



# Chesapeake WILD Grants Program

## NFWF CONTACTS

### Jake Reilly

Program Director  
Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund  
jake.reilly@nfwf.org  
202-595-2610

### Tori Sullens

Program Manager  
Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund  
tori.sullens@nfwf.org  
202-888-1656

### Ragan Smith

Program Coordinator,  
Regional Programs  
ragan.smith@nfwf.org  
202-938-0625

## FUNDING PARTNERS

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Forest Service
- Altria

## ABOUT NFWF

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) works with partners to foster sustainable and impactful conservation solutions so that people and nature thrive together. Chartered by Congress in 1984, NFWF has grown to become the nation's largest conservation foundation. Since its founding, NFWF has funded more than 23,300 projects that have generated a total conservation impact of \$11.3 billion.

Learn more at [www.nfwf.org](http://www.nfwf.org)

### NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

1625 Eye Street, NW  
Suite 300  
Washington, D.C., 20006  
202-857-0166



Northern diamondback terrapin

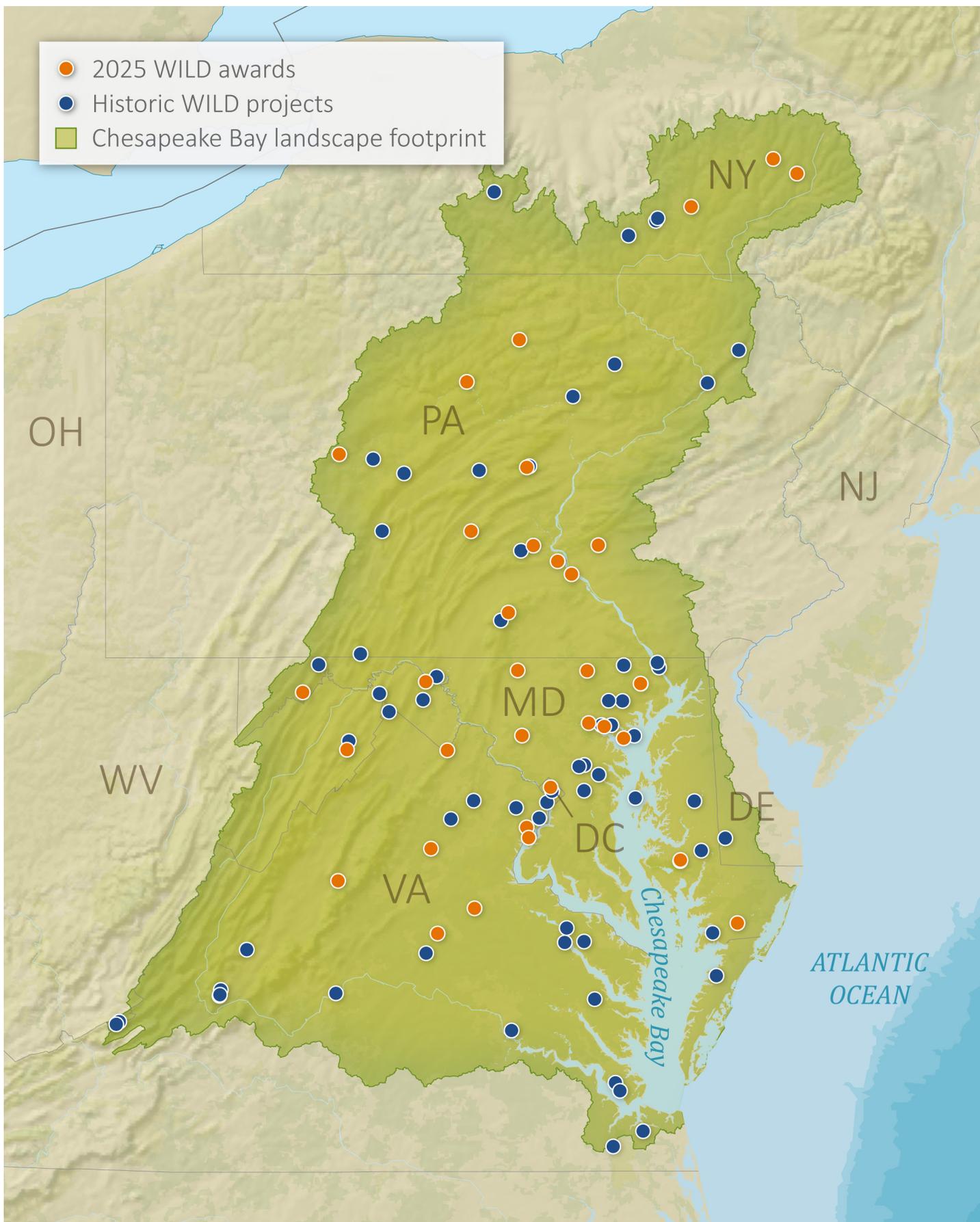
## OVERVIEW

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in partnership with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) announced a 2025-year round of funding for Chesapeake Watershed Investments for Landscape Defense (WILD) projects with additional funds provided by U.S. Forest Service and Altria. Thirty-three new or continuing conservation and restoration grants totaling nearly \$6.9 million were awarded. The 33 awards announced leveraged more than \$6 million in matching contributions from grantees, generating a total conservation impact of \$12.9 million.

The WILD Grants Program, authorized in late 2020, supports efforts to sustain natural resources and human communities, build capacity to address shared restoration and conservation priorities, and implements projects to conserve, steward, and enhance fish and wildlife habitats throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

NFWF manages the Chesapeake WILD program in partnership with government agencies and private corporations and in close coordination with the Chesapeake Conservation Partnership and federal-state Chesapeake Bay Program partnership. Major funding for the Chesapeake WILD Grants program is provided by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

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**IMPLEMENTATION**

**Advancing Connectivity of Wildlife Corridors and Water Trails in Rappahannock River Watershed (VA)**

Grantee: Friends of the Rappahannock  
 Grant Amount:..... \$364,200  
 Matching Funds:..... \$380,400  
 Total Project Amount:..... \$744,600  
