



**Cecil County**  
**2011 Land Preservation, Parks**  
**and Recreation Plan**

*Adopted* \_\_\_\_\_

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# Executive Summary

## *Introduction*

Updated County Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plans (LPPRP) are required to be submitted to the State of Maryland every six years, effective July 1, 2011. This 2011 round of LPPRPs is intended to provide a common benchmark to assist the State's evaluation of each county's land preservation and recreation programs and thereby ensure good return on public investment. The LPPRPs support the State's planning visions and qualify local governments for State Program Open Space (POS) funds and other programs related to the plan's objectives for three land resource elements:

- Recreation and Parks
- Agricultural land preservation
- Natural resource conservation

Upon adoption by the Board of County Commissioners, this LPPRP becomes an amendment to the Cecil County Comprehensive Plan. The LPPRP also serves as a guide for park acquisition and land preservation in Cecil County's eight incorporated municipalities.

The LPPRP was prepared by the departments of Parks and Recreation and Planning and Zoning. With information provided by the towns of Cecilton, Chesapeake City, Charlestown, Elkton, North East, Perryville, Port Deposit and Rising Sun.

## *Cecil County*

Cecil County is located at the north end of the Chesapeake Bay. The County's 350 square mile land area is shaped by several peninsulas formed by the North East, Elk, Bohemia, and Sassafras Rivers. Major north/south access is via I-95, US 40 and US 1 on the western shore, and MD 213 on the eastern shore. In 2007, approximately 75 percent of the County's land area was resource land; agricultural uses accounted for over 83,2099 acres or 37 percent of total land cover, and an additional 80,746 acres were forested which is 36 percent of the total land area.

As of 2011, Cecil County's population is estimated at 103,800, an eight percent increase over the 2005 population of 96,195. The 2030 population is projected to be 154,900, a 49 percent increase over the 2005 population. In 2010 74 percent of county residents lived in unincorporated areas, 26 percent lived in the 8 municipalities.

## *Comprehensive Plan*

The County Comprehensive Plan divides the county into eleven land use districts as the framework for directing growth and development, infrastructure investment, and community enhancements. Under the plan, future growth is directed primarily to the Development, Town, and Suburban Districts most of which are located in or near the I-95/US 40 corridor. The Plan seeks to protect rural character by designating Rural Conservation Districts (RCD) north of the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal and on much of the Elk Neck peninsula, and a Resource Protection District (RPD) south of the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal. In 2010 a number of amendments were made to the Comprehensive Plan regarding Rural Legacy, the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Program, rural subdivision design, greenways, and watershed planning. Action on other proposed amendments took place in 2010.

## *Recreation and Parks*

The County used the Maryland Electronic Inventory of Recreation Sites (MEIRS), to update its inventory of recreation and open space land and facilities. The County, together with its municipalities and Board of Education, provides approximately 1,500 acres of public park, recreation, and open space land. This acreage includes 17 community parks, 14 mini-parks, eight sports complexes, seven special use areas and eight undeveloped parks.

Of the land in the County's Recreation and open space inventory, approximately 13,576 acres are state and federal natural resource lands including 5,613 acres in the Fair Hill Natural Resources Management Area and 5,718 acres in the Elk Neck State Park and State Forest. Federal land in the County totals a little over 2,800 acres. Approximately 500 acres of these are managed hunting areas, and the other lands are dredge disposal sites also used as wildlife management areas.

A needs analysis was conducted comparing recreation facility supply to demand. Sizable deficits exist now for some facilities and will increase through 2030 as the County's population grows unless new facilities are programmed and developed. Current primary deficits are:

- Regional Parks
- Turf Fields
- Fishing from piers
- Multi Purpose Fields
- Indoor Recreation Centers
- Hiker/biker trails
- Boat Landings

An analysis was also made of population and demand for recreation land by sub-areas of the County. The demand for recreational land is currently highest in the North East, Elkton and Rising Sun recreation service areas. Projecting the acreage needs out to 2030, the need will be highest in the Elkton and Rising Sun service areas.

The LPPRP sets out the County's Parks and Recreation priorities for meeting its land acquisition, facility development and rehabilitation needs through 2030. The overall program would cost almost \$36 million of which \$12 million would be for acquisition, \$ 23.5 million for new facility development projects, and \$500,000 for rehabilitation projects. Highlights of the program are:

- Acquisition of 250 to 410 acres of park and recreation lands.
- The development of the 100 acre parcel in the North East Rising Sun service areas as a Regional Park.
- A Community Park between 75 to 100 acres in the Town of Elkton or in the Elkton service area.
- An indoor sports complex or recreation center in Elkton.
- Two Community Parks of approximately 25 to 50 acres in the Rising Sun and North East recreation service areas.
- Additional water access points.

Key facility development projects are: Chesland Park, Calvert, and Conowingo Park,

A number of recreational trails are currently under development or are planned, and Cecil County has an opportunity to create an excellent network of trails that could be a countywide and regional amenity. These include the Elk Neck Trail, Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway Trail, and the East Coast Greenway.

The County needs to consider expanding its role in funding for recreation and parks. Currently the County primarily relies on the State's POS program funding and provides only limited general funding for matching POS funds and operating the small Division of Parks and Recreation. With the decline in POS funding over the last several years, the County and other organizations need to begin a dialogue to consider new options for funding recreation and parks.

The 2005 LPPRP recommended the County incorporate a leadership role in the overall organization of recreation in Cecil County. The County fulfilled this goal with the implementation of a Department of Parks and Recreation in 2006.

Cecil County has adopted the default State recommended land acquisition goal of 30 acres per 1,000 population. As of 2011, the County is short of this goal by 1418 acres. If no more land is acquired and the population increases as projected, the deficit will increase to over 3000 acres by 2030.

## *Agricultural Preservation*

Most of the County's agricultural lands are in two broad areas: one north of the I-95 corridor, running east-west across the width of the County, and the other south of the Chesapeake and Delaware canal. In 2007, approximately 75 percent of the county's land area was resource lands, down from 87 percent in 1997. Agricultural uses accounted for 83,299 acres or 37 percent of total land coverage in 2007.

The preservation of open spaces, rural character and agricultural activities is a recurring theme of the Cecil County Comprehensive Plan. Several of the Plan's goals specifically address agricultural land preservation. In 2000 Cecil County adopted farmland preservation goals of 30,000 acres in the Comprehensive Plan's Resource Protection District, and 25,000 acres in the Rural Conservation District by the year 2025. In 2002 Cecil County signed *Eastern Shore 2010: A Regional Vision*, an inter-county land use agreement that sets regional goals to protect the Eastern Shore. The State has designated two rural legacy areas (RLA) in the County, the Sassafras RLA in the RPD and the Fair Hill RLA in the RCD. Approximately 50 to 60 percent of the Fair Hill RLA has been protected and 20 to 30 percent of the Sassafras RLA

The primary easement acquisition mechanisms operating in the County are the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF), land trusts (mainly the Maryland Environmental Trust and the Cecil Land Trust) and the Rural Legacy Program. As of 2004, approximately 20,100 acres were under easement in Cecil County of which approximately 18,000 acres were agricultural easements. In addition to the easements, there are approximately 6,430 acres in MALPF districts on which development rights have not been sold. The average price per acre of MALPF development rights sold in the County between 1998 and 2002 was \$1,683. Between 2000 and 2004 approximately \$7.5 million from different sources were spent on easement acquisition in Cecil County.

Cecil County's preservation strategy contains many of the elements to be effective in securing a land base for the agricultural industry and, in doing so, protect the agricultural heritage and rural character of the County. However, implementation of the strategy is not yet complete and much work remains to be done.

Current funding levels will be insufficient to meet County goals. Based on current funding levels, it will take the County 49 years to acquire easements to meet the 55,000-acre goal. There is significant interest in selling easements; between 1998 and 2002 there were 93 applicants to the MALPF program with only 29 easement offers accepted. The next few years will be critical for agricultural land preservation. The amount of farmland in Cecil County was relatively stable between 1987 and 1997, but loss of farmland was over 9,000 acres between 1997 and 2002. If this trend continues, some time around 2025 the County will no longer have even a pool of farmland sufficient to meet its goal.

The County's key land use management tools for agricultural land preservation are the NAR and SAR zoning districts. With residential density permitted in these districts at one dwelling unit per five acres and one dwelling unit per eight acres respectively, these districts have not been effective in supporting agricultural land preservation. Subdivision activity and residential development continues to occur on a widespread basis in these districts, though to a greater degree in the NAR which is under greater development pressure.

Cecil County's program development strategy for agricultural land preservation is:

1. Continue implementing a Transfer of Developments Rights (TDR) Program.
2. Provide attractive development opportunities in designated growth areas.
3. Increase State funding for the MALPF program (**STATE ACTION**).
4. Create a County Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program.
5. Consider providing local incentives for donated easements.
6. Ramp up the pace of easement acquisitions.
7. Monitor permitted rural residential development densities to ensure congruence with agricultural land preservation goals.

8. Increase business development assistance, marketing capacity, and access to financing and capital for resource-based industries. **STATE and COUNTY ACTION.**

### *Natural Resources Conservation*

Three of the Comprehensive Plan's eleven land use districts particularly emphasize land conservation and resource protection; the RPD, RCD, and four mineral extraction districts. In addition, through the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Program, the County limits growth in approximately 25,000 acres of sensitive Critical Area lands. The County has some large and contiguous areas that have remained intact from development and were identified in Maryland's 2000 Green Infrastructure Assessment. Greenways were incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan in 1997.

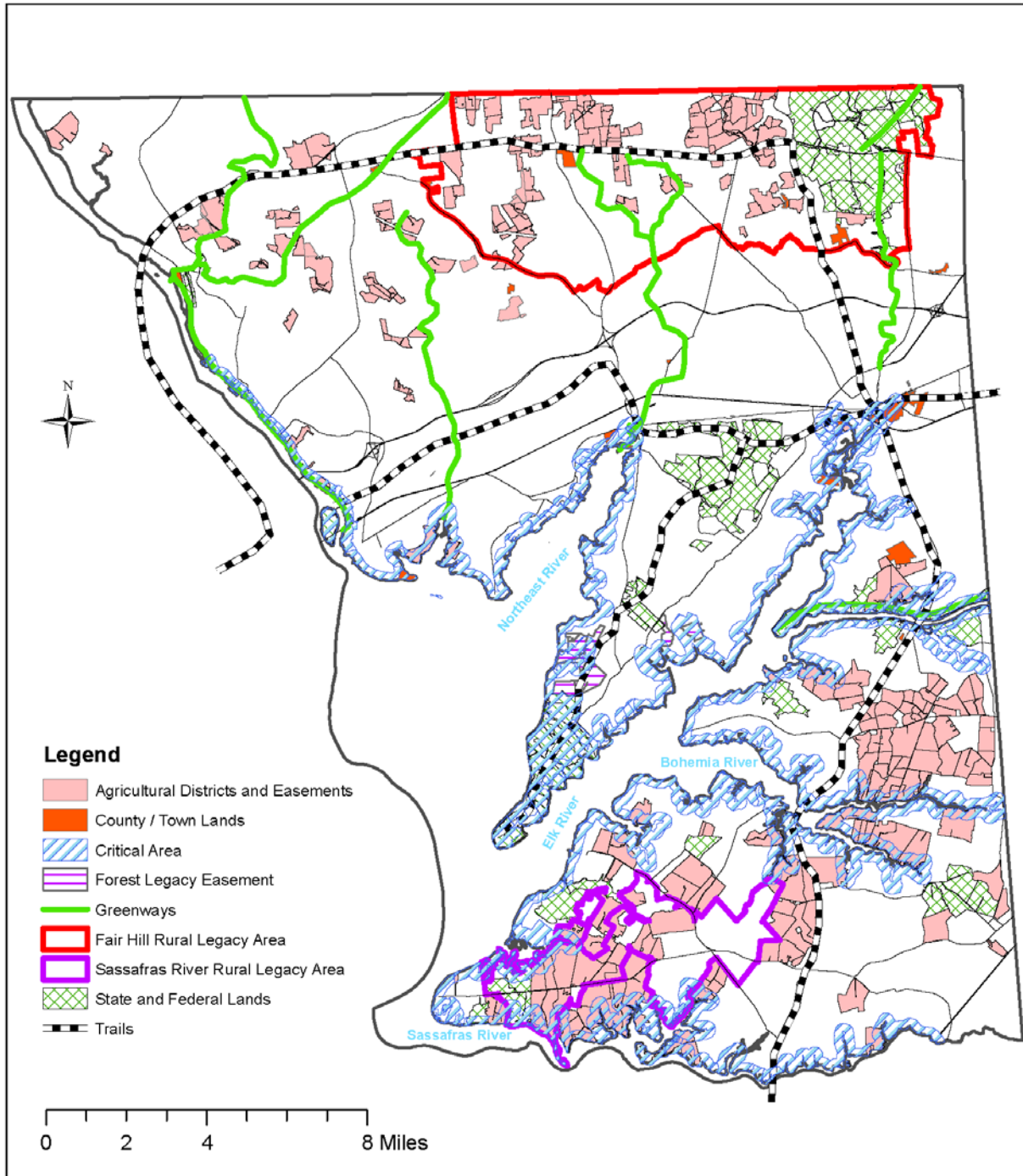
In addition to the approximately 2,100 acres of natural resource land under easement as of 2004, approximately 14,200 acres of County's recreation and open space inventory are federal, state and local natural resource lands. The County's designated conservation areas together with other large protected natural resource areas form a good basis for the County's natural resource conservation efforts. Combined, these areas account for approximately one quarter of the County's land area and form a largely continuous north-south swath through the central portion of the County.

Several recently adopted or proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan would strengthen County policy for concentrating development in urban growth boundaries and helping land conservation in rural areas: a Smart Growth Code; development of a watershed protection plan; and increased support for land preservation in RLAs. Approval of these changes to the Comprehensive Plan will place the County in a better position to pursue more specific implementation measures through new regulations and natural resource conservation programs and funding options. Cecil County's program development strategy for natural resources land preservation is:

1. Adopt recommended revisions relating to natural resources into the Comprehensive Plan, and implement revisions adopted in 2004.
2. Incorporate small area and watershed-based planning into the County's comprehensive planning program. **STATE and COUNTY ACTION.** Based on the State's Clean Water Action Plan, the primary candidate watershed in Cecil County would be the Upper Elk River.
3. Adopt a broad, countywide approach to natural resource conservation, connecting the County's existing protected areas into a broader, interconnected framework of protected lands (see Figure ES-1).
4. Develop a more comprehensive geographic information system (GIS) to support and facilitate both small area and watershed-based planning.
5. Improve the coordination of development review for rare, threatened and endangered species (RTES) with the Department of Natural Resources.
6. Complete protection of the County's two rural legacy areas – Sassafras and Fair Hill **STATE and COUNTY ACTION.** Special emphasis should be on Fair Hill which received funding only in 2002..
7. Continue efforts to adopt urban growth boundaries.
8. Increase state funding for natural resource conservation **STATE ACTION.**
9. Continue to support land trusts.
10. Develop measurable objectives to assess natural resource conservation implementation **STATE and County Action.**
11. Integrate greenways and the State's Green Infrastructure concepts more comprehensively into the County's planning and development review processes.
12. Encourage continuation of a coordinated and proactive partnership among the State, County, and municipalities to attract tourists.

Figure ES-1 is the synthesis map from Chapter VI that brings together the three key figures from the recreation, agricultural land, and natural resource conservation chapters.

**Figure ES-1  
 Synthesis  
 Cecil County Land Preservation,  
 Parks, and Recreation Plan**



The following elements stand out on Figure ES-1.

1. The extensive amount of protected land in large blocks south of the C&D Canal and on the Elk Neck Peninsula. There is a very strong foundation here to build on.
2. The somewhat scattered pattern of protected lands in the Rural Conservation District north of I-95 except in the Fair Hill Rural Legacy Area. While there are a good number of agricultural districts outside the RLA in the RCD, little agricultural land is permanently protected. Major efforts will be needed to preserve significant blocks of land in this area.
3. The relatively minor contribution of county and town park land to overall land preservation except in the immediate vicinity of Elkton. While recreation land can and should support broader land preservation efforts, its contribution will likely remain small.
4. The extensive Critical Area, almost 12 percent of the County, and particularly extensive south of Elkton.
5. The potential to interconnect the large blocks of agricultural and natural resource lands via natural corridors (green infrastructure) and the greenways designated in the County's Comprehensive Plan. While these connections look feasible on the map, actually creating these interconnections on the ground will take considerable effort.
6. The potential to create an extensive on-road and off-road recreational trail system serving much of the County and connecting many of the County's large blocks of protected lands. This system has the potential to be a major asset to the County, but again will take a significant effort to make real on the ground.

Cecil County is at an important crossroads:

- Before 2010, the County's population is projected to top 100,000, the highest of any of the Eastern Shore counties. The rate of growth and development is projected to continue, putting pressure on farmland protection efforts and on resource land, and creating new demands for recreation.
- The next few years will be critical to the farmland protection effort which must increase substantially if Cecil County is to achieve its farmland protection goal of 55,000 acres.
- The County's past model for recreation provision will likely not provide an adequate level of recreation service for the County's population.
- Through the Comprehensive Plan the County has agreed conceptually to pursue watershed plans, groundwater protection, and greenways. While there is significant grassroots interest in the County in watershed planning and protection and in natural resource conservation initiatives, the County has yet to define in detail the direction it will take on natural resource conservation.

By pursuing the program development strategies set forth in this LPPRP, Cecil County will be able to move towards meeting both its and the State's goals for recreation, agricultural land preservation, and natural resource conservation.



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## CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the purpose and context for preparing the 2011 Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan (LPPRP), its objectives and legal framework.

### A. Purposes of the Plan

Updated County Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plans (LPPRP) are required to be submitted to the State of Maryland every six years, effective July 1, 2011<sup>1</sup>. The Maryland Department of Planning will develop a statewide plan incorporating all county plans within one year after county plans are due. That plan will provide the framework for the State to implement an integrated and coordinated approach to the provision of recreational lands and facilities, including the protection of natural resources and agriculture.

This 2011 round of LPPRPs is intended to provide a common benchmark to assist the State's evaluation of each county's land preservation and recreation programs and thereby ensure good return on public investment. The LPPRPs support the State's seven land use planning visions contained in the 1992 Economic Growth, Resource Protection and Planning Act and an eighth vision added in 2000. In addition, LPPRPs qualify local governments for State Program Open Space (POS) grants and other programs related to the plan's objectives for three land resource elements:

- Recreation and Parks,
- Agricultural land preservation, and
- Natural resource conservation.

To achieve this purpose, this LPPRP planning process:

- Evaluates State and County land preservation goals and objectives for the three land resource elements and identifies where they are the same, complementary, or different;
- Evaluates the ability of implementation, programs and funding sources to achieve goals and objectives for each element;
- Recommends changes to policies, plans and funding strategies to better implement goals and leverage return on public investment in the three land preservation elements;
- Identifies the needs and priorities of current and future County residents for recreation; and
- Ensures that public investment in land preservation and recreation supports the County's Comprehensive Plan, State planning policy, and State and local programs that influence land use and development.

Upon adoption by the Board of County Commissioners, this 2011 LPPRP becomes an amendment to the Cecil County Comprehensive Plan pertaining to recreational land acquisition, facility development, and land preservation in the County. The LPPRP also serves as a guide for park acquisition and land preservation in Cecil County's eight incorporated municipalities: Cecilton, Chesapeake City, Charlestown, Elkton, North East, Perryville, Port Deposit and Rising Sun.

The 2011 LPPRP for Cecil County was prepared in accordance with guidelines developed in 2003 by the Maryland Departments of Planning and Natural Resources. The LPPRP examines progress since adoption

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<sup>1</sup> Program Open Space: § 5-905 of the Natural Resources Article, Maryland Annotated Code.

of the 1998 Cecil County Land Preservation and Recreation Plan (LPPRP) and sets overall policy to guide decision making over the 2011 to 2030 period and beyond. The 2011 LPPRP replaces the 2005 LPPRP.

## **B. Local Agency Preparation of the Plan**

Cecil County government is responsible for the preparation of the LPPRP. The effort was led by the Cecil County Department of Parks and Recreation and Planning and Zoning. In addition, the following agencies and organizations contributed to preparation of the plan:

- Cecil County Planning Commission provided oversight and direction to the planning process;
- Cecil County Board of Parks and Recreation provided input related to recreation elements and programs;
- Cecil County Department of Planning and Zoning provided the input on Agricultural
- The Towns of Cecilton, Charlestown, Chesapeake City, Elkton, North East, Perryville, Port Deposit, and Rising Sun provided input primarily related to recreational facilities and needs.

The Cecil County Board of Parks and Recreation approved the LPPRP on April 28, 2011 and forwarded to the Cecil County Planning Commission for a public hearing on May 16, 2011. The Board of County Commissioners approved the LPPRP in a public hearing on May 17, 2011.

## **C. The Plan's Relationship to the Comprehensive Planning Process**

The LPPRP is one of a series of companion plans, regulations, and guidance documents that together form Cecil County's planning program. Chief among these documents is the Cecil County Comprehensive Plan which guides land use management policies and decisions. The Comprehensive Plan was adopted in April 2010.

This LPPRP has been prepared to be consistent with County policies, goals and objectives, including potential amendments to the existing Comprehensive Plan. Formal adoption of this LPPRP, as an amendment to the Cecil County Comprehensive Plan, by the Cecil County Commissioners is expected by July, 2011.

## **C. Definitions**

Appendix A contains a glossary of planning terms that is intended to improve understanding of local and technical terms used in this LPPRP.

