



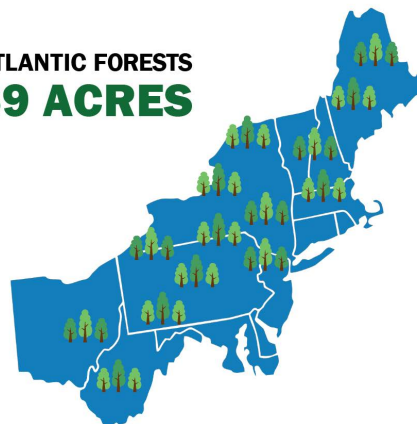
NORTHEAST MID-ATLANTIC PARTNERSHIP FOR FORESTS & WATER

Summer 2024

BACKGROUND

The Northeast Mid-Atlantic Partnership for Forests and Water (“the Partnership”) is an interagency, multi-partner collaborative to enhance concerted, science-based **restoration of priority forest landscapes to improve water quality and quantity in 13 states in the Northeastern and Mid-Atlantic United States.** The Partnership’s footprint encompasses Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Ohio. The region’s numerous streams, lakes, and reservoirs provide drinking water to 66 million people, or around 40% of the American population. Approximately 25% of U.S. forests are located in the Northeast and Midwest regions, with a total of **89,680,169 forested acres within the Partnership area.**

NORTHEAST MID-ATLANTIC FORESTS
89,680,169 ACRES



Forests filter sediments and other pollutants before they reach water sources, providing clean water that is vital to communities and habitats. Regional collaboration helps mitigate the multiple pressures that threaten forests (e.g., fragmentation, invasive species, abiotic disturbances) and highly effective coordination across states, multiple levels of government, and non-governmental partners is essential given the multitude of entities with management responsibility related to forests and water. **The Partnership creates a space for collaboration and alignment** between the forest and water sectors to maximize investments and improve program delivery and outcomes across the region. It also includes and supports regional and state-led efforts that work to restore and protect forested lands and priority watersheds.

VISION: Resilient and well-managed forests that improve water resources and create healthy watersheds.

MISSION: To create a collaborative network that leverages resources to manage, restore, and conserve forests and protect water resources.

VALUES IN ACTION: The values of the Partnership (see graphic to the right) create the framework for making governing and operational decisions. We are committed to creating respectful spaces for intentional collaboration that allow for equitable input. In making all voices heard, we produce outcomes that are both community-informed and focused.



WHAT'S NEW IN 2024?

In June 2024, the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) was awarded a second Landscape Scale Restoration grant for the Partnership. This new grant will enable us to increase collaborative efforts, expand the partnership, develop and disseminate additional resources, and implement new projects in West Virginia and Pennsylvania. Looking ahead in 2024, we will further build the programmatic structure for the sustainability of the Partnership and create unified messaging materials for elevating and expanding the Partnership. Members will begin regional scoping for partner alignment to build on work that enhances the Partnership without duplicating efforts previously undertaken.

2024 Regional Partnership efforts include:

- Establishing a governance structure and developing a charter (finalized June 2024).
- Launching a unifying logo and strategic plan with a vision, mission, and goals for the Partnership (finalized June 2024).
- Designing and launching web-accessible communications to share materials and updates with members, including a recurring newsletters and website (launching in July 2024).
- Documenting and sharing accomplishments through regular touch points and reports.
- Organizing meetings and creating tools to engage landowners and align partners.
- Support state-led efforts and implementation of on-the-ground projects in the region.

WHAT ARE STATE IMPLEMENTERS DOING THIS YEAR?

In 2024, the Partnership plans to support implementation activities through several projects across the Northeast Mid-Atlantic region.

In Ohio, implementers will begin by providing oversight and guidance to conservation efforts in approximately 30 counties within the Appalachian region that are classified as “most disadvantaged” or “disadvantaged” by the University of Michigan’s “Index of Deep Disadvantage” equity maps. The Partnership will analyze issues of program access and equity through working group discussions and outcomes. These working group discussions will identify and assess the barriers that prevent forestry and water managers and the communities they serve from accessing federal, state, local, and NGO programs. Working groups will also discuss potential approaches to improving the effectiveness of outreach strategies and engagement with historically underserved forest owners.

In Connecticut, implementers will continue to support collaborative partnerships that equip landowners with the resources and knowledge necessary to make informed decisions about their forested lands. Connecticut implementers will work to restore riparian buffers in up to 50 acres in priority watersheds in Connecticut. A large percentage of people who will benefit from the proposed watershed projects within Connecticut (e.g., greater New Haven area) are low income and people of color. Low-income rural communities (e.g., Putnam) will also benefit from the proposed drinking water supply protection projects, including those served by private wells.

In West Virginia, implementers will meet in May to identify priority forested areas and critical watersheds for potential implementation projects that serve local communities. Implementers will also support projects that target wildlife habitat improvements, state forest action plan priorities, and water quality protection. West Virginia’s Association of Conservation Districts (WVACD) will collaborate with conservation districts in target watersheds to leverage their community relationships to educate landowners about the program and associated practices to facilitate their participation and practice adoption.