



Governor Applauds Frederick County Schools For Environmental Leadership *First School District in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed To Set A Tree Canopy Goal*

Frederick County, Md. — In an effort to improve air and water quality, the Frederick County Board of Education recently adopted a goal to increase tree canopy on all school district properties to 20 percent, becoming the first school district in the Chesapeake Bay watershed to do so.

"Restoration of our local streams, rivers and the Chesapeake Bay begins by taking positive steps to reduce pollution and expand tree cover in every community," said Governor O'Malley. "I hope that the leadership exhibited by Frederick County's School Board inspires other school districts to improve local and regional environmental health by setting their own tree canopy goal."

Working with support from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR), U.S. Forest Service and Chesapeake Bay Foundation, the Potomac Conservancy spearheaded the initiative concept. In addition to technical support, DNR's Tree-mendous Gift of Trees program provided trees that will be planted to help the school system meet its 20 percent tree canopy goal.

"Trees are absolutely fundamental to improving the Potomac River and Chesapeake Bay," said Heather Montgomery, Potomac Conservancy associate leading the effort. "Potomac Conservancy is thrilled to be able to participate in this program. This work affects the water quality of the local community as well as one of our greatest natural resources, the Chesapeake Bay."

A [recent assessment](#) by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources found that only 12 percent of the city of Frederick is covered by tree canopy, with an additional increase of 72 percent possible. The urban tree canopy (UTC) is the layer of leaves, branches and trees that cover the ground when viewed from above. Trees help improve water quality by intercepting rainfall, reducing erosion and aiding filtration to remove excess nutrients.

In addition to improving watershed health and air quality, increasing tree canopy on school grounds provides valuable shaded areas for recreation and education, and has the potential to reduce building maintenance and energy costs. DNR encourages other communities and school systems to develop local tree canopy goals through partnership and support from DNR and the US Forest Service.

As part of the Chesapeake Bay Agreement and the [Chesapeake Bay Executive Council's](#) recent directive expanding riparian forest buffer goals, each state in the agreement committed to working with local jurisdictions to adopt goals and increase canopy cover, as well as promote tree canopy goals as tool for communities in watershed planning. Governor O'Malley recently signed legislation to create a [no net loss forestry goal](#) in Maryland and establish a task force to develop a statewide plan and draft legislation by December 2008 to help meet that goal.

For more information on urban tree canopies, visit <http://www.dnr.state.md.us/forests/programs/urban/urbantreecanopygoals.asp>.

May 6, 2008

Contact: Olivia Campbell
410-260-8016 office | 410-507-7525 cell
ocampbell@dnr.state.md.us

Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is the state agency responsible for providing natural and living resource-related services to citizens and visitors. DNR manages more than 449,000 acres of public lands and 17,000 miles of waterways, along with Maryland's forests, fisheries and wildlife for maximum environmental, economic and quality of life benefits. A national leader in land conservation, DNR-managed parks and natural, historic and cultural resources attract 12 million visitors annually. DNR is the lead agency in Maryland's effort to restore the Chesapeake Bay, the state's number one environmental priority. Learn more at <http://www.dnr.state.md.us/>