

Healthy Forests and Trees Outcome

Healthy Forests and Trees: Conserve, manage and restore forests and tree cover to maximize benefits for water quality, habitat and people throughout the watershed, with a particular focus on riparian areas and communities.

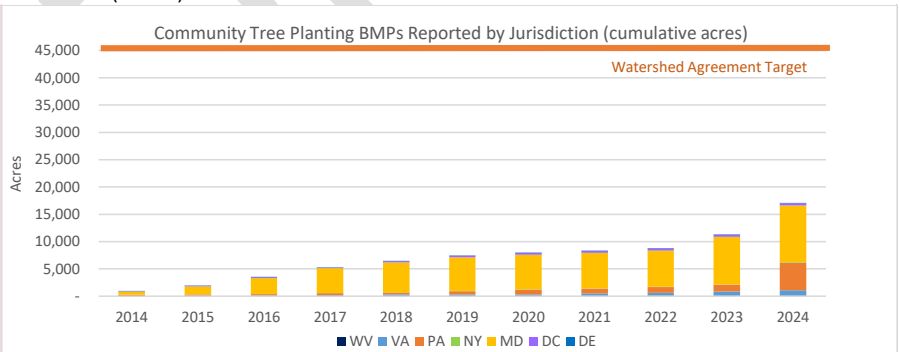
- Conserve tree canopy within communities by reducing the rate of loss of existing canopy and planting and maintaining 45,000 acres of community trees by 2040 to achieve a net gain in canopy over the long term.
- Conserve riparian forest by reducing the rate of loss of existing buffers and planting and maintaining 7,500 acres of forest buffers annually to achieve no less than 71.5% riparian forest cover by 2040 and 75% riparian forest cover over the long term.
- Achieve a net gain in forests over the long-term by reducing the rate of forest conversion to other land uses by 33%, permanently protecting a total of 9 million acres of forested land, and planting, maintaining and managing 202,000 acres of new forests by 2040.

Baseline and Current Condition

Community Tree Canopy

The Community Tree Canopy target has two major components: 1) tree planting and maintenance and 2) tree canopy change within communities.

1. Tree planting and maintenance: As of 2024, jurisdictions had reported a cumulative total of 17,082 acres of trees planted in communities since 2014, which serves as a baseline. Tree planting is measured using urban tree planting Best Management Practices (BMPs) reported by states annually to track progress towards the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL).



Commented [KB1]: Modified charts to put progress in context of the Watershed Agreement targets

2. Tree canopy change within communities: Remotely-sensed land use/land cover (LULC) change data from 2021/2022 show a net loss of over 28,000 acres of tree canopy to development in communities since 2013/2014. On average, this reflects a rate of 3,755 acres of tree canopy loss annually, which will be used as a baseline for assessing changes in the rate of canopy loss. Although it may take between ten and fifteen years for tree plantings to become visible in the aerial imagery used to produce LULC data, tree canopy losses exceed the acres planted. Significant efforts are needed to reverse the declining trend and achieve a net gain in tree canopy.

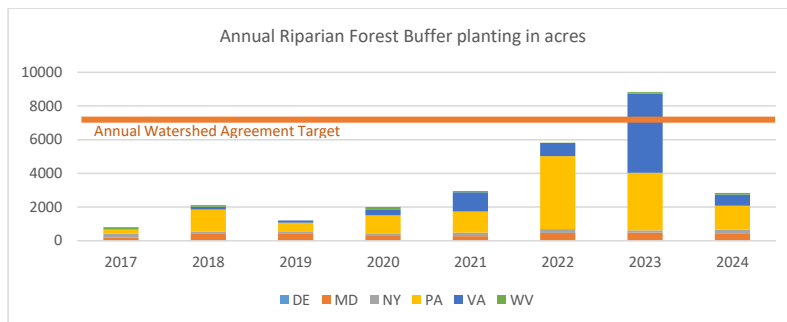
Net Change in acres (2013/14-2021/22) for Healthy Forests and Trees Targets			
Jurisdiction (CB Only)	Community Tree Canopy: Net change in tree cover to development in census places	Forest Buffers: Net change in riparian forest cover (100 ft buffer)	Forest Conservation: Net change in forest cover to development
Delaware	-32	-337	-692.45
DC	0	2	-84.29
Maryland	-11,867	-1,828	-19,741.24
New York	-1,318	-2,991	-7,378.85
Pennsylvania	-3,709	-7,416	-28,841.97
Virginia	-11,873	-27,353	-48,813.33
West Virginia	-109	-2,018	-3,661.93
Total	-28,908	-41,941	-109,214.06
Average Annual Rate of Change	-3,755	-5,587	-14,020

Commented [KB2]: Added average annual rate of change into the table since each of the targets calls for reducing the rate of loss so this annual rate of loss will serve as a baseline

Forest Buffers

The Forest Buffer target has two major components: 1. Forest buffer planting and maintenance and 2. Riparian forest cover and change.

