

DNR Amendments 8/3/09, 5/17/10  
MASCD amendments 3/24/09, 10/14/09  
UME Amendments 9/17/09

Draft: 12/05/08

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Between the

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

and the

MARYLAND ASSOCIATION OF FOREST CONSERVANCY DISTRICT BOARDS

and the

MARYLAND ASSOCIATION OF SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

and the

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

and the

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND EXTENSION

and the

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
FOREST SERVICE, Northeastern Area S&PF

and the

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is made and entered into by and between the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR); the Maryland Association of Forest Conservancy District Boards (Forestry Boards); the Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts (MASCD); the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA); the University of Maryland Extension (UME); and the United States Departments of Agriculture - Forest Service (FS) and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), hereinafter referred to as "the Parties."

**I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this MOU is to strengthen cooperation among the Parties to result in coordinated interagency delivery of forestry-related conservation assistance to private landowners. In order to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of Maryland's

private working lands forest land, cropland and pasture land and achieve Chesapeake Bay water quality and restoration goals. The Parties have a long-term commitment to the conservation and stewardship of Maryland's natural resources.

The parties recognize there is a synergistic effect produced from coordinating natural resource protection, forestry and agricultural soil conservation and water quality programs and that these programs can complement each other. However, the following four barriers have been identified, hereinafter referred to as "the Barriers," to the delivery of forestry-related conservation assistance in Maryland.

The availability of technical expertise and assistance to private non-industrial forest landowners is insufficient to meet the need;

There is a lack of integration of planning and other administrative issues between the Parties, making it difficult for private landowners to participate in forestry and conservation programs;

Funding devoted to forestry and agroforestry is inadequate and inconsistent; and,

The Parties speak different technical/organizational languages, which suggests a need for improved communication.

The Parties are committed to address and resolve Barriers through both joint and separate actions.

## INTRODUCTION

### **The Importance of Private Forest Lands to Maryland's Welfare**

The Parties recognize that healthy forests are a critical component of Maryland's landscape. Forestlands, as well as trees and forests on other working lands, provide clean air, carbon sequestration, climate change buffering, flood protection, wildlife habitat, recreation, and aesthetic enjoyment. Healthy forests are also vital to clean and abundant supplies of water. The vast majority of Maryland's freshwater resources originate on forested lands. Millions of Marylanders rely on these forested lands to capture and filter their drinking water. Maryland's forests prevent millions of pounds of nitrogen and other pollutants from reaching the Bay each year. Every acre of forest converted to other uses means more nutrients entering the Bay, making it more difficult to mitigate development impacts and resulting in additional loss and fragmentation of forest habitats. Water quantity and quality are threatened by changes in climate, population, and land use. Wildfires, insect outbreaks, and invasive species also adversely affect forest health and the ability of forests to store and filter the water we drink. Forests and forest products also provide economic benefits to all of Maryland, but are especially important as primary economic engines in rural areas. Emerging markets, such as renewable energy, rely on forests for the foundation of their supply and infrastructure needs. Forests also provide important habitat for rare, threatened, and endangered species, such as the threatened bald eagle and the endangered Delmarva fox squirrel, along with hundreds of species of forest interior dwelling birds (FIDS). Many FIDS are particularly sensitive to forest fragmentation, and require large contiguous tracts of forest lands for breeding. The Parties recognize that privately-owned forests make up 76 percent of Maryland's forest resource base, and that these forests will continue to be divided into smaller ownership parcels. Retaining and expanding forests across the watershed is a cost-effective strategy for reducing pollution now and maintaining caps on nutrients in the future. An investment in sustainable forestry will not only help address water quality issues, but other challenges such as climate change, sprawl, and energy independence and economic stability.

