



Chesapeake Bay Program's (CBP)
Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC)
Workshop

**Healthy Forests: Proactive Strategies for Managing
Threats and Promoting Conservation**

February 24-25th, 2026

The Delaplaine Arts Center

Frederick, Maryland

[Workshop Webpage](#)

****Exact Times Are Subject to Change****

This meeting will be recorded to assure the accuracy of meeting notes.

Workshop Objective: Identify major stressors to forest health in the Chesapeake Bay watershed and evaluate how they affect forest resilience, water quality, and Bay goals; explore proactive management and stewardship strategies (e.g., silviculture, invasive species control, policy tools, and community engagement) to strengthen forest conservation beyond traditional easements and develop actionable recommendations for the Partnership.

- **Day 1 Objective:** Identify and understand the major stressors to forest health and resilience, and how they interact to affect Bay outcomes.
- **Day 2 Objective:** Develop and prioritize actionable recommendations for proactive forest management and stewardship, distinguishing short-term from long-term strategies.

February 24, 2026

8:45 am **Coffee & Light Breakfast (Provided)**

9:15 am **Welcome and Introductions**

Steering Committee members/co-chairs will kick off the workshop with a welcome and introductions and outline the objectives of the workshop. Summary of the new Forestry goals in the [Bay Watershed Agreement](#).

9:45 am **Conceptual Model Discussion**

Steering Committee introduces a draft model connecting stressors to forest health, water quality, and Bay outcomes. Participants requested to provide feedback and refinement.

10:00 am **Level-Setting Plenary: Major Ecological Stressors to Forest Health**

Presentations from 2–3 experts on key stressors (climate change, land use, invasives, pests/disease, etc.) w/ Q&A.

- *Chris Hayes (USDA FS)*
- *Matt Hurd (MD DNR FS)*
- *Jill Rose (PA DCNR)*

11:00 am **20-minute Break**

11:20 am **Panel: People and Forests**

Panel of 3–4 short talks w/ Q&A.

- *Allyson Brownlee Muth (Center for Private Forests, PSU)*
- *Isaac Hametz (The Nature Conservancy)*
- *Jennifer Willoughby (City of Frederick)*
- *Jon Geyer (Hardwood Development Council)*

12:20 pm **Lunch (provided)**

- 1:20 pm** **Panel: Lessons from Practice** — *Workshop Co-chair, Craig Highfield, facilitator*
Case studies of proactive forest management (silviculture, invasive species control, community-level efforts) followed by Q&A.
- *Roy Brubaker (PA DCNR)*
 - *Nancy Baker (Land steward, landowner)*
 - *Matt Pienkowski (Woodland Stewardship Network, the Alliance)*
 - *Dave Mausel (USFS)*
- 2:20 pm** **20-minute Break**
- 2:40 pm** **Breakout Groups: Stressors in Context**
- 4:00 pm** **Breakout Group Report-Out and Discussion**
- 4:30 pm** **Wrap-Up Discussion: Key Takeaways from Day 1** – *led by workshop Steering Committee*
- 4:45 pm** **Recess**
- 4:45 pm** **Optional Dinner**
- February 25, 2026**
- 8:45 am** **Coffee & Light Breakfast (Provided)**
- 9:00 am** **Recap of Day 1 & Framing for Day 2 – Steering Committee**
Summary of Day 1 outcomes and Framing Day 2 focus: recommendations and next steps.
- 9:15 am** **Lightning Talks / Panel: Tools and Approaches for Scaling Forest Management**
5-6 talks (or one panel) highlighting practical tools and policies, that have supported proactive forest management, followed by Q&A.
- *Amy Shields (Allegheny Hardwoods Utilization Group, Allegheny Forest Health Collaborative)*
 - *Guy Dunkle (Foundation for Sustainable Forests)*
 - *Sabina Dhungana (VA DOF)*
 - *Phyllis Joris (Neighbor Space)*
 - *Jeff Larkin (IUP)*
- 10:30 am** **Breakout Groups: Strategies for Action**
- What proactive management/stewardship strategies can address the priority stressors?
 - Short-term vs. long-term approaches
- 11:30 am** **20-minute Break**
- 11:50 am** **Breakout Out Groups Report Out**
- 12:30 pm** **Keynote: Inspiring Forest Futures** – *Ethan Tapper*
- 2:00 pm** **Group Discussion: Synthesis and Next Steps** – *led by workshop Steering Committee*
This session will summarize key takeaways from both days and focus on identifying three priority areas for follow-up.
- 3:00 pm** **Closing Remarks and Workshop Conclusion** – *led by workshop Co-Chairs*
- 3:15 pm** **Adjourn**