

Management Strategy for Goal 3: Healthy Landscapes

Healthy Landscapes Goal:

Conserve, protect, restore and enhance landscapes of ecological, economic, recreational and cultural value to improve water quality, provide habitat for wildlife and increase resilience.

Situation Analysis for Goal 3: Healthy Landscapes

In the table below, the Goal Team has summarized the most critical challenges facing each of its Outcomes that are within CBP's ability to impact or influence. The Goal Team and its Workgroups, as appropriate, have identified those challenges shown in **bold** as critical for Workgroups to begin addressing within the next six years via the development and implementation of Management Approaches. Challenges associated with Changing Environmental Conditions are denoted with an asterisk (*).

	Outcomes			
	3.1 Adaptation	3.2 Healthy Forests	3.3 Land Use	3.4 Protected Lands
Challenges				
3.0.1 Coordination: <i>Effective and efficient coordination with other goals and their outcomes and management approaches</i>	X	X	X	X
3.0.2 Funding: <i>Inconsistent funding and availability of effective programs for planting and maintenance; insufficient funding for land conservation capacity and technical assistance</i>		X	X	X
3.0.3 Land use change: <i>Fragmentation and conversion of forests and tree canopy to other land uses; insufficient resources for land use planning assistance to reduce forest and farmland conversion; shoreline change due to sea level rise and marsh migration.</i>	X	X	X	X
3.0.4 Policy and Regulation: <i>Inadequate state and/or local policies that support effective reforestation, forest and tree canopy conservation, and forest management; overcoming regulatory and permitting hurdles that stall innovative nature-based engineering solutions.</i>	X	X	X	X
3.0.5 Local engagement: <i>Inadequate engagement with local governments to support planning decisions for forests and tree canopy and to draft complex, competitive federal grant proposals for resilience projects.</i>	X	X	X	X

Management Approaches for Goal 3: Healthy Landscapes

TBD for all Approaches: statement about which Outcome Workplan(s) will incorporate related actions to implement the approach.

Management Approach 3.0.1: Cross-outcome coordination

Healthy Landscapes outcomes are highly interrelated. For example, planting trees is among the nature-based solutions needed to address changing environmental conditions and preserving forests is critical to the protected lands' outcome and is often a stated objective in local land use plans. In addition, participation and coordination with several other outcomes including Public Access, Local Government Leadership, Stewardship, Stream Health, and Wetlands are needed to effectively achieve the Healthy Landscapes outcomes. The Healthy Landscapes Goal Team will host periodic joint meetings with the Engaged Communities and Thriving Habitat, Fisheries, and Wildlife Goal Teams to address these coordination challenges.

Management Approach 3.0.2: Funding

Where quantifiable funding gaps exist for programs supporting Healthy Landscapes' outcomes, such as tree planting and maintenance or technical and capacity assistance for land conservation, the Healthy Landscapes Goal Team will work with its members to identify and/or create funding opportunities.

Management Approach 3.0.3: Land Use Change

The conversion and fragmentation of forests threaten water quality, stream health, and wildlife habitat. The conservation of farms threatens food security, cultural heritage, and rural character of communities and landscapes. The Healthy Landscapes Goal Team will work with its workgroups to synthesize and communicate information across outcomes on changes in land use, ecosystem services, and strategies to address them. This information will be provided to the public in a variety of formats coinciding with the release of the most recent high-resolution land use datasets.

Management Approach 3.0.4: Policy

More effective state and local policies are needed to support reforestation, forest and tree canopy conservation, and forest management and for overcoming regulatory and permitting hurdles that stall innovative nature-based engineering solutions. The Healthy Landscapes Goal Team will work with members to identify and promote more effective policies.

Management Approach 3.0.5: Local Engagement

Engagement with local governments is critical to the success of all four Healthy Landscapes' outcomes and engagement of local government leaders is the main objective of the Local Government Leadership outcome. The Healthy Landscapes Goal Team will work with the Engaging Communities Goal Team and Local Government Leadership Workgroup to develop a collective engagement strategy, ensuring that engagement activities are effective, coordinated, and complementary.

3.1 Adapting to Changing Environmental Conditions

Adapting to Changing Environmental Conditions Outcome:

Increase the capacity for pursuing solutions, including those that are nature-based, to improve planning and responses to changing conditions while balancing long-term resilience of watershed communities, economies and ecosystems.

- Target 1: By 2040, support at least seven sub-watershed areas with knowledge-sharing and technical assistance to identify adaptation options with a preference for nature-based solutions. These solutions include restoration and protection projects that will help address risks to people, infrastructure and habitats from changes in temperature, precipitation and landscapes.
- Target 2: By 2040, inform and lead to an increase in the implementation of the identified adaptation options that prioritize and integrate nature-based solutions in the above sub-watershed areas.

Baseline and Current Condition

The previous adaptation outcome under the 2014 Watershed Agreement did not have a formalized quantitative baseline or explicit project-tracking mechanisms for resilience-related projects. This was mainly due to the outcome being structured under the CBP's Scientific, Technical, Assessment, and Reporting (STAR) team where progress was assessed from a qualitative perspective on addressing science needs. Under the revised 2025 Watershed Agreement framework, the Adapting to Changing Environmental Conditions (ACEC) outcome now has defined targets. To facilitate progress on the targets, we are using a place-based, adaptation needs-driven approach across chosen sub-watershed areas. This strategy targets the unique impacts of changing environmental conditions—specifically changes in precipitation, changes in air and water temperatures, and sea level rise—on local landscapes within the sub-watershed area. Ideally, the selected seven sub-watershed areas will have varying geographic and development considerations (e.g., urban, suburban, rural) where the workgroup can build capacity for adaptation strategies, with a focus on nature-based solutions (NbS), to maximize resilience and ecosystem benefits across coastal (tidal) and inland (nontidal) areas.

For each selected sub-watershed, we will determine a baseline condition against which adaptation needs will be measured. Baseline conditions will be analyzed by using existing datasets to assess trends in precipitation, temperature, and sea levels and other environmental changes and by examining any existing vulnerability assessments and adaptation plans or similar products. Adaptation needs will be conveyed by local governments and stakeholders, and could include, but are not limited to, addressing issues around coastal and inland flooding, shoreline erosion, droughts or warming temperatures, habitat loss, invasive species, or other issues of local concern. If such information does not exist, the workgroup will support activities to empower jurisdictions and communities to develop the needed information.

Ultimately, the baseline will be defined by the current capacity of localities within a sub-watershed to understand changing environmental conditions and develop solutions to address adaptation needs, policies and funding. The workgroup, in coordination with signatories, will develop an inventory of candidate sub-watersheds and categorize current conditions based on land use, landscape geography, and the specific environmental stressors related to the adaptation needs within the sub-watershed and capacity to implement solutions. This information would be used to establish baselines at the watershed-scale and inform us where additional capacity-building is needed. Capacity to implement solutions includes connecting various partners, funding sources, and technical assistance that improves the likelihood of an increase in the implementation of adaptation options.

Monitoring Progress and Indicators

The previous adaptation outcome did not have any quantitative indicators. Instead, progress was assessed qualitatively based on collaborative projects being supported by the workgroup participants. Moving forward, the group will be evaluating options for quantitative indicators to track progress on the outcome. This outcome and its targets are unique in that they depend on the integration of stakeholder feedback on adaptation needs in the sub-watershed area. Collaboration and strategic networking will be key in monitoring progress.

To move forward in identifying and implementing appropriate adaptation strategies, including NbS and other resilience activities, we plan to take an adaptation planning-to-implementation pipeline approach where the workgroup will collaborate with local and regional partnerships presiding or working within a sub-watershed to share and deliver data and tools, assess adaptation needs, connect groups with adaptation best practices, and implement other knowledge sharing activities, such as workshops to address specific adaptation challenges. These activities will aid groups in the sub-watershed area in advancing their use of NbS and other resilience activities where they are in the process. For instance, some areas may already have in-depth vulnerability assessments and have identified adaptation strategies but need improved information to support design and implementation. Others may be starting at an initial concept and need guidance on which adaptation strategies to consider.

The adaptation planning-to-implementation pipeline could vary depending on the jurisdiction's policies and resources. Flexibility will be key to work where local and regional partners are in the process and provide technical assistance where needed. Examples of activities that the workgroup could support to empower local and regional groups with their adaptation needs include:

- Connecting partners with existing datasets and data tools to aid in their vulnerability assessments,
- Identifying innovative NbS strategies or hybrid green-gray infrastructure approaches that bolster multiple benefits (e.g. hazard mitigation, water quality improvements, habitat provision, outdoor recreation, etc.) for implementing groups to consider in their adaptation planning,

- Producing best practices on pre-project and post-project monitoring to assist in efforts to assess and track resilience progress and performance,
- Aligning research with adaptation efforts to improve and standardize NbS approaches over time,
- Translating project-level adaptation efforts to additive resilience and ecosystem services benefits across the sub-watershed,
- Highlighting new and enabling policies and legislation from state or local jurisdictions, and
- Identifying and sharing funding opportunities.

Progress will be measured based on the adaptation activities occurring in the sub-watersheds, building up to a minimum of seven sub-watersheds supported by 2040. Tracking progress would encompass documenting the workgroup's and participating partners' evolution through the adaptation planning-to-implementation pipeline across the selected sub-watersheds. The workgroup envisions direct involvement with knowledge-sharing and technical assistance activities under Target 1 with the goal that these activities would lead to an increase of identified adaptation options under Target 2 by participating organizations through strategic networking efforts. Tracking Target 2 will depend on developing reporting mechanisms with the participating partners.

Future indicators will demonstrate progress made by sub-watersheds on the adaptation planning-to-implementation pipeline. We aim to develop "capacity-building" indicators to track progress. These could include the integration of resilience strategies into local comprehensive plans, the number of successful grant proposals submitted for projects, and the establishment of local policies/ordinances. Additionally, the workgroup aims to support activities to quantify the additive benefits across implementing NbS and other resilience activities for prioritized endpoints (e.g., reduced flooding damage, resilient habitat, reduced erosion, etc.). These will depend on the adaptation needs identified in the sub-watershed area. The workgroup will also explore engagement metrics, including an endpoint metric that indicates when a sub-watershed network is self-sufficient in advancing their adaptation pipeline.