The Parties further recognize that Maryland's forest resources are threatened and do not provide the full range of benefits they are capable of providing. Some of the risks to our forests include: Development pressures. Maryland's forest area has remained relatively stable for the past century. While many acres have been lost to development, overall forest acreage has been balanced by gains, mainly from conversion of abandoned pasture and some cropland. Economic incentives for retaining working forests are insufficient and, as a result, landowners are increasingly pressured to convert their forest land to other uses.

Landscape fragmentation. Fragmentation of landscapes and changes in land use will continue to stress forest health.

Rural/urban interface. As the public moves to rural areas there is an increase risk of wildfires and public perception of the value of privately owned forests. In many cases conflicts arise over harvesting and other management methods to maintain a healthy forest.

Lack of knowledge and understanding of Ecosystem Services.

Increased invasive species damage. The spread of invasive insects, diseases, and plants is expected to increase as a result of travel and trade associated with globalization of the world economy and forest fragmentation.

**Climate change.** Climate change may lead to land cover and land use changes, increases in atmospheric pollutants such as ozone and nitrous oxides, and potential expansion of invasive species.

**Wildfires.**

**Trends toward smaller forest parcels and more owners.**

Seventy-six percent of Maryland's forests are in private ownership and 80 percent of the owners control small tracts of less than 10 acres.

The reasons why people own forest land are diverse, including aesthetic enjoyment, recreation, economic incentives, or to pass the land to heirs as part of the farm or home site.

Only 12-15 percent of Maryland's family forest owners have a written forest management plan while less than 30 percent have sought management advice.

**Streamlining to Meet Customer Needs**

The Parties recognize that the owners of all non-industrial private forest land (NIPF) are key customer for our programs/activities. Forest lands are often owned and managed in conjunction with agricultural land. It is important that staff remain available to deliver program services and provide technical assistance to landowners. Key to our success in improving the management of working lands will be our increased coordination and collaboration between our programs and activities. It is critical that landowners are able to obtain information and assistance about implementing conservation practices that will maximize natural resource benefits and address concerns on all their working lands, including forestland

The Parties believe that a strong partnership among them will make it possible to be more effective in assisting NIPF landowners, thereby increasing natural resources benefits from working lands. The Parties also recognize that strong citizen participation, as well as stakeholder-based partnerships operating at the local, regional, state, and other geographic scales, is fundamental to successful management and conservation of natural resources.

Each Party delivers technical and financial assistance to private landowners and land managers through their various conservation programs and activities. Increased coordination and collaboration between the Parties will result in synergistic effects that enable broader success in achieving natural resource protection, management, and conservation goals.

**II. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FIDS**

This MOU commits the Parties to increase cooperation at the local, regional, and state level, to ensure coordinated interagency delivery of conservation assistance to private landowners and land managers. The actions taken under this MOD are expected to enable the Parties to accomplish their individual and collective conservation goals and missions.

The Parties recognize the unique and complementary role that each Party brings to the partnership:

- The Maryland DNR Forest Service has the primary leadership role for forestry programs in the State.
- Soil Conservation Districts carry out natural resource management at the local level and

are recognized as the delivery system for soil conservation and water quality programs, often acting as a liaison between private landowners and government assistance programs.

- The Maryland Department of Agriculture provides leadership and support regarding agriculture to the citizens of Maryland by conducting regulatory, technical and financial assistance programs, and educational activities that assure consumer confidence, protect the environment, improve conservation and natural resource management and promote agriculture.
- The University of Maryland Extension provides primary leadership in forestry related educational programs, outreach, and applied research and demonstrations for both private landowners and professional natural resource managers. It also provides research and educational support related to conservation and natural resource management on all working lands including agricultural lands.
- The US Forest Service, Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry, works cooperatively with other federal, state, local governments; institutions of higher learning; and profit and non-profit organizations to provide forestry leadership, and financial and technical assistance.
- NRCS works in partnership with America's private land owners and managers to conserve and sustain soil, water, and other natural resources.
- All parties recognize the need to work cooperatively with other federal, state, and local agencies and groups as appropriate in order to achieve the purposes of this MOU.
- Private landowners voluntarily request assistance from the signatories and are the decision-makers for their lands.

