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## **FREDERICK COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS ADOPT INCREASED TREE CANOPY GOAL**

### ***Conservancy Leads Effort for 20 Percent Goal; First School District in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed***

**Frederick County, MD** April 23, 2008 –Frederick County’s Board of Education unanimously voted to support a goal to increase the tree canopy for all Board of Education of Frederick County properties to 20 percent over the next 30 years. Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS), which currently has 12 percent tree cover, is the first school district in the Chesapeake Bay watershed to adopt a tree canopy goal.

Potomac Conservancy, with support from the US Forest Service, Chesapeake Bay Trust, Home Depot Foundation and local partners, worked closely with Frederick County’s Board of Education and FCPS Facilities Services Division and Schoolyard Habitat Program to establish the 20 percent system-wide tree canopy goal for the school district.

“Trees are absolutely fundamental to improving the Potomac River and Chesapeake Bay,” said Heather Montgomery, the Potomac Conservancy associate leading this 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 on one of our greatest natural resources, the Chesapeake Bay.”

Tree canopy slows stormwater by intercepting rainfall, and helps to improve air and water quality. Increasing tree canopy on school grounds also provides shade from harmful UV rays; enhances outdoor learning opportunities; and has the potential to decrease heating, cooling, and grounds maintenance costs.

In his April 24, 2008, letter to Potomac Conservancy, Frederick County’s Board of Education President Daryl Boffman said, “The Board, in adopted policy and practice, is supportive of many efforts that serve to reduce energy use and protect the environment. In particular, with respect to the tree canopy goal, the objectives of the Conservancy and our own Schoolyard Habitat Program are closely aligned and complementary to one another.”

Working with Frederick County’s Schoolyard Habitat Teacher Specialist and members of the Monocacy & Catoctin Watershed Alliance, the Conservancy has led over 1,400 students, teachers, and volunteers in planting more than 600 native trees and shrubs at schools since last fall. By planting trees, students are participating in creating positive, lasting environmental change while creating exciting outdoor classrooms.

**About Potomac Conservancy:**

Since 1993, the Potomac Conservancy has protected the health, beauty, and enjoyment of the Potomac River and its tributaries. Its conservation programs address the goals of improving water quality, protecting the river's scenic integrity, enhancing recreational resources, and building an informed and engaged constituency, using a range of tools, including restoration, permanent protection, advocacy, and citizen education and engagement.

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