

Chesapeake Watershed Investments for Landscape Defense (WILD)program

On October 30, 2020 the America's Conservation Enhancement Act became law (Public Law No: 116-188). Title 1, section 111 of the Act authorizes the creation of the Chesapeake Watershed Investments for Landscape Defense (WILD) program.





United
Nations

Climate Change

A polar bear swims through the chilly waters of the Arctic Ocean, searching for a patch of ice to climb on. Polar bears rely on sea ice for resting, hunting, and in some places, raising their young. But lately the amount of sea ice has been shrinking. Some scientists predict that the Arctic might be completely ice-free during the summer sometime this century. When that happens, this polar bear—and the approximately 25,000 others that call the Arctic home—will be in serious danger.

RIISING TEMPERATURES

According to NASA, the Earth's average surface temperature has increased about 1.5°F over the past hundred years, making 2012 one of the hottest years ever recorded. Most scientists expect the climate to warm another 0.5°F to as much as 8.6°F by 2100.

What's the big deal about a little extra heat? According to most scientists, plenty. As glaciers and polar ice sheets melt, rising sea levels could threaten coastal areas. And this global warming causes other changes to the Earth's climate, including harsher droughts, stronger hurricanes, and shifting wind and ocean patterns. Together, these changes are known as climate change.

WHY THE WARM-UP?

So what do scientists say is causing climate change? Earth is surrounded by an atmosphere made up of a layer of gases. When sunlight enters the atmosphere, some of the sun's heat is trapped by the gases, while the rest escapes the atmosphere. The trapped heat keeps Earth warm enough to live on.

But during the past few centuries, the oil, gas, and coal we use have released carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. This gas traps heat that would otherwise escape Earth's atmosphere. This increases Earth's average temperature, which changes its climate. Climate change seems like an overwhelming problem, but you can make a difference. Keep reading for ways to live a more eco-friendly life.



Million Species At Risk of Extinction

UN Report

SPECIES

8 million

Total species estimated on Earth

12.5%

Could go extinct over
the next few decades

That includes:

10% of insects



40% of amphibians



33% of reef corals, sharks,
and marine mammals





Chesapeake WILD - Origins

- ▶ Dire need to address Wildlife and Habitat directly
- ▶ Modelled after the Delaware River Basin Conservation Act - appropriated \$5 to \$10M
- ▶ Inspired by the Delmarva Restoration and Conservation Network and the Upper Susquehanna Conservation Alliance
- ▶ Non-regulatory, partnership based

The Act Authorizes Funding up to \$15 Million per year.

- ▶ To coordinate restoration and protection activities among Federal, State, local, and regional entities throughout the watershed
- ▶ Engage other agencies and organizations to build capacity and generate funding for projects in the Chesapeake Bay
- ▶ Support collaborative efforts to implement conservation, stewardship, and enhancement projects.
- ▶ Collaborative efforts should incorporate equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ) into practices and policies.

Projects - DRAFT Five Pillars

- ▶ 1. Sustain and enhance **restoration** and **protection** activities by conserving a resilient network of fish and wildlife habitats and connecting corridors, with emphasis on **vulnerable species and habitats**
- ▶ 2. Address **climate change** by increasing scientific capacity and supporting strategic planning, monitoring, and applied science activities necessary to ensure resilience of natural ecosystems and habitats impacted by changing climate and development.
- ▶ 3. Increase capacity and support for coordinated restoration and protection activities in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, particularly in **underserved communities**, through **outreach**, education, and civic engagement.
- ▶ 4. Enhance recreational opportunities and **public access** with a strong emphasis on equitable access to nature, consistent with the ecological needs of fish and wildlife habitat
- ▶ 5. Improve and sustain **water quality**, upgrade water-management capability, and reduce flood damage, with an emphasis on green infrastructure and natural infrastructure to support fish and wildlife, habitats of fish and wildlife, and drinking water for people

Details

Who is Eligible?

- ▶ State and the District of Columbia.
- ▶ A unit of local government.
- ▶ A nonprofit organization.
- ▶ An institution of higher education.

What is the Match Requirement?

- ▶ 50% however, non-DOI Federal funds may be used for not more than 25% of the total cost of a project funded under the grant program.

Reporting?

- ▶ On April 30, 2020 and annually thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report describing the implementation of this Act, including a description of each project that has received funding under this Act.

Chesapeake WILD Framework - 1st step toward guiding the vision and meeting the intent of the Act

Stakeholder meeting - February 23, 2020

► Some DRAFT Themes:

- Integrate wildlife movement corridors in wildlife action plans, and create multi agency strategies
- Private landowner strategies - the bulk of the land; need to ramp up and make more efficient/effective
- Align Chesapeake WILD work with existing efforts (ex. Chesapeake Bay Program, Gateways Network, state programs)
- Involve communities in planning/ restoration
- Improve ability to access green space/ waterways -- funding, assistance, transit access, improving existing (maintenance and interpretation)
- Make the science a whole community effort.

The Chesapeake Conservation Partnership (CCP)

- ▶ Well established already
- ▶ Part of the Network for Landscape Conservation
- ▶ Broadly inclusive of relevant conservation/restoration stakeholders in the watershed
- ▶ Well known to the relevant players with a strong reputation for collaborative conservation, familiar and trusted forum
- ▶ Chesapeake Conservation Atlas - related priorities - forests, farms, habitat, heritage and health

Next Steps

- ▶ Funding!
- ▶ Implementation - need good projects across the watershed
- ▶ Need ambassadors
- ▶ New paradigm for addressing conservation related issues?

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