

State Technical Committee Minutes

Richmond, Virginia

January 22, 2013

Wade Biddix, NRCS ASTC-Programs, started the meeting at 10:02 a.m. by acknowledging those who had joined the group via teleconference. He had those participating remotely introduce themselves. He then welcomed everyone, introduced himself and asked those in attendance to do the same. He asked those present to pick up handouts from the table in the front of the room.

Attendance: Wade Biddix (*NRCS*), Jack Bricker (*NRCS*), Kristen Saacke-Blunk (*Headwaters LLC [Chesapeake Bay Program]*), Brent Whitlock (*FSA*), Chad Wentz (*NRCS*), Ron Wood (*NRCS*), Pat Paul (*NRCS*), Blaine Delaney (*NRCS*), Jon Roller (*Ecosystem Services*), Patrick Vincent (*NRCS*), Diane Dunaway (*NRCS*), Maribeth Pettigrew (*NRCS Recorder*).

Connected via teleconference: David Byrd (*USFWS*), Greg Frey (*VSU/VCE*), Kirk Havens (*VIMS*), Gary Moore (*DCR*), Seth Coffman (*TU*), and Cully McGurdy (*NWTF*).

Jack Bricker, NRCS State Conservationist – Opening Comments: A lot has happened. The “Fiscal Cliff” etc. is not all behind us, but NRCS has been provided a budget based on the Continuing Resolution. We are on a bit of a different track this year; all programs have been authorized, but all have NOT been allocated funds.

Already we have over 900 applications for the 1st EQIP Batching Period. The ranking will be done by February 1. These applications will probably amount to about \$20 million in funds requested.

We had been waiting for updated Adjusted Gross Income forms from FSA, but that has all been completed as of last Friday (1/18/13).

The staff will get into the nitty gritty details during the rest of the meeting.

Wade Biddix introduced the featured visitor for this meeting, **Kristen Saacke-Blunk**, here to talk about the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) grants available.

Kristen began her presentation by saying that she’s visiting all the State Technical Committee (STC) meetings in the targeted watersheds to give each STC a better idea of where the NFWF priorities are for this year. She is a contractor working specifically with Chesapeake Bay concerns. There is huge interest in the NFWF grants and their cost share programs. Her involvement is intended to accelerate and improve outcomes.

She presented a PowerPoint (see handouts) and went through the information on the individual slides, starting with water quality, habitat and species. They are looking for “sweet spots”. She discussed their business plan and reviewed maps, including zones within the Shenandoah Valley and the Rappahannock River Watershed.

In the past, they’ve sprinkled money across the landscape, but are now trying to be more focused, with a goal of putting about 60% of their funds toward high priority targeted watersheds.

She next discussed manure management, stream health to improve habitat, vulnerability and eligibility data, and Eastern Brooke Trout and River Herring.

A discussion ensued as she reviewed the slides starting with Chesapeake Bay Targeted Watersheds. She stated that they were asking for help with the Rappahannock and the Shenandoah so that investments are made in certain locations. Change is expected over time.

They are planning local meetings to ask questions and locate the “right projects”. They’d like guidance on where partner agencies might need money invested – looking for activities that haven’t been “floating to the top” where they can help; identifying places where there is a need for improvement or where there is a need for a “bridge” of funding. Dates are not yet established but should be within the next few weeks; they are open for suggestions.

This effort is not just about 2013; they are anticipating setting up a plan or model to support target zones throughout the next few years. The details of how they have come to the conclusions they’ve currently drawn can be found in the PowerPoint handout.

At this point, **Kirk Havens** from VIMS suggested that one possible group would be the water quality implementation team for the Chesapeake Bay. **Seth Coffman** (TU) mentioned that he’s working in the Shenandoah Valley and would like to be involved.

Q: Wade Biddix asked if NFWF allows for planning studies or if their funding would just be for implementation. **A:** Technical assistance is important, so “yes” that would be part of it. That wouldn’t be included in the watershed base, but would be a separate RFP for technical assistance side.

They are aiming for a quarterly schedule instead of the walk-up assistance policy they’ve had in the past. June 2013 is the target date to begin that quarterly schedule.

Blaine Delaney (NRCS) mentioned that the Smith Creek partnership has established momentum and traction, and there’s no question that it could use additional help from CBF.

The question was asked as to whether anyone else knew of other specific groups. Friends of the Rappahannock were mentioned and **Jon Roller** (Ecosystem Services, LLC) said they have a Rappahannock River project and would be interested.

Kristen asked “What are Virginia’s priority watersheds?”

Blaine answered that about half of CBW and then stated that there is no new funding for CBWI, but we do have targeted funding in EQIP for the Bay. **Wade** explained that we currently aren’t using priority watersheds as part of EQIP; that is not a requirement statewide.

As her PowerPoint presentation was concluded, **Wade** told **Kristen** that he thinks she is touching the right bases to accomplish what CBF is trying to do and that there will certainly be opportunities to partner. He then thanked her for coming and invited her to stay for the remainder of the meeting if she wanted. She did stay.

Program Updates:

Brent Whitlock – FSA – CRP/CREP – He announced that the extension of the Farm Bill on January 1st had reauthorized the majority of their programs. They expect sign-up to begin on CRP in March or April; they are not sure currently of the dates.

They will be updating requirements within the next three weeks and expect to see a lot of activity. He noted that FSA will be attending the NRCS JED meetings in April and expressed appreciation for the partnership.

Basically, they have the same expectations for CREP, although it may move a little more quickly. He said it was just a matter of updating the appendix and other requirements.

Gary Moore – DCR – They are just waiting for the updates to get enrollment started back up again. They expect additional acres for Southern Rivers. The request has gone in, but there is no update on status.

Wade Biddix – (NRCS) – FARM BILL PowerPoint presentation (Handout). At the last STC meeting in September, we were on the threshold of completing FY13 program offerings. There had been lots of activity and input from the Local Working Groups, but nothing had been finalized. We did not meet in November because everything was still up in the air. As he began the PowerPoint, there was a recap of the final decisions that have been made, specifically concerning funding levels and offerings and that there is currently a Continuing Resolution through March.

Some programs were extended but no funding was allocated. As a result, active solicitation won't start for participants until funding is received.

He then went over specifics of the funding levels (see handout). Seasonal High Tunnels were funded at a much higher level than expected. The funding for EQIP (which is really a combination of CBWI and EQIP since no funding was made for CBWI) was down 15.4% from last year; however, this is still a high level of funding for EQIP at \$19.9 M.

Slides (see handout) included a breakdown of funds; there is a lot of breakdown for the total monies. Other handouts concerning the breakdown will be handed out later as Patrick and Ron give their reports. The application period deadlines were specified (see handout), as well as the regional payment schedule.

Key implications of payment schedule changes were discussed. Some of the payment rates are more generous than previous rates. One thing to look for is the payment unit designation. Some may be paying according to square footage rather than by acres, feet or other indicators.

The point was made that NRCS is actually getting away from cost sharing and focusing on incentive payments.

Screening of EQIP applicants was reviewed. Applicants will be docked for prior contract terminations and cancellations. We are trying to encourage people to complete their contracts. Inclusion of Pest Management will be an offering if an IPM plan is completed. Land that has been converted from more to less intensive landuse will receive an extra 25 points. This is aimed at erosion reduction.

There are changes to caps; some have been added.

Proceeding to the slide on Forestry Issues, **Wade** noted that there are a couple of new limitations, but EQIP is allowing a higher planting rate per acre this year.

There are also changes in the definition of Heavy Use Area, and Waste Management payments are based on the amount of animal waste stored not the type of building constructed. The prescribed grazing practice now requires a 35 pasture condition score for payment to be made. We did not set up a Specialty Crops fund pool. Some practices were moved from *companion* practices to *priority* practices.

Kirk Havens commented about a study on aquaculture and noted that we can help restore oyster beds and help with recycling cages. There are no changes in the aquaculture offerings in FY-13.

There has been work with VA Tech and their recommendations have been followed on fruit tree pest management. We are not offering a separate fund pool for fruit tree growers this year.

We have requested special funding for the Working Land for Wildlife Initiative. This would go to restoring habitat for the Golden Winged Warbler. We allocated 5% of EQIP funds in Virginia toward wildlife habitat and maintenance. The difference between this and WHIP is simply that the applicant would have to meet all the EQIP eligibility criteria. WHIP criteria were easier to meet.

Other points to clarify:

- We are waiting on the National CIG before we can go forward with the State CIG announcement.
- Meanwhile, CSP has been authorized and 32 applications have already been received.
- Diane Dunaway is now covering ALL Virginia Easement issues, since Jeremy Stone went to Headquarters.

Wade then asked if there were any questions from the group. **Q: Brent Whitlock** asked if notification would stay the same with the new payment schedules. **A:** Yes. They have just tried it and are trying to be more consistent nationally.

Wade closed this update/presentation by saying that NRCS appreciates everyone's help and noting that the changes made are a result of a collaborative effort. He also stated that we are already thinking about next year; this Farm Bill extension is only valid through the end of this fiscal year. Since there ISN'T a new Farm Bill, a new one is still very much anticipated, and discussions about that will start soon, probably by March or April. We are happy to be up and running. From what we're seeing, we will be able to obligate all our existing EQIP funds without any trouble this year.

Diane Dunaway – (NRCS) – Easements – (Handout) – Reviewed FRPP, GRP and WRP standings. We are soliciting applications for FRPP. We anticipate closing some of the older ones out in the coming months. GRP is backlogged; there is no funding as of yet. We are looking forward to closing some of these, as well. Reviewed handout for WRP.