## Chapter II Framework

### A. Physical Characteristics

#### 1. Location

Cecil County is located at the north end of the Chesapeake Bay and extends easterly from the Susquehanna River, following borders with the States of Pennsylvania and Delaware, to the Sassafras River on the south (Figure II-1). The County's 348 square mile land area is shaped by several peninsulas formed by the North East, Elk, Bohemia, and Sassafras Rivers. Major north/south access is via I-95, US 40 and US 1 on the western shore, and MD 213 on the eastern shore.

#### 2. Land Cover

Table II-1 summarizes trends in land cover and development from 1997 to 2007, the most recent year for which data is available. In 2007, approximately 75 percent of the County's land area was resource lands, down from 87 percent in 1997. Agricultural uses accounted for 83,299 acres or 37 percent of total land coverage in 2007. An additional 80,746 acres were forested, 36 percent of the total land area. Residential and other developed lands increased from 13 percent of land cover in 1997 to 24 percent in 2007. Figure II-2 shows land cover in 2007.

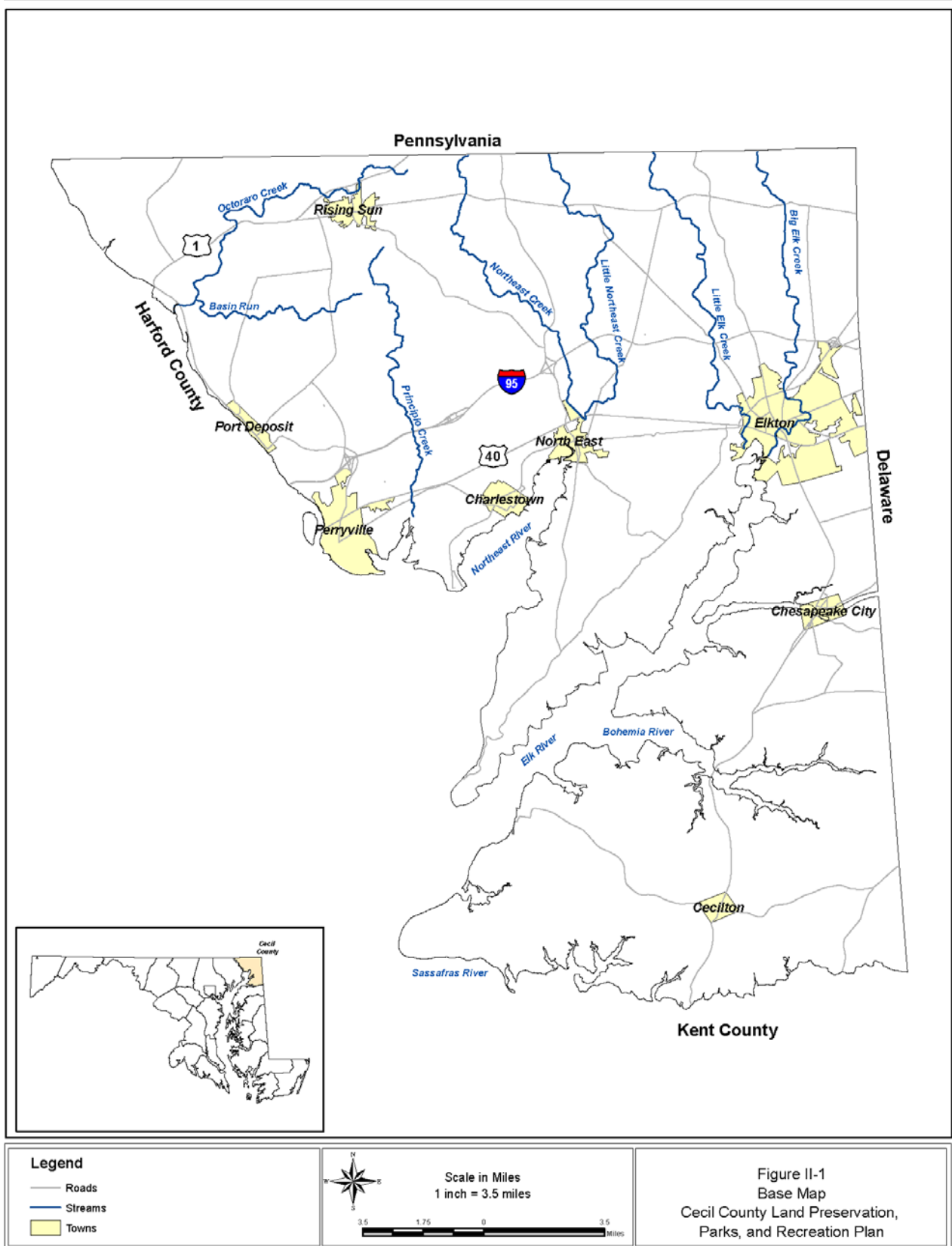
**Table II-1**      *Cecil County Land Cover 1997-2007*

	1997		2002		2007	
	Acres	Percent	Acres	Percent	Acres	Percent
Resource Lands	193,418	87	186,634	84	167,699	75
Agriculture	101,543	46	98,654	44	83,299	37
Forest	86,939	39	84,482	38	80,746	36
Extractive/barren	2,684	1	703	<1	1,169	0.5
Wetland	2,252	1	2,795	1	2,485	1
Development Lands	29,446	13	35,961	16	53,165	24
Residential	22,215	10	26,386	12	39,692	18
Non-residential	7,231	3	9,575	4	13,473	6
<b>Total Land Area</b>	<b>222,864</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>222,595</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>223,674</b>	<b>100</b>

Note: The Maryland Department of Planning has slightly varied methodology in calculating total acreage between 1997 and 2007 resulting in slight variations in total land area.

Source: 1990 and 1997 data from Maryland's Changing Land: Past, Present and Future, December 2001; 2002 data from the May 2004 Land Use/Land Cover Survey; 2007 data from the September 2008 Land Use/Land Cover Survey, all published by the Maryland Department of Planning.

Figure II-1 Location Map



**Legend**

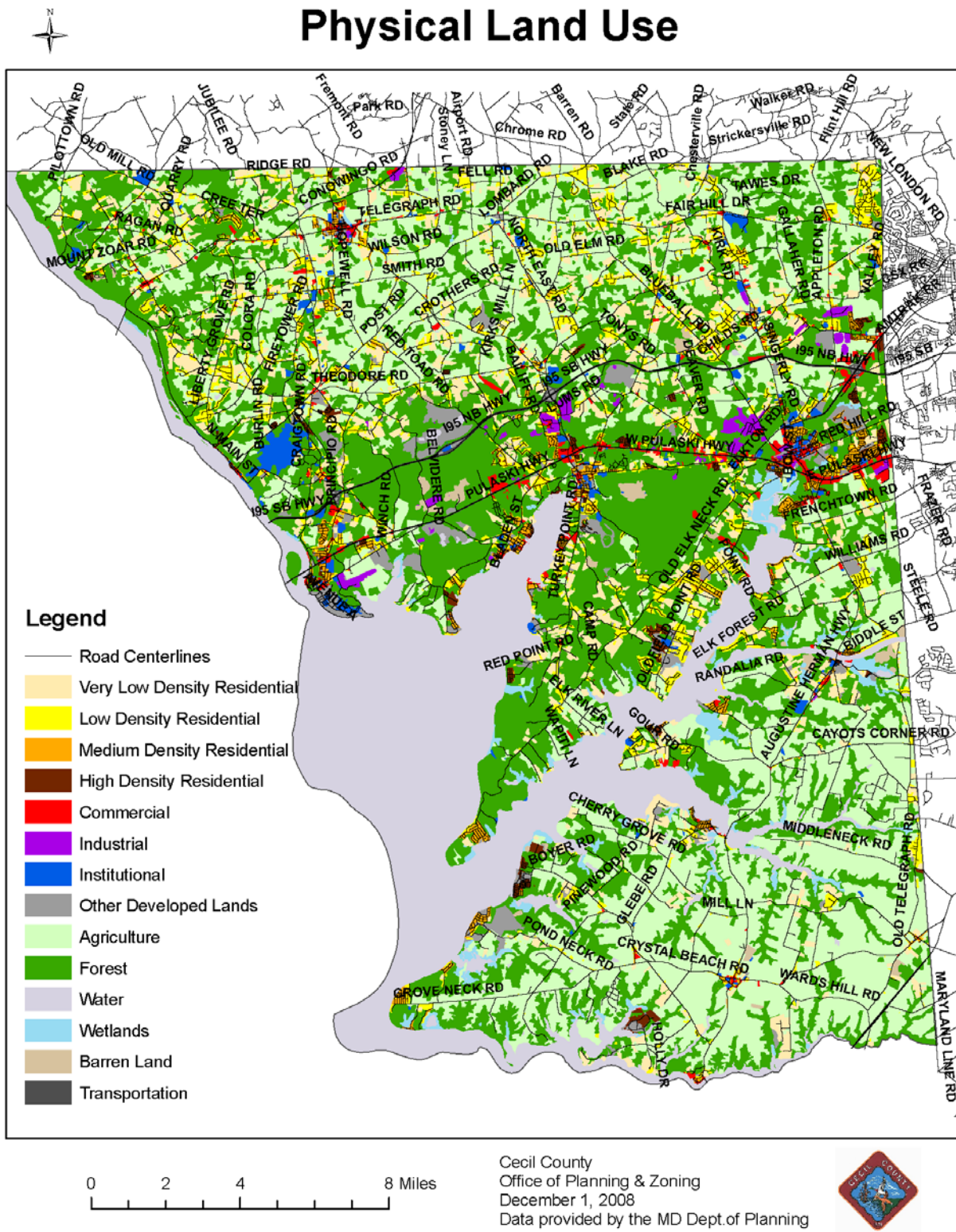
- Roads
- Streams
- Towns

Scale in Miles  
1 inch = 3.5 miles

3.5 1.75 0 3.5 Miles

Figure II-1  
Base Map  
Cecil County Land Preservation,  
Parks, and Recreation Plan

Figure II-2 Cecil County Land Cover - 2007



### 3. Natural Resources

Environmentally sensitive areas occur throughout Cecil County including flood plains, streams and their buffers, the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area, wetlands, and steep slopes (Figure II-3).

Cecil County has extensive shorelines. In addition to the shorelines of the rivers and their major tributaries, the five major rivers, the Susquehanna, Northeast, Elk, Bohemia and Sassafras form a series of peninsulas or necks contributing to the extensive shoreline of the Chesapeake Bay. Approximately 25,800 acres or 12 percent of the county is in the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area which adjoins the shorelines generally to the head of tide. There are 12 major (8 digit) watersheds in the County (Table II-2 and Figure II-3).

**Table II-2 Major Watersheds**

Number	Watershed	Acres
	Name	
02120203	Octoraro Creek	22,196
02130609	Furnace Bay	13,623
02130608	Northeast River	40,377
02130605	Little Elk Creek	15,670
02130606	Big Elk Creek	10,933
02130603	Upper Elk River	19,872
02130601	Lower Elk River	25,388
02130604	Back Creek	8,729
02130602	Bohemia River	26,502
02130610	Sassafras River	48,326
02120201	Lower Susquehanna River	19,885
02120204	Conowingo Dam Susquehanna River	11,676
<b>Total</b>		<b>263,177</b>

Note: Acres for watersheds are for the entire watershed which may include portions of other counties. Therefore the total acreage exceeds the land area shown in Table II-1. For example, the Lower Susquehanna River and Conowingo Dam Susquehanna River watersheds drain portions of Harford County.

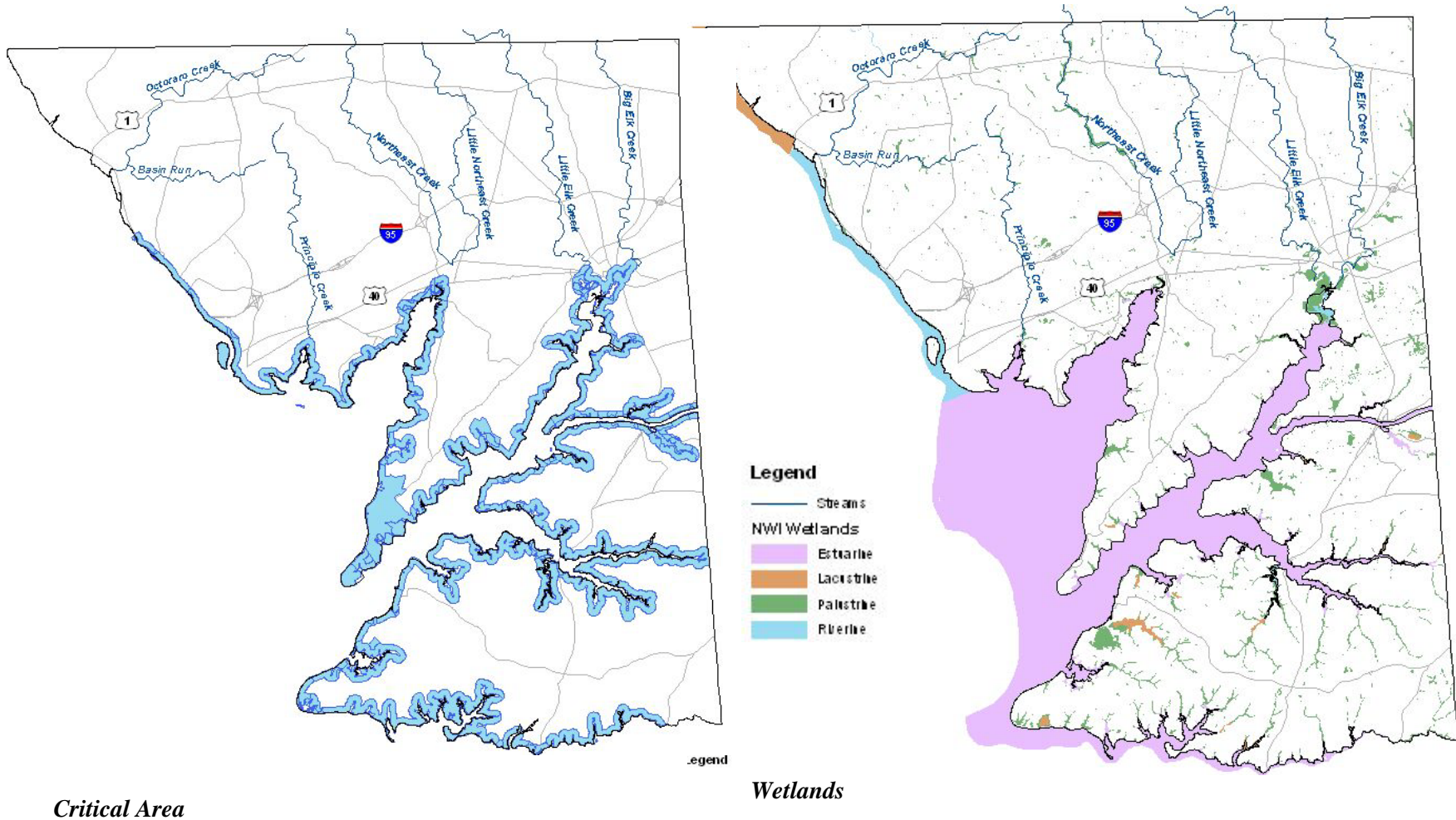
#### a. Topography

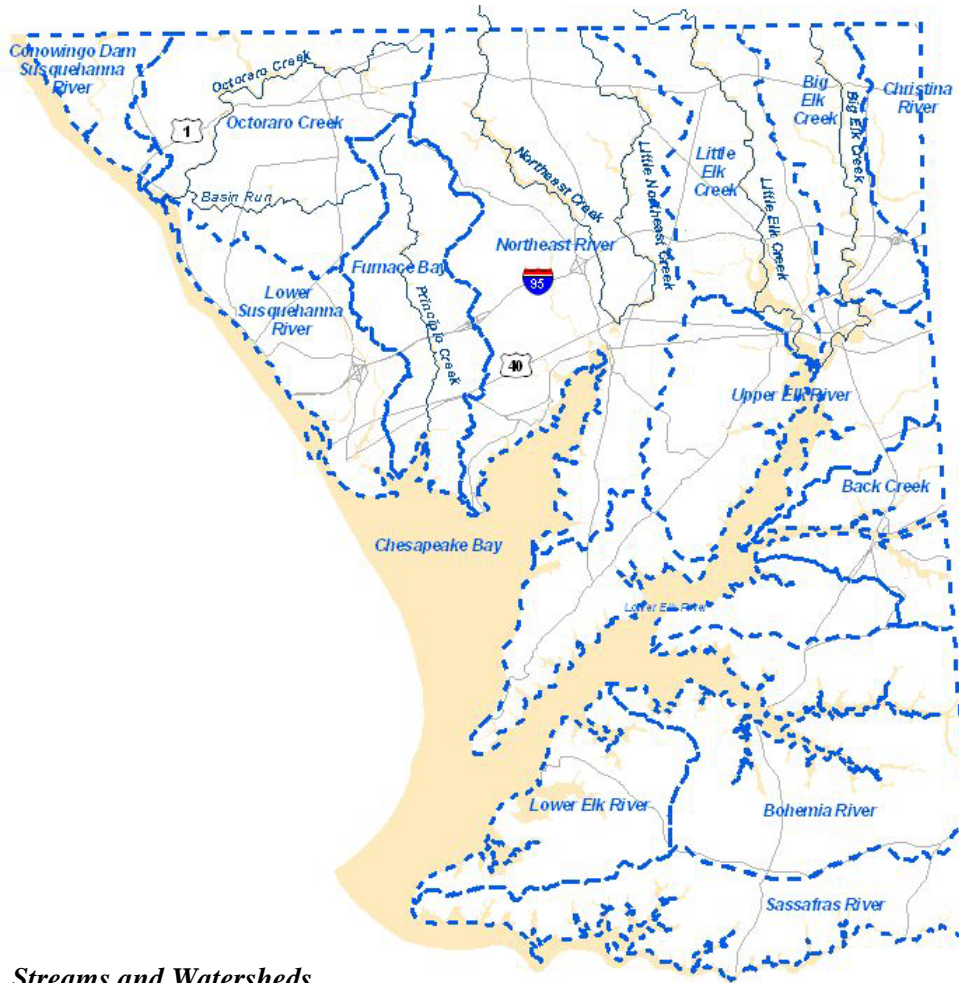
Cecil County is divided into two major physiographic regions along the Fall Line, which lies just north of the I-95/US 40 corridor.

The southern two-thirds of the County are in the Atlantic Coastal Plain. Generally this land shows little relief; its streams are small and sluggish and marshes and wetland areas are common. Underlying sediments are easily eroded, and wave action from the Chesapeake Bay, in addition to surface runoff, have created local areas of steep slopes and bluffs from 20 to nearly 100 feet in height.

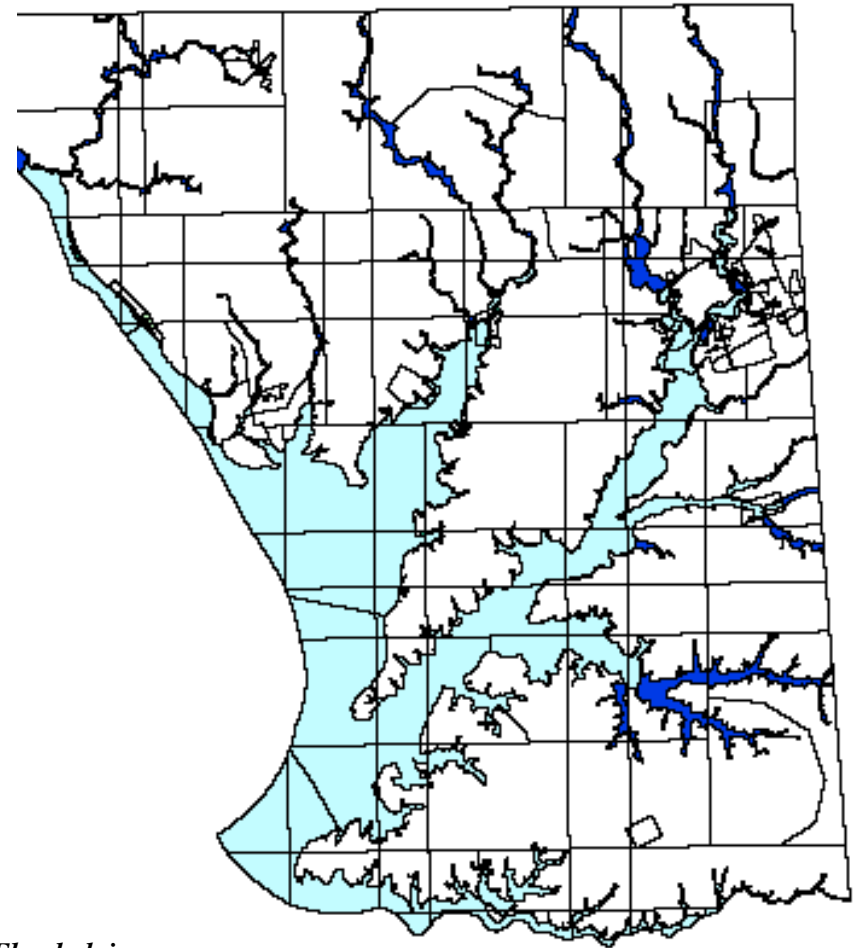


**Figure II-3 Selected Natural Resource**





*Streams and Watersheds*



*Flood plains*

The northern third of Cecil County lies within the eastern Piedmont, and is characterized by an uneven, hilly terrain punctuated by small-scale gorges, cliffs, and ridges. The northeastern portion of the County is moderately hilly, with the greatest relief provided by the gorges of the major stream valleys. The north-central section of the County is only slightly hilly with wide valleys and large-scale undulations in the terrain. The northwest section of the County provides the most varied topography. Near Port Deposit along the Susquehanna River, for example, are granite cliffs. Further north, the Octoraro and Conowingo Creeks form deep gorges as they flow to the Susquehanna. This region has the highest elevation in the County; 535 feet above sea level near Rock Springs.

