



# Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement: Land Conservation and Public Access progress and recommendations toward 2025 and beyond

Presented by:

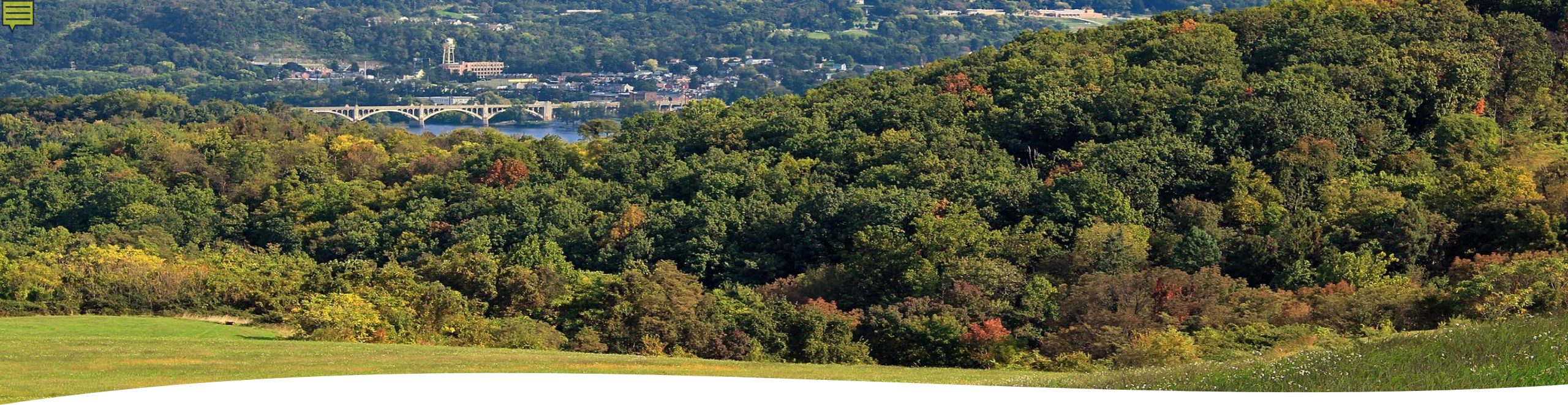
Wendy O'Sullivan, Superintendent,  
National Park Service, Chesapeake Office

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Chesapeake Conservancy

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Community Engagement,  
National Aquarium

Darius Johnson, Executive Director,  
Kent Attainable Housing





## Overview of today's presentation

- Brief background on land conservation
- Conservation in the Chesapeake Bay watershed
- *America the Beautiful* and “30 x 30”
- Where do we stand today and reasons for success?
- Where do we go from here?
- Ideas for Maryland, Virginia, and Pennsylvania
- Public water access in the Chesapeake Bay watershed





## *Brief background on land conservation*

- **What is land conservation?**
- **Why do we conserve land**
  - Wildlife and habitat
  - Clean air and water quality / quantity
  - Equitable outdoor recreation
  - Historic / cultural preservation
  - Agriculture and natural resources
  - Scenic vistas and quality of life
  - Economic benefits from all the above
- **Who is involved?**



What is it all about??





