

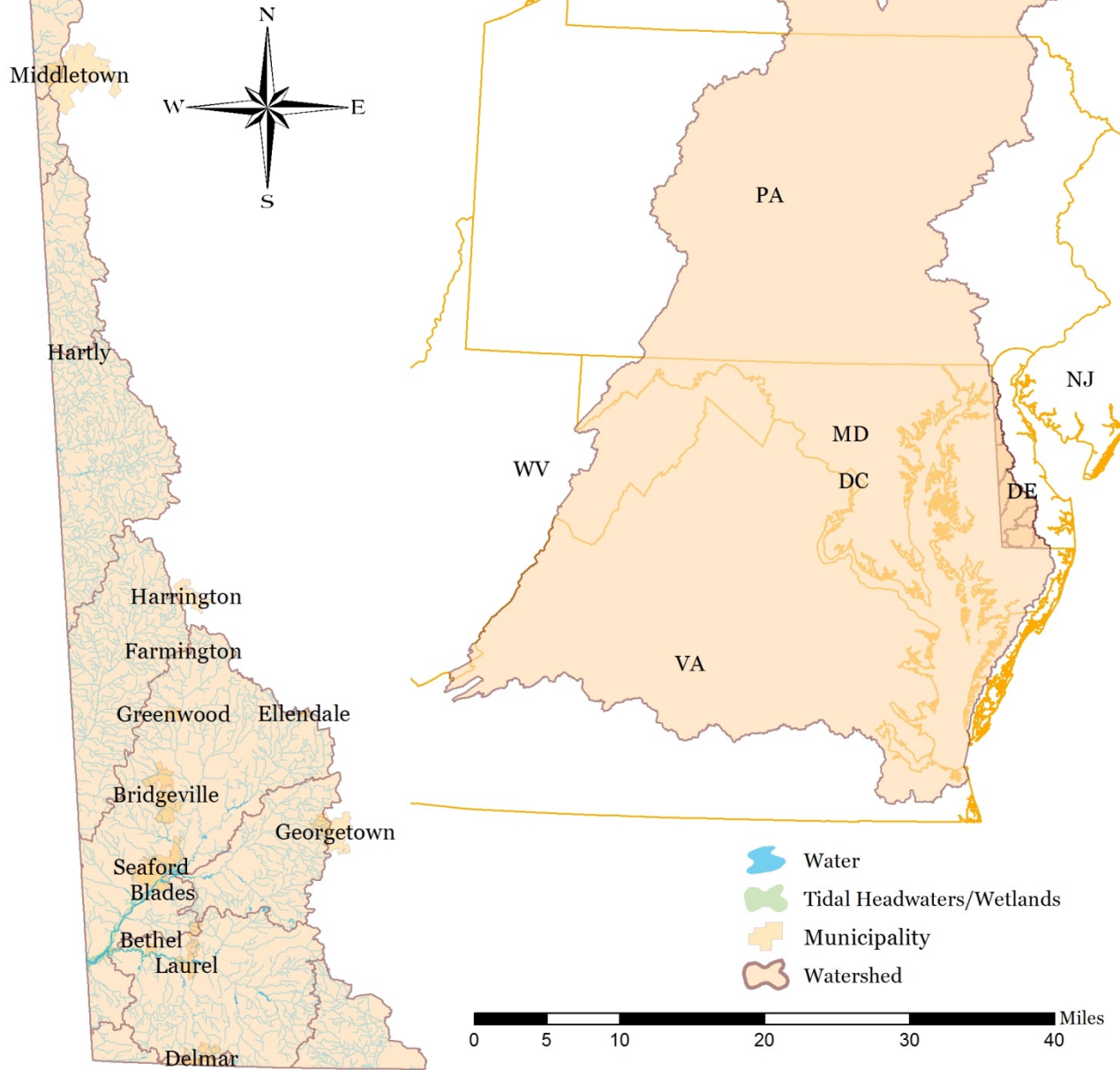
An aerial photograph of a forest with a stream. The stream flows through the center of the image, surrounded by dense green trees. Some trees are bare, suggesting a mix of deciduous and coniferous species. The water in the stream is dark and reflects the surrounding forest. The overall scene is a lush, green landscape with a winding waterway.