1. Forest buffer planting and maintenance: Between 2017-2024, on average 3,326 acres of riparian forest buffers were planted annually. In the most recent reporting period (2024), 2,848 acres were planted. Note that although the partnership has been tracking riparian forest buffer planting watershed-wide since 2010, previous years were tracked in miles to align with the previous Watershed Agreement.

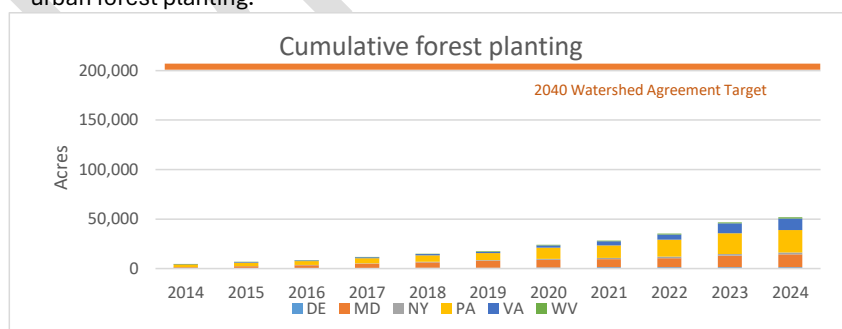


2. Riparian forest cover and change: Remotely-sensed LULC data showed that as of 2021/2022, 69.96% of riparian areas in the watershed are forested, but there was a net loss of 41,941 acres of riparian forest cover between 2013/2014 and 2021/2022 (see Net Change table under Community Tree Canopy target). On average, this reflects a rate of 5,587 acres of riparian forest loss annually, which will be used as a baseline for measuring changes in the rate of riparian forest buffer loss. The loss of riparian forest buffers highlights the need to pair robust forest buffer planting and maintenance programs with forest buffer conservation.

Forest Conservation

The forest conservation target has four primary components: 1. Forest conversion to other land uses; 2. Permanent protection of forested land; 3. Forest planting and maintenance; and 4. Forest management.

1. Forest planting and maintenance: As of 2024, jurisdictions had reported an estimated 51,684 acres of forest planting since 2014, which serves as a baseline. These acres include BMPs recognized by the Bay Program that convert land to a forested land use, including riparian forest buffers, agricultural tree planting and urban forest planting.



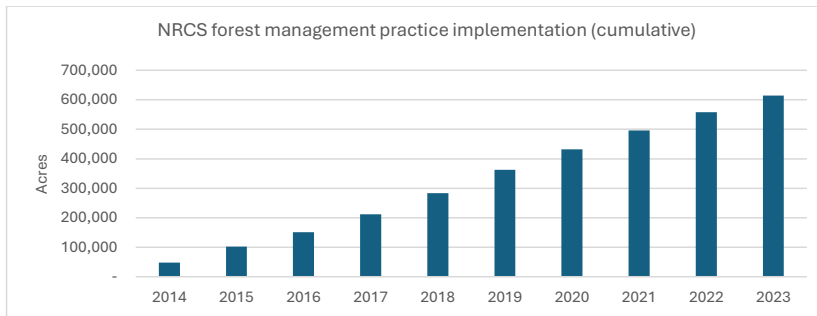
2. Forest conversion to other land uses: Remotely-sensed LULC change data from 2021/2022 show a net loss of 109,214 acres of forest to development since 2013/2014 (see Net Change table under Community Tree Canopy target). On average, this reflects a rate of 14,020 acres of forest loss annually. This annual rate of loss will be used as a baseline for measuring progress towards the target of reducing the rate of forest conversion to other land uses by 33%.
3. Permanent protection of forested land: An estimated 7,103,907 acres of forested land in the watershed has been permanently protected, which represents 77% of the total protected lands footprint in the watershed. This estimate is based on looking at the remotely-sensed LULC data from 2021/2022 within the footprint of the 2024 Chesapeake Bay Protected Lands dataset.

