



Potomac Watershed Partnership

ANNUAL REPORT 2011



Protected Forest Overlook on the Potomac
Photo by Emily Warner

The PWP began in 1999

through the USDA Forest Service Large Scale Watershed Restoration Partnership which invested over \$100 million in fifteen watersheds across the nation. Some locations are well known—Pacific Coast, Lower Mississippi Alluvial Valley, and N.Y. City Watershed. Today, 12 years later, the PWP is one of the only large scale partnerships still active.

A 2006 Forest Service report on lessons learned from the national large scale partnership initiative found that the “most important long-term outcome may be an expanded way of thinking.” They found the achievements and learning were greater in programs that embraced landscape-level management as opposed to project, forest, or unit level planning. Today the PWP is still actively expanding the way people are thinking about The Nation’s River. Our twice annual PWP Information Exchanges bring hundreds of stewards (volunteer & professional) together for timely and far reaching conversations on forest conservation and watershed protection. Our network encourages partners to quickly share lessons learned.

The 2006 report listed several lessons for success and PWP’s success can be found in one of those lessons—“the importance that visionary energetic agency employees (and partners) play.” PWP is fortunate to have benefited from the visionary and energetic leadership of USDA Forest Service staff, committed state forestry staff, and strong partners. The USFS Chesapeake Bay Program Office and George Washington National Forest have been with the PWP since the beginning and have dedicated staff time to help steer the PWP through today. PWP continues to benefit from the knowledge and skill of state forestry (Cont. on back)

Goal 1

Increase and spread knowledge through assessment, monitoring, and education

Better Roads, Cleaner Streams

There are thousands of miles of unpaved, low volume roads throughout the Potomac River Basin. They are important for forest management, recreation, and residential access. They are also significant sources of sediment pollution. Recent studies in three heavily forested watersheds in the upper Potomac indicate such roads contribute at least 13-54 tons of sediment to streams during a typical rain event!

The PWP is helping address this problem. The *Better Roads, Cleaner Streams* initiative is expanding the application of well-established maintenance techniques for unpaved roads and making successful training programs available to more public lands and road managers in the Potomac watershed. The initiative is also using existing methods for assessment and measurement to improve understanding of this source of sediment pollution.

The Nature Conservancy assessed 300 miles of unpaved roads in the watersheds of Sideling Hill, Fifteen Mile and Town Creeks, using criteria-based field methods of the Pennsylvania Dirt and Gravel Road Maintenance Program. Sixty miles of hotspots on public roads were mapped. TNC used this data to select and study demonstration project sites, and to help MD DNR Forest Service develop a road infrastructure management plan.

MD DNR Forest Service and The Nature Conservancy used a rainfall simulation method developed by the Center for Dirt and Gravel Road Studies to collect field data and calculate sediment loads from three sites within Green Ridge State Forest. The method provided a compelling demonstration of an often overlooked problem, and when combined with assessment enabled TNC to estimate sediment loads from roads. *Article by Donnelle Keech, TNC*