Situation Analysis

The following table identifies challenges that will impact progress towards attaining this outcome and its targets over the upcoming six-year Management Strategy cycle. Priority challenges identified by the Goal Team are shown in **bold**. Challenges associated with Changing Environmental Conditions are denoted with an asterisk (*). In some instances, the workgroup's ability to act will depend on the financial resources available.

Challenges	Within CBPs ability to influence	Within CBPs ability to act	Outside of CBP's ability to influence or act
Selecting which sub-watersheds to support that align with available expertise (operational for workgroup)		X	
*Lack of quantitative adaptation metrics and indicators for evaluating long-term resilience enhancement.		X	
*Lack of centralized adaptation strategies project-tracking database		X	
*Regulatory and permitting challenges that stall innovative nature-based engineering solutions.	X		
*Short-term horizon (under 5 years) of major resilience grants, which discourages long-term adaptation planning and monitoring of progress of desired adaptation end-points.	X		
*Lack of long-term datasets needed to better inform adaptation planning and design with NbS		X	
Limited operational capacity to support localized, “boots-on-the-ground” relationship-building	X	X	
Limited technical capacity of local governments to draft complex, competitive federal grant proposals	X	X	
*Defining and quantifying impacts of changing climatic and environmental conditions	X	X	
*Limited public and private landowner awareness regarding existing land-use transition incentives, cost-share options, and resilient easements.		X	

Challenges	Within CBPs ability to influence	Within CBPs ability to act	Outside of CBP's ability to influence or act
Tradeoffs of implementing one NbS to address a particular issue (shoreline erosion, stormwater management), but may negatively impact other natural resources outcome (seagrass beds near living shorelines; marsh migration through forested landscapes).	X		
Future forward land use planning and strategies to address risks to private property.	X		
Long-term fiscal uncertainty for sustaining post-construction monitoring and maintenance after grant expiration	X		
*Accelerating rate of sea level rise drowning coastal wetlands and driving saltwater intrusion			X
*Increasing frequency, duration, and peak intensity of heavy precipitation events and flash flooding			X
*Warming atmospheric conditions driving chronic riverine and estuarine water temperature increases			X
Cost inflation, material supply chain shortages (native seed stock, saplings), and localized labor constraints			X
High fiscal costs of project construction, ranging into millions of dollars per installation			X
Fragmented ownership (private, public, commercial) across sub-watershed limiting NbS strategy options at the landscape-scale			X

Snapshot of Signatory Programs

TBD

Management Approaches

Management Approach 3.1.1 Develop a Criteria and Stakeholder-Based Selection Strategy for Focus Sub-watersheds

To maximize impact and regional representation, candidate sub-watersheds will be selected via data and stakeholder-informed solicitation and review process. Selection criteria will aim to integrate geographic diversity (e.g., urban/rural, tidal/nontidal), vulnerability to changing environmental conditions and ecological indices, the presence of existing or planned institutional capacity, alignment with high-priority adaptation needs (e.g., flooding, heatwaves, habitat protection), and potential applicability of nature-based solutions. This process will also aim to evaluate the potential for leveraging funding opportunities (e.g., Sentinel Landscapes, Whole Watershed Act, NFWF Coastal Resilience Fund) and the capacity for cross-outcome and partnership collaboration for watershed-level resilience, rather than relying solely on individual project opportunities. The selection of the seven sub-watersheds will occur incrementally to ensure each focus area receives adequate technical assistance and to allow for iterative improvements in our engagement and technical assistance model. Collaboration with the CBP Geospatial Science and Application Team (GSAT) is planned to leverage existing and new mapping of criteria.

Management Approach 3.1.2: Build Strategic Coalitions through Stakeholder Engagement and Connector Framework

The workgroup will act as a strategic "connector" and "translator," bridging the gap between high-level science and localized action. We will support activities, such as network mapping, that aims to improve our understanding of the institutional landscape, including local restoration practitioners, land trusts, and soil conservation districts—to advance adaptation efforts at the watershed scale. We will coordinate with the HLGT, Local Government Leadership Workgroup and the Strategic Engagement Team (SET) when developing the stakeholder engagement and connector framework to maximize existing relationships and reduce redundancy when working with partners in the sub-watersheds. We plan to move beyond opportunistic projects toward a framework that facilitates peer-to-peer knowledge exchange, leverages diverse funding sources, and matches local technical needs with regional expertise across the sub-watershed. Ultimately, this approach aims to empower networks to collaborate on identifying (Target 1) and implementing (Target 2) adaptation efforts within the sub-watershed for additive community and watershed-scale benefits. Strategic coalitions lead to a greater likelihood of advancing Target 2 of the ACEC outcome through combined resources and expertise.

Management Approach 3.1.3: Support Place-Based, Needs-Driven Technical Assistance for Additive Benefits

The workgroup will provide tailored technical assistance that recognizes a spectrum of adaptation strategies for the selected sub-watersheds. While we prioritize nature-based solutions (NbS) for their multifaceted benefits, we will also coordinate with other CBP workgroups and their experts when considering gray or hybrid gray-green infrastructure, where they are determined to be the most effective mechanism for addressing local vulnerabilities. For NbS that crosses over with other outcomes (e.g., wetlands, forest conservation), we will coordinate with the corresponding workgroup.

Assistance will focus on maximizing "additive benefits" such as combining hazard mitigation, water quality improvements, and habitat restoration. We will structure workgroup activities to deploy expertise, translate data, and build on lessons learned to help partners within the sub-watershed navigate the transition from initial concept (Target 1) to implementation (Target 2), providing guidance on best practices, funding, design, implementation pathways, and scaling adaptation considerations at the watershed-scale.

Adaptation strategies will encompass both tidal/coastal and nontidal/upland restoration and protection projects and other resilience activities, including, but not limited to:

- Wetland restoration
- Living shorelines
- Tree canopy expansion and forest conservation
- Green infrastructure and small-scale stormwater management
- Stream and/or floodplain protection, restoration and floodplain management
- Other adaptation solutions, including hybrid approaches
- Resilience plans at the watershed-scale
- Community outreach programs
- Policy and regulatory examples
- Financing programs for adaptation
- Improvements to existing stormwater management and floodplain management infrastructure

The Collaborative Tidal Marsh Adaptation [framework](#), the NOAA Habitat Focus Areas, and Maryland's Whole Watershed Program are examples of place-based frameworks to inform the workgroup's strategy.

Management Approach 3.1.4: Promote Adaptation Monitoring, Data Integration, and Implementation Tracking to Assess Long-Term Resilience

To assess long-term resilience across selected sub-watersheds, the workgroup will help document standardized data-sharing mechanisms and best practices for monitoring and data collection at both the project and landscape scales. We will collaborate with partners to identify the most effective ways to gather key information—such as using surveys or data calls to track existing and

proposed nature-based solutions (NbS) and evaluate implementation success. Synthesizing these monitoring practices and dataset insights will support better identification (Target 1) and implementation (Target 2) of adaptation projects, while establishing performance indicators for additive benefits. Additionally, we will coordinate with GSAT on data-sharing mechanisms to ensure findings from focus sub-watersheds are transformed into actionable products that guide resilience planning both locally and regionally.

Participating Partners

The following partners participated in the creation of this Management Strategy and expressed their intention to collaborate on Management Strategy implementation over the next six years. Per the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement, “participation in developing Management Strategies or in the achievement of Outcomes varies by signatory based on differing priorities across the watershed. This participation may include commitments such as sharing knowledge, data or information, educating the public, working on future legislation and developing or implementing programs or verified practices” (2025). Signatory partners may join implementation efforts at any time. Partners also recognize that Signatory participation is voluntary and may vary accordingly.

- **Signatory Partners**
TBD
- **Other Partners**
TBD

3.2 Healthy Forests and Trees

Healthy Forests and Trees Outcome:

Conserve, manage and restore forests and tree cover to maximize benefits for water quality, habitat and people throughout the watershed, with a particular focus on riparian areas and communities.

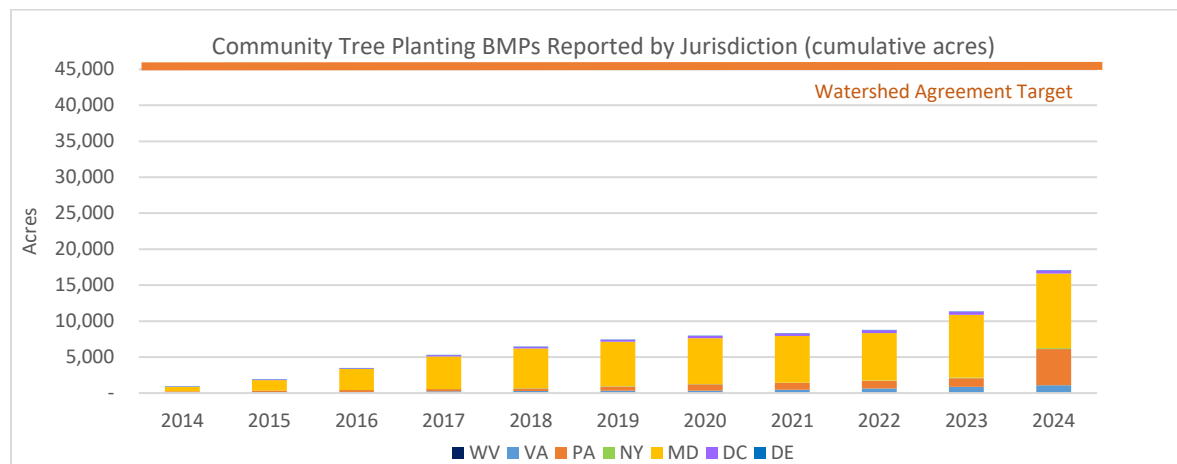
- Conserve tree canopy within communities by reducing the rate of loss of existing canopy and planting and maintaining 45,000 acres of community trees by 2040 to achieve a net gain in canopy over the long term.
- Conserve riparian forest by reducing the rate of loss of existing buffers and planting and maintaining 7,500 acres of forest buffers annually to achieve no less than 71.5% riparian forest cover by 2040 and 75% riparian forest cover over the long term.
- Achieve a net gain in forests over the long-term by reducing the rate of forest conversion to other land uses by 33%, permanently protecting a total of 9 million acres of forested land, and planting, maintaining and managing 202,000 acres of new forests by 2040.

