



THE CHESAPEAKE BAY LAND AND WATER INITIATIVE

2021 Grant Program: Funded Project Summaries

Launched in 2016, the Chesapeake Bay Land and Water Initiative is a partnership between the Chesapeake Bay Funders Network and the Land Trust Alliance. Over the past five years, the Initiative's competitive grant program has made strategic, targeted investments in land trusts, watershed groups and other conservation partners to accelerate permanent land conservation and stewardship on conserved land with a meaningful impact on water quality. Several watersheds have been prioritized for grant funding, including: the Upper and Lower Susquehanna, the Juniata, the Shenandoah and Upper Potomac, the Rapidan/Rappahannock and the Eastern Shore watersheds.

In the past five years, the Initiative's grant program has provided project support totaling more than \$778,000, awarding 31 grants to 20 projects. In 2021, the grant program focused its support on continuing to build the strategic focus and capacity of regional collaborative partnerships that combine the goals of land conservation and water quality restoration. The following projects were selected for funding in 2021.

Forever Maryland Foundation/Heart of Maryland Conservation Alliance, \$30,000: *Setting the Table: Building Capacity for Conservation and Watershed Restoration*

The Heart of Maryland Conservation Alliance is a regional conservation partnership coordinated by Catocin Land Trust through the support of the Forever Maryland Foundation. The HMCA will convene a team of conservation partners around landscape-scale land and water protection of the Catocin and Antietam Creek watersheds through the South Mountain Campaign. These watersheds encompass a section of the Appalachian Trail, tributaries of the Potomac River, and large swaths of productive farmland that are experiencing significant development pressure. The 25 HMCA members will develop a strategic plan that coordinates their respective efforts and formalizes their partnership. It will operationalize subsequent land conservation and restoration efforts through deployment of previously developed geospatial tools, additional partner recruitment, expanded outreach and exploration of public funding options.

Lower Shore Land Trust,* \$30,000: *Advancing the Delmarva Restoration & Conservation Network to Achieve Chesapeake Bay Program Goals*

Lower Shore Land Trust leads coordination of the Delmarva Restoration Conservation Network in partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The DRCN is a platform for land trusts, restoration specialists and wildlife agencies to coordinate their efforts across the Delmarva Peninsula. These efforts are informed by a robust geospatial mapping tool that combines more than 100 datasets to identify high-priority water protection and restoration projects. Following an extensive strategic planning process, LSLT will continue to convene DRCN members around the pursuit of identified projects and explore partnerships with new members, such as soil conservation districts, faith-based groups and economic development leaders. Under LSLT's leadership, the DRCN will also develop (and implement) a communications plan, as well as seek more robust funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

*Indicates land trusts accredited by the independent Land Trust Accreditation Commission
Photos L to R: L courtesy of shutterstock/John Bilous; R courtesy of Pennsylvania DCNR

Potomac Conservancy,* \$20,000: *Expanding Roots for the Safe Water Collaborative*

This grant will support Potomac Conservancy's participation in the West Virginia Safe Water Conservation Collaborative. The SWCC successfully formed, developed a strategic plan and convened working groups to implement this plan, all while conducting restoration, conservation and communications projects. The SWCC has reached an inflection point at which it must either reduce capacity dedicated to coordinating and convening its members or secure more robust funding. PC will support implementation of the SWCC's conservation and restoration activities as well as lead the necessary efforts to solicit more adequate funding. PC will contact landowners and negotiate conservation easements and restoration projects with those who express interest. PC will also lead the application process for more funding through a Small Watershed Grant and maintain active participation in SWCC working groups.

West Virginia Rivers Coalition, \$30,000: *From Launching to Launched – A West Virginia Safe Water Conservation Collaborative*

This grant provides support for West Virginia Rivers Coalition to continue serving as the host partner for the Safe Water Conservation Collaborative, a regional conservation partnership that uses land conservation as a strategy to protect drinking water supplies. As the Collaborative has grown, the work of the host partner has far outpaced the originally envisioned 30% FTE. WVRC currently convenes three workgroups that focus on conservation, education/outreach and stewardship, respectively. WVRC also supports pursuit of new collaborative partners, especially water utilities and compiles results of outreach efforts and long-term funding conversations. Part of this year's work will be to assess multi-year administrative, management and programmatic needs of the SWCC and secure funding that is more adequate to meet these needs.



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