

At a Glance:
Chesapeake Bay Watershed Initiative

November 2008

Overview

The Chesapeake Bay Watershed Initiative (CBWI) is a voluntary initiative that assists agriculture producers with implementing conservation activities on agricultural lands in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. The initiative has been designed to complement State and Federal conservation efforts currently available in the watershed. Specifically, it will help producers enhance land and water resources by:

- controlling erosion and reducing sediment and nutrient levels in ground and surface water; and
- planning, designing, implementing, and evaluating habitat conservation, restoration, and enhancement measures where there is significant ecological value for either retaining the land in its current use or restoring the land to its natural condition.

Legislative Changes

The Chesapeake Bay Watershed Initiative is authorized by the Food Security Act of 1985, and amended by the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (2008 Farm Bill). The USDA/Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) administers this initiative.

The CBWI legislative authority defines the “Chesapeake Bay Watershed” as all tributaries, backwaters, and side channels, including their watersheds, draining into the Chesapeake Bay.

Applications may be submitted from agricultural producers located anywhere in the Chesapeake Bay watershed; however, the program requires that USDA give special priority consideration to applications from producers in the following river basins:

- Susquehanna River;
- Shenandoah River;
- Potomac River (including North and South); and
- Patuxent River.

Participants will enter into agreements with USDA to:

- improve water quality and quantity; and
- restore, enhance, and preserve soil, air, and related resources.

NRCS will deliver the funds available to implement the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Initiative through USDA conservation programs currently available to agriculture producers and owners of agricultural lands.

More Information

For more information and updates about the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Initiative and other Farm Bill topics, please visit the U.S. Department of Agriculture Web site <http://www.usda.gov/farmbill> or the Natural Resources Conservation Service Web site <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/>