Q: Brent Whitlock asked if NRCS anticipates receiving any more funding for GRP. **A:** We have no idea. We have heard that NHQ is requesting an equal amount to last year, but there has been no request from NHQ to the field to ask what we would like. Since there is so much preliminary work involved, and we are getting to such a late point in the year, Wade noted that the later in the year we go, the harder the crunch is to try to turn requests around and get the easement funds obligated this year.

Q: Someone asked re: those GRP and WRP requests that are backlogged. **A:** Applicants will be contacted by us, but nothing is automatic. Applicants will need to reconfirm they are still interested.

Virginia will have to do another market analysis for the easement programs for next year.

Patrick Vincent – (NRCS) EQIP/CSP – (Handouts) – Reviewed spreadsheet provided on handout and gave an overview. He pointed out that the different applications are broken down on the spreadsheet (forestry, cropland and energy). Out of 920, about 50 don't yet have fund codes. There are 317 high priority applications.

As far as CSP goes, we are still waiting to hear whether we will offer a sign-up in FY-13. The field is still working on paying previous year's contracts.

Wade explained Patrick's role as the new point of contact for EQIP and CSP now that Dan Solomon has retired.

One change is in CCPI project funding; there is no designated funding for that this year. That was specifically pointed out to **Seth Coffman** from TU.

Ron Wood – (NRCS) - Organic/WHIP – (Handout) Attended and spoke at CASA conference last week. We will have a display set up at the Virginia Biological Farming Conference that is coming up in February.

Wade noted that there is lots of interest being shown for programs, in general. We will be ranking the current applications in the next couple of weeks. The preapproval process should begin the first week in February.

State CIG – The National Office is expected to send out an RFP in February for CIG projects of interest. Until the National CIG announcement is issued, we can't release our State CIG announcement. We not offering a State CIG this year but since the EQIP funding is better than we expected, we are now considering the possibility. This money does come out of the state allocation for EQIP.

Some current possible projects have to do with Silvopasture and with Soil Health and Soil Quality (not just to protect, but to improve – that is very interesting to our technical people). **Wade** solicited requests for other interests or needs that come to mind, noting that we would like to narrow the possibilities down to those resource concerns or practices where we need additional adoption or technology development. Projects that are proposed need to be something that will help us do our jobs better. There is approximately \$150,000-\$200,000 to offer; that is a limit of \$75,000 maximum per project.

As far as the current State CIG projects, a showcase was held at VA State on January 10th, and a lot of people came in to see the results.

Q: Kristen inquired whether farmers or providers are asking about shade/riparian areas, noting that a lot of people would like to see more shade in the field. This is a new idea in the East.

Gary Moore wondered if pasture into forested area would be a more intensive use of the land vs. a less intensive use. He said that he didn't really understand what silvopasture is.

A: Wade said that is really the question. We'd just be interested in leaning more about it. It can be a combination of grass and trees. This year, our EQIP offering is limited to those taking cropland and converting to trees. The opposite does seem to be making a more intense use of the land. We have not offered the option of converting forest land to cropland initially; we need to find out more about it. Perhaps VSU or DOF or someone might want to explore this idea some more.

J.B. Daniel has expressed a need for silvopasture information for CIG projects. Right now we don't have quantified information about benefits. The result of a CIG would be to clarify what the Best Management practices would be. A CIG project answers the questions of productivity, profitability and environmental stewardship. At this point, we do need more information.

Gary Moore mentioned that there is a lot of interest in multi-species cover crops. Addressing this topic might be a good project for a CIG. There needs to be a good base of research, more demo projects and a way to show how they're applicable.

In closing out the topic of the State CIG, **Wade** reiterated that we are leaning toward offering a State CIG this year and that he felt it would be money well-spent. Anyone with further thoughts and/or suggestions should let him know.

Agency Updates:

Gary Moore – (DCR) – There has been a massive response to the Virginia Enhanced Conservation Initiative. Certain stream exclusion practices would be funded 100%. As of their January 10th cut-off, there were 290 practices approved for the \$2.3 million that has been allocated. February 10th is the end of the next application period. They are asking for further funding from the General Assembly based on the interest that has already been shown.

There is some concern that if a landowner has applied for both State funding and EQIP and has been accepted for the DCR program, then we need to ensure that their EQIP application is cancelled. Gary will work with NRCS to try to coordinate a way to make that happen.

Seth Coffman – (*TU*) – Trout Unlimited has recently received a grant to do restoration work and work to enhance trout habitat in priority areas, specifically the Upper Potomac and also in the Shenandoah Valley. They are finishing up various projects.

Greg Frey – (*VSU/VCE*) – Reminded the group again of the Virginia Biological Farming Conference coming up on February 8th and 9th at the Holiday Inn – Koger Center in Richmond.

He also asked the group that if they know of any existing case studies on silvopasture in reference to what has already been done, to please let him know.

Cully McCurdy – (*NWTF*) - Clarification that Cully is the Regional Biologist for the National Wild Turkey Foundation. They have a million dollar grant from NRCS at the national level with a 1:1 match. Brian Chandler is starting with NWTF in Lynchburg today to work on landowner management plans. He will be assisting landowners with Longleaf Pine projects and also with Golden Winged Warbler projects.

David Byrd – (*USFWS*) – They are focusing on big projects. There is one in SE Virginia that they have been working on for the last 5 years, targeted at the Upper James and working on Stream Habitat.

Also they are working with partners on Longleaf Pine, trying to get more native seed sources and plant more acres. Things are looking up for Longleaf Pine, but we are still behind other states in our progress.

Kirk Havens – (*VIMS*) – They are moving forward with a General Assembly resolution. The Institute is working on helping develop plans with local governments.

Kristen Saacke-Blunk – (*NFWF*) - There will be an Ag. Networking Forum meeting in Staunton on March 6th at 8 a.m. The USDA “Showcase Watersheds” in VA, PA and MD will be highlighted at the meeting.

Brent Whitlock – (*FSA*) – CRP sign-up will be announced in the future; he asked all to “stay tuned”. He also noted a project their agency began in the fall mentoring three VA Tech students. It involves providing access for fishing and working on stream quality.

Wade announced that he wanted to recognize the Chesapeake Bay Foundation even though they weren’t represented in today’s meeting. CBF won one of NRCS’s National Earth Team partnership awards. The work spotlighted was at Muddy Creek and involved 70 volunteers and 1200 acres. Congratulations to CBF!

VA Tech – (handout) – Distributed handout on the “Future of Diversity” conference as requested via e-mail.

Jack Bricker – **NRCS** – Closing Comments: Right now we have a piece-meal Farm Bill – kind of like concentric circles. The programs will all get back in sync hopefully before too long. The Continuing Resolution is in place through March 27th. The good news is that we do have program funding and are able to continue sign-ups.

Wade Biddix – (**NRCS**) – Thanked attendees for coming and adjourned meeting at 11:48. Next meeting is scheduled for March 26, 2013, at 10 a.m.

State Technical Committee
Agenda

January 22, 2013 - 10:00 a.m.
Richmond NRCS State Office
1606 Santa Rosa Road, Ste. 209

Welcome and Opening Remarks	NRCS - Bricker
NFWF Targeted Watersheds in Virginia 2013 RFP for Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund	Kristen Saacke Blunk Headwaters LLC
Conservation Reserve Program (CRP & CREP)	FSA - Horsley DCR - Moore
FY-13 Funding Levels and Program Offerings	NRCS - Biddix
Extension of Farm Bill	NRCS - Biddix
Fund Pools and Applications To Date FRPP, GRP and WRP EQIP and CSP WHIP, Organic, High Tunnel and Energy	NRCS - Dunaway NRCS - Vincent NRCS - Wood
State CIG	NRCS - Biddix
Agency Updates	All



Next Meeting - March 26, 2013



NFWF CBSF Targeted Watersheds VIRGINIA

BACKGROUND

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) has administered the Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund (CBSF) since 1999 – awarding hundreds of grants approaching \$78 million and leveraging one and half times this amount in support of Bay-wide conservation. In 2013, NFWF, in collaboration with its partners, seeks to:

- Focus on high priority, targeted watersheds. Using a science-based approach and feasibility screen, identify watersheds where investments will result in water quality, habitat, and species improvement.
- Tackle cross-cutting issues. Building on prior investments, focus funds on innovation and technology that tackle issues that matter across the watershed – manure management, stormwater, local government finance.
- Accelerate the pace and drive down costs. Support new restoration methods, leverage cost-share programs, advance ecosystem markets, and enhance technical assistance and capacity.
- Expand information and technology transfer. Ensure that information and technology is shared across key stakeholder groups to encourage adoption.

Prioritizing Geographies for Conservation in VA

Criteria considered:

Stream Health – on rankings provided by US EPA from very poor to excellent, NFWF identified those that fell in the categories of poor, fair, and good to focus.

Vulnerability to Development Pressure – data provided by the USGS ranks the landscape from very low to high in regards to the area where landuse is least likely to change in the near term. NFWF focused on the areas that ranked very low, low, and moderate.