The Parties will work to coordinate programs to achieve mutual goals and to address the Barriers through the following joint and individual organizational actions:

**A. Jointly, the Parties will, as needed:**

**Planning/Processes**

1. Review guidelines/standards/procedures to improve integration of Forest Stewardship Plans and Soil Conservation and Water Quality Plans as they relate to easier application of conservation practices, eligibility for cost share programs, and coordinated delivery.
2. Make recommendations for program and technical training to NRCS, MDA, Soil Conservation District, and MFS staffs.
3. Establish a forestry subcommittee to the State Technical Committee (an advisory group to the office of the NRCS State Conservationist) to identify and establish priorities for agency activities and funding.

**Partnerships/Information Sharing**

4. Promote the delivery of timely coordinated interagency forestry and agroforestry assistance to landowners through actions such as jointly funded positions, increased use of Contributory Agreements, Technical Service Providers (TSPs), improved technology, and related actions that increase assistance for working lands.
5. Share information regarding priorities for conservation of private forest lands and other working lands.
6. Share information regarding priorities for promoting and establishing complementary forestry practices on working lands, such as agroforestry, riparian forest buffers, and other programs that accelerate implementation of conservation actions.
7. Coordinate to ensure each Party's conservation programs are complementary and not inadvertently conflicting.
8. Share updated information regarding conservation policies, programs, voluntary conservation agreements, and procedures related to providing forestry assistance to private landowners and land managers. This can be done through communication at State Technical committee meetings, joint training programs, or other means.
9. Coordinate forest resource information and data to focus resources (e.g., priority watersheds/landscapes) for developing and implementing conservation agreements or strategies, plans, or other programs and projects such as Conservation Resource Enhancement Program (CREP), the Woodland Incentive Program (WIP), the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and other similar programming.
10. Collaborate with other appropriate parties to facilitate development and implementation of conservation plans and agreements on working lands including forest lands, and to promote agroforestry on other working lands.
11. Work with the American Tree Farm System and others to coordinate multiple use management plans for NIPF owners in order to meet landowner needs and the requirements of the agencies, including eligibility for financial assistance to implement

practices prescribed in management plans.

12. Collaboratively identify research studies needed to support sustainable management of working lands and utilize the science to improve conservation programs and activities.
13. Support state and local Envirothon activities with those resources already available from each party and to collaboratively develop whatever additional resources may be needed to administer, promote, manage, fund, and continue a successful program. The parties recognize that the capacities of anyone individual party change over time, yet the commitment to the program shall remain firm.
14. Identify and map sensitive wildlife habitats.

### **Employee Training/Education**

15. Collaborate to secure additional funding for Partners to provide field personnel with training.
16. Invest in inter-agency training for employees to provide tools to deliver conservation assistance to an increasing number of family forest owners and agricultural landowners interested in diversifying their working lands in a changing economy, as funding is available.
17. Collaborate to deliver agroforestry training for natural resource professionals and develop technical information to support technical assistance to private landowners, as funding is available.
18. Provide cross training to all Parties' staffs regarding each respective organization and its processes, technical issues, and program requirements, as funding is available.

### **Ecosystem Services**

19. Cooperate with the Parties on market-based environmental stewardship approaches and certification processes that provide participants with flexibility to voluntarily undertake conservation measures including those that are forestry-related.

### **MOU Implementation**

20. Encourage the development of MOUs, Contributory and Technical Service Provider agreements, as well as other types of partnerships (e.g., at local, regional, and state levels) to facilitate implementation of mutual goals of parties to this MOU.
21. Parties are encouraged to jointly pursue innovative pilot projects/demonstration areas and share and publicize success stories consistent with the objectives of this MOU.

22. Monitor and report on implementation of this MOU until the objectives have been addressed by consensus of the Parties. The agency contacts (as identified in VI, below), or their designees, will meet at least annually to review performance under this MOU, and provide recommendations as appropriate.

