Harry R. Hughes Center for Agro-Ecology, Inc.
Support and Promote Viable Farms and Forests

2012-2017 Strategic Plan
Approved January 9, 2012 by the Board of Directors

Mission:

Support and promote economically viable and environmentally sound agriculture and forestry as Maryland’s preferred land use

It is envisioned that the Mission of the Harry R. Hughes Center for Agro-Ecology, Inc., will be implemented by:

1. Developing and encouraging economically viable and environmentally sound agriculture, forestry and natural resource practices and policies and supporting and enhancing integrated research, outreach and public policy initiatives towards that end;

2. Improving broad public understanding of and support for the interrelationships and interdependencies among agricultural and forestry production, natural resource protection and open space preservation;

3. Continuing to obtain additional funding support for Center sponsored research and education efforts from federal, state, local and private sources;

4. Working cooperatively with organizations, individuals and institutions—notably including the University of Maryland – on educational, research and public policy issues set forth above;

5. Promoting consensus building activities by diverse stakeholders who are concerned with emerging agriculture, forestry and natural resource issues;

6. Soliciting and disseminating sound, independent, unbiased and verifiable scientific research and making that research available to the public and decision makers in order for them to make objective decisions;

7. Creating a land and water stewardship ethic.

8. Promoting and supporting the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay through research and collaborative partnership efforts.
Goal 1: Communications and Outreach

Increase communications and outreach activities to highlight research funded by the Center, emphasizing application of the research findings through building alliances and addressing public policy issues.

1.1 Educate legislators, especially those newly elected, local government officials, other decision makers, stakeholders and the public on what the Center has funded and what the Center has learned;

1.2 Increase public awareness of the economic and environmental contributions that farms and forests provide for all Marylanders;

1.3 Implement new communication and marketing tools to increase the Center’s exposure and outreach to diverse stakeholders;

Goal 2: Research

Identify and support new research that promotes policies that enhances economically viable and environmentally sustainable agriculture and forestry in Maryland.

2.1 Identify, research and support new agricultural and forestry practices being used elsewhere that show economic promise to assist in the retention of farming and forestry in Maryland.

2.2 Board topics for research when funding is available:

* TMDLs (viewed as a top priority)  
* Economic impact of sprawl  
* Ecosystem services  
* Implications of no net loss of forests  
* Invasive pathogens and plants  
* Land use & retention including TDRs  
* Manure management and biosolids  
* Nutrient Trading  
* New agricultural practices that can promote profitability of farms  
* New agricultural practices that can promote “buy local” and the organic movement  
* Renewable energy  
* Water quality  
* Water supply

Goal 3: Catalyst

Continue to be a catalyst by developing partnerships and alliances to address key issues of importance related to the Center’s Mission.

3.1 Inform policy development on topics related to the Center’s Mission.

3.2 Convene diverse groups of stakeholders around key issues related to the Center’s Mission.
Goal 4: Institutional Strength

Continue to ensure the sustainability of the Center through the strengthening of its finances and governance.

4.1 Develop the criteria and guidelines for the Endowed Fellowship Fund. Attain the goal of $1.5 million dollars for the Fund by creating and implementing a fundraising plan to include annual solicitations and a major gift campaign.

4.2 Establish a Board Committee to examine organizational governance and succession; develop a plan for Board discussion and approval.

4.3 Ensure through the Nominating Committee that the mix of Board membership will enable the Center to successfully meet its goals.

4.4 Raise the awareness of the Center and its work with Legislative committee leaders.

4.5 Raise the awareness of the Center and its work with Congress and key Federal agencies.

4.6 Explore, identify and secure a dedicated source of research funding that supports the Mission of the Center and that enables it to retain its reputation for applied and unbiased scientific inquiry.