*b. Forest Land*

As noted in Table II-1, 36 percent of the County was forested as of 2007. Forested areas occur throughout the County, including several large contiguous blocks in the Elk Neck peninsula that are in public ownership; Elk Neck State Forest and Elk Neck State Park. Another large forested area is located between the Towns of Perryville and North East along the I-95/US40 corridor.

*c. Flood Plains and Streams*

Flood plains are areas subject to periodic flooding. Cecil County has both tidal and non-tidal flood plains. The 100-year floodplain is shown in Figure II-3. Most non-tidal flooding occurs in August and September as a result of high intensity rainfall from hurricanes, tropical storms, and severe thunderstorms. Most tidal flooding is attributed to tidal surges and high coastal waters due to strong winds also associated with such storms.

*d. Significant Habitat Areas*

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources has designated two Natural Heritage Areas (NHA) in Cecil County. These are areas designated for special protection, pursuant to state rare, threatened and endangered species regulations for plants or wildlife. The Grove Neck NHA is located along the Sassafras River and the Plum Creek NHA is located in Elk Neck State Forest. The Susquehanna Flats form another unique environmental and habitat area where the Susquehanna's shallow fresh waters merge with the Chesapeake Bay and create a rich habitat for fish and other aquatic species.

*e. Wetlands*

Low-lying wetlands are concentrated along the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, including swamps, marshes, bogs and other hydric soils areas (Figure II-3). Wetlands are formed by saturated soils that have enough moisture to support a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted to such wet conditions. These and other inland streams and wetlands are valuable natural resources and serve as flood and water storage and pollution filtration areas, wildlife habitats, and fish spawning areas. They also provide recreational and educational opportunities.

## B. Demographic Characteristics

As of November 2010, the Maryland Department of Planning estimates Cecil County's population at 102,600, a 16 percent increase over the 2000 population of 85,951. The 2020 population is projected to be 125,100, a 45 percent increase over the 2000 population. The projected growth reflects the central location and attractiveness of Cecil County along the I-95/US 40 corridor, its relative affordability, and its proximity to Pennsylvania and Delaware.

County and town population change between 2000 and 2010 is shown in Table II-3. In 2010, 74 percent of County residents lived in unincorporated areas and 26 percent lived in the eight municipalities. The towns increased their share of total county population by one percent (3,345 people) between 2000 and 2010. The greatest increase in population occurred in the Town of Elkton.

**Table II-3 County and Town Population, 2000 and 2010**

	Population					
	2000		2010		Change 2000 to 2010	
	Number	Percent of County total	Number	Percent of County total	Number	Percent
Cecilton	474	0%	495	0%	21	4%
Charlestown	1,019	1%	1,106	1%	87	9%
Chesapeake City	787	1%	832	1%	45	6%
Elkton	11,893	12%	14,746	14%	2,853	24%
North East	2,733	3%	2,872	3%	139	5%
Perryville	3,672	4%	3,816	4%	144	4%
Port Deposit	676	1%	706	1%	30	4%
Rising Sun	1,702	2%	1,818	2%	116	7%
<b>Total Towns</b>	<b>22,956</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>26,391</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>3,435</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>Unincorporated area</b>	<b>62,995</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>76,209</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>13,214</b>	<b>21%</b>
<b>Total County</b>	<b>85,951</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>102,600</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>16,649</b>	<b>19%</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2000 data); Maryland Department of Planning population projections (2010 data)

The County's age distribution is projected to change slightly through 2030 (Table II-4). The population age 19 and under is projected to increase by approximately 14,160 persons, but will decline slightly as an overall proportion of the County population from 29 percent in 2005 to 28 percent in 2030. The population age 65 and over is projected to increase by approximately 14,140 and will comprise 15 percent of the population in 2030 compared to 11 percent in 2005. The 20 to 64 age group will increase by approximately 30,500 but as a percent of overall population will decline from 60 percent to 57 percent.

**Table II-4 Population Projections by Age for Cecil County and Maryland, 2005 to 2030**

	2005				2030			
	Cecil		Maryland		Cecil		Maryland	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>0-19</b>	28,500	29%	1,567,180	28%	42,660	28%	1,740,680	26%
<b>20-64</b>	57,870	60%	3,364,060	60%	88,370	57%	3,607,620	54%
<b>65 +</b>	9,830	11%	646,230	12%	23,970	15%	1,335,960	20%
<b>Total</b>	96,200	100%	5,577,470	100%	155,000	100%	6,684,260	100%

Source: Maryland Department of Planning, October 2009.

### C. Comprehensive Plan Framework

The 2010 Cecil County Comprehensive Plan adopted by the Board of County Commissioners on April 13, 2010 provides the policy framework for land use management policies and decisions. The Comprehensive Plan contains several goals related to agriculture and the protection of natural resources and, to a lesser extent, parks and recreation. The plan also contains performance standards and guidelines intended to prevent conflicts between land uses, protect natural resources, and manage stormwater quality.

Implementation of the 2010 Comprehensive Plan shall occur primarily via the 2010-2011 Comprehensive Rezoning process, which is currently underway and expected to be complete in late April 2011. The Comprehensive Rezoning shall establish the County’s new zoning districts and character of development for each district.

#### General Planning Strategy and Context

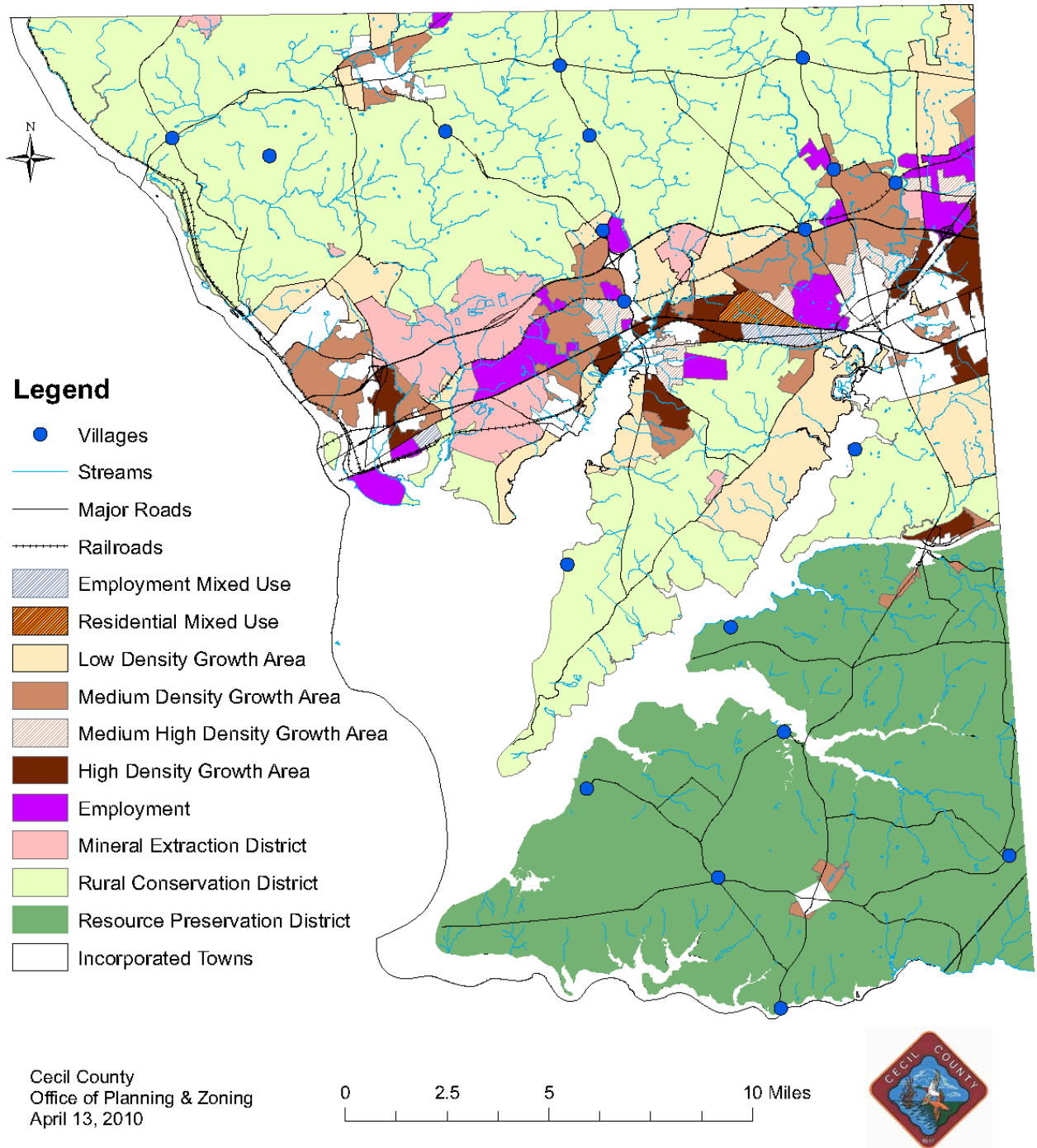
The Comprehensive Plan divides the county into eleven land use districts as the basis for directing growth and development, infrastructure investment, and community enhancements. Under the plan, future growth is directed primarily to the Employment Mixed Use, Residential Mixed Use, Low Density Growth Area, Medium Density Growth Area, Medium High Density Growth Area, High Density Growth Area, and Employment districts (Figure II-4). Other Comprehensive Plan policies are intended to preserve open spaces, rural character and agricultural activities. The County’s general land use planning framework and strategy has four basic elements:

1. **Encourage intensive development within designated Growth Areas.** The growth areas around the Towns of Elkton, North East, Perryville and Port Deposit are intended for high density development supported by public facility infrastructure and available or planned public water and sewer facilities. Smaller sized growth areas around Rising Sun, Chesapeake City and Cecilton are intended to be served by public water and sewer infrastructure to serve new development that is compatible with each town’s existing character. The growth areas are to be defined by surrounding farm and forest lands which complement the surrounding rural character and function as a transition between developed enclaves and rural areas.

By concentrating growth in these areas, the County’s strategy is to relieve development pressure in the rural districts where public water and sewer is not planned and other significant public facility investment is discouraged.

Figure II-4 Cecil County Comprehensive Plan Map

## CECIL COUNTY LAND USE MAP 2010 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



2. **Provide opportunities for development in historically settled areas outside of the Growth Areas.** This is accomplished by designating Village Districts to protect the character of the County's historic villages by separating them from surrounding rural or developed areas. Villages are classified into two categories: crossroad villages and waterfront villages. Crossroad villages are located at intersections of existing or historic roads, and waterfront villages are located along the shorelines of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. The Comprehensive Plan recognizes 19 villages, and the villages make up less than one percent of the County's land area, approximately 1,600 acres.
  
3. **Protect rural character by designating Rural Conservation Districts and a Resource Preservation District.** This strategy encourages agricultural and forest resource protection while discouraging development of rural areas. The Rural Conservation District (RCD) generally encompasses agricultural areas north of the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal and also includes much of the Elk Neck area south of the Town of North East. The RCD comprises approximately 43 percent of the County's land area. The primary purpose of this District is to maintain the rural character of the County by encouraging agricultural and forestry uses.

The Resource Preservation District (RPD) encompasses most areas south of the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal except for Chesapeake City, Cecilton, and some small village districts. The RPD covers about 28 percent of the County's land area. The primary purpose of the RPD is to encourage retention of agricultural land and agricultural related activities and to support the County's agricultural economy. These areas are intended to be protected through zoning, the Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program, and various land preservation programs.
  
4. **Protect environmentally sensitive resources in all areas of the County.** This strategy relies on regulatory controls to protect sensitive resource lands such as flood plains, wetlands, steep slopes, and forest land. The Comprehensive Plan provides performance standards and guidelines to protect sensitive lands and natural resources. These standards are implemented through the zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations.

### **Designated Conservation Areas**

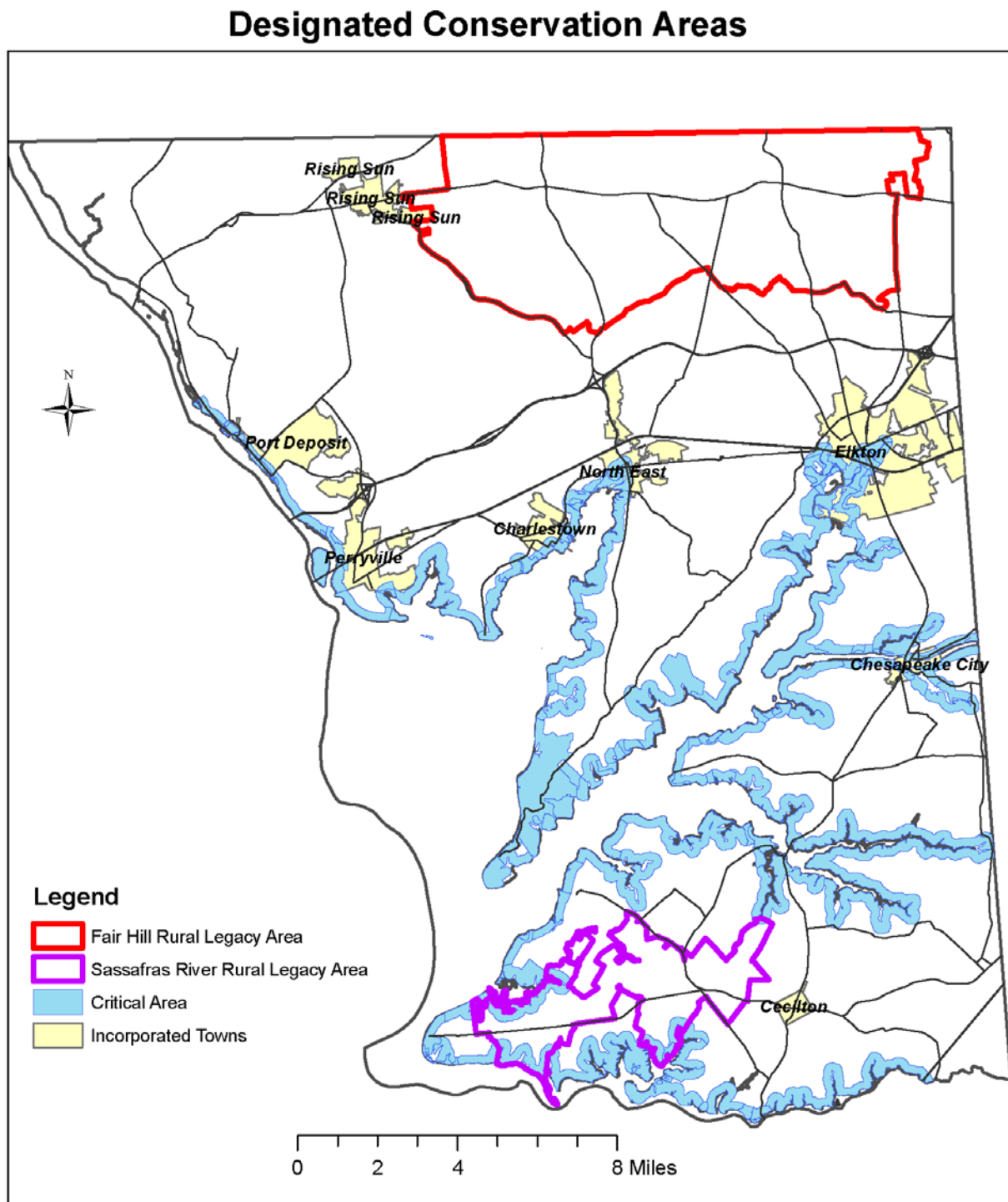
Figure II-5 shows the County's designated conservation areas. These are the Fair Hill and Sassafras Rural Legacy Areas (RLA) and the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area. Rural Legacy is a community driven program that leads to designation of large, contiguous blocks of rural lands, including agricultural, natural, cultural and forestry resources after specific criteria are met. In RLAs land conservation is emphasized through the encouragement of fee-simple and easement purchases of land for permanent conservation. The Fair Hill RLA encompasses 30,987 acres and the Sassafras RLA is approximately 8,244 acres.

The Sassafras RLA is part of a larger 36,000-acre RLA also known as the mid-shore Agricultural Security Corridor. The purpose of this RLA is to focus local, regional, and national efforts on one of the largest, contiguous blocks of highly productive farmland in the rapidly developing mid-Atlantic region.

The Fair Hill RLA is one of the County's most productive and economically important agricultural areas and much of it is under various forms of protection. The goal for the RLA is to improve water quality in the Big and Little Elk Creek watersheds while buffering and expanding the state-owned Fair Hill Natural Resource Management Area.

The Chesapeake Bay Critical Area contains approximately 25,800 acres of sensitive shoreline and streams and is subject to regulatory controls in the zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations regarding land use, development, and natural resource disturbance.

Figure II-5 Designated Conservation Areas





# CHAPTER III - RECREATION, PARKS, AND OPEN SPACE

## Introduction

This chapter identifies the needs and priorities of current and future Cecil County residents for parks, recreation, and open space.

Goals and priorities for recreation land acquisition and facility development and rehabilitation are established based on the following considerations:

- State goals and policies for recreation and parks.
- A supply and demand needs analysis of recreational facilities and activities based on existing facilities and demand factors obtained from state surveys of public recreational interests; and
- Goals, policies and actions from the 2005 LPPRP.

Based on the supply and demand analyses, a program for recreational land acquisition, facility development and rehabilitation is outlined for the short (2011-2015), mid (2016-2020) and long-range (2021-2030) periods and beyond.

## A. Recreation and Parks Program

### 1. Goals

This section discusses interrelationships between the County Comprehensive Plan and State goals for recreation and parks.

#### a. State Goals

The State's goals for recreation, parks, and open space are:

1. Make a variety of quality recreational environments and opportunities readily available to all citizens, and thereby contribute to their physical and mental well-being.
2. Recognize and strategically use parks and recreation facilities as amenities to make communities, counties, and the State more desirable places to live, work and visit.
3. Use State investment in parks, recreation and open space to complement and mutually support the broader goals and objectives of local comprehensive master plans.
4. To the greatest degree feasible, ensure that recreational land and facilities for local populations are conveniently located relative to population centers, are accessible without reliance on the automobile, and help protect natural open spaces and resources.
5. Complement infrastructure and other public investments in neighborhood and community parks and facilities.
6. Continue to protect recreational open space and resource lands at a rate that equals or exceeds the rate that land is developed at a statewide level.

*b. County Goals*

The 2011 Comprehensive Plan has a single goal directly pertaining to Recreation and Parks:

“Acquire park land and develop recreation facilities for all major user groups.” (page 3)

More specific goals were set forth in the 2005 LPPRP. These goals remain valid in 2011 and are incorporated as goals into this LPPRP. The County goals that follow, like State Goals 1 and 4, seek to provide adequate amounts of park land and recreation facilities located convenient to residents. However, at a more local level, the County’s goals place emphasis on efficient management and delivery of park and recreation services and programs (Goals 1, 2, 5 and 6) that are similar to or complement State Goals 1 and 5.

1. Create a leadership role for the County in the overall organization of recreation in Cecil County
2. Improve methods by which information about recreation programs is gathered and disseminated in Cecil County.
3. Provide adequate amounts of recreation land to serve residents throughout the County.
4. Develop additional recreation facilities to meet specific demands.
5. Improve the countywide coordination and provision of recreational programming.
6. Provide an adequate level of recreation services while keeping the cost to government as low as possible.

The 2005 LPPRP identified the following policies to guide future land acquisitions, and these policies are also incorporated into this 2011 LPPRP:

- Ensure maximum use of existing facilities including school sites and existing recreation land.
- Add onto existing sites wherever possible.
- Locate new recreation facilities in or convenient to towns and the county's designated development district.
- Continue to meet existing unmet demand in suburban and rural areas provided this does not contribute to sprawl development.
- Increase cooperation with the Board of Education in incorporating joint uses of school sites and facilities, especially when renovating schools or building new facilities.

These policies support the County’s goals and place emphasis on efficient management and joint utilization of park and recreation facilities. The policies support and are consistent with State Goals 2, 4 and 5, that emphasize facilities as community amenities; providing facilities close to population centers; and as facilities that complement other infrastructure and public investment.

## **2. Programs and Procedures**

*a. Organization and planning procedures*

The Cecil County Code requires the Board of County Commissioners to appoint a Board of Parks and Recreation. The Board comprises eight-members, including one ex-officio County Commissioner member. The Board is authorized in the Code to develop and provide “a comprehensive program of public recreation in schools, parks, or other lands or buildings, either publicly or privately owned” § 57-5.

The Board's primary function is to assist staff with implementing policies and procedures, CIP development, County project oversight and grassroots advocacy. The County Commissioners retain approval authority for plans and funding recommended by the Board.

The Director of Parks and Recreation is also established in the County Code. Currently the Department of Parks and Recreation is comprised of a Director, Superintendent, 6 other employees, and approximately 30 seasonal employees and volunteers.

