9th
- Upcoming meetings
  - Rescheduling April meeting to April 9th 9-11
  - June meeting- in-person meeting in VA!

#### II. Round Robin

**Decisions [required]:**

1. N/A

**Actions [required]:**

1. N/A

**Discussion Notes [optional]:**

- **New York, Lydia Brinkley:** We are working on our stock needs for 2027, and taking all of our past planted stock to project our needs for 2027 so we can start getting local growers to grow our stock instead of getting it from Georgia. We are hiring at least 13 stewards that will start around May to complete our forest stewardship program this summer, and will be hiring at least four more watershed-wide technicians because of some state funding. Our contract that employs most of our urban and community forestry team and watershed forestry team expires June 30th. It is going out for bid, so if you want to host our team of contract employees you can bid on the contract right now.
- **Pennsylvania, Teddi Stark:** our Community and Watershed Forestry program CTP2 grant round is open now along with other CTP2 grants. We are working on contracting our spring and fall 2026 plantings through the commonwealth ITQ procurement system. We are likely about to receive an additional 1.5 million in funding from the EPA as well. They are also working to utilize FEMA funding for buffers and other watershed forestry BMPs for their flood mitigation benefits. Finally the contract that employs most of PA's watershed forestry team is expiring June 30th and is going out to bid for the first time in 9 years.
- **Pennsylvania, Robbie Coville:** The Mid-Atlantic Agroforestry Conference is [now open for registration](#). The Chesapeake Agroforestry Network has created a [google group](#) if anyone wants to be on the list for announcements and information about Chesapeake agroforestry.
- **Maryland, Alanna Crowley:** we are starting to organize seedling bundling and distribution for backyard buffer hand outs to get the ball rolling by the end of the month.
- **Maryland, Rob Schnabel:** We got official word that we got a NFWF grant that will support doing "beyond sustainable" regenerative farm tours. The climate summit in Frederick last week was looking to modify the county's ag preservation program, and we had a roundtable workgroup to elevate the forest preservation aspect. We are looking to move forward so that when we invest in farmland preservation we are not removing lots of trees at the same time.
- **Maryland, Alexis Dickerson:** The Potomac Conservancy has been involved with the sewage spill and going to lots of meetings, and has curated a sign on letter for community members and partners, if anyone is interested in that. Right now we are focused on emergency repairs and creating a long term plan.
- **DC, Robert Corletta:** We are getting back in the groove and getting trees in the ground, and learning how to manage elms for Dutch elm disease. The Tree Corps is doing some workforce development activities. Casey Trees also has a new NFWF grant that is combining conservation landscapes with residential projects.

**III. Laying the groundwork for the Healthy Forests and Trees Management Strategy**

Lead: Katie Brownson and Julie Mawhorter (USFS)

**Decisions [required]:**

1. N/A

**Actions [required]:**

1. N/A

**Discussion Notes [optional]:**

- **Robbie Coville:** What does non-ag approaches refer to?
  - **Katie Brownson:** It is looking at programs more in the developed sector, so for people who want to plant buffers that aren't farmers

**IV. Discussion of New Forest Conservation Target**

Lead: Katie Brownson (USFS)

**Decisions [required]:**

2. N/A

**Actions [required]:**

2. N/A

**Discussion Notes [optional]:**

- **Sophie Waterman:** The protected lands coordination team is about to dig into jurisdictions planning documents, for example state wildlife action plans, or similar to better understand what conservation priorities are identified by jurisdictions and where the overlap is, and we are happy to share our findings once we do that. If you have any planning documents or documents you think we should be paying attention to feel free to put them in the chat, but we really want to pay attention to what jurisdictions say they want to conserve and how can we utilize that to push the needle forward
  - **Katie Brownson:** That is great, you should definitely put the state forest action plans on your list.
- **Rob Schnabel:** Yes, reach out to ag preservation funders and the state agencies that lead these programs, some of these programs don't require any forest protection yet it is public dollars going into this. There is a waiting list of farmers waiting to get into these preservation programs, and it would be cool to do a bay wide survey and get an idea of programs out there and which ones do and do not have any forest protection or stream buffer requirements.
  - **Katie Brownson:** Yes, we should definitely follow up on that. The way we wrote the target language for the permit protection piece is that we want it to be forested land, so the key is keeping it as a forest, and I think this will give us an avenue to develop approaches to make sure our conservation program and permanent protection programs are actually helping to keep forests forests.
  - **Rob Schnabel:** yes, and as a quick add on since we are talking about canopy cover, some counties have set canopy goals of percent increases and finding those areas that have that and ways to work with them is a strategy as well.

