

# Forest Conservation In Maryland



## OVERVIEW

Maryland has 2.7 million acres of forest land that provide abundant natural resource benefits: fish and wildlife habitat, clean air and water, opportunities for recreation, innate beauty and timber products. These benefits contribute to everyone's quality of life.

Many forests are both healthy and productive. However, a number of different concerns have been identified as major forestry problems in the east. These include land use changes, invasion of non-native and native pests, loss of biodiversity, air pollution, and degraded riparian forests.

With forty percent of Maryland's total acreage being forest land, it is important to develop and implement conservation plans to ensure the health and quality of your forest - a prescription for forest health. USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) can help you do just that.



Maryland has lost more than 350,000 acres of forest land to development, or an average of more than 7,000 acres per year since 1950.

## KEEPING YOUR FOREST HEALTHY WITH NRCS

NRCS is a federal agency that emphasizes voluntary, science-based assistance to help private landowners. NRCS conservationists will work with you to develop a conservation plan customized to meet your objectives for your land. The conservation plan addresses resource concerns and proposes improvements that can be voluntarily implemented on the landscape. As a forest landowner, you decide what type and level of conservation assistance is appropriate in meeting your forest management needs.

NRCS conservationists can assist you with management decisions as well as providing technical and financial assistance for improving forest health. In almost 75 years of assisting forest land and woodland owners, NRCS has assembled a toolbox of technical conservation standards to help you address a large number of natural resource concerns.

## FOREST CONSERVATION PRACTICES

The following practices are available to landowners with established forest land, and serve as the building blocks to your conservation plan. NRCS technical and financial assistance is available for eligible landowners to implement these practices through our conservation programs.

### ACCESS CONTROL

Installs barriers to exclude or limit access from an area.

### BRUSH MANAGEMENT

Removes or reduces woody vegetation to improve plant community.

### CRITICAL AREA PLANTING

Repairs trails and stabilizes eroding sites.

### DIVERSION

Controls runoff to keep water clean through channel construction.

### FOREST STAND IMPROVEMENT

Manipulates tree stands by cutting or killing selected trees to improve production.

### GRADE STABILIZATION

Controls the grade and headcutting in natural or artificial channels.



Brush management practices are needed to control woody vegetation, such as multiflora rose, to prevent it from competing against the desired forest stand.



Reducing the density of living trees in a forest stand increases forest productivity by allowing more light and space. A planned thinning also provides vegetation and habitat for wildlife.

**More...**

## FOREST CONSERVATION PRACTICES CONTINUED

### **PRESCRIBED FORESTRY**

Manages for forest health, wood and/or fiber, water recreation, aesthetics, wildlife habitat and plant biodiversity.

### **RESTORATION AND MANAGEMENT OF RARE OR DECLINING HABITATS**

Preserves biodiversity by providing habitat for rare or declining species.

### **STREAM BANK PROTECTION**

Stabilizes and protects stream banks on your forest land to prevent loss or damage due to erosion.

### **STREAM CROSSING**

Improves existing access points for people, livestock, equipment, or vehicles while reducing erosion and improving water quality.

### **STREAM HABITAT IMPROVEMENT**

Maintain, improve or restore the functions of a stream and its associated riparian areas to provide suitable habitat for a desired aquatic species.

### **UPLAND WILDLIFE HABITAT MANAGEMENT**

Supports wildlife needs on forest upland.

### **WETLAND RESTORATION**

Restores drained or degraded wetland back to its original hydrologic condition and plant community.



Stabilizing stream banks prevents erosion damage, reduces sediment runoff downstream, and provides improved wildlife habitat.



Rehabilitating wetlands to their original condition creates a haven for many different species of wildlife.

## TREES WORKING FOR AGRICULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

NRCS also assists in establishing trees on private land. In addition to those previously listed, the following conservation practices may be helpful:

### **CONSERVATION COVER**

Establishes and maintains a permanent vegetative cover to protect soil and water resources.

### **FIELD BORDER**

A strip of perennial vegetation established at the edge of a field can environmentally improve land in numerous ways, from reducing erosion to providing food for wildlife.

### **FILTER STRIP**

Removes contaminants from run off through herbaceous vegetation.

### **HEDGEROW PLANTING**

Establishes a living fence of trees and/or shrubs in, across, or around a field.

### **TREE AND SHRUB ESTABLISHMENT**

Establishes woody plants to improve timber production, air quality, natural diversity, and enhance aesthetics.

### **WINDBREAK/SHELTER BREAK**

Provides shelter for structures or livestock, reduces erosion, and improves aesthetics.

### **FIREBREAK**

Reduces the threat of fire.

### **RIPARIAN FOREST BUFFER**

Establishes trees and/or shrubs on land adjacent to water bodies to reduce excess surface runoff and improve riparian habitat and plant communities.



Maryland farmers are planting trees and shrubs to improve water and air quality, control erosion, and improve timber production.



A recently established forest buffer planted adjacent to a stream improves water quality while providing wildlife habitat and potential future income.

## NRCS PROGRAMS

### FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

NRCS offers technical and financial assistance through a variety of voluntary programs. If you would like to improve the health of your existing forest land or establish new forest stands on your property in Maryland, the following programs may be helpful in developing and implementing a conservation plan:

#### ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (EQIP)

EQIP is a voluntary program that provides technical and financial assistance to agricultural and forest producers who face threats to soil, water, air, and other natural resources on their land. The NRCS through EQIP provides an incentive to re-establish forest stands and treat related natural resource concerns such as: forest health, water quality, and wildlife habitat.