Rainfall simulation and sediment collection
Photos courtesy TNC & MD DNR

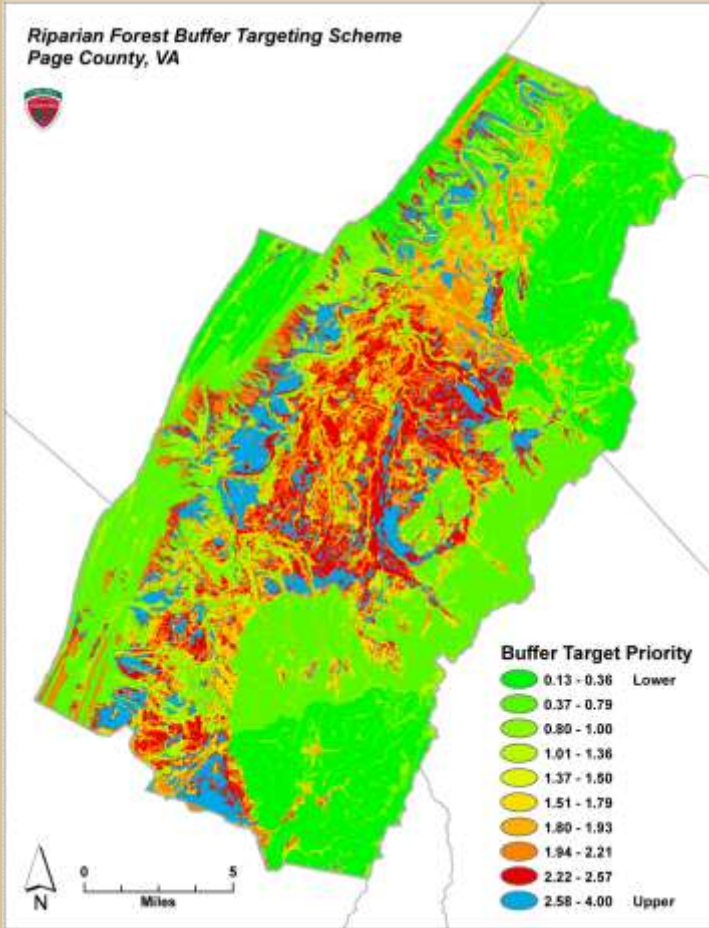
VA DOF will host two one-day trainings on February 28 and March 15; contact Judy Okay judyannokay@gmail.com (703-517-3763).



MD DNR Forest Service and TNC will sponsor a two-day training May 30-31; contact Donnelle Keech dkeech@tnc.org (301-722-0313).

Forest Buffer Targeting In Virginia

Targeting where riparian forest buffer function is most effective has circulated through the scientific community for several years. After reviewing available buffer targeting methodologies in 2008, a partnership within the Chesapeake Bay Forestry Work Group developed a process that uses landscape features related to forest buffer function for nitrogen reduction. Percent slope, depth to water table, land use, and nitrogen loading are



considered. GIS layers of the features are overlaid to identify riparian areas that lack forest buffers (map at left).

Priority areas have a water feature such as a stream, river, lake, pond, or marsh. VA DOF applied the targeting process in the Shenandoah watershed in four focus counties—Page, Shenandoah, Rockingham & Warren. Review with aerial imaging confirmed the targeted sites as priorities. Next, local government land use maps supply addresses of the landowners of the targeted parcels. Landowners are being contacted, and there will be follow up meetings to assist them with implementation of forest buffers. PWP members working in the targeted priority areas can share the mapping results. They will have to do less ground work to find riparian restoration sites. Over the four focus counties there are more than a thousand landowners to contact.

Goal 2
Accelerate riparian and wetland restoration

The targeting process saves the time of field practitioners and will assure that forest buffers get on the ground where they will do the most for water quality goals. This process forwards the goals of the PWP to work with partners to improve water quality in the Potomac River through conservation efforts.

Article for VA DOF by Judy Okay, President, J&J Okay Consulting, judyannokay@gmail.com

Goal 3

Promote land protection and stewardship

A peek into Potomac Conservancy's Land Protection Program

As of November 2011, Potomac Conservancy held 69 conservation easements on 11,765 acres across the Potomac Watershed. These easements protect farms, forests, and almost 80 miles of riparian buffers from degradation. Living on these lands are white tail deer, black bear, wood turtles, at least one endangered plant, and a variety of farmers, hunters, and outdoor enthusiasts. Conservation easements represent the work of many conservation-minded persons: the 70+ landowners who chose to protect their lands, friends who introduced easement donors to the Conservancy, and the various land trust staff members and volunteers who created the easements and have accepted the responsibility of stewarding them long into

the future. Land conservation requires community support, and the Conservancy's success is largely due to strong relationships with easement donors and land trust partners like the PWP. Approximately half of the Conservancy's easements are co-held with other land trusts, including the Cacapon & Lost Rivers Land Trust, Land Trust of the Eastern Panhandle, Northern Virginia Conservation Trust, and a number of county government boards in Virginia and West Virginia.

