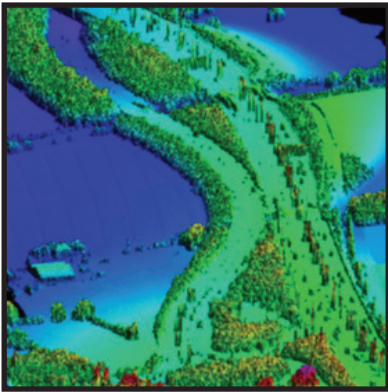


Conservation Innovation in Context



A Roundtable hosted by the
Aspen Institute and the Chesapeake Conservancy

May 20-21, 2013



Foreword

This Conservation Innovation Roundtable is part of ongoing work by the Aspen Institute on the future of conservation in the 21st Century. The next few decades will determine the direction and form of expanding human societies and the condition of the world we live in. As awareness grows of the interdependency between the natural world and human well-being, traditional conceptions of “economic growth” and “conservation” are becoming outdated.

The Aspen Institute will continue to use its dialogue method to address issues covered in this roundtable, seeking additional opportunities where dialogue can help achieve consensus and clarity of purpose. For the Chesapeake Conservancy this roundtable represents an important step towards developing ground-breaking programs that will use Precision Conservation to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of conservation work throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed initially and then ideally at the national and global level.

As with all policy dialogues convened by the Aspen Institute’s Energy and Environment Program, this roundtable followed the Institute’s time-honored approach to intentional, value-based dialogue. Critical to this process is a strict not-for-attribution rule that encourages candor and the exploration of new ideas. The participants in this dialogue were invited to take part specifically for their expertise and not their organizational affiliation per se. They are listed at the end of this summary for identification purposes only – they are not responsible for, nor do they or their organizations necessarily endorse, the summary’s narrative, conjecture or any errors.

The Aspen Institute acknowledges and thanks the Intel Corporation for their generous financial support of this roundtable and for the impactful collaboration of the Chesapeake Conservancy.

David Monsma

Executive Director

Energy and Environment Program

The Aspen Institute

Scientists now believe we need to approach conservation on a landscape scale. Otherwise we risk reducing the Chesapeake’s most beautiful habitats and historic places to small isolated patches, resulting in local extinction of our wildlife and loss of our history. That means we need to broaden our work from protecting single parcels to protecting entire corridors and addressing gaps in a patchwork quilt of protected and unprotected lands.

To achieve landscape-scale conservation in our watershed (from Cooperstown to Virginia Beach), we need to be wildly creative. Conservation is complicated and isn’t cheap. In an era of declining public conservation dollars and emerging ecosystem services markets, we need to break down traditional barriers, forge new partnerships, and think differently. Also, our limited conservation resources must be deployed in the right places to maximize our effectiveness.

The Internet and the Web have had a revolutionary impact on our lives. So have rapid advances in cloud-based computing, remotely sensed data such as satellite imagery, and the development of powerful software like Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for analyzing data. These transformative innovations are the great opportunity of our time. They enable us to collaborate, inform, and engage partners and communities in conservation like never before.

This roundtable and summary report highlights our intentional effort to bring together some of the brightest minds from our region and beyond to emulate the way some of the world’s most successful companies use technology to create new opportunities to advance their missions. This report demonstrates the need and demand for conservation innovation and what can be achieved if we incorporate it into our daily work.

Joel Dunn

Executive Director

Chesapeake Conservancy



Photo Courtesy of Ian Plant

Introduction

Innovation has been at the heart of land conservation in the United States since the first public open space was set aside for the good of society. Concepts like the establishment of city parks and the national park system, the conservation easement, and large-landscape planning frameworks such as the Appalachian Trail were novel ideas at the time of their creation, but have become common place and allowed for vast ecosystems to be permanently protected throughout the country. Protected land has become an integral part of many communities and the benefits to society are continuously proven with research showing that land conservation boosts local economies, provides critical habitats, and delivers water quality and public health benefits.

To further the conversation around conservation innovation both globally and locally, the Intel Corporation generously supported the Chesapeake Conservancy and the Aspen Institute's Energy and Environment Program to convene this Conservation Innovation Roundtable from May 20-21, 2013, that brought together 35 experts in the fields of conservation targeting, remote sensing, environmental finance, and communications as well as representatives from NOAA, USFWS and a number of regional non-profits.

Over a day and a half of meetings, the group discussed the challenges currently facing conservation organizations, promising technologies and techniques that could help bridge some of these gaps through conservation innovation, and the Conservancy's plans for a virtual Conservation Innovation Center for the Chesapeake Bay region

Conservation Innovation can be defined as identifying and applying emerging technologies, new financing methods, and non-traditional partnerships that will allow conservation organizations to do more with the resources that they have and ensure that their programs are maximizing their potential to have a positive impact on overall ecosystem health.



The Aspen Institute’s Energy and Environment Program provides a neutral venue for convening nonpartisan leadership and improving energy and environmental policymaking through intentional, values-based dialogue. The goal of these discussions is to create an impartial atmosphere for thought leaders and experts to engage in informed discussion around some of the most important and complex environmental issues of our time.

The Chesapeake Conservancy’s mission is to strengthen the connection between people and the watershed, conserve the landscapes and special places that sustain the Chesapeake’s unique natural and cultural resources, and encourage the exploration and celebration of the Chesapeake as a national treasure. The Conservancy advances this mission through partnerships and citizen engagement; educational programs; land conservation, public access and recreational opportunities; advocacy; and signature initiatives such as the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail and Chesapeake Gateways and Watertrails Network.

Precision Conservation means getting the right practices, in the right places, at the right scale, and at the right time to maximize their environmental benefits while minimizing their social and financial costs.

