

# **Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008**

**As it Relates to Conservation**

**Martha Powers, District Conservationist**

**Charlotte & Lunenburg Counties**

# 2008 Farm Bill Highlights

Increases funding for Conservation programs

Focuses on Agricultural and Forestry Working Lands

Conservation Stewardship Program begins FY2010

Private Land Protection Programs Continued

# Conservation Technical Assistance

## Technical Services

Service provided directly to farmers, ranchers, and other eligible entities, such as conservation planning, technical consultation, and assistance with design and implementation of conservation practices

## Technical Assistance is Available to :

- ✓ Owners
- ✓ Operators
- ✓ Entities

# Adjusted Gross Income Limitation

***For conservation programs, persons or legal entities are eligible if—***

*The average non-farm AGI is less than \$1,000,000, or*

*2/3 of the average total AGI is from farming, ranching, or forestry*

*The limitation may be waived on a case-by-case basis if:*

*Environmentally sensitive land of special significance would be protected*

# **WORKING LANDS PROGRAMS**

**Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)**

**Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)**

# Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

EQIP offers financial and technical assistance to agriculture and forestry producers to promote agricultural production, forest management, and environmental quality as compatible goals

# EQIP Changes

Reauthorized until 2012

Primary focus on improving water quality by reducing sediment and nutrients entering streams and rivers

Wildlife habitat improvement for threatened & endangered species and species of concern

Continued focus on increasing soil quality through crop rotations, no-till planting resulting in reduced soil erosion

# EQIP- Resource Concerns

➤ Agricultural Waste

➤ Irrigation Efficiency

➤ Cropland

➤ Poultry Litter

➤ Forestry

➤ Wildlife


➤ Grazing Land



# FORESTRY CONCERN

- Competitive – acceptance based on score
- Those applications which typically score highest include those who are willing to:
  - Plant hardwoods or other pine species such as longleaf and shortleaf
  - Plant loblolly pine at a lower rate per acre – generally less than 360 and no more than 480
  - Exclude livestock permanently from woodland
  - Establish riparian buffers

# FORESTRY CONCERN CON'T

- Re-vegetation of denuded skid trails, log roads and landings
  - Willingness to implement a Forest Stewardship Plan
  - Plant marginal pastures with slopes  $> 10\%$  to trees and shrub
  - Convert cropland to trees
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# Eligible Practices

- Tree/shrub planting
- Forest site prep
- Prescribed burning
- Fencing
- Pest management
- Firebreak
- Forest stand improvement
- Forest stand improvement
- Critical area planting
- Forest trails & landings
- Riparian forest buffer establishment

# Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)

**Provides cost-share assistance to participants seeking to improve and protect wildlife habitat on private agricultural or forest land or tribal land.**

# WHIP Resource Concerns

- Declining Priority Habitat
  - At-risk Species Habitat
  - Invasive Species Control and General Wildlife
  - Fish Passage
  - Stream or Estuary Wildlife Habitat
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# Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)

## ➤ Eligible land:

- Privately owned agricultural land
- Non-industrial private forest land
- Tribal land

# Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)

- Contract length from 1 to 10 years
- contract can not exceed \$50,000 in cost share

# Conservation Stewardship Program (CStP)

CStP pays farmers who are improving conservation treatment on their working lands to encourage the continuation of farming and ranching practices that benefit soil, water, and air resources

## CStP Focus:

- Incentivizing new conservation
- Rewarding producers for high levels of additional stewardship
- Addressing local priority resource concerns

# PRIVATE LANDS PROTECTION PROGRAMS

Grassland Reserve Program (GRP)

Healthy Forests Reserve Program (HFRP)

Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP)

# Grassland Reserve Program (GRP)

Assists landowners to restore and protect grassland, rangeland, pastureland, shrub land and certain other lands and provides assistance for restoration.

1.22 million acres of grazing land to be enrolled and protected from conversion to other uses

# Healthy Forest Reserve Program (HFRP)

Assists landowners to restore and protect forest  
land resources and protects at risk species

# Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP)

Provides matching funds to help State, tribal, or local governments and non-governmental organizations purchase development rights to keep productive farm and ranchland in agricultural uses.

Reauthorized through 2012

# **LAND RETIREMENT PROGRAMS**

**Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)**

**Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)- Administered by FSA**

# Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)

A voluntary, non-regulatory, incentive-based program that helps private landowners, farmers and ranchers protect and restore wetlands on their property

Overall Program Acreage Cap 3,041,200 ac.  
(increase of 766,200 acres)

# WRP Key Points

## Enrollment Options:

- ✓ Permanent easements
- ✓ 30-year easements
- ✓ Restoration cost-share agreements

Prohibits enrollment of land in easements where ownership has changed during the previous 7 years for the purposes of enrolling in the WRP

