

# Community-based Watershed Partnerships

USDA Forest Service  
Northeastern Area  
State and Private Forestry



## Description:

Solutions to watershed health issues require working collectively across mixed ownerships. By working with other Federal and State agencies, local communities, private landowners, and organizations, the Forest Service is restoring large watersheds and sustaining communities that depend on them. A watershed approach builds local ownership and demonstrates measurable environmental change.

Beginning in 1999, the Area took a prominent role in two of fifteen national focus projects; the Potomac Watershed and White River Partnerships. Implementation included preparation of a Business Plan, strategic goals and outcome measures, and the formation of public/private partnerships. Through these efforts, the Area is demonstrating how the conservation, restoration and stewardship of forests improves watershed health.

## National Community-based Watershed Partnership Projects



## Key Issues:

- Watershed management across multiple ownerships is one of our most complex challenges, requiring long-term investment and commitment as well as community action.
- The role of watershed forests in protection of drinking water supplies, downstream water quality, and healthy fish habitat is not widely known or appreciated.
- Watershed-scale partnerships require an investment of time and resources to build momentum, trust and synergy, and to demonstrate success.
- Although only a five-year national commitment was made (FY 99-04), the Northeastern Area continues to provide technical and some financial resources to support signature projects.

## Accomplishments:

The Potomac River is the second largest tributary to the Chesapeake Bay. The Potomac flows through the nation's capital and drains a watershed of 9 million acres in Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, West Virginia and DC. The watershed is home to over 4.5 million people and contains some of the fastest developing areas in the country. The watershed has lost over 70% of its wetlands and riparian habitats to agriculture and urban expansion and over 50% of its Piedmont and Coastal plain forests. The *Potomac Watershed Partnership* brings the strengths of six primary partners: the Forest Service (NA & George Washington/Jefferson National Forest), Maryland DNR Forest Service, Virginia Department of Forestry, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, Ducks Unlimited and the Potomac Conservancy, to bear on these issues. Six strategic goals guide Partnership actions. For information go to [www.potomac.org](http://www.potomac.org) and [www.growingnative.org](http://www.growingnative.org). In FY 2005, the Partnership:



- restored over 25 miles of streamside forests and 40 acres of wetlands on private lands in high priority watersheds, bringing the totals restored since 1999 to 762 miles and 658 acres respectively.
- protected nearly 500 acres of forest from development bringing the total to over 7300 acres to date.
- completed urban greenway projects in 3 cities resulting in the creation of more than 20 acres of new urban forest and installed five new "Rain Garden" demonstration projects.
- hosted "Plant-A-Seed" with partner support from Harrisonburg Schools & Parks and Recreation, James Madison University, and the George Washington/Jefferson National Forest. This program brought urban youth to the forest to learn about the environment.
- completed a Forest Management Plan for the Frederick City Drinking Water Supply watershed.

- brought together local stakeholders, GIS experts, and conservationists to develop a comprehensive resource conservation plan for the Cacapon and Lost Rivers watersheds.
- led “Growing Native,” a watershed-wide educational and restoration event which collected nearly 10 tons of native tree seed for state nurseries, established over 16 schoolyard nurseries, and involved over 10,000 volunteers in tree planting and restoration activities

**The White River Partnership** (WRP) in Vermont is a collaborative watershed effort of the Forest Service (NA and the Green Mountain National Forest), George D. Aiken Resource Conservation and Development Area, Vermont Parks and Forests, Fish and Wildlife Service, and local towns and landowners. The White River is the last free-flowing tributary of the Connecticut River and a target for recovery of the endangered Atlantic salmon. Goals include stream restoration, building capacity for local action, outreach and education to local communities and schools, and building a collaboration of businesses and towns using the river as an economic asset. Active citizen participation is a cornerstone of the WRP and restoration is led by citizen “stream teams”. For information visit [www.whiteriverpartnership.org](http://www.whiteriverpartnership.org). In 2005, the Partnership:



- involved 30 landowners to restore 1.5 miles of river bank, reforest 3 miles and 50 acres of riparian floodplain forests by planting over 2000 trees and hundreds of willows.
- expanded a volunteer tree-planting program with the National Wildlife Federation and created incentives to remove incompatible land uses from river shorelines.
- completed water quality monitoring program for temperature, turbidity, conductivity and *e.coli* with data made available to towns and recreational users of the river; worked with teachers from 35 schools to involve students in water sampling and stream surveys along the White River.
- worked with a local forestry stakeholder group, to develop a sustainable forestry plan for the watershed, implement a timber harvesting monitoring program, and conduct outreach to landowners to improve the management of private forest lands.

### Budget History:

Funding has involved multiple programs, FS regions, and mission areas. FY 04 was the last year of direct funding at the national level. Targeted projects were supported in FY 05-06 through NA budget, Chesapeake Bay Program, and National Fish and Wildlife Foundation partnership.

<b>Community-based Watershed Partnerships</b>					
<i>(\$ in thousands)</i>					
	<b>Program</b>	<b>FY 2003</b>	<b>FY 2004</b>	<b>FY 2005</b>	<b>FY 2006</b>
<b>Potomac Watershed Partnership</b>	S&PF	725	725	280	100
	NFS	475	375	100	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1200</b>	<b>\$1100</b>	<b>\$380</b>	<b>\$100</b>
<b>White River Partnership</b>	S&PF	105	105	35	0
	NFS	131	105	80	0*
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$236</b>	<b>\$210</b>	<b>\$115</b>	<b>\$0*</b>

**Future Direction:** Continue to provide technical support and assist the partners in expanding their funding base to sustain long-term partnership activities.

**Kathryn Maloney**, Director  
11 Campus Blvd., Suite 200  
Newtown Square, PA 19073  
610-557-4103 (4177-FAX)  
[kmaloney@fs.fed.us](mailto:kmaloney@fs.fed.us)

**Robin Morgan**, Assistant Director  
11 Campus Blvd., Suite 200  
Newtown Square, PA 19073  
610-557-4124 (4136-FAX)  
[rmorgan@fs.fed.us](mailto:rmorgan@fs.fed.us)

**Albert Todd**, Watershed Program Leader  
410 Severn Avenue, Suite 109  
Annapolis, MD 21401  
(410) 267-5705 (5777-FAX)  
[atodd@fs.fed.us](mailto:atodd@fs.fed.us)