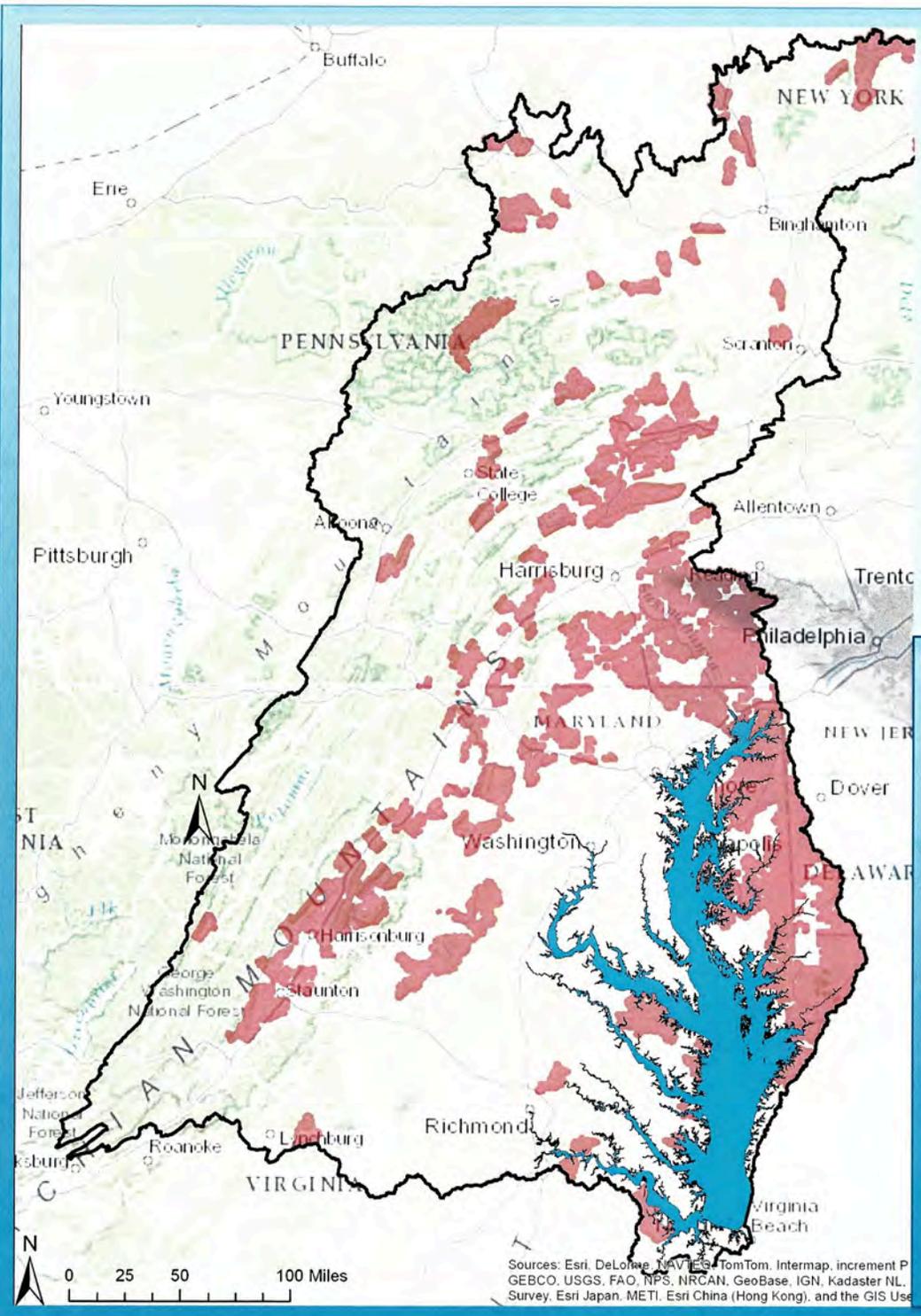
Nitrogen and Phosphorus Loads – based on the US EPA Chesapeake Bay Program Office map, informed by the SPARROW model, the areas the have the higher contributions of nitrogen and phosphorus for all sources are identified.

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 & \text{Moderate Stream Health} \\
 & \quad + \\
 & \text{Low Vulnerability to Development} \\
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 & \text{Priority Areas for N and P} \\
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 & \text{Watershed Restoration} \\
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Eastern Brook Trout Population Status – based on data provided by the Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture, NFWF is focusing on the streams that show brook trout as being present, reduced, or absent/extirpated.

and/or

River Herring Conservation – based on USDA NRCS data identifying priority watersheds for River Herring populations.



Prioritizing VA Watersheds Based on Conservation Criteria

The 2013 CBSF RFP will seek to provide enhanced opportunities in support of targeted watersheds that address cross-cutting issues.

- Rappahannock River Watershed
- Shenandoah River Watershed across the Valley Region

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The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund is dedicated to protecting and restoring the Bay by helping local communities clean up and restore their polluted rivers and streams. We advance cost-effective and creative solutions with financial and technical assistance. Working in partnership with government agencies and private corporations, the Stewardship Fund awards \$8 million to \$12 million per year in grants.



Major funding for the Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund is provided by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service and Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Altria Client Services. Additional funding is provided by the D.C. Department of the Environment, FedEx, Northrop Grumman, Wal-Mart, Acres for America, and Wells Fargo.

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit that preserves and restores our nations native wildlife species and habitats. Created by Congress in 1984, NFWF directs public conservation dollars to the most pressing environmental needs and matches those investments with private funds. www.nfwf.org/chesapeake



NFWF CBSF Targeted Watersheds VIRGINIA

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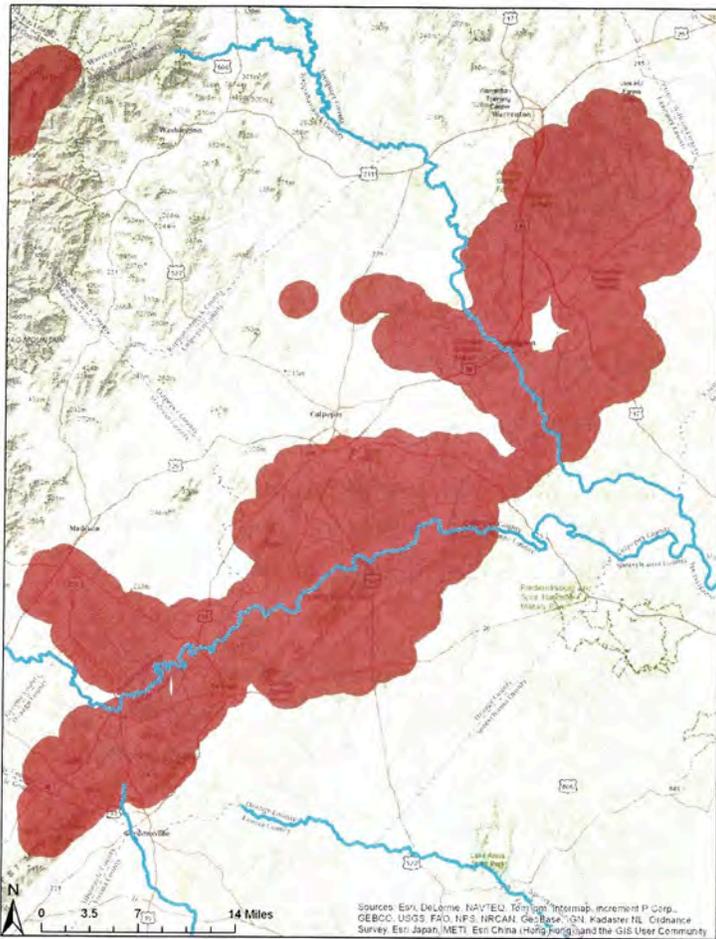
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- Rappahannock River Watershed
- Shenandoah River Watershed across the Valley Region