**B. Maryland DNR – Forest Service will:**

**Planning/Processes**

1. Consider and take appropriate action on recommendations from the Parties to integrate NRCS conservation plans/processes with Forest Stewardship and wildlife management plans/processes so they meet NRCS and soil conservation district requirements for participation in forestry-related technical and financial assistance programs including CREP, EQIP and other conservation programs.

**Partnerships/information Sharing**

2. Invite and encourage NRCS and Soil Conservation Districts (SCDs) to be involved on State Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committees and associated subcommittees.
3. Actively participate on Maryland NRCS State Technical Committee.
4. Through State Technical Committee meetings and other venues, provide information about State-administered programs that can assist in planning and implementing forestry-related conservation practices in priority watersheds/landscapes identified by NRCS and other cooperators.
5. Provide GIS and staff support as available and appropriate to assist SCDs in meeting CREP riparian forest buffer goals.
6. Invite NRCS and soil conservation districts to participate in the development, division, and implementation of State Forest Resource Assessments and Response Plans.
7. Provide forest land, wildlife, and natural resource information to NRCS (e.g., forest inventory, riparian forest buffer, forest health risk and condition, fire regime/condition class as available) to support conservation programming.
8. Request that the State Conservationist utilize State Forest Resource Assessments and Response Plans in the development of program ranking processes.
9. Inform NRCS and conservation district employees about State-administered forestry and conservation programs through training and education.
10. Foster and guide the development and implementation of MOU documents between the Parties.

11. Cooperate with the Parties in the identification of needs for forestry, riparian forest buffer and agroforestry assistance on private lands and participate in the delivery of this assistance.
12. Provide the Parties with contacts for forest landowners/managers whose participation in forest stewardship planning has identified the need for technical or financial assistance.
13. Respond to information or technical assistance referrals from soil conservation districts which identify needs or opportunities to work with cooperators with forest-related conservation or management.

### **Resources**

14. Provide assistance to the Maryland Department of Agriculture and soil conservation districts to train employees in forestry and to provide technical assistance to private forest owners.

### **Employee Training/Education**

15. Increase field staff knowledge of NRCS, MDA and soil conservation district resource conservation programs through training and education.
16. Provide forestry-related training and education to NRCS, MDA and soil conservation district employees.
17. Provide cross training to forest service employees related to local, state and federal agricultural conservation programs to foster information sharing with forest landowners who may be eligible for related conservation or natural resource management programs.

### **C. Maryland Association of Forest Conservancy District Boards (Forestry Boards) will:**

#### **Planning/Processes**

1. Promote an ethic of forest stewardship to landowners.
2. Provide leadership in educating teachers, students and the general public about the benefits trees and forests provide in improving the environment in urban, suburban and rural areas.
3. Promote the multiple advantages of forest management plans for achieving landowner objectives and for improving quality of life for all citizens through enhanced wildlife habitats, protection and production of clean water, ready supply of forest products, protection of air quality, retention of natural areas, and other environmental, social, and economic benefits derived from well managed forests.

4. Raise awareness and encourage participation among landowners of the many financial incentives available to assist with better forest management.
5. Assist the Department of Natural Resources-Forest Service with implementing their programs and policies.