The discussion during this Conservation Innovation Roundtable, focused on four main topic areas: **1) Conservation in Context – From Global to Local, 2) Innovative Tools for Public Engagement in Conservation, 3) New Financing Models for Conservation, and 4) Technology – Remote and On-the-Ground Sensing.** The discussion resulted in five key observations.

The following is a summary of the discussions and observations from this roundtable. Every effort has been made to accurately characterize the ideas and information presented during the roundtable, but all views expressed were not unanimous and participants were not asked to agree to the content or wording of this summary.

Key Observations

Over the course of the discussion, the participants in this Conservation Innovation Roundtable developed the following observations.

- A) *There is a tremendous amount of potential for conservation innovation to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of local, state and federal conservation programs as well as non-profit organizations.*** Although many of the tools and information needed to address the most pressing conservation issues are currently available to planners and managers, there are a number of obstacles that must be overcome before they can be fully implemented. Using new technologies and partnerships to help bridge these gaps will provide conservation organizations with access to emerging tools and datasets that will advance their capabilities and allow them to take on greater challenges.
- B) *Large-landscape initiatives require local partners.*** To build these collaborations, partner organizations need to know what they are getting out of the process and how they can leverage their strengths on behalf of the greater community. The inclusion of local partners also helps generate credibility and trust within the community as there will likely be some resistance from the community in the beginning. Having an effective communications plan that addresses the public's concerns in a manner that they can understand is essential to building support for proposed actions and building public input into the planning process early on will create a greater sense of community ownership in the larger initiative.
- C) *Public demand and support is critical to the success of conservation initiatives.*** This is most often achieved in one of two ways, either by educating the public to value protected lands for the ecological and social benefits they provide, or by creating a system of regulations that has incentives for protecting the land and disincentives for the destruction of natural landscapes. Improving communications and public engagement will help educate residents about the need for conservation, but regulations, especially those that create disincentives, are typically more effective at changing behaviors.
- D) *To be effective ecosystem markets and regulations must accurately prove they have improved over-all ecosystem health.*** Recent increases in available monitoring technology and the resolution of remotely sensed data available to managers is beginning to increase the reliability of modeling and both government agencies and non-profits are starting to use them to identify high-quality landscapes that have the potential to significantly impact over-all ecosystem health. Both the sensors and the landscape analysis still have a high cost, however, which will limit their widespread use. Partnering with universities can often lower the cost of these analyses, while providing students with "real-world" experience, and a level of apolitical credibility that agencies and non-profits may not have by themselves.
- E) *Ecosystem markets that accurately reflect the impact of conservation and restoration will lead to an influx of private capital.*** Climate adaptation will also be a driver for conservation programs to reduce vulnerability while protecting important coastal ecosystems. These new sources of funding will be critical because many local governments do not have the resources to engage in conservation activities or any analysis of the landscape and state and federal programs are currently operating with limited budgets. Combining public and private funding will help extend the capabilities of any large-landscape conservation initiative and will likely be a major determinant of a program's success.



Conservation in Context – From Global to Local

The world of conservation is beginning to change. Other environmental issues have started to take precedence over conservation, despite the multitude of benefits it provides, and often times there is a disconnect between the land, people who live near conservation areas, and their understanding of how their actions affect the health of these ecosystems.

According to Jim Levitt of the Lincoln Institute for Land Policy, most of the innovative conservation programs in the United States that have been successful meet five broad criteria: **1) Novelty, or creativity in conception, 2) Strategic significance, 3) Measurable effectiveness, 4) Transferability to other jurisdictions, and 5) An ability to endure.** When developing new programs and partnerships, it will be important to use these criteria as a framework for analyzing or evaluating ideas and planning for the future. Achieving success through these new efforts will require an emphasis on developing and clearly communicating compelling information that will not only motivate the public to want to see change, but will captivate them enough to become active participants and supporters of conservation programs.

Increasingly, the success or failure of conservation programs is also dependent on their ability to form new partnerships that combine resources and funding and engage a variety of interests. Large landscape conservation initiatives have emerged as a way to coordinate efforts across jurisdictional boundaries and ensure that multiple organizations are creating a comprehensive protection strategy that will conserve landscapes on a scale that has ecological and cultural significance.

Examples such as the Roundtable for the Crown of the Continent or the Appalachian Trail demonstrate how a single organizing framework can unify disparate partners under a common banner to realize conservation objectives that would be impossible for any one organization to achieve on their own. These frameworks were successful for a number of reasons, and, despite being created almost 90 years apart from each other,



Photo Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons Photographer Ruhrfisch

