

Chesapeake Watershed Investments for Landscape Defense (WILD) Program

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Friends came together
Conservation inspires us
Now the work begins

Haiku credit: Mike Slattery





Million Species At Risk of Extinction

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 2017 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.



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





Improve the functionality and connectivity of habitat for imperiled and listed fish and wildlife



Improve water health to benefit both human and fish and wildlife communities



Enhance climate resilience and readiness in natural and human communities using nature-based solutions



Equitably connect people with nature to improve wellbeing and grow support for restoration and conservation actions and funding



Build capacity to access funding and implement coordinated restoration and conservation activities; emphasis on underserved partners and communities

WILD Grant Cycles (FY22 & FY23)



In 2 years, ~\$28M
invested!

- 2022: **awarded \$3.5M to 12 projects**
 - **total conservation impact of nearly \$8M** (>\$4M match)
- 2023: **awarded \$7.7M to 25 projects**
 - **total conservation impact of nearly \$20M** (>\$12M match)

FY22 Wetland Funded Projects



- **Restore a 100-acre tidal inlet** on Kent Island (MD) that has been plagued with deteriorating water quality and habitat conditions
- **Improve management of 147 acres of tidal wetlands** for waterfowl and recreational benefit (VA – Doe Creek)
- **Permanently protect 300 acres of critical wildlife habitat and marsh migration corridor** between Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge and the Nanticoke River watershed (MD)



FY22 Aquatic/Diadromous Funded Projects

- Create a **Mussel Richness Map for Virginia** and a Conservation Buffer Layer that will prioritize buffer placement to best enhance mussel habitat (VA).
- Create a **James River Basin Freshwater Mussel Restoration Plan** that will serve as an important tool for state government departments, federal agencies, nonprofits, and funders in mussel restoration efforts in the James River (VA).
- **Preserve and restore one of two remaining populations of the endangered James spiny mussel.** Project will **permanently protect a 40 acre tract** critical to the resident James spiny mussel population (WV).
- **Permanently protect 1,000 acres of critical habitat** for Eastern brook trout, freshwater mussels, several federally endangered species, and 60 other species of greatest conservation need (WV).
- Complete **aquatic organism passage projects** on PA state game lands to benefit brook trout and other important and at-risk aquatic species. Project will result in **20 additional miles of accessible stream habitat** through assessment and design, implementation, and monitoring of culvert replacement projects (PA).

FY23 WILD Grant Impact: Ecological

- Excellent coverage of grant pillars (WILD goals)
 - Imperiled & Listed spp...turtles, mussels, fish, birds, butterflies...
 - Science and data gaps
 - Actions led by Indigenous and people of color
 - Cross-jurisdictional management & capacity-building



FY23 WILD Grant Impact: Ecological

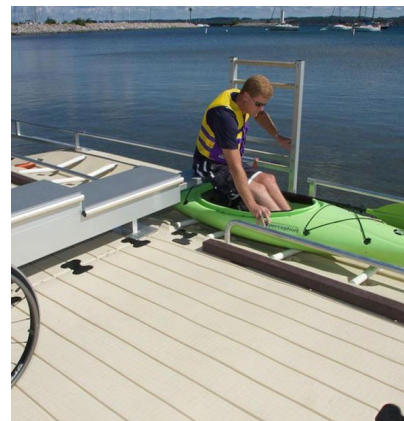


- Permanently protect forest, wetland, pollinator, and marsh habitat: **>4,700ac**
- Restore riparian forest and wetland habitat: **>32mi**
- Improve river and trail recreational access: **>31mi**
- Aquatic connectivity/river opened for migratory species: **>120mi**
- **Nature-based solutions** for stormwater & erosion management

FY23 WILD Grant Impact: Connecting People with Nature



- **Restore cultural connections with living resources**
- **Equitable access**
- **Community led and managed greenspaces and pollinator habitat**
- **Faith-based and injustice-led conservation actions**





FY23 WILD Grant Investments in Underserved Communities

- **83% of WILD proposals** are doing conservation work in places with **more diversity, higher poverty and unemployment, and lower household income**, than the national average!
 - **65% of WILD proposals** work in a **highly underserved community**
- **89% of FY23 WILD funds** will be invested in conservation actions in **underserved communities!**



JEDIA Through Chesapeake WILD Grants

- Co-created the initial WILD RFP to reflect community and regional conservation values and desired actions → *annual (fall) review & refresh*
- Presentation to WILD partner network about **NFWF's new DEIJ Action Plan for The Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund** → *standards and metrics adopted by WILD grant*
- **Monitor and track funding** → *where is \$ going relative to funding priorities articulated by 5 pillars and RFP*
- **Invest in and continually enhance grant technical assistance to meet capacity gaps** → *partnering with NFWF and CCP (and others)*

Chesapeake WILD FY24 RFP



- **FY24 RFP release** (late Jan/early Feb)
- **Applicant Webinar** (TBD)
- **FieldDoc Webinar** (TBD)
- **Proposal Due Date** (~mid-Apr)
- **Proposal Review Period** (Apr – Aug)
- **Awards Announced** (~Sept)

➤ **Proposal Technical Assistance**

- **WILD Proposal Labs** (Feb – Apr)
- **Webinars** (TBD)
- **NFWF Field Liaisons** (year-round)
- **One-on-one meetings** (year-round)





Questions?

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