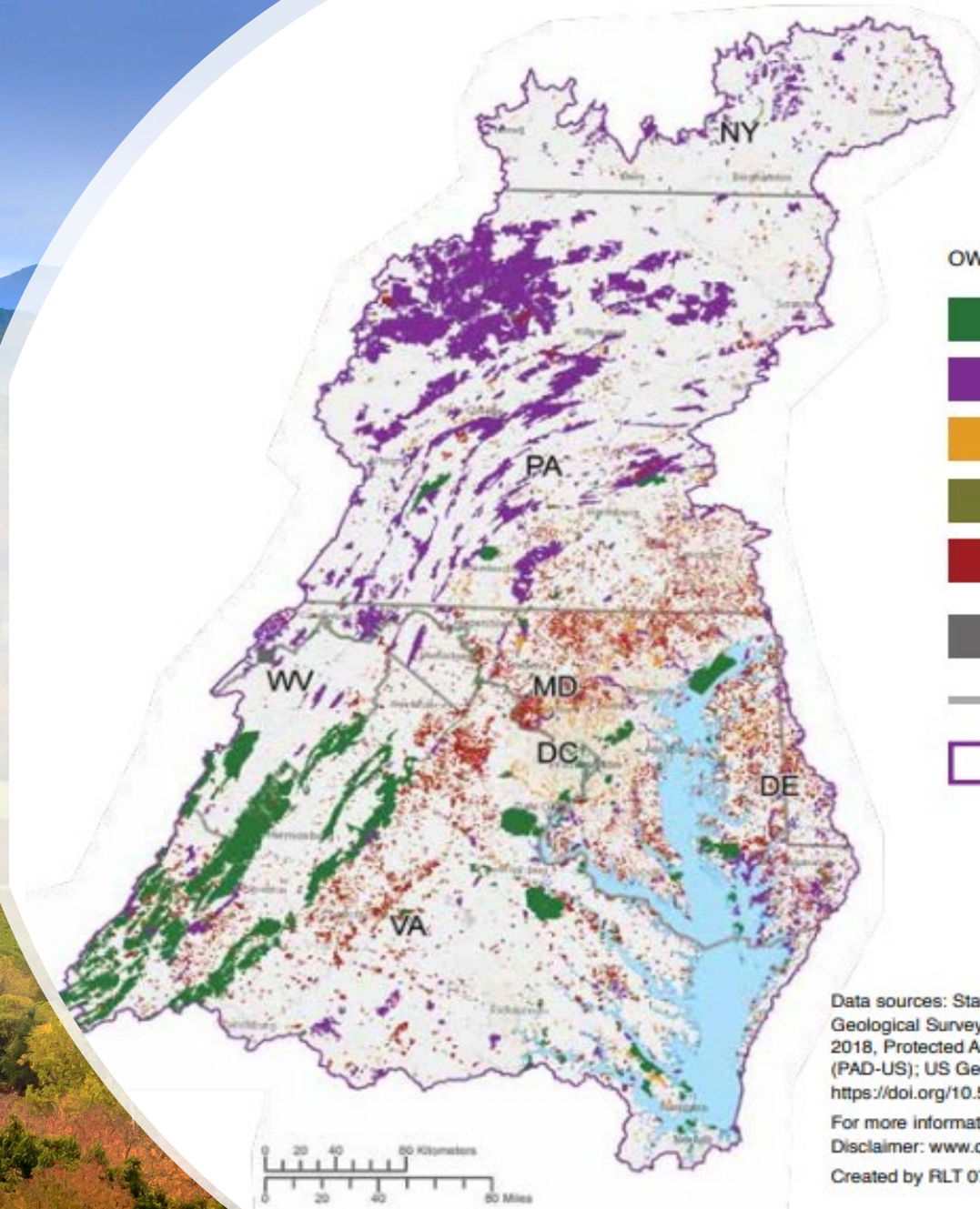
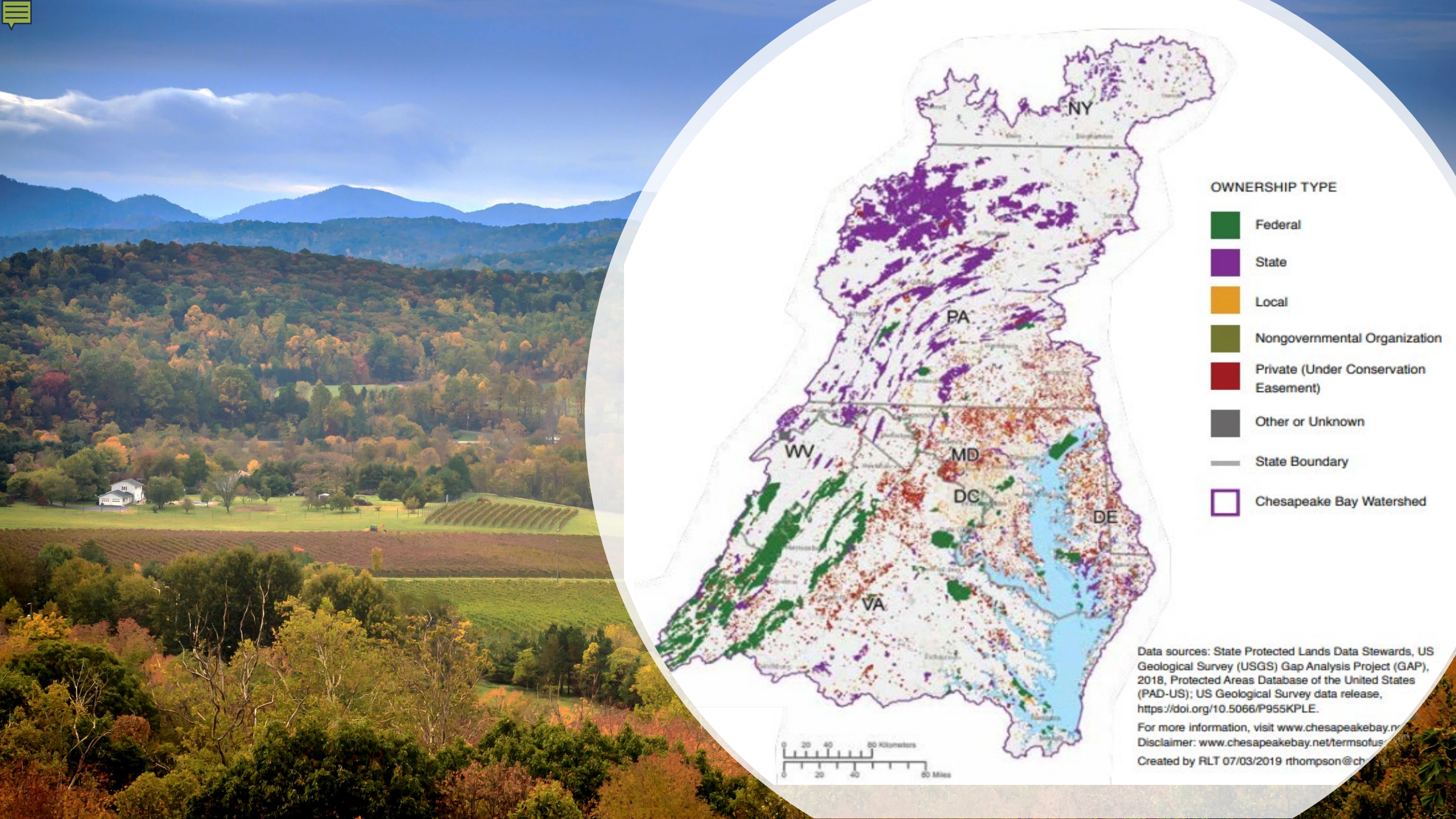
# Conservation in the Chesapeake Bay watershed