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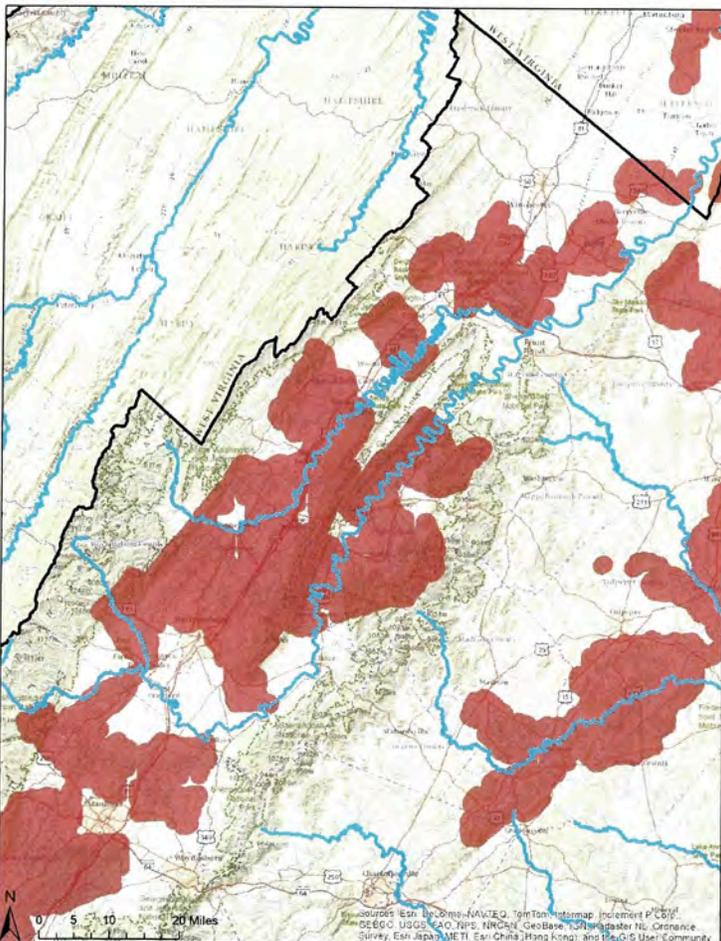
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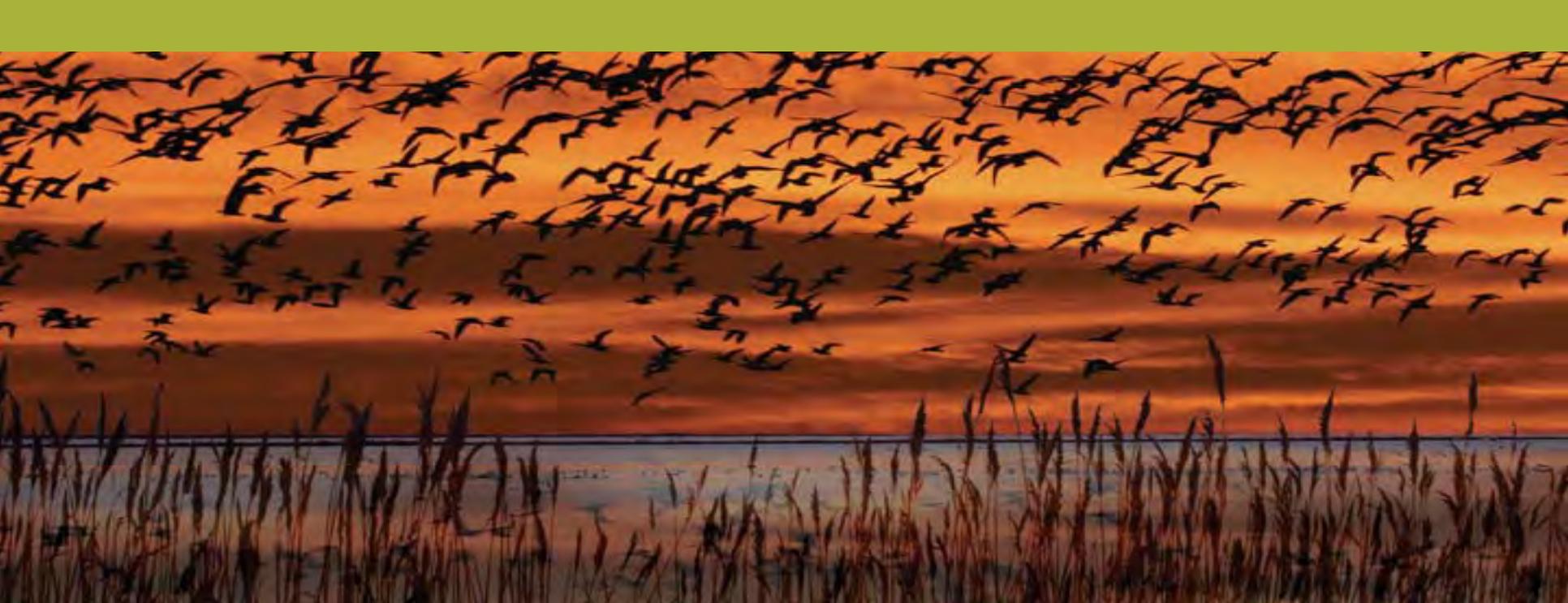
Altria



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www.nfwf.org/chesapeake



National Fish and
Wildlife Foundation



Targeted Watersheds
Discussion with VA NRCS State
Technical Cttee – Jan 22, 2013



NFWF

The Chesapeake Bay Business Plan will...

- **Focus on High Priority Targeted Watersheds.**

Using a science-based approach/feasibility screen, identified watersheds where investments result in WQ, habitat and species improvements



- **Tackle Cross-Cutting Issues.**

Building on prior investments, focus funds on innovation and technology that tackle issues that matter across the watershed – manure management, stormwater, local government finance.



- **Accelerate the Pace and Drive Down Costs.**

Support new restoration methods, leverage cost-share programs, advance eco-system markets and enhance technical assistance and capacity.

- **Expand Information and Technology Transfer.**

Ensure that information and technology is shared across key stakeholder groups to encourage adoption of best practices.

Feasibility Filter

How much restoration is NEEDED in our targeted areas?

What goals exist for subwatersheds that can be extrapolated?

6,000+ miles of livestock exclusion

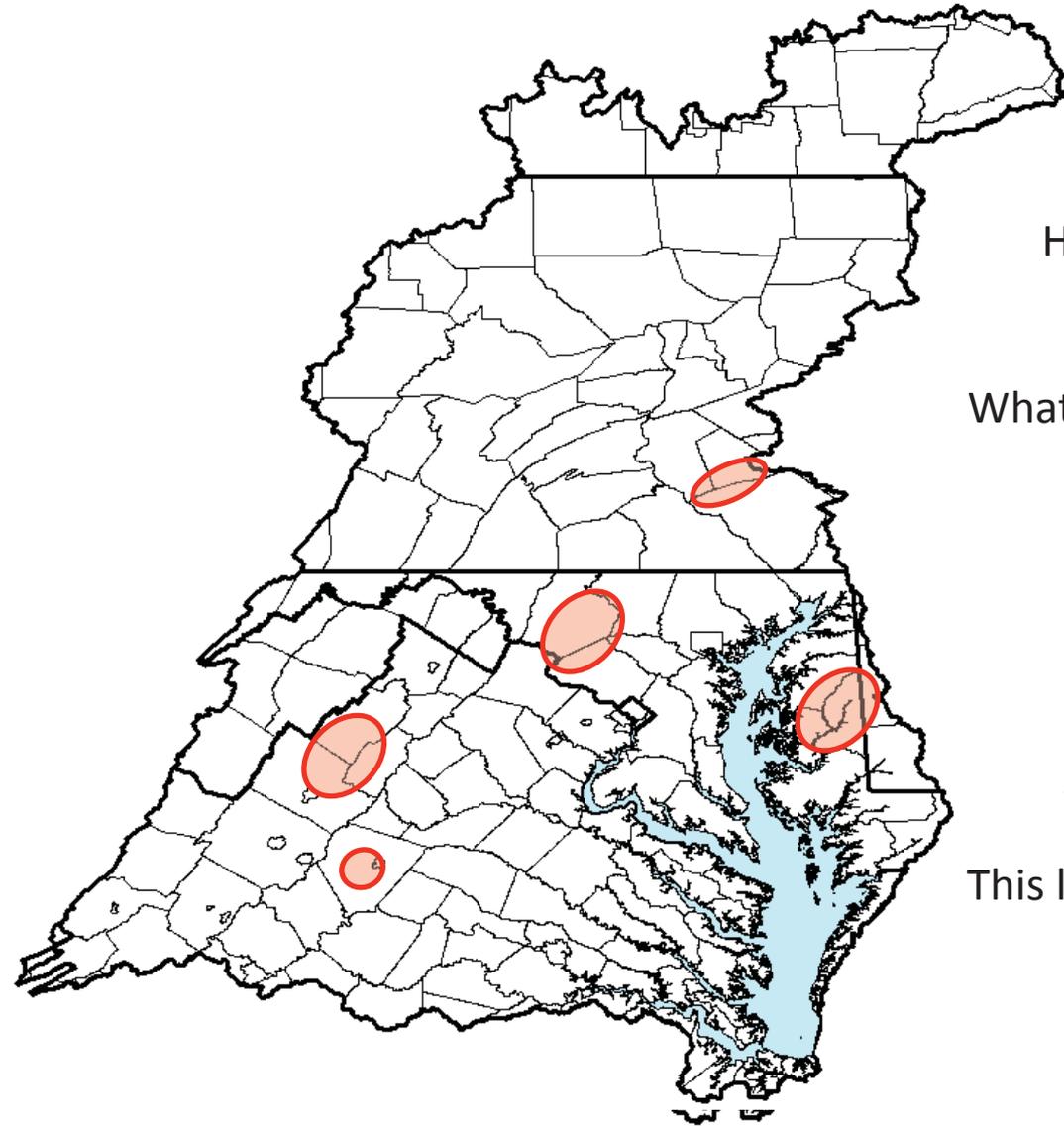
10,000 + miles of buffers

490+ acres of stream restoration

7,600+ acres of reforestation

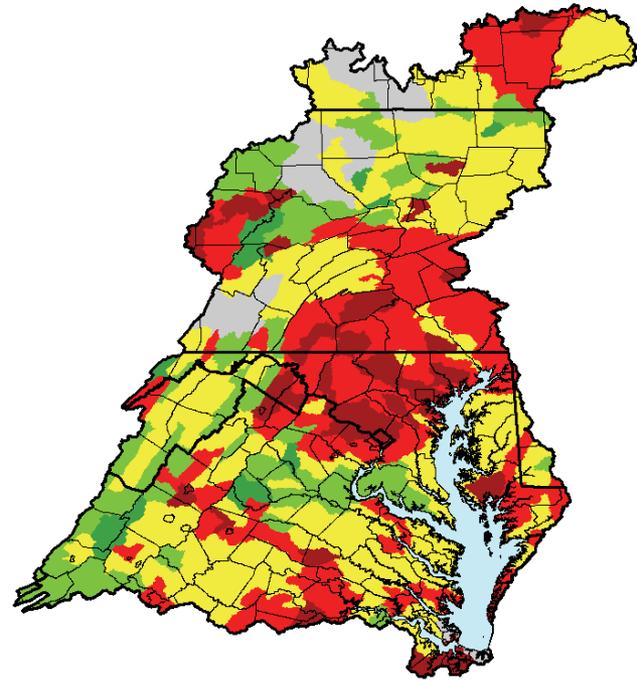
23,000+ acres of wetland restoration

This let us know what is POSSIBLE and provided critical information for when we later determine our goals and funding