Baseline and Current Condition

Community Tree Canopy

The Community Tree Canopy target has two major components: 1) tree planting and maintenance and 2) tree canopy change within communities.

1. Tree planting and maintenance: As of 2024, jurisdictions had reported a cumulative total of 17,082 acres of trees planted in communities since 2014, which serves as a baseline. Tree planting is measured using urban tree planting Best Management Practices (BMPs) reported by states annually to track progress towards the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL).



2. Tree canopy change within communities: Remotely-sensed land use/land cover (LULC) change data from 2021/2022 show a net loss of over 28,000 acres of tree canopy to development in communities since 2013/2014. On average, this reflects a rate of 3,755 acres of tree canopy loss annually, which will be used as a baseline for assessing changes in the rate of canopy loss. Although it may take between ten and fifteen years for tree plantings to become visible in the aerial imagery used to produce LULC data,

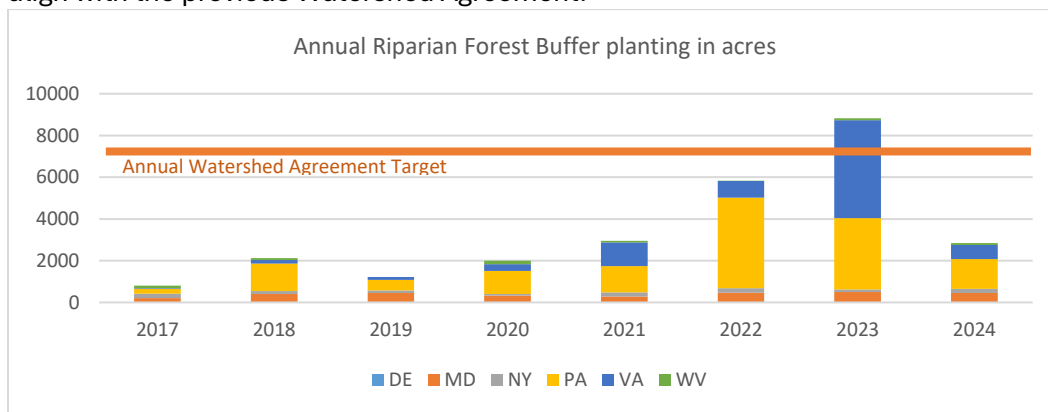
tree canopy losses exceed the acres planted. Significant efforts are needed to reverse the declining trend and achieve a net gain in tree canopy.

Net Change in acres (2013/14-2021/22) for Healthy Forests and Trees Targets			
Jurisdiction (CB Only)	Community Tree Canopy: Net change in tree cover to development in census places	Forest Buffers: Net change in riparian forest cover (100 ft buffer)	Forest Conservation: Net change in forest cover to development
Delaware	-32	-337	-692.45
DC	0	2	-84.29
Maryland	-11,867	-1,828	-19,741.24
New York	-1,318	-2,991	-7,378.85
Pennsylvania	-3,709	-7,416	-28,841.97
Virginia	-11,873	-27,353	-48,813.33
West Virginia	-109	-2,018	-3,661.93
Total	-28,908	-41,941	-109,214.06
Average Annual Rate of Change	-3,755	-5,587	-14,020

Forest Buffers

The Forest Buffer target has two major components: 1. Forest buffer planting and maintenance and 2. Riparian forest cover and change.

1. Forest buffer planting and maintenance: Between 2017-2024, on average 3,326 acres of riparian forest buffers were planted annually. In the most recent reporting period (2024), 2,848 acres were planted. Note that although the partnership has been tracking riparian forest buffer planting watershed-wide since 2010, previous years were tracked in miles to align with the previous Watershed Agreement.



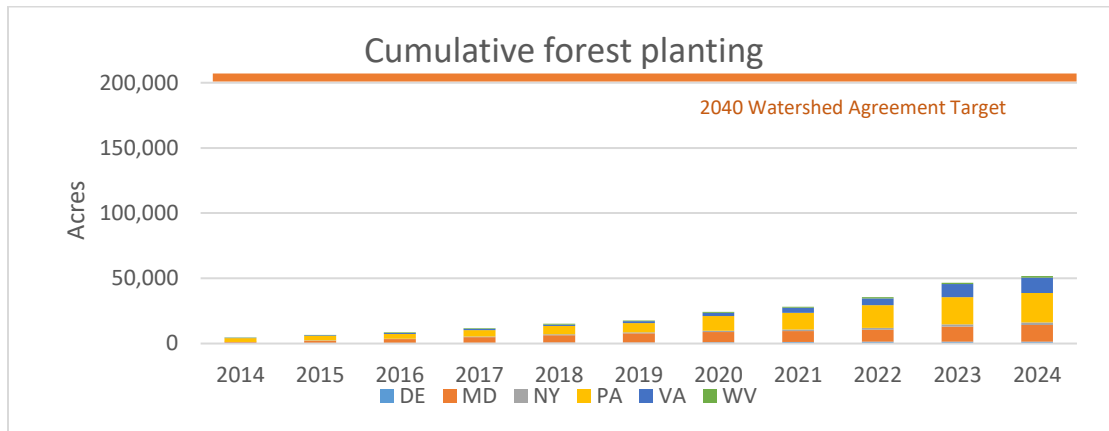
2. Riparian forest cover and change: Remotely-sensed LULC data showed that as of 2021/2022, 69.96% of riparian areas in the watershed are forested, but there was a net loss of 41,941 acres of riparian forest cover between 2013/2014 and 2021/2022 (see Net Change table under Community Tree Canopy target). On average, this reflects a rate of 5,587 acres of riparian forest loss annually, which will be used as a baseline for measuring

changes in the rate of riparian forest buffer loss. The loss of riparian forest buffers highlights the need to pair robust forest buffer planting and maintenance programs with forest buffer conservation.

Forest Conservation

The forest conservation target has four primary components: 1. Forest conversion to other land uses; 2. Permanent protection of forested land; 3. Forest planting and maintenance; and 4. Forest management.

1. Forest planting and maintenance: As of 2024, jurisdictions had reported an estimated 51,684 acres of forest planting since 2014, which serves as a baseline. These acres include BMPs recognized by the Bay Program that convert land to a forested land use, including riparian forest buffers, agricultural tree planting and urban forest planting.

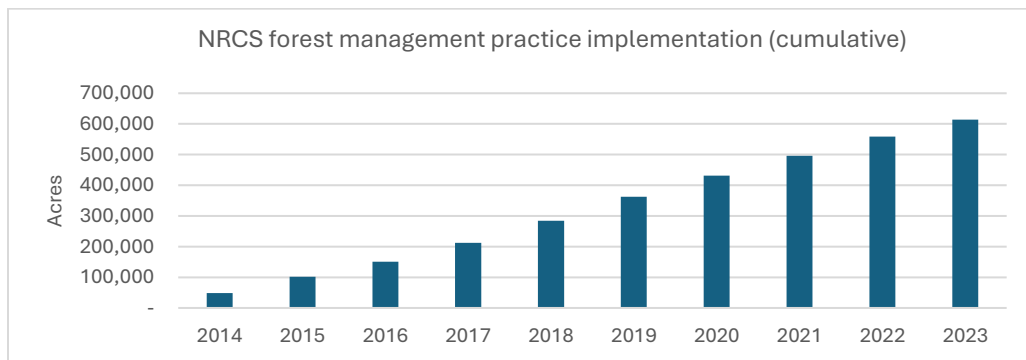


2. Forest conversion to other land uses: Remotely-sensed LULC change data from 2021/2022 show a net loss of 109,214 acres of forest to development since 2013/2014 (see Net Change table under Community Tree Canopy target). On average, this reflects a rate of 14,020 acres of forest loss annually. This annual rate of loss will be used as a baseline for measuring progress towards the target of reducing the rate of forest conversion to other land uses by 33%.
3. Permanent protection of forested land: An estimated 7,103,907 acres of forested land in the watershed has been permanently protected, which represents 77% of the total protected lands footprint in the watershed. This estimate is based on looking at the remotely-sensed LULC data from 2021/2022 within the footprint of the 2024 Chesapeake Bay Protected Lands dataset.

Jurisdiction	Acres of Protected Forest	Total Acres of Protected Land	Percent of Protected Lands in forest
Delaware	70,235	130,606	54%
DC	4,926	8,386	59%
Maryland	929,874	1,700,266	55%
New York	276,967	307,393	90%
Pennsylvania	3,023,979	3,688,214	82%

Virginia	2,493,238	3,118,595	80%
West Virginia	304,689	319,921	95%
Watershed	7,103,907	9,273,380	77%

4. Forest management: Between 2014-2023, there has been an estimated 614,033 acres of forest management on private lands in the watershed supported by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Additional management occurs on state and federally owned land, but there is not yet a watershed-wide dataset for quantifying the extent of forest management on private lands. Common private forest management activities include brush management, herbaceous weed treatment, upland wildlife habitat management, early successional habitat development and management, and forest stand improvement.



Note the original numeric targets were set based on planting trends and did not account for forest management activities, but forest management trends will be tracked from a 2014 baseline to align with other indicators and targets.

Planning is critical for effective forest management and stewardship. The US Forest Service Forest Stewardship Program supports private landowners in developing Forest Stewardship Plans (FSP) so landowners can identify their goals and the management activities needed to meet their goals. Program data show there are currently >11,000 active management plans within the watershed, covering 1.3 million acres of forest, with 71% of active FSP plans being “Managed Sustainably”, which indicates these plans were verified through annual plan monitoring.

State	# of FSP Plans	Acres in FSP Plans	FSP Plan Implementation %	Acres of FSP Sustainably Managed
DE	93	10,819	84.41%	9,132
MD	8,534	798,423	85.78%	684,903
NY	505	70,624	65.50%	46,260
PA	414	107,645	39.34%	42,347

VA	1,519	285,208	81.24%	231,707
WV	276	69,567	83.49%	58,079
TOTAL	11,341	1,342,285	70.95%	952,364

Monitoring Progress and Indicators

Community Tree Canopy

The Community Tree Canopy indicator tracks tree plantings within communities annually to calculate cumulative tree planting progress from a 2014 baseline using annual progress data reported by jurisdictions to the Chesapeake Bay Program. The indicator also tracks tree canopy change within communities using the high-resolution LULC monitoring data every 4-5 years. Over time, the methods for tracking tree canopy loss may change as the high-res LULC data improves and understanding of change evolves.