Jurisdiction	Acres of Protected Forest	Total Acres of Protected Land	Percent of Protected Lands in forest
Delaware	70,235	130,606	54%
DC	4,926	8,386	59%
Maryland	929,874	1,700,266	55%
New York	276,967	307,393	90%
Pennsylvania	3,023,979	3,688,214	82%
Virginia	2,493,238	3,118,595	80%
West Virginia	304,689	319,921	95%
Watershed	7,103,907	9,273,380	77%

4. **Forest management:** Between 2014-2023, there has been an estimated 614,033 acres of forest management on private lands in the watershed supported by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Additional management occurs on state and federally owned land, but there is not yet a watershed-wide dataset for quantifying the extent of forest management on private lands. Common private forest management activities include brush management, herbaceous weed treatment, upland wildlife habitat management, early successional habitat development and management, and forest stand improvement.

Commented [KB3]: Cassie- consider if some of this detail would be better captured in the workplan or if additional detail could be provided here to give more context

Commented [KB4R3]: The workplan won't necessarily have space to capture this detail. Keeping the detail for now but can consider removing some of this detail if requested by the Goal Team or PSC



Note the original numeric targets were set based on planting trends and did not account for forest management activities, but forest management trends will be tracked from a 2014 baseline to align with other indicators and targets.

Planning is critical for effective forest management and stewardship. The US Forest Service Forest Stewardship Program supports private landowners in developing Forest Stewardship Plans (FSP) so landowners can identify their goals and the management activities needed to meet their goals. Program data show there are currently >11,000 active management plans within the watershed, covering 1.3 million acres of forest, with 71% of active FSP plans being “Managed Sustainably”, which indicates these plans were verified through annual plan monitoring.

State	# of FSP Plans	Acres in FSP Plans	FSP Plan Implementation %	Acres of FSP Sustainably Managed
DE	93	10,819	84.41%	9,132
MD	8,534	798,423	85.78%	684,903
NY	505	70,624	65.50%	46,260
PA	414	107,645	39.34%	42,347
VA	1,519	285,208	81.24%	231,707
WV	276	69,567	83.49%	58,079
TOTAL	11,341	1,342,285	70.95%	952,364

Monitoring Progress and Indicators

Community Tree Canopy

The Community Tree Canopy indicator tracks tree plantings within communities annually to calculate cumulative tree planting progress from a 2014 baseline using annual progress data reported by jurisdictions to the Chesapeake Bay Program. The indicator also tracks

Commented [KB5]: Acknowledge that methods for tracking loss may change with new data as our understanding evolves

tree canopy change within communities using the high-resolution LULC monitoring data every 4-5 years. Over time, the methods for tracking tree canopy loss may change as the high-res LULC data improves and understanding of change evolves.

Forest Buffers

The Forest Buffer indicator tracks annual riparian forest buffer planting using annual progress data reported by jurisdictions to the Chesapeake Bay Program. Under the 2014 Watershed Agreement, the indicator estimated progress in miles using state-reported data (in acres) and state-reported average buffer widths. However, the 2025 Watershed Agreement sets an acreage target so the indicator will be adapted to track progress in acres. The indicator also tracks riparian forest change using the high-resolution LULC monitoring data every 4-5 years. In addition to tracking progress on the indicator, we will also be investigating the high-res LULC data further to better understand the drivers of riparian forest loss.

Commented [KB6]: Acknowledge need to better track transitions to understand why we are losing riparian forests

Monitoring: Forest Conservation

A new indicator will be developed to track progress towards the new Forest Conservation target. This indicator will include four major components to cover the numeric targets:

1. Forest planting and maintenance: Tracked annually using annual progress data reported by jurisdictions to the Chesapeake Bay Program
2. Forest conversion to other land uses: Tracked every 4-5 years using the high-resolution LULC monitoring data. While we are currently focusing on forest conversion to development, with future iterations of the high-res LULC, we may also track conversion to other land uses (for example, agriculture).
3. Permanent protection of forested land: Tracked using the Protected Lands dataset and the most recent high-resolution LULC data to calculate the amount of forested land within the Protected Lands footprint
4. Forest management: This component will likely leverage data both from the NRCS Resources Conservation Act (RCA) Data Viewer and the USFS Forest Stewardship Program on an annual time step. Taken together, the indicator will track both on-the-ground management activities and the planning needed to ensure management activities are having their intended outcomes. The Forestry Workgroup will start developing this new indicator in 2027 for communicating progress. In the interim, the Workgroup will continue tracking progress on all four components as new data is available.