#### **Partnerships/Information Sharing**

6. Collaborate with partners in developing and delivering training opportunities for landowners and resource professional alike.
7. With assistance and collaboration among partners, develop forestry coursework for use in high school curriculums which will minimally consist of lesson plans that teach primary concepts of forestry and forest management. Ideally, the curriculum will further include the dedication of tree planting locations for practical applications of tree establishment planning, planting, and maintenance.
8. Cooperate with partners in communicating the importance of implementing Best Management Practices (BMPs) when harvesting timber in the critical and riparian forest buffer areas.
9. Assist the MDA-Pest Management in promoting and coordinating the control of insects and diseases on public and private lands.
10. Collaborate with partners to identify opportunities and then initiate actions for expanding the markets for forest products, including biomass energy and so-called "non-traditional forest products".
11. Support the efforts of partners in obtaining third-party certification of sustainable forest practices on public or private lands.
12. Encourage landowners to adopt a stewardship ethic and take a first action by implementing a Forest Stewardship Plan and following Best Management Practices.
13. Serve as the lead party to conduct one week forest oriented Natural Resources Careers Conference for high school students and teachers in cooperation with other Parties.
14. Cooperate with partners to target the largest class of forest landowners (i.e., those with 5 or fewer acres) with outreach designed to encourage forest retention and on-going stewardship.

#### **D. Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts (MASCD) will:**

#### **Partnerships/Information Sharing**

1. Invite the Parties to participate in their meetings and conservation initiatives and encourage the soil conservation districts to involve the Parties in conservation program efforts at the local level.
2. Cooperate with the Parties in the identification of needs for forestry and agroforestry

assistance on private lands.

3. Partner with the Parties in landscape or watershed scale planning and implementation, providing a locally-led component for these activities.
4. Provide opportunities for the Parties to interact with MASCD leadership on forestry and other matters of mutual interest, including appropriate committee and/or policy groups.
5. With the landowner's permission, provide the Parties with contacts for landowners/managers whose participation in conservation planning has identified the need for technical or financial assistance.
6. Foster and guide the development and implementation of MOU documents between the Parties.
7. MAS CD agrees to consider incorporating forestry activities in programs generating conservation funding through eco-trading programs relating to carbon, nutrients and wildlife, to further agrees to facilitate the development and implementation of conservation plans on forest lands.
8. Coordinate information exchange about forest harvest BMPS to meet sediment and erosion control requirements or the management of forest mitigation programs implemented by SCDs.

#### **Employee Training/Education**

9. Support cross training to increase soil conservation district field staff knowledge of DNR-programs and DNR-FS knowledge of conservation programs available through the SCD local delivery system.

### **E. Maryland Department of Agriculture will:**

#### **Planning/Processes**

1. Consider and take appropriate action to integrate state soil conservation and water quality plans/processes with Forest Stewardship plans/processes so they meet landowner and managers objectives when participating in conservation technical and financial assistance programs including CREP and those related to forestry.
2. Conduct surveys and carry out pest management measures or make recommendations for action, depending on the circumstances, to protect the state's forest resources.
3. Coordinate surveys and pest management measures to protect the State's forest resources with the DNR FS when these activities are undertaken on land under the jurisdiction of the DNR FS.

#### **Partnerships/Information Sharing**

4. Cooperate with other Parties on measures to protect the forest and shade trees of the State.
5. Keep other Parties informed of plans, programs, and accomplishments relative to natural resource conservation and forest health.
6. Collaboratively identify research studies needed to support sustainable management of working lands and utilize the science to improve conservation programs and activities.
7. Coordinate tracking systems to support targeting and implementation of conservation and forestry related BMPs and natural resource management
8. Make a continuous effort to keep all Parties, foresters, landowners, and the public informed of current forest pest problems and forest health conditions through various media.

#### **Employee Training/Education**

9. Provide training, as needed, in recognition of forest pests, damage by forest pests, and forest pest control to all Parties.

### **F. University of Maryland Extension will:**

#### **Planning/Processes**

1. Consider and take appropriate action on recommendations from the Parties to integrate Parties' programs into educational programs as appropriate.
2. Conduct surveys to assess the needs and accomplishments of forest landowners and loggers of the State of Maryland.