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- Conservation is a priority in the Chesapeake Bay clean-up
- Land Conservation is related to other goals (water quality, habitat, public access, climate resilience)
- States have historically been the leader
- Looking ahead: land use pressure, population growth, and climate change







OWNERSHIP TYPE

-  Federal
-  State
-  Local
-  Nongovernmental Organization
-  Private (Under Conservation Easement)
-  Other or Unknown
-  State Boundary
-  Chesapeake Bay Watershed

Data sources: State Protected Lands Data Stewards, US Geological Survey (USGS) Gap Analysis Project (GAP), 2018, Protected Areas Database of the United States (PAD-US); US Geological Survey data release, <https://doi.org/10.5066/P955KPLE>.

For more information, visit [www.chesapeakebay.net](http://www.chesapeakebay.net).  
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# *America the Beautiful* and “30 x 30”

- **Great American Outdoors Act**
  - Full and permanent funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)
- **“30 x 30” and “Half-Earth”**
  - Global threat to biodiversity and species abundance
  - Scientific consensus on conservation benchmark to protect nature / wildlife
- ***America the Beautiful* and “30 x 30”**
  - U.S. response to a global 30% by 2030 conservation goal
  - Locally-led and implemented, but supported by federal agencies through funding, agency coordination, and resources like mapping






# Conservation in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed: Where do we stand today?

Conserved lands by jurisdiction within Chesapeake Bay watershed	Acres
Delaware	108,522
D.C.	10,292
Maryland	1,773,792
New York	327,281
Pennsylvania	3,550,179
Virginia	2,987,078
West Virginia	401,312
Total	9,158,456





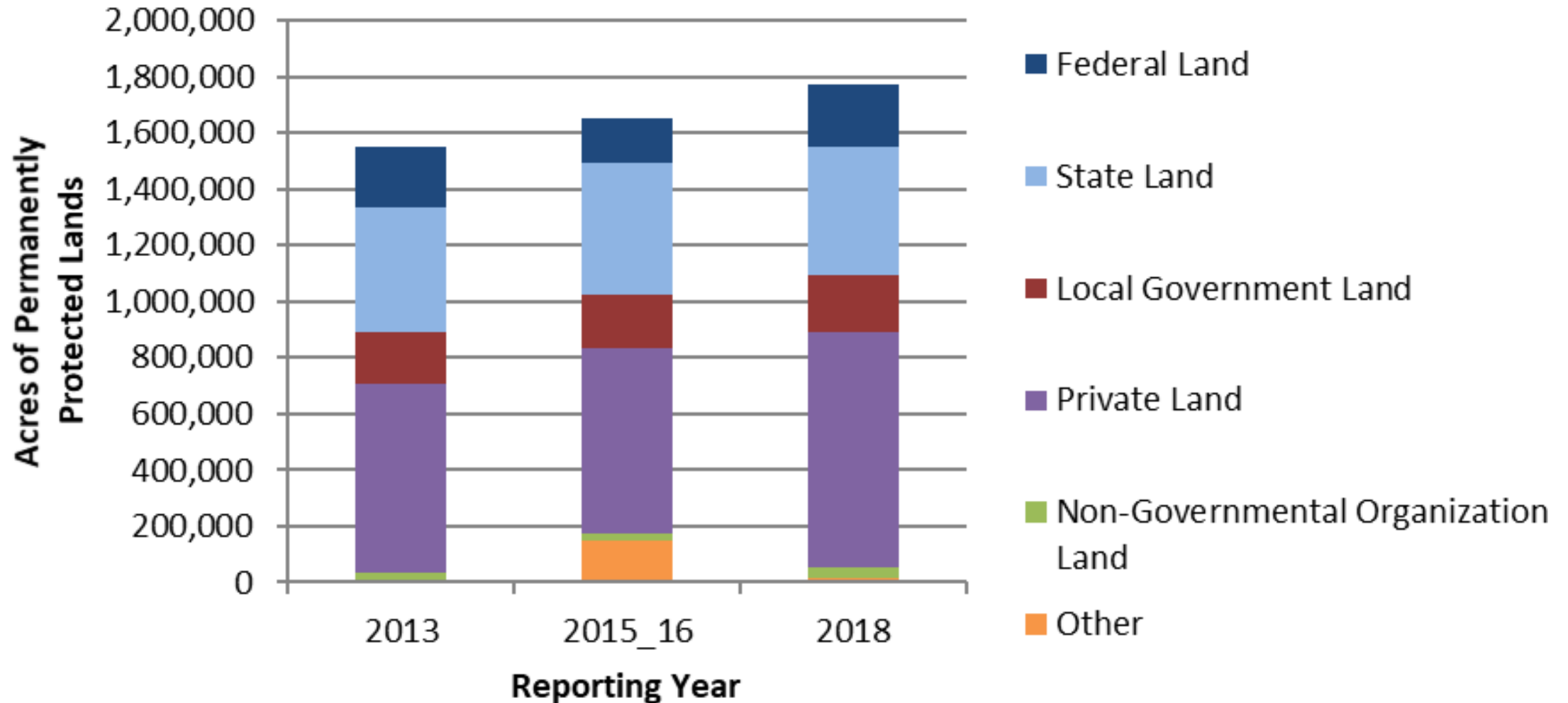
# Conservation in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed: Where do we stand today?