Commented [KB7]: Suggestion from CBC: Note that in the future we may track additional conversions beyond conversion to development

Healthy Forests and Trees Situation Analysis

The following table identifies challenges that will impact progress towards attaining this outcome and its targets. This analysis considers scientific, environmental, fiscal or policy-related developments that have already or may influence work during the upcoming six-year Management Strategy cycle. Consideration is given to which challenges are within and outside of CBP's ability to influence. Challenges associated with Changing Environmental Conditions are denoted with an asterisk (*). Challenges listed in bold font have been identified by the Goal Team and its Workgroups as being priorities for the

Workgroup to seek to address or make progress against through the development and implementation of Management Approaches. Note many of the challenges identified by the Forestry Workgroup are interrelated.

	Within CBPs ability to influence	Outside of CBP's ability to influence
Challenges		
Funding: Inconsistent funding and availability of effective programs for planting and maintenance	X	
Capacity: Workforce capacity for technical assistance, implementation and maintenance	X	
Maintenance and management: Insufficient maintenance of new plantings and inadequate or unsustainable long-term management of existing forests	X	
Land use change: Fragmentation and conversion of forests and tree canopy to other land uses	X	
Stressors: Increasing forest health pressures (invasive species, pests, disease, deer overabundance) degrading forest structure, function and resilience*	X	
Changing environmental conditions: Increasing variability in temperature and precipitation, saltwater intrusion, and extreme events (i.e. storms, droughts) degrading forest structure, function and resilience*		X
Nursery stock: Insufficient availability of planting stock reflecting the size classes, quality, quantity and diversity of species needed by partners	X	
Policy: Inadequate state and/or local policies that support effective reforestation, forest and tree canopy conservation, and forest management	X	
Local government engagement: Inadequate engagement with local governments to support planning and decisions to support forests and tree canopy	X	
Crediting and incentives: Chesapeake Bay Program water quality crediting framework and state MS4 programs do not consistently incentivize forest conservation, reforestation and long-term management and stewardship	X	
Landowner engagement: Barriers to effectively engage landowners to participate in planting, maintenance, management and conservation	X	
Markets: Insufficient forest products markets and processing infrastructure, particularly for low-value wood products	X	

Commented [KB8]: Bolded challenges could be elevated to the goal team to include

Commented [KB9R8]: This list of challenges is similar to what was presented at the July meeting but some have been reframed and all have been re-organized to lead with a high-level theme followed by a slightly more detailed problem statement

Commented [KB10]: Rob- address role of stream restoration in driving forest buffer loss

Commented [KB11R10]: Policy/crediting issue driving loss and local decision-making that is resulting in loss

Commented [KB12R10]: MS4 as either a positive or negative driver for reforestation and how we meet our goals

Commented [KB13R10]: Added a bullet on crediting and incentives to consider

Commented [KB14]: Rob: Should include protecting forests in lands being preserved for ag

Commented [KB15R14]: It is currently framed broad enough to be inclusive of ag. Not citing ag specifically so we don't have to list other land uses as well in this very short blurb

Snapshot of Signatory Programs

Managing a large and difficult restoration and conservation program with “no assurance about the level of funds that may be available beyond the short term” (GAO, 2028) is a challenging undertaking that requires individual and collaborative action from signatory partners, as well as the many communities and individuals who live, work, play and learn in our region. This “Snapshot of Signatory Resources” seeks to better recognize the significant contribution that individual signatory partners and federal agencies make towards outcome attainment. The existing programs and funding spotlighted below are not intended to represent the full range of resources available or required to support progress towards outcome attainment; only the “biggest ticket” programs are included for each outcome and signatory partner. It is important to note that funding is reported from a single point in time (fiscal year 2025) and is not representative of future investments. Identifying the most critical programs and resources that exist at a particular moment in time can help the partnership focus its collaborative efforts on activities that have the greatest impact, and which don’t duplicate the work of existing programs.

Commented [KB16]: Note for jurisdictions that provided multiple submissions per target, I removed a few that didn’t seem to clearly be “programs” and we may end up needing to refine further to save space.

Commented [KB17R16]: This list may also be updated depending on the information rounded up by EPA CBPO from signatories

Federal Government

Community Trees

- [USFS Urban and Community Forestry Program](#) (\$1.85 million for Fiscal Year 2024¹) is dedicated to growing and maintaining urban and community trees, forests and green spaces.