#### **Partnerships/information-sharing**

3. Promote sustainable forest management by teaching forest landowners and the general public about the importance of forest lands, sustaining the productivity of privately owned forest land, maintaining forest health and protecting watersheds.
4. Encourage the development of alternative income option on forest land to assist forest landowners maintain a sustainable forest land base.
5. Provide training to increase logger participation rates in Maryland and Delaware through the MD/DE Master Logger Program.
6. Actively participate on Maryland NRCS State Technical Committee.
7. Through the State Technical Committee meetings and other venues, provide information about extension programs that can assist in planning and implementing forestry-related soil conservation district field practices in priority watersheds identified by NRCS and other Party members.

8. Cooperate with the Parties in the identification of needs for forestry and agroforestry assistance on private lands and participate in the delivery of educational programs.
  9. Provide opportunities for the Parties to interact with Extension leadership.
  10. Keep the Parties informed of plans, programs and other accomplishments relative to forest education.
- II. Facilitate the development of local forest landowner educational programs through Master Gardeners and Coverts Cooperators/MD Woodland Stewards as appropriate.

### **Employee Training/Education**

12. Increase staff knowledge of all Parties on the details of conservation programs administered by the respective Parties.
13. Provide technical training and continuing education opportunities to professional natural resource managers.

### **Ecosystem Services**

14. Cooperate with the Parties in:
  - a) Establishing a role for agriculture and forestry in providing environmental offsets and enhancements; and
  - b) Developing accounting practices and procedures for quantifying environmental goods and services; and
  - c) Developing an education program to explain the meaning of ecosystem services, their values, and management opportunities for the public, forest landowners and natural resource professionals.

## **G. USDA Forest Service will:**

### **Strategic**

1. Promote sustainable forest management by conserving biological diversity of important forest lands, sustaining the productivity of privately owned forest land, maintaining forest health, and protecting watersheds.
2. Enhance the capacity of forests to provide public benefits.

### **Funding/Resources**

3. Provide financial assistance in collaboration with the DNR-Forest Service, Maryland

Department of Agriculture and soil conservation districts to promote sustainable forest management and enhance the capacity of forests to provide public benefits.

4. Provide technical assistance and expertise related to forest insect, disease and other forest health issues on both Federal and non-Federal forest lands in the State.
5. Provide technical support and coordination related to watershed forestry related programs in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.
6. Assist with identifying opportunities to improve and/or expand technical assistance or landscape-level projects.

### **Planning/Processes**

7. Provide technical assistance to the State of Maryland in development of the State Forest Resource Assessments and Strategy

### **Partnerships/Information Sharing**

8. Actively participate on the Maryland State Technical Committee and the forestry subcommittee when formed.
9. Through State Technical Committee meetings and other venues, provide information about U.S. Forest Service programs and resources that can assist in planning and implementing forestry-related conservation practices in priority watersheds/landscapes identified by NRCS and other cooperators.
10. Provide forest land and resource information to NRCS (e.g., forest inventory, riparian forest buffers, forest health risk and condition, fire regime/condition class as available) to support conservation programming.
11. Inform NRCS and conservation district employees about USFS partnerships and conservation programs, and events of mutual interest.
12. Foster and guide the development and implementation of MOU documents between the Parties.
13. Cooperate and coordinate with the Maryland Forest Service in the delivery of forestry assistance to landowners.
14. Promote agroforestry technology, training, and educational resources in cooperation with NRCS and University of Maryland Extension.

### **Ecosystem Services**

Cooperate with the Parties, as well as with other non-governmental organizations in:

14. Establishing a role for agriculture and forestry in providing environmental offsets and enhancements; and
15. Developing accounting practices and procedures for quantifying environmental goods and services (as per USDA Departmental Regulation 5600-003).

16. Providing natural resource data for use in developing ecosystem-related markets
17. Assisting with development of ecosystem market tools for farmers and forest landowners.

#### **Employee Training/Education**

18. Encourage FS employees to increase their knowledge of NRCS conservation programs through training and education.
19. Provide forestry-related training and education to NRCS and conservation district employees.