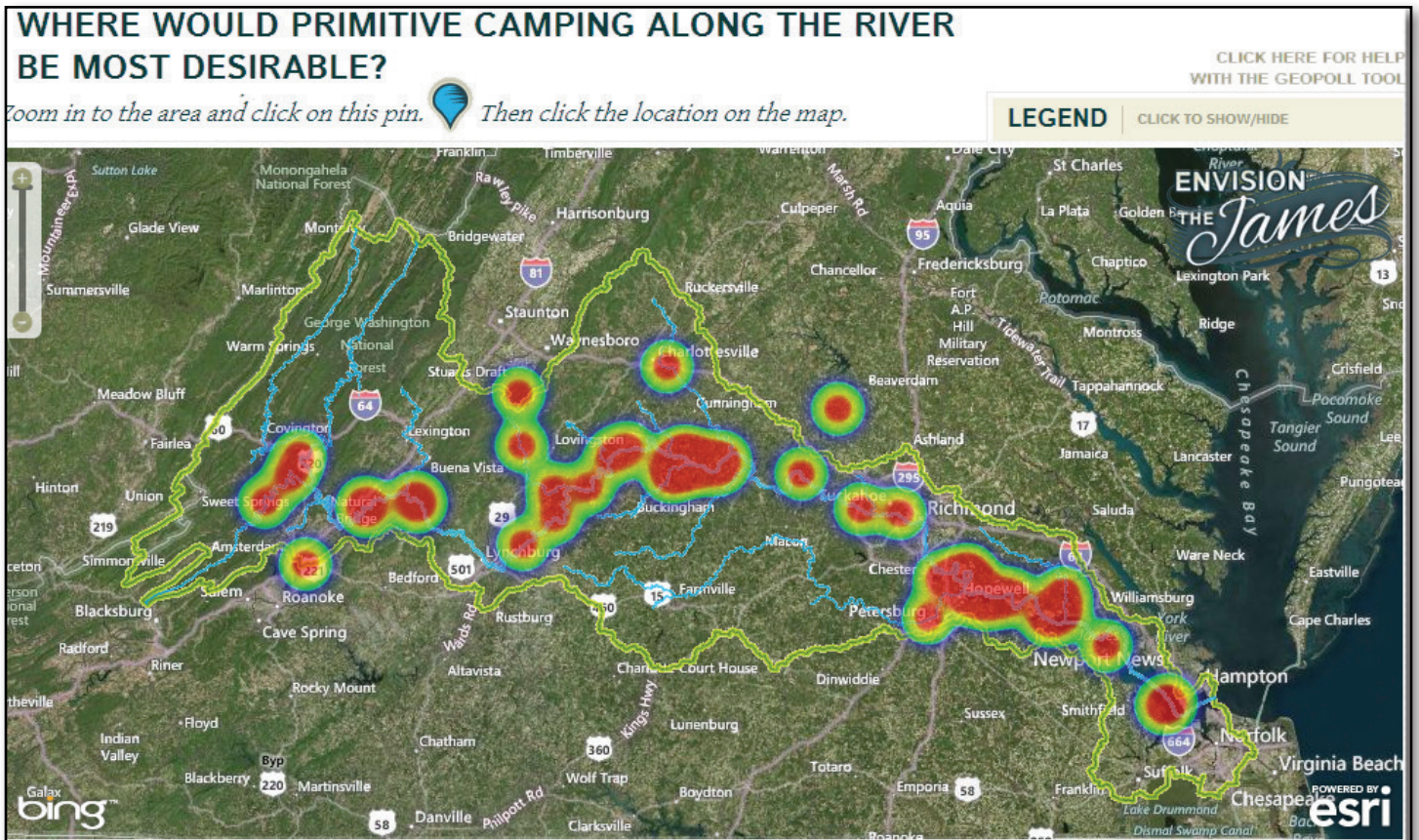
Protecting large landscapes, like this section of the Susquehanna River, requires the cooperation and collaboration of a wide variety of partners across social and geographic boundaries.

represent similar innovative methods of bringing together a wide variety of partners across geographic, political, and sectorial boundaries to achieve a common goal. As multiple local and regional partners become engaged, large-landscape conservation programs effectively create a “network of networks” where each partner’s success benefits their own goals as well as the goals of the entire group.

The Chesapeake Conservancy, for example, described how they are incorporating “Precision Conservation,” or getting the right practices, in the right places, at the right scale; into their programs and how it could apply to the development of new programs throughout the watershed. Successful initiatives will need to take advantage of new regional datasets that are being created to efficiently target high quality landscapes and distribute this information to local partners in an easily digestible manor to help them act in an informed and cohesive manor. Although large-landscape conservation must be coordinated on a regional scale, local partners will accomplish much of the work at a much more intimate scale where they have established a degree of trust with residents and can leverage existing relationships.

Conservation organizations will not only need to understand why certain landscapes are important, but also work to help local communities see the value in protecting them. As one participant put it, ***science is key to understanding important issues; mapping is the key to understanding priorities; species can provide charismatic inspiration; but getting people enrolled and engaged in the environment is critical to getting their support.***

As large-landscape conservation efforts expand, it will be increasingly important to engage a variety of residents and stakeholders early in the process to ensure that there is public support, understanding, and funding as projects move forward. Through this process, conservation organizations also need to gain a better understanding of what motivates people to protect and restore the land around them.



New web-mapping tools are allowing regional partnerships, like Envision the James, to incorporate individual's preferences into conservation targeting to guide where community actions take place.

Innovative Tools for Public Engagement in Conservation

While online and mobile tools are not a replacement for getting outside and experiencing the importance of conserving these landscapes, in many cases they provide a rare opportunity for interaction with natural and cultural resources and can create a large amount of participation at limited cost. These tools could be a precursor for later in-person involvement and should be used to educate the public about the need for conservation, understand their needs and priorities, and build support for future actions.

Geographic Information Systems, or GIS, are a particularly powerful tool to organize spatial data and present it in a clear and informative way. Over the last decade, online web-mapping tools have gained tremendous popularity through products such as Google Maps and ESRI's ArcGIS Online. These mapping tools have the ability to not only display data but create a story that engages the public and provides them with the ability to learn about a specific narrative while exploring the landscape around it. However, while useful, "storymaps" must go beyond just displaying information and provide a way for users to explore and engage in the topic.

Furthermore, for these technologies to reach their full potential, they should create a two-way dialogue that both pushes data to the public and gains their input on what is important. It is easier than ever to gather input from near-by residents with the prevalence of mobile technology and social media. Reaching out to better understand what is important to the public in a given area from the start will help organizations tailor their message so it will lead to greater engagement, fundraising, and public approval further on in the process. Building marketing and public engagement into conservation programs from the start will enable organizations to quickly understand what is needed and what will motivate the public to become involved. Much as precision conservation is getting the right practice in the right place, the concept of precision communications, or getting the right message to the right people in the right format, will greatly improve the ability of conservation organizations to effectively engage the public.