Riparian Forest Buffers

- [FSA Conservation Reserve Program](#) (\$33.7 million for Fiscal Year 2024) is a voluntary program that encourages agricultural producers to convert highly erodible and other environmentally sensitive acres to vegetative cover, such as native trees and riparian buffers.

Forest Conservation

- [USFS Forest Stewardship Program](#) (\$495,589 for Fiscal Year 2024²) enables the USFS to work in partnership with state forestry agencies, cooperative extension, and conservation districts to connect private landowners with the information they need to manage their forests and woodlands.
- [USFS Forest Legacy Program](#) (\$0 for Fiscal Year 2024³) is administered by the Forest Service in partnership with state agencies to encourage the protection of privately owned forest lands through conservation easements or land purchases.
- [NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program](#) (\$51.8 million for Fiscal Year 2024) helps forest landowners integrate conservation into working lands.

¹ Estimated based on the total amount of funding awarded to a state, pro-rated by the % of the state’s total population within the Chesapeake Bay watershed, since these funds support community forestry.

² Estimated based on the total amount of funding awarded to the states, prorated by the % of a state’s private forested land within the Chesapeake Bay watershed, since these funds are invested in private forest management

³ Funding is competitively awarded so varies significantly from year to year

- [NRCS Conservation Stewardship Program](#) (\$20 million for Fiscal Year 2024) is the largest working lands conservation program in the United States that helps producers enhance natural resources and improve their business operations.

Delaware

Community Trees

- [Urban and Community Forestry](#) (Federally Funded) Provides assistance to help municipalities, nonprofit groups, community associations, and homeowners to plant and care for their trees.

Riparian Forest Buffers

- [Buffer Incentive Program](#) (Federally Funded – as funding is available) provides incentives for implementation of forest buffer and grass buffers in Delaware's Chesapeake Bay watershed, including site prep, materials, installation, and incentives to landowners based on acreage placed into protection for 5-years.
- [Delaware Community Conservation Assistance Program](#) (Federally Funded – as funding is available) supports community and landowner-level implementation of backyard best management practices, including but not limited to tree plantings and riparian tree buffers, in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Forest Conservation

- [Forestland Preservation Program](#) (1 Million for Fiscal Year 2025) protects working forest through perpetual conservation easements, these easements allow forest management activities, including timber harvests.
- [Stewardship Program](#) (Federally funded / Timber Harvest Revenue for Fiscal Year 2025) –offers multiple tax incentive programs to keep properties in active forest management. It also offers a small state cost share program when timber revenues allow.

District of Columbia

Community Trees

- [Urban Forestry Division \(UFD\)](#) – (Annual Budget \$25 Million) DDOT's Urban Forestry Division (UFD) is the primary steward of Washington DC's urban forest and has a mission of keeping this resource healthy, safe, & growing.

Maryland

Community Trees

- [5 Million Trees Initiative](#) (\$15 million FY26) is a partnership effort to plant 5 million trees by 2031, including trees within communities.
- [Tree-Mendous Maryland](#) helps schools, local governments, civic groups, and nonprofit organizations plant native trees on public land and community open space across Maryland.
- [Community Forestry Catalyst Fund](#) (federally funded) aims to reduce barriers to tree planting and provide local partners with flexible access to a source of funds that can be leveraged to secure additional resources without requiring matching funds.

- [Maryland Urban and Community Forestry Council \(MUCFC\) Community Tree Planting and Education Program](#) supports community-based tree planting and forestry education projects that strengthen Maryland's urban forests.

Forest Buffers

- [Conservation Reserve Enhancement Permanent Easement Program](#) is a voluntary program that enables permanent conservation easements for forest buffers under an existing Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program contract.
- [Maryland's Conservation Buffer Initiative](#) provides farmers with attractive incentive payments to plant streamside buffers on farmland to improve the health of local streams and the Chesapeake Bay.
- [5 Million Trees Initiative](#) (\$15 million FY26) is a partnership effort to plant 5 million trees by 2031, including trees in forest buffers.