The following procedures have been established to manage the recreation and parks program and provide for public involvement:

- The Department of Parks and Recreation and Board of Parks and Recreation generally meet monthly. Meetings are public and are primarily devoted to reviewing County projects and program goals, needs and accomplishments. The Board will also discuss policy and implementation progress, funding for the Department of Parks and Recreation, and other departmental issues.
- The Director provides quarterly department reports to the Board of Parks and Recreation and the Board of Cecil County Commissioners.
- Information about recreation programs in Cecil County is collected and distributed by four main sources: Cecil County Parks and Recreation; Cecil County Public Schools, the Cecil County Library; and Cecil County news papers.
- The 2005 LPPRP recognized Cecil County's lack of a centralized park and recreation planning and programming structure and recommended that the County take more of a leadership role. Thus, in 2006, Cecil County Government established the first Department of Parks and Recreation. The department currently organizes over 100 programs to Cecil County residents throughout the year while managing over 500 acres of open space. The department continues to work closely with private, non-profit organizations such as Cecil Soccer, Cecil County Jr League Football, Little League, etc.

#### *b.* Funding

##### Operating Funds

The County's FY 2011 operating budget for the Department of Parks and Recreation is approximately \$828,577 derived from the County's general fund. The Department of Parks and Recreation produces significant revenue from program user fees, facility rental fees and the County's three public boat launch ramps. Fee revenues are returned to the general fund, however all programs are monetarily self sustaining.

## Capital Funds

The majority of park acquisition, and facility development and rehabilitation funding comes from the State's POS program. The FY 2011 POS apportionment for Cecil County is \$228,238. The County holds these POS funds in a capital account along with any general funds appropriated to cover the County's share of development costs for specific POS funded projects it is managing. As of December, 2010, this fund contains approximately \$228,238, including approximately \$86,079 in County funds.

Since 2007, the County's annual POS appropriation has averaged approximately \$700,525. From 2007 to 2011, funding was significantly reduced because of State fiscal constraints. The \$173,000 FY2011 funding is down from a high of \$1,879,814 in 2007. POS funding is heavily relied upon by the County, its municipalities, and other park and recreation organizations as the major contributor to funding land acquisitions and facility development and rehabilitation projects. At least 50 percent of POS funding must be spent on land acquisition because the County has not yet met its recreation acreage goal (see below Section III.D).

Since 1970, POS allocations have totaled approximately 11.2 million. Of this total 5.5 million have gone to the towns and 5.7 million have remained with the County to further develop county facilities to meet present and future demands. Figure III-1 shows the percentage breakdown of POS funds to the eight municipalities.

As of December 2010, there were 4 active POS funded projects in the County in various stages of completion. Funds dedicated to these projects total approximately \$250,293. Of this total, State POS funds represent 75 percent or \$200,235 of the funding. The remaining 25 percent is local funds: \$50,058 from Cecil County as its contribution for development at Conowingo, Elk River and Sports Complex and Chesland

The Department became a recognized member of the County's formal Capital Improvements Program (CIP) for the first time in FY 2012. The Department requested a total of \$288,061 in CIP funding for FY2012. \$311,500 was requested to complete Phase I of Conowingo Park. \$35,800 was requested to begin the refurbishment of the existing football field at the Cecil County Sports Complex. Request submittals for CIP funds have not yet been approved for FY 2012.

### *b. Planning*

The County Comprehensive Plan provides little guidance for Parks and Recreation planning other than its stated goal to "acquire park land and develop recreation facilities for all major user groups." In a countywide context, however, the Comprehensive Plan provides the broad policy framework in which all public investment decisions are made (see Chapter II, Section C).

Since 2006, Recreation planning has been traditionally centralized and is conducted through the Departments Director and staff. The LPPRP is an important document in setting long-term planning objectives in that projects can be viewed for consistency with its recommendations.

**Table III-1 Summary of Cecil County's Program Open Space Local Share Apportionments from 2006 to 2011<sup>1</sup>**

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Total POS Funds</b>	<b>Acquisition Amount</b>	<b>Development Amount</b>
2012	99,000	49,500	49,500
2011	173,000	86,500	86,500
2010	86,092	43,046	43,046
2009	214,038	107,019	107,019
2008	1,339,684	669,842	669,842
2007	1,879,814	939,907	939,907
2006	624,304	312,152	312,152
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,316,932</b>	<b>2,158,466</b>	<b>2,158,466</b>

<sup>1</sup> FY12 Funding to be determined April 2011.

## B. Needs Analysis and County Priorities for Lands, Facilities, and Rehabilitation

County priorities for land acquisition, facility development and rehabilitation are based on consideration of identified needs in the context of State and County goals. A needs analysis, using statewide surveys and methodology contained in the October 2003 LPPRP Guidelines, was performed to evaluate the amount of land and facilities needed, both on a countywide and on a recreation service area basis, to satisfy the demand for recreational facilities and activities. The analysis uses three time frames: short (2011-2015), mid (2016-2020), and long-range (2021-2030 and beyond). Estimates for short-range demand and need are based on projected 2015 population; mid and long-range on projected 2015 and 2030 population.

The results from the needs analysis are the County's best estimates, especially for the mid to long-range planning horizons. The State recognizes in its guidelines for the LPPRP that priorities are subject to change for a variety of legitimate and sometimes unpredictable reasons.

The following sections examine the supply, demand and facility needs in the County including a special analysis for 14 recreation activities selected by the State, and the County Department of Parks and Recreation. Detailed tables for the supply, demand, and needs analyses are provided in Appendix B.

### 1. Supply

The County used the Maryland Electronic Inventory of Recreation Sites (MEIRS), an electronic, internet-based database, to update its inventory of recreation and open space land and facilities. Appendix C contains the MEIRS summary facility groupings list of all existing park and recreation facilities in Cecil County and its municipalities, including State, Federal, and private facilities that make a significant contribution to recreation in the County. The County intends to update the MEIRS inventory whenever the inventory of land or facilities changes. A more detailed inventory table of park and recreation sites, acreage, and facilities at each site is presented in Appendix D. Table III-2 summarizes the recreation and open space land in the County by owner, and Figure III-2 shows the location of each site.

#### *County and municipal land*

The County, together with its municipalities and Board of Education, provides 2,042 acres of public park, recreation, and open space land. This acreage includes 17 community parks, 14 mini-parks, nine sports complexes, eight special use areas and seven undeveloped parks. Cecil County does not have a regional park.

The largest **community parks** are Perryville Community Park (193 acres), and John Stanley Meadow Park West and Meadow Park East in Elkton (92 acres and 111 acres respectively). Approximately 160 acres of the two parks in Elkton are classified as natural resource lands as they are routinely subject to flooding and often unavailable for recreation because of wet soil conditions, making scheduling of activities extremely difficult. County community parks consist of the Cecil Community Center Park in Rising Sun, Fletchwood, Harborview, and Elk Mills.

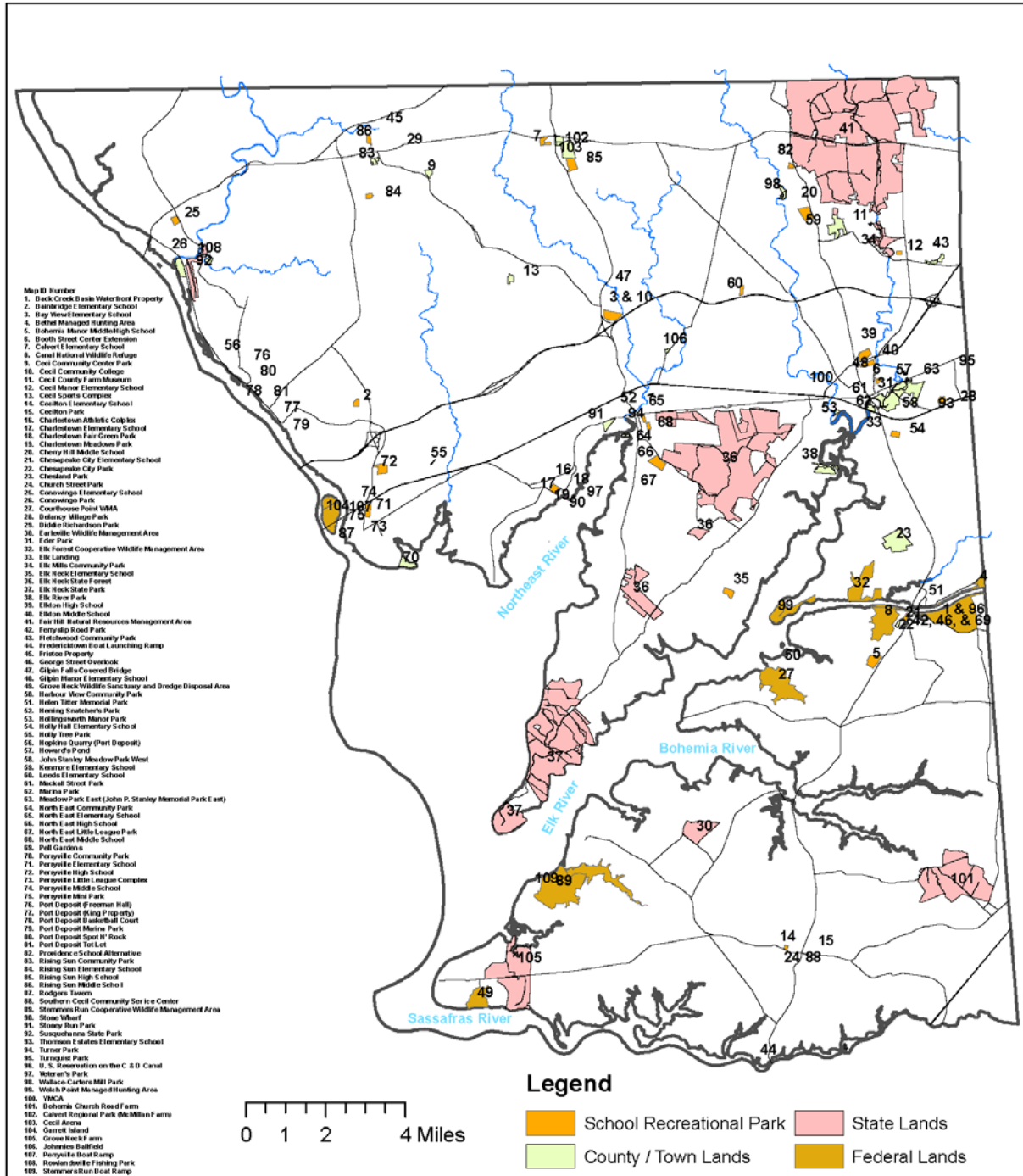
**Sports complexes** play an important role in recreation in Cecil County. They are:

- Perryville Little League Complex
- Chesland Park
- Chesapeake City Park
- Cecil Sports Complex
- Eder Park (Little League)
- North East Little League Park
- Cecil Arena
- Conowingo Park

Chesland Park is a proposed regional park, south of Elkton. Phase I is for soccer fields, multi-purpose fields, pavilions, playgrounds and trails.

Figure III-2 Park and Recreation Sites

### Figure III-2 Recreation and Public Open Space Cecil County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan



**Table III-2 Ownership and Acreage of Cecil County's Park and Recreation Lands**

Owner	Acres		
	Recreation	Resource	Total
County	601	2	603
Town of Elkton	89	277	366
Town of Charlestown	6		6
Town of Perryville	196	2	198
Town of Port Deposit	78		78
Town of Rising Sun	21		21
Town of North East	13		13
Town of Chesapeake City	22		22
Town of Cecilton	26		26
Board of Education Recreation Land	211		211
<b>Total Local</b>	<b>1,263</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>1,544</b>
State	5,796	5,803	11,599
Federal	533	2,314	2,847
<b>Total State and Federal</b>	<b>6,329</b>	<b>8,117</b>	<b>14,446</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>7,592</b>	<b>8,398</b>	<b>15,990</b>

Source: Appendix D. Note: excludes privately-owned lands.

**School recreation areas.** The Board of Education is an important provider of recreation land in the County. School recreation parks totaling 211 acres are located at 26 elementary, middle, and high school sites. These sites and facilities are used by a variety of sport teams and community leagues.

**Undeveloped Parks.** The following parks are undeveloped.

- Conowingo Park Phase II, 32 acres near Susquehanna State Park
- Hopkins Quarry, 68 acres in Port Deposit
- Stony Run Park, 30 acres near North East
- Wallace Carter Mill Park, 28 acres north of Elkton
- Church Street Park, 0.3 acres in Cecilton
- McKall Street Park, 2 acres in Elkton
- Charlestown Meadows, 0.3 acres in Charlestown
- Calvert Property, 101 acres in North East
- Chesland, Phase II

*State and Federal Land*

The State provides nearly 5,800 acres of recreation lands at Elk Neck State Park, Elk Neck State Forest and Susquehanna State Park (Cecil County portion). Fair Hill, 5,600 acres, is classified as a Natural Resources Management Area, although it does provide extensive passive recreation opportunities, especially: hiking, biking, horse riding, and nature viewing.

Federal holdings in the County total a little over 2,800 acres. Approximately 500 acres of these are managed hunting areas and contribute to recreation in the County. The other lands are dredge disposal sites also used as wildlife management areas.



### *Private Land*

Privately owned recreation sites totaling approximately 52 acres help meet community recreation needs: Eder Park and North East Little League fields, and the YMCA in Elkton. In addition, there are five private golf courses in the County that are open to the public for a fee. This acreage is not included in Table III-2.

### *Water Access*

There are 14 publicly-owned boat ramps at eight locations in the County, including three County-owned or leased facilities at Fredericktown, Stemmers Run and Elk River. The other ramps are in Elk Neck State Park, the Stemmers Run Federal property, and at the North East Community Park, Charlestown Veterans Park, US Reserve on the Canal (C&D Canal Museum), and Port Deposit Marina Park.

Elk Neck State Park has a swimming beach, the only publicly owned beach in the County, and there are several fishing ponds and shoreline fishing areas.

## **2. Demand**

Two recent State surveys were used as the basis for determining the demand for recreational facilities<sup>1</sup>: Results are based on responses from 400 households in the Upper Eastern Shore region, representatively proportioned to the population in Caroline, Cecil, Kent, Queen Anne's and Talbot Counties.

Additional information on demand was provided through the LPPRP public participation process, including numerous personal interviews with County and municipal staff and recreation providers regarding the supply, acreage, location, and recognized need for facilities in each municipality and in the County.

The demand analysis used State survey data, daily carrying capacity and season length data unless other information or local experience indicated otherwise. In such cases, either sport season length or daily carrying capacity were adjusted to better represent local participation rates or demand was adjusted based on local activity and facility utilization experience. The electronic version of the supply and demand tables in Appendix B includes comments to note where changes were made to season length or daily carrying capacity. For example, season length was shortened for use of multi-purpose fields because many municipal and County fields are not always available due to wet soil conditions or flooding. Also there are different utilization patterns related to use of fields, diamonds and basketball courts for team games and practice sessions. Input from the various towns was considered in adjusting factors.

## **3. Needs Analysis**

The needs analysis compares recreation facility supply to demand. The analysis results in two products:

- A summary of surpluses or deficits in the amounts of land and facilities needed to serve County residents, and
- Identification of County priorities for land acquisition, facility development and rehabilitation.

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<sup>1</sup> 2003 *Participation in Local Park and Recreation Activities in Maryland and State Parks and Natural Resource Areas in Maryland: A Survey of Public Opinion.*

Table III-3 summarizes results obtained from the detailed supply, demand and needs analysis tables contained in Appendix B. Table III-3 lists the supply of existing facilities and shows the estimated surplus or deficit of facilities for 2011 and 2030. Sizable deficits exist now for some facilities. These deficits will increase through 2030 as the County's population increases unless new facilities are programmed and developed to keep pace with growth. Current deficits are:

**Primary Deficit**

- Baseball/softball diamonds
- Indoor basketball courts
- Multipurpose fields/Turf fields
- Trails
- Fishing from piers

**Secondary Deficit**

- Boat ramps and public water access;
- Playgrounds
- Picnic pavilions

**Table III-3 Recreation Facilities Summary Needs Report**

Numbers in parenthesis indicate a deficit. Positive numbers indicate a surplus. For example, the (16) for baseball/softball in 2011 indicates a need for 16 diamonds to meet current demand.

Activity	Facility type	Existing Facilities	2011 Demand	2030 Demand
Baseball/Softball	Diamonds	49	(14)	(24)
Basketball (indoor)	Courts	34	(17)	(25)
Tennis	Courts	54	29	25
Field sports (football, soccer, lacrosse, field hockey)	Multi-purpose fields	57	(22)	(35)
Trails: hike, bike, jog, walk, nature (State/Fed. Parks)	Trail miles	114	62	53
Trails: County/Municipal Parks	Trail miles	6	(46)	(55)
Swimming Pools (indoor/outdoor)	Pools	1	(1)	(1)
Swimming Beach	Miles beach	0.17	(5)	(6)
Playgrounds (Tot Lots)	Playgrounds	39	(0)	(6)
Picnic Pavilions	Shelters	22	2	(2)
Golf (18 holes)	Courses (public)	5	3	3
Fishing from pier	Fishing spots (8 feet per spot)		(68)	(83)

*Local Recreation Land Demand by Sub-Area*

An analysis was also made of population and demand for recreation lands by sub-areas of the County. Sub-areas of the County, also referred to as recreation service areas are approximately equivalent to high school attendance areas. These are the same service areas as were used in the 1998 Land Preservation and Recreation Plan (See Figure III-3).

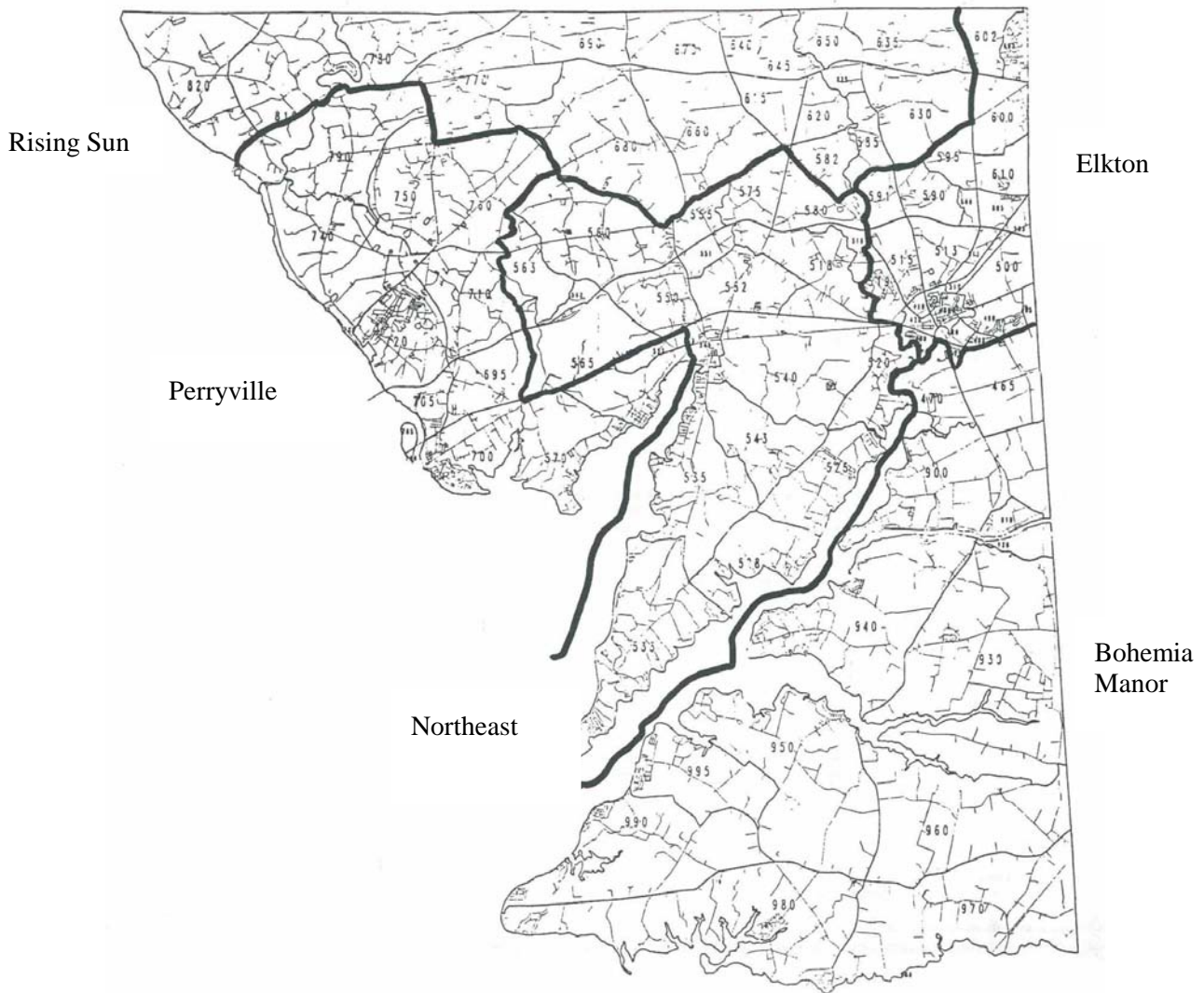
Local recreation lands comprise community parks, school recreation areas, and neighborhood parks, but do not include countywide or state parks whose function is primarily regional or countywide. Table III-4 indicates that in 2005 (based on a local area recreation demand of 30 acres per 1,000 population), the demand for more recreational land is highest in the North East, Elkton and Rising Sun recreation service areas. Projecting the acreage needs out to 2030, the need will be highest in the Elkton and Rising Sun service areas.