# Delaware's Riparian Forest Buffer Updates

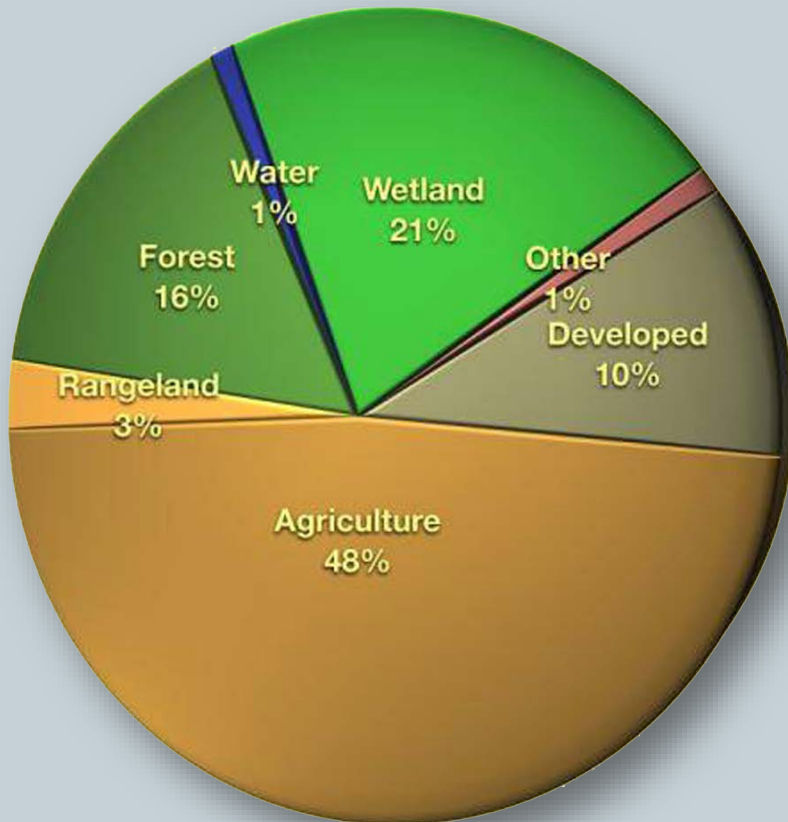
**Marcia Fox**  
DNREC, Division of Watershed Stewardship  
Nonpoint Source Program



# Chesapeake Bay Watershed



# Land Uses in Delaware



- Within all 3 counties
- Very rural character:
  - Developed 10%
  - Agriculture 48%
  - Rangeland 3%
  - Forest 16%
  - Water 1%
  - Wetland 21%
  - Other 1%
  - Small, but growing, towns

# Delaware's RFB Strategies



- Amend the state CREP Agreement to make the riparian forest buffer practice more attractive to cropland farmers by providing more financial incentives.
- Increase farmer awareness through a multi-stakeholder outreach campaign.
- Ensure program success through enhanced financial and technical assistance to farmers.
- Provide high-level federal and state leadership to inspire local staff and partners to implement RFBs.

