

Community-Based Watershed Partnerships

USDA Forest Service
Northeastern Area
State and Private Forestry

Collaboration for clean water



Description:

The USDA Forest Service has recognized that solutions to watershed issues require working collectively across mixed ownerships within a watershed. By collaborating with other Federal and State agencies, local communities, private landowners, and organizations, the Forest Service can contribute to restoring large watersheds to healthy and sustainable conditions. A watershed approach to program implementation can also build greater local ownership and demonstrate measurable environmental change.

Beginning in 1999, fifteen projects were selected to become national prototypes for a new approach to restoring watersheds through large-scale community-based partnerships. NA has taken a prominent role in implementing two of the 15 national projects; the Potomac Watershed and White River Partnerships. Implementation included a business plan, strategic goals, environmental measures, and innovative public/private partnerships. The Northeastern Area is demonstrating how the conservation, restoration and stewardship of forests maintains and improves water quality and watershed health.

National Community-based Watershed Partnership Projects



Key Points:

- Watershed management across multiple ownerships is one of our most complex challenges, requires long-term investment and commitment, and can be a catalyst for community action.
- The role of watershed forests in protection of drinking water supplies, downstream water quality, and critical habitats needs to be continually communicated and demonstrated.
- Large-scale partnerships require an investment of time and resources to build momentum, relationships, and synergy and to show success. From direct restoration of streams, wetlands and forests, to community outreach and education, to landowner assistance and land protection, these partnerships have paid impressive dividends.
- Maintaining investments beyond the 5-year national commitment will require innovative strategies to leverage non-federal funds and involve new partners in these collaborative efforts.

Accomplishments:

The Potomac River is the second largest tributary to the Chesapeake Bay. The Potomac flows through the nation's capital and drains a watershed of 9 million acres in Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, West Virginia and DC. The watershed is home to over 4.5 million people and contains some of the fastest growing areas in the country. The watershed has lost over 70% of its wetlands and riparian forests to agriculture and urban expansion and many streams and forests are degraded and fragmented.



The **Potomac Watershed Partnership** brings together the strengths of six primary partners: NA, George Washington National Forest, MD DNR Forest Service, VA Department of Forestry, PA Department of Environmental Protection, Ducks Unlimited and the Potomac Conservancy to protect and restore the lands and waters of this important watershed. In FY 2003, the Partnership:

- To date, riparian forests have been restored on over 600 miles of streams with nearly 250 miles restored in FY 2003. Over 700 acres of wetlands have also been restored on private lands.
- Protected over 1600 acres of forest from development in FY 2003 and 6000 acres to date.
- Completed 10 urban greenway projects in 4 cities and installed "Rain Garden" demonstrations.

- Helped 5 communities in high risk areas develop wildfire protection programs.
- Completed over 1500 acres of prescribed burning and 32 forest stewardship plans.
- Involved over 7500 volunteers in tree planting and restoration activities
- Led “Growing Native”, a watershed-wide educational and restoration event that collected nearly 20,000 pounds of native tree seed for state nurseries and established over 16 schoolyard nurseries.
- Received the Conservation Fund National Watershed Award for 2003.

For more information go to www.potomac.org and www.growingnative.org.

The White River Partnership (WRP) is a collaborative effort of the Forest Service (NA and the Green Mountain National Forest), George D. Aiken Resource Conservation and Development Area, VT Parks and Forests, USFWS, and other Federal and State agencies, local towns and watershed landowners. The White River is the last untamed tributary of the Connecticut River and a target for restoration of the endangered Atlantic salmon. It has experienced significant bank erosion, instability and degraded habitat. Much of the floodplain has been cleared of its bottomland forests. Goals include stream corridor restoration, outreach and education to local communities and schools, building a collaborative of business interests and towns to utilize the river as an economic asset to the area, and building community capacity for future action. Active citizen participation is a cornerstone of the WRP and desired action is demonstrated through targeted restoration and conservation projects. In 2003 the Partnership:



- Restored 1.5 miles of river and planted over 2,000 trees and hundreds of willows to create two miles of new riparian floodplain forests.
- Established a volunteer tree-planting program with the National Wildlife Federation and created incentives to remove incompatible land uses from river shorelines.
- Worked with teachers from 35 schools, involving their students in water quality monitoring and stream surveys along the White River.
- Partnered with the National Wildlife Federation to conduct outreach that resulted in 30 landowners coming together to plant three miles of riverbank.

For more information visit www.whiteriverpartnership.org

Budget History:

Community Based Watershed Partnerships					
<i>(\$ Thousands)</i>					
	Funds	FY 2001	FY 2002	FY 2003	FY 2004
Potomac Watershed Partnership	S&PF	725	725	725	725
	NFS	475	475	475	375
	Total	\$1,200	\$1,200	\$1,200	\$1,100
White River Partnership	S&PF	105	105	105	105
	NFS	188	173	131	105
	Total	\$293	\$278	\$236	\$210

Future Direction:

Continue assistance to states and non profit organizations in accomplishment of Partnership activities and assist in expanding and diversifying funding in order to maintain long-term support. Funding transition plans will be prepared in FY 2004 to determine future levels of support from NA and Regions 9 and 8.

Kathryn Maloney, Director
11 Campus Blvd., Suite 200
Newtown Square, PA 19073
610-557-4103 (4177-FAX)
kmaloney@fs.fed.us

Robin Morgan, Assistant Director
11 Campus Blvd., Suite 200
Newtown Square, PA 19073
610-557-4124 (4136-FAX)
rmorgan@fs.fed.us

Albert Todd, Watershed Program
410 Severn Avenue, Suite 109
Annapolis, MD 21401
(410) 267-5705 (5777-FAX)
atodd@fs.fed.us