 Support acquisition of nearly 21 acres and conserve an additional 6 acres of forest, wetland and open space, connecting a total of 117 acres of wildlife habitat along the state scenic Rappahannock River in downtown Fredericksburg. Project will work with the Virginia Department of Forestry to assess the forest resources on three properties and implement forest management best practices to improve forest health and wildlife habitat in the Rappahannock River watershed in Virginia.

**Creating Wildlife Corridors Across Washington, DC**

Grantee: Casey Trees  
 Grant Amount:..... \$499,800  
 Matching Funds:..... \$149,800  
 Total Project Amount:..... \$649,600  
 Leverage new geospatial data analysis to install trees and pollinator gardens to improve habitat connectivity for birds and reduce flooding in Washington, DC. Project will sustain five jobs, plant 700 trees, capture 100,000 gallons of stormwater, and install 10,000 square feet of pollinator gardens.

**Enhancing Dynamic Forest Block Restoration through the Kittatinny Ridge Forest Health Collaborative (PA)**

Grantee: The Nature Conservancy  
 Grant Amount:..... \$200,000  
 Matching Funds:..... \$240,700  
 Total Project Amount:..... \$440,700  
 Expand efforts of the Kittatinny Ridge Forest Health Collaborative for large-scale habitat restoration for key terrestrial and aquatic wildlife species within the Kittatinny Ridge of Pennsylvania. Project will develop a dynamic forest restoration block plan to guide forest restoration and management and freshwater habitat considerations for more than 50,000 acres.

**Enhancing Forest and Freshwater Habitat at Prettyboy Reservoir (MD, PA,VA, WV)**

Grantee: Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay  
 Grant Amount:..... \$500,000  
 Matching Funds:..... \$452,000  
 Total Project Amount:..... \$952,000  
 Convert a degraded red pine plantation into a mixed hardwood stand of native species to protect and enhance the brook trout populations in three tributaries of the Upper Gunpowder River and the main stem that feeds into Prettyboy Reservoir in Baltimore County, Maryland. Project will restore 32 acres of mixed hardwood forest, install 20 instream habitat structures for fish passage, and restore 17 acres of riparian habitat.



Timber rattlesnake

**Enhancing Wetland Habitat for Waterfowl at Mason Neck National Wildlife Refuge (VA)**

Grantee: Ducks Unlimited  
 Grant Amount:..... \$238,000  
 Matching Funds:..... \$238,300  
 Total Project Amount:..... \$476,300  
 Enhance tidal wetlands to improve habitat quality for waterfowl and other wildlife within the Elizabeth Hartwell Mason Neck National Wildlife Refuge in Fairfax County, Virginia. Project will provide engineering support, design and contracting for the removal of a berm and two water control structures that currently isolate High Point Creek impoundment from Occoquan Bay, resulting in restoration of 68 acres of tidal wetland habitat.

