

CHESAPEAKE BAY PROGRESS REPORT

MARYLAND

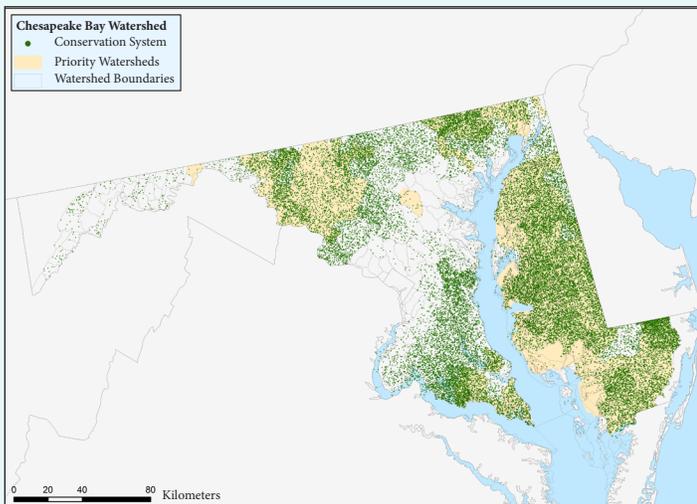
Agricultural Lands in Maryland Key to Healthy Bay

The Chesapeake Bay is a tremendous economic and recreational engine for the state of Maryland. Cities like Baltimore and Annapolis rely on the bay for commerce, tourism and transportation, and many citizens' livelihoods depend on the "fruits of the sea." The Bay's wetlands filter pollutants and provide critical wildlife habitat and flood protection.

Farmers and forest landowners are using conservation systems that are reducing nutrient and sediment runoff by keeping soil in place and making agricultural lands more efficient and productive.



NRCS works closely with farmers in Maryland to adopt conservation systems that help improve water quality.



Each dot represents a farm where "Avoid-Control-Trap" conservation systems were implemented. Dots are randomly placed within priority watersheds to protect landowner privacy.

Targeted Approach in Maryland

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has developed a systems approach for designing and installing conservation activities on farms and forests to protect and improve water quality. The core parts of this approach are conservation activities that avoid, control and trap potential nutrient and sediment losses from farm fields.

Most of the conservation work in Maryland focuses on controlling nutrients on livestock operations and on croplands where farmers use manure as fertilizer. Nearly all the land in Maryland drains to the Chesapeake Bay, requiring NRCS to target investments in high-priority watersheds where nutrient and sediment pollution is highest. Since 2009, NRCS and conservation partners have worked with Maryland farmers and forest landowners to install conservation systems on more than 846,000 acres in the Chesapeake Bay basin.

CHESAPEAKE BAY PROGRESS REPORT: MARYLAND



Through the CIG program and RCPP, NRCS works with partners to innovate and expand conservation efforts.

INVESTMENTS IN MARYLAND

YEAR	INVESTMENT	ACRES
2009	\$32 million	146,000
2010	\$39.8 million	194,000
2011	\$39.6 million	158,000
2012	\$30.6 million	130,000
2013	\$28.7 million	108,000
2014	\$22.7 million	85,000
2015	\$21 million	25,000
TOTAL	\$214.4 million	846,000

Source: NRCS Resources Economics, Analysis and Policy Division.

Leveraging the Help of Partners

The state boasts a strong conservation partnership among NRCS, the Maryland Department of Agriculture, 24 conservation districts and Resource Conservation and Development Councils that leverages resources to meet local conservation needs. Investments by NRCS are often matched two- and three-fold by conservation partners in Maryland. Through the Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) program and Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), NRCS is building the next generation of conservation science and innovation and bringing together partners at the grassroots level to address natural resource challenges.

Through CIG, NRCS has invested nearly \$350,000 since 2009 in innovation efforts of universities, conservation

districts, companies and other groups in Maryland. These grants are improving conservation approaches, such as how farmers can apply nitrogen more efficiently or how bioswales can better trap sediment and phosphorus on livestock operations.

RCPP brings traditional and non-traditional conservation partners together across the state and basin. USDA designated the Chesapeake Bay Watershed as one of the eight critical conservation areas for RCPP funding. Right now, Maryland's landscape is benefitting from seven projects, bringing together an array of partners like Maryland Department of Agriculture, Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and American Bird Conservancy.

Positive Outcomes in Maryland

Independent reports show positive trends for water quality, habitat and key aquatic species, and modeled results and monitoring stations show declines in nutrient and sediment loads to the Bay.

The dissolved oxygen levels in Maryland's portion of the Chesapeake Bay was the second best it has been since 1985, according to data released by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources in July 2016.

Blue crab, shad and striped bass populations are on the rise across the Bay. Additionally, oyster populations in Maryland show signs of revival inside the state-created sanctuaries that have been off-limits to harvesting for the past decade. Plus, people are spotting dolphins further and further into the Bay, including rivers around Annapolis. The Severn Riverkeeper calls the dolphin sightings a sign of improved water quality.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.