# Barriers to Implementation

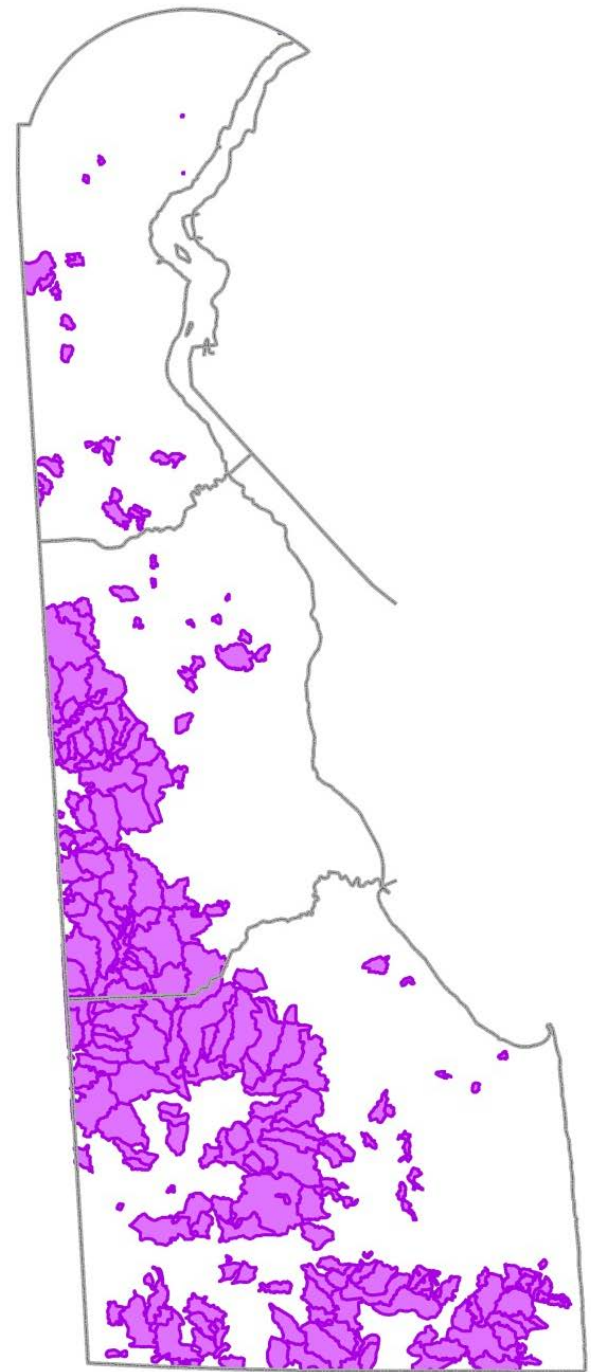
- Shading of row crops
- Loss of ag lands
- Commodity prices\*
- Tax ditches and right-of-ways





# Tax Ditches 101

- Over 230 organizations in the state manage 2000+ miles of ditch
- County Breakdown:
  - New Castle County – 26
  - Kent County – 78
  - Sussex County - 143
- Formed through Superior Court



# What is a Tax Ditch?

- **Governmental Subdivision of the State**
  - Permanent Right of Way for Maintenance
  - Levy taxes
  - Make & execute contracts
  - Borrow money
  - Receive administrative & technical assistance from DNREC