New Financing Models for Conservation

As priorities change, new markets emerge, and federal and state land conservation funding diminishes, it will be imperative for conservation organizations to improve their ability to target high-functioning landscapes and coordinate potential funding sources interested in the multitude of ecosystem services land conservation provides. While the public and philanthropic sectors contribute significantly to conservation, there is already far greater demand for land protection and restoration than existing funds can support. Many of the participants felt that resources coming from federal and state programs would continue to contract and that the funding needed to accomplish large landscape goals would not be available through traditional sources.

One potential source of funding is commodifying the ecosystem services that conservation lands provide. In some areas, environmental offsets created by development activities are already generating enough money to restore wetlands and other natural ecosystems; however, the cost of conserving large landscapes will almost certainly outpace the potential revenues that could be created through existing ecosystem service markets.

Ecosystem services have the potential to help fund new conservation work but their success is highly dependent on the interest of the community to engage in these markets. In most cases, trust in the system of quantifying and verifying the benefits of conservation and restoration efforts will be the largest determinant of success or failure in these programs. Before large investments are made, the public must believe that the banking or trading of ecosystem services actually contributes to overall ecosystem health. If this trust is not in place, it undermines the price of the ecosystem services and increases the bureaucratic requirements of a program to ensure that the activities and outcomes that were promised are being fulfilled.

For an ecosystem services market to be successful and bring substantial resources to conservation and restoration efforts, the performance of the investment must be shown so the market can identify which practices are most effective. Technology will play a role in both verifying the benefits of conservation or restoration efforts as well as ensuring that promised actions are being implemented. In the Chesapeake Bay region, for example, while the level of accountability in each state is currently strong, the region's programs have remained small because they are based on average reduction potentials for a particular practice and are not actually performance-based.

One of the main challenges to existing ecosystem markets is the variability that must be accounted for in the system because there are no tools that can directly monitor nutrient or sediment reductions. However, as water quality monitoring technology becomes more accessible, ecosystem markets will be able to harness these tools to measure the reductions that are actually occurring and incentivize projects that provide the greatest benefits.

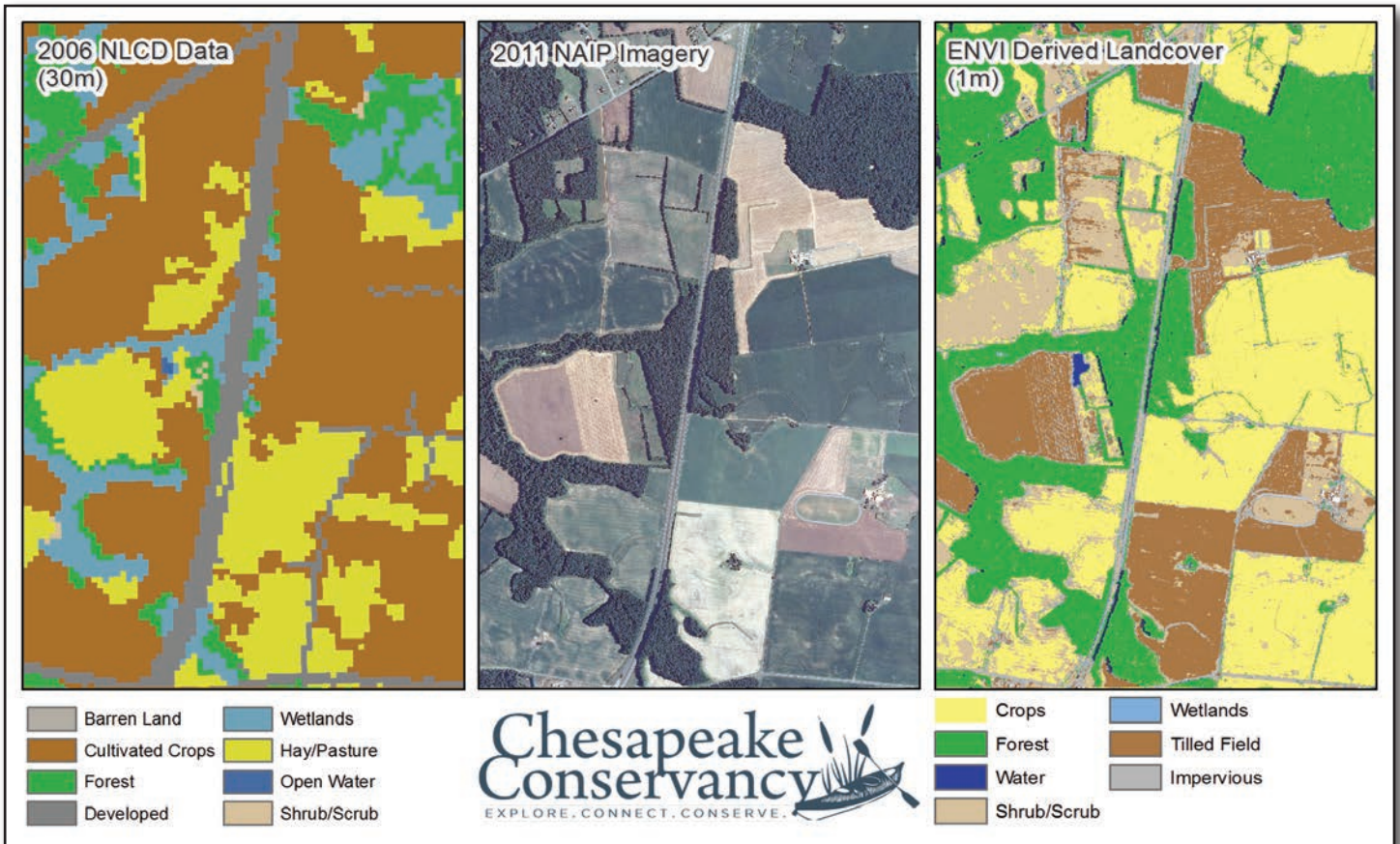
Multiple participants also raised the potential for climate adaptation efforts to bring additional funding to conservation programs in coastal areas. Many of the landscapes that are most vulnerable to coastal erosion, storm surge, and sea-level rise are the same areas that are essential for the long-term survival of critical coastal habitats that will be impacted by climate change. As the Federal government and insurance companies continue to pay large sums for post-storm recovery in affected areas, land conservation has the potential to become a core method to improve resiliency and permanently reduce risk in the coastal zone.