**Table III-4 Local Recreation Demand by Recreation Service Area, 2011 and 2030**

Service Area	Population				Percent of County Population 2000	Population Change 2005 to 2030	2011 Recreation Acres		2011 local demand (based on 30 acres per 1,000 population)
	2000	2005	2010	2030			County/Town	State/Federal	
Rising Sun	16,385	18,568	19,982	22,708	19%	6,323	137	0	279
Elkton	21,483	23,485	24,450	26,230	25%	4,748	272	0	352
Perryville	15,330	16,693	17,241	17,952	18%	2,622	343	78	250
Northeast	21,603	24,309	25,979	29,072	25%	7,470	250	5,718	365
Bohemia Manor	11,151	12,594	13,548	15,488	13%	4,337	260	83	189
<b>Total</b>	<b>85,951</b>	<b>95,650</b>	<b>101,200</b>	<b>111,450</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>15,800</b>	<b>1,262</b>	<b>5,879</b>	<b>1,435</b>

1. Recreation service areas are approximately equivalent to high school attendance areas. These are the same service areas as were used in the 2005 Land Preservation and Recreation Plan (see Figure III-3).
2. Projections by service area are based on traffic analysis zone (TAZ) projections prepared by WILMAPCO and used in Cecil County's Urban Growth Boundary Plan, 2000. Projections adjusted proportionately to match MDP 2009 projections.
3. Population projections are by the Maryland Department of Planning, May 2009

**Figure III-3 Recreation Service Areas**



Note: The figure shows a division of the County into five recreation service areas based on high school attendance areas and traffic analysis zones, and consistent with the 2011 LPPRP

## C. County Priorities

Table III-5 lists the County's Park and Recreation priorities for meeting its land acquisition, facility development and rehabilitation needs through 2030. In developing the priorities consideration was given to need relative to:

- The supply and demand analysis and how the County can use Table III-5 to prioritize acquisition, facility development and rehabilitation projects to meet identified needs;
- Needs by recreation service areas and how investment in land and facilities can be used to support County goals for locating facilities convenient to population concentrations while ensuring that all areas of the County are served by facilities;
- Municipal needs to provide a variety of quality recreational environments and opportunities that are responsive to the unique needs of municipal residents and can complement community infrastructure and character;
- How a project can best satisfy recreational facility or activity needs in terms of meeting identified needs and in being located to maximize utilization;
- How a recreational need can best be accommodated by facilities such as through joint use agreements, and
- How a project relates to the State's and County's broader visions and goals to use parks and recreation elements to complement County efforts in reinforcing designated growth areas as more desirable locations in which to live and to complement other open space investments in preserving rural and resource lands.

The overall program through 2030 would cost almost \$36 million of which \$ 12 million would be for acquisition, \$23.5 million for new facility development projects, and \$500,000 for rehabilitation projects<sup>2</sup>. Projects are in three time-frames: short range – 2011 to 2015, mid-range 2016 to 2020, and long-range 2021 to 2030.

### 1. Land Acquisition and Development Projects

The cost for acquisition of approximately 1500 acres of park and recreation lands is estimated at \$27 million. Acquisition of this additional acreage will account for approximately half of the projected parkland deficit of 3000 acres by 2030 (see below Table III-6). Development of these lands is estimated at \$23.5 million. The key projects are as follows:

- a. A regional park of 100+ acres in the North East/Rising Sun corridor to serve countywide needs. The County does not have a regional park, a major deficit in a County that has over 100,000 people. A centrally located regional park can serve multiple purposes including helping meet current and future demand for baseball/softball diamonds, multi-purpose fields and trails, providing a location for fairs and festivals as well as resource based recreational activities. This park was recommended in the 2005 LPPRP. Development should be programmed in the mid-term.

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<sup>2</sup> Cost estimates are approximate and are in 2005 dollar values, based on knowledge of recent land acquisitions, real estate values in different parts of the County, and facility development and rehabilitation costs. Estimates assume acreage is acquired at the mid-point of estimated acreage needs, for example 75 acres for a 50 to 100-acre recommendation.

**Table III-5 Land Acquisition, Facility Development and Rehabilitation Recommendations**

Projects	Location (area)	Description of Land Preservation and Recreation Recommendations	Estimated Total Cost (\$1,000's)	Fiscal Year Programmed	Acres to be Acquired	Estimated Short-Range (2011-2015) Cost (\$1,000s)			Estimated Mid-Range (2016-2020) Cost (\$1,000s)			Estimated Long-Range (2020-2030) Cost (\$1,000)		
						Acquisition	Capital Development	Rehab	Acquisition	Capital Development	Rehab	Acquisition	Capital Development	Rehab
<b>LAND ACQUISITION and DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS</b>														
Elkton Regional Park	Elkton/Fair Hill area	Acquire and develop an active recreation area in the Town of Elkton or in the Elkton/Fair Hill area	\$ 8,063	2011-2015	75 - 100				\$ 6,563	\$ 1,500				
Additional land at Cecil County Sports Complex (Babe Ruth)	Rising Sun area (Bard Cameron Road)	Acquire 18-acre area to rear of existing sports complex and its easement through center of complex for passive use; acquire 7-acre field in front for storm water pond and parking (including the 1 acre proposed acquisition in 2005 POS program)	\$ 350	2011-2030	18 - 25	\$ 350								
Additional Water Access Points	Fredericktown (Sassafras River), Locust Point & Town Point (Elk River), Cara Cove (North East River)	Acquire and develop four (1-2 acre) public landings with boat ramps and piers in vicinity of sites listed	\$ 3,200	2011-2030	8	\$ 600	\$ 1,000					\$ 600	\$ 1,000	
<b>Acquisition Cost</b>			\$ 8,113		251 - 413	\$ 950	\$ 1,000		\$ 6,563	\$ 1,500		\$ 600	\$ 1,000	
<b>Facility Cost</b>			\$ 3,500											
<b>Total Cost</b>			\$ 11,613											
<b>FACILITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS</b>														
Calvert Property	Rising Sun/North East	Development of Regional Park	10,000											
Elkton Sports Complex/Rec Center	Town of Elkton	Acquire land and build indoor rec center and possible athletic fields	\$ 4,640	2011-2020	5 - 10	\$ 640	\$ 4,000							
Chesland Park (164.5 ac.)	Chesapeake City area	Complete construction of 18-field soccer complex and three football fields	\$ 4,000	2011-2015			\$ 3,000		\$ 1,000					
Conowingo Park (32.8 ac.)	Conowingo area	Develop athletic fields, basketball court, pavilion, trails (\$12,780 County FY05 POS share)	\$ 375	2011-2015			\$ 3,000							
Hopkins Quarry (68.4 ac.)	Town Port Deposit	Develop leisure recreation, natural amphitheater, some hiking trails and heritage trail head improvements	\$ 1,500	2020-2030					\$ 1,500					
Susquehanna Greenway Trail (I)	Port Deposit area	Construct approximately 16 miles of on and off-road trails in partnership effort	\$ -	2016-2020		x	\$ -							
Indoor Pool/Aquatics Center	Community College	Construct community aquatics center	\$ 3,000	2016-2020					\$ 3,000					
Bohemia River Water Access	Bohemia River	Construct boat ramps	\$ 220	2016-2020			\$ 220							
<b>Total</b>			\$ 23,735				\$ 6,220		\$ 5,500			\$ -		
<b>FACILITY REHABILITATION PROJECTS</b>														
Sports Complex	Bard Cameron Rd	Baseball Field	\$ 75	2011-2015				\$ 50						
Fredericktown	Cecilton	Rehab piers and ramp	\$ 200	2011-2015				\$ 120						
<b>Total</b>			\$ 275					\$ 170						
<b>Grand Total</b>			\$ 35,623		251 - 413	\$ 950	\$ 7,220	\$ 170	\$ 6,563	\$ 7,000		\$ 600	\$ 1,000	
(1) The Susquehanna Greenway trail is recommended in the Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway (LSHG) Plan. Funding will be obtained by LSHG, Inc. and other partners.														
							Capital Cost = \$32,791	47%		46%			7%	
							\$ 15,220							

- b. A community park between 100 acres in the Elkton service area. This park is envisioned as an active recreation facility with athletic fields and ballfields. The need for this park recognizes the unsuitability of the Town of Elkton's existing athletic fields for reliable use because of wet soil conditions and frequent flooding. Land prices are much higher in the Town of Elkton than elsewhere, and acquisition is estimated at \$4.5 million. This facility would meet the Elkton service area local recreation deficit identified in Table III-4.
- c. An indoor sports complex or recreation center in Elkton/Fair Hill service area. There are insufficient indoor facilities both in the Town and in the County as a whole to accommodate current demand for court use, especially basketball. This facility should be located on the same site as the Community Park and would include basketball courts, indoor soccer, fitness center and possibly an aquatics center. The YMCA and the Cecil Arena are the only multi-purpose indoor recreation facilities in the County. Many communities are developing sports complexes and recreation centers either with public funding or by partnering with private or non-profit organizations. Facility development is estimated at \$5.5 million. Development of the sports complex is recommended for the short-term.
- d. Development of the recently acquired Calvert property in the Rising Sun North East Recreation service areas could meet the need identified in Table III-4. This park is intended to serve as a Regional County Park and would include amenities such as baseball/softball diamonds, multi-purpose fields, trails, playgrounds, pavilions, basketball courts, dog parks, and disc golf. Development costs approximately \$10-\$12 million.
- e. Acquiring and developing additional land adjacent to the Cecil Sports Complex (Babe Ruth) in the short-term. Currently, an access easement passes through the complex connecting to an 18-acre property to the rear. Acquisition of these 18 acres would secure permanent complex protection by removing the possibility of the access easement disrupting use of the facility. The 18 acres to the rear of the property can be used for passive resource based recreational purposes. In addition, a seven acre parcel in front of the complex should be acquired to provide for a stormwater pond, additional parking and a possible new ball diamond. Acquisition of the 18 to 25 acres is estimated at \$350,000.
- f. Acquire additional water access points to address the long standing need for such facilities. The needs analysis (Table III-3) indicates a current deficit of 25 boat ramps – some of which is met by private marinas. Currently there are 12 public boat ramps at seven locations with a small water access park programmed for construction using on the north side of the Bohemia River, within the MD 213 right-of-way. Because of high costs for waterfront land acquisition and construction, price estimates may vary. Additional ramps would increase public access to the water and could also provide additional beach access and shoreline fishing opportunities. The following locations are suggested for consideration:
  - Current need is expressed for an additional boat ramp at the Fredericktown launch site on the SassafRAS River. Acquisition of property adjacent to the existing site should be the first priority;
  - Other water access parks with boat ramps, piers and possible swimming areas could be located along the Elk River near Locust Point (south of Elkton) and Town Point. Another could provide access to the east side of the North East River by being located on the west side of the Elk Neck peninsula near Cara Cove. Acquisition and development is recommended to be spread over the short, mid and long-range time frames.

## 2. Facility Development Projects (no new land acquisition)

The total cost for facility development projects on land already owned by the County and towns is approximately \$19 million. The County currently has approximately 297 acres of undeveloped park property. Another 140 undeveloped acres exist in the Towns of Elkton, Port Deposit and Rising Sun.

Facility development at these undeveloped parks is recommended in the short, medium, and long terms to spread out the costs, although development should begin as soon as possible to meet the demand especially for outdoor athletic facilities. Development of existing park properties described below will result in five additional baseball/softball diamonds and 24 new multi-purpose athletic fields, the majority at Chesland Park. Provision of these needed facilities will further the County's efforts to make its growth areas more desirable locations in which to live, as well as providing facilities in other locations that are in need of recreational opportunities. These facilities will also create opportunities to attract tourist and recreation related expenditures.

Key facility development projects are:

- a. **Chesland.** The 165-acre County owned Chesland soccer, football and baseball complex. This complex is under development and should be completed by the mid-term. When completed it will serve as a County Regional Park. It is expected to contribute significantly to meeting the existing and projected need for multi-purpose fields, as well as providing economic benefits from the attraction of large tournaments to the area
- b. **Conowingo Park.** The 32-acre Conowingo Park is leased by the County and is proposed in the short-term for two baseball fields, a soccer and football field, pavilion, walking/jogging trails, tennis courts and playground.
- c. **Calvert.** The 100 acre Calvert site will serve as a Regional Park. When completely developed will consist of multi-purpose fields, baseball, softball, trails, tennis, basketball, pavilions, playgrounds, and special interest areas. Development is recommended in the short to mid-term.
- d. **Hopkins Quarry.** The former Hopkins Quarry site in Port Deposit is owned by the Town. This 68-acre site is proposed in the mid-term for leisure and resource based recreation to include a natural amphitheater, hiking trails and Lower Susquehanna Heritage Area activities.
- e. **Bohemia River Water Access.** This will include the addition of boat ramps and water access. Development is recommended for the mid-term.
- f. **Susquehanna Greenway.** The Susquehanna Green way would link communities together by way of trails along the Susquehanna.
- g. **Aquatics Center.** Development of an aquatics center at Cecil Community College or Calvert property is recommended in the mid-term. The pool at the YMCA in Elkton is the only indoor pool open to the public in the County. The needs analysis shows the need for at least one additional aquatics component.



### **3. Rehabilitation**

The cost for facility rehabilitation is estimated at \$275,000 for two projects anticipated to be completed in the short-term:

- a. Rehabilitation of the baseball field at the Sports complex;
- b. Rehabilitation of the piers and boat ramp at Fredricktown.

### **4. Other projects**

A number of other projects are in need of development or rehabilitation. These projects have not received any funding approval and therefore a timeline has not been established for completion.

- The Town of Perryville would like to design a trail head and install parking and a kayak launch at the Perryville Community Park.
- The Town of Rising Sun hopes to have trails to encircle the entire town. The town will use their Community Parks and Playground grant to upgrade/install playground equipment.
- The Town of Port Deposit has plans for a bridge repair, and the purchase of new playground equipment.

Some other projects are important to future recreation in the County but do not show on the County's priority list (Table III-5) because they are not yet conceived in sufficient detail. Some may develop through non-county sources or may "move up" onto the list should priorities change in the next few years.

- Possible acquisition of the 412-acre Arundel Corporation quarry property on MD Route 276, north of Port Deposit;
- Expanded use of existing school facilities upon renovation or expansion. No new schools are currently programmed other than a new Elkton Elementary school programmed for design beginning in FY2013. However, 20 schools are in the Cecil County Public School's list of "Potential Long-Range Projects" proposed for renovation beginning in FY05. As new or expanded school facilities are planned, they provide opportunity for the County to provide additional land and recreational facilities. By building larger gymnasiums and/or adding community space, these schools can play an important role in meeting local recreation demand, and save money that would otherwise be spent in developing separate recreation facilities. Many other Maryland counties are following this strategy.

## 5. Trails

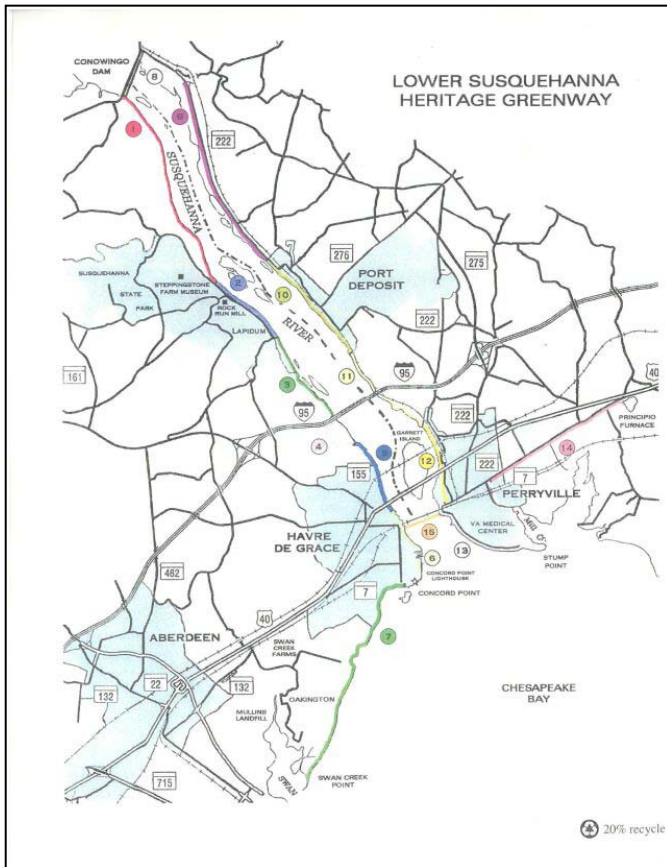
The need for trails and other opportunities for walking and bicycling was expressed at public meetings held for this LPPRP, and is supported by the needs analysis which shows a current demand for over 45 miles of trails. Overall the County has approximately 120 miles of trails, but 95 percent of these are at Fair Hill, Elk Neck State Forest, and Elk Neck State Park, and not easily accessible to many residents.

A number of trails are currently under development or are planned, and Cecil County has an opportunity to create an excellent network of trails that could be a tremendous countywide and regional amenity. Figure III-4 shows the main elements of this network.

- a. **Elk Neck Trail.** This partially complete 12-mile long nature trail runs from Elk Neck State Forest to Elk Neck State Park. The Elk Neck Trails Association is a non-profit and volunteer effort dedicated to completing the missing four-mile trail segment. This facility is envisioned to be a soft surface trail with approximately one mile of paved surface in the Elk Neck State Forest to be handicapped accessible. The trail is being financed by donations, and volunteers build and maintain trail segments.
- b. **Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway Trail.** The Cecil County portion of this trail is approximately 16.5 miles between Perryville and Conowingo.

The Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway (LSHG) was approved in 2000 to promote heritage tourism and greenway development in Harford and Cecil counties. Cecil County comprises approximately one-third of the 45,532 acre LSHG. .

**Figure III-5 The Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway**

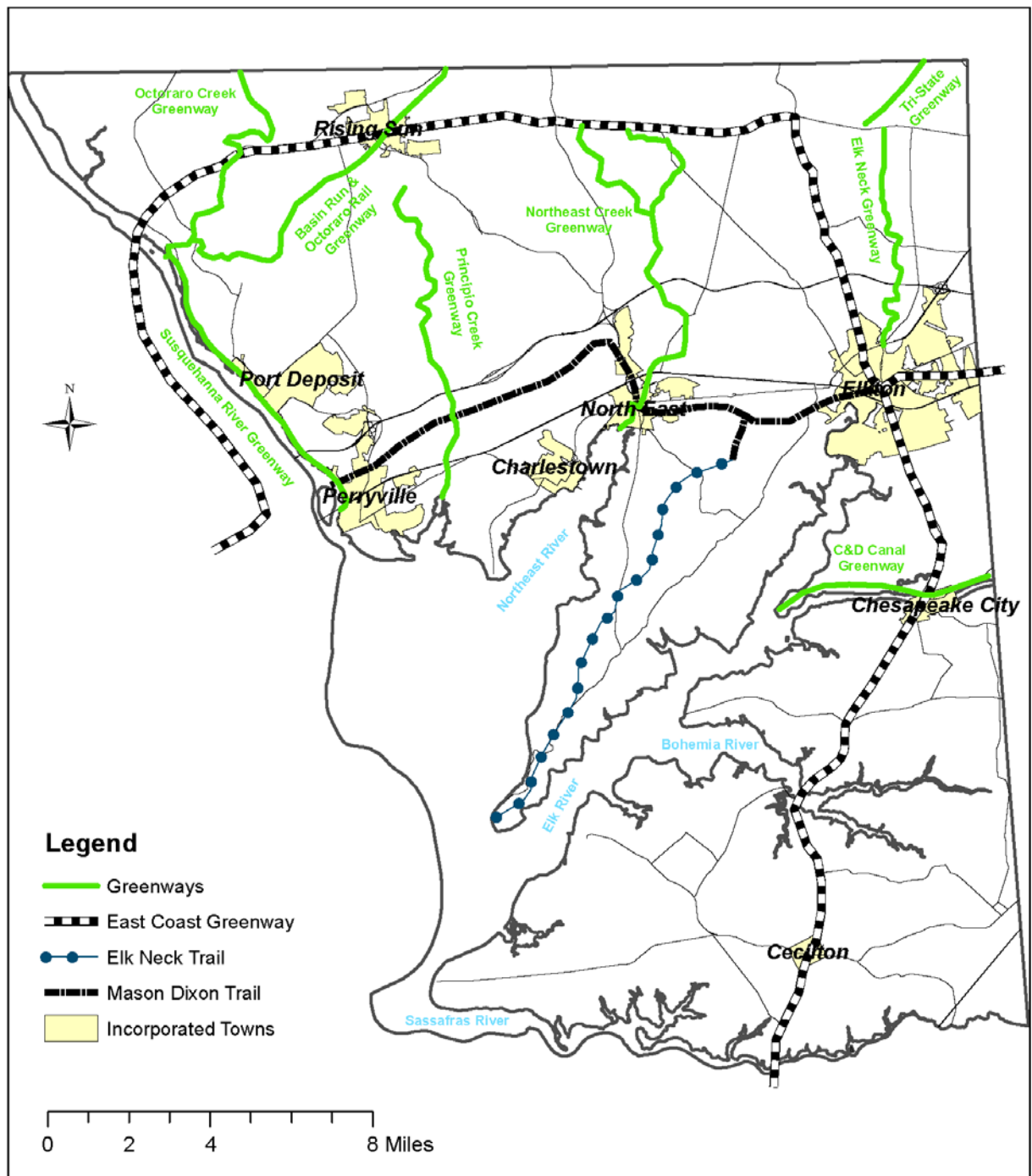


The LSHG Plan outlines strategies for enhancing historic, archeological, heritage, cultural, environmental and recreational resources for the purpose of increasing tourism and compatible economic development that can help improve stewardship and insure long-term preservation and protection of these resources.