Forest Conservation

- [Maryland Program Open Space](#) (\$42.7 million FY26) – Protects habitat and working lands, easement and fee simple acquisition, including local and state recreation, Targeted Ecological Areas, and protection of productive farm and forest land (Rural Legacy, MALPF). Some local jurisdictions have matching programs.
- [Property and Income Tax Abatement for Forest Landowners](#) – 15-year recorded Forest Conservation and Management Agreements and the 3-year SDAT Woodland Assessment Program offer reduced property taxes for eligible forest land managed under a Forest Stewardship Plan; TAXMOD offers state income tax credits for twice the amount invested in productive forests.

New York

Community Trees

- [Urban and Community Forestry Grant](#) (\$10 million statewide) State grant program for community tree inventories and management plans and support initiative to plant 25 million by 2033.

Riparian Forest Buffers

- Upper Susquehanna Coalition's [Water Quality Program](#), [Trees for Tributaries](#), and Forestry Steward Program (\$580,000 annually from multiple state and federal funding sources) The USC Water Quality Program's goal is to increase implementation of riparian forest buffers, wetlands, grazing, stream corridor rehabilitation and afforestation projects.

Forest Conservation

- [DEC Establishing Large Forest \(ELF\)](#) and [Regenerate NY](#) Forestry Programs (\$9.5 million statewide) State Grant Programs for encouraging and financially assisting private landowners in establishing large forests upon unforested or deforested lands, improving the health of existing forests, and restoring forests.
- [Climate Resilient Farming Grant Track 4: Agricultural Forestry Management](#) (\$2 million statewide) Supports healthy productive forests as well as afforestation on currently unforested lands on farms both for the purpose of carbon sequestration and to promote sustainable and resilient agriculture and forestry.

Pennsylvania

Community Trees

- [Community Conservation Partnerships Program](#)- Community and Watershed Forestry Grants; Urban and Community Forestry (\$1,000,000.00). Grant program funds community engagement, street tree planting, urban forest planning, planting, and tree care in communities and other publicly accessible spaces throughout the Commonwealth.

Riparian Forest Buffers

- [Community Conservation Partnerships Program](#)- Community and Watershed Forestry Grants; Riparian Forest Buffers (\$1,000,000.00). Grant program funds outreach, implementation, and post-planting establishment/stewardship of riparian forest buffer plantings across PA.

Forest Conservation

- [Community Conservation Partnerships Program](#)—land conservation program provides grant funding to conservation partners for conservation easements and fee simple acquisition. Bureau of Forestry also acquires forest land directly. Funding averages several million total.

Virginia

Community Trees

- [Virginia Trees for Clean Water](#) (\$1,100,000 for FY25) establishes long-term, sustained canopy cover to improve water quality throughout the state through community plantings, tree giveaways, and riparian buffer plantings.
- [Urban and Community Forestry Grants](#) (\$425,000 FY26) promote the protection and enhancement of urban and community forest ecosystems, tree planting, and the care of trees in cities, towns, and communities.
- [Throwing Shade VA](#) (\$300,000 FY25). Partnership between DOF and retail nurseries to offer discounts on eligible native trees and shrubs.

Riparian Forest Buffers

- [Riparian Forests for Landowners](#) (\$1,000,000 FY25). Zero-cost riparian buffer establishment program for private landowners wishing to establish a buffer on their property. Program covers site preparation, tree planting and one year of maintenance following planting.

Forest Conservation

- [Forest Legacy](#) (\$20,000,000 FY25). Partnership between DOF and USDA Forest Service to conserve forestland under threat of conversion to other land uses. Qualifying properties must be within identified Legacy Areas.
- [Purchase of development rights program](#) (\$437,500 FY25, distro. To participating counties with PDR programs). Partnership between DOF and participating localities. DOF equally distributes the funding allocated to the Virginia Farmland and Forestland Preservation Fund to localities that can provide matching funds for the purchase of open-space easements.

- [Logger Best Management Practice Cost-Share](#) (\$450,000 FY25). Provides financial and technical assistance to loggers to implement BMPs during and after timber harvests to reduce erosion and prevent sediment from reaching waterways.

West Virginia

- [\[Featured Program with hyperlink\]](#) ([Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2025]) [one sentence max description of how program relates to Outcome attainment]

Management Approaches for Outcome 2: Healthy Forests and Trees

Management Approach 3.2.1: Increase workforce capacity and tree supply to accelerate implementation:

Restoring and conserving forests and tree canopy across the watershed requires an extensive network of technical assistance providers to effectively engage private landowners and communities. Although volunteers and landowners play a critical role in planting and maintaining trees, private contractors are also essential for implementing restoration and management at scale. The Forestry Workgroup will continue to act as a hub for knowledge and expertise sharing to broaden the expertise of the existing workforce across governments, nonprofits, and academia so it can be strategically utilized to meet the Tree Canopy, Riparian Forest Buffers and Forest Conservation targets.