**Freshwater Mussel Conservation in the Unadilla River Watershed (NY)**

Grantee: Tioga County Soil and Water Conservation District  
 Grant Amount:..... \$500,000  
 Matching Funds:..... \$280,000  
 Total Project Amount:..... \$780,000  
 Collaborate with farmers, agricultural experts, water quality specialists and other key players to identify and overcome barriers to the adoption of agricultural and water quality best management practices across the Unadilla River Valley in New York. Project will protect 20 acres of land, restore 7 acres of floodplain, plant 8 acres of trees, and restore 5 acres of wetland habitat.



Tricolored bat

**Protecting Wildlife Habitat and Water Quality in Berkeley County (WV)**

Grantee: The Potomac Conservancy  
 Grant Amount:..... \$500,000  
 Matching Funds:..... \$732,000  
 Total Project Amount:.....\$1,232,000  
 Conserve 300 acres of floodplain and forests habitat on Back Creek in the Potomac River watershed in Berkeley County, West Virginia. Project will protect water quality and wildlife habitat for wood turtle, tricolored bats and green floaters.

**Restoring the Drury Run in the West Branch Susquehanna River (PA)**

Grantee: Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources  
 Grant Amount:..... \$500,000  
 Matching Funds:.....\$2,138,300  
 Total Project Amount:.....\$2,638,300  
 Reconnect the aquatic organism passage with a structure to restore connectivity and enhance resilience in Sproul State Forest, Pennsylvania. Project will replace three fish passage barriers and open over 4 miles of stream to benefit brook trout.

**Restoring Mixed Oak and Northern Hardwoods Forests in the Pennsylvania Wilds**

Grantee: American Bird Conservancy  
 Grant Amount:..... \$500,000  
 Matching Funds:..... \$500,000  
 Total Project Amount:.....\$1,000,000  
 Improve forest conditions in seven State Game Lands within the Pennsylvania Wilds region of the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Project will restore 795 acres of forest habitat,

implement supplemental planting of more than 181,400 tree seedlings and develop a monitoring strategy to efficiently assess tree seedling survival.

**COLLABORATIVE CONSERVATION**

**Accelerating Collaborative Conservation and Capacity in the Cacapon Watershed (WV)**

Grantee: Cacapon and Lost Rivers Land Trust  
 Grant Amount:..... \$199,800  
 Matching Funds:..... \$9,500  
 Total Project Amount:..... \$209,300  
 Increase the collaborative capacity of Cacapon Watershed Collaborative to advance fish and wildlife habitat protection and restoration in the Cacapon River watershed in West Virginia. Project will improve critical habitat through land protection, riparian restoration, landowner outreach and increased local community participation, and strengthen the collaborative to ensure long-term sustainability of the partnership.

**Advancing Collaborative Habitat Restoration and Conservation in the Rappahannock River Watershed (VA)**

Grantee: Friends of the Rappahannock  
 Grant Amount:..... \$188,100  
 Matching Funds:..... \$18,400  
 Total Project Amount:..... \$206,500  
 Address capacity gaps and prioritize water quality, land conservation and habitat restoration outcomes in the Rappahannock River watershed, Virginia. Project will empower local governments to develop and offer land conservation programs, develop a freshwater mussel restoration plan, host three wetland restoration workshops and conferences, provide technical training and professional development opportunities and support targeted outreach to private landowners bordering public lands.

### **Advancing Landscape-scale Restoration through the Envision the Choptank Partnership (DE, MD)**

Grantee: Center for Watershed Protection

Grant Amount:..... \$200,000

Matching Funds:..... \$0

Total Project Amount:..... \$200,000

Scale up coordination efforts and achieve landscape-scale improvements for fish and wildlife habitat, water quality, and human communities throughout the Choptank River watershed. Project will target implementation work in critical marsh habitat and an oyster restoration tributary, expand existing programs to incorporate nature-based solutions for flood mitigation, and leverage state implementation funding to carry out the Upper Choptank Whole Watershed Project to improve the local ecosystem.

