

Meeting Summary

Chesapeake

Large Landscape Conservation Partnership Meeting

November 12-13, 2013 | Shepherdstown, WV

November 12:

Welcome, Introductions, Agenda Review, and Context Setting

More than fifty partners gathered at the National Conservation Training Center to further their shared work on large landscape conservation. The primary focus of the meeting was on developing shared agreements on how to further communication and collaboration efforts among the partners and focus energy on priority action areas. This meeting builds on a series of meetings, held almost annually since 2009 to advance large landscape collaboration in the Chesapeake watershed.

Progress and our To Do List

Participants shared progress on joint action items through rapid presentations. Please see attached "Priorities Update" for more information.

Identifying our Conservation Focal Areas

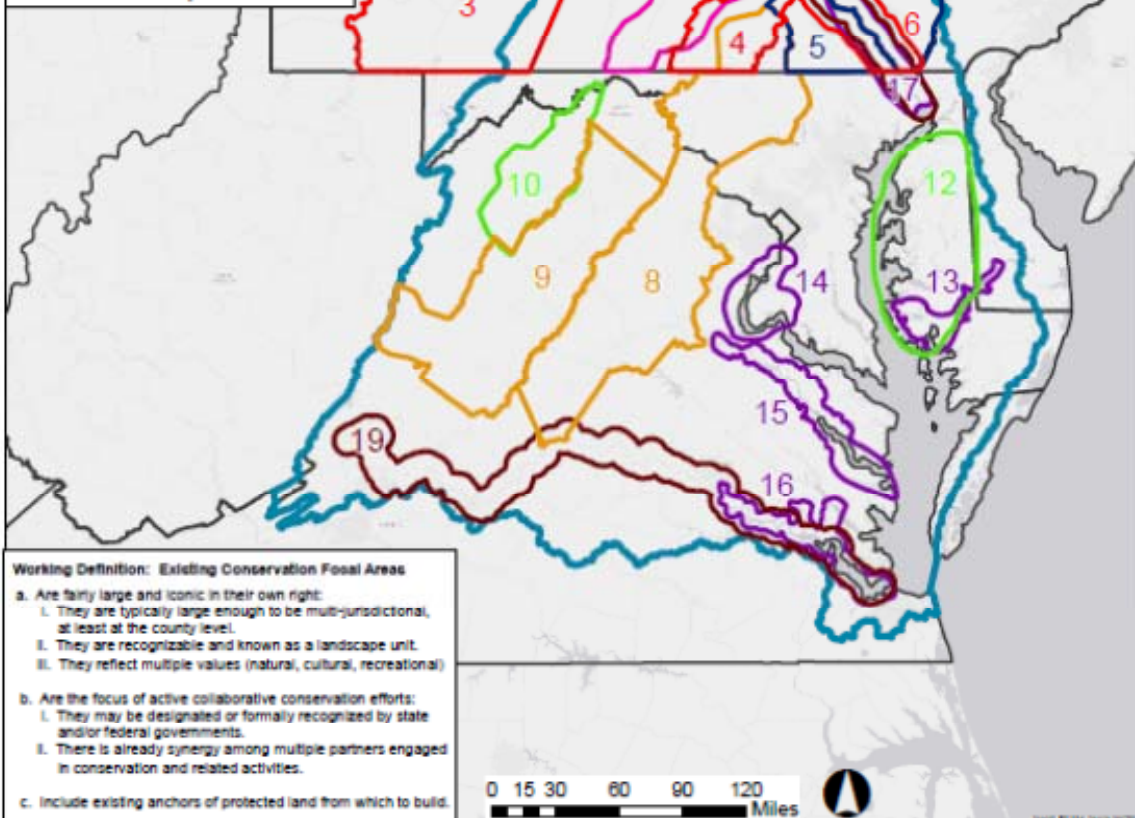
The group used information available through LandScope Chesapeake to answer the question "where is there documented collaborative landscape conservation focused on specific landscapes? In effect, where are our existing focal areas?" The group considered this in the context of landscapes which: (a) are fairly large and iconic in their own right (i.e. multi-jurisdictional, at least at the county level; recognizable and known as a landscape unit; reflecting multiple values (natural, cultural, historical, recreational); (b) are the focus of active collaborative conservation efforts (e.g. designated or formally recognized by state and/or federal governments; already synergy among multiple partners engaged in conservation and related activities; demonstrated capacity for active collaboration); and (c) include existing anchors of protected land from which to build. The map below represents an initial draft of the existing conservation focal areas recognized by the group as meeting these parameters; there may be additional focal areas that have been missed. Further time needs to be allocated to exploring the question "where are there areas that seem to have high conservation value but that don't seem to be addressed by an existing concerted effort?" The Stewardship Team might consider how to engage the broader group in addressing these questions.

