

# LAND CONSERVATION GOAL

## Protected Lands Outcome



2025 PROGRESS  
**ON COURSE**

**OUTCOME:** 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.

**PROGRESS AS OF 2021:** The [Protected Lands Outcome](#) is on course to meet its target. Based on the most recent 2018 data, 68% of the target to protect an additional two million acres has been met, including 79% of the forest acres target and 30% of the wetlands target. Given that additional acres have been protected since 2018 and not yet counted, projections indicate the potential to meet the target early, pending updated data expected by the end of 2021. Additional emphasis is now being placed on conserving large forest tracts and wetland acres, as well as on working to exceed the original two million acre target, instead reaching to protect 30% of the watershed by 2030, in concert with the [America the Beautiful Initiative](#) and the Chesapeake Executive Council's Directive No. 21-1: [Collective Action for Climate Change](#).

**BACKGROUND:** Between 2009–2010, state, federal and nongovernmental partners working on land conservation and public access met at a series of collaborative sessions to develop recommendations for supporting further progress across the watershed in these areas. These sessions led to the inclusion of the Land Conservation Goal and the Protected Lands Outcome within the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*. The Chesapeake Conservation Partnership, a regional coalition of over 80 diverse organizations throughout the watershed, primarily guides and advances the development of this outcome.

**BASELINE:** At the time the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement was signed, land protection was tracked only in the three states that signed [Chesapeake 2000](#): Maryland, Pennsylvania and Virginia. GIS data was used to track protected lands in Delaware, New York and West Virginia. Based on this data, a baseline of 7.8 million acres of protected lands was established in 2010. By the end of 2013, approximately 8.37 million acres of land (21% of all land in the watershed) had been permanently protected from development, marking a 29% achievement toward protecting an additional two million acres of land by 2025.

**DATA SOURCE:** Watershed jurisdictions self-report progress toward the Protected Lands Outcome using GIS data and the [Protected Areas Database](#).