

5-428.

The General Assembly finds and declares that:

(1) Forests and trees play an important role in the restoration and enhancement of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries; and

(2) The establishment and supplementation of forests and trees along the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries is in the best interests of the residents of the State.

5-429.

(a) The Department shall establish a Green Shores Program to promote and cause the planting and maintenance of forested buffers around the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.

(b) The Green Shores Program may include:

(1) Providing grants in the form of trees, money, materials, or expertise to local governments, NONPROFIT CORPORATIONS, and State agencies to be used for planting or enhancing forested buffers around the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries;

(2) Educating the public about the benefits of trees and forested buffers, including:

(i) Establishing demonstration forest buffers on public lands;

(ii) Providing educational and promotional materials to schools;

(iii) Providing grants to schools for their own educational programs;

(iv) Developing and disseminating educational and promotional materials to the public; and

(v) Coordinating volunteer efforts; and

(3) Promoting forested buffers on private land by providing:

(i) Technical assistance, such as preparing site plans and coordinating planting arrangements; and

(ii) Economic incentives, including cost-sharing programs.

5-430.

(a) In order to implement the Green Shores Program, the Department may:

(1) Enter into contractual agreements with other State agencies, local governments, NONPROFIT CORPORATIONS, and private citizens who receive payments or grants;

(2) Set priorities by watersheds for the dissemination of grants and payments; and