At the local level, while it is unlikely that private capital will completely replace public spending for conservation and restoration efforts around the Chesapeake, having these resources to supplement public programs will go a long way towards achieving the watershed's conservation goals. Ultimately, the success of these programs will come down to the ability to tell what impact conservation and restoration efforts are having on the health of the Bay.



Photo Courtesy of USDA NRCS

Wetland restoration projects, created to help offset the negative impacts of development, can provide essential habitats and ecosystem services.



New image analyses are allowing conservation planners to interpret satellite and aerial photography with 900x the detail of existing data to help make field-scale management decisions that maximize ecosystem benefits.

Technology – Remote and On-the-Ground Sensing

With the advent of remote sensing and geographic information systems, practitioners are gaining access to more information about the land, allowing them to make better informed decisions about what areas to protect and identifying trends in development and ecosystem decline that warrant immediate action.

One of the challenges that most conservation organizations will have to face is how to keep current with continuously advancing technologies. As these tools become more complex and are able to analyze data in ever increasing complexity, staff at organizations that are already strained for resources will likely have a hard time maintaining skill sets that are able to keep pace with the software and analyses that are being developed. Many training programs are also not adapted to the needs of a conservation organization creating an additional need for staff to adapt techniques and processes used in other fields to meet their needs.

Universities could help alleviate the need to have extensively trained staff as students are instructed in the most up-to-date methods and represent a considerable cost-effective work force that could supplement the work of local organizations. Both undergraduate and graduate students could also help identify new ways to use innovative solutions to address conservation issues through their research. Most importantly, academic institutions also have the ability to act as an apolitical entity that is seen as a trusted source of information.



In-stream nutrient monitoring systems are helping managers identify and quantify the impacts of land use on water quality.

Technology in the Chesapeake

Much of the Chesapeake Bay watershed is privately owned and it is often difficult for managers to gain access to the land to determine the composition of land use, which practices are being implemented, and how the landscape has changed over time. Remote sensing provides the tools to identify not only what is on the ground, but also how water flows across it and what it may interact with before reaching the nearest tributary.

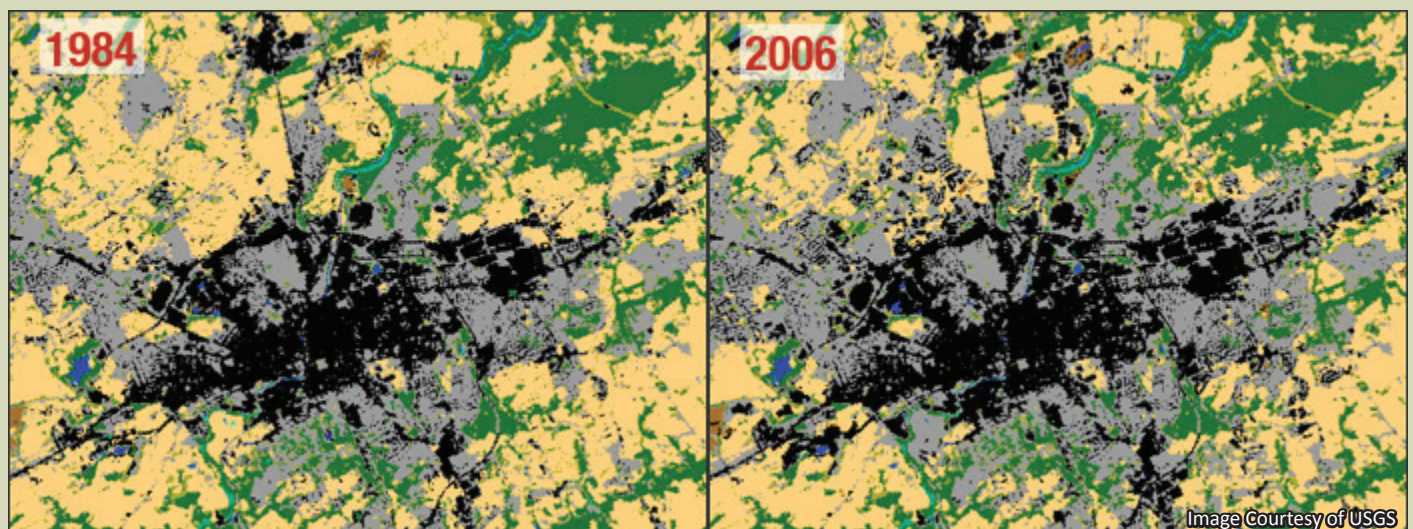
Furthermore, scientists have been collecting this data for almost four decades providing managers with an extremely robust dataset to compare historic information with the present to better understand how the landscapes of the Chesapeake have changed since the start of many conservation programs. Technology has increased significantly over this time period and managers now have access to data with unprecedented resolution. With this increasing resolution comes a higher cost and managers will need to find the appropriate balance for the activities that they are attempting to monitor. There are, however, a number of private, state, and federal programs that are interested in acquiring this data and the process lends itself to cost-sharing partnerships as the resulting data is easily duplicated and transferred among contributing members.

In-river water quality monitoring technology is also improving significantly as researchers work to

lower the cost of sensor platforms. Washington College is working to create a watershed wide monitoring network composed of moderately low cost monitoring stations that will help relate changes in agricultural practices to downstream water quality. This concept could be translated to other watersheds and provide managers with the level of detail needed to make better-informed management decisions and identify areas that will provide the greatest return on investments.