The Conservancy's 2011 easements range from a wetland restoration site on a farm in Rockingham County, VA to a forested property overlooking the Potomac River in Berkeley County, WV. The Conservancy anticipates closing two more easements in 2011: 260 acres of forested land on the South Branch of the Potomac River in Hampshire County, WV and a 205-acre farm in Frederick County, VA. *Article by Emily Warner, Land Protection Manager, Potomac Conservancy*

To learn more visit <http://www.potomac.org/site/land-protection/> or contact Emily Warner, Land Protection Manager, at 540-667-3606 or warner@potomac.org.

Protected Wetland Meadow
Photo by Emily Warner





Forestry for the Bay (FFB), a collaborative outreach program coordinated by the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, strives to promote the myriad of ecological, social and economic benefits provided by woodlands and to work with the region’s private woodland owners to sustain and enhance this invaluable resource. In 2011, FFB teamed with the forestry agencies, state cooperative extensions and other groups in the Potomac River basin to conduct several landowner trainings and workshops.

In the spring FFB worked with PWP members WV DOF and Opequon Creek Project Team to offer an educational program for small acreage woodland owners, a growing population often underserved with technical resources. The Berkeley County program used the award winning *Woods in Your Backyard* manual & training developed by MD, PA & VA Extensions. This two evening workshop allowed participants to learn resource management concepts in the classroom then see them implemented on the ground.

FFB also provided logistical and programmatic support to a similar program initiated and lead by the VA DOF and Virginia Cooperative Extension. This full day workshop was held at Blandy Arboretum in Clarke County but attracted landowners from several of the surrounding counties in Virginia and West Virginia. Here participants were engaged with a variety of natural resource practices like enhancing wildlife habitat, invasive plant removal and tree planting and care.

FFB partnered with MD DNR Forest Service, UMD Cooperative Extension and the Chesapeake Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture to organize a field day for agriculture producers in western Maryland. This field event, which was held on a farm in southern Frederick County, engaged farmers in forest management concepts while demonstrating potential income opportunities from a sustainable timber harvests and non-timber forest products like mushrooms. These farmers also learned about the benefits and incentives to re-establish wooded riparian buffers on their land by participating in the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program.

Forestry for the Bay plans to sustain and enhance our existing partnerships while forging new ones. We are already collaborating on new landowner workshop offerings for 2012.

Article by Craig Highfield, Coordinator, Forestry for the Bay
For more information please visit www.forestryforthebay.org



20% by 2038. FCPS Tree Canopy Goal
“Leaving a Legacy for Future Generations”

Donated by Girl Scout Troop 81041 (2008)
Photo by Heather Montgomery

existing tree canopy, impervious surfaces, available tree planting areas, and unavailable open space (e.g. recreational fields). Based on 2005 data, FCPS had 12% existing tree canopy, 29% impervious surface, 38% available open space, and 21% unavailable open space.

Potomac Conservancy proposed a 20% tree canopy goal—equal to approximately 100 acres of new trees—to be achieved over 30-years. The Frederick County Board of Education unanimously adopted the goal in 2008, per the recommendation of the Facilities Services Division. FCPS sees the myriad of benefits of adopting the goal, including but not limited to: reduced annual mowing costs; enhanced outdoor educational experiences for students, improved aesthetics, and the positive effect on the environment and local water quality.

Success is largely due to the frequent collaboration between FCPS Facilities Services staff, the FCPS Schoolyard Habitat Program,

Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS)

in collaboration with Potomac Conservancy and Frederick County Government, has been making great strides towards reaching its “20% by 2038” tree canopy goal. More than 30 acres of new trees have been planted on FCPS properties. The program was initiated in 2007 by Potomac Conservancy with technical support from the PWP and financial support from the USDA Forest Service and Chesapeake Bay Trust.

