

# The Maryland Chesapeake Bay Showcase Watershed: Upper Chester River



## Overview

President Obama's May 2009 Executive Order charges the Federal government with exercising greater leadership in restoring the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. A complete Bay cleanup is targeted for 2025 with activities broken into two-year milestones.

USDA- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and its partners are helping farmers voluntarily implement conservation practices to reduce nutrient and sediment runoff into the Bay. NRCS funding through the 2008 Farm Bill Chesapeake Bay Watershed Initiative (CBWI) provides \$72 million over the next three years to reduce agricultural pollution.

NRCS is establishing three Showcase Watersheds: Upper Chester River in Maryland, Conawago in Pennsylvania, and the Smith Creek in Virginia. These watersheds are designed to show what can be accomplished by bringing people and groups together to solve natural resource problems in a targeted area. Successful approaches learned here can be replicated in other watersheds.

## Why the Upper Chester River?

Many groups working to protect the watershed provide a broad base of support for collaborative conservation efforts.

The variety of agricultural enterprises will enable NRCS and its partners to demonstrate a wide variety of conservation systems. Focusing federal technical and financial assistance will accelerate the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) plan implementation, which is already underway.

## What can I expect?

- The partnership will ensure outreach to all agricultural landowners.
- Farmers will participate in developing approaches and selecting practices.
- An NRCS and/or District coordinator will oversee planning, implementation and evaluation.
- Increased federal funds, as well as state and private funds will be leveraged to increase landowner participation and cost-share.

## The Role of Partners

Partners provide guidance and direction for the project. They leverage monies with matching funds for cost sharing on best management practices. They help establish goals and objectives and identify priority practices. They give technical and financial resources to expand outreach

efforts and increase program participation.

Partners will:

- Provide information and conduct site visits.
- Submit proposals for Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI) and/or CIG funding
- Target financial and technical resources toward the watershed.
- Assist with tracking, monitoring and evaluating progress in meeting water quality goals.

## Upper Chester River Profile

The Upper Chester River watershed covers about 23,300 acres. Fifty percent of the watershed is in Kent County and 49 percent is in Queen Anne's County. The majority of the land is farmland, poultry facilities, horse farms, nurseries and cattle farms can also be found in the watershed.

## Contact Information

Questions or concerns should be emailed to Shawn Belt, acting Chester River Watershed Coordinator at:

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