Conserved land ownership 2018	Acres
State governments	4,065,638
Federal government	2,309,248
Private landowners	2,105,727
Local governments	415,605
Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)	133,826
Other	128,412
Total	9,158,456



# Maryland

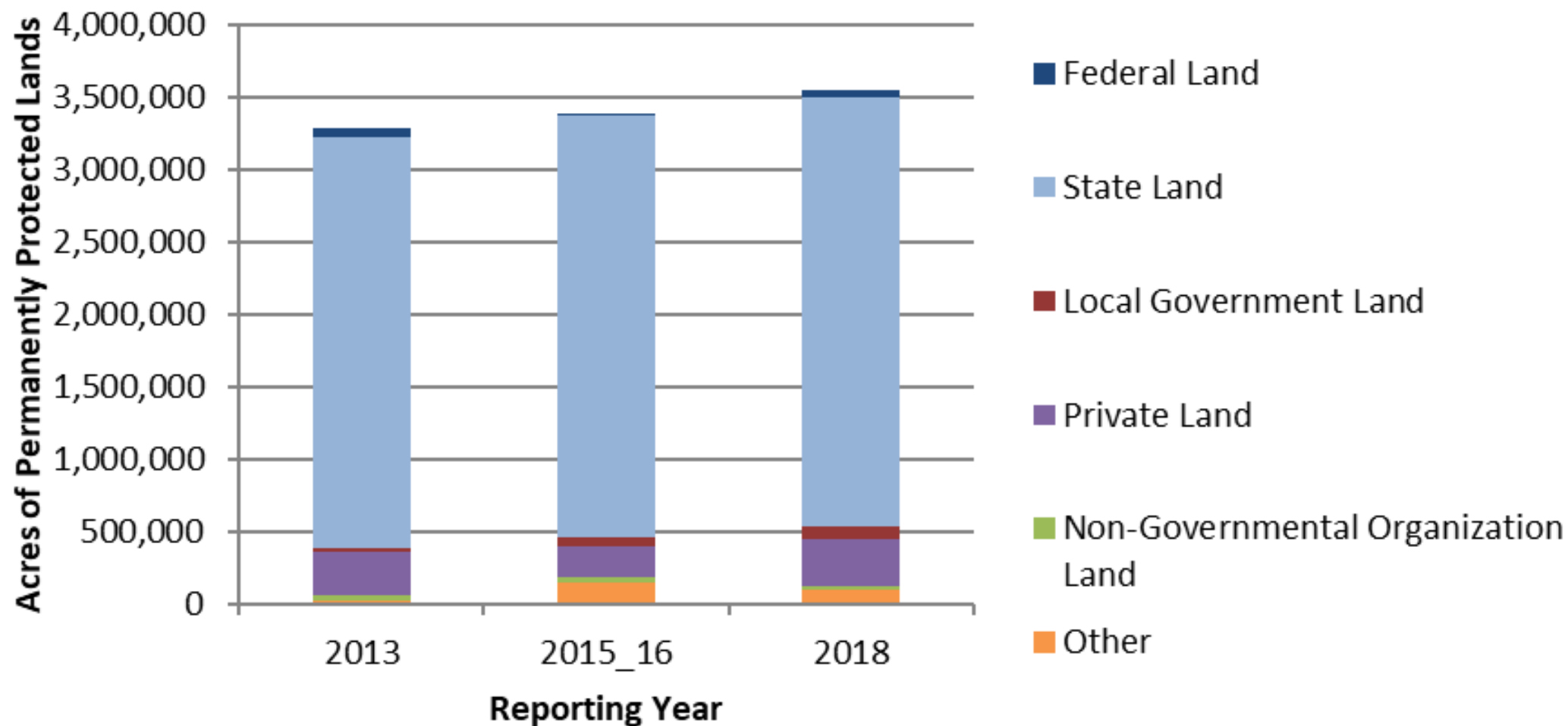
## Maryland Protected Lands by Ownership Type