### **H. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will:**

#### **Strategic**

1. Incorporate in its State Strategic Plan an increased emphasis on providing forestry assistance to Non-industrial Private Forest (NIPF) landowners to help them address resource concerns and increase the emphasis on applying agroforestry on working agricultural lands.

#### **Funding/Resources**

2. The State Conservationist will collaborate with the Parties to allocate appropriate resources to address resource concerns on NIPF land and to help meet landowner needs for technical and financial assistance in forestry and agroforestry.

#### **Planning/Processes**

3. Consider and take appropriate action on recommendations from the Parties to integrate NRCS conservation plans/processes with Forest Stewardship plans/processes, to meet NRCS requirements for participation in forestry-related technical and financial assistance programs.
4. Incorporate NIPF land and resource information into its Rapid Watershed Assessments, as appropriate.

#### **Partnerships/Information Sharing**

5. Invite and encourage the Parties to be involved on State Technical Committees and associated subcommittees, as well as local working groups, to provide expertise in forestry, wildlife, and agroforestry related to program priorities, ranking processes, and practice standards.

6. Recognize that State Forest Resource Assessments and Plans are an important tool for focusing programs on priority forest areas. State Conservationists are expected to utilize these Assessments and Plans in determining their priorities for providing technical and financial assistance.
7. Through State Technical Committee meetings and other venues, provide information about NRCS conservation programs that can assist in planning and implementing forestry-related conservation practices in priority landscapes/watersheds identified by DNR-FS and other cooperators.
8. Continue, in cooperation with the Parties, to jointly produce and promote agroforestry technology, training, and educational resources.
9. Through its Plant Materials Centers, engage with the Parties on native plant propagation, gene conservation, and other areas of common interest to improve coordination and share expertise.

#### **Ecosystem Services**

10. Cooperate with the Parties to enhance the role of agriculture and forestry in providing environmental offsets and enhancements.
11. Developing accounting practices and procedures for quantifying environmental goods and services (as per USDA Departmental Regulation 5600-003).

#### **Employee Training/Education**

12. Encourage NRCS employees to increase their knowledge of DNR-FS programs through training and education.
13. Provide training and education to the Parties about NRCS conservation programs.

#### **Resources**

14. Provide assistance to the Maryland Department of Agriculture and soil conservation districts to train employees in forestry and to provide technical assistance to private forest owners.

### **III. GENERAL PROVISIONS**

- A. This MOU takes effect upon the signatures of the Parties and remains in effect for five years from the date of execution.
- B. This MOU is not intended to, and does not create any right, benefit, or trust responsibility, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or equity, by any party against the United States, its agencies, its officers, or any person

- C. This MOU does not affect or modify existing regulation or agency responsibilities and authorities. It specifically does not commit any agency to activities beyond the scope of its mission and authorities under its organic statutes.
- D. The Parties and their respective officers will handle their own activities and utilize their own resources, including expenditures of their own funds, in pursuing the purposes of this MOU. Each party will carry out its separate activities in a coordinated and mutually beneficial manner.
- E. Nothing in this MOU shall obligate the Parties to obligate or transfer any funds.

Specific work projects or activities that involve the transfer of funds, services, or property among the various agencies and offices of the Parties will require execution of separate agreements, and be contingent upon the availability of appropriated funds. Such activities must be independently authorized by appropriate statutory authority. This MOU does not provide such authority. Negotiation, execution, and administration of each such agreement must comply with all applicable statutes and regulations.

- F. Any information furnished to NRCS and FS under this agreement is subject to the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552).
- G. All activities and programs, conducted under this MOU shall be in compliance with the nondiscrimination provisions contained in Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 (Public Law 100-250); and other nondiscrimination statutes: namely, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972, and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975. They will also be in accordance with regulations of the Secretary of Agriculture (7 C.F.R. 15, Subparts A& B), which provide that no person in the United States shall on the grounds of race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, marital status, or handicap be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance from USDA or agency thereof.
- H. All activities conducted under this MOU shall be in compliance with the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988 (Public Law 100-690, Title V, Subtitle D).