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**V. Trees are Cool and Baltimore Green Space Community Science: Forest Cooling Project**

Lead: Dexter Locke (USFS) and Thomas McCarty, Baltimore Green Space

**Decisions [required]:**

3. N/A

**Actions [required]:**

3. N/A

**Discussion Notes [optional]:**

- **Rob Schnabel:** It would be great to have a fact sheet of sorts - "Trees role in mitigating heat islands". Land managers /Parks Dept.'s need this info as they attempt to protect forests from Public Work's Dept.'s MS4 stream construction projects as they try to balance quality of life / human health interests vs Engineering interests
- **Lorzeno Cinalli:** That model would be great for DC as well. A lot of trails here that could reveal good data - trails in the city with no tree cover, trails by the Potomac under canopy, trails through parks and forests
- **Rob Schnabel:** Great presentation. I think the parks department land managers often are in conflict with public works trying to protect their trees, so this kind of data and community awareness of the multiple benefits of trees is huge, and you have probably worked with the parks department a little.
- **Dexter Locke:** Yes the benefits of trees are huge, people die each year because it is so hot, and the trees do something about it. You mention the parks, and continuing to work with them, bring that on- lets ride bikes together and increase the evidence to say this place is providing a cooling benefit that would take x amount of air conditioners, or create a translation of this much tree canopy creates this temperature which is x temperature saved in AC bills, for example.
  - **Robert Corletta:** DDOT and urban forestry actually fund our trail rangers in the District, so we have bicycle trail rangers that are riding our trail network. I wonder if we could put temperature sensors on them, that could be a source of data to explore.
  - **Dexter Locke:** yes, anything doing regular trips would be great to explore, like for example if we had sensors on 1% of amazon trucks that would be a ton of data. But bikes are great because they can go places cars cannot and go through the forest.
- **Alexis Dickerson:** I think it would be a big hit to work with students/schools to get biking data around schools (MWEE projects) - Not forests per se, but very important to re-plant more school spaces
- **Julie Mawhorter:** This is much more coarse scale, but the national tree canopy map now has heat index data incorporated to help folks map or communicate overlapping priorities <https://treecanopy.us/>
- **Dexter Locke:** [Alonzo, M., Ibsen, P. C., & Locke, D. H. \(2025\). Urban Trees and Cooling: A Review of the Recent Literature \(2018 to 2024\). Arboriculture & Urban Forestry, jauf.2025.023.](#)
- **Dexter Locke:** [Locke, D. H., Baker, M., Alonzo, M., Yang, Y., Ziter, C. D., Murphy-Dunning, C., & O'Neil-Dunne, J. P. M. \(2024\). Variation in the relationship between urban tree canopy and air temperature reduction under a range of daily weather conditions. Heliyon, 10\(3\), e25041.](#)

**VI. Adjourn**

**Next Meeting:** April 9th, 2026

**Attendees:**

Julia Fucci, CRC	Katie Brownson, FS	Eric Oliver	Nancy Sonti, FS
Alanna Crowley, DNR	Craig Highfield, Alliance for the Chesapeake	Teddi Stark, PA DCNR BOF	Claire Jantz, PA DCNR

Katie Ombalski, Woods and Waters Consulting	Molly Hassett, NYS DEC	Robert Corletta, DDOT	Rob Schnabel, CBF
Katie Ayers, EPA	Sophie Waterman, EPA	Beth Garcia, EPA	Robbie Coville, PA DCNR
Ned Brockmeyer, PA DCNR	Orsolya Lazar, PA	Anne Gilbert, DNR	Lucas Ranier, Upper Susquehanna Coalition
Brendan Durkin, DOEE	Lorenzo Cinalli, DPR	Dexter Locke, FS	Alexis Dickerson, Potomac Conservancy
Kristen Heberlig, CBF	Thomas McCarty	Julie Mawhorter, FS	Emily Heller, EPA
Lydia Brinkley, Upper Susquehanna Coalition			