Forest Buffers

The Forest Buffer indicator tracks annual riparian forest buffer planting using annual progress data reported by jurisdictions to the Chesapeake Bay Program. Under the 2014 Watershed Agreement, the indicator estimated progress in miles using state-reported data (in acres) and state-reported average buffer widths. However, the 2025 Watershed Agreement sets an acreage target so the indicator will be adapted to track progress in acres. The indicator also tracks riparian forest change using the high-resolution LULC monitoring data every 4-5 years. In addition to tracking progress on the indicator, we will also be investigating the high-res LULC data further to better understand the drivers of riparian forest loss.

Monitoring: Forest Conservation

A new indicator will be developed to track progress towards the new Forest Conservation target. This indicator will include four major components to cover the numeric targets:

1. Forest planting and maintenance: Tracked annually using annual progress data reported by jurisdictions to the Chesapeake Bay Program
2. Forest conversion to other land uses: Tracked every 4-5 years using the high-resolution LULC monitoring data. While we are currently focusing on forest conversion to development, with future iterations of the high-res LULC, we may also track conversion to other land uses (for example, agriculture).
3. Permanent protection of forested land: Tracked using the Protected Lands dataset and the most recent high-resolution LULC data to calculate the amount of forested land within the Protected Lands footprint
4. Forest management: This component will likely leverage data both from the NRCS Resources Conservation Act (RCA) Data Viewer and the USFS Forest Stewardship Program on an annual time step. Taken together, the indicator will track both on-the-ground management activities and the planning needed to ensure management activities are having their intended outcomes. The Forestry Workgroup will start developing this new indicator in 2027 for communicating progress. In the interim, the Workgroup will continue tracking progress on all four components as new data is available.

Situation Analysis

The following table identifies challenges that will impact progress towards attaining this outcome and its targets over the upcoming six-year Management Strategy cycle. Priority challenges identified by the Goal Team are shown in **bold**. Challenges associated with Changing Environmental Conditions are denoted with an asterisk (*). In some instances, the workgroup's ability to act will depend on the financial resources available.

Challenges	Within CBPs ability to influence	Outside of CBP's ability to influence
Funding: Inconsistent funding and availability of effective programs for planting and maintenance	X	
Capacity: Workforce capacity for technical assistance, implementation and maintenance	X	
Maintenance and management: Insufficient maintenance of new plantings and inadequate or unsustainable long-term management of existing forests	X	
Land use change: Fragmentation and conversion of forests and tree canopy to other land uses	X	
Stressors: Increasing forest health pressures (invasive species, pests, disease, deer overabundance) degrading forest structure, function and resilience*	X	
Changing environmental conditions: Increasing variability in temperature and precipitation, saltwater intrusion, and extreme events (i.e. storms, droughts) degrading forest structure, function and resilience*		X
Nursery stock: Insufficient availability of planting stock reflecting the size classes, quality, quantity and diversity of species needed by partners	X	
Policy: Inadequate state and/or local policies that support effective reforestation, forest and tree canopy conservation, and forest management	X	
Local government engagement: Inadequate engagement with local governments to support planning and decisions to support forests and tree canopy	X	
Crediting and incentives: Chesapeake Bay Program water quality crediting framework and state MS4 programs do not consistently incentivize forest and forest buffer conservation, reforestation and long-term management and stewardship	X	
Landowner engagement: Barriers to effectively engage landowners to participate in planting, maintenance, management and conservation	X	
Markets: Insufficient forest products markets and processing infrastructure, particularly for low-value wood products	X	

Management Approaches

Management Approach 3.2.1: Increase workforce capacity and tree supply to accelerate implementation:

Restoring and conserving forests and tree canopy across the watershed requires an extensive network of technical assistance providers to effectively engage private landowners and communities. Although volunteers and landowners play a critical role in planting and maintaining trees, private contractors are also essential for implementing restoration and management at scale. The Forestry Workgroup will continue to act as a hub for knowledge and experience sharing to broaden the expertise of the existing workforce across governments, nonprofits, and academia so it can be strategically utilized to meet the Tree Canopy, Riparian Forest Buffers and Forest Conservation targets.

Tree supply can also be a limiting factor for implementing effective restoration projects at scale. The Forestry Workgroup will seek to advance recommendations from the [Addressing Regional Tree Supply Challenges and Opportunities](#) project to support building a more consistent supply of high-quality nursery stock in the watershed. This will directly support implementation of the Tree Canopy target but also support efforts to scale up reforestation to support the Riparian Forest Buffers and Forest Conservation planting targets.

Management Approach 3.2.2: Bolster funding, programs and partnerships:

Maintaining sustainable sources of funding is critical for ensuring continued progress on the Tree Canopy, Riparian Forest Buffers and Forest Conservation targets and for maintaining a stable workforce that can implement programs and practices on the ground. Collaborative restoration and conservation efforts can help diversify funding streams and ensure projects are being delivered where they will have the greatest impact for the partnership. The Forestry Workgroup will work to broaden its engagement with new partners to support effective implementation of the Healthy Forests and Trees outcome, including organizations involved with forest management, stewardship and forest products to support implementation of the new Forest Conservation target.

Management Approach 3.2.3: Leverage networks to enhance coordination and restoration impact

Regional networks can support shared learning and effective communication to increase awareness about the value of forests and increase forest conservation and restoration across the landscape. The Forestry Workgroup will expand its role as a network of networks to facilitate communication and strategic, watershed-wide coordination supporting efforts to address the Tree Canopy, Riparian Forest Buffers and Forest Conservation targets. These efforts will include engaging workgroups under the Engaged Communities goal team to identify opportunities to meaningfully engage networks of community stewards.

Coordination across federal, state and local leaders enables a policy environment that supports effective planning of reforestation, forest and tree canopy conservation, and forest management. Coordination includes working with other state agencies, including wildlife agencies, to work towards regeneration and a healthy forest understory. Improved planning and coordination will help focus forest conservation and restoration efforts in places that will maximize benefits for water quality, habitat and people, including in the headwaters. A cross-jurisdictional approach can also enable forest conservation and management at ecologically-meaningful scales. The Forestry Workgroup will continue to provide a platform for cross-jurisdictional coordination to support shared learning and the development of effective approaches for addressing challenges and maximizing impact across boundaries.

Management Approach 3.2.4: Address drivers of forest and canopy loss:

The Tree Canopy, Riparian Forest Buffers and Forest Conservation targets all set goals to reduce the loss of forests and tree canopy. There are multiple drivers of forest and canopy loss in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, including conversion to development and other land uses; changing environmental conditions; invasive plants, pests, and diseases; among others. Addressing drivers of loss to advance these targets will require a comprehensive approach that includes strengthening policies and ordinances to promote conservation, supporting land use planning efforts, working through regional networks to engage communities and private landowners, and using active management to address stressors.

As a new area of focus for the Bay Program, the Forestry Workgroup will work to implement the recommendations from the STAC Healthy Forests workshop report to support implementation of the Forest Conservation target. These efforts will include strengthening communications and engagement around forest conservation as well as exploring opportunities to support the expansion and diversification of forest product markets.

Management Approach 3.2.5: Expand outreach and engagement with local governments around forests and tree canopy

Local governments are critical partners for effectively conserving and restoring forests and tree canopy. However, it can be very challenging to effectively engage the myriad of local governments throughout the watershed who represent a wide range of communities with different priorities and decision-making processes. The Forestry Workgroup will work with other relevant Bay Program workgroups and support teams to develop more effective two-way communications channels and regular engagement with local government partners. This engagement will also inform the development of targeted resources to support local governments in better understanding the value of forests and tree canopy, strengthening policies and ordinances, improving land use decisions to limit further forest parcelization and fragmentation, and addressing regulatory barriers for sustainable forest management. This Approach is particularly relevant to the Tree Canopy target but will also support advancing the Riparian Forest Buffer and Forest Conservation targets.

Management Approach 3.2.6: Ensure adequate maintenance and management:

The Tree Canopy, Riparian Forest Buffer and Forest Conservation targets all set goals to maintain forests and tree post-planting. However, programs that provide financial support for planting activities do not consistently provide the needed financial support for the needed post-planting maintenance or the long-term stewardship and management of forests. The Forestry Workgroup will identify potential approaches to improve existing implementation programs or to develop new programs to ensure adequate maintenance and management. This could include extending grant timelines to ensure funding is available for longer-term maintenance and management or developing standalone programs specifically for maintenance and management.

Participating Partners

The following partners participated in the creation of this Management Strategy and expressed their intention to collaborate on Management Strategy implementation over the next six years. Per the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement, “participation in developing Management Strategies or in the achievement of Outcomes varies by signatory based on differing priorities across the watershed. This participation may include commitments such as sharing knowledge, data or information, educating the public, working on future legislation and developing or implementing

programs or verified practices” (2025). Signatory partners may join implementation efforts at any time. Partners also recognize that Signatory participation is voluntary and may vary accordingly.

- **Signatory Partners**

- US Forest Service
- USGS
- NRCS
- Delaware Forest Service
- Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control
- DC District Department of Transportation
- DC Department of Energy and Environment
- Maryland Forest Service
- New York Department of Environmental Conservation
- Pennsylvania Bureau of Forestry
- Virginia Department of Forestry
- West Virginia Division of Forestry
- Chesapeake Bay Commission

- **Other Partners**

- Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay
- Cacapon Institute
- Chesapeake Bay Foundation
- Potomac Conservancy
- Upper Susquehanna Coalition

3.3 Land Use Planning and Decision Support

Land Use Planning and Decision Support Outcome:

Develop and disseminate relevant and actionable land use information in consultation with local governments, to organizations and communities involved in local and regional land use planning. This information should include past, present and future conditions, as well as the potential environmental and socioeconomic consequences of changing conditions.

- Develop at least five use cases annually, informed by and provided at the county, watershed or municipal scale to inform land use planning and decisions and maintain the ecological integrity of watersheds supporting good stream health. Use cases can include watershed protection, aquatic connectivity, stormwater, tree canopy, agricultural preservation or redevelopment.
- Highlight at least two widely applicable land use cases annually to showcase best practices and share this information with local governments and partners through diverse communications products.

Baseline and Current Condition

Land Use Planning and Decision Support Outcome

The Land Use Workgroup (LUWG) has made significant progress in generating foundational data to support land-use planning across the Chesapeake Bay watershed. High-resolution 1-meter land use/land cover (LULC) datasets have been produced for three points in time, giving partners an unprecedented level of detail on past and present landscape conditions. These datasets have proven highly valuable for analysis, communication, and planning, offering insight into development patterns, conservation needs, and environmental challenges. A fourth time step is under development and scheduled for release in 2028, which will further strengthen the ability to evaluate trends and change over time.

Despite these advances, the extent to which LUWG data are influencing actual land use decision-making remains only partially understood. While the LUWG has some awareness of how the data are being used, it lacks a comprehensive picture of the effectiveness, consistency, and depth of that use across jurisdictions. The current repository of LULC use cases includes approximately 39 examples documented in 2023 for the 2022 Edition of the LULC dataset. However, these use cases are for an outdated dataset and are not compiled in an easily accessible or well-communicated format, limiting their usefulness in demonstrating impact or supporting replication.

Outside of LUWG's own efforts, the Chesapeake Conservancy has independently collected more than 300 use cases involving hyper-resolution hydrography and land use/land cover data. These examples represent a promising body of evidence showing broad interest and application of high-resolution datasets. However, additional detail is needed for many of these cases to meet the specific requirements of the Land Use Planning and Decision Support Outcome—particularly around decision context, outcomes achieved, and opportunities for replication.

There have been some notable successes where land use data have been communicated effectively, such as the widely used [Tree Canopy Fact Sheets](#) and the Chesapeake Conservancy's development of a forest conservation [technical study](#) that supported reauthorization of [Maryland's](#)

[forest conservation act](#). These products demonstrated the potential for accessible, well-designed materials to reach local planners and decision-makers. However, the initiative was supported by one-time funding and was not tied to a broader, sustained strategy for delivering information to trusted local sources. As a result, while individual projects have shown promise, the LUWG lacks a systematic approach to ensuring that land-use data consistently reach the people and processes where they can shape decisions.

Overall, the baseline condition for the Land Use Planning and Decision Support Outcome reflects meaningful progress in data development and early communication efforts, but also a clear need for improved structure, accessibility, and sustained engagement. Strengthening the use-case repository, improving understanding of decision impacts, and building reliable pathways to trusted local entities are essential next steps in evolving from high-quality data creation to high-value decision support.

Monitoring Progress and Indicators

All of the following indicators will be reported at the watershed, state, county, and sub-watershed scales, as determined by the LUWG.

Indicator: [Impervious Surface Cover \(Net Change\)](#)

The Impervious Surface Cover Net Change indicator reports the extent of the Chesapeake Bay watershed that is covered by impervious surfaces, the net change in impervious cover over time and the types of impervious cover that most contributed to these changes. This indicator will also track increases in impervious cover associated with energy infrastructure (e.g., solar fields), road widening and new roads, and agricultural intensification.

Indicator: [Impervious Surface Cover \(Per Capita\)](#)

The Impervious Surface Cover Per Capita indicator tracks changes in impervious surface cover per capita within residential areas. By normalizing impervious cover relative to population, this measure helps evaluate land use policies and the impact of growth patterns on watershed health. Higher impervious surface per capita may indicate low-density or inadequate smart growth implementation. Conversely, declining impervious surface cover per capita may indicate more efficient land use, infill development, redevelopment or policy success in guiding growth toward areas with existing infrastructure.

Indicator: [Natural Land Conversion Indicator](#)

This indicator tracks the conversion of natural land cover – primarily forests and wetlands – to development. It reflects both ongoing development pressure and the effectiveness of conservation, zoning, and mitigation strategies intended to protect ecological integrity.

Indicator: [Farmland Conversion Indicator](#)

This indicator measures the rate at which farmland transitions to developed land uses. Farmland conversion is an important proxy for loss of rural open space character, changes in local economics, and shifts toward more land-intensive development patterns.

Indicator: [Watershed Population](#)

This indicator is an influencing factor, not a measure of performance. The decline in the health of the Chesapeake Bay is correlated to the rise in population in the watershed from 1950 through the 1980's. Projections through 2050 show continued population growth, loss of natural areas and

increases in urban development, which are all challenges to protecting and restoring the Chesapeake. Population growth has correlated with the decline of the Chesapeake Bay.

Monitoring: Use Cases

The Land Use Workgroup (LUWG) will maintain an actively updated, publicly accessible repository of use cases for relevant land use data. This repository will serve as a centralized reference for local governments, planners, and partners seeking examples of effective planning, policy, and data application.

Every year, the LUWG will produce an “Impact Memo” that highlights at least five use cases that demonstrate impact and at least two widely applicable use cases. The document may summarize metrics, such as jurisdictions referencing use cases in plans or codes, documented changes to decisions or policies, co-benefits achieved, etc. The Impact Memo is intended to showcase successful land use data applications, support scalable adoption, and demonstrate progress toward maintaining watershed ecological integrity.

Situation Analysis

The following table identifies challenges that will impact progress towards attaining this outcome and its targets over the upcoming six-year Management Strategy cycle. Priority challenges identified by the Goal Team are shown in **bold**. Challenges associated with Changing Environmental Conditions are denoted with an asterisk (*). In some instances, the workgroup’s ability to act will depend on the financial resources available.

	Within CBPs ability to influence	Outside of CBP's ability to influence
Challenges		
Wide variation in who makes land-use decisions, when they’re made, and what data they use makes it hard to deliver consistent, targeted support across the watershed.		X
Building trust and recognition for the LUWG (and CBP data) among audiences that decision-makers already rely on as trusted sources.	X	
Identifying and addressing local priorities effectively and communicating CBP data so that it is relevant to local priorities and needs.	X	
Getting representative feedback on what information and formats would be most useful to a diversity of stakeholders.	X	
Diminished scientific capacity/workforce/expertise of federal agencies.		X
Adapting to rapidly evolving landscape-monitoring technologies.	X	
Strengthening our approach to collecting use cases and sharing information.	X	

Continued long-term financial support to monitor the landscape over time, as well as create tools and resources based on updated data.	X	
Changing technology to monitor the landscape.		X
Population growth.		X
Vulnerability of high-value watersheds/habitats to development due to growth pressure.		X
Legislative authority to shape growth patterns can be difficult to obtain.		X
Dynamic permitting landscape.		X
Lack of strong communication between those creating the data and those who use it.	X	
Time lag of monitoring the landscape and producing the data.		X
Local government capacity to use the products produced.		X
Maintaining confidence in the data as it changes with new methods and data sources.	X	
Lack of network of translators and trusted sources to deliver relevant land use information to local decision makers.		X
Rapid expansion of emergent phenomena (e.g., data centers, warehouses, solar fields, and agricultural intensification).		X

Management Approaches for Outcome 3: Land Use Planning and Decision Support

Management Approach 3.3.1: Expand and Improve the Land Use Decision Support Use-Case Repository

The LUWG will enhance its use case repository by transforming it into a more accessible system that supports local planning and Chesapeake Bay restoration goals. The LUWG will refine the current use case survey, or create a follow-up survey, to collect essential details, such as problem framing, decision context, data sources, partners, methods, outcomes, and opportunities for replication. The LUWG will also develop a public-facing online viewer or story-map platform that allows users to search case studies by topic, jurisdiction, or watershed and explore examples through visual formats and links to relevant datasets. The viewer will be developed with extensive feedback from state and local partners to ensure it is useful and aligned with their needs.

To highlight progress, LUWG will publish an annual “Impact Memo” featuring at least five influential use cases and two broadly applicable examples. Jurisdictions will be encouraged to contribute and champion use cases for inclusion each year. The memo could also summarize metrics demonstrating how examples influence decisions, policies, and environmental outcomes across the watershed.

Management Approach 3.3.2: Strengthen Local Land Use Decisions Through Trusted Networks

The LUWG will work to strengthen local land use decisions through trusted networks by utilizing concepts from the Local Engagement Strategy, developed in coordination with the Local Government Leadership Workgroup (LGLW). The LUWG will leverage the Local Government Leadership Workgroup (LGLW) and the Local Government Advisory Committee (LGAC) to identify local priorities, gather structured feedback on data products, and understand which information formats are most useful to local governments. This partnership will also help reveal the trusted

communication channels that already exist with local governments. In addition to trusted sources represented on LGLW and LGAC, the LUWG will identify and engage influential networks such as watershed organizations, agricultural partners, non-profits, universities, or regional planning organizations that often serve as key conduits for land use information. Using insights from these networks, LUWG will update existing products or develop new communication materials to meet locally defined needs. Some examples of this may include creating impervious surface change summaries, updating tree canopy analyses, integrating parcel-level data with Chesapeake Bay Program land use datasets, identifying flood-prone areas, or mapping future development probability using land use forecasting tools.

Whenever possible, the LUWG will adapt, replicate, or promote existing use cases to help jurisdictions or trusted sources apply proven approaches without starting from scratch. Throughout this process, the LUWG will maintain consistent two-way communication with LGLW, LGAC and other trusted sources, creating regular opportunities for feedback and collaborative refinement of land use-related data and tools.

Participating Partners

The following partners participated in the creation of this Management Strategy and expressed their intention to collaborate on Management Strategy implementation over the next six years. Per the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement, “participation in developing Management Strategies or in the achievement of Outcomes varies by signatory based on differing priorities across the watershed. This participation may include commitments such as sharing knowledge, data or information, educating the public, working on future legislation and developing or implementing programs or verified practices” (2025). Signatory partners may join implementation efforts at any time. Partners also recognize that Signatory participation is voluntary and may vary accordingly.

- **Signatory Partners**

- District of Columbia Department of Energy & Environment
- Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control
- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
- Maryland Department of Planning
- Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection
- West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection
- Chesapeake Bay Commission
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

- **Other Partners**

- Hampton Roads Planning District Commission
- Northern Virginia Regional Commission
- Eastern Shore Land Conservancy
- Chesapeake Conservancy
- Choose Clean Water Coalition
- U.S. Geological Survey

3.4 Protected Lands

Protected Lands 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.

