



FOREST RESOURCE STRATEGY

2010-2015



Executive Summary

The Maryland Forest Resource Strategy lays out a five-year plan based on a long-term approach to desired conditions for Maryland's future forests. The Maryland Forest Resource Assessment characterized a maturing forest base in Maryland that supports considerable biological diversity, expanding potential for sawtimber and other wood products, greater tree growth than removal, net gains in carbon sequestration, and protection of water quality. Forest land conversion to other uses is considered the greatest threat to many of these forest benefits, since forest land is being lost at almost 3% per decade, a loss much greater than the modest but increasing rates of land conservation.

Based on a public involvement and stakeholder process and internal strategic planning, the Forest Resource Strategy identified five major areas for action: Sustaining Forests, Forest Health, Watershed Forestry, Community Forestry and Jobs, and Climate Change. Sustaining Forests was consistently identified as the highest priority, since all the forest benefits depend on forests remaining on the landscape. Other supporting goals in priority order are Forest Health, Watershed Forestry, and Community Forestry. Climate Change goals were considered important to include, and will be used to leverage progress in other goals.

To sustain forests on Maryland's working landscape, core programs for forest management plans, tax incentives, and financial assistance will remain critical. Expanded actions will include a focus on forest markets, effective outreach and education, and greater interaction with local planning requirements at the local level. Responsible management of State Forests will play an important role in demonstrating sustainable forest management on public lands.

To continue supporting priority goals, functions protecting forests from wildfire, pests, and other injury will be maintained. Actions addressing chronic harm from stresses like deer browse, invasive plants and pests, elevated wildfire risk, uncontrolled recreation, and land use change will be addressed in priority areas with a range of partners. The conservation, care, and planting of trees will be used to support Chesapeake Bay commitments for riparian forest buffers, targeted forest conservation for water quality, and expanded urban tree canopy. Technical and financial assistance will support landowner assistance and urban forestry practices essential to building livable communities throughout the state.