### **Collaborative Conservation in the South Mountain and Kittatinny Ridge Landscapes (PA)**

Grantee: Appalachian Trail Conservancy

Grant Amount:..... \$163,200

Matching Funds:..... \$319,000

Total Project Amount:..... \$482,200

Leverage the Appalachian Trail Community Program and networks of partners in the Kittatinny Ridge and South Mountain of Pennsylvania areas to improve and expand priority fish and wildlife habitats. Project will support 10 watershed communities by providing cross-jurisdictional management planning and coordination capacity to implement restoration, conservation and connectivity efforts, and assist with project development and preparation for future funding and implementation opportunities.

### **Creating a Pipeline for Saltmarsh Restoration Efforts on Maryland's Lower Eastern Shore**

Grantee: National Audubon Society

Grant Amount:..... \$191,300

Matching Funds:..... \$51,400

Total Project Amount:..... \$242,700

Advance tidal marsh restoration on private lands to protect critical marsh habitat for saltmarsh sparrow and other at-risk marsh birds in the Dorchester and Somerset counties of Maryland. Project will develop a collaborative framework for landowner-specific outreach and engagement to reach at least 30 landowners and create a pipeline for implementing future saltmarsh restoration projects.

### **Cultivating the Pamunkey Freshwater Mussels Alliance in the Pamunkey River Watershed (VA)**

Grantee: Chesapeake Bay Foundation

Grant Amount:..... \$199,700

Matching Funds:..... \$44,100

Total Project Amount:..... \$243,800

Leverage the Pamunkey Freshwater Mussels Alliance to enhance freshwater mussel populations in Virginia's

Pamunkey River watershed. Project will advance knowledge and public awareness of freshwater mussel conservation through environmental sampling and partnership cultivation, utilize a newly developed species richness maps to identify habitat restoration priority areas and conduct outreach to connect landowners with available programs to help advance mussel habitat restoration.

### **Expanding the Shenandoah Regional Conservation Partnership for Greater Landscape Connectivity (VA)**

Grantee: Shenandoah National Park Trust

Grant Amount:..... \$200,000

Matching Funds:..... \$174,600

Total Project Amount:..... \$374,600

Expand land conservation efforts surrounding Shenandoah National Park in Virginia through direct outreach and facilitation of the Shenandoah Regional Conservation Partnership. Project will produce in-depth mapping of the region to identify strategic parcels of land along park boundaries, increase adoption of conservation practices on adjacent private and public lands, and implement a landscape-scale conservation initiative to link the park with other regional conservation efforts.

### **Increasing Capacity and Collaboration to Improve Habitat and Water Quality in Otsego County (NY)**

Grantee: Otsego County Conservation Association

Grant Amount:..... \$198,400

Matching Funds:..... \$20,800

Total Project Amount:..... \$219,200

Increase the capacity of local organizations in the Otsego County region to protect and enhance water quality and wildlife habitat, and promote outdoor recreation through the creation of a regional Habitat Conservation Plan and the development of a County Greenway Plan. Project will support two coordination positions to advance habitat and water quality projects amongst regional conservation groups and to oversee the creation and implementation of the Habitat Conservation Plan.

### **Increasing Habitat and Community Capacity in the Baltimore Metro Region (MD)**

Grantee: The Neighborhood Design Center

Grant Amount:..... \$200,000

Matching Funds:..... \$48,500

Total Project Amount:..... \$248,500

Advance community-centered watershed and habitat restoration planning and implementation across Baltimore City and Baltimore County, Maryland. Project will strengthen the capacity and connectivity of community-based organizations, foster cross-jurisdictional collaboration, and expand nature-based solutions that restore habitat for imperiled fish and wildlife while promoting community resilience and health.



Bog turtle

**Restoring Wildlife Habitat through Collaborative Prescribed Burns in Pennsylvania**

Grantee: The Nature Conservancy  
 Grant Amount:..... \$152,300  
 Matching Funds:..... \$31,300  
 Total Project Amount:..... \$183,600  
 Support the coordination and management of the Pennsylvania Certified Prescribed Burn Manager program to scale wildlife habitat restoration through controlled burning. Project will restore wildlife habitat on at least 1,000 acres, train 15 individuals to become Certified Prescribed Burn Managers, provide technical review or assistance for 35 prescribed burn plans, and engage 10 organizations in cross-jurisdictional prescribed burning.