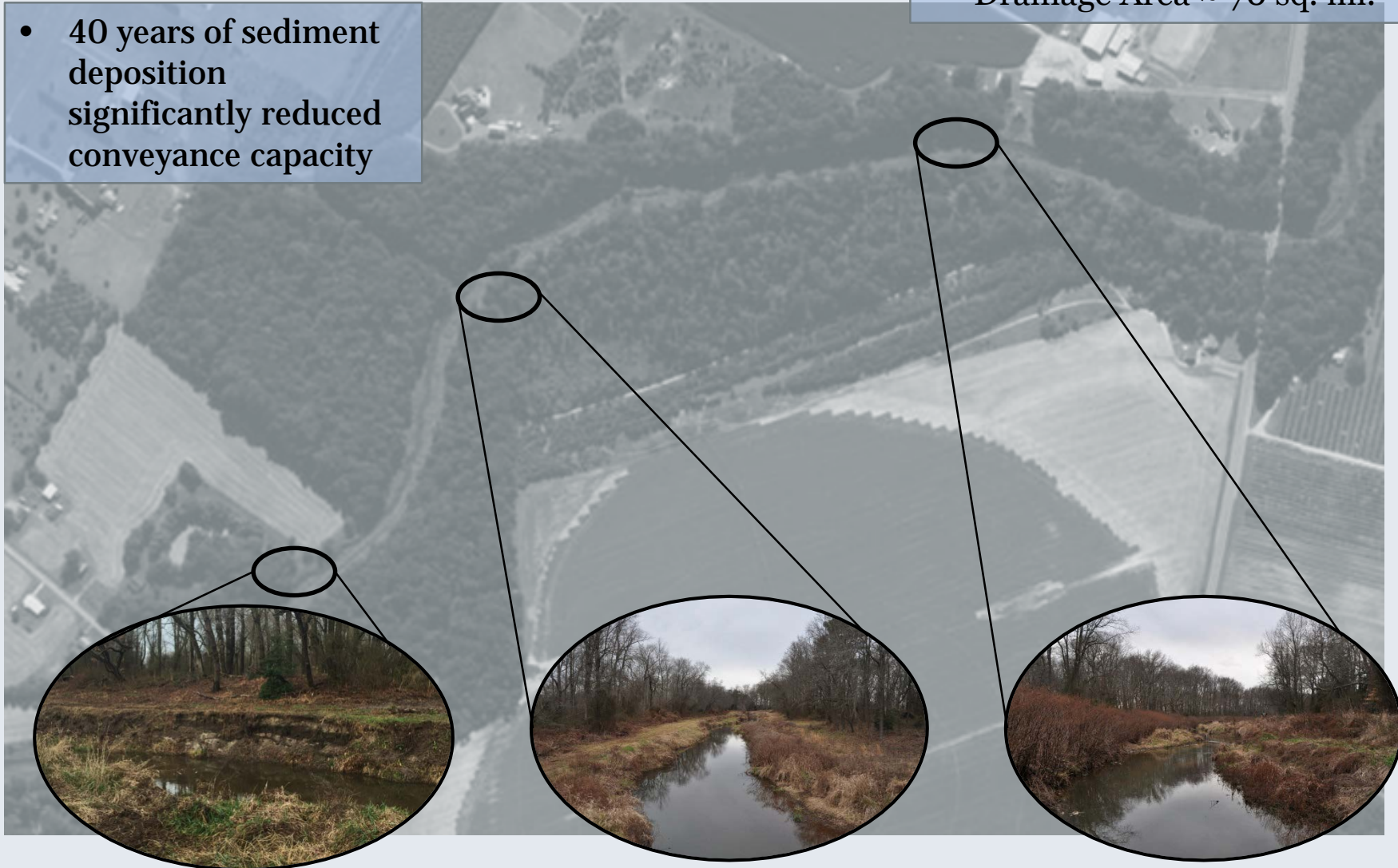


# Nanticoke River Tax Ditch

## Stream Restoration Project

- 40 years of sediment deposition significantly reduced conveyance capacity

- 4,300 ft. of Stream Restoration
- Construction started in Jan. 2016
- Completion projected for June 2016
- Construction Cost \$850,000
- Drainage Area  $\approx$  70 sq. mi.





