

Fact Sheet:
**Chesapeake Bay
Watershed Initiative**

March 2009

Overview

The Chesapeake Bay Watershed Initiative (CBWI) strengthens coordination and cooperation to help agricultural producers improve the environment of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. CBWI complements State and Federal conservation efforts that improve water quality and quantity, and restore, enhance, and preserve soil, air, and related resources. CBWI helps 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.

Definition

The Chesapeake Bay Watershed is defined as all tributaries, backwaters, and side channels (and their watersheds) draining into the Chesapeake Bay. This includes portions of the States of Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia.

Eligibility

Eligible producers are located anywhere in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. Priority consideration will be given to producers in these Chesapeake Bay river basins:

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

How CBWP Works

The USDA/Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) administers this initiative. Participating agricultural producers voluntarily implement conservation practices and activities on agricultural and forest lands in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.

CBWI funds will be available through various natural resources conservation programs authorized under the Farm Bill. CBWI assistance for fiscal year (FY) 2009 will be delivered through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). All EQIP requirements and policies will apply (see 7 CFR Part 1466 and www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip).

Legislative Changes

The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (2008 Farm Bill), established the CBWI with an amendment to the Food Security Act of 1985. The 2008 Farm Bill provides \$188 million between FY 2009 and FY 2012 to support CBWI. In FY 2009, \$23 million will be available for technical and financial assistance through the EQIP Program.

More Information

For more information and updates about CBWI and other Farm Bill topics, visit the USDA Web site at www.usda.gov/farmbill, or the NRCS Web sites at www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/farmbill/2008.