**Strengthening the Friends of Hart Miller Island and Masonville Cove Conservation Partnership (MD)**

Grantee: Friends of Hart-Miller Island  
 Grant Amount:..... \$200,000  
 Matching Funds:..... \$49,700  
 Total Project Amount:..... \$249,700  
 Increase capacity for the long-standing conservation partnership of Masonville Cove and Hart-Miller Island, two restored sites that anchor environmental stewardship and public engagement in the Baltimore region. Project will increase partnership capacity by hiring two coordinators who will guide nonprofit formation, strategic planning, and strengthen organizational capacity for conservation work in the region.

**PLANNING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

**Advancing Habitat Conservation and Restoration for Bog Turtles in Harford County (MD)**

Grantee: Harford Land Trust  
 Grant Amount:..... \$75,000  
 Matching Funds:..... \$1,400  
 Total Project Amount:..... \$76,400  
 Gather data on bog turtle populations and their habitats and educate landowners about local and federal programs available to protect and restore bog turtle habitat. Project will improve understanding of bog turtle populations and site conditions through habitat assessments and species occurrence on 48 private properties and build lasting working relationships with relevant private landowners.

**Assessment and Planning for the Monocacy Grasslands Important Bird Area (MD)**

Grantee: Catoctin Land Trust  
 Grant Amount:..... \$65,700  
 Matching Funds:..... \$10,000  
 Total Project Amount:..... \$75,700  
 Complete an assessment of the Monocacy Grasslands Important Bird Area and engage partners in developing a plan to preserve biodiversity and critical habitat for grassland birds through outreach, technical assistance and program design. Project will develop an action plan for public outreach, engagement and implementation, as well as hold workshops with local farmers and landowners to showcase targeted conservation practices that can benefit grassland bird populations.



Great spangled fritillary

**Community-based Planning to Expand and Connect Pollinator Habitat in Baltimore County (MD)**

Grantee: NeighborSpace of Baltimore County  
 Grant Amount:.....\$74,900  
 Matching Funds:.....\$25,100  
 Total Project Amount:.....\$100,000  
 Employ a holistic approach to creating, restoring, connecting and stewarding pollinator habitat in Woodlawn, Baltimore County, that combines a community-driven planning process with a range of educational activities. Project will result in shovel-ready designs for new pollinator gardens at multiple sites, a concept design for a walking trail linking these habitats, and enhanced community capacity to observe, restore and steward pollinator habitat.

**Early Detection of Aquatic Invasive Species Using eDNA in the Upper Susquehanna Watershed (NY, PA)**

Grantee: The Catskill Center for Conservation and Development  
 Grant Amount:.....\$53,600  
 Matching Funds:.....\$0  
 Total Project Amount:.....\$53,600  
 Conduct early detection eDNA sampling in the Upper Susquehanna in order to identify aquatic invasive species that may be invading these waterways and then follow up with traditional sampling methods to determine the density and spread of the invasive populations as well as what management actions or spread prevention strategies will be most effective. Project will inform invasive species management plans in order to protect rare, threatened and endangered species in these waterways.

**Evaluating Freshwater Mussels and Aquatic Connectivity in the Upper Potomac River (MD, PA, WV)**

Grantee: University of Maryland  
 Grant Amount:.....\$72,700  
 Matching Funds:.....\$7,000  
 Total Project Amount:.....\$79,700  
 Evaluate freshwater mussel populations and aquatic connectivity in the Wills, Patterson and Evitts Creeks tributaries of the Upper Potomac River using eDNA, habitat assessments and mapping of barriers to aquatic passage. Project will help identify candidate areas for future mussel recovery, develop spatial tools to support implementation, strengthen cross-state partnerships in aquatic conservation and provide training for students.

**Feasibility Study and Alternatives Analysis for New Cumberland Dam (PA)**

Grantee: American Rivers  
 Grant Amount:.....\$75,000  
 Matching Funds:.....\$35,000  
 Total Project Amount:.....\$110,000  
 Conduct a feasibility study and alternatives analysis for the New Cumberland dam in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, to increase aquatic connectivity and fish passage on Yellow Breeches Creek. Project will evaluate potential water supply impacts, identify non-removal options such as portage or a fish passage facility, and work with an advisory group to help prioritize options for local decision-making.