While the information created using these new technologies could play a critical role in identifying and verifying the potential impact of conservation and restoration efforts on the health of the Bay, steps must be taken to ensure that this new data does not undermine the validity or credibility of existing watershed wide monitoring efforts being used in the Chesapeake Bay TMDL models. A considerable amount of effort needs to be put into understanding how these new datasets can be integrated into existing information incrementally as resources to conduct the work becomes available.

Once this data has been collected and the analysis techniques have been created, however, the information will help support effective ecosystem services markets, improve communications tools, and help target conservation and restoration efforts and resources where they will have the greatest impact on improving the health of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.



Land use data, captured over time, can provide managers with a better understanding of where development is threatening important ecosystems and what areas should be a priority for conservation or restoration.



Conservation in the Chesapeake: A Great Challenge, A Great Opportunity

Land conservation in the Chesapeake Bay watershed has come a long way since state and federal governments began making it a priority over forty years ago. Many of the region's most important ecological, historical, and cultural resources have been protected through programs like Maryland's Program Open Space, Pennsylvania's Keystone Fund, Virginia's Open Space Recreation and Conservation Fund, Delaware's Open Space Program, and the efforts of numerous non-profit organizations. In this time, over 1,100 opportunities for the public to access the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries have also been created. By 2011, the six watershed states and District of Columbia had permanently protected 8,013,132 acres, over 20% of the Chesapeake Bay watershed, surpassing the original goals of the Chesapeake 2000 agreement. In 2010, the Strategy for Protecting and Restoring the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, issued under Executive Order 13508, extended this goal by an additional two million acres by 2025, pushing local, state, federal, and non-profit conservation programs to reevaluate their current strategies and identify new methods to achieve this ambitious standard.

Conservation programs in the Chesapeake Bay region have made great progress over the last forty years and have the potential, through innovative conservation initiatives, to further protect some of the region's most important ecological and cultural landscapes. While limited funding and increasing property costs will challenge many organizations, adopting innovative methods such as building regional partnerships, engaging new funding sources, and tailoring messaging to build strong public support will allow them to increase their effectiveness and efficiency to ensure that the highest quality land is being protected. The Roundtable observed the following in regards to the Chesapeake:

- **Various audiences throughout the Chesapeake watershed must be engaged to support conservation.**
- **Large-landscape initiatives require local partners.**
- **Public demand and support is critical to the success of most conservation initiatives.**
- **To be effective ecosystem markets and regulations must accurately prove they have improved the health of the Chesapeake Bay watershed.**
- **Ecosystem markets that accurately reflect the impact of conservation and restoration will lead to an influx of private capital to help address water quality issues in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.**

Due to the success of existing conservation efforts, many of the Chesapeake's large intact tracts of forest and wetlands have already been incorporated into local, state, and federal programs. Nevertheless, a substantial



Photo Courtesy of Ian Plant

number of ecologically, culturally, and historically important landscapes still remain vulnerable to development and degradation throughout the watershed. As the Bay states continue to strive to meet the ambitious goals established by President Obama's Executive Order, conservation programs will need to begin focusing on protecting areas in more developed areas and may struggle with the higher costs of resource protection in these landscapes.

There are many paths to advance conservation interests here in the Chesapeake Bay Region, from protecting critical habitats and areas of cultural importance to focusing on the land's impact on water quality. Recently, however, federal and state agencies have been appropriated less funding to coordinate land planning and conservation efforts in Maryland, Virginia and Pennsylvania. With the prospects for far less federal and state resources available to the region and the political environment becoming more challenging, innovative solutions that efficiently and effectively make use of limited resources are needed to maintain a well rounded Bay protection and restoration plan that incorporates the multitude of benefits land conservation provides.

One of the biggest challenges is how to effectively engage various audiences throughout the watershed. Wealthy waterfront landowners will likely need to hear a very different message than underprivileged urban communities, and political leaders will likely have different considerations than the public. As the Chesapeake Bay watershed's demographics change and the number of residents living along the shores and tributaries grows, conservation programs will also need to adapt to be more inclusive of minorities and lower income populations. In the end, the support of all of these groups will be necessary to achieve landscape-scale conservation throughout the Bay's watershed.

The creation of more public access sites and education programs in heavier developed areas will help address this challenge, but fundamentally, there will need to be a shift in the message that many organizations use and their communications strategies will need to be adjusted so they reach their intended audiences. This is especially true since less than two percent of the Chesapeake Bay's shoreline is publicly accessible making it difficult for the majority of Bay resident's to get out on the water and experience the Chesapeake first hand. As a result, new tools need to be developed to reach people and provide them with both information about the importance of the landscapes around them as well as a way to contribute their preferences and knowledge to identify regional priorities for conservation and new public access to make these efforts meaningful.



A Conservation Innovation Center for the Chesapeake Bay Region

To overcome a number of obstacles currently facing the conservation community and to make a greater impact in the application of land and water conservation in the Chesapeake Bay region, the Chesapeake Conservancy is creating a virtual **Center for Conservation Innovation**. The Center has a number of goals to improve conservation efforts in the Chesapeake Bay, and beyond, including:

- ***Acting as a test bed for emerging techniques that harness the power of new technologies, software packages, and sensors to generate unprecedented access to information about the landscapes surrounding the Chesapeake Bay.***
- ***Connecting local partners to the information, tools, and resources they need to implement the best possible data into their conservation planning.***
- ***Educating and engaging users from around the Chesapeake Bay watershed by developing mobile and web applications that allow visitors and residents to explore and learn about the Bay's resources.***
- ***Facilitating partnerships between local organizations, funders, and researchers interested in a specific area or topic to advance conservation efforts.***
- ***Engaging the academic community and researchers to identify new tools that could help with conservation planning and engage students to help create useful datasets while gaining 'real-world' experience and pioneering new techniques.***
- ***Providing a central location for conservation practitioners to find relevant case-studies, emerging technologies, and new research that could help improve their efforts at a local scale.***