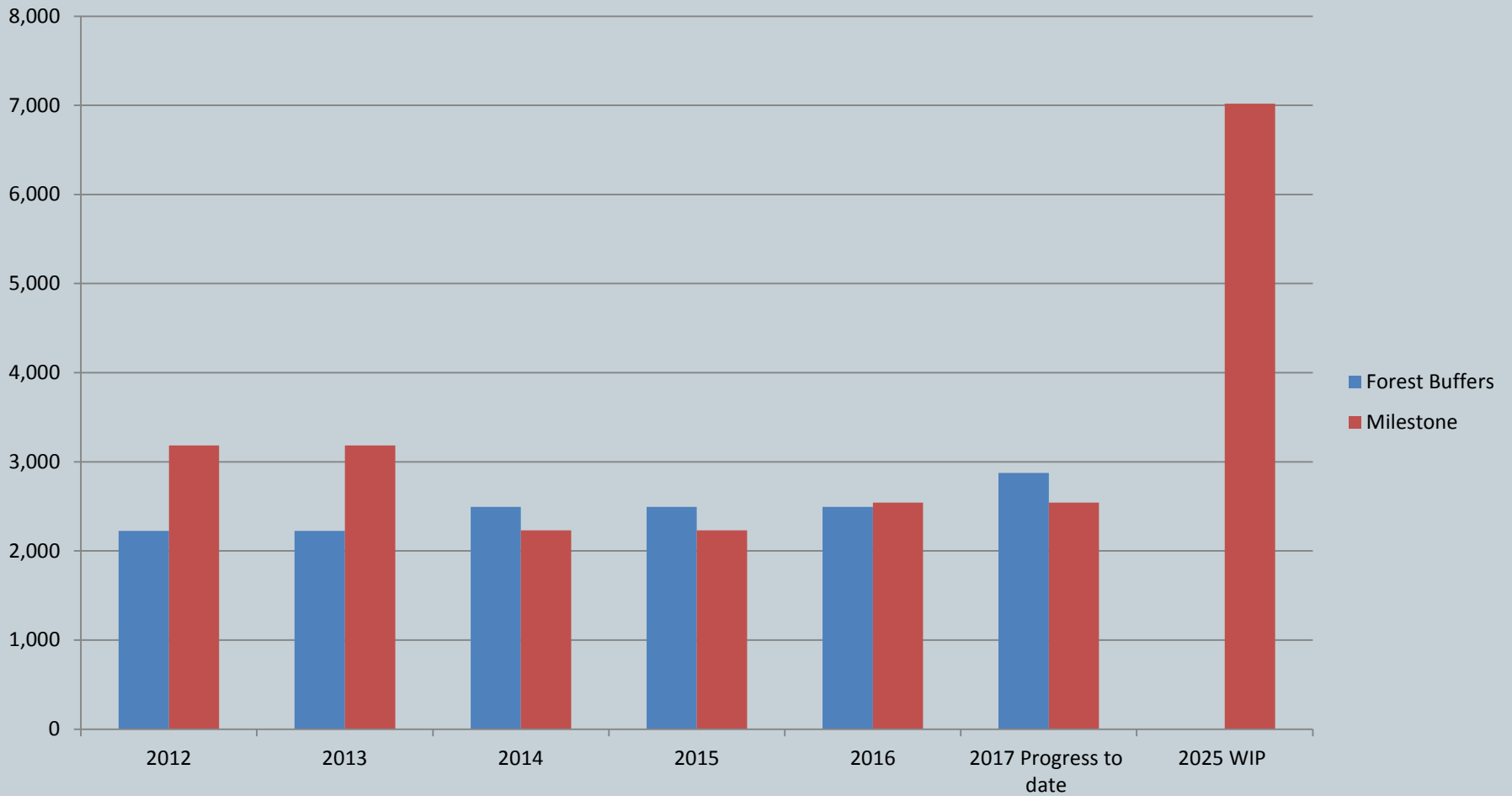
# RFB Progress to Date



- Received \$1M USDA CREP RFB Initiative
- 2015 – State Budget \$0
- 2016 – State Budget \$1M
  - Reinstating 2016 and 2017 expiring contracts
- Signed a new CREP Agreement in August 2016
  - Includes additional incentives for landowners within CBWS



# RFB Progress to Date





# Education and Outreach Focus



- **Funding**

- \$5K from Alliance to conduct CREP outreach
- \$10K annually from EPA Chesapeake Bay funds for RFB education/outreach

- **Partners**

- USDA NRCS and FSA
- DNREC
- Soil and Water Conservation Districts
- University of Delaware (DE)


- **Outputs**

- GIS analysis to target outreach to landowners of tracts of land enrolled in NRCS practices.
- Districts will develop letter and conduct direct
- UD will develop new CREP brochure with new mailing inserts
- Contracts are underway for the Districts and
- Public radio advertising

End Result =  
**MORE BUFFERS!!!**







**Marcia Fox**  
Delaware NPS Program,  
Department of Natural Resources  
and Environmental Control  
**[Marcia.Fox@state.de.us](mailto:Marcia.Fox@state.de.us)**