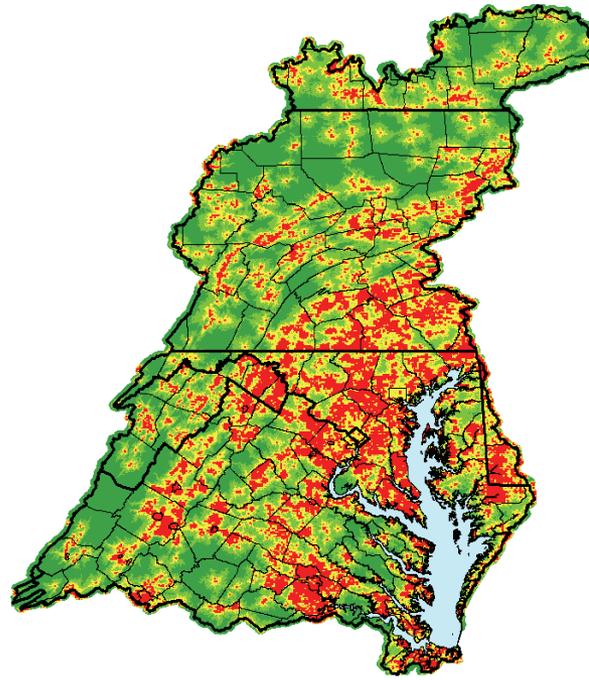


Prioritize Geographies for Conservation

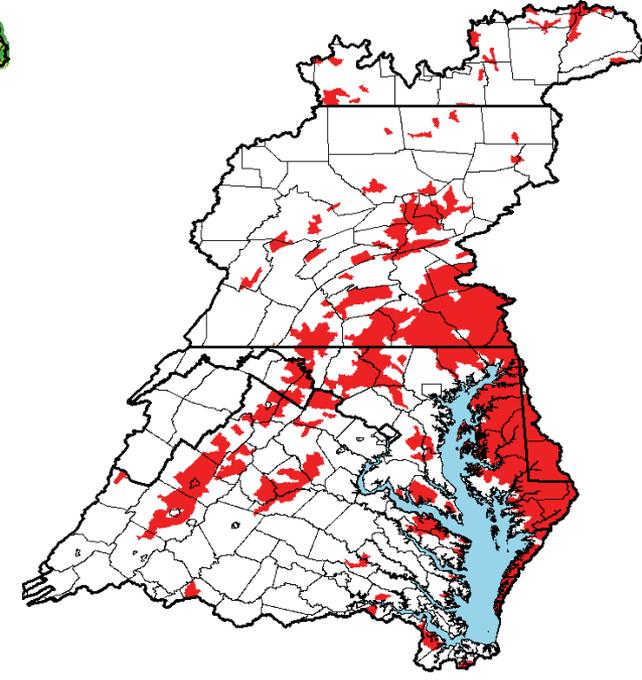
Where do these criteria intersect?



Moderate Stream Health



**Low Vulnerability to
Development Pressure**



**Priority Areas for Nitrogen &
Phosphorus**

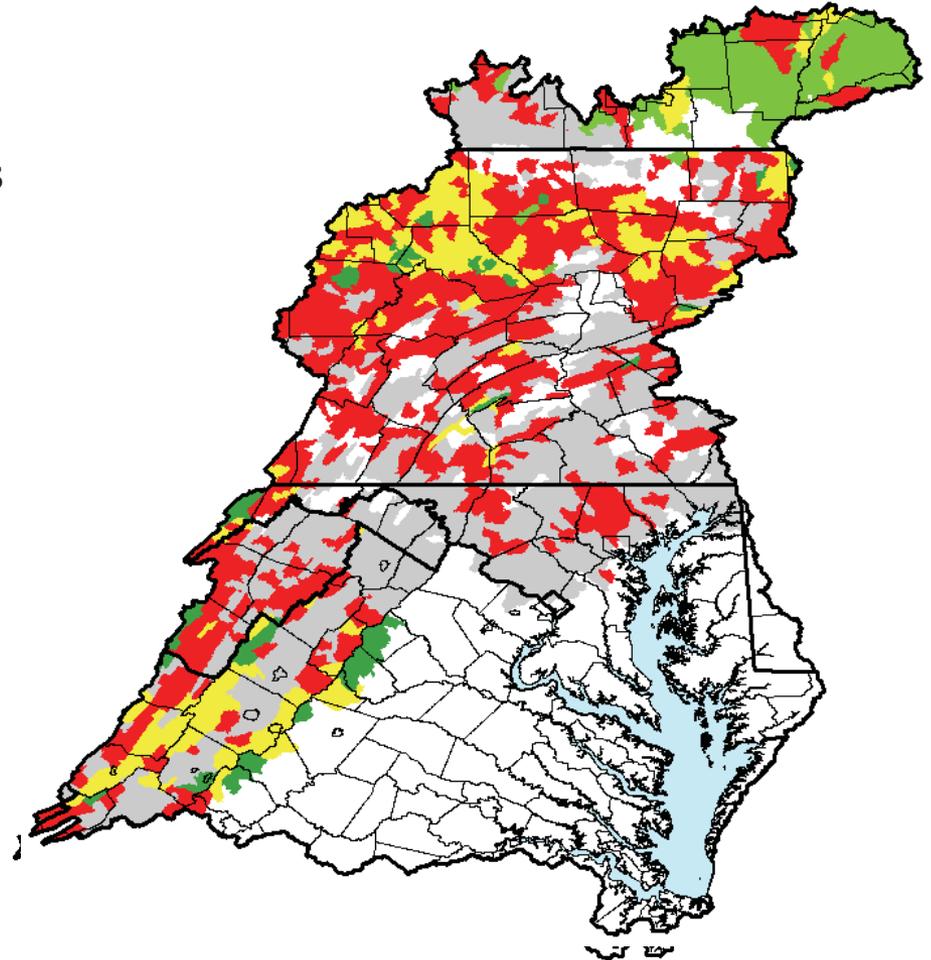
Eastern Brook Trout

Eastern Brook Trout Population Status

Source: Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture

Population Status

-  Present: Intact
-  Present: Qualitative
-  Present: Reduced
-  Present: Greatly Reduced
-  Extirpated or Absent
-  Unknown or Never Occurred



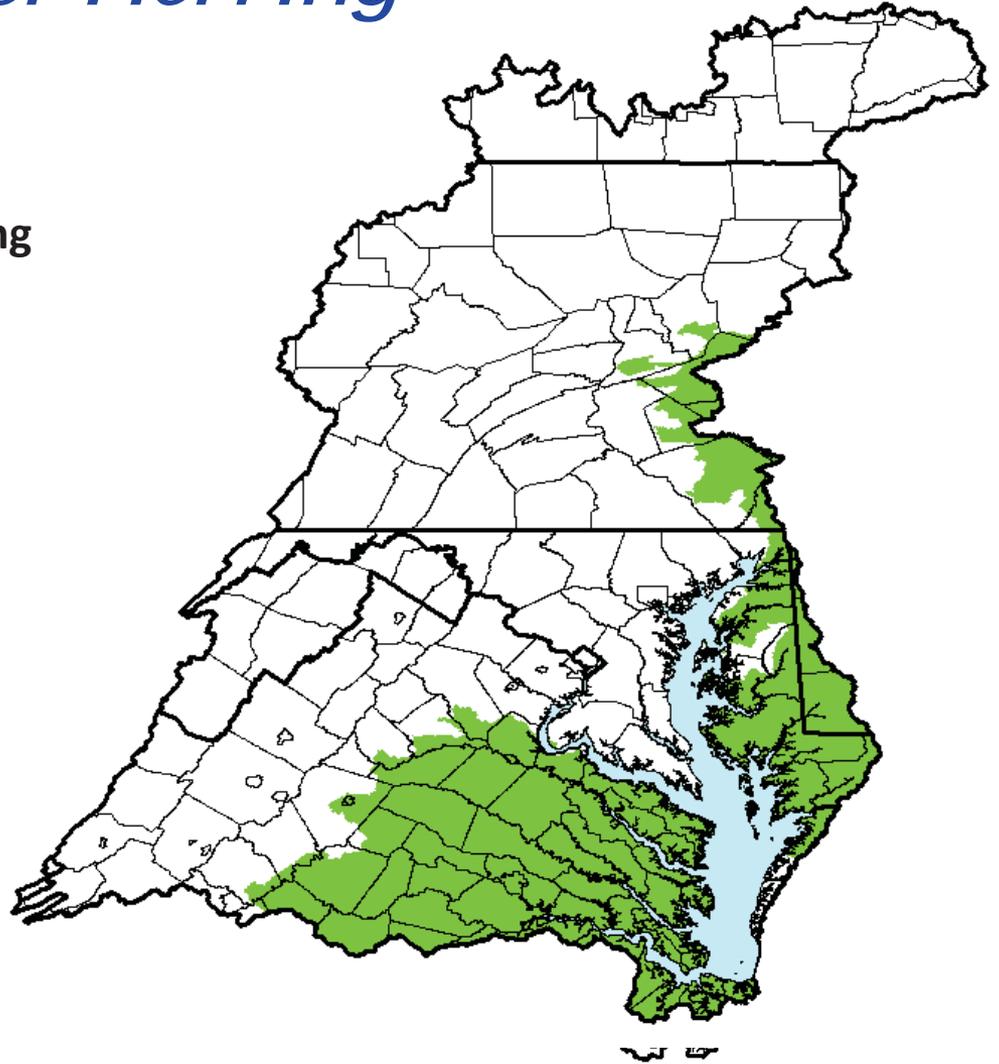
Let's also remove "Present: Intact" since protection is not the main goal of these funds.