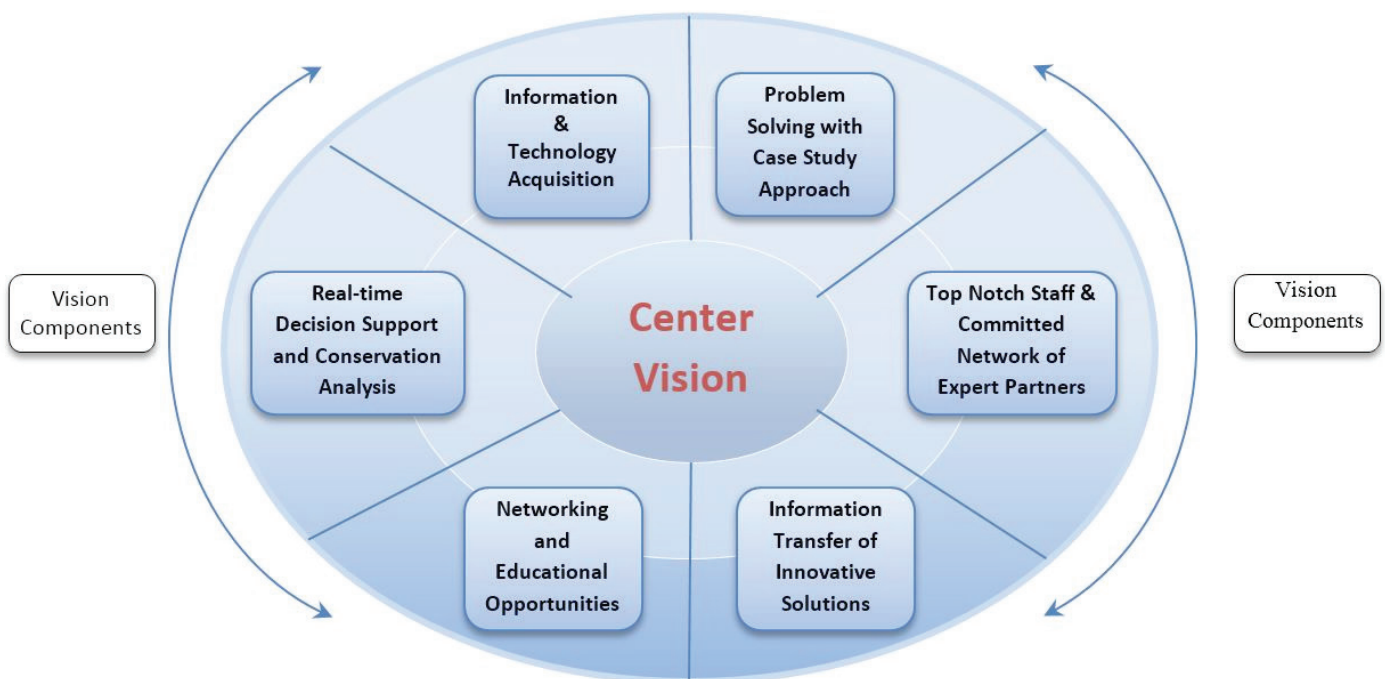
The result is not only a broader and deeper understanding of which areas should be priorities for conservation and restoration but also a platform to build a more engaged base of supporters, disseminate best practices and novel approaches to conservation, and create the network of partners needed to conserve a cohesive system of protected lands throughout the Chesapeake.