# Pennsylvania

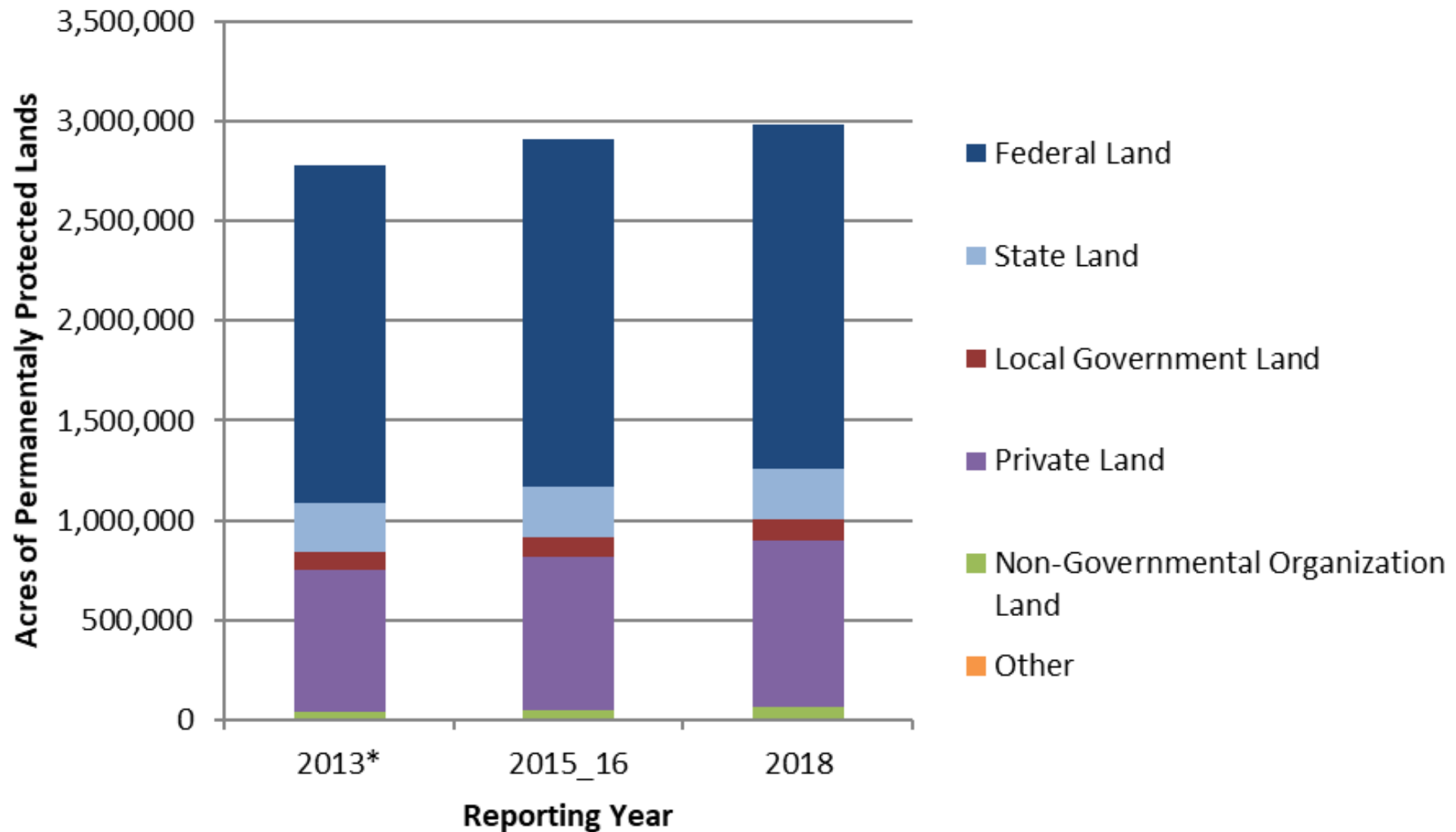
## Pennsylvania Protected Lands by Ownership Type






# Virginia

## Virginia Protected Lands by Ownership Type







# Why this has been successful?

Strong state funding overall

Strong land trust community

Rivers of the Chesapeake

Chesapeake Conservation Partnership

Progress is 'fixed'





# Where do we go from here?

Land conservation goal is on track

Biden Administration's support and initiatives

The idea of a reach goal is happening nationally and internationally

This is something to consider for the Chesapeake



# Ideas for Maryland

- Fully fund Program Open Space
- Re-program transfer tax repayments to: 1.) support private land trusts via Revolving Loan Fund, 2.) support greenspace in urban communities through small-acre acquisition grant program and directing funding to Community Parks and Playgrounds, and 3.) supporting stewardship and infrastructure on public lands
- Resolve ACEP-ALE and MALPF issue



A blue geometric graphic on the left side of the slide, consisting of a large blue square with a smaller, darker blue square partially overlapping its left side, creating a layered effect.

## Ideas for Virginia

- Establish dedicated funding for conservation
- Increase funding for conservation grant programs






## Ideas for Pennsylvania

- Retain dedicated funding through the Keystone, Recreation, Parks and Conservation Fund



A photograph of four people, likely a family, jumping joyfully into the water. They are all wearing bright orange life vests. The person on the far left is a woman with dark hair, wearing a dark long-sleeved shirt and dark pants. The person next to her is a man with dark hair, wearing a dark long-sleeved shirt and dark pants. The person in the center is a woman with dark hair, wearing a white t-shirt and blue pants. The person on the far right is a woman with blonde hair, wearing a green and yellow patterned shirt and dark pants. They are all smiling and have their arms raised in the air. The background shows a body of water and some structures in the distance.

