

Small Watershed Grants

Grant Funding Supports Chesapeake Bay Restoration Projects

The Challenge

The Chesapeake Bay watershed was once 95 percent wooded. Today, however, only 55 percent of the watershed is forested, and that percentage continues to decrease. It is critical that partners throughout the Chesapeake Bay's six-State region collaborate to restore forest land given that 90 percent of the remaining forests are privately owned.

In 2010, the Environmental Protection Agency began regulating the entire 43-million-acre Chesapeake Bay watershed under the Clean Water Act to reduce nonpoint source pollutants. Forests are a front line defense that reduces nonpoint source pollutants. Forests act as a filter to remove pollutants from water and are vital to the health of the Chesapeake Bay.

The Solution

For the past 10 years, the U.S. Forest Service, Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry Chesapeake Bay Program has partnered with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), EPA, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and others to provide funding for local governments and nonprofit organizations to restore forests. This Chesapeake Bay small watershed grant money is well leveraged—every \$1 in Forest Service funding leverages \$5 in matching funds. This program provides funding for restoration projects that may not otherwise be completed.

In 2011, the Chesapeake Bay Small Watershed Grants Program provided about \$3 million in funding, of which the Forest Service contributed \$300,000. Projects funded this year included riparian forest restoration for brook trout, county “turf to trees” programs, and using markets to accelerate private forest land conservation.



Deputy Under Secretary for USDA Ann Mills and EPA Region 3 Regional Administrator Shawn Garvin (seated) listen to Congressman Bobby Scott of Virginia give remarks at the Chesapeake Bay Small Watershed Grants announcement on October 5, 2011.

Resulting Benefits

- Improve the health of small watersheds and the Chesapeake Bay.
- Combine funding to support an array of well-supported, targeted, on-the-ground projects.
- Work collaboratively with partners to continue this robust program, which is one of only a few regional competitive funding opportunities to address Chesapeake Bay watershed objectives.

Sharing Success

- The NFWF administers, monitors, and reports on projects and overall grant program effectiveness, including making an independent evaluation and providing technical assistance during the application and project implementation phases of the grant process.
- Work collaboratively to receive better proposals and leverage funds.
- Held a “big splash” media event to announce the 2011 grant awards.

The Chesapeake Bay Small Watershed Grants Program provides grants to organizations and local governments to protect and improve watersheds in the Chesapeake Bay basin while building citizen-based resource stewardship efforts.
—National Fish and Wildlife Foundation



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