River Herring

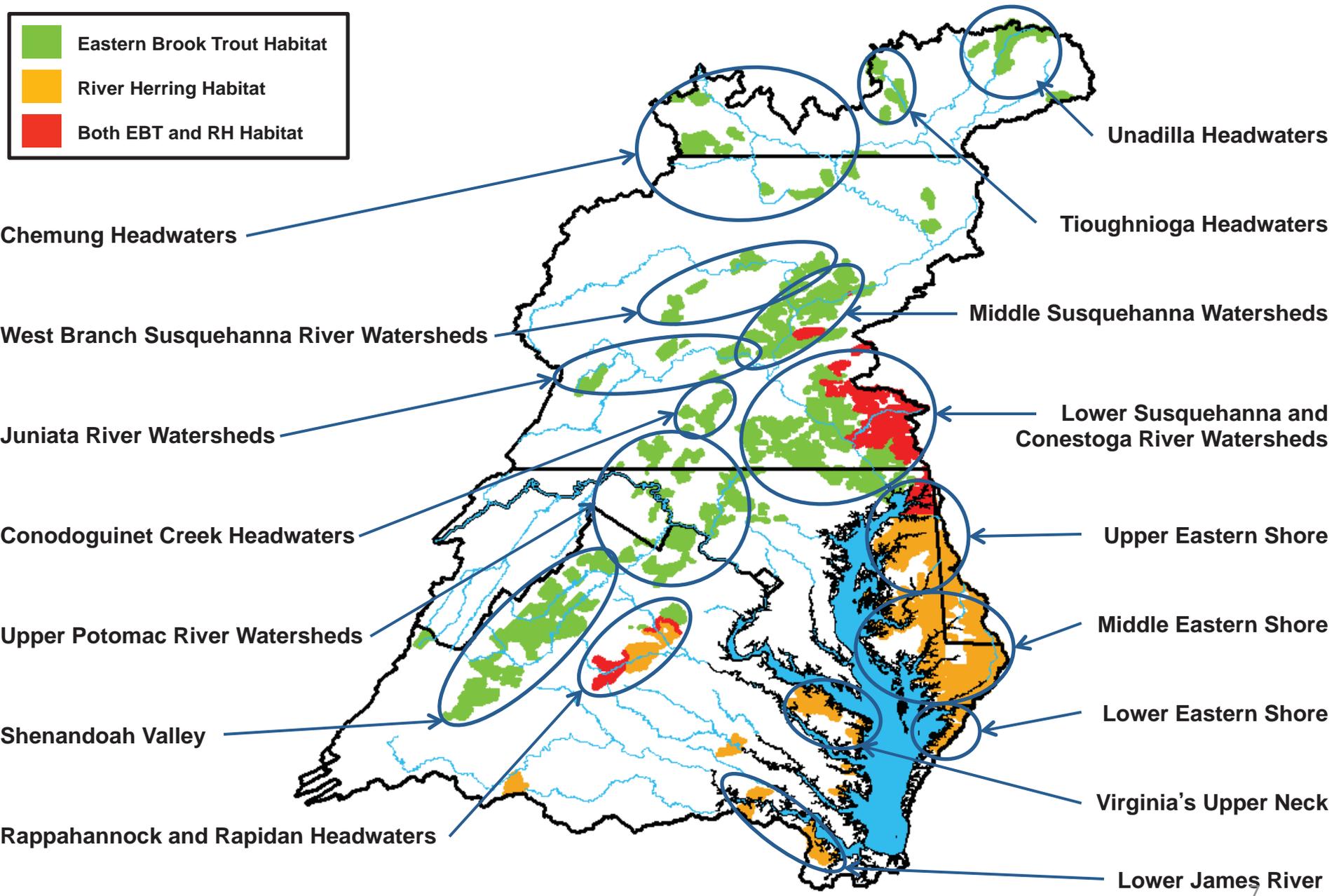
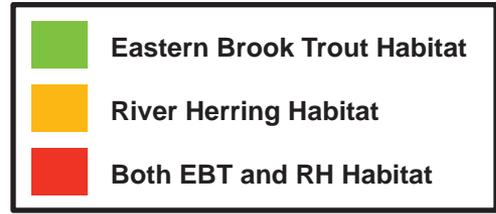
Priority Watersheds for River Herring Conservation