#### **IV. DEFINITIONS**

*Working Lands* - Privately owned forest land, cropland, pasture, and rangeland.

*Nonindustrial Private Forest Lands* - Rural lands that:

- a. Have existing tree cover or are suitable for growing trees: and
- b. Are owned by any non-industrial private individual, group, association, corporation, Indian tribe, or other private legal entity so long as the individual, group, association, corporation, tribe, or entity has definitive decision making authority over the lands. Corporations whose stocks are publicly traded or owners principally engaged in the primary processing of raw wood products are excluded.

#### **V. AUTHORITY**

NRCS agrees to participate in this agreement under the authority of the following federal laws: The soil conservation and Domestic Allotment Act, as amended (PL74-76; 49 Stat163, USC, 590 a-f, 590q, 7CFR Part 610 (CEDA 10.902); The Food Security Act of 1985 as amended by the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996; EQIP-16 USC 3839aa-3839aa-8, 3841, 7 CFR Part 1466 (CFDA 10.912); WHIP - 16 USC 383a, 7CFR Part 636 (CFDA 10.914); CRP - 7CFR Part 1410.

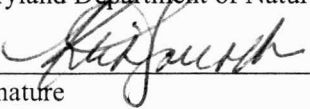
#### **VI. AGENCY/ORGANIZATION CONTACTS**

MDA:	Louise Lawrence	NRCS:	Mark Rose
MASCD:	Lynne Hoot	USFS:	Robert Lueckel
MCE:	Robert Tjaden	MAFCDB:	Mel Noland
DNR-FS:	Steven W. Koehn		
DNR-WHS:	Paul Peditto		

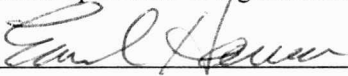
**VII. APPROVAL**

The undersigned parties hereby agree to the terms and conditions specified above.

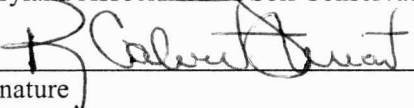
Kristin Saunders Evans  
Assistance Secretary -- Land Resources  
Maryland Department of Natural Resources

  
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Signature 6/29/10  
Date

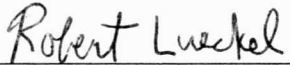
Earl "Buddy" Hance  
Secretary  
Maryland Department of Agriculture

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature 6-30-10  
Date

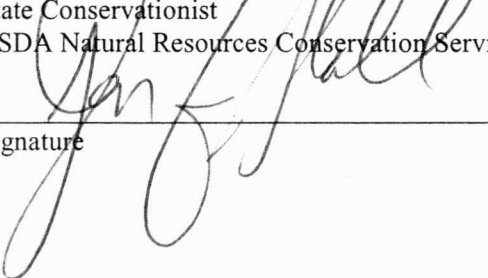
R. Calvert Steuart  
President  
Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature 6/28/10  
Date

Robert G. Lueckel  
Field Representative  
USDA Forest Service State and Private Forestry-Northeastern Area

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature 7/30/10  
Date

Jon Hall  
State Conservationist  
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature 6/28/2010  
Date

**AUTHORIZING UNIVERSITY OFFICIAL**  
**Katie Petrone, Contract Manager**  
**Research Administration & Advancement**  
**University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742**  
**Phone 301-405-6269/Fax 301-314-9569**  
**Email oraa@umd.edu**

Dr. Cheng-i Wei  
Dean & Director, Agricultural Experiment Station & University of Maryland Extension  
Or Other University Signatory Authority

*Katie Petrone*

*8/30/2010*

Signature

Date

~~-Melvin Noland-~~

James S. Bardsley, Jr.

~~-President-----~~

~~-Maryland Association of Forest Conservancy District Boards~~

*[Handwritten Signature]*

*12 NOV 2010*

Signature

Date

President

Maryland Association of Forest Conservancy District Boards