

Chesapeake Conservation Landscaping Council Strategic Plan January 2010 - January 2012

Executive Summary

CCLC seeks to build on its foundations of providing a network for a diverse professional audience, being a reliable source of information on conservation landscaping, and promoting conservation landscaping practices. Increased development across the Chesapeake Bay watershed has made stormwater runoff the fastest growing source of pollution to the Bay and its rivers. Wildlife habitat has been lost and degraded along with the ecosystem services natural habitats provide such as clean air and clean water. Because of new stormwater regulations and recognition of habitat loss, there is increased attention on low impact design, incorporating principles of conservation landscaping.

CCLC is uniquely poised to be a major resource in the region for landscape professionals, educators, local and state government, planners, and developers. CCLC has been providing outreach to the professional community through its bi-annual "Turning a New Leaf" conference, field days, conservation landscaping contest, listserv and web site. One of CCLC's strengths has always been the diversity of the organizations represented on its board. There are people from small and large businesses, public gardens, county, state and federal government, master gardeners and educational non-profits.

CCLC has several major goals for the next two years. Having achieved non-profit status as a 501(c)(3) organization in 2009, CCLC *seeks to become self-sustainable* through a membership program, donations, sponsorships, grants and income from events and web advertising. One major goal is to establish enough regular income to support a paid position to coordinate CCLC's many activities. A membership program will provide income for CCLC to provide more consistent programming and benefits for its supporters.

An *improved web site* will provide pages on conservation landscaping resources, upcoming events and training opportunities, photographs of conservation landscapes, and the 8 Elements of a Conservation Landscaping document.

The "8 Elements of a Conservation Landscape" document serves to provide information on each aspect of what makes up a conservation landscape. A third goal is to *design a certification process* based on the "8 Elements" for conservation landscape professionals by working with state and local governments, other educational institutions and professional societies. As with the confusion over labeling "organic" products, there are many "green", "eco-friendly" services available that are not necessarily environmentally beneficial. There are many training opportunities throughout the region that professionals can participate in, but having a certifying body that tracks participation and ensures a basic standard of quality would make these opportunities more valuable to professionals. It would also provide a service to the public who is trying to select a professional who specializes in environmentally beneficial services.