

# Chesapeake Watershed Forestry

USDA Forest Service

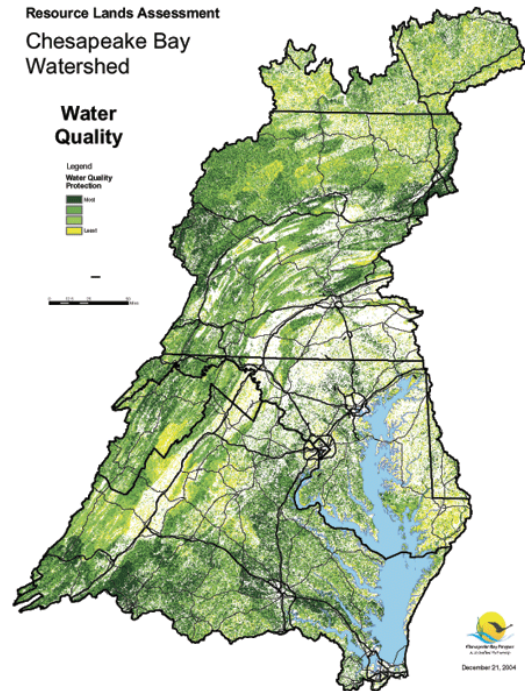
Northeastern Area

State and Private Forestry

*State of the Chesapeake Forests*



**Description:** The declining health of the Chesapeake Bay is, in part, the result of historic and ongoing conversion of forests to development and other uses. The *State of the Chesapeake Forests* Report, completed by the Forest Service and the Conservation Fund in 2006, found that the watershed is losing forests at a rate of more than 100 acres/day and projects that 9.5 million acres of private forest will experience some development by 2030. Every acre of forest lost means more nutrients polluting the Bay, yet the vital role of forests in water quality is often overlooked. The Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry (NA) provides critical federal leadership for forestry efforts in the Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP); directly coordinating the activities of an interagency, multi-state Forestry Workgroup and facilitating involvement of the Bay State Foresters, the Southern Region, Forest Service Research and the George Washington/Jefferson National Forest. More information is available at [www.chesapeakebay.net/fwg.htm](http://www.chesapeakebay.net/fwg.htm).



## Key Issues:

- Forests are part of the solution to reducing non-point pollution in agricultural and urban areas.
- Riparian forests are critical to water quality, aquatic health, and habitat diversity; these areas require substantial restoration and protection.
- In this region of 16 million residents, nearly 100 acres of forest are lost to development every day, degrading the Bay and threatening the viability of regional resource-based economies.
- With 90 percent of the land in private ownership, strong partnerships and collaboration are essential to demonstrating specifically how forest protection, restoration, and stewardship contribute to Chesapeake Bay restoration.

## Accomplishments:

- Completed staff work that resulted in an historic agreement to protect Chesapeake forests signed December 5, 2007, by the Governors of six states, the Mayor of Washington DC, the Administrator of EPA, and the Secretary of Agriculture.
- Completed a series of three Urban Watershed Forestry Manuals with tools local organizations can use to protect watershed health in urban areas. More than 8000 copies of the manuals were downloaded for use in all 50 states and 13 countries and 2000 printed copies were distributed.
- Restored riparian forests along 410 miles of stream and shoreline; bringing the total number of restored miles to 5,747. Conducted training on riparian buffer restoration techniques for more than 200 field staff.
- Worked with more than 40 municipalities that have agreed to develop quantitative urban tree canopy goals to increase their canopy cover.

- Collected more than 23,000 pounds of native tree seed for state nurseries (saving more than \$30,000 in seed collection costs) through *Growing Native* and involving over 8,000 volunteers in the 2008 annual seed collection, education, and tree planting activities.
- In partnership with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, awarded 10 grants totaling \$368,000 to non-profit partners to advance forest conservation. Grants leveraged \$2.5 million in contributions.

**Budget History:**

<b>Chesapeake Bay Watershed Forestry Budget</b> (\$ Thousands)				
	<b>FY 2005</b>	<b>FY 2006</b>	<b>FY 2007</b>	<b>FY 2008</b>
Watershed Forestry Program *	\$1,100	\$936	\$950	\$950
Potomac Watershed Partnership <sup>1</sup>	200	200	200	200
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,255</b>	<b>\$1,036</b>	<b>\$1,150</b>	<b>\$1,150</b>

\*Approximately 80% of the Chesapeake Forestry Program budget is granted to state, local, and non-profit partners.

<sup>1</sup>Funding shown for Potomac Watershed Partnership comes through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

**Future Direction:**

The Forest Service has been coordinating forestry efforts in the Chesapeake Bay watershed for nearly 17 years. In addition to past efforts that will assist in forest conservation and restoration, these new projects are among the many being pursued by the Forest Service and its partners:

- *Forestry for the Bay* is an innovative web-based program designed to encourage forest stewardship by landowners of smaller parcels (5-50 acres).
- The *Bay Bank<sup>TM</sup>* (under development) will be a regional ecosystem services marketplace where buyers and sellers can identify, calculate, buy and sell ecosystem service credits. The *Bay Bank<sup>TM</sup>* will provide a platform for linking private landowners to markets benefiting water quality and the environment.
- The development of an online GIS *Spatial Lands Registry* application is being funded by the Forest Service to assist in the delivery of *Forestry for the Bay* and possibly the *Bay Bank<sup>TM</sup>*.
- A partnership has begun with the land-trust community to host a *Land Conservation Summit* in the spring of 2008. This event represents the first time that this community has been engaged in this region to focus on forest land conservation.
- A national Riparian Buffer Conference will be hosted in 2008 in cooperation with the American Water Resources Association.
- Cities, schools, and communities are receiving unprecedented support in expanding their tree canopies to address stormwater and air quality issues.
- States and non-profit partners advance forest conservation, restoration and stewardship goals through small watershed grant programs.

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