

Did you know that lawn/turfgrass is the biggest “crop” in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, and there are more than 2 million acres of lawn in Pennsylvania? To improve water quality and ecological diversity, there is a movement underway to convert those lawn acres to native meadows and woods. Turfgrass does not provide food or shelter for native species, and it requires a lot of maintenance including fuel, labor, water, fertilizer, herbicides, and pesticides.

Lawns do have some benefits. They provide great cover to minimize soil erosion and are good for outdoor sports, recreation, and entertainment. However, there is an opportunity to convert many lawn acres to native meadows or woods.



### Resources

The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources' (PA DCNR) Lawn Conversion Program offers support for those who want to convert lawn to woods or meadows. According to the [PA DCNR website](#), “the department can provide technical assistance and resources, support partnership development and projects, and fund eligible plantings.”

For more information on converting your lawn to meadows or woods, check out Penn State Extension's article, “[Neighborly Natural Landscaping in Residential Areas](#),” and WeConservePA's piece, “[From Lawn to Meadows: Protect Water, Provide Habitat, Save Money](#).”

### Benefits

- ▶ **Clean Water** - Shallow roots of turfgrass and compacted lawn soils limit water absorption when it rains. The ground is more effective at absorbing stormwater and filtering pollutants in meadows and woods.
- ▶ **Habitat** - Food and cover are available for pollinators, butterflies, songbirds, and small mammals.
- ▶ **Biodiversity** - Meadows can contain up to 100 species of plants, rather than a monoculture of turfgrass.