Specifies cost-assistance for maintenance activities

# **NEW INITIATIVE**

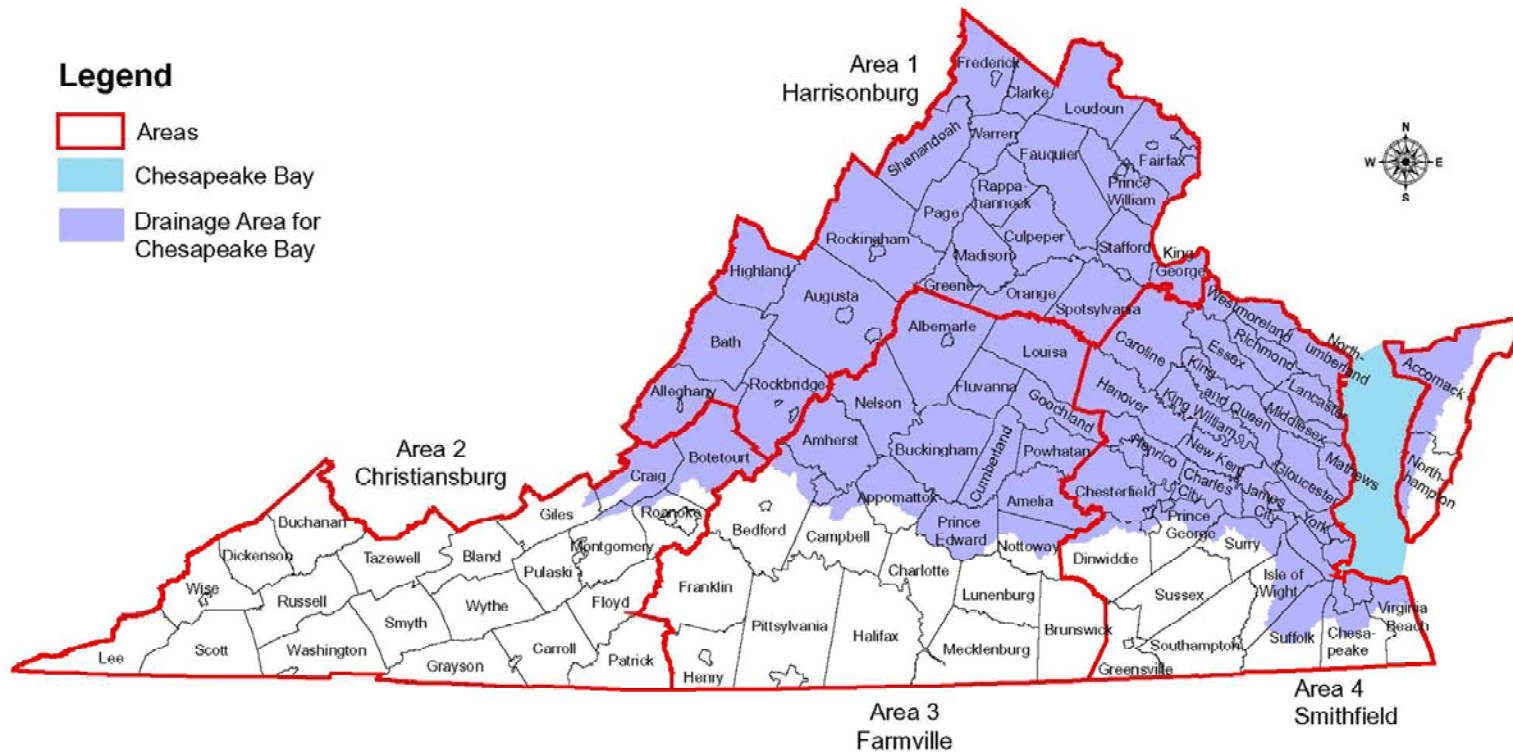
## **Chesapeake Bay Watershed Program**



### Chesapeake Bay Drainage Area

#### Legend

-  Areas
-  Chesapeake Bay
-  Drainage Area for Chesapeake Bay



Source: Watershed Boundary Dataset - Data developed with interagency standards - Primary members: NRCS, USGS, and EPA.

Scale: 1:3,000,000

# Chesapeake Bay Watershed Key Points

Provides additional program resources in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed

Provides assistance to producers to minimize nutrient and sediment loading

Special consideration and evaluation of applications in the Susquehanna, Shenandoah, **Potomac** and Patuxent River Basins

The funds are utilized through existing Farm Bill conservation programs and are available until expended.

# ADDITIONAL COST SHARE PROGRAMS

- Best Management Practices (BMPs)
  - Administered by Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs)
  - Address water quality and soil erosion concerns
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# Conservation Programs

- Eligible practices
  - refer to handout
- Grazing land protection (SL-6)
  - Exclusion from surface water required
    - 35 foot buffer
  - Wells, troughs, pumping plant, fence, and pipeline
  - Also, cross fencing, heavy use feeding area, spring developments and stream crossings



# Conservation Programs cont.

- Reforestation of erodible crop and pastureland (FR-1)
  - Planting pine or hardwood trees
  - Cropland, pastureland OR hay land
  - Land must have been in production two of past five years to qualify




# Conservation Programs cont.



- Woodland buffer filter area (FR-3)
  - Pine or hardwood
  - 35 -100 feet from the stream
  - Cropland or pastureland in production two out of the past five years to qualify

# Conservation Programs Con't

- FR-4 Land shaping and vegetation establishment on critically eroding areas on forest harvesting sites
  - Cost-share and tax credit available for measures needed to stabilize eroding areas
  - Not intended for current harvesting operations
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# Conservation Programs cont.



- Stream protection (WP-2)
  - Stream crossing with fencing
- Sod waterways (WP-3)
- Grass filter strips (WQ-1)
- Legume cover crop (WQ-4)

# Program Details

- Each practice has a lifespan for installation
  - 1-10 years
  - Varies by practice
- Spot checks throughout this lifespan
  - To ensure proper maintenance
- You must follow our specifications to receive reimbursement or incentive payment
  - Specifications are “How-to’s” that we provide to you
    - Such as fencing specifications
    - Or detailed instructions for a stream crossing including grading details and estimated quantity of materials, for example

## For More Information, visit:

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250C LeGrande Ave.  
Charlotte CH, VA 23923  
(434)542-5442 ext 3