#### WILDLIFE HABITAT INCENTIVES PROGRAM (WHIP)

WHIP encourages the voluntary establishment of high quality wildlife habitat on private lands. While some NRCS programs are specifically designed for agricultural lands, WHIP offers technical and financial help for all private landowners or projects that will make their area a better place to live.

#### CHESAPEAKE BAY WATERSHED INITIATIVE (CBWI)

CBWI helps farmers restore, preserve, and protect local water quality in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. The NRCS through CBWI provides technical and financial assistance to agricultural producers to implement conservation practices that minimize nutrient and sediment losses.

### CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

Long-term conservation on your forest land can be established with a conservation easement. NRCS offers voluntary programs that protect land for future generations while allowing owners to retain many private property rights and to live on and use their land.

Conservation easements can be used to manage land use change and protect and improve entire working farms, woodlands, wetlands, important natural areas, and historical and cultural resources.

#### WETLAND RESERVE PROGRAM (WRP)

WRP restores wetland, upland and riparian complexes to improve habitat for migratory birds. The objectives of this program are to purchase conservation easements from willing sellers, restore and protect wetlands in agricultural settings, and assist landowners with the restoration of wetland hydrology and wildlife habitat. Floodplain forests and coastal marshes are among wetlands restored through WRP.

#### FARM AND RANCLAND PROTECTION PROGRAM (FRPP)

FRPP helps farmers keep their productive land in agriculture. This program assists states, tribes, local governments and non-profit organizations by purchasing conservation easements for the purpose of limiting land conversion to non-agricultural uses.

## PARTNER PROGRAMS FOR FORESTRY

NRCS works closely with other federal, state, and local agencies to meet the needs of Maryland landowners. The following programs are not administered by NRCS, but may be helpful in your effort to improve the health of your forest land.

#### CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM (CRP)/ CONSERVATION RESERVE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM (CREP)

CRP encourages farmers to convert highly erodible cropland or other environmentally sensitive acreage to vegetative cover, such as introduced or native grasses, wildlife plantings, trees, filterstrips, or riparian buffers. CRP is administered by the Farm Service Agency, with technical assistance made available through NRCS. CREP is an option under CRP that offers additional incentives to encourage landowners to implement practices that will help reduce sediment and nutrients in the Chesapeake Bay and will improve wildlife habitat. Visit <http://www.fsa.usda.gov> for more information.

#### MARYLAND AGRICULTURAL WATER QUALITY COST-SHARE PROGRAM (MACS)

MACS provides farmers with grants to cover up to 87.5 percent of the cost to install conservation measures known as best management practices (BMPs) on their farms to prevent soil erosion, manage nutrients and safeguard water quality in streams, rivers and the Chesapeake Bay. MACS is administered by the Maryland Department of Agriculture. Visit <http://www.mda.state.md.us> for more information.

#### WOODLAND INCENTIVE PROGRAM (WIP)

WIP provides cost sharing assistance for tree planting, site preparation and timber stand improvement practices. The program is available to owners of at least 5 forest acres but not more than 1,000 acres that, when appropriate, has the potential to be harvested for products. WIP is offered through the Maryland Dept of Natural Resources- Forest Service.

Visit <http://www.dnr.state.md.us/forests> for more information.

**More...**

To learn more about NRCS contact your local field office, or visit [www.md.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.md.nrcs.usda.gov).

**ALLEGANY FIELD SERVICE CENTER**

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Phone: 301-777-1494

**ANNE ARUNDEL FIELD SERVICE CENTER**

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**BALTIMORE FIELD SERVICE CENTER**

9831 Van Buren Lane  
Cockeysville, MD 21030-5022  
Phone: 410-666-1188

**CALVERT FIELD SERVICE CENTER**

65 Duke Street, Kaine Bldg., Room 106  
PO Box 657  
Prince Frederick, MD 20678  
Phone: 410-535-1521

**CAROLINE FIELD SERVICE CENTER**

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Phone: 410-479-1202

**CARROLL FIELD SERVICE CENTER**

Carroll County Commerce Center  
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Phone: 410-848-6696

**CECIL FIELD SERVICE CENTER**

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**CHARLES FIELD SERVICE CENTER**

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Phone: 301-934-9588

**DORCHESTER FIELD SERVICE CENTER**

501 Court Lane, Room 213  
Cambridge, MD 21613-1801  
Phone: 410-228-5640

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FIELD SERVICE CENTER**

51 N St., NE  
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Phone: 202-535-2242

**FREDERICK FIELD SERVICE CENTER**

92 Thomas Johnson Drive, Suite 230  
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Phone: 301-695-2803

**GARRETT FIELD SERVICE CENTER**

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**KENT FIELD SERVICE CENTER**

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**MONTGOMERY FIELD SERVICE CENTER**

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**PRINCE GEORGE'S FIELD SERVICE CENTER**

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**QUEEN ANNE'S FIELD SERVICE CENTER**

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**ST. MARY'S FIELD SERVICE CENTER**

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**SOMERSET FIELD SERVICE CENTER**

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**TALBOT FIELD SERVICE CENTER**

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