



Patuxent Science Meeting 2004 Poster Abstract

Consideration of Ecological Value and Development Pressure in Land Conservation Decisions

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Throughout most of the Chesapeake Bay watershed, remaining large tracts of forests and farmlands are threatened with fragmentation and parcelization due to urban development pressure. "If recent trends continue, the area of developed land in the (Bay) watershed will increase by more than 60% by 2030" (Boesch and Greer, 2003). In light of these issues, the Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership has committed to permanently preserve 20% of the land area in the Bay watershed from development and to target the most valued and vulnerable lands for protection (Chesapeake Executive Council, 2000). This study focuses on assessing the vulnerability of large, contiguous forest tracts to development and proposes a method for combining measures of vulnerability and ecological value to prioritize areas for conservation.