

FOR RELEASE  
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### **Girl Scouts and landowners move Puritan tiger beetle closer to recovery**

Chesapeake Bay landowners will partner with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Maryland Department of Natural Resources and the Eastern Shore Land Conservancy to protect more than 450 acres of cliff and shoreline habitat through a \$2.4 million federal grant for the threatened Puritan tiger beetle, the Service announced today.

“The approval of this grant is a significant recovery action on behalf of the Service in partnership with the state and the local communities,” said Leopoldo Miranda, supervisor of the Service’s Chesapeake Bay Field Office. “The protection of these lands will put the recovery of this beetle within reach.”

The grant, awarded through the national [Recovery Land Acquisition Grants Program](#), will be used by [Maryland DNR](#) to purchase permanent conservation easements on several properties on the Chesapeake Bay in Calvert County and on the Sassafras River in Cecil County. The easements will allow permanent protection of shoreline and cliff habitat.

Permanent protection of these lands will help meet one of the federal criteria required for recovery of this species—to stabilize six large sub-populations and their habitats in the Chesapeake Bay. Three sub-populations are already protected by the state.

“Protection of beetle habitat is part of a larger plan not only to protect this species, but also to provide additional options for shoreline protection to the residents of Calvert and Cecil counties,” said DNR Secretary John R. Griffin. “By proactively protecting this important habitat, we may have some additional flexibility when dealing with the overall tiger beetle issue.”

In addition to several privately owned properties in Calvert County, one 230-acre property along the Sassafras River belongs to the [Girl Scouts at Camp Grove Neck](#), who for many years have acted as caretakers for the Puritan tiger beetle population there. Thousands of girls have received hands-on education regarding the life history and importance of the Puritan tiger beetle and other Chesapeake Bay wildlife.

“We are thrilled about this opportunity to be good stewards of the camp by putting an easement on the property to protect rare and endangered species, hardwoods, forest and freshwater wetlands, thanks to the encouragement and funding from the Service, Maryland DNR and Eastern Shore Land Conservancy,” said Lynn Williams, project manager for Girl Scouts of Chesapeake Bay.

These forests, wetlands, eroding cliffs and shoreline areas also support 19 protected rare plant and animal species, including a population of the federally threatened northeastern beach tiger

beetle. Traditional recreation compatible with habitat protection will continue as permitted by the landowners.

“We are very excited to be working with Maryland DNR and the Service again on protecting critical endangered species habitats here on the Eastern Shore,” said Rob Etgen, executive director of the Eastern Shore Land Conservancy. “Rare plants and animals are a key part of our natural heritage, and we must work hard to save their habitats wherever possible.”

Maryland provides a home to the Puritan tiger beetle's largest global population, with a few sister populations along the Connecticut River in New England. The most serious threats to this beetle are shoreline development and bluff stabilization, which destroy or make habitat unsuitable for the beetle and its larvae. Other shoreline erosion structures, such as segmented offshore or headland breakwaters, slow erosion and may help protect property while still providing essential shoreline habitat for the beetle.

This grant is the largest land acquisition grant awarded this year for recovery of a protected species. Land acquisition secures long-term protection of habitat, often an essential element of comprehensive recovery for a listed species. The recovery grant program, authorized by Section 6 of the Endangered Species Act, provides funds for states and territories to protect land through voluntary landowner agreements that benefit listed species with recovery plans.

Landowners and managers play a vital role in conserving our nation's imperiled wildlife. Most threatened and endangered species depend at least in part on private and other nonfederal lands. The Endangered Species Act is not only a critical safety net for America's native fish, wildlife and plants, but it also provides tools to help in the search for improved and innovative ways to conserve and recover imperiled species.

More resources:

- [National news release](#)
- [Puritan tiger beetle in Chesapeake Bay](#)
- [Puritan tiger beetle recovery plan](#) (PDF)
- [Grants under the Endangered Species Act](#)
- [Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund Grants](#) (PDF)