



Sustainability / Statewide Scale

Maryland's Strategic Forest Lands Assessment (SFLA)	
Place-Based Example	Maryland's SFLA provides information and GIS tools to identify strategic forests and support strategic land management planning and land use decisions needed to protect forests and the State's green infrastructure
Discussion	<p>Description: The SFLA, extended from the Montreal Process Criteria & Indicators, provides the status of forest resources from ecological, economic, and social perspectives—allowing the Governor's Commission to identify trends and issues. It used indicators to analyze forest sustainability and GIS computer models to determine ecological, economic, and vulnerability rankings of forest lands as well as riparian restoration opportunities. Large expanses of unbroken forest is an important part of the state's important natural lands called green infrastructure; and the Forest Assessment links to MD's Green Infrastructure Assessment. In fact, the SFLA augments the Green Infrastructure landscape ecological focus with other important attributes of MD's forests.</p> <p>Context: The quest to protect and sustainably manage forests is a challenge due to urban development, forest land fragmentation and parcelization and other pressures. Forests that once covered more than 90% of MD's landscape now only cover 41%; and the responsibility for what is left is shared with counties, landowners, and others. MD's forests are an important part of the Chesapeake Bay watershed—where there is recognition that what happens on the land determines the health of the bay. In 2006 the Chesapeake Bay Executive Council signed a directive on forests to reduce forest loss, necessitating use of best available tools to locate areas where retention and expansion of forests is most needed to protect water quality.</p> <p>Value Added: The assessment data, indicators, and computer tools are being used for county planning, watershed planning, landowner outreach, and more. Use of the C&I to help organize state-level forest resource information for assessing forest conditions and identifying strategic forests has helped facilitate dialogue across scales, ownership boundaries, and program goals—a complex mix from site-level to county to statewide to the bay. Also MD's use of the C&I has assisted the US in testing and refining them for use at the national level. Applying the C&I at multiple scales encourages data coordination and sharing of technology and 'know how'; and facilitates the tracking of changes including forest loss.</p>
Key Resources and Web Links	<p><i>Maryland's Strategic Forest Lands Assessment</i> (2003); and <i>Maryland's Green Infrastructure Assessment</i> (2003)</p> <p>http://www.dnr.state.md.us/forests/plnning/sfla/index.htm</p> <p>http://www.dnr.state.md.us/greenways/gi/gi.html</p>
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