Tree supply can also be a limiting factor for implementing effective restoration projects at scale. The Forestry Workgroup will seek to advance recommendations from the [Addressing Regional Tree Supply Challenges and Opportunities](#) project to support building a more consistent supply of high-quality nursery stock in the watershed. This will directly support implementation of the Tree Canopy target but also support efforts to scale up reforestation to support the Riparian Forest Buffers and Forest Conservation planting targets.

Management Approach 3.2.2: Bolster funding, programs and partnerships:

Maintaining sustainable sources of funding is critical for ensuring continued progress on the Tree Canopy, Riparian Forest Buffers and Forest Conservation targets and for maintaining a stable workforce that can implement programs and practices on the ground. Collaborative restoration and conservation efforts can help diversify funding streams and ensure projects are being delivered where they will have the greatest impact for the partnership. The Forestry Workgroup will work to broaden its engagement with new partners to support effective implementation of the Healthy Forests and Trees outcome, including the forest management and stewardship communities and the forest products industry to support implementation of the new Forest Conservation target.

Management Approach 3.2.3: Leverage networks to enhance coordination and restoration impact

Regional networks can support shared learning and effective communication to increase awareness about the value of forests and increase forest conservation and restoration across the landscape. The Forestry Workgroup will expand its role as a network of

Commented [KB18]: Similar to what was presented at the June FWG with some reframing/reorganizing

Commented [KB19]: Comment from Healthy Landscapes co-chair to make stronger connections between the management approaches and targets

Commented [KB20R19]: Adding statement for each Management approach to make stronger connections with the targets

networks to facilitate communication and strategic, watershed-wide coordination supporting efforts to address the Tree Canopy, Riparian Forest Buffers and Forest Conservation targets. These efforts will include engaging workgroups under the Engaged Communities goal team to identify opportunities to meaningfully engage networks of community stewards.

Commented [KB21]: Suggestion from Claire to increase focus on people and communities

Coordination across federal, state and local leaders enables a policy environment that supports effective planning of reforestation, forest and tree canopy conservation, and forest management. Improved planning and coordination will help focus forest conservation and restoration efforts in places that will maximize benefits for water quality, habitat and people. A cross-jurisdictional approach can also enable forest conservation and management at ecologically-meaningful scales. The Forestry Workgroup will continue to provide a platform for cross-jurisdictional coordination to support shared learning and the development of effective approaches for addressing challenges and maximizing impact across boundaries.

Management Approach 3.2.4: Address drivers of forest and canopy loss:

The Tree Canopy, Riparian Forest Buffers and Forest Conservation targets all set goals to reduce the loss of forests and tree canopy. There are multiple drivers of forest and canopy loss in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, including conversion to development and other land uses; changing environmental conditions; invasive plants, pests, and diseases; among others. Addressing drivers of loss to advance these targets will require a comprehensive approach that includes strengthening policies and ordinances to promote conservation, supporting land use planning efforts, working through regional networks to engage communities and private landowners, and using active management to address stressors.

As a new area of focus for the Bay Program, the Forestry Workgroup will work to implement the recommendations from the STAC Healthy Forests workshop report to support implementation of the Forest Conservation target, including strengthening communications and engagement around forest conservation as well as expanding and diversifying forest product markets.

Management Approach 3.2.5: Expand outreach and engagement with local governments around forests and tree canopy

Local governments are critical partners for effectively conserving and restoring forests and tree canopy. However, it can be very challenging to effectively engage the myriad of local governments throughout the watershed who represent a wide range of communities with different priorities and decision-making processes. The Forestry Workgroup will work with other relevant Bay Program workgroups and support teams to develop more effective two-way communications channels and regular engagement with local government partners. This engagement will also inform the development of targeted resources to support local governments in better understanding the value of forests and tree canopy, strengthening policies and ordinances, improving land use decisions to limit further forest parcelization

and fragmentation, and addressing regulatory barriers for sustainable forest management. This Approach is particularly relevant to the Tree Canopy target but will also support advancing the Riparian Forest Buffer and Forest Conservation targets.