In Cecil County, the proposed trail begins at Conowingo Dam and connects the Towns of Port Deposit and Perryville, using both on and off-road trails, before connecting to the last segment leading to Principio Furnace. Pedestrian bridges over the Susquehanna would connect Cecil County with Harford County.

Figure III-4 Cecil County's Recreational Trails/Greenway Concept

**Figure III-4  
Trails & Greenways  
Cecil County Land Preservation,  
Parks, and Recreation Plan**



The rustic off-road segments are being designed to be 8 to 10 feet-wide crushed stone and are estimated to cost between \$20,000 and \$30,000 per mile. More formal hard-surface urban trails will be located within Port Deposit and Perryville. Pre-engineered bridges are planned at stream crossings and standard parking lots using best environmental practices to minimize impervious surfaces are planned at trail heads. The LSHG plan estimates trail construction costs at \$6.3 million, plus trail head parking and facility costs of approximately \$75,000 each and \$30,000 per pedestrian bridge.

A water shuttle service is planned to connect many sites within the LSHG area at a cost of \$500,000. The plan also includes a water trail along both banks of the Susquehanna River, Mill Creek and Furnace Bay that will include canoe/kayak and boat launch facilities. Once completed, the greenway trail system will offer loop trails in the Perryville area. The non-profit LSHG, Inc. anticipates leveraging funding from a variety of sources, including POS, Maryland Heritage Area Authority, municipalities and Cecil County. The LSHG is in the process of developing design and construction documents.

- c. **East Coast Greenway.** The East Coast Greenway (ECG) is a planned 2,600-mile long trail geared to both bicyclists and hikers. that would link the east coast cities from Maine to Florida. Portions of the trail, using existing trails, are complete but a complete designated ECG route does not yet exist. ECG planners hope to use off-road trails to the greatest extent possible, and estimate that the trail will be 80 percent complete by 2010. The ECG has two routes in Cecil County, a western shore route and an eastern shore. The west shore route follows the Susquehanna Greenway on the Harford County side and enters the County across the Susquehanna River at Conowingo. It then follows US Route 1 north and east to MD 273, before looping south to the Town of Elkton and north into Delaware. The eastern shore route comes up from Kent County and meets the west shore route in Elkton.

*Figure III-6 East Coast Greenway*



- d. **Mason Dixon Trail.** The Mason-Dixon Trail runs from Pennsylvania to Delaware. The segment in Cecil County is an existing informal 20-mile trail from Perryville to the Elkton area. It is not officially sanctioned and portions of it follow an easement owned by AT&T. The County has obtained some trail easements along the trail route as part of development approvals, but the trail is not identified as a greenway in the Comprehensive Plan. Recognition of this trail in the LPPRP would provide a stronger basis for acquiring public easements or rights-of-way.

This trail would be very valuable in that it would complete a loop around the central part of the County connecting the Lower Susquehanna Heritage Recreational Greenway Trail, the East Coast Greenway, and the Elk Neck Trail.

Any pursuit of this trail will require resolving issues related to access, use, and maintenance with the utility owner and other property owners.

#### **e. County greenways**

One or more of the greenways designated in the Comprehensive Plan could connect with the trails described above, to create a fully interconnected recreational trail system:

- Octoraro Rail Trail
- Northeast Creek Greenway
- Chesapeake and Delaware Canal Greenway
- Principio Creek Greenway
- Elk Creek Recreational Greenway Trail;

#### **6. Funding**

The County needs to consider expanding its role in funding for Recreation and Parks. Currently the County primarily relies on the State's POS program funding and only provides limited general funding for matching POS funds and operating the small Department of Parks and Recreation. With the decline in POS funding over the last several years to \$99,000 in FY2012, the County and other organizations need to begin a dialogue to consider new options for funding Recreation and Parks. As outlined in the 2005 LPPRP, these options could include user fees, development impact fees, general and capital program funds, bonds, local impact grant funding (Casino Revenues), State and Federal programs, and grants and donations.

Proposals shown in the short term (2011-2015) are most likely to be funded almost entirely by POS funds, along with other grant funding unless the County finds other revenue sources.

Should the County meet the States POS land acquisition goal of 30 acres per 1000 capita total projected land acquisition cost will be approximately \$54 million. Over the 20 year period to 2030 this would average \$2.7 million per year for the County to acquire 3000 acres. With no dedicated CIP funds, the Parks and Recreation program is likely to remain substantially under-funded.

The County's growing population is also creating demand for expanded/renovated and new schools. A new Technical High school is programmed for design beginning in FY20. This may add a small amount of active outdoor recreational lands to the County's park land inventory. More important, however, is the potential that school expansions and renovations can add additional indoor recreational facilities to help ease demand. There are 20 schools in the Cecil County Public School's list of "Potential Long-Range Projects" proposed for renovation beginning in FY05. These facilities will create a major draw on the County's capital budget reducing available funding for other areas such as recreation. A positive aspect, however, is the potential to create new school recreational facilities that can also serve public recreation needs. Economies of scale could be realized by leveraging County recreation and park funds with educational funding to implement a coordinated park/ school concept, as many counties are now doing.

Cecil County will continue to rely on the POS annual allocation for land acquisition projects. In total, acquisition recommendations through 2030 will add nearly 1500 to 3000 additional acres to the County's park land inventory. The current level of POS allocations will not be insufficient for the County to meet the land acquisition goal.

In summary, the projected costs of the project priorities are not sustainable given the current fiscal environment, especially with recent cut backs in POS funding. Little if any progress will be achieved in meeting the State's goal to protect lands at a rate that land is developed. Nevertheless, the parks and recreation priorities program represents the necessary level of investment that will be needed to meet projected recreation needs.

#### **7. Organization and Staffing**

Since the development of the 2005 LPPRP, a Department of Parks and Recreation was established that now consists of 8 full time employees and 30 part time staff and volunteers. The Department is responsible for implementation, oversight, facilitation and evaluation of the County's programs, facilities and

properties. The 2005 LPPRP recommended the following goal which has been incorporated into this LPPRP (see Section III-A.b):

**Create a leadership role for the County in the overall organization of recreation in Cecil County.**

The plan noted that because coordination is needed countywide, county government is the only body that can truly fulfill this role. To implement this goal the following actions were taken.

- A Department of Parks and Recreation was established within County Government. The structure includes a Director, Superintendent and supporting staff.

**Define the role of the Parks and Recreation Board within a new organizational structure.** The Board's primary function is to assist staff with implementing policies and procedures, CIP development, County project oversight and grass roots advocacy.

Additional roles are being explored.

- Provide staff to organize and manage Countywide Recreation

Since the 2005 LPPRP, 8 full time positions have been added so that Parks and Recreational services can be delivered to the public. As County programs, parks and services increase the need for additional staff will be required.

**Land Acquisition Goal**

Cecil County has adopted the default State recommended land acquisition goal of 30 acres per 1,000 population. As of 2011, the County is short of this goal by 1418 acres. If no more land is acquired and the population increases as projected, the deficit will increase to over 3000 acres by 2030 (Table III-6).

**Table III-6 Cecil County Recreation and Open Space Acreage Goal Analysis**

**Table III-6 Cecil County Recreation and Open Space Acreage Goal Analysis**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Year	Current/ Projected Population	Recreation and Open Space Acreage Goal (30 acres per 1,000 population)	County and Town Recreation Land (1)	County and Town Natural Resources Land (2)	Applicable State and Federal Land (3)	Total	Acreage Required to Meet Goal
2005	95,650	2,870	1,263	94	-	1,357	1,513
2010	103,828	3,115					1,758
2015	106,600	3,198					1,841
2030	154,954	4,649					3,292

1) Acreage in column 1 were updated using the 2010 Comprehensive Plan.

2) State and Federal Lands are not applicable in meeting the State Mandate of 30 acres per 1000 population.

## **E. Program Development Strategy**

This section summarizes Cecil County's program development strategy for Recreation and Parks. Recommended actions on the part of the State are noted.

### **1. Acquire land for new or expanded park facilities and public boat launches.**

Approximately 1400 to 3000 acres will need to be acquired at an approximate cost of \$39.6 million for acquisition and another \$ 23.6 million for development. The largest acquisition is for a 100 acre Community park in the Elkton development district and construction of 2-4 boat ramps.

### **2. Implement the proposed facility development and rehabilitation program.**

The facility development program on property already owned by the County or municipalities totals \$16.2 million. Projects are spaced over several time periods for programming purposes. Several sites are proposed for resource-based recreation (Chesland, Calvert, Hopkins Quarry).

### **3. Pursue other recreation projects.**

Development of Turf fields, development of Calvert Property as a Regional Park and working with the school system to coordinate expanded use of schools for recreational purposes. Proposed Municipal projects include, development of a Mom and Pop park, trails, play grounds, jetties, and murals.

### **4. Complete a County network of trails.**

Build upon efforts of others to extend the Elk Neck, Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway, East Coast Greenway, and Mason Dixon trails, including development of several greenways designated in the Comprehensive Plan - *State, County and non-profit action.*

### **5. Assume organizational leadership in planning, managing and delivering park and recreation services.**

The County has developed an established Recreation and Parks department and will continue to manage projects, acquire properties, seek partnerships, implement programs, maintain facilities, and seek alternate sources of funding.

## **F. Public Participation**

Table III-7 summarizes public participation in preparation of the LPPRP. Additional information is provided in Appendix E.



**Table III-7 Public Participation Summary**

Invitees	Summary of Participation	Date	Comments
Board of Parks and Recreation, Agricultural Land Preservation Advisory Board, Board of County Commissioners, municipalities, and general public	Project kick-off meeting explaining scope and schedule and soliciting public comment	September 17, 2009	See Appendix E for list of attendees.
Board of Parks and Recreation, Agricultural Land Preservation Advisory Board, Board of County Commissioners, municipalities, and general public	Review initial findings and recommendations regarding facility supply, demand and needs analysis and agricultural and natural resources data findings	October 21, 2010	Discussed variations in data resulting from first round use of State season length and daily capacity data and suggested revisions. See Appendix E for list of attendees.
<b>Tentative Schedule</b>			
Public hearing by Planning Commission, Board of Parks and Recreation, and Agricultural Preservation Board,	Planning Commission reviewed the draft plan and comments received from interagency review.	May 16, 2011	Commission voted unanimously to forward the plan to the Board of County Commissioners.
Public hearing by Board of County Commissioners	Review final draft including responses to comments received from the Maryland Department of Planning.	June 7, 2011	Following the public hearing the Board of County Commissioners approved the plan unanimously.

## Chapter IV Agricultural Land Preservation

### Introduction

Cecil County has a long and rich agricultural tradition. Most of the County's agricultural lands are in two broad areas: one north of the I-95 corridor, running east-west across the width of the County, and the other south of the Chesapeake and Delaware canal.

The southern agricultural area is at the northern end of a roughly 400,000-acre area known as the "Agricultural Security Corridor"<sup>1</sup>. This area of the mid-eastern shore involves portions of five counties, and is defined by the presence of high quality agricultural soils, a concentration of agricultural infrastructure, and extensive agricultural easements.

### Agriculture in Cecil County

The USDA Census of Agriculture defines a farm as "any place from which \$1,000 or more of agricultural products were produced and sold, or normally would have been sold, in the census year." In 2007 the Census counted 85,026 acres of land in farms in Cecil County, an increase of 11 percent from 77,089 acres in 2002. The number of farms also increased during that period, from 468 in 2002 to 583 in 2007 (Table IV-1). Other key points from Table IV-1 are as follows:

- The number of farms in the 10 to 49-acre category increased by 24 percent from 192 in 2002 to 239 in 2007.
- The number of farms in the 50 to 179-acre category declined by 15 percent from 113 in 2002 to 96 in 2007.
- The number of farms in both the largest and the smallest categories (1-9 acres and 1000+ acres) *increased* between 2002 and 2007.
- Over 70 percent of the land in farms is cropland. The leading crops are corn and soybeans.
- The market value of agricultural products sold by Cecil County farms increased from \$68.6 million in 2002 to \$95.8 million in 2007.
- Of the 583 "farm operators"<sup>2</sup> in the County, only 51 percent listed farming as their primary occupation.
- The average age of farm operators in Cecil County in 2002 was 56.6.

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<sup>1</sup> The Agricultural Security Corridor concept was developed by the Eastern Shore Land Conservancy.

<sup>2</sup> Defined in the census as the person who operates a farm, either doing the work or making day-to-day decisions about such things as planting, harvesting, feeding, and marketing.

Table IV-1 Selected Agricultural Statistics 2007 and 2002

<i>Selected Agricultural Statistics, Cecil County 2007 and 2002</i>						
	2007		2002		Change 2002 to 2007	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>Land in County (acres)</b>	221,719		222,655			
<b>Number of farms</b>	583		468		115	25%
<b>Land in farms (acres)</b>	85,026	38%	77,089	35%	7,937	10%
<b>Land in farms by land use (acres)</b>						
Cropland	60,147	71%	56,603	67%	3,544	6%
Woodland	11,960	14%	9,520	11%	2,440	26%
Pasture	8,040	9%	7,446	9%	594	8%
Other (house lots, roads)	4,879	6%	3,520	4%	1,359	39%
<b>Number of Farms by Size</b>						
1-9 acres	68	13%	49	9%	19	39%
10-49 acres	239	46%	192	37%	47	24%
50-179 acres	96	19%	113	22%	(17)	-15%
180-499 acres	72	14%	77	15%	(5)	-6%
500-999 acres	25	5%	22	4%	3	14%
1000+ acres	17	3%	15	3%	2	13%
<b>Market Value of Products Sold \$ millions</b>						
Crops (including nursery & greenhouse)	\$ 44.1	46%	\$ 30.2	44%	\$ 13.9	46%
Livestock	\$ 51.7	54%	\$ 38.4	56%	\$ 13.3	35%
Total	\$ 95.8		\$ 68.6		\$ 27.2	40%
<b>Market Value of Land and Buildings \$ millions</b>	\$ 653.9		\$ 457.1		\$ 196.8	43%
<b>Farms by value of sales</b>						
\$24,999 or less	403	69%	342	73%	61	18%
\$24,999 and above	180	31%	126	27%	54	43%
<b>Top crops (acres)</b>						
Corn for grain	21,970	37%	18,760	31%	3,210	17%
Soybeans	18,009	30%	13,849	23%	4,160	30%
Forage (hay, grass)	8,365	14%	8,713	14%	(348)	-4%
Wheat	6,589	11%	6,724	11%	(135)	-2%
Other	5,214	9%	8,557	14%	(3,343)	-39%
<b>Principal Farm Operator Characteristics</b>						
Farming as primary occupation	296	51%	255	54%	41	16%
Other as primary occupation	287	49%	213	46%	74	35%
Average age	56.6		57.3			

Sources: USDA, 2002 and 1997 Censuses of Agriculture

## A. Goals

As described in Chapter II, the preservation of open spaces, rural character and agricultural activities is a recurring theme of the Cecil County Comprehensive Plan. The Plan contains several goals which specifically address agricultural land preservation:

- Goal 5 under Land Use: Continue to use all means to preserve land in the Rural Areas for agricultural and natural resource pursuits.
- Goal 1 under Sensitive Areas: Refine the Priority Preservation Area map and acreage goals.
- Goal 4 under Sensitive Areas: Continue to fund the County's Purchase of Developments Rights (PDR) program and seek to increase funding.

The State's goals for Agricultural Land Preservation are shown in the box on the following page. County goals are consistent with the state's goals.

In 2000 the Cecil County Board of County Commissioners adopted by resolution farmland preservation goals of 30,000 acres in the Comprehensive Plan's Resource Protection District, and 25,000 acres in the Rural Conservation District by the year 2025. The 55,000-acre goal would be approximately 25 percent of the County's land area. The goal had been recommended by the County Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board following a 1999 report called *Grounding Our Future* prepared by a county-appointed Cecil County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Task Force.

In 2002 Cecil County joined five other Eastern Shore counties in signing *Eastern Shore 2010: A Regional Vision*, an inter-county land use agreement launched by the Eastern Shore Land Conservancy, that sets four regional goals to protect the Eastern Shore:

- Strive to protect from development through the use of voluntary preservation programs 50 percent of Eastern Shore land outside of locally-designated growth areas by 2010<sup>3</sup>.
- Recognize our resource-based economy as a key part of the Eastern Shore heritage and future by integrating agriculture, fisheries, and forestry into each county's economic development plan by 2005.
- Work with existing communities to guide at least 50 percent of new annual development into locally-designated growth areas by 2005.
- Develop a regional transportation plan that integrates the use of public transportation and alternative modes of transport within and among communities by 2010.

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<sup>3</sup> This equates to approximately 61,500 acres outside Cecil County's growth areas (*Tools Available for Attaining the Eastern Shore 2010 Land Protection Goal*, Eastern Shore Land Conservancy, 2003/2004).

## **State of Maryland Goals for Agricultural Land Preservation**

1. Permanently preserve agricultural land capable of supporting a reasonable diversity of agricultural production.
2. Protect natural, forestry, and historic resources and the rural character of the landscape associated with Maryland's farmland.
3. To the greatest degree possible, concentrate preserved land in large, relatively contiguous blocks to effectively support long-term protection of resources and resource-based industries.
4. Limit the intrusion of development and its impacts on rural resources and resource-based industries.
5. Preserve approximately 1,030,000 acres of productive agricultural land by 2020.
6. Ensure good return on public investment by concentrating State agricultural land preservation funds in areas where the investment is reasonably well supported by both local investment and land use management programs.
7. Work with local governments to:
  - Establish preservation areas, goals, and strategies through local comprehensive planning processes that address and complement State goals;
  - In each area designated for preservation, develop a shared understanding of goals and the strategy to achieve them among rural landowners, the public-at-large, and State and local government officials;
  - Protect the equity interests of rural landowners in preservation areas by ensuring sufficient public commitment and investment in preservation through easement acquisition and incentive programs;
  - Use local land use management authority effectively to protect public investment in preservation by managing development in rural preservation areas.
  - Establish effective measures to support profitable agriculture, including assistance in production, marketing, and the practice of stewardship, so that farming remains a desirable way of life for both the farmer and the public-at-large.

Source: Guidelines for State and Local Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Planning, Maryland Departments of Planning and Natural Resources, 2003.

## B. Current Implementation Program

The implementation program for agricultural land preservation comprises all the programs and mechanisms currently operating in the County to achieve local and state goals. A diverse group of organizations and agencies help implement farmland protection in Cecil County. The major groups and organizations are:

### Cecil County Government

- Department of Planning and Zoning
- Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board
- Economic Development Commission Agricultural Advisory Board
- Department of Economic Development Agricultural Coordinator

### Other

- Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation
- Cecil Land Trust
- Eastern Shore Land Conservancy
- Maryland Environmental Trust

## 1. Priority Preservation Areas

Areas designated for agricultural land preservation in the Comprehensive Plan are the Resource Protection District (RPD) south of the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal and the Rural Conservation District (RCD) generally north of the Canal (Figure II-4). The primary purpose of the RPD is to “encourage retention of agricultural land and agriculture related activities and to support the agricultural economy of the County”. The primary purpose of the RCD is to “maintain rural character by encouraging the continuation of agricultural and forestry uses and requiring that the essential elements of rural character are retained in development.

Within these two districts, the County and state have designated two rural legacy areas (RLA). The Rural Legacy Program, run by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR), consists of two concepts: first, delineating a specific geographic area of a county in need of focused land conservation efforts, and, second, acquiring easements from willing landowners within that area.

The Sassafras RLA, part of the mid-shore’s Agricultural Security Corridor, was established in 1998 and totals approximately 5,275 acres at the southwestern tip of the County. The Sassafras RLA features prime agricultural land and productive farming operations. Over 75 percent of the area is defined as prime agricultural soils. Additional resources in the RLA are historic sites along the Sassafras River and natural habitat areas.

The Fair Hill RLA was established in 2002 and comprises approximately 30,987 acres. Much of the area is already under various forms of protection, especially the 5,600-acre state-owned Fair Hill Natural Resources Management Area. Cecil County also owns some land in this area including an 84-acre tract acquired in 2002 for a Farm Museum and Conservation Education Center. Goals of the Fair Hill RLA are to improve water quality in the Big and Little Elk Creek watersheds, support agriculture, and buffer and expand the Natural Resource Management Area as a landscape indicative of Cecil County’s rural and natural heritage.

Priority Preservation Areas have been delineated within the County, to include lands that are capable of supporting profitable agricultural and forestry enterprises. The areas designated include; northern rural area, southern rural area, and the Elk Neck Peninsula. In all, these three areas comprise a total of 125,800 acres, with a preservation goal of 79,000 acres. Of those 79,000 acres; 53,600 acres are not yet protected.

## 2. Easement Acquisition Mechanisms

The primary easement acquisition mechanisms operating in the County are the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF), Cecil County Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program, land trusts (mainly the Maryland Environmental Trust and the Cecil Land Trust) and the Rural Legacy Program. Table IV-2 and Figure IV-1 summarize these organizations' accomplishments in permanently protecting private lands with conservation easements as of January 2011.

*Table IV-2 Protected Land Summary*

<b>Agricultural Easements</b>	<b>Acres</b>
Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation	14,058
Rural Legacy (FHRLA & SRLA)	2,737
Cecil County Purchase of Development Rights	458
Other easements (see note)*	5,266
Total Agricultural Easements	22,987

Note: Other easements: Maryland Environmental Trust, Cecil Land Trust, Nature Conservancy, Natural Lands Trust, North American Lands Trust, Eastern Shore Land Conservancy

### *a. Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF)*

Cecil County has been participating in the MALPF program, run by the Maryland Department of Agriculture, with district creation and easement purchase since the early 1980s. As of 2010 a total of 14,058 acres have been permanently preserved through MALPF with, easement purchases fluctuating considerably over the years (Figure IV-1). In addition to the easements, as of 2010, there were approximately 5,601 acres in MALPF districts on which development rights had not been sold.