Source: USDA-NRCS

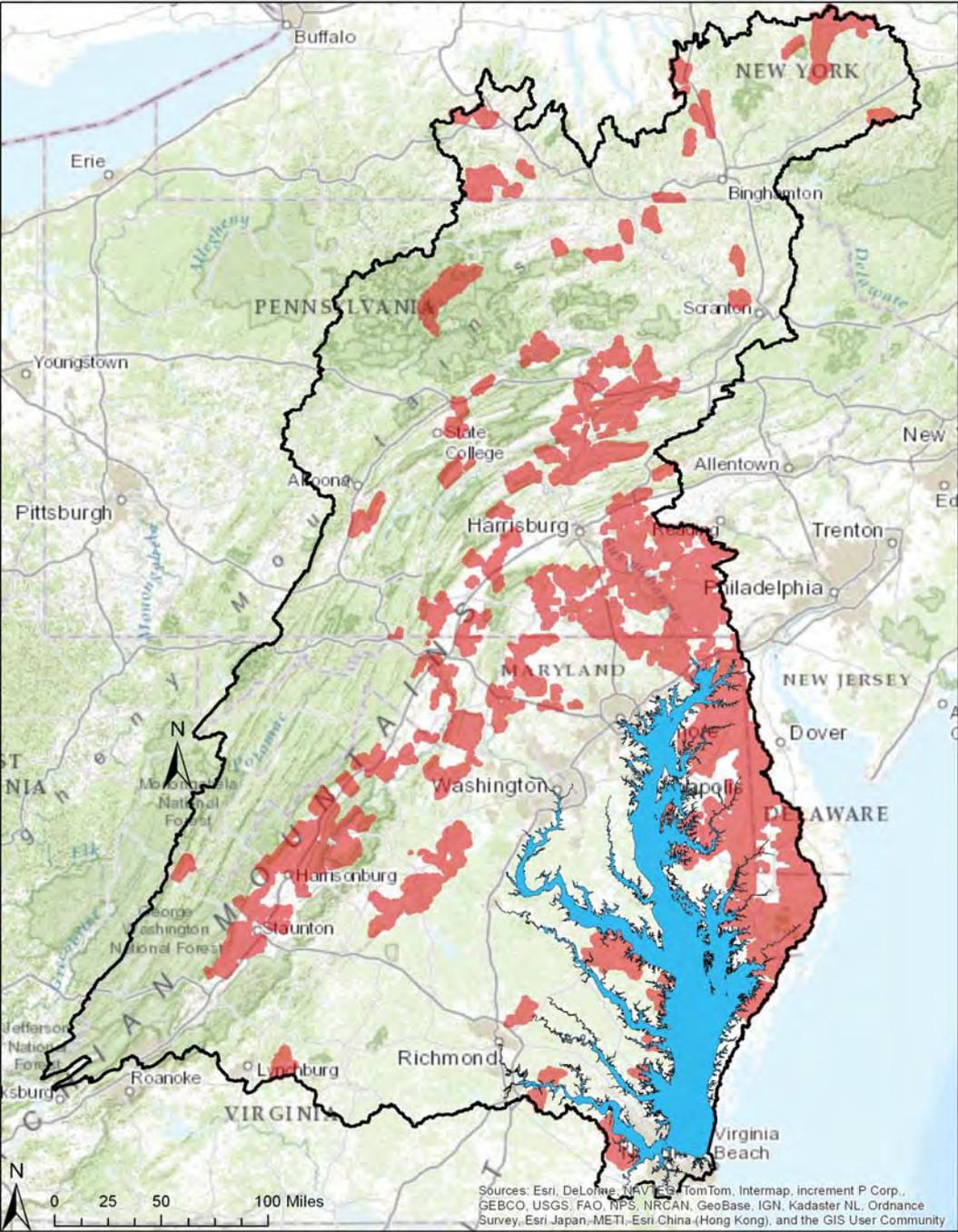
 Priority Watersheds



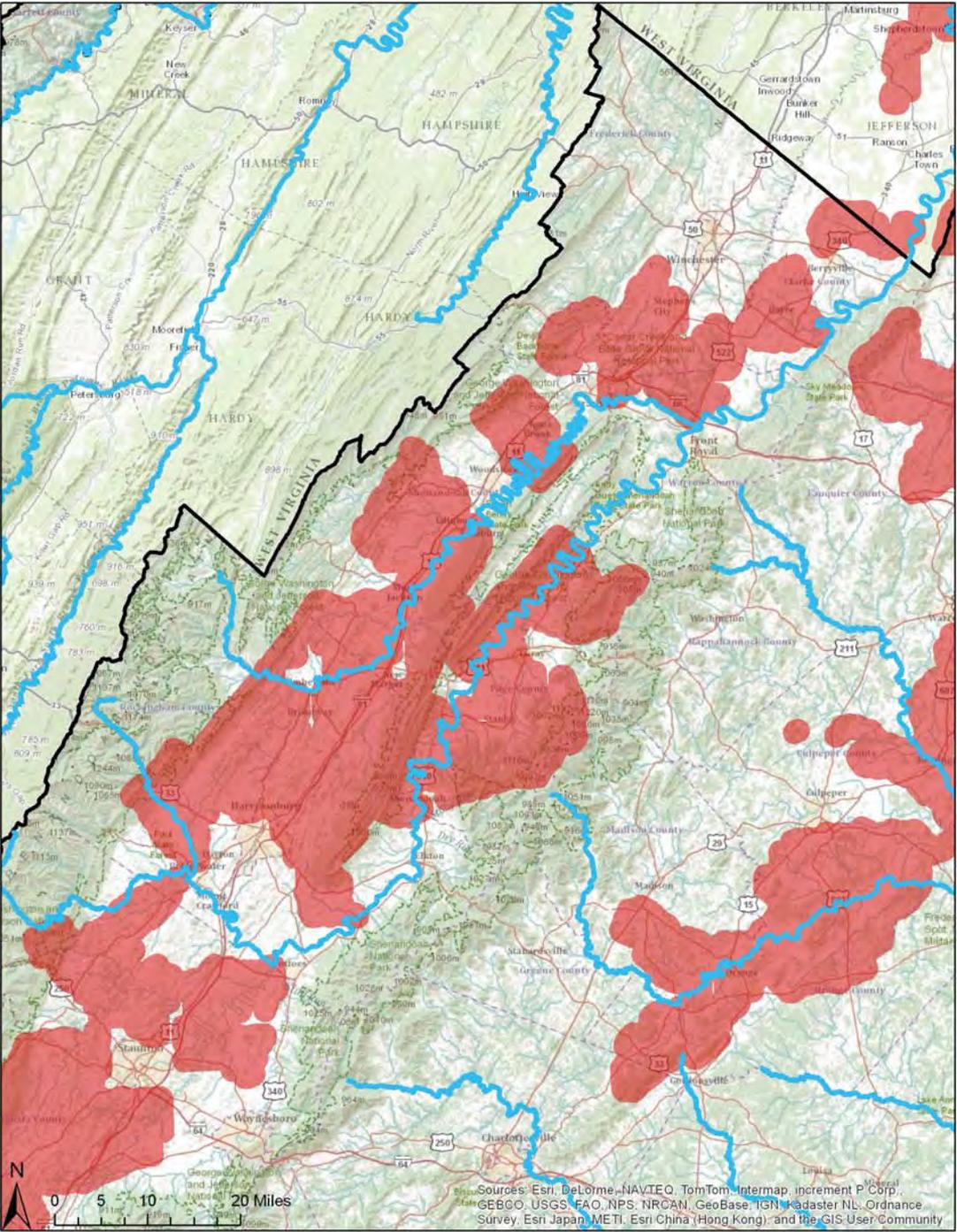
Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund Targeted Watersheds



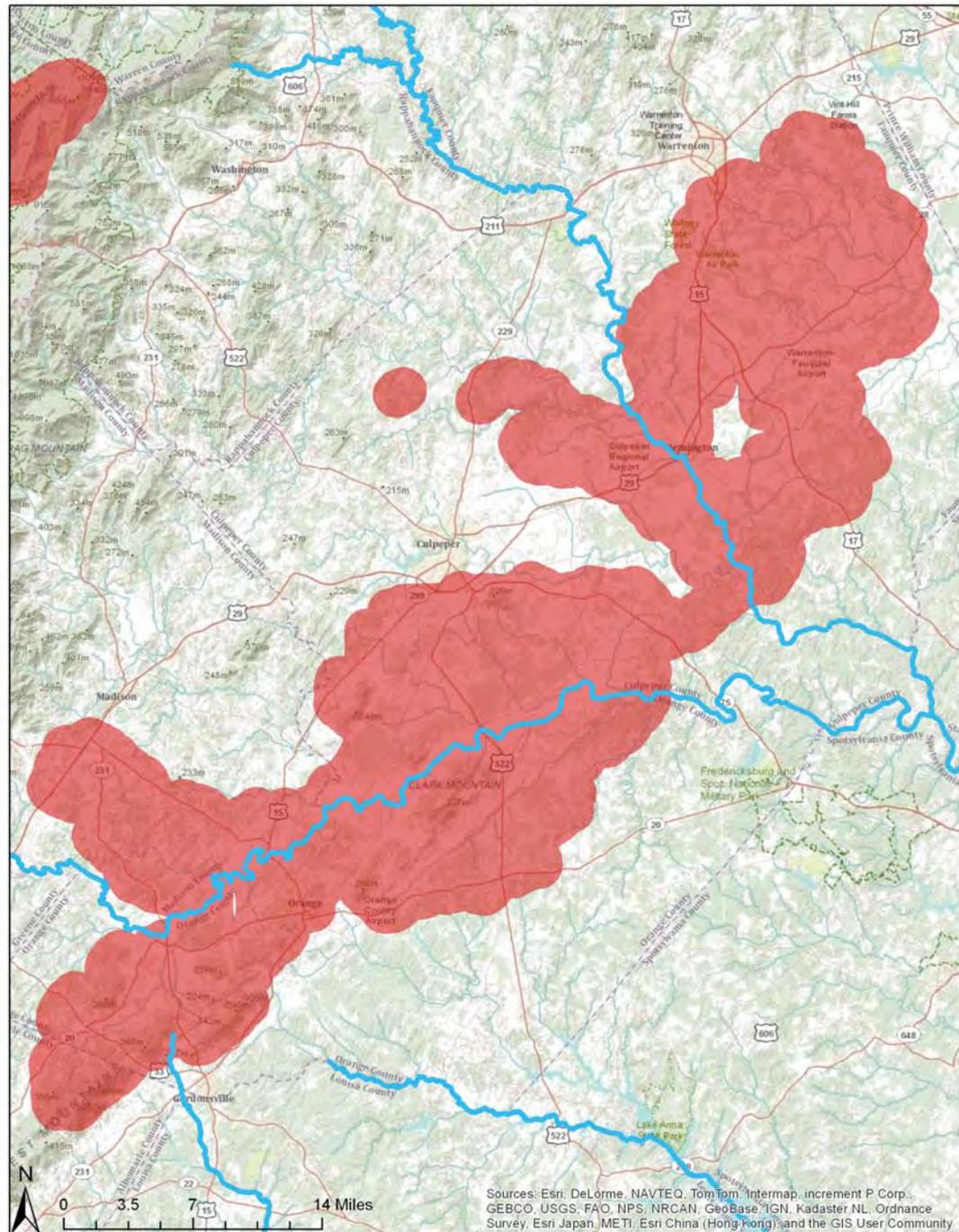
Virginia Targeted Watersheds (NFWF)



VA Targeted Watersheds



VA Targeted Watersheds



Sources: Esri, DeLorme, NAVTEQ, TomTom, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), and the GIS User Community

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Serving in support of the Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund, a program of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation





FARM BILL
FUNDING LEVELS AND
PROGRAM OFFERINGS
Virginia
FY 2013

FY-13 Continuing Resolution

- Continuing Resolution allows the authority to operate through March 28, 2013.
- 2008 Farm Bill expired September 30, 2012. Some programs were extended in September.
 - EQIP
 - WHIP
 - CSP
 - FRPP

Farm Bill Extension Passed With American Tax Relief Act of 2012

- *Farm Bill Extension* included authorizations for
 - Conservation Reserve Program
 - Grassland Reserve Program
 - Wetlands Reserve Program
 - Chesapeake Bay Watershed Initiative
- No appropriations yet for any of these
- *Adjusted Gross Income* provision reactivated

FY-13 Farm Bill Programs

- Applicants must meet the basic criteria for both producer eligibility and land eligibility.
- Applicants contact the local FSA office to get a farm number and tract number and document program eligibility.
- Farm Bill Handbook has been released to the field.
- The various program ranking tools and the Payment Schedule have been finalized and the payment incentives established for the various conservation practices.
- Program information is available on the NRCS Virginia Website at <http://www.va.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip13docs.html>

FY-13 Program Funding Levels

- EQIP Funding = \$19,888,119
Breakdown is as follows:
 - \$11.7 M for Regular EQIP
 - \$6.4 M for Chesapeake Bay Watershed
 - \$150,000 for Longleaf Pine Initiative
 - \$125,000 for Energy Conservation
 - \$270,000 for Organic Initiative
 - \$545,00 for Seasonal High Tunnel Initiative
 - \$675,954 for the National Water Quality Initiative

EQIP Fund Pools

(60% must go to livestock agriculture)

Area Fund Pools

- Livestock in Confinement
- Cropland
- Pasture

Special Fund Pools

- National Water Quality Initiative
- Greenhouse Gas – Eastern Shore
- Longleaf Pine Initiative

Statewide Fund Pools

- Organic
- Energy
- High Tunnel
- Aquaculture
- Wildlife
- Beginning Farmers
- Socially Disadvantaged Farmers
- CAPs
- Irrigation

FY-13 Application Periods

- #1 - January 18th with ranking by February 1st.
- #2 – February 15th with ranking by March 1st.
- #3 – March 15th with ranking by April 1st.