More than 60 schools were assessed for



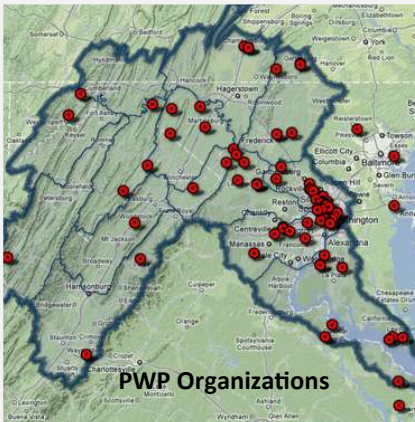
Kemptown Elementary School planting
Photo by Heather Montgomery



agencies in MD, PA, VA & WV. Some of the original staff have participated for more than ten years. PWP also draws on the strength of the Potomac Conservancy, The Nature Conservancy, Cacapon Institute and all our non-profit collaborators.


The PWP is a legacy of the 1999 large watershed partnership initiative but today the PWP exists because resourceful individuals, too many to list here, saw beyond the short-term potential of the original grant. The 2006 report found that where watershed partnerships are seen “simply as a source of additional funding the partnership.... struggled or failed.” Thanks to visionary leaders and outside-the-box thinking, the PWP continues to serve the lands and people of the Potomac River Basin. As all of us who have contributed and gained from the PWP know, it isn’t the funding that makes PWP successful it is our “expanded way of thinking.”

We invite you to join the PWP!



PWP is a collaborative effort by federal, state, and local partners to protect and restore the health of the land & water of the Potomac River Basin.

PWP is Coordinated by:



Cacapon Institute
 PO Box 68
 High View, WV 26808
 304-856-1385
www.cacaponinstitute.org

Frederick County Government, Potomac Conservancy, and MD DNR Forest Service. Thousands of trees, seedling to B&B, have been planted by students, volunteers, and contractors. Acres of invasive species have been treated. Six acres of trees have been placed under permanent conservation. Several acres of lawn have been taken out of mowing rotation, and mowing will continue to be reduced as trees mature. Partners are already in the process of identifying 10 additional acres to plant with trees during spring and fall 2012.

Funding has been leveraged through grants from the U.S. EPA, Chesapeake Bay Trust, local grant programs, and school-based fundraisers—“Coins for the Canopy” and “Leaf a Legacy”.

Article by Heather Montgomery, Community Restoration Coordinator, Frederick Co. (MD)
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(For tools and tips to engage your local school see *Make it a MWE!* at www.cacaponinstitute.org)

A Cleaner Sustainable Potomac Basin

will require action by government and a strong network of citizen stewardship. The Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin (ICPRB) is actively involved in providing resources to encourage that stewardship and partner with other organizations. ICPRB recently created a web-based map of groups (left). PWP partners are encouraged to visit www.potomacriver.org to make certain their organization is “on the map.”



ICPRB River Ramble building networks
 Photo by Curtis Dalpra

Additionally, ICPRB and the Cacapon Institute created the “Potomac Basin Stewards Group”, an information-sharing system to highlight and share success stories, trials and tribulations, and funding information. Greater communication and coordination among the watershed’s groups can strengthen the activities of each one (visit: www.chesapeakenetwork.org/PotomacBasin).

In addition to the new outreach tools, ICPRB works with watershed groups to provide support through help with incorporation, organizational support, identification and assistance with grant acquisition, and networking that brings groups together to partner on common goals. Support for these established stewardship groups brings water quality and resources issues to the personal level, and lends a frame of reference for larger, basin-wide issues.

The ICPRB's mission is to enhance, protect, and conserve the water and associated land resources of the Potomac River and its tributaries through regional and interstate cooperation. Considered the "Nation's River," for more than six million basin residents, the river plays an important role in the lives of all. Through regional cooperation and partnerships, ICPRB is protecting the river and improving the quality of life in the watershed, as it has since 1940. ICPRB is proud to be a member of the Potomac Watershed Partnership.

Article by Audra Lew, Watershed Coordinator, ICPRB



State foresters Matt Poirat (VA) and Herb Peddicord (WV).

For more information on the Potomac Watershed Partnership visit www.potomacpartnership.org

PWP Steering Committee includes:

