

Chesapeake Forest Restoration Strategy

In September 2012, the Management Board (MB) gave its endorsement of the Draft Chesapeake Forest Restoration Strategy and recommended it to the Principal Staff Committee (PSC) for further consideration and approval as a CBP product (originally at the November meeting).

Because of timing issues, the US Forest Service is seeking final endorsement of the Strategy ahead of the scheduled December 5 PSC meeting since a signing ceremony is now scheduled for the same date in Washington DC. The timing of the signing ceremony requires action now.

A letter with a link to the final Strategy will be sent later this week to PSC members asking for their endorsement and use of the CBP logo in conjunction with the USFS logo.

Background

- Planting trees across urban-to-rural landscapes is a key, cost-effective approach to meeting multiple goals – water quality, air quality, wildlife and fisheries habitat, and sustainable communities.
- In the *2010 Executive Order Strategy for Protecting and Restoring the Chesapeake Bay*, USDA committed to work with partners on a strategy to maximize forest restoration in priority areas across the watershed.
- During 2011-2012, the US Forest Service coordinated teams with over 60 representatives from over 30 federal, state, and nongovernmental organizations to craft this Chesapeake Forest Restoration Strategy. State forestry agency representatives from across the Bay jurisdictions provided critical input on these teams.
- The different sections in the Strategy advance innovative and collaborative approaches to target restoration in areas of greatest opportunity and benefit, focusing on **wildlife and fisheries habitat, mine lands, agroforestry, urban and community forestry, and contaminated lands** (e.g. brownfields).
- The Strategy does not set forth policy statements or financial commitments of Chesapeake Bay partners. Rather, it provides broad guidance to inform collaborative forest restoration initiatives in the years ahead.
- The draft Strategy was released for public comment in July 2012 and can be viewed online at <http://executiveorder.chesapeakebay.net/post/New-Draft-Forest-Restoration-Strategy-for-the-Chesapeake-Watershed.aspx>. Comments from the Management Board and the public are being incorporated, and the document will be finalized in a Signing Ceremony on December 5 with US Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell, State Foresters, and other partners.