

Cost-Share and Financial Assistance Programs

Maryland Forest Service · Maryland Department of Natural Resources

Several state and federal programs provide financial assistance to Maryland forest and farm landowners for implementing conservation and forest management practices. Programs differ in what they fund, who administers them, cost-share rates, and eligibility requirements. Cost-share rates and program availability change from year to year. Contact your local Maryland Forest Service office to confirm current rates and enrollment status before planning a project.

Note: This table covers operational cost-share programs only. Conservation easement programs — including Forest Legacy, MALPF, Rural Legacy, the Maryland Environmental Trust, and ACEP — are described separately on the Land Conservation and Easement Programs page.

Program	Administrator	What It Funds	Cost-Share Rate	Eligible Land	Contract Length	Acreage Req.	MFS Role
Mel Noland Woodland Incentive Program (WIP)	Maryland Forest Service	Thinning, pruning, prescribed burning, crop tree release, invasive species control, site preparation, seedling purchase and planting	Up to 65% reimbursement	Private non-industrial forestland	15-yr practice maintenance	5–1,000 ac	Administers directly
Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)	USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)	Silvicultural practices, stream exclusion fencing, prescribed burning, wildlife habitat improvement, invasive species control, nutrient management	Typically 50%; up to 90% for limited-resource producers	Cropland, pasture, private non-industrial forestland	1–10 yr contracts	None	Technical service provider
Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)	USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) with NRCS and Maryland Dept. of Agriculture	Riparian forest buffer establishment, wetland restoration, retirement of highly erodible cropland near waterways; includes annual land rental payments	Up to 87.5% combined (50% federal + 37.5% state MACS); plus annual rental payments	Farmland in riparian areas and near waterways	10–15 yr contracts	None	Technical service provider
Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)	USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)	Rewards existing conservation and adds new practices: invasive species management, prescribed burning, wildlife habitat enhancements, forest stand improvement layered on top of existing practices	Annual payments based on conservation performance	Private agricultural and forestland; entire operation enrolled	5-yr contracts	None	Technical service provider
Healthy Forests Healthy Waters (HFHW)	Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay and Maryland Forestry Foundation	Reforestation and afforestation of open land only; includes site preparation, planting, and three years of follow-up maintenance	100% — no cost to landowner	Open land suitable for reforestation; private ownership	10-yr landowner commitment; 3 yrs maintenance provided	1 ac min.	Technical assistance
Maryland Farm Stewardship Program	Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF)	Streamside forest buffers, upland tree planting, rotational grazing conversion; associated stream fencing and livestock watering where needed	100% — no cost to landowner	Private farmland and adjacent land	3 yrs maintenance provided	None	Supporting role

CREP Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program **CSP** Conservation Stewardship Program **EQIP** Environmental Quality Incentives Program **FSA** Farm Service Agency **HFHW** Healthy Forests Healthy Waters **MACS** Maryland Agricultural Water Quality Cost-Share **NRCS** Natural Resources Conservation Service **WIP** Mel Noland Woodland Incentive Program

Contact your local Maryland Forest Service office to confirm eligibility and current program status · dnr.maryland.gov/forests · 410-260-8531