



Inland Bays Watershed Reforestation Plan

Project Status:
Plan completed in 2018
Implementation Ongoing

Project Contact:

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Project Partner:

Sussex Conservation District

Funding:

Surface Water Matching Planning
Grant from the Delaware Water
Infrastructure Advisory Council

Project Timeline:

The reforestation plan was
completed in 2018.

Implementation of projects
outlined in the plan began in 2019
and will be completed by Spring
2025.



Project Summary

Background

Land use in the Inland Bays watershed is rapidly changing from farms and forests to developed lands and impervious cover. Between 1992 and 2017, forested land within the watershed decreased by 9.2 square miles. These changes contribute to water quality problems in our Bays. Reforesting agricultural parcels is one of the most cost-effective ways to improve water quality while also providing other benefits, such as valuable habitat for wildlife and sequestering carbon from the atmosphere.

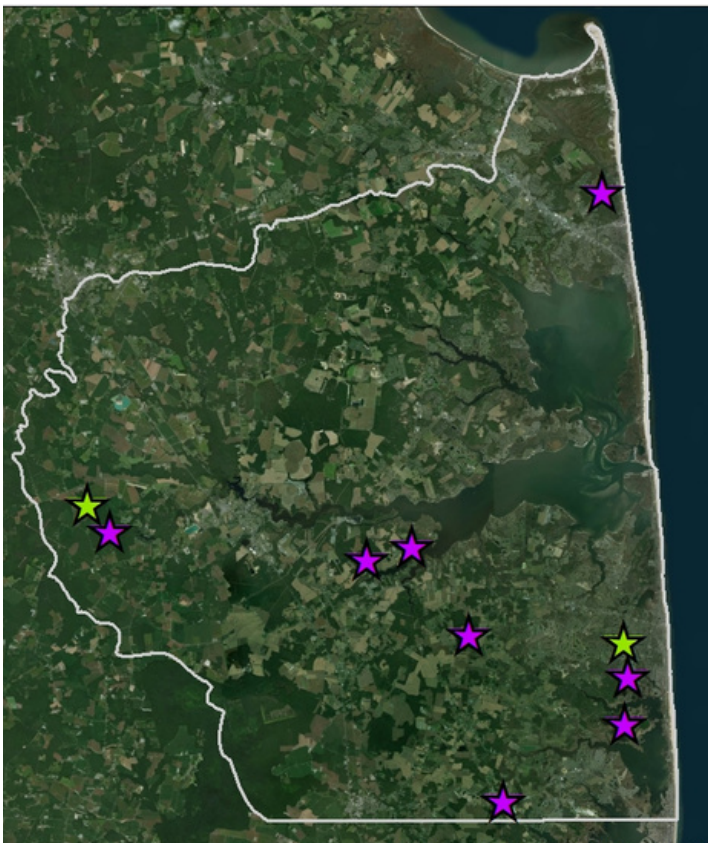
Project Description

The Center developed a geospatial Watershed Reforestation Model that ranked parcels within the Inland Bays watershed according to the expected water quality benefits that would be gained by reforestation or other habitat restoration projects. The Sussex Conservation District assisted with outreach to owners of high-ranking parcels, and conceptual plans were created for 10 parcels.

Objectives

The Watershed Reforestation Model was created to help the Center:

- Rank and publicly and privately owned lands and prioritize them in the Watershed Reforestation Model.
- Conduct outreach to landowners of high-ranking parcels.
- Develop conceptual designs for reforestation projects with project information and estimated cost.
- Identify funding and begin project implementation with partners/landowners.



This map shows the reforestation projects included in the Center's Watershed Reforestation Plan. The purple sites are on public land and the two green sites are on private land.

Completed and Proposed Projects

In 2019-2020, the following reforestation projects were completed:

- Assawoman Wildlife Area, Sassafras Landing (3.5 acres restored)
- Assawoman Wildlife Area, Muddy Neck Tract (13.4 acres restored)
- Midlands Wildlife Area, Morris Tract (20 acres restored)
- Sussex County-owned parcel on Burbage Road (9 acres restored)

Future project plans include reforesting 20 acres at the Assawoman Wildlife Area, Piney Point Tract, and 6 acres along Route 54 in Sussex County.

Project Highlights

The completion of all reforestation projects included in the plan will result in:

- 308.8 acres of land reforested
- 5,850 pounds of total nitrogen reduced per year
- 164.4 pounds of total phosphorus reduced per year
- 136 acres interior forest created
- 331.8 million pounds of carbon dioxide will be sequestered over 20 years

CCMP Focus Area

This project fulfills objectives outlined in the Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan (CCMP) for the Delaware Inland Bays:

- Focus Area: Water Quality Management
- Objective and Action: Develop an implementation plan for remaining Pollution Control Strategy actions that includes a time frame for completion, interim goals, and identified implementation sources.



Volunteers plant trees at Sassafras Landing reforestation project in Assawoman Wildlife Area.



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The Delaware Center for the Inland Bays is a nonprofit organization established in 1994 to promote the wise use and enhancement of the Inland Bays and its watershed. With its many partners, the Center conducts public outreach and education, develops and implements restoration projects, encourages scientific inquiry and sponsors research. To learn how you can get on board with the bays, please visit www.inlandbays.org and follow us on Facebook @deinlandbays!