



Calling all Land Trusts in the Chesapeake Bay watershed!



A healthy Chesapeake Bay watershed is essential to maintaining thriving wildlife populations, local economies, and a high quality of life. Thanks to the more than 170 local land trusts working within the watershed, more than 1.6 million acres of important wildlife habitat, scenic vistas and working lands in the region have been conserved forever. Despite these achievements, however, the Bay's chronically deteriorating report card is all too familiar as we struggle to balance the health of our natural resources with our increasing demand for the land.

Although there is still much work to be done, a vibrant Bay watershed remains an accessible goal. Achieving this goal, however, will require that every group within the watershed conduct their work in a coordinated and highly strategic manner. Land trusts are key players in attaining this collective conservation vision. And despite the fact that most local land trusts in the region work with limited budgets and few to no staff, they have achieved an impressive list of successes toward this vision. Even so, most land trusts express a strong desire to work at a higher level—protect more, restore more, educate more. Common needs include more scientific or technical expertise, a better strategic plan, stronger ability to influence decision makers, greater command of financing options and more productive partnerships.

Defenders recognizes the important role that land trusts play in conserving the Bay watershed and offers the following opportunity for Chesapeake Bay area land trusts.

A Call for Proposals

Defenders of Wildlife, in partnership with the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program and with funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation is pleased to offer a comprehensive capacity-building opportunity for one or more land trusts within the Chesapeake Bay watershed who are interested in building a strategic approach to protecting the region's wildlife, habitat and water quality. This opportunity will consist of the following four activities:

1. **Biodiversity Conservation Short Course**— this course will bring in experts from the watershed to provide a working foundation of all aspects of biodiversity conservation. Whenever possible, course content will reflect the needs and interest of the selected land trust(s) and the specific region in which they work placed in the larger framework of the Bay watershed. Potential topics could include:
 - Why care about biodiversity? (the obvious and not so obvious reasons)
 - Strategic conservation planning through a habitat lens
 - Climate change— how it's affecting the Bay and what land trusts can do about it
 - Conservation finance—sources of funding and long term planning
 - Habitat restoration—it's importance and how to start
 - Other relevant topics requested by the land trust

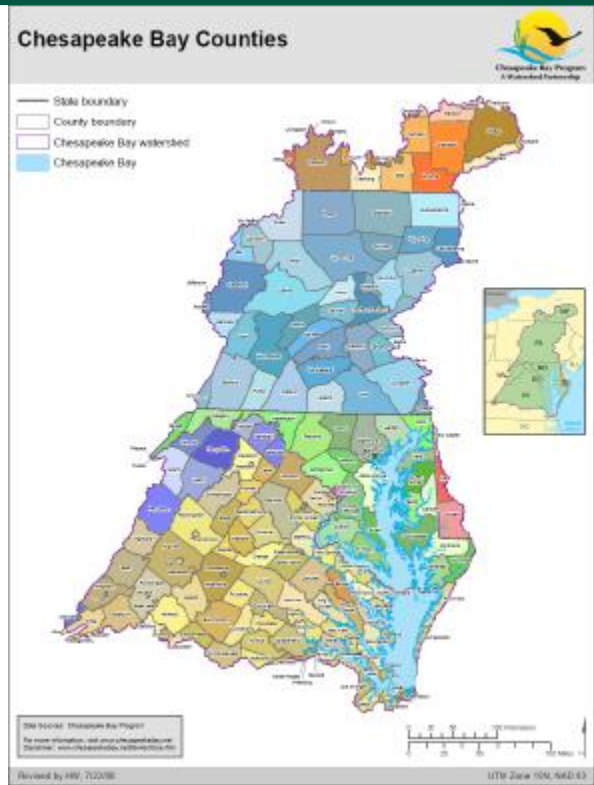
2. **Visioning and Mapping**—GIS experts, conservation professionals and trained facilitators will help you identify resources that are important to your land trust and develop criteria that will help to prioritize and link the most important areas into a science-based network of conservation lands that reflect these values. Criteria will be translated into one or more values-based maps and a customized decision support tool will be created to allow manipulation of values as the landscape changes in the future. No GIS experience is required.

3. **Funding and Implementation**—After identifying a set of priority areas and the partners that are necessary to protect them, we will work with you to develop a stakeholder charrette to draft financing options, build partnerships and develop an implementation strategy to achieve your vision.

4. **Start-up Grants**—Land trusts who complete stages 1-3 will be eligible for small grants to support initial plan implementation.

If your land trust is interested, please fill out the short application form at: www.defenders.org/livinglands/chesapeake_bay to be considered. All land trusts operating within the watershed (see map above) are eligible to apply but preference will be given to those who:

1. Are located in regions with relatively high biodiversity and conservation potential
2. Communicate a real need for assistance
3. Demonstrate a genuine commitment to the process by both staff and board members as well as to implementation beyond the grant period



Chesapeake Bay watershed and counties
<http://www.chesapeakebay.net/maps>

Questions? Please call or email:

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Email completed applications to asrinivas@defenders.org by October 15, 2008