# Public water access across the Chesapeake watershed

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# Public access in the Chesapeake Bay watershed

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- Public access points to the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries
- The 2014 Bay Agreement goal: add 300 new public access sites by 2025, with a strong emphasis on boating, swimming and fishing, where feasible







# Public access: by the numbers

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- **206:** Between 2010 and 2020, 206 boat ramps, fishing piers and other public access sites were opened in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.
- **69%:** We are at 69% of the Watershed Agreement goal.
- **1,345:** Total number of access sites: 1,345 to date.



# Public access: by the numbers

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Chesapeake Bay watershed Public access sites by jurisdiction		Sites
Delaware		8 total (2 added since 2010)
D.C.		24 total (2 added since 2010)
Maryland		634 total (62 added since 2010)
New York		39 total (11 added since 2010)
Pennsylvania		214 total (33 added since 2010)
Virginia		380 total (94 added since 2010)
West Virginia		46 total (2 added since 2010)
Total		1,345 sites



# What's Next for Public Access?

Hint: It's much  
more than just  
about the  
numbers!



**Different ways people access  
nature across the Chesapeake  
watershed**

Parks/Trails  
Water Access  
Views & Virtual



**Equity and public access**



**Quality of public access sites &  
experiences**



**Climate resilience of public access sites**



## Equality



## Equity





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## **PUBLIC ACCESS, COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS, PROGRAMMING/ENGAGEMENT**



Curtis Bennett, Director of Equity & Community Engagement, National Aquarium



# WHAT'S YOUR STORY? WHAT'S YOUR WHY?







**WHO INSPIRES AND CONTINUES TO  
SUPPORT YOUR WHY?**



# MASONVILLE COVE: THE FIRST URBAN WILDLIFE REFUGE PARTNERSHIP





# CONNECTION TO THE COMMUNITY



MAP 1: Masonville Cove Watershed Boundary

# ENGAGEMENT: CO-DESIGN & CO-CREATION

## FOSTER (& MEASURE!) SUCCESS IN CO-DESIGN PROCESSES

LIKERT SCALE (1-5) 1 = COMPLETELY DISAGREE; 5 = COMPLETELY AGREE

### EFFECTIVE AUTONOMY

I feel effective at this process without needing an expert guiding my every move.

### MEANINGFUL OWNERSHIP

The part of this process that I control is personally or professionally meaningful to me.

### COMMUNITY DEMAND

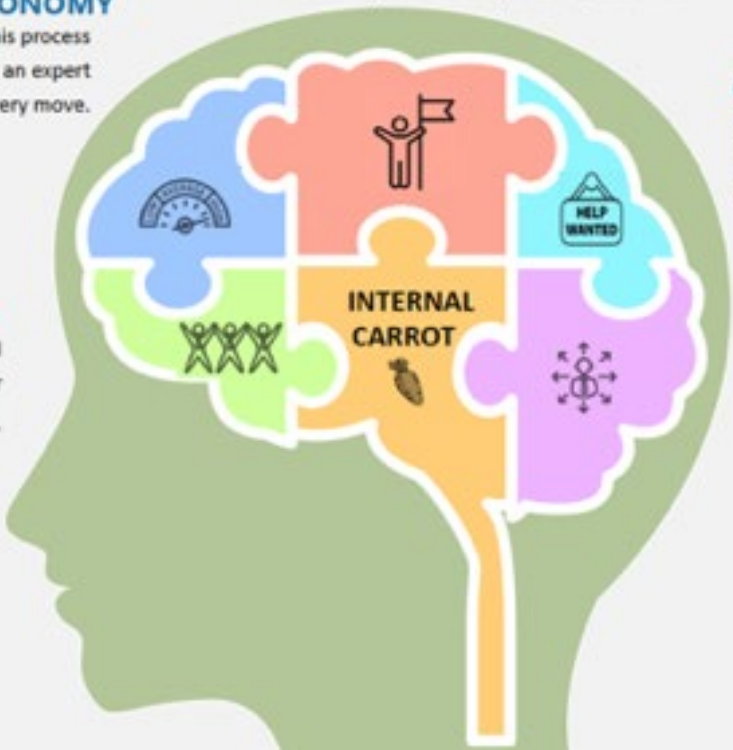
My community members have told me that this process is good for our neighborhood.

### GROUP EFFICACY

My group members and I effectively work together in this process.

### SELF-REGULATED UNDERSTANDING

If I make a mistake while working in this process, I can correct myself.







# COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING









# Access Considerations & Recommendations

Listen to Understand: Equitable Access Means Something Different to Different Communities

Be Mindful of the Different Dimensions of Access

- What cross sector partnerships must be fostered and sustained?
- Whose voices and perspectives are being centered in access conversations?