Initial Draft - Existing Conservation Focal Areas of the Chesapeake Watershed

Chesapeake Large Landscape Conservation Partnership Meeting, November 2013

Legend

1. Pennsylvania Wilds Conservation Landscape Initiative (CLI)
2. Pocono Forest and Waters Conservation Landscape Initiative
3. Laurel Highlands Conservation Landscape Initiative
4. South Mountain Partnership (CLI)
5. Susquehanna Gateway Heritage Region
6. Lower Susquehanna Conservation Landscape Initiative
7. Allegheny Ridge Heritage Area
8. Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area and Scenic Byway
9. Shenandoah Battlefields National Historic District
10. Cacapon and Lost Rivers Watershed (Cacapon & Lost Rivers Land Trust)
11. Otsego Lake (Otsego Land Trust)
12. Eastern Shore, Maryland (Eastern Shore Land Conservancy)
13. Blackwater-Nanticoke Corridor
14. Lower Potomac River Corridor
15. Tidal Rappahannock River Corridor
16. Lower James and Chickahominy Rivers Corridor
17. Lower Susquehanna Corridor
18. Kittatinny Conservation Corridor
19. Envision the James
20. Envision the Susquehanna



“Enhancing the Partnership: Chesapeake Large Landscape Conservation Partnership Report”: The Cliff Notes

Catherine (Tommie) Herbert, co-author (with Phillip Olaleye) of *Enhancing the Partnership: Chesapeake Large Landscape Conservation Partnership Report*, presented key observations and findings in the report to the group. A conversation then followed regarding which of the findings are most pertinent to the Large Landscape Conservation Partnership and how we can use the case studies as models for our collaborative. This prepared the group for discussions about the future of the collaborative on the second day.

Learning from Journey through Hallowed Ground

One of the distinct highlights of the event was a conversation with leaders of Journey Through Hallowed Ground (JTHG). JTHG founder and President Cate Magennis Wyatt provided an overview of the innovative techniques being used to further education, tourism, and awareness across the heritage area. Denise Harris, Dennis Frye, and Chris Miller then joined Cate for an open discussion with participants about how they have executed these tasks.

November 13:

Organizing for Impact & Focusing Our Action Planning

Visioning Exercise: The Chesapeake Large Landscape Partnership in 2018

The group participated in a visioning exercise to explore what the LLC Partnership might accomplish by 2018, as well as the key steps that would be necessary to attain those goals. Those items highlighted in yellow were lifted up in the plenary discussion and identified as priorities by the large group.

LAND CONSERVATION

- Protect 1,000,000 acres after 5 years (progress toward the EO goal of 2 million acres by 2025) – identify where
- Progress in filling gaps, e.g. Indigenous Cultural Landscapes (ICLs), underrepresented areas
- Success with iconic conservation in focal areas

CLEAR PUBLIC STORY

- We have a shared brand for the watershed (30,000 foot brand)
- Common story – incorporate EO goals into story
- Our accomplishments are well known
- Experiences become best communication
- Broad recognition of Chesapeake values
- External communications strategy
- Increased public awareness of Large Landscape Conservation

