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## Getting Started

We are interested in talking with landowners who have existing forests, as well as, those with areas on their property in need of planting. Contact the WCSCD to schedule a site visit to evaluate your property. There is no obligation or cost to have us stop by your property and discuss the program options and opportunities.

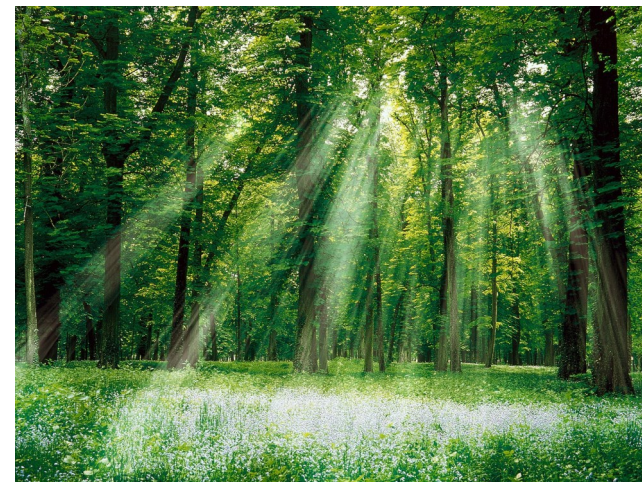
We will provide you with samples of all the documents needed to complete the enrollment process when we visit. If you are interested in proceeding after our visit, we will guide you through the rest of the process and seek approval for your project. The opportunity to conserve your forest resources or create a new forest, while realizing an income from your land, has never been greater than with the Forest Conservation Act Program.



*All programs and services offered by the Washington County Soil Conservation District and its partners are offered to all citizens without regard to race, color, sex, handicap, religion, age, or national origin.*

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# FOREST CONSERVATION ACT PROGRAM



**A cooperative program of forest creation and conservation between the Washington County Soil Conservation District, Washington County Commissioners, Washington County Planning Commission, Maryland Dept. of Natural Resources Forest Service and Washington County Landowners**

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# WHAT IS THE FOREST CONSERVATION ACT PROGRAM?

As development activities are being planned in Washington County, part of the planning process is to look at the impact of each development on our forest resources. In some instances, saving trees or planting trees at the development site is not the best option. In these cases, developers may provide money to the Forest Conservation Fund instead of planting or saving forests at their development site. These funds give an opportunity for conservation of existing forests and creation of new forests on public and private lands in Washington County. The Washington County Soil Conservation District (WCSCD) locates willing landowners who wish to participate in the program and recommends them for approval to the Planning Commission and County Commissioners. The WCSCD then manages the various stages of forest conservation or tree planting and monitors the sites for a period of 20 years following the establishment of the forest conservation areas. Conservation efforts are focused on the most sensitive areas along streams, steep slopes, and those areas providing wildlife or other environmental benefits. Each project site will be evaluated regarding environmental benefits, location, and other site factors before acceptance in to the program.



## Program Highlights

- Landowners agree to a permanent conservation easement on those acres enrolled in the program.
- Landowners are paid \$2,000 per acre for tree planting within 300 feet of a stream and \$1,800 per acre for tree planting beyond 300 feet from a stream.
- Landowners are paid \$1,500 per acre for existing forest acres regardless of how close those acres may be to a stream.
- Each easement area is surveyed, at no cost to the landowner, based on the area the landowner wishes to place under the easement.
- 100% of the cost of tree planting and maintenance for 2 years is paid for by the program at no cost to the landowner.

## Program Benefits

- Permanent protection for our valuable forest resources.
- Provides income from your land.
- No cost way to enhance your property.
- Enhance habitat diversity for wildlife.
- Helps conserve groundwater and surface water quality.



## Frequently Asked Questions

- **What kinds of trees will be planted?** The trees selected for planting will be based on the soil type, wetness, and other factors such as slope. A professional forester from Maryland's Department of Natural Resources Forest Service will develop a planting plan based on these considerations and the wishes of the landowner. Some examples of trees that have been planted in the past are: Ash, Maple, Oak, Sycamore, White Pine, and Bald Cypress.
- **Will I have to allow public access to my land if I agree to the easement?** Public access is not a requirement of the easement.
- **Can I still practice forestry on my land and harvest timber and cut firewood?** Harvesting of timber is restricted for the first 5 years of the easement, then trees may be harvested in accordance with an approved Forest Management Plan. Hazardous and diseased trees may be removed and could certainly be used for firewood at any time.
- **How many years is the easement?** The easement is permanent and runs with the land regardless of ownership. The easement is recorded in the land records along with the survey plat of the easement area.
- **For more information contact Denise Price, District Manager at the phone number, e-mail, or address below:**

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