



Chesapeake Bay Program's (CBP)
Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC)
**Healthy Forests: Proactive Strategies for Managing
Threats and Promoting Conservation**
Workshop | 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** – *Katie Brownson (USFS), Craig Highfield (ACB)*
Steering Committee co-chairs will kick off the workshop with a welcome and introductions. They will outline the objectives of the workshop and summarize the new Forestry goals in the [Bay Watershed Agreement](#).

9:45 am **Conceptual Model Discussion** – *Matt Baker (UMBC)*
Steering Committee will introduce a draft model connecting stressors to forest health, water quality, and Bay outcomes. Participants are requested to provide feedback and refinement.

10:00 am **Level-Setting Plenary: Major Ecological Stressors to Forest Health**
Experts will present on important ecological stressors affecting forest health in the Chesapeake Bay watershed (e.g., climate change, land use, invasive species, pests/disease) and the management relevance of these stressors.

Panelists:

- *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**
Panelists will talk about the roles of people (e.g., landowners, community groups, stewardship programs, local governments) in forest management.

Panelists:

- *Allyson Brownlee Muth (Center for Private Forests, PSU)*
- *Isaac Hametz (The Nature Conservancy)/[Michele Romolini](#) or [Donnelle Keech](#)*
- *Jenny Willoughby (City of Frederick)*
- *Jon Geyer (Hardwood Development Council)*

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

- 1:20 pm Panel: Lessons from Practice**
Case studies of proactive forest management that will help inform the strategy moving forward.
- Panelists:
- Kyle Myers (PA DCNR), Roy Brubaker (PA DCNR)
 - Nancy Baker (land steward, landowner)
 - Matt Pienkowski (Woodland Stewardship Network, ACB)
 - Dave Mausel (USFS)
- 2:20 pm 20-minute Break**
- 2:40 pm Breakout Groups: Stressors in Context**
Participants will discuss the urgency of stressors, examine how multiple stressors interact, and identify knowledge gaps in understanding stressors to forest health.
- 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**
STAC Staff will share a list of nearby restaurants within walking distance of the workshop location.

February 25, 2026

- 8:00 am Optional Tour of the Delaplaine Arts Center**
Staff-guided tour of the Delaplaine Arts Center, including information on the facility's history, programs, and exhibitions.
- 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
- 9:15 pm Lightning Talks: Tools and Approaches for Scaling Forest Management**
Lightning talks highlighting practical tools and policies that have supported proactive forest management.
- Speakers:
- Guy Dunkle (Foundation for Sustainable Forests)
 - Jeff Larkin (IUP/ABC)
 - Sabina Dhungana (VA DOF)
 - Amy Shields (Allegheny Hardwoods Utilization Group, Allegheny Forest Health Collaborative)
 - Phyllis Joris (Neighbor Space)
- 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**

DRAFT