Let's Think Beyond Quantity...Quality is Important Too

Increased Resources for Frequency of Outdoor Experiences for Youth

Masonville Cove

- More sustainable funding sources, which would in turn allow for (1) operating hours that are currently not available (i.e. staying open later in the day and on Sundays) as well as (2) developing even stronger, deeper community partnerships;

# Big Woods. Still Pond.

*Experiences and places that shape my views  
on conservation and public access*

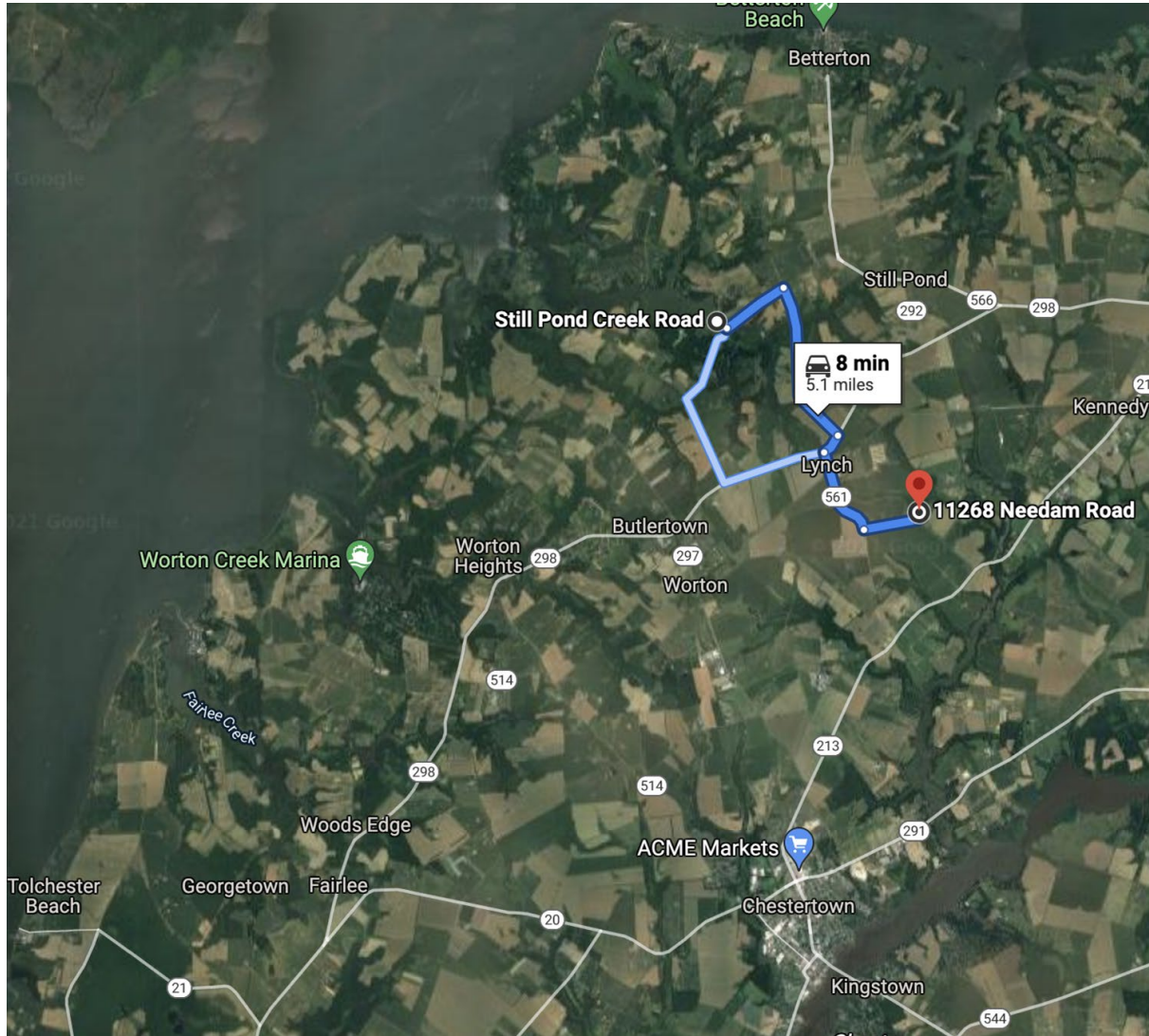
By Darius Johnson, Executive Director of  
Kent Attainable Housing



