



Elevating Conservation in a Revised Watershed Agreement



Justification for elevating forest conservation/ stewardship

- Healthy forests= clean water. We need to make this connection stronger within the partnership and the agreement
- Need more explicit consideration of upland forests
- Forest conservation needs to include being good stewards of the forest
- Opportunities to better engage with forest management community, build awareness of forest management practices
- Benefits of regional coordination around forest management to maximize restoration impact (dynamic forest restoration block approach)

Input from the last meeting

- Conserve and restore high priority forests
- Reduce forestland loss
- Permanent conservation/protection
- Preserve mature trees
- Increase tree cover beyond riparian buffer areas

Existing related outcomes: Protected Lands

- By 2025, protect an additional two million acres of lands throughout the watershed- currently identified as high conservation priorities at the federal, state or local level- including 225,000 acres of wetlands and 695,000 acres of forest land of highest value for maintaining water quality
- Healthy Watersheds: 100% of state-identified currently healthy waters and watersheds remain healthy

Protected Lands

“Protected lands” means lands permanently protected from development, whether by purchase or donation, through a perpetual conservation or open space easement or fee ownership for their cultural, historical, ecological, or agricultural value.

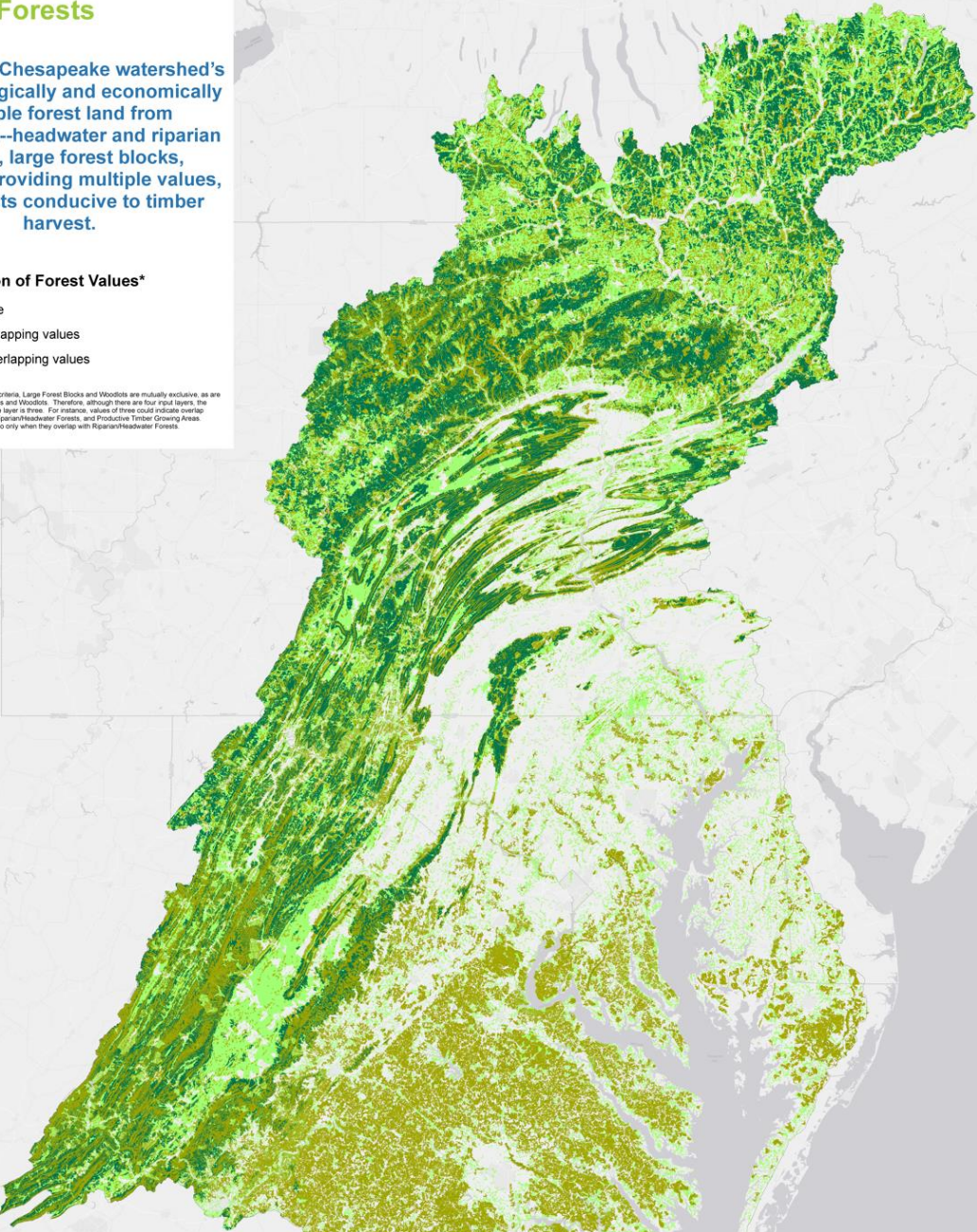
Forests

Protect the Chesapeake watershed's most ecologically and economically valuable forest land from conversion--headwater and riparian forests, large forest blocks, woodlots providing multiple values, and forests conducive to timber harvest.