Management Approach 3.2.6: Ensure adequate maintenance and management:

The Tree Canopy, Riparian Forest Buffer and Forest Conservation targets all set goals to maintain forests and tree post-planting. However, programs that provide financial support for planting activities do not consistently provide the needed financial support for the needed post-planting maintenance or the long-term stewardship and management of forests. The Forestry Workgroup will identify potential approaches to improve existing implementation programs or to develop new programs to ensure adequate maintenance and management. This could include extending grant timelines to ensure funding is available for longer-term maintenance or monitoring or developing standalone programs specifically for maintenance and management.

Participating Partners

The following partners participated in the creation of this Management Strategy and expressed their intention to collaborate on Management Strategy implementation over the next six years. Per the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement, “participation in developing Management Strategies or in the achievement of Outcomes varies by signatory based on differing priorities across the watershed. This participation may include commitments such as sharing knowledge, data or information, educating the public, working on future legislation and developing or implementing programs or verified practices” (2025). Signatory partners may join implementation efforts at any time. Partners also recognize that Signatory participation is voluntary and may vary accordingly.

- **Signatory Partners**

- US Forest Service
- USGS
- NRCS
- Delaware Forest Service
- Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control
- DC District Department of Transportation
- DC Department of Energy and Environment
- Maryland Forest Service
- New York Department of Environmental Conservation
- Pennsylvania Bureau of Forestry
- Virginia Department of Forestry
- West Virginia Division of Forestry
- Chesapeake Bay Commission

- **Other Partners**

- Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay
- Cacapon Institute

- Chesapeake Bay Foundation
- Potomac Conservancy
- Upper Susquehanna Coalition

DRAFT

Appendix 1. Signatory Statutory Authorities Driving Outcome Attainment

The law and regulation of signatory partners may support, justify or motivate their participation in the collaborative work of the Chesapeake Bay Program related to the attainment of specific Outcomes and Targets of the Watershed Agreement.

The following documentation identifies core statutory authorities that provide part of the impetus for the attainment of Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement Outcomes and their related Targets. While Chesapeake Bay Program partners acknowledge that the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement is voluntary, subject to the availability of appropriated funds, and does not preempt, supersede or override any other law or regulation applicable to each signatory, they also acknowledge that the law or regulation of individual signatories can support each partner's participation in outcome attainment. The table below is not an exhaustive list of all relevant laws and regulations. Rather, this appendix identifies the driving motivators that can bring about signatory partner engagement in efforts described in this Strategic Plan, associated Management Strategies, and Workplans.

Goal 3: Healthy Landscapes

Outcome: Healthy Forests and Trees	
Signatory	Statutory Authority
Federal government	Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978 (16 U.S.C. Chapter 41)
	Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (Public Law 115-334)
Delaware	State Forestry (Title 3, Chapter 10)
	Delaware Agricultural Land Preservation Act (Title 3, Chapter 9, Subchapter V)
District of Columbia	DDOT Establishment Act (D.C. Official Code § 50-921.01 et seq.)
	Urban Forest Preservation Act of 2002 (D.C. Law 14-309; D.C. Official Code § 8-651.01 et seq.)
Maryland	Maryland Forest Conservation Act (MD Nat. Res. Article (NRA), Title 5, Subtitle 16)
	Program Open Space (MD NRA, Title 5, Subtitle 9)
	Forests and Parks (MD NRA, Title 5)
New York	Taxation of forest land Real Property Tax (RPT) (CHAPTER 50-A, ARTICLE 4, TITLE 2, SECTION 480-A)
	Tree Conservation and Urban Forestry (Environmental Conservation (ENV) CHAPTER 43-B, ARTICLE 53)
	Susquehanna River Basin Compact (Environmental Conservation (ENV) CHAPTER 43-B, ARTICLE 21, TITLE 13)

	Clean Water, Clean Air, and Green Jobs Environmental Bond Act of 2022 (Environmental Conservation (ENV) CHAPTER 43-B, ARTICLE 58)
Pennsylvania	Conservation and Natural Resources Act (PA Act 18 of 1995)
	Keystone Tree Fund Restricted Account (HB 374 of 2019)
	Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code Act (Reenacted and amended Dec. 21, 1988, P.L.1329, No.170)
	Pennsylvania Clean and Green (Act 319).
Virginia	Virginia Water Quality Improvement Fund (Code of Virginia § 10.1-2128)
	Forest Resources & The Department of Forestry (Code of Virginia 10.1. Conservation, Chapter 11)
	Open-Space Land Act (Code of Virginia 10.1. Conservation, Chapter 17.)
West Virginia	