**Michaux State Forest Headwaters Conservation Planning (PA)**

Grantee: Western Pennsylvania Conservancy  
 Grant Amount:.....\$31,300  
 Matching Funds:.....\$4,000  
 Total Project Amount:.....\$35,300  
 Utilize electrofishing, aquatic connectivity assessment and visual assessment to identify new brook trout and other priority species populations, expand knowledge of known populations, and gather information on potential restoration opportunities at Michaux State Forest. Project will fill knowledge gaps regarding brook trout and other priority species distributions and population changes over time.

**Planning and Technical Assistance to Address Abandoned Mine Drainage Impacts on Babb Creek (PA)**

Grantee: Trout Unlimited  
 Grant Amount:.....\$61,700  
 Matching Funds:.....\$14,600  
 Total Project Amount:.....\$76,300  
 Assess biological recovery status, find opportunities for new abandoned mine drainage treatment and provide technical guidance to the Babb Creek Watershed Association. Project will document watershed recovery status, analyze abandoned mine drainage sources under high and low flow conditions, prioritize areas for additional treatment and develop a comprehensive maintenance plan for the Babb Creek Watershed Association's 13 passive treatment systems.

**Prioritizing Land Parcels for Habitat Restoration for Threatened Pollinators and Other Wildlife (PA)**

Grantee: PA DMVA Environmental  
 Grant Amount:.....\$75,000  
 Matching Funds:.....\$13,000  
 Total Project Amount:.....\$88,000  
 Develop a habitat ranking tool to prioritize restoration of habitat for multiple species of concern on 28 parcels of land preserved for encroachment prevention purposes by Fort Indiantown Gap National Guard Training Center through the U.S. Department of Defense’s Army Compatible Use Buffer program. Project will create a dynamic ranking prioritization inventory for future habitat restoration and share the results with local, state and national conservation partners.

**Protecting Priority Wildlife Species and Preserving Heritage on Maryland’s Rural Eastern Shore (MD)**

Grantee: Upstream Alliance  
 Grant Amount:.....\$75,000  
 Matching Funds:.....\$0  
 Total Project Amount:.....\$75,000  
 Collaborate with the Accohannock Indian Tribe of Maryland to outline a conservation project that protects priority wildlife species and to design a community center that preserves heritage along Maryland’s lower Chesapeake Bay. Project will help safeguard the Tribe’s long-standing relationship with the land and water, support regional heritage, and enhance the stewardship of priority species, including the Northern diamondback terrapin, American black duck, black rail and saltmarsh sparrow.

**Strategic Land Conservation Planning for the Central Potomac Region (VA)**

Grantee: Northern Virginia Conservation Trust  
 Grant Amount:.....\$74,500  
 Matching Funds:.....\$61,200  
 Total Project Amount:.....\$135,700  
 Identify the most critical land conservation necessary to connect and protect the Central Potomac region’s imperiled fish and wildlife species. Project will prioritize 2,000 to 3,000 acres to permanently conserve in the Central Potomac region, including targeted priority areas for water quality, forest protection, coastal resilience and public access.

**Surveying Priority Oak-hickory Flora and Fauna at Rolling Ridge Conservancy (VA, WV)**

Grantee: Rolling Ridge Conservancy  
 Grant Amount:.....\$74,800  
 Matching Funds:.....\$7,700  
 Total Project Amount:.....\$82,500  
 Conduct a comprehensive survey of flora and fauna to guide conservation management practices that promote the health and sustainability of the woodland environment on 1,600 acres of the west facing slope of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Project will result in an up-to-date depiction of the priority species and habitats of this permanently



Saltmarsh sparrow

protected land and provide the basis for improving targeted conservation, management and restoration activities to support them.

**Updating Historical Data to Enhance Future Development Chesapeake Bay Land Conservation Initiatives**

Grantee: Land Trust Alliance  
 Grant Amount:.....\$195,000  
 Matching Funds:.....\$0  
 Total Project Amount:.....\$195,000  
 Update historic date of establishment (DOE) data, create a standard framework for recording future DOE information, and institutionalize the recording of DOE information in government and nonprofit databases. Project will establish a clearer understanding of when and where lands have been protected over time, enabling Chesapeake Bay conservation partners to identify and demonstrate benefits of past land conservation initiatives and better inform them moving forward.