Concentration of Forest Values*

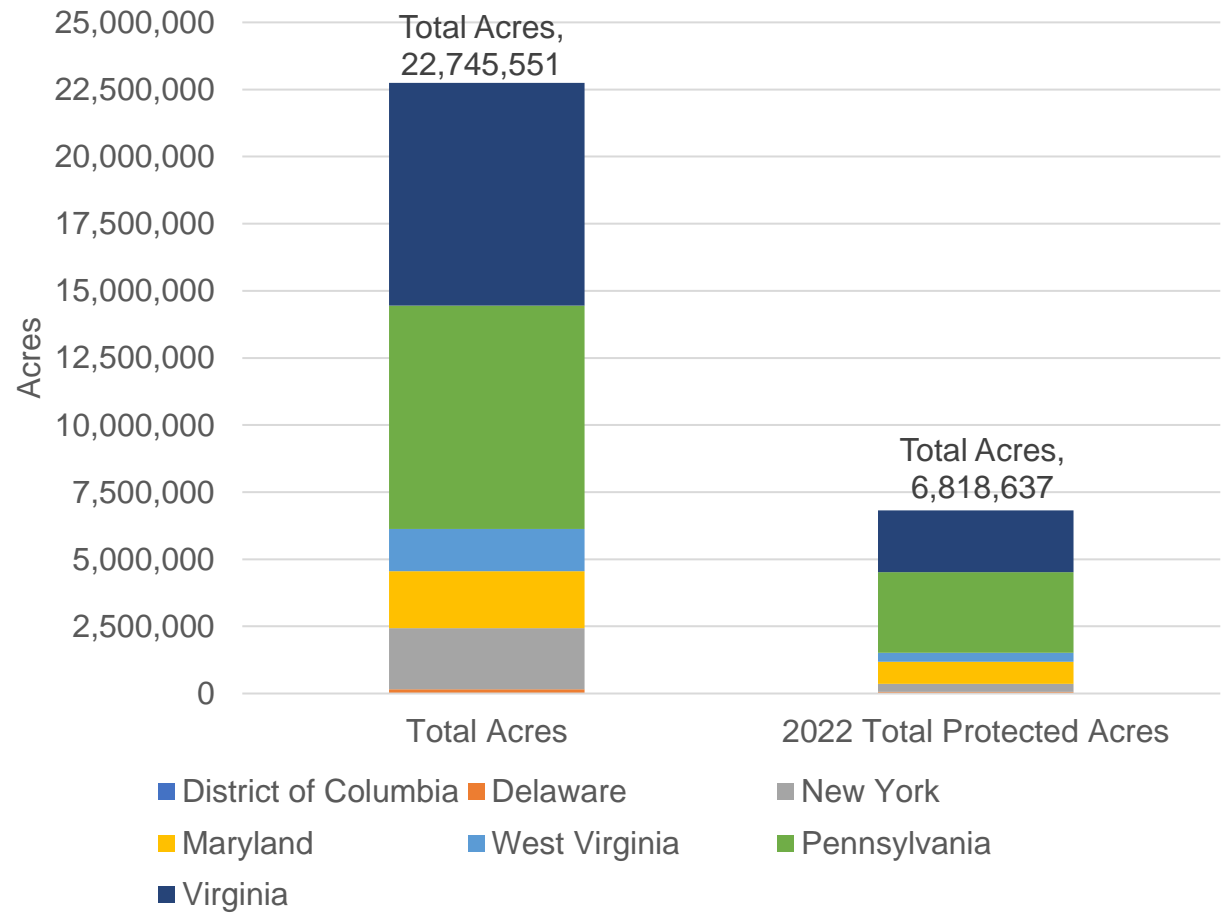
- One value
- Two overlapping values
- Three overlapping values

*Note: Due to forest patch size criteria, Large Forest Blocks and Woodlots are mutually exclusive, as are Productive Timber Growing Areas and Woodlots. Therefore, although there are four input layers, the maximum value in the composite layer is three. For instance, values of three could indicate overlap between Large Forest Blocks, Riparian/Headwater Forests, and Productive Timber Growing Areas. Woodlots can have a value of two only when they overlap with Riparian/Headwater Forests.



High Value Forests

Protected vs Unprotected



Existing related outcomes: Healthy Watersheds

- Current outcome: 100% of state-identified currently healthy waters and watersheds remain healthy
- Proposed new direction: Update Healthy Watersheds Goal and Outcome to go beyond state-identified healthy watersheds and address watershed health more holistically
 - Potential revised outcome language: "Maintain landscape integrity, watershed processes and conditions contributing to healthy aquatic ecosystems"

Two potential paths for elevating forest conservation

- Propose a new forest conservation outcome
 - Heavier lift, may not be approved by MB/PSC
 - Would enable being more comprehensive and focused on forest conservation stewardship
- Seek to elevate forest conservation through modifications to existing outcomes
 - More likely to be approved by MB/PSC, in line with efforts to streamline
 - Scope would likely be more limited



Discussion:

Initial thoughts on which path to pursue for elevating forest conservation in a revised watershed agreement?



Thank you!!