In 1999, the County's agricultural land preservation activities were certified by the Maryland Department of Agriculture and the Maryland Department of Planning, enabling the County to hold back a larger percentage (75 percent instead of 33 percent) of agricultural transfer tax for use as matching funds to leverage state MALPF dollars.

Most of the MALPF easements are in the RPD, including some large clusters north and south of the Bohemia River. Most of the MALPF easements in the RCD are in the Fair Hill RLA (Figure IV-2).

The average price per acre in the County of MALPF development rights sold between 2004 and 2010 was \$5,633 and since the first sale is \$2,247 per acre.

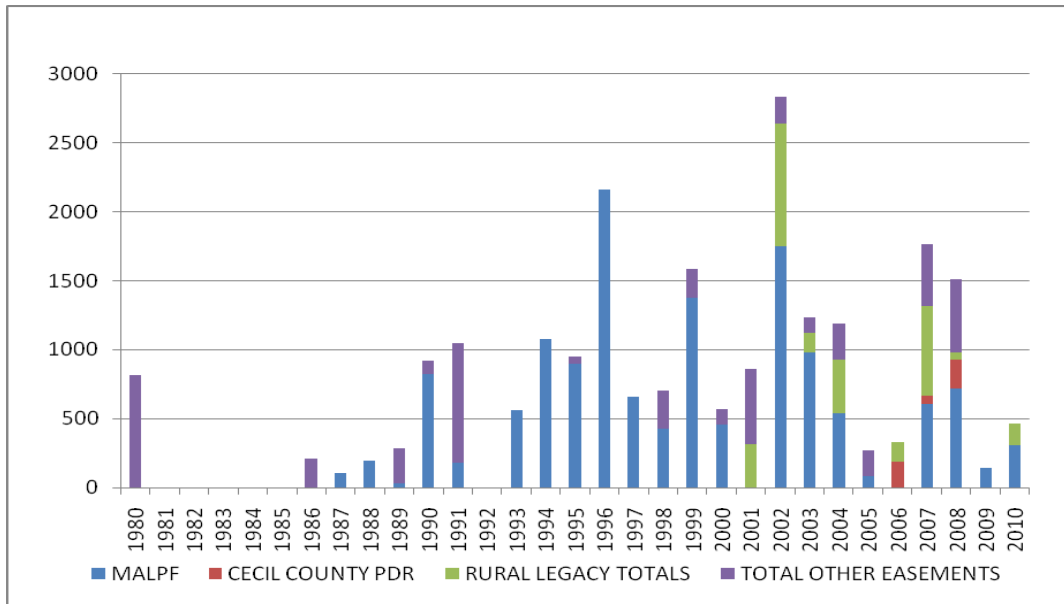
### *b. Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program*

The Cecil County Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) Program was established to help preserve agricultural lands within Cecil County, and supplement existing Federal, State and local preservation programs. Adopted by the Board of County Commissioners in July 2005, the program was structured as a simplified version of the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF) easement program.

To fund the program, the Recordation Tax was increased 80 cents per 500 dollars. The program was initially proposed to receive up to 1.0 million dollars each fiscal year, as budgeted by the County

Commissioners. To date, the County acquired easements on approximately 458 acres, at a cost of just over \$2.5 million dollars.

**Figure IV-1 Agricultural Land Preservation Easements since 1980**



*c. Land Trusts*

Land trusts are non-profit organizations created by interested citizens to accept, monitor and enforce conservation easements donated by landowners in exchange for significant tax benefits at the Federal, State and local property tax levels.

The Cecil Land Trust, formed in 1997, is the only local land trust operating in the County. It has been quite successful and, in addition to holding easements, has engaged in broader land preservation activities including sponsoring the Fair Hill Rural Legacy Area, funding an influential 1998 report on farmland preservation<sup>4</sup>, watershed-based planning, and working with some of the County’s towns on implementing greenbelt concepts. Most of the Cecil Land Trust’s easements are in the northwest part of the County, especially in the Furnace Creek watershed (Figure IV-2) but it also co-holds a number of easements with other trusts.

The Maryland Environmental Trust (MET) holds 6,927 acres in easements in Cecil County, much of this co-held with the CLT and the ESLC. As of 2010 it held 2,830 acres independent of the Cecil Land Trust and the Eastern Shore Land Conservancy. The MET holds a large block of easements adjacent to the Sassafras Rural Legacy Area.

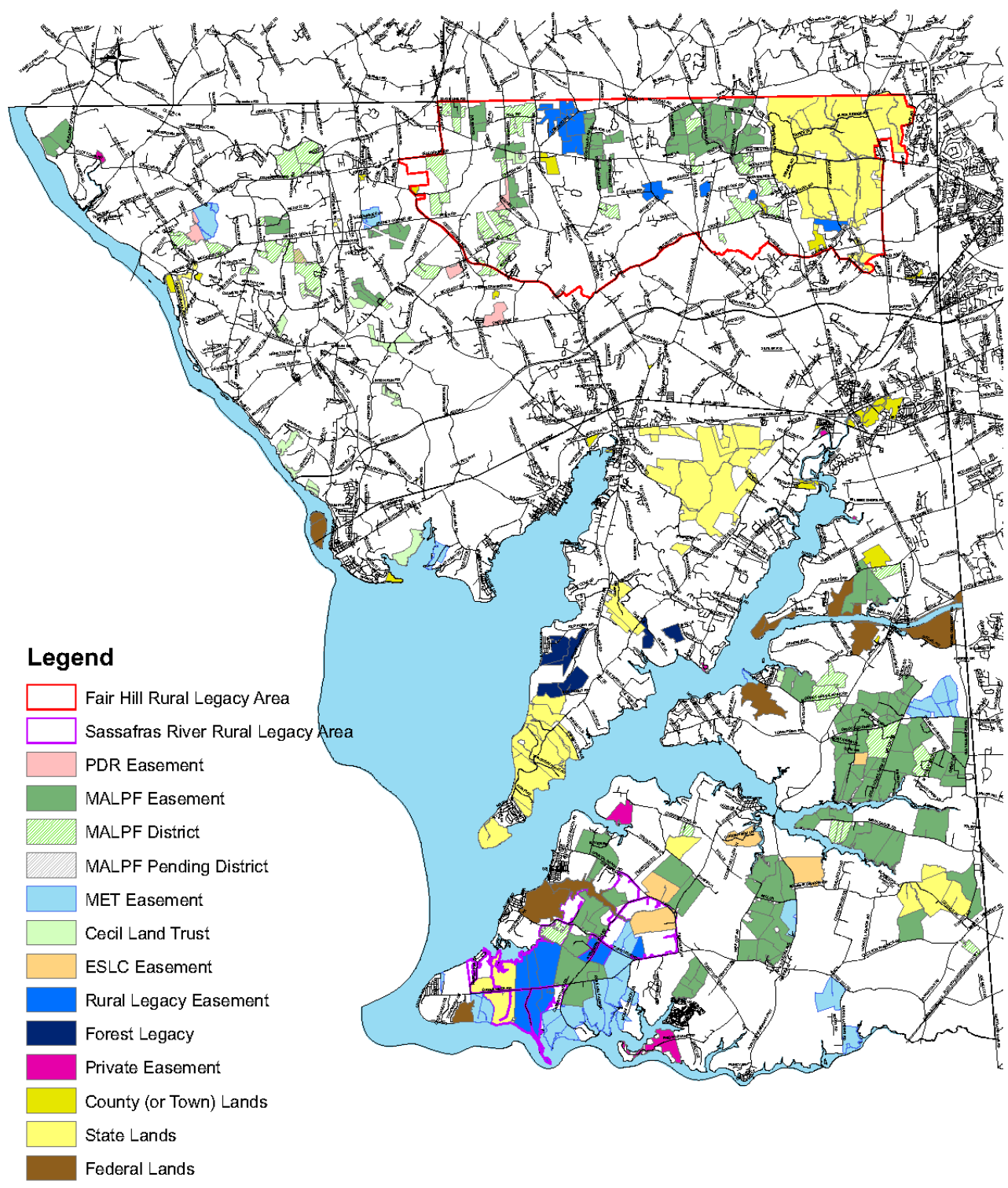
The Eastern Shore Land Conservancy (ESLC), based in Queen Anne’s County holds (independently) approximately 677 acres in Cecil County. It helped sponsor the Sassafras Rural Legacy Area and, like the Cecil Land Trust, has engaged in broader land preservation activities including *Eastern Shore 2010: A Regional Vision* and follow-up white papers and reports associated with that effort.

While other land trusts hold easements in the County (Table IV-2), these are natural resource lands and are not included in this chapter as contributing to agricultural land preservation.

<sup>4</sup> Six Compelling Reasons to Retain Farmland in Cecil County, American Farmland Trust.



Figure IV-2 Agricultural Districts and Easements



d. *Rural Legacy*

Easements acquired through the Rural Legacy program in Cecil County are held by one or more of the following. Cecil Land Trust, the MET, and the ESLC. As of 2010, approximately 2,334 acres of the 5,000-acre Sassafras RLA area and 757 acres in the Fair Hill RLA have been permanently protected from development through the Rural Legacy Program.

**3. Funding for Acquisition**

Placing conservation easements on private land from willing owners is the chief mechanism for permanently protecting agricultural land in Cecil County. The vast majority of these easements have been purchased through MALPF or Rural Legacy with the State of Maryland providing the lion’s share of the funding. Local funds used to match state dollars are generated from a number of sources. Table IV-3 summarizes this funding since 2000.

*Table IV-3 Summary of Funds for Acquisition*

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Agricultural Transfer Tax</b>	<b>County General Fund</b>	<b>County Purchase of Development Rights</b>	<b>Federal Farmland Protection Program</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Rural Legacy - Sassafras</b>	<b>Rural Legacy - Fair Hill</b>	<b>Total</b>
2000	\$156,697							\$156,697
2001	\$197,015	\$50,000			\$280,000	\$529,886		\$1,056,901
2002	\$185,449	\$50,000		\$132,250	\$571,368	\$1,314,588	\$1,377,340	\$3,630,995
2003	\$220,386	\$60,000		\$220,100		\$ 630,792		\$1,131,278
2004	\$207,489	\$130,000		\$397,400		\$789,931		\$1,524,820
2005	\$528,042		\$1,000,000	\$310,800				\$1,838,842
2006	\$1,020,756		\$1,074,250	\$559,826				\$2,654,832
2007	\$586,816		\$1,000,000	\$844,433				\$2,431,249
2008	\$773,834		\$500,000					\$1,273,834
2009	\$89,440			\$630,541				\$719,981
2010	\$25,132					\$3,504,961	\$1,885,095	\$5,415,188
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,991,055</b>	<b>\$290,000</b>	<b>\$3,574,250</b>	<b>\$3,095,350</b>	<b>\$851,368</b>	<b>\$6,770,158</b>	<b>\$3,262,435</b>	<b>\$21,834,616</b>

Annual Average \$ 1,984,965

a. *Agricultural Transfer Tax*

When agricultural land in Maryland is sold for development, a small percentage of the transaction value is paid to recapture, in part, the preferential taxation rate the land has enjoyed due to its previous agricultural use. Part of the revenue collected is forwarded to the State and part remains with the County to be used only for farmland preservation. Cecil County’s agricultural preservation program is certified by Maryland Department of Planning and Maryland Department of Agriculture, so that it may hold back 75 percent of revenues collected to be used to purchase easements within three years. The County applies these funds to its match of State funds in the MALPF program. Since 2000 Cecil County has retained almost \$4.0 million in agricultural transfer taxes.

In the long run, this source of revenue is self limiting because as the amount of farmland diminishes, so does the tax on conversion to non-agricultural use. An increase in this source of funds, as shown in Table IV-3, indicates a loss of the resource the money is meant to protect. Conversely, with the downturn of the

housing market beginning in 2008, transfer taxes were dramatically reduced, along with available funds to be used for easement purchase.

*b. General Fund*

Beginning in 2001 Cecil County began committing general funds as a local match to the MALPF program. The annual appropriation increased to \$130,000 in FY 2005. With the creation and implementation of the County Purchase of Development Right Program (PDR), the local matching funds are now allocated for PDR purchases.

*c. Federal Funds*

Since 1998 the Federal government has made relatively small amounts of funds available for the purchase of development rights on farmland through the Farmland Preservation Program of the Natural Resource Conservation Service in the US Department of Agriculture. It is a competitive process in which Cecil County has joined forces with other Maryland counties and the State to win dollars to partially fund easement purchases. Since 2000 Cecil County has received over \$3,000,000 which was applied to the MALPF matching funds program.

*d. Rural Legacy*

Since 2001 the state has awarded over \$10.0 million in Rural Legacy funds to the Sassafras and Fair Hill rural legacy areas, for preservation within Cecil County (Table IV-3).

**4. Land Use Management Authority**

*a. Zoning*

The Comprehensive Plan’s RPD south of the C&D Canal and the RCD north of the Canal are implemented through the County’s Zoning Ordinance. The Southern Agricultural-Residential District (SAR) largely follows the RPD, and the Northern Agricultural-Residential District (NAR) largely follows the RCD. The purposes of the zoning districts are as follows:

NAR “...maintain the existing rural character of the County by encouraging the continuation of agricultural and forestry uses.....Low density residential development is permitted.”

SAR “...encourage the retention and maintenance of agricultural land, agricultural industry and agriculturally-related uses, forestry and compatible rural uses to support the agricultural economy of the County..... Low density residential development is permitted.”

In 2007, the permitted density of Major Subdivisions within the NAR and SAR zoning districts were reduced, with the introduction of the Transfer of Development Rights Program. The permitted density of the NAR was reduced from 1 du per 5 acres, to 1 du unit per 10 acres. The permitted density of the SAR was reduced from 1 du per 8 acres, to 1 du unit per 20 acres. Additionally, the provision for bonus density by clustering was removed from both zoning districts.

Table IV-4 summarizes the permitted residential development density in these districts.

**Table IV-4 Summary of Permitted Residential Development Density in Agricultural-Residential Districts**

Zoning District	Minor Subdivision (up to 5 lots)	Major Subdivision (6 or more lots)	
		Standard	Permitted density with additional Open Space
NAR	1 du per acre	1 du per 10 acres	No bonus density permitted.
SAR	1 du per acre	1 du per 20 acres	No bonus density permitted.

du = Dwelling unit.

*b. Right-to-Farm*

Cecil County first adopted right-to-farm legislation in the zoning ordinance in 1993. It was amended in 2000 to create an Agricultural Reconciliation Committee to arbitrate and resolve disputes, and requires that purchasers or lessees of property sign a disclosure statement regarding the existence of the right-to-farm ordinance.

**5. Farming Assistance Programs**

In 2000 an agricultural coordinator position was established in the Cecil County Office of Economic Development to assist in the development and marketing of Cecil County agricultural products. In 2002 an Agricultural Advisory Board was established as part of the County’s Economic Development Commission to work with the agricultural coordinator. Also in 2002 an equine industry task force was established to measure and track the economic impact of this industry on the County.

Among the coordinator’s achievements have been establishing two farmers’ markets in Fair Hill and in Chesapeake City, establishing an internet web site ([www.cecilbusiness.org](http://www.cecilbusiness.org)), marketing new agricultural businesses, and working with the County Commissioners on changes to agricultural fees and permits

**C. Evaluation of Agricultural Land Preservation Program/Policy Implementation**

**1. Overall strategy**

Cecil County’s overall preservation strategy contains many of the elements to be effective in securing a land base for the agricultural industry and, in doing so, protect the agricultural heritage and rural character of the County. However, full implementation of the strategy is not yet complete and much work remains to be done.

The County has made significant strides since the 2005 Land Preservation and Recreation Plan:

- Continued certification by the State of the County’s agricultural land preservation activities.
- Permanent preservation of approximately 23,840 acres of farm land, almost 3,800 acres since 2005.
- Continued support of preservation within the County’s two rural legacy areas. .
- Adoption and implementation: Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Program, along with the Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) Program.
- Modification of, in January 2007, permitted building densities within the NAR and SAR zoning districts.

## 2. Funding

Current funding levels will be insufficient to meet County goals. Based on current funding levels, it would take the County 67.7 years to acquire easements on an additional 31,160 acres (Table IV-5). There is significant interest in selling easements. Between 2005 and 2010 there were 93 applicants to the MALPF program with only 29 easement offers accepted.

*Table IV-5 Funding Analysis*

Need/ Funding		Explanation/Source
Acres to go by 2025	31,160	55,000-acre goal less 23,840 acres preserved.
Average easement cost	\$5,633 per acre	See Section B.2.A
Total need	\$134,290,720	23,840 acres x \$5,633 per acre
Average annual funding 2000 to 2004	\$1,984,965	Table IV-3.
Years to go	67.7	\$134,290,720 /\$1,984,000

## 3. Land Use Management Tools

As described in Section B (Current Implementation Program) Cecil County's key land use management tools for agricultural land preservation are the NAR and SAR zoning districts. With residential density permitted in these districts at one dwelling unit per ten acres and one dwelling unit per twenty acres respectively.

In 2010, the Cecil County Planning Commission completed its mandated six-year review of the Comprehensive Plan. The Commission made several major recommendations relating to agricultural land preservation. The Planning Commission's recommendations also recognize that setting the conditions for and encouraging growth in designated growth areas is the necessary flip side to land preservation. As discussed in Chapter II, the Commission's recommendations include: encouraging intensive development within designated Growth Areas, provide opportunities for development in historically settled areas outside of the Growth Areas, designating Rural Conservation Districts and Resource Preservation Districts, protection of environmentally sensitive resources in all areas of the County.

## 4. Combined performance of preservation tools

The tools Cecil County is currently using are being partially successful in preserving farmland. Since 1980 almost 24,000 acres of farmland have been permanently protected in Cecil County, and the rate of farmland loss has been less than in some other counties. However, trends indicate that unless much more is done, Cecil County will not achieve its farmland protection goal.

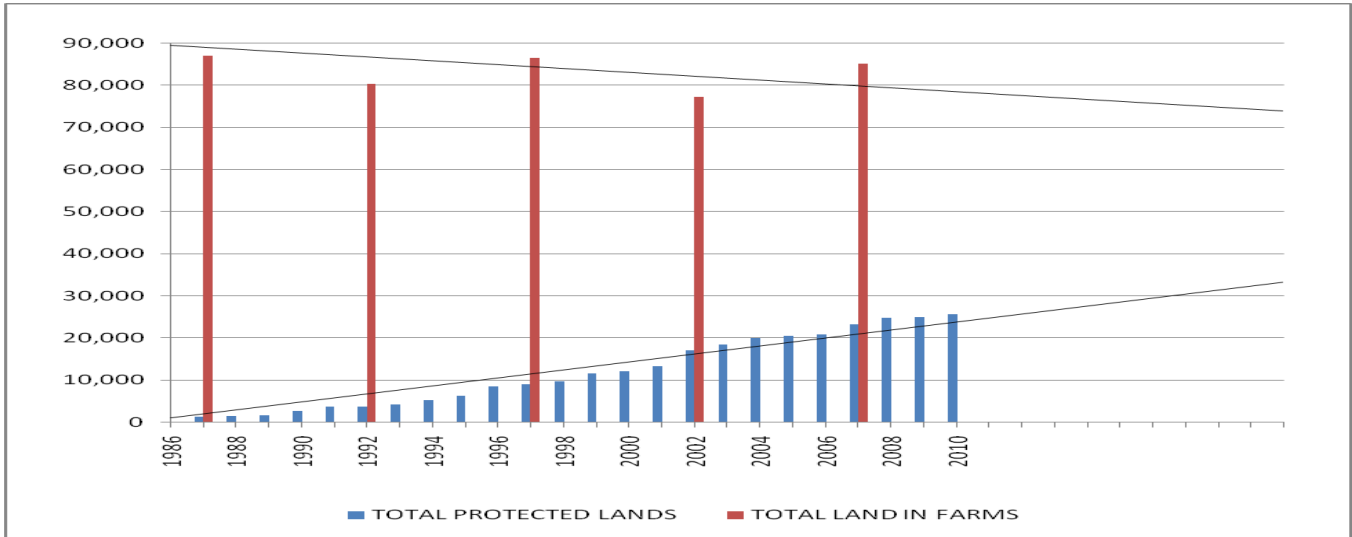
To illustrate this, Figure IV-4 shows trends in preservation versus loss of farmland. Land in farms is shown from 1987 to 2007 from the Census of Agriculture. The rate of farmland loss is projected over time along with the current rate of easement protection of agricultural land. The County's goal of 55,000 acres by 2025 is noted and the timeframe (2022) relates to the State of Maryland's target date to have protected 1.2 million acres of farmland statewide.

Conclusions from the analysis are as follows:

- Cecil County will not achieve its farmland protection goal unless the rate of easement acquisition increases substantially.

- The next few years will be critical to this effort. The amount of farmland in Cecil County was relatively stable between 1987 and 1997, but loss of farmland was over 9,000 acres between 1997 and 2002. If this trend continues, some time around 2025 the County will no longer have even a pool of farmland sufficient to meet its goal.

**Figure IV-4 Preservation Versus Loss of Farmland**



Source: ERM based on reports from Cecil Department of Planning, Zoning and Recreation and Parks; USDA Census of Agriculture, MET, CLT, ESLC, MD DNR Rural Legacy Program.