Note: NWQI cut-off dates will be announced later.

FY-13 Regional Payment Schedule

- VA in Appalachian Region with KY, NC, TN, and WV
- National Team developed a list of all practices to be made consistent in the Region
 - The units to be used
 - The no. of scenarios available per practice
 - Which components can be included in cost estimate
- Another national team developed foregone income estimates
- Another national team worked on national initiatives and CAPs
- Another national team conducted quality reviews of regional team submissions for changes

Key Implications of Payment Schedule Changes

- There are changes/differences in FY-13.
 - Typical scenarios
 - Units used
 - Payment rates
- No longer “bundling” practices.
- Planners have to select the “typical” scenario that is closest to the client’s objective and plan.
- Now using an incentive payment. No longer a cost-share program based on a certain percentage of the average cost.

- Screening Worksheets for EQIP
 - Producers with terminated contracts within the last 3 years cannot be “High Priority”
 - » FY-12 = -100 points for terminated contract in past 3 years
- Add ranking question for -50 points for participants who have had a cancelled contract in the past 2 years.

- Include 595 – *Pest Management Practice*
 - CAP 114 – IPM Plan must be done by TSP
 - Implementation of pest management practice available if IPM Plan is done
- Add 25 point question to all ranking tools for land that is converted from more intensive agricultural use to less intensive use, ex.: cropland to grass or trees, pasture to trees.

- Establish a fund pool for “Irrigation Water Management”
 - Must have irrigation history - at least 2 out of last 5 years.
 - New equipment must be at least 15% more efficient than equipment being replaced and be at least 80% efficient.
 - An irrigation water management plan must be developed before participants are eligible for implementation practices.
 - Payment is capped at \$10,000 per contract

Changes to CAPs

- Add *CAP 110 – Grazing Management Plan*
- Add *CAP 142 – Fish and Wildlife Habitat Management Plan*
- Add *CAP 146 – Pollinator Habitat Enhancement Plan*

FORESTRY ISSUES

- Allocated 5% of EQIP allocation to forestry.
- Allocated \$150,000 to Longleaf Pine Initiative.
- Set cap of \$7,500 per participant for Loblolly Pine Plantings under *612 – Tree and Shrub Establishment*.
- Set cap of \$15,000 per participant for hardwood plantings under *612 – Tree and Shrub Establishment*.

Forestry Issues (cont.)

- Allow planting rate >363 trees per acre up to a maximum of 484 trees per acre.
- Add 50 point question on ranking sheet for planting trees on marginal land (Class 4 or higher).

HEAVY USE AREA/LIVESTOCK IN CONFINEMENT

- Do not offer bed pack as a separate payment schedule scenario
 - Use least cost calculations and apply to bed pack, as needed
- Address water quality & erosion resource concerns in production areas (required by CNMP)
 - This includes loafing areas

GRAZING ISSUES

- 528 – *Prescribed Grazing* – new payment caps set at \$10,000/year and \$30,000/contract.
- Established policy as follows: Payment may be made for *Prescribed Grazing* when all planned practices and components of the grazing plan are in place and records indicate that livestock are being managed according to the written grazing plan and the pasture condition score is 35 or above (with the exception of the sacrifice area).

- Added the following practices to the Grazing Practices:
 - Priority Practice
 - 381 – *Silvopasture Establishment*
 - Companion Practices
 - 338 – *Prescribed Burning*
 - 394 – *Fire Break*
 - 490 – *Tree and Shrub Site Preparation*
 - 645 – *Upland Wildlife Habitat Management*

SPECIALTY CROPS/INITIATIVES

- Did not set up a specialty crop fund pool.
- Included all organic initiative practices in regular EQIP payment schedule and ranking tools to improve Special Crop offerings.
 - 484 – *Mulch (straw)*
 - 330 – *Contour Farming*

Other Issues

- Aquaculture – no change from FY-12
- Did Not Offer Separate Pest Management for Fruit Trees –per VA Tech recommendations

WILDLIFE ISSUES

- WHIP authority extended with CR. However, no statewide funding.
- Requested \$45,000 WHIP funding for Golden Winged Warbler.
- Allocated 5% of EQIP funding to wildlife habitat
 - Split into three fund pools:
 - Upland Wildlife Habitat Creation
 - Aquatic Wildlife Habitat Creation
 - Habitat Maintenance

National CIG - Greenhouse Gas Project

- In FY-11, nine national CIGs were awarded for projects related to GHG and promoting carbon sequestration.
- For FY-13, NRCS Chief reserved \$10M in EQIP.
- One of the projects is with CBF on Eastern Shore of VA for adaptive nutrient management techniques (GreenSeeker Technology). PA is doing manure injection too.
- Requested \$1M for this project over 2 years.

Conservation Stewardship Program

- Program was authorized.
- Funding provided for existing contracts.
- NRCS is accepting new applications now. We have received 32 to date.
- The 2013 program sign-up period has been put on hold for now.

EASEMENTS

- FRPP
 - No significant changes for FY-13
 - \$3.4 M allocated to VA
- Note: Jeremy Stone has accepted the position as National FRPP Program Manager.
- Diane Dunaway is the contact person for all easement programs.

EASEMENTS

- All 3 easement programs are slated to be combined in next Farm Bill.
- Not accepting new applications for GRP and WRP at this time.

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Questions??

FY-13 EQIP Budget Allocation and Number of Applications Received

Fund Code	Account Name	Allocated	Contract Approval	Obligated	Applications	High
76F 51	Virginia	\$19,888,119.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	920	317
76F 51 2	FY13 Certified Organic	\$135,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	1	N/A
76F 51 3	FY13 Organic Transition	\$135,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	3	N/A
76F 51 4	FY13 On-Farm Energy	\$125,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	68	50
76F 51 5	FY13 Seasonal High Tunnels	\$545,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	44	N/A
76F 51 AC	Livestock in Confinement - Christiansburg	\$1,464,480.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	27	15
76F 51 AF	Livestock in Confinement - Farmville	\$1,516,320.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	15	7
76F 51 AH	Livestock in Confinement - Harrisonburg	\$2,812,320.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	38	6
76F 51 AS	Livestock in Confinement - Smithfield	\$686,880.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	9	2
76F 51 AQ	Aquaculture	\$100,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	15	N/A
76F 51 BF	Beginning Farmer	\$986,906.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	59	21
76F 51 CA	CAPS-Conservation Activity Plans	\$150,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	31	N/A
76F 51 CC	Cropland - Christiansburg	\$620,533.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	2	2
76F 51 CF	Cropland - Farmville	\$850,834.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	15	5
76F 51 CH	Cropland - Harrisonburg	\$850,834.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	30	9
76F 51 CS	Cropland - Smithfield	\$902,012.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	111	47
76F 51 FS	Forestry - Statewide	\$638,215.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	153	80
76F 51 GG	Greenhouse Gas Project	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	1	1
76F 51 HA	Wildlife - Aquatic Wildlife Habitat Creation	\$177,643.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	1	N/A
76F 51 HC	Wildlife - Upland Wildlife Habitat Creation	\$532,929.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	47	N/A
76F 51 HM	Wildlife - Habitat Maintenance	\$177,643.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	8	N/A
76F 51 IW	Irrigation Water Management	\$150,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	11	N/A
76F 51 LP	Long Leaf Pine Initiative	\$150,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	2	N/A
76F 51 N2	NWQI	\$675,954.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0	N/A
76F 51 PC	Pasture - Christiansburg	\$1,460,160.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	44	26
76F 51 PF	Pasture - Farmville	\$1,218,240.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	46	21
76F 51 PH	Pasture - Harrisonburg	\$1,287,360.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	49	11
76F 51 PS	Pasture - Smithfield	\$354,240.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	4	0
76F 51 SD	Socially Disadvantaged	\$986,906.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	30	14
76F 51 13952	FY13 EQIP Reserve	\$197,710.00	\$0.00	\$0.00		
	None - Other Applications				56	0
Totals		\$19,888,119.00			920	317

FRPP :: Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program

- \$3,436,976 is FY-13 allocation, and we have been soliciting applications.
- 13 FRPP easements are in the acquisition process, with 10 partners, total 2,054 acres. (4 FY-11 parcels with 4 partners, 9 FY-12 parcels with 6 partners.)

GRP :: Grassland Reserve Program

- The Farm Bill Extension that was passed reauthorized the GRP Program. However, no funds have been allocated to states for FY-13, so are not soliciting applications.
- 32 applications are in our backlog from FY-12, totaling over 4,800 acres, for over \$12 million.
- 2 GRP easements are in the acquisition process, one each from FY-11 and FY-12, closing is expected in FY-13, total 181 acres.
- NRCS annual monitoring is underway on all easements.

WRP :: Wetlands Reserve Program

- The Farm Bill Extension that was passed reauthorized the WRP Program. However, no funds have been allocated to states for FY-13, so are not soliciting applications.
- 12 WRP easements are in the acquisition process, 3 from FY-11 and prior, and 9 from FY-12, closing is expected in FY-13, total 365 acres.
- 6 restoration plans (WRPOs) are in various stages of development and implementation on closed WRP sites.
- 9 restoration plans on the FY-12 WRPs are in the early development stage (concurrent with acquisition process.)
- 4 restorations were completed recently on WRP sites.
- NRCS annual monitoring is underway on all easements.



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