- Creating public stewardship ethic
- Educational system equipped with stories

ORGANIZED AND FOCUSED

- Work under clearly defined vision, mission and objectives
- Creating working groups that include heritage, land trusts, urban, place based, land trusts
- Local economic and planning agencies working together supporting conservation
- Predictable/structured schedule of meetings
- Take action through divvying up the tasks – taking higher level of goal settings to the local level
- Place-based conservation teams – over time, communicate visions that resonate with that community. Evolves into land stewardship teams. Creates pride in sense of place - includes heritage areas, ICLs, archaeologists, others who love the land at local level

CAPACITY

- Create a clearinghouse for data, success and progress
- Dedicated staff
- Watershed-wide mapping to include local priorities and development threats
- Reporting protocols – getting these other values on the map will generate excitement and momentum

POLICY AND POLITICAL SUPPORT

- Bay watershed re-recognized as priority (following on EO) [time driven with new governors]
- Conservation credited in bay model

FUNDING

- LLC Partnership has funding from variety of sources
- Non-federal LLC partners successfully lobbied for federal appropriation for land conservation in Chesapeake landscape
- Corporate/private partnerships and funding
- Overall conservation funding greater in watershed
- More local ballot/bond measures for local land protection
- Congress made tax incentives permanent
- Developed mechanisms for paying for stewardship of this land
- Conservation transcends boundaries, politics

MORE DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE

- Outreach/recruitment based on a list of expectations
- Leadership committee includes diverse planning perspectives
- Working groups engage history and cultural groups in conservation mission
- More partners around the table (fill the dining hall)

- Engage more historic/cultural partners (this story may resonate more than the ecological one)
- Most robust partners → get the right people at the table
- More diverse and inclusive (tacit and meaningful) collaborative -- land trusts, urban folks in working groups – a structure that enables these to engage

Working off the action areas identified above, the group explored how to move forward effectively. One recurring theme was the need to have respect for the validity of views recognized, so there is something in it for everybody. It was also emphasized that we need a breadth of interrelated objectives, so we can all do our piece, but that it relates to what everybody else is doing. This means we are not only preserving health of the land, we are preserving the health of the communities.

Several mission statements were drafted for consideration moving forward:

- Our mission is to preserve the health of the communities and lands in the Chesapeake watershed to sustain each other in economically beneficial ways that result in the conservation of the cultural and environmental heritage of the region.
- Promote vibrancy of Chesapeake watershed to support preservation, conservation etc. objectives
- Our mission is to preserve and economically benefit from healthy communities and lands within the Chesapeake in ways that support and sustain the environmental and cultural heritage of every region in our watershed.
- Conserving the Chesapeake watershed's natural, cultural, and recreational resources to sustain the quality of life and sense of place of the region's citizens and communities into the future. (modified from the South Mountain Partnership's mission)
- Chesapeake Heritage – Protecting the natural and cultural heritage of the Chesapeake watershed, the place where America began

The attached “Framework” document captures the agreements made on working groups and commitments.

Conservation Finance Boot Camp

In a previous meeting, conservation finance was highlighted as a priority area for the LLC Partnership. To explore options in this field, Leigh Whelpton, Program Manager of the [Island Press Conservation Finance Network](http://conservationfinancenetwork.org/) (<http://conservationfinancenetwork.org/>), shared information on the program and the Conservation Finance “Boot Camp” training courses. There seemed to be a lot of interest across the group in a “Chesapeake” boot camp to explore innovative financing techniques to further large landscape conservation initiatives. Joel Dunn will follow-up with Leigh to assess the feasibility of such a workshop.

Next Steps

In addition to moving forward with the structure and principles described in the companion documents, participants agreed that it was important to participate in the process for renewing the Chesapeake Bay Watershed agreement.

The desired goal was to have a designated spokesperson(s)/chairpersons for the partnership who could speak on behalf of the partnership as well as broad participation by agencies and organizations who are a part of the partnership.

The first task in implementing the new structure is for the current, ad hoc advisory group to create a more formal Stewardship Group. The group asked for the new Stewardship Group to make this task their first order of business.