Protected Lands Workgroup Statement

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.

Protecting land can prevent nonpoint source pollution from entering our waterways through the conservation of forests and other working lands like pasture and cropland with appropriate best management practices applied to prevent or minimize runoff. Many studies indicate that watersheds remain healthy if they retain 70-90% forest cover. Communities throughout the watershed also have many needs for protected lands to help ensure the safety and well-being of their residents such as protecting water supply, preventing flooding, supporting outdoor recreation and tourism, and maintaining economically viable working landscapes. Meeting these local protection needs can complement and reinforce the watershed-wide protection outcome and targets.

Definitions

Urban and Community Greenspaces: Publicly accessible lands in census-designated places and urban areas that provide opportunities for both passive and active recreation while offering exposure to nature. These public spaces deliver human health, community, and environmental benefits and include, but are not limited to, parks, trails, gardens, sports fields, waterfronts, outdoor gathering areas, and natural landscapes like forests or grasslands. Definition created by the Protected Lands Workgroup and the Public Access Workgroup in 2026

Agriculture: Lands associated with the production of crops (e.g., grains, legumes, vegetables, fruits, nuts), used for grazing livestock (e.g., cattle, goats, sheep), or for producing fodder (e.g., hay and alfalfa). Definition from the Chesapeake Bay Land Use/Land Cover (LULC) Database 2024 Edition User Guide

Forest: Tree canopy with a natural understory that is part of a large patch. Large patches are at least 1-acre in area with a minimum patch diameter of 36-meters (~120 feet). Forest also includes small patches of contiguous tree canopy that do not meet forest area and/or width requirements, such as agricultural windbreaks and small woodlots, where the understory is assumed to be

undergoing natural or managed succession. *Definition adapted from the Chesapeake Bay Land Use/Land Cover (LULC) Database 2024 Edition User Guide*

Riparian Forest: natural or re-established woodlands next to streams, lakes, and Wetlands with a width of 30 meters (100 feet). *Definition from the US Forest Service and the Chesapeake Bay Forestry Workgroup*

Wetlands: Wetlands are water influenced ecosystems that reduce flooding, filter pollution, support diverse wildlife, store carbon, and provide valuable recreational and cultural benefits. *Definition adapted from Chesapeake Bay Program White Paper on Common Terminology Around Wetlands Practices in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed*

Tribal Homelands: *Definition will be developed with the Indigenous Conservation Council. Will update document once definition is available*

Natural Areas Supporting Healthy Streams: A healthy stream is defined as fair, good, or excellent condition as measured by an Index of Biotic Integrity. Natural areas include: forests, early successional forests, forest clear cuts, tidal and non-tidal wetlands, beaches, and exposed lake and reservoir water margins. *Definition adapted from Stream Health Outcome and Chesapeake Bay Land Use/Land Cover (LULC) Database 2024 Edition User Guide*

Baseline and Current Condition

In 2025, there were 9.3 million acres of protected lands within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. 7.1 million acres of protected forest, 811,000 acres of protected riparian forests, 1.3 million acres of protected lands used for agriculture, and 510,269 acres of protected lands within the census-designated places and urban areas footprint.

Note: The priority lands do not add up to 9.3 million as one parcel can be counted towards multiple priority landscape acres. For example, a protected forest parcel in a buffer would show up in both protected forest and protected riparian forest buffers. For more information about the protected forests priority landscapes, please refer to the Healthy Forests & Trees outcome subchapter.

The Protected Lands Workgroup is working to create targets for each of the priority landscapes. The Targets will be in place by the end of 2027.

Our understanding of how these lands have changed over time continues to evolve, and our baseline assessments may shift as more complete data becomes available. The Land Trust Alliance and USGS are currently undertaking a project to improve the attribution of jurisdictional protected lands by adding dates of protection, enabling us to better track how land protection has progressed over time.

Monitoring Progress and Indicators

The following datasets will be used to monitor progress of overall protection as well as specific protection of our priority landscapes.

Chesapeake Progress Protected Lands Indicator (Chesapeake Bay Program Office. (2024). *Chesapeake Progress ProtectedLands_2024* (MapServer) [GIS dataset]. U.S. Environmental

Protection Agency.

https://gis.chesapeakebay.net/ags/rest/services/ChesapeakeProgress/cpProtectedLands_2024/MpServer)

Chesapeake Bay Land Use/Land Cover (LULC) Database 2024 Edition (Claggett, P. R., McDonald, S. M., O’Neil-Dunne, J., MacFaden, S., Walker, K., Guinn, S., Ahmed, L., Buford, E., Kurtz, E., McCabe, P., Pickford, J. A., Royar, A., Schulze, K., 2025, Chesapeake Bay Land Use/Land Cover (LULC) Database 2024 Edition: U.S. Geological Survey data release, <https://doi.org/10.5066/P14BEBRC>.)

Chesapeake Bay Watershed Riparian 30m 1:24k 2024 Edition (McDonald, S.M., Thompson, R.L., Katoski, M.P., Claggett, P.R., Ahmed, L., Fitch, A., and Wolf, J., 2024, Chesapeake Bay Watershed 1:24k 10, 30 and 90-meter Riparian Buffer Zones: U.S. Geological Survey data release, <https://doi.org/10.5066/P99HZHQ0>.)

National Wetlands Inventory (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. (n.d.). *National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) dataset* (FGDC metadata XML) [Data set]. U.S. Department of the Interior. https://documentst.ecosphere.fws.gov/wetlands/data/metadata/FWS_Wetlands.xml)

Situation Analysis

The following table identifies challenges that will impact progress towards attaining this outcome and its targets over the upcoming six-year Management Strategy cycle. Priority challenges identified by the Goal Team are shown in **bold**. Challenges associated with Changing Environmental Conditions are denoted with an asterisk (*). In some instances, the workgroup’s ability to act will depend on the financial resources available.

	Within CBP's ability to influence	Outside of CBP's ability to influence
Challenges		
Data gaps in the Protected Lands Indicator Dataset- Attributes of the dataset are missing key amounts of data, limiting CBP's ability to understand conserved lands within the Chesapeake fully	X	
Building relationships and trust within the Protected Lands Network- Jurisdictions have deep networks of implementers; the Bay Program does not. There is a need for the Bay Program to better coordinate with those doing the on-the-ground work	X	
Communication- There is a need for communicating the importance of protection and demonstrating how it contributes to the successful achievement of a wide range of goals, including the economic impacts. Communication should be targeted to multiple audiences: the public, legislators, donors, etc.	X	
Land Use Change* - Land use is changing throughout the watershed. When land is disturbed or additional impervious surface created through development, it can increase runoff and therefore add to nonpoint source pollution loads. The Protected Lands Workgroup, with support of the Healthy Landscape Goal Team, should be working with jurisdictions and local partners to inform them of tools and resources to help them with land change planning and decisions that impact watershed health.	x	
Population change- The overall population in the watershed is increasing, but is not evenly distributed. There are some areas of the watershed that are seeing increases in population, while others are losing population. These population changes can shape how protection is perceived in rural, suburban and urban areas.		x
Funding- Partners are being asked to do more with fewer resources. There is a real need for funding for agency and partner capacity and technical assistance.	x	

Management Approaches

Management Approach 3.4.1: Data, Tracking & Targeting

Accurate and comprehensive tracking of protected lands over time is essential to achieving the Protected Lands Outcome and its Targets.

High quality data—particularly complete attribution of protection dates and public access status within the Protected Lands Indicator—are critical for assessing current conditions, setting up targets, and evaluating progress toward the Protected Lands Outcome.

This approach requires the Protected Lands Workgroup to coordinate with data managers to improve protected lands datasets' completeness and consistency, ensuring that all information is properly attributed and suitable for detailed analysis.

The Protected Lands Workgroup will also identify, quantify, and—where feasible—monetize the ecological, hydrological, and community benefits of land protection across the watershed, while assessing emerging issues and potential approaches for addressing them. These insights, along with jurisdictional plans (example: State Wildlife Action Plans), will help guide the strategic prioritization of conservation investments.

Management Approach 3.4.2 Funding Conservation & Protection

Sustained, accessible funding is critical for conserving and restoring protected lands. The Protected Lands Workgroup will work to expand both access to funding and the total resources available for protection and restoration activities. It will support partners in identifying and leveraging diverse funding opportunities, addressing challenges such as limited capacity. In collaboration with the Chesapeake Bay Program, the Workgroup will also explore ways to use appropriated funds more effectively.

To maximize long-term value, the Workgroup will promote conservation and restoration strategies that advance multiple outcomes—including water quality, habitat and forest protection, and community well-being—and encourage coupling conservation and restoration efforts to increase environmental and community benefits.

Management Approach 3.4.3 Engagement, Communication & Outreach

The Protected Lands Workgroup will strengthen land conservation and increase protection across the Chesapeake Watershed by actively engaging practitioners, improving communication resources, and expanding outreach that supports voluntary conservation and restoration activities.

Over the next six years, the workgroup will engage directly with the Protected Lands Network—including land conservation practitioner networks (such as the Chesapeake Conservation Partnership), federal and state agencies, local governments, nonprofits, and community partners—to build trust and cultivate meaningful, collaborative relationships. Through regular engagement, workgroup meetings, and knowledge-sharing, the Workgroup will deepen its understanding of on-the-ground challenges, opportunities, and priorities. These strengthened relationships will support coordinated conservation strategies, advance shared goals, and enhance long-term stewardship of critical lands throughout the region.

The Workgroup will also develop and provide communication resources that help jurisdictions, local governments, and partners convey the environmental, economic, military readiness, and community benefits of land conservation and protection, especially the protection of our priority landscapes. Tools such as fact sheets, case studies, and messaging materials will support informed decision-making and build broader support for conservation at local and regional scales.

Appendix 1. Signatory Statutory Authorities Driving Outcome Attainment

The law and regulation of signatory partners may support, justify or motivate their participation in the collaborative work of the Chesapeake Bay Program related to the attainment of specific Outcomes and Targets of the Watershed Agreement.