## 5. Farming and farming assistance programs

The County’s farming assistance activities are diverse. They include the work of the Soil Conservation District, the Cecil County Farm Bureau, the Maryland Cooperative Extension Service, Cecil County Farmers' Market Association and the Office of Economic Development (ECD). Advisory boards and commissions include the Economic Development Commission (EDC), Agricultural Advisory Board, Equine Industry Task Force, and the Business and Education Partnership Advisory Council, and Career Preparedness Education Committee (CPEC).

## 6. Summary of needed improvements in the implementation program

In summary, the needed improvements in the implementation program are as follows:

- Increased funding through the MALPF for agricultural easement acquisition to meet the demand to sell easements.
- Increased rate of easement acquisitions.
- Increased funding of the County’s Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program
- Review and refine the County’s Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program.
- Reduced development pressure in the NAR and the SAR zoning districts by providing attractive development opportunities in designated growth areas.

## D. Program Development Strategy

This section describes Cecil County's program development strategy for agricultural land preservation. Recommended actions on the part of the State are noted. The strategy is based in part on the evaluation in this chapter, but relies heavily on the extensive research, planning, and analysis conducted over the past three years in the following efforts:

- 2010 Cecil County Comprehensive Plan
- Purchase of Development Rights program
- Transfer of Development Rights program
- Tools Available for Attaining the Eastern Shore 2010 Land Protection Goal, Eastern Shore Land Conservancy, 2003/2004.
- Cecil County Growth Management Investment Plan, Cecil County Land Trust, 2003.
- Eastern Shore 2010: A Regional Vision Goal Two: Economic Development Support for Resource-Based Industries A White Paper of Options Focusing on Increasing Economic Development Support for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries on the Upper Eastern Shore of Maryland. American Farmland Trust, 2004.

### 1. Land use management

*a. Continue to support a Transfer of Developments Rights (TDR) Program.*

TDR is a tool that allows a landowner to transfer the right to develop a property in one part of the County to another. A key benefit of a TDR program is that it can preserve agricultural land at zero public cost. TDR program was adopted in 2006, and currently under review to incentives its use.

*b. Provide attractive development opportunities in designated growth areas.*

This is the necessary flip side to rural land preservation efforts so as to reduce development pressure in the NAR and the SAR zoning districts. A number of steps are needed to achieve this:

- **Adequate water and sewer infrastructure.** Cecil County has wrestled with this issue for several years. A Water and Sewer Infrastructure Task Force was appointed in 2004 to make recommendations to the County Commissioners. Key elements of this are identifying funding sources for infrastructure development and working with the incorporated towns on urban growth boundaries. An Urban Growth Boundaries plan was developed in 2000, but formal agreements with the towns are not yet in place.
- **Revise PUD Regulations.** Review the Planned Unit Development (PUD) regulations and approval process to make PUD's easier to develop in desired locations.
- **Smart code ordinance.** Setting urban design requirements and controls that will lead to the building of attractive, walkable, communities. Cecil County developed a Smart Code Report in 2002 and has drafted an implementing ordinance.
- **Parks, recreation areas, and trails.** See Chapter III of this LPPRP for recommendations on these.
- **Attention to transportation planning,** - including the use of public transportation and alternative modes of transport within and among communities.

*c. Reconsider permitted rural residential development densities if other steps are not succeeding*

In 2004 the Board of County Commissioners, after extensive public review, rejected the Planning Commission's recommendation to downzone the NAR and SAR zoning districts. If other steps are not succeeding in meeting agricultural land preservation goals, the County should be prepared to reconsider this question.

## **2. Easement acquisitions**

### *a. Increase State funding for the MALPF program. STATE ACTION*

As noted in Section C.2, demand to sell agricultural easements exceeds available funding through the MALPF program, and the County is at risk of not meeting its agricultural land preservation goal.

Increased funding would enable the County to ramp up the pace of easement acquisition.

### *b. Revise the County Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program*

The PDR program is under review to change the payment options, to allow for a optimum use of funds through Installment Purchase Agreements (IPA's), and working with other preservation groups to help leverage available funds. Recommendation are under review by the Board of County Commissioners.

### *c. Ramp up the pace of easement acquisitions*

As noted in Section C.4, because of increased rate of farmland loss, the next few years will be critical to agricultural land preservation effort. Increased funding as described above together with an aggressive outreach program will be needed to increase the pace of easement acquisitions.

## **3. Farming assistance**

*Increase business development assistance, marketing capacity, and access to financing and capital for resource-based industries. STATE and COUNTY ACTION*

This need was identified in the ESLC's 2004 white paper of options focusing on increasing economic development support for agriculture, forestry and fisheries. The paper suggested that the above options could be accomplished through a regional partnership and housed under one of the regional economic development entities on the Shore. This sharing of the program expenses would keep costs to each county at a minimum, and funding could be matched by the Maryland Economic Development Assistance Fund, USDA and other grants.



# CHAPTER V – NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION

## Introduction

This chapter evaluates Cecil County's implementation strategy to achieve State and County goals for protecting and conserving natural resource lands. These lands contain the forests, wetlands, floodplains, stream buffers and other sensitive natural features that help create the County's rural character.

Natural resource lands provide significant benefits. They help maintain the County's rural character, the physical attractiveness of developed areas, and provide wildlife habitat, natural filtration for air and water pollutants, and opportunities for resource-based recreation. They form the natural framework around which the built environment is planned and developed, and help provide flood, erosion and sediment control. In return, natural resource lands require few government services, provide opportunities for eco-tourism, and help enhance property values in developed areas.

### A. Goals for Natural Resource Land Conservation

This section describes the State's and County's goals for natural resource conservation.

#### 1. State Goals

The State's goals for conservation of natural resource lands are shown in the box on the following page.

#### 2. County Goals

Cecil County's Comprehensive Plan provides the framework and foundation for the County's natural resource conservation goals and strategies. These goals in turn form the basis for policies, resource protection performance standards and guidelines in the zoning ordinance (Article IX), subdivision regulations, and regulations for wetlands, floodplain protection, stormwater management, and sediment and erosion control, etc. Together, each contributes to a framework for natural resource conservation that is compatible with State goals.

Cecil County's efforts to protect natural resources are grounded in following the Comprehensive Plan's major goal statements for natural resources. These goals complement the State's goals pertaining to protection of waterways; using land use management techniques and regulations to protect sensitive areas; and working with others to achieve natural resource goals.

- Protect environmentally sensitive resources and natural features in all areas of the County, comprising steep slopes, streams, wetlands, floodplains, and habitat including the habitats of threatened or endangered species;
- Encourage the conservation of agricultural and forested lands; encourage sustainable agribusiness and other natural resource based industries;
- Conserve agricultural and forest resource land, with special focus on the County's Priority Preservation Area;
- Develop a systematic approach to protect the County's green infrastructure resources; and
- Manage watersheds in ways that protect, conserve and restore their hydrologic and water quality functions.

Three of the Comprehensive Plan's eleven land use districts particularly emphasize land conservation and resource protection (see Figure II-4).

- The Rural Conservation District (RCD) covers most of the Elk Neck peninsula and rural areas north of the I-95/US 40 corridor. This district contains approximately 43 percent of the County’s land area. The primary purpose of the RCD is to “encourage the retention of agricultural and forestry uses and to support the County’s agricultural industry.”

**State of Maryland Goals for Natural Resource Land Conservation**

1. Identify, protect and restore lands and waterways in Maryland that support important natural resources and ecological functions, through combined use of the following techniques:
  - Public land acquisition and stewardship;
  - Preservation and stewardship on private lands through easements and assistance; and
2. Local land use management plans and procedures that conserve natural resources and environmentally sensitive areas and minimize impacts to resource lands when development occurs.
3. Focus conservation and restoration activities on priority areas within the statewide green infrastructure.
4. Develop a more comprehensive inventory of natural resource lands and environmentally sensitive areas to assist State and local implementation programs. Accomplish this by synthesizing local inventories with DNR’s inventory of green infrastructure in each county.
5. Assess the combined ability of State and local programs to:
  - Expand and connect forests, farmlands, and other natural lands as a network of contiguous green infrastructure.
  - Protect critical terrestrial and aquatic habitats, biological communities, and populations.
  - Manage watersheds in ways that protect conserve, and restore stream corridors, riparian forest buffers, wetlands, floodplains, and aquifer recharge areas and their associated hydrologic and water quality functions.
  - Support a productive forestland base and forest resource industry, emphasizing economic viability of privately owned forestland.
6. Establish measurable objectives for natural resource conservation and an integrated State/local strategy to achieve them through State and local implementation programs.
7. Preserve the cultural and economic value of natural resource lands.
8. Encourage private and public economic activities, such as eco-tourism and natural resource-based outdoor recreation, to support long-term conservation objectives.

- The Resource Preservation District (RPD) located south of the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal comprises about 28 percent of the County’s land area. The emphasis in this area is on retaining productive agricultural soils in farm use.
- The Mineral Extraction District (MED), the majority of which is within the I-95/US 40 corridor, contains 8,400 acres. The MED serves to protect the County’s economically important mineral resources, protect surrounding land uses from the effects of mining, and provide for the restoration of mineral extraction sites after mining.

In addition, through the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Program, the County limits growth in approximately 25,800 acres of sensitive Critical Area lands to help minimize impacts on water quality and habitat.

The Comprehensive Plan also contains performance standards for natural resource and stormwater management goals. These standards are implemented through the County's zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations and help support State goals. The goals and standards restrict development in floodplains, on steep slopes, and in other sensitive areas in order to protect water quality and plant and animal habitat. The performance standards address stream, wetland, and sensitive soils setbacks and buffers, steep slopes, rare, threatened and endangered species, and forest cover and habitat enhancement. The zoning ordinance includes provisions pertaining to natural resources, such as:

- Establishment of a 110-foot perennial stream buffer (with expansion to 160 feet in certain instances) and a 25-foot intermittent stream buffer; limitations on developing steep slopes; protection of rare, threatened and endangered species (RTES); and afforestation in new subdivisions;
- Establishment of resource protection policies to concentrate development in cluster subdivisions while encouraging measures such as wildlife corridors, open space, forest retention, farmland preservation, and stormwater protections as essential underpinnings of policies to protect the Chesapeake Bay; and
- Establishment of a greenways policy of open space corridors to provide for water quality protection, wildlife habitat, aesthetic relief, recreation, pedestrian transportation and environmental education. This policy supports the State's green infrastructure goals and helps implement State goals to preserve cultural and economic values of natural resource lands.

The 2010 Comprehensive Plan includes, as incorporated by reference, the Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway Management Plan. Said promotes heritage tourism and greenway development in Harford and Cecil Counties, and it suggests several methods of pursuing acquisition of easements or land.

The 2010 Comprehensive Plan also includes elements relating to watershed protection, groundwater resources, rural legacy areas, greenways, and tourism.

## **B. County Implementation Program for Natural Resource Land Conservation**

This section discusses major policy components of the County's implementation program for natural resources conservation.

### **1. Comprehensive Planning**

The Comprehensive Plan establishes the countywide framework for planning and regulatory functions. The framework has three basic elements: concentrating development in designated areas; preserving open space in rural areas; and protecting sensitive areas

#### *a. Concentrating development in designated Growth Areas*

The designated growth areas contain about 29 percent of the County's land area. These districts are the only areas in the County targeted for public water and sewer and intensive development. In 2000, the County and municipalities adopted an Urban Growth Boundary Plan to encourage cooperative strategies for the provision of water and sewer infrastructure in designated areas. The County and municipalities have discussed alternatives for implementing this plan in the intervening years.

As discussed in Chapter II, new and revised strategies to concentrate development in the County's designated growth areas while discouraging development in rural areas have been incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan, zoning ordinance, and subdivision regulations.

#### *b. Preserving open space in rural areas*

Approximately 95,800 acres or 43 percent of the County's land area are in the Rural Conservation District (RCD), and 63,500 acres, 28 percent, are in Resource Preservation District (RPD). The best opportunities

to preserve open space and natural resources are in these less developed areas of the County. The Comprehensive Plan's intent is to preserve these areas from development encroachment in order to maintain the County's rural character and agricultural land base. In 2009, only 72 building permits for new dwellings, 14% of the total number of similar permits issued, were within these areas.

*c. Protecting sensitive areas.*

The County's sensitive area resource protection regulations address protection of steep slopes, floodplains, wetlands, streams and their buffers, hydric soils, and habitats of rare, threatened, and endangered species (see below in Section B.5).

*Green Infrastructure*

The County has some large and contiguous areas that have remained intact from development and were identified in the Conservation Fund's 2008 Green Infrastructure Plan for Cecil County. The largest hubs are in the following areas (Figure V-1):

- The Elk Neck peninsula including Elk Neck State Park, Elk Neck State Forest and the Plum Creek Natural Heritage Area
- The Mineral Extraction District west and north of the Town of Charlestown
- Fair Hill
- Along some the County's larger streams, especially Octoraro Creek, Northeast Creek, and the Bohemia and Sassafras Rivers.

Greenways are incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan, as evidenced by Sections 5.4 and 7.2.2 of said plan. Additionally, the Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway Management Plan is incorporated by reference.

An independent, though not County sponsored, inventory assessment of the County's green infrastructure was conducted by The Conservation Fund in 2008. The green infrastructure network identified in the plan prioritizes the areas of greatest ecological importance within the County's natural ecosystems and provides a scientifically defensible framework for green infrastructure protection countywide.

**2. Use of resource data and inventories**

The County's planning and development review process uses available State and County inventories of land cover, natural resource lands, protected lands, habitats of rare, threatened and endangered species, and other environmental features. Forest stand delineation plans require review by the Department of Natural Resources to identify the presence habitats of rare, threatened and endangered species (RTES). If RTES are identified, the County requires habitat studies prior to any development approvals.

**3. Designated conservation and other natural resource areas**

Cecil County's designated conservation areas are the Fair Hill and Sassafras Rural Legacy Areas and the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area (see Figure II-5).

The Fair Hill and the Sassafras RLAs were discussed in Chapter IV as their goals, especially for the Sassafras RLA, are primarily agricultural preservation.

**4. Easements and Funding**

Cecil County has established the goal of protecting 80 percent of the remaining undeveloped land in its designated Priority Preservation Area. As discussed in Chapter IV, the County's easement acquisition

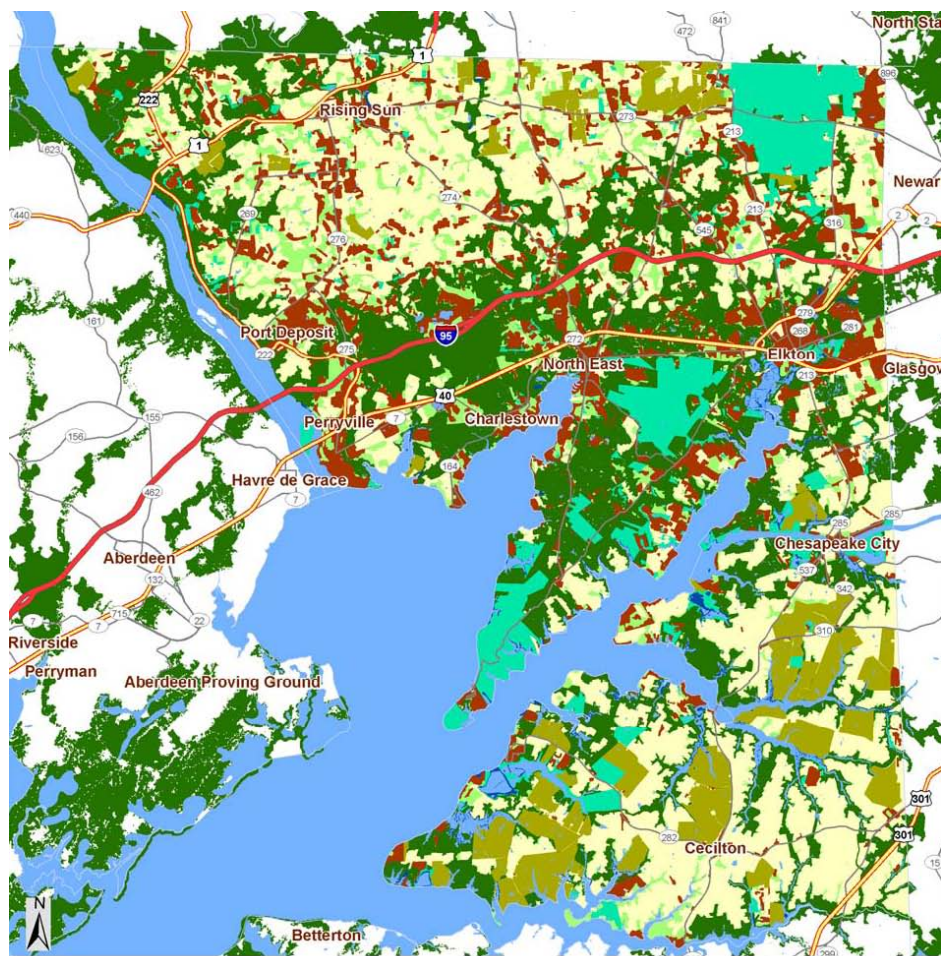
efforts have been geared primarily to agricultural land preservation. This is due to the Board of County Commissioners adopting, in the year 2000, a farmland preservation goal of 55,000 acres by 2025: 30,000 acres in the Resource Preservation District and 25,000 acres in the Rural Conservation District.

Of a total of approximately 37,417 acres of protected lands in the County, approximately 22,987 acres are agricultural lands (Table IV-2). Easements on natural resource lands include 854 acres of forest legacy easements and 5,148 acres of easements held by the MET, ESLC, and others.

The Rural Legacy Program has been valuable in that it has enabled the conservation of both farmland and natural resource land.

Of the land in the County’s recreation and open space inventory (Appendix D), approximately 13,576 acres are state and federal natural resource lands including 5,613 acres in the Fair Hill Natural Resources Management Area and 5,718 acres in the Elk Neck State Park and State Forest.

**Figure V-1 Green Infrastructure**



**Cecil County Green Infrastructure Plan**  
December 2007 - The Conservation Fund

1:200,000  
0 1 2 4 Miles

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Green Infrastructure Network</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #006400; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Hubs and Corridors</li> </ul> <p><b>Conserved and Managed Lands</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #00FF00; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Fed, DNR, Forest Legacy, MET/Co Parks, ESLC, Subdivision OS</li> </ul> <p><b>Agricultural Easements</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #FFD700; margin-right: 5px;"></span> MALPF, MET, PDR, Rural Legacy</li> </ul> | <p><b>Cecil Co 2002 Land Use</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #8B0000; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Developed, Barren Land</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #90EE90; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Forest outside GI Hubs and Corridors</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #FFFF00; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Agriculture</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #0000FF; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Wetlands</li> </ul> |
|--|--|

Source: Cecil County Green Infrastructure Plan, The Conservation Fund, 2008.

No County funds are currently specifically dedicated for natural resource land easement acquisition or easement protection, although agricultural easements frequently also contain natural resource land. For example, an easement purchased on an agricultural property via the County's PDR program may contain woodlands, wetlands, or sensitive habitats.

## 5. Planning, Land Use Management Authority

The major components of the County's planning strategy to implement natural resource goals are its land use management, zoning and subdivision authority, and the various easement acquisition programs.

Key zoning and subdivision regulations relating to natural resources protection are summarized in Table V-1. As development occurs, these regulations help protect sensitive resource lands, and provide opportunities to add to the County's greenways network.

Some natural resource and watershed inventory and assessment work has been completed by the State and by others that, in combination with the State's green infrastructure, provides a basis for achieving the State's and County's natural resource protection goals.

### *Maryland's Clean Water Action Plan<sup>1</sup>*

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources has divided Maryland into 138 large (8 digit) watersheds. Fifteen of these are located in whole or in part in Cecil County (Figures II-3, and V-2). Cecil County's watersheds exhibit a range of health characteristics according to Maryland's Clean Water Action Plan.

**Category 1 (restoration) watersheds.** Twelve of the 15 watersheds in Cecil County fail to meet two or more of their clean water and natural resource goals and need some restoration (Figure V-2 A). Two of the 12 watersheds, the Upper Elk and Back Creek are *Category 1 Priority (Restoration) watersheds* because they failed to meet at least half of their goals (Figure V-2 B).

The three other watersheds, the Octoraro, Christina, and Big Elk, met all or all but one of their clean water and natural resource goals, and need preventative actions to sustain water quality and aquatic life – they are described as *Category 2 (preventative action) watersheds* (shown in white on Figure V-2 A).

**Category 3 (protection) watersheds.** Thirteen of the 15 watersheds met two or more indicators of high quality or pristine conditions. Four of the 15 watersheds are *Selected Category 3 watersheds* because they met four or more indicators of high quality or pristine conditions: Conowingo Dam-Susquehanna Run, Lower Susquehanna, North East River, and the Upper Elk River (Figure V-2 C and D).

The Upper Elk River is both a Category 1 Priority (Restoration) watershed and a Selected Category 3 watershed - one of only 17 such watersheds in the State (Figure V-2 E).

### *Tributary Strategies*

Tributary Strategies are State coordinated programs that describe ways in which nutrient pollution loads can be reduced in subwatersheds that drain into the Chesapeake Bay. Cecil County is at the head of the Chesapeake Bay and is located in two tributary watersheds: the Upper Eastern Shore Watershed and the Upper Western Shore Watershed.

In 2007, the Cecil County Office of Planning & Zoning applied for and received a Coastal Communities grant from the Maryland DNR to complete a pilot watershed plan. Said plan, conducted for the Sassafras River Watershed, was completed by Angler Environmental in May 2008.

