



(continued)
sustained. Buffers must also be maintained to prevent the infiltration of noxious weeds

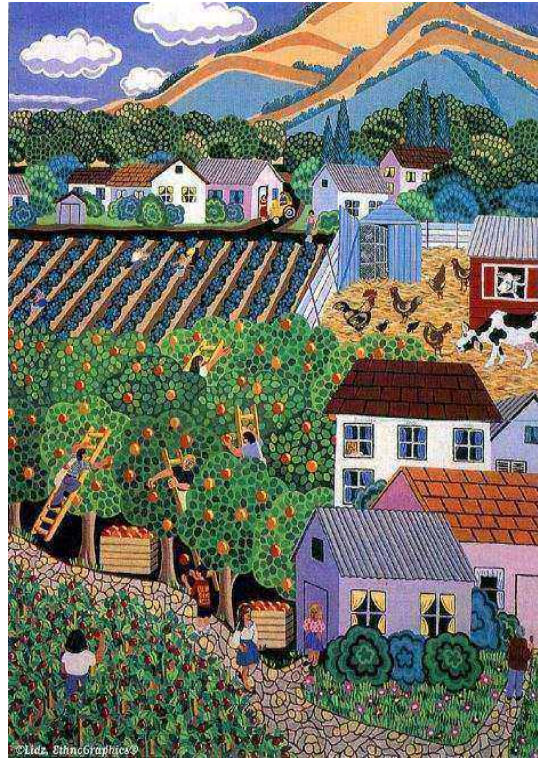
Buffer reductions: Buffers may be reduced for agricultural land uses if conservation practices equivalent to the 100 foot buffer are used. Buffer reductions must be approved by the Prince William Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Directors.

Further buffer reductions may be granted when BMPs and the reduced buffer provide adequate pollutant and nutrient removal. If BMPs such as minimum till, no till, cover crops, cross slope farming, crop rotations and crop residue management are used, the field may already qualify for a buffer reduction.

A buffer reduction is not permanent and does not transfer when the property is sold for development or otherwise changes use.

Who is responsible?

It is the landowner, not the tenant farmer, who is responsible for compliance with the ordinance.



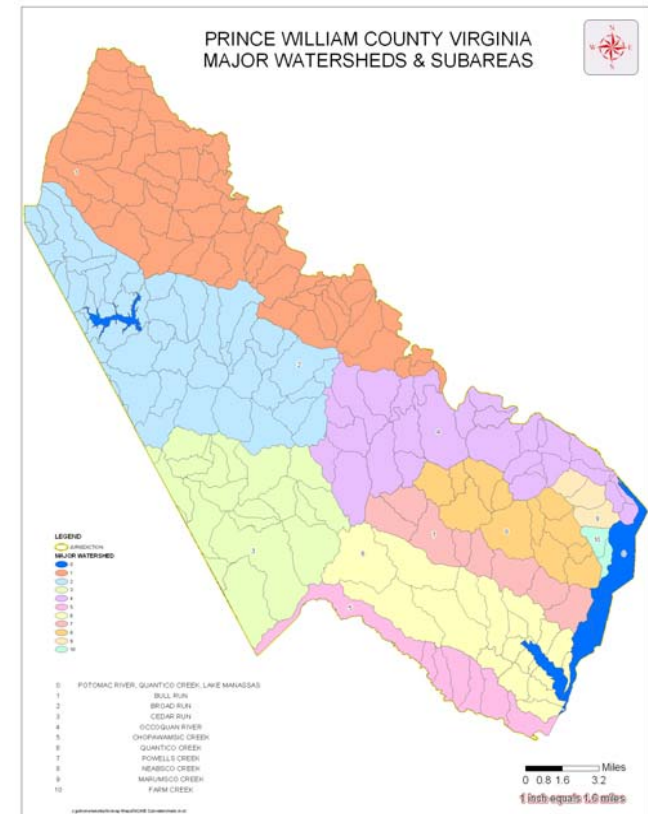
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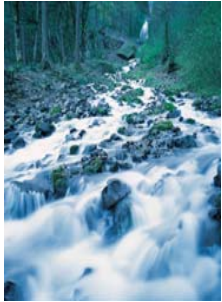
Agriculture in Prince William County

and the
Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act



What is the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Area Overlay District?

The overlay district was created in 1991 under the mandate of Virginia Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act. The intent, outlined in Section 32-504 of the Prince William County Zoning Ordinance, is to protect high quality state waters; restore other state waters to a healthy condition; safeguard clean waters from pollution;



prevent any increase in pollution; reduce existing pollution and promote water resource conservation. The overlay district covers all zoning categories.

The regulations establish Resource Protection Areas (RPAs) (sensitive lands such as tidal wetlands, nontidal wetlands connected by surface flow and contiguous to tidal wetlands or perennial streams, tidal shores, and a 100 foot "RPA buffer") and Resource Management Areas (RMAs) (land types having potential for causing significant water quality degradation.) Prince William County has designated all County areas not included in an RPA as RMA.

For the first time, the overlay district establishes regulations for agriculture. The requirements are: 1.) a Soil and Water Quality Conservation Plan must be written by 1995, and 2.) a vegetated buffer must be established and maintained adjacent to RPAs.

What is a Soil and Water Quality Conservation Plan?

A Soil and Water Quality Conservation Plan is a document based on the Field Office Technical Guide of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. The plan includes agricultural Best Management Practices (BMPs) that address **Erosion Control**, **Nutrient Management** and **Integrated Pest Management (IPM)** practices that are carried out or planned for a property. The plan must be approved by the Prince William Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Directors.

For many landowners, the plan documents good conservation practices already in place. Others may benefit from ideas and information provided by current research that may help increase production and reduce operation costs.

Erosion Control: The overall goal of the erosion control portion of the plan is to build and retain soil, so productivity is sustained while waterways receive less sediment. BMPs reduce erosion and control sediment runoff. BMPs, such as minimum or no-till, cover crops, or contour farming, are selected on a case-by-case basis.

Nutrient Management: These practices accomplish the goal of minimizing the amount of nutrients reaching local waterways and ultimately the Chesapeake Bay. In this portion of the plan, landowners and operators are encouraged to apply nutrients at the rate crops use them. This practice reduces the amount of nutrients available to leach into the water table or flow into local streams.

Components of the nutrient management plan may include: site specific timing, method of application and/or amounts needed for realistic economic yields. Specific

plan requirements will depend on soil types, average crop yields, current soil sample reports, rotations, and account for nutrient credits for legumes, manure and sludge applications. Using this plan, many farmers reduce their costs by applying only the nutrients needed at the time crops will use them best.

Integrated Pest Management: The IPM portion of the plan addresses the management of pests in the most economical and environmentally sound way. Scouting, sprayer calibration, and alternative pest controls are discussed. Written by the County Extension Agent, IPM plans can also save money while benefiting the environment.

What is a buffer? How large must my buffer be? Will I have to take land out of production?

The ordinance requires a 100-foot vegetated buffer as part of the RPA. The buffer must be vegetated to reduce runoff, filter pollutants from runoff and prevent soil erosion. The buffer must be established where it does not exist to provide permanent vegetated cover. Existing vegetation (trees, shrubs, vines or grasses) may be left in place for required buffer purposes. Grasses and legumes in the buffer area may be harvested for hay or grazed, provided the integrity of the buffer is sustained. Buffers must also be maintained to prevent the infiltration of noxious weeds such as Multiflora Rose, Johnsongrass, and Kudzu.