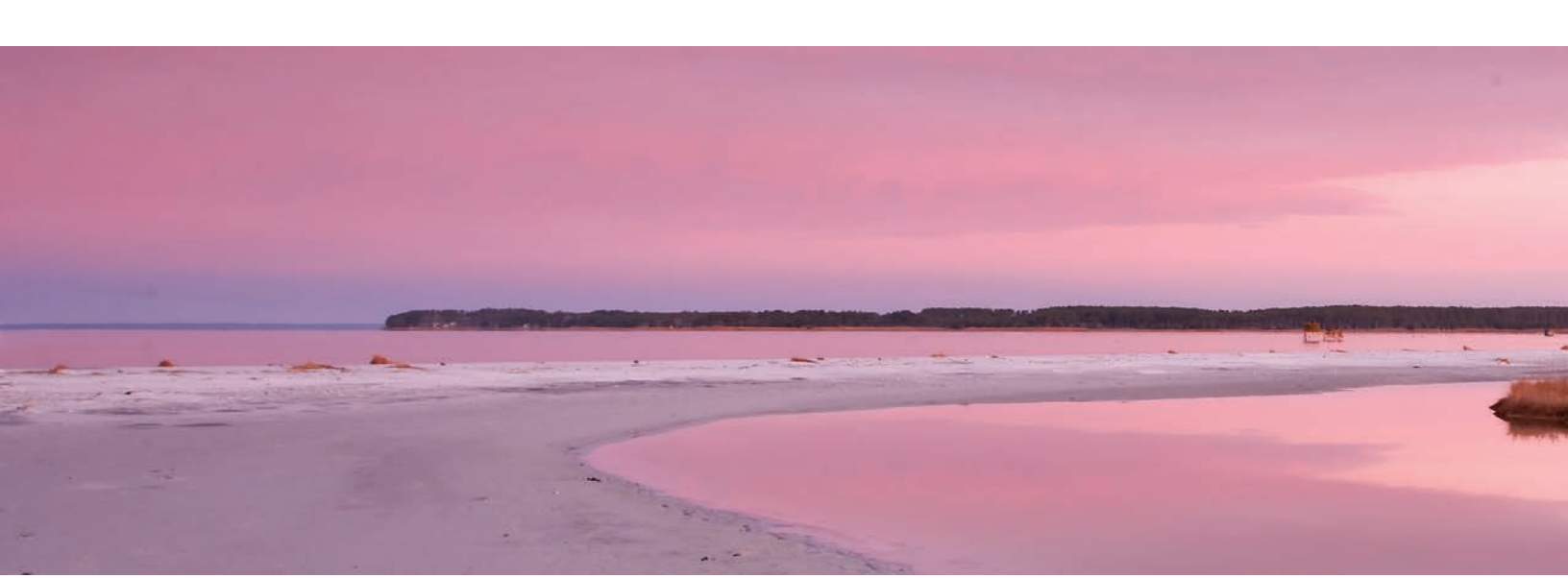
Photo Courtesy of Ian Plant

The Center for Conservation Innovation will focus on providing a strong analytical, scientific and organizational framework for the Conservancy’s broader conservation mission, but it will also leverage the power of technology to improve conservation efforts throughout the watershed by developing and disbursing new technology and tools to partner organizations involved with the protection of the Chesapeake Bay.

The outcome of these efforts will hopefully be innovative governance approaches and effective financial mechanisms that link land conservation and water quality restoration efforts in the Bay. It will also create a portfolio of experts and willing partners to provide the guidance, research, skill sets and execution strategies needed to accelerate land conservation and water quality solutions to protect the watershed’s most important ecosystems and key cultural and historical landscapes.



For more information, please visit: <http://www.chesapeakeconservancy.org/Conservation-Innovation>



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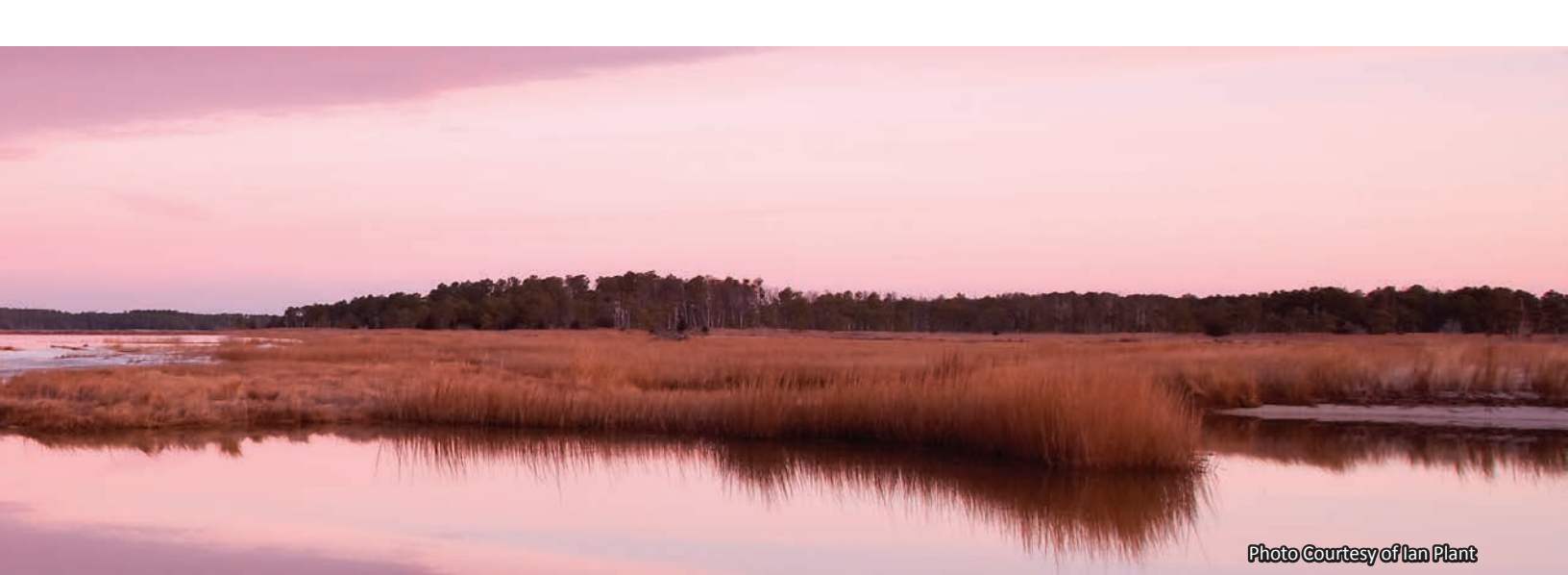


Photo Courtesy of Ian Plant

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The Aspen Institute is an educational and policy studies organization based in Washington, D.C. Its mission is to foster leadership based on enduring values and to provide a nonpartisan venue for dealing with critical issues. The Institute has campuses in Aspen, Colorado, and on the Wye River on Maryland's Eastern Shore. It also maintains offices in New York City and has an international network of partners. www.aspeninstitute.org

The Aspen Institute's Energy and Environment Program provides a decidedly neutral forum for constructive civil society dialogue on complex policy issues in the areas of energy and environmental policy, thereby deepening knowledge, broadening perspectives and enhancing the capacity of leaders to solve problems. The Program periodically convenes strategic groups of experts from government, business, academia and nonpro it organizations in dialogue series structured and moderated for discussion, exploration and consensus building on important energy or environmental topics.

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The Chesapeake Conservancy is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization based in Annapolis, MD. Its mission is to strengthen the connection between people and the watershed, conserve the landscapes and special places that sustain the Chesapeake's unique natural and cultural resources, and encourage the exploration and celebration of the Chesapeake as a national treasure. www.chesapeakeconservancy.org

The Chesapeake Conservancy advances this mission through partnerships and citizen engagement; educational programs; land conservation, public access and recreational opportunities; advocacy; and signature initiatives such as the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail and Chesapeake Gateways and Watertrails Network.

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