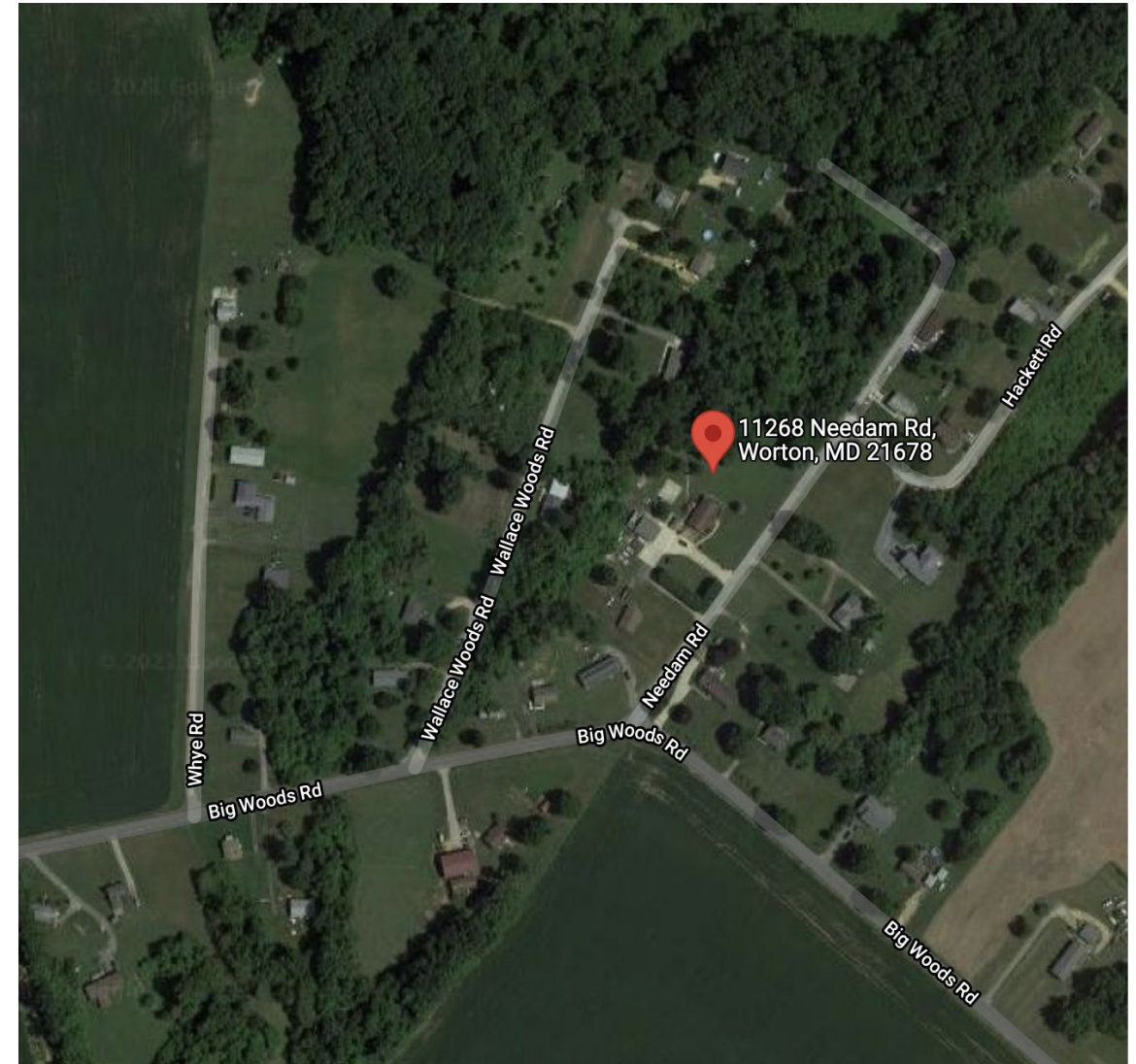
# Snapshot of my work experiences

- Concrete Mason/Sales/Marketing - **Johnson's Concrete** (ages 12-27)
- Global Reporting Analyst - **Prometric** (ages 21-22)
- Development Data Specialist - **Fund for Johns Hopkins Medicine, Dept. of Neurology** (ages 22-23)
- Affiliate Director & Strategic Outreach Manager - **MD Center for Construction Education & Innovation/ACE Mentor Program of Baltimore** (ages 23-24)
- Community Revitalization Project Manager & Communications Manager - **Eastern Shore Land Conservancy** (ages 24-27)
- Executive Director - **Kent Attainable Housing** (age 27)

Where I Grew Up (Zoomed Out)



Where I Grew Up (Zoomed In)





# Narrative of influences on my views of conservation

- Growing up in Kent County (landlock, surrounded by trees + farms)
- Hiking across Baltimore County (post-college: 2015-2018)
- My first time kayaking -- and my awakening to the power of public access (which I've missed out on for the majority of my life)
- My previous work at Eastern Shore Land Conservancy (first notice of the lack of public access & equitable opportunities for people of color to engage w/ outdoors)
- My current work at Kent Attainable Housing (and my efforts of bridging housing and conservation goals)

## Recommendations

- Create funding programs that incentivizes conservation activity to happen at the residential level and that fosters collaboration between housing and conservation organizations. (Ex. Shore Rivers + KAH - River-friendly Yards)
- Incentivize/require grantmaking organizations to develop programs that create economic opportunities for diverse constituencies to participate in co-creation/co-design of public access facilities such as parks, landing spots, etc. (i.e. do more than just ask them for their input.)
- Don't let the Sassafras Environmental Education Center go away; leverage the program as a training ground to develop "green-trades" workforce on the Upper Eastern Shore; to revitalize agrarian-based economies; and to create a model for others across the Chesapeake Watershed
- Support Washington College's efforts to be an anchor institution for the Mid-Shore through its focus on environment and society (people) and foster connection between Washington College and Chesapeake College by funding creative, collaborative experiential learning opportunities