The following documentation identifies core statutory authorities that provide part of the impetus for the attainment of Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement Outcomes and their related Targets. While Chesapeake Bay Program partners acknowledge that the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement is voluntary, subject to the availability of appropriated funds, and does not preempt, supersede or override any other law or regulation applicable to each signatory, they also acknowledge that the law or regulation of individual signatories can support each partner's participation in outcome attainment. The table below is not an exhaustive list of all relevant laws and regulations. Rather, this appendix identifies the driving motivators that can bring about signatory partner engagement in efforts described in this Strategic Plan, associated Management Strategies, and Workplans.

Outcome: Healthy Forests and Trees	
Signatory	Statutory Authority
Federal government	Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978 (16 U.S.C. Chapter 41)
	Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (Public Law 115-334)
Delaware	State Forestry (Title 3, Chapter 10)
	Delaware Agricultural Land Preservation Act (Title 3, Chapter 9, Subchapter V)
District of Columbia	DDOT Establishment Act (D.C. Official Code § 50-921.01 et seq.)
	Urban Forest Preservation Act of 2002 (D.C. Law 14-309; D.C. Official Code § 8-651.01 et seq.)
Maryland	Maryland Forest Conservation Act (MD Nat. Res. Article (NRA), Title 5, Subtitle 16)
	Program Open Space (MD NRA, Title 5, Subtitle 9)
	Forests and Parks (MD NRA, Title 5)
New York	Taxation of forest land Real Property Tax (RPT) (CHAPTER 50-A, ARTICLE 4, TITLE 2, SECTION 480-A)
	Tree Conservation and Urban Forestry (Environmental Conservation (ENV) CHAPTER 43-B, ARTICLE 53)
	Susquehanna River Basin Compact (Environmental Conservation (ENV) CHAPTER 43-B, ARTICLE 21, TITLE 13)
	Clean Water, Clean Air, and Green Jobs Environmental Bond Act of 2022 (Environmental Conservation (ENV) CHAPTER 43-B, ARTICLE 58)
Pennsylvania	Conservation and Natural Resources Act (PA Act 18 of 1995)
	Keystone Tree Fund Restricted Account (HB 374 of 2019)
	Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code Act (Reenacted and amended Dec. 21, 1988, P.L.1329, No.170)
	Pennsylvania Clean and Green (Act 319).
Virginia	Virginia Water Quality Improvement Fund (Code of Virginia § 10.1-2128)
	Forest Resources & The Department of Forestry (Code of Virginia 10.1. Conservation, Chapter 11)
	Open-Space Land Act (Code of Virginia 10.1. Conservation, Chapter 17.)

Appendix 2 Snapshot of Signatory Programs

Managing a large and difficult restoration and conservation program with “no assurance about the level of funds that may be available beyond the short term” (GAO, 2028) is a challenging undertaking that requires individual and collaborative action from signatory partners, as well as the many communities and individuals who live, work, play and learn in our region. This “Snapshot of Signatory Resources” seeks to better recognize the significant contribution that individual signatory partners and federal agencies make towards outcome attainment. The existing programs and funding spotlighted below are not intended to represent the full range of resources available or required to support progress towards outcome attainment; only the “biggest ticket” programs are included for each outcome and signatory partner. It is important to note that funding is reported from a single point in time (fiscal year 2025) and is not representative of future investments. Identifying the most critical programs and resources that exist at a particular moment in time can help the partnership focus its collaborative efforts on activities that have the greatest impact, and which don’t duplicate the work of existing programs.

Adapting to Changing Environmental Conditions

TBD

Healthy Forests and Trees Signatory Programs

Federal Government

Community Trees

- [USFS Urban and Community Forestry Program](#) (\$1.85 million for Fiscal Year 2024¹) is dedicated to growing and maintaining urban and community trees, forests and green spaces.

Riparian Forest Buffers

- [FSA Conservation Reserve Program](#) (\$33.7 million for Fiscal Year 2024) is a voluntary program that encourages agricultural producers to convert highly erodible and other environmentally sensitive acres to vegetative cover, such as native trees and riparian buffers.

Forest Conservation

- [USFS Forest Stewardship Program](#) (\$495,589 for Fiscal Year 2024²) enables the USFS to work in partnership with state forestry agencies, cooperative extension, and conservation districts to connect private landowners with the information they need to manage their forests and woodlands.
- [USFS Forest Legacy Program](#) (\$0 for Fiscal Year 2024³) is administered by the Forest Service in partnership with state agencies to encourage the protection of privately owned forest lands through conservation easements or land purchases.

¹ Estimated based on the total amount of funding awarded to a state, pro-rated by the % of the state’s total population within the Chesapeake Bay watershed, since these funds support community forestry.

² Estimated based on the total amount of funding awarded to the states, prorated by the % of a state’s private forested land within the Chesapeake Bay watershed, since these funds are invested in private forest management

³ Funding is competitively awarded so varies significantly from year to year

- [NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program](#) (\$51.8 million for Fiscal Year 2024) helps forest landowners integrate conservation into working lands.
- [NRCS Conservation Stewardship Program](#) (\$20 million for Fiscal Year 2024) is the largest working lands conservation program in the United States that helps producers enhance natural resources and improve their business operations.

Delaware

Community Trees

- [Urban and Community Forestry](#) (Federally Funded) Provides assistance to help municipalities, nonprofit groups, community associations, and homeowners to plant and care for their trees.

Riparian Forest Buffers

- [Buffer Incentive Program](#) (Federally Funded – as funding is available) provides incentives for implementation of forest buffer and grass buffers in Delaware’s Chesapeake Bay watershed, including site prep, materials, installation, and incentives to landowners based on acreage placed into protection for 5-years.
- [Delaware Community Conservation Assistance Program](#) (Federally Funded – as funding is available) supports community and landowner-level implementation of backyard best management practices, including but not limited to tree plantings and riparian tree buffers, in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Forest Conservation

- [Forestland Preservation Program](#) (1 Million for Fiscal Year 2025) protects working forest through perpetual conservation easements, these easements allow forest management activities, including timber harvests.
- [Stewardship Program](#) (Federally funded / Timber Harvest Revenue for Fiscal Year 2025) – offers multiple tax incentive programs to keep properties in active forest management. It also offers a small state cost share program when timber revenues allow.

District of Columbia

Community Trees

- [Urban Forestry Division \(UFD\)](#) (Annual Budget \$25 Million) DDOT's Urban Forestry Division (UFD) is the primary steward of Washington DC's urban forest and has a mission of keeping this resource healthy, safe, & growing.

Maryland

Community Trees

- [5 Million Trees Initiative](#) (\$15 million FY26) is a partnership effort to plant 5 million trees by 2031, including trees within communities.
- [Tree-Mendous Maryland](#) helps schools, local governments, civic groups, and nonprofit organizations plant native trees on public land and community open space across Maryland.
- [Community Forestry Catalyst Fund](#) (federally funded) aims to reduce barriers to tree planting and provide local partners with flexible access to a source of funds that can be leveraged to secure additional resources without requiring matching funds.
- [Maryland Urban and Community Forestry Council \(MUCFC\) Community Tree Planting and Education Program](#) supports community-based tree planting and forestry education projects that strengthen Maryland’s urban forests.

Forest Buffers

- [Conservation Reserve Enhancement Permanent Easement Program](#) is a voluntary program that enables permanent conservation easements for forest buffers under an existing Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program contract.
- [Maryland's Conservation Buffer Initiative](#) provides farmers with attractive incentive payments to plant streamside buffers on farmland to improve the health of local streams and the Chesapeake Bay.
- [5 Million Trees Initiative](#) (\$15 million FY26) is a partnership effort to plant 5 million trees by 2031, including trees in forest buffers.

Forest Conservation

- [Maryland Program Open Space](#) (\$42.7 million FY26) – Protects habitat and working lands, easement and fee simple acquisition, including local and state recreation, Targeted Ecological Areas, and protection of productive farm and forest land (Rural Legacy, MALPF). Some local jurisdictions have matching programs.
- [Property and Income Tax Abatement for Forest Landowners](#) – 15-year recorded Forest Conservation and Management Agreements and the 3-year SDAT Woodland Assessment Program offer reduced property taxes for eligible forest land managed under a Forest Stewardship Plan; TAXMOD offers state income tax credits for twice the amount invested in productive forests.

New York

Community Trees

- [Urban and Community Forestry Grant](#) (\$10 million statewide) State grant program for community tree inventories and management plans and support initiative to plant 25 million by 2033.

Riparian Forest Buffers

- Upper Susquehanna Coalition's [Water Quality Program](#), [Trees for Tributaries](#), and Forestry Steward Program (\$580,000 annually from multiple state and federal funding sources) The USC Water Quality Program's goal is to increase implementation of riparian forest buffers, wetlands, grazing, stream corridor rehabilitation and afforestation projects.

Forest Conservation

- [DEC Establishing Large Forest \(ELF\) and Regenerate NY Forestry Programs](#) (\$9.5 million statewide) State Grant Programs for encouraging and financially assisting private landowners in establishing large forests upon unforested or deforested lands, improving the health of existing forests, and restoring forests.
- [Climate Resilient Farming Grant Track 4: Agricultural Forestry Management](#) (\$2 million statewide) Supports healthy productive forests as well as afforestation on currently unforested lands on farms both for the purpose of carbon sequestration and to promote sustainable and resilient agriculture and forestry.

Pennsylvania

Community Trees

- [Community Conservation Partnerships Program](#)- Community and Watershed Forestry Grants; Urban and Community Forestry (\$1,000,000.00). Grant program funds community engagement, street tree planting, urban forest planning, planting, and tree care in communities and other publicly accessible spaces throughout the Commonwealth.

Riparian Forest Buffers

- [Community Conservation Partnerships Program](#)—Community and Watershed Forestry Grants; Riparian Forest Buffers (\$1,000,000.00). Grant program funds outreach, implementation, and post-planting establishment/stewardship of riparian forest buffer plantings across PA.

Forest Conservation

- [Community Conservation Partnerships Program](#)—land conservation program provides grant funding to conservation partners for conservation easements and fee simple acquisition. Bureau of Forestry also acquires forest land directly. Funding averages several million total.

Virginia

Community Trees

- [Virginia Trees for Clean Water](#) (\$1,100,000 for FY25) establishes long-term, sustained canopy cover to improve water quality throughout the state through community plantings, tree giveaways, and riparian buffer plantings.
- [Urban and Community Forestry Grants](#) (\$425,000 FY26) promote the protection and enhancement of urban and community forest ecosystems, tree planting, and the care of trees in cities, towns, and communities.
- [Throwing Shade VA](#) (\$300,000 FY25). Partnership between DOF and retail nurseries to offer discounts on eligible native trees and shrubs.

Riparian Forest Buffers

- [Riparian Forests for Landowners](#) (\$1,000,000 FY25). Zero-cost riparian buffer establishment program for private landowners wishing to establish a buffer on their property. Program covers site preparation, tree planting and one year of maintenance following planting.

Forest Conservation

- [Forest Legacy](#) (\$20,000,000 FY25). Partnership between DOF and USDA Forest Service to conserve forestland under threat of conversion to other land uses. Qualifying properties must be within identified Legacy Areas.
- [Purchase of development rights program](#) (\$437,500 FY25, distro. To participating counties with PDR programs). Partnership between DOF and participating localities. DOF equally distributes the funding allocated to the Virginia Farmland and Forestland Preservation Fund to localities that can provide matching funds for the purchase of open-space easements.
- [Logger Best Management Practice Cost-Share](#) (\$450,000 FY25). Provides financial and technical assistance to loggers to implement BMPs during and after timber harvests to reduce erosion and prevent sediment from reaching waterways.

West Virginia

- [\[Featured Program with hyperlink\]](#) ([\[Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2025\]](#)) [\[one sentence max description of how program relates to Outcome attainment\]](#)

District of Columbia

- [\[Featured Program with hyperlink\]](#) ([\[Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2025\]](#)) [\[one sentence max description of how program relates to Outcome attainment\]](#)

Land Use Planning and Decision Support Outcome

Delaware

- Chesapeake Implementation Program
 - [\[https://dnrec.delaware.gov/watershed-stewardship/chesapeake/\]](https://dnrec.delaware.gov/watershed-stewardship/chesapeake/) (FY25 ~ \$200,000)
 - The Chesapeake Implementation Program oversees several funding programs while working closely with related programs to help local governments, community groups and landowners in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed take actions and make changes to protect and improve water quality in the watershed through planning and implementation.

Maryland

- *[Featured Program with hyperlink] ([Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2025]) [one sentence max description of how program relates to Outcome attainment]*

New York

- *[Featured Program with hyperlink] ([Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2025]) [one sentence max description of how program relates to Outcome attainment]*

Pennsylvania

- *[Featured Program with hyperlink] ([Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2025]) [one sentence max description of how program relates to Outcome attainment]*

Virginia

- *[Featured Program with hyperlink] ([Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2025]) [one sentence max description of how program relates to Outcome attainment]*

West Virginia

- *[Featured Program with hyperlink] ([Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2025]) [one sentence max description of how program relates to Outcome attainment]*

Chesapeake Bay Commission

- *[Featured Program with hyperlink] ([Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2025]) [one sentence max description of how program relates to Outcome attainment]*

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

- [Interagency agreement with USGS](#) (~ \$1.5M Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2025).
 - This agreement provided the Chesapeake Bay Program with technical expertise to investigate and communicate land use related information to address relevant topics.
- [Agreement with the Chesapeake Conservancy](#) (~ \$1.3M Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2025)
 - This agreement provides the Chesapeake Bay Program decision-makers and partners with the data and tools needed to support protection and restoration efforts impacting the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Protected Lands Outcome

Delaware

- [Delaware Open Space Program](#) (Estimated \$3 million in Chesapeake Bay Watershed) aims to protect our natural and cultural resources, conserve biological diversity, protect parks,

forests, wildlife areas, nature preserves, etc., to provide for outdoor recreation and allow for water resource conservation.

New York

- [New York State Conservation Partnership Program](#) (\$138,000 within watershed FY25) State grants used to leverage public and private funding for building capacity of land trusts to help advance open space protection farmland preservation, and resource conservation goals.
- [Open Space Conservation Grant Program](#) (\$25 million statewide to be awarded in FY27) The goal of this grant program is to provide funding for land conservation partners across New York State, increase climate resiliency and adaptation, and support conserving 30% of NY's lands and waters by 2030 ([30x30 initiative](#)).
- [Forest Conservation Easements for Land Trusts](#) (\$404,250 within watershed FY25) State grants for land trusts to protect forestland through conservation easements and provide community benefits.

Pennsylvania

- [Department of Agriculture Farmland Preservation Program](#) (\$22,956,951 in FFY25; additional \$17.9 million from county programs in FY25). The program is a partnership between all levels of government and non-profit organizations - with a common goal of saving prime farmland. The Pennsylvania Agricultural Conservation Easement Purchase Program was developed to strengthen Pennsylvania's agricultural economy and protect prime farmland. This program enables state and county governments to purchase conservation easements from farmers. The program was approved in 1988 and the first easement was purchased in December of 1989. To date, 6,600+ farms have been approved for easement purchases totaling 660,000+ acres.
- [Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund](#). Created in 1993, the Key 93 initiative operated solely on realty transfer tax revenue, with 65% directed to Pennsylvania's Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR). The DCNR allocation supports the rehabilitation and enhancement of state parks, forestry, trails and river protection, emphasizing the importance of conserving natural resources and promoting outdoor recreation. Funds are also directed toward grants for local recreation projects that can have land acquisition elements, and grants for land trusts are provided to plan for and acquire open space.
 - 2025 land trust acquisition grants: \$12.1 million
 - 2025 community acquisition grants: \$2.9 million
- [Oil and Gas Lease Fund](#). Established in 1955, the Oil and Gas Lease Fund supports conservation, recreation and flood control initiatives. It has enabled the purchase of state park lands, acquisition of mineral rights, infrastructure and trail upgrades, habitat protection and restoration, and the procurement of recreational equipment.

Maryland

- [Rural Legacy Program](#) (\$15.3M in FY25) This program provides grant funding for the preservation of the natural resources and resource-based economies of Maryland through the purchase of conservation easements and fee simple acquisitions located in designated protection areas, including prime agricultural and forest lands, wildlife habitats, and cultural resources that, if conserved, will promote resource-based economies and maintain the fabric of rural life.
- [Maryland Agriculture Land Preservation Foundation](#) (MALPF) (\$24.5M In FY25) MALPF purchases agricultural preservation easements that forever restrict development on prime

farmland and woodland and has permanently preserved land in each of Maryland's 23 counties amounting to over 350,000 acres since 1980.

- [Maryland Program Open Space \(POS\)](#) (\$34.7M in FY25) POS Stateside preserves natural areas for public recreation and watershed and wildlife protection across Maryland through the acquisition of fee simple land and conservation easements, while POS Local provides financial and technical assistance to local subdivisions for the planning, acquisition, and or development of recreational land or open space areas, including working lands, targeted ecological areas, productive farm and forest lands.

Virginia

- [Office of Working Lands Preservation](#) – (no dedicated funding) Work with public agencies and private groups to slow the loss of valuable working landscapes in Virginia through education, technical assistance, and accepting open-space easements.
- [Forest Legacy](#) – (FY25 \$2,102,500 state required match and \$8,410,000 federal) Partnership between DOF and USDA Forest Service to conserve forestland under threat of conversion to other land uses. Qualifying properties must be within identified Legacy Areas.
- [Purchase of Development Rights Program](#) – (FY25 - \$437,500 distributed to participating counties with PDR programs, all within the Bay) Partnership between DOF and participating localities. DOF equally distributes the funding allocated to the Virginia Farmland and Forestland Preservation Fund to localities that can provide matching funds for the purchase of open-space easements.

West Virginia

- [Outdoor Heritage Conservation Fund](#): A state program that gives out grants to protect important wildlife habitats, farmlands, and public recreation areas.
- [West Virginia Division of Natural Resources](#): Protects public lands through hands-on restoration projects and runs the Master Naturalists Program to train environmental stewards.

District of Columbia

- [Office of District Waterways Management \(\\$270,000 in FY26\)](#) The Office of District Waterways Management advises District agencies on waterways adjacent land-use and infrastructure decisions that affect local rivers. Through the development of the Waterways Advisory Plan, ODWM identifies priority access points and supports projects that improve connectivity, safety, and equitable access to waterfront spaces across the District.

Chesapeake Bay Commission

- As a tri-state legislative commission, the Chesapeake Bay Commission advances the goals of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement by working collaboratively with Bay Program partners to identify and pursue legislative, budgetary, and policy needs within the legislatures of our member states and the U.S. Congress.

Federal

- [Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund](#) **USFWS/NFWF**
- [Chesapeake Small Watershed Grants](#) **USFWS (\$23 million)**
- [Chesapeake WILD](#) **USFWS (\$6.9 million)**

Forest Legacy Program USFS a conservation program administered by the Forest Service in partnership with State agencies to encourage the protection of privately owned working forests through conservation easements or land purchases.

Community Forest Program USFS a grant program that provides financial assistance to tribal entities, local governments, and qualified conservation non-profit organizations to acquire and establish community forests that provide community benefits.

Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) Program DoW (\$10.3M) a grant program administered by military installations in partnership with local land trusts to protect land outside of installations. REPI funds both conservation easements and fee-simple purchases for the purposes of reducing incompatible development, habitat protection, and increased resiliency.

Land and Water Conservation Fund DOI

Agricultural Conservation Easement Program USDA Is a Farm Bill program with two components. Agricultural Land Easements (ALE) protect croplands and grasslands on working farms and ranches by limiting non-agricultural uses. Wetlands Reserve Easements (WRE) protect, restore and enhance wetlands which have been previously degraded due to agricultural uses.

Conservation Stewardship Program USDA

Recreational Trails Program US DOT Funded by gas taxes paid by off-road vehicles, the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) is dedicated to the construction, restoration and maintenance of nonmotorized and motorized recreational trails (paved and unpaved) and trail-related facilities.

American Battlefield Protection Program NPS supports community-driven stewardship of historic resources. NPS ABPP administers four grant opportunities: Preservation Planning, Battlefield Land Acquisition, Battlefield Restoration, and Battlefield Interpretation grants.

Regional Conservation Partnership Program NRCS This funding allows for NRCS conservation activities with partners that offer value-added contributions to expand the ability to address on-farm, watershed, and regional natural resource concerns.

Wetland Reserve Enhancement Partnership NRCS This funding opportunity is a component of the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program's Wetland Reserve Easements, and is intended to target and leverage resources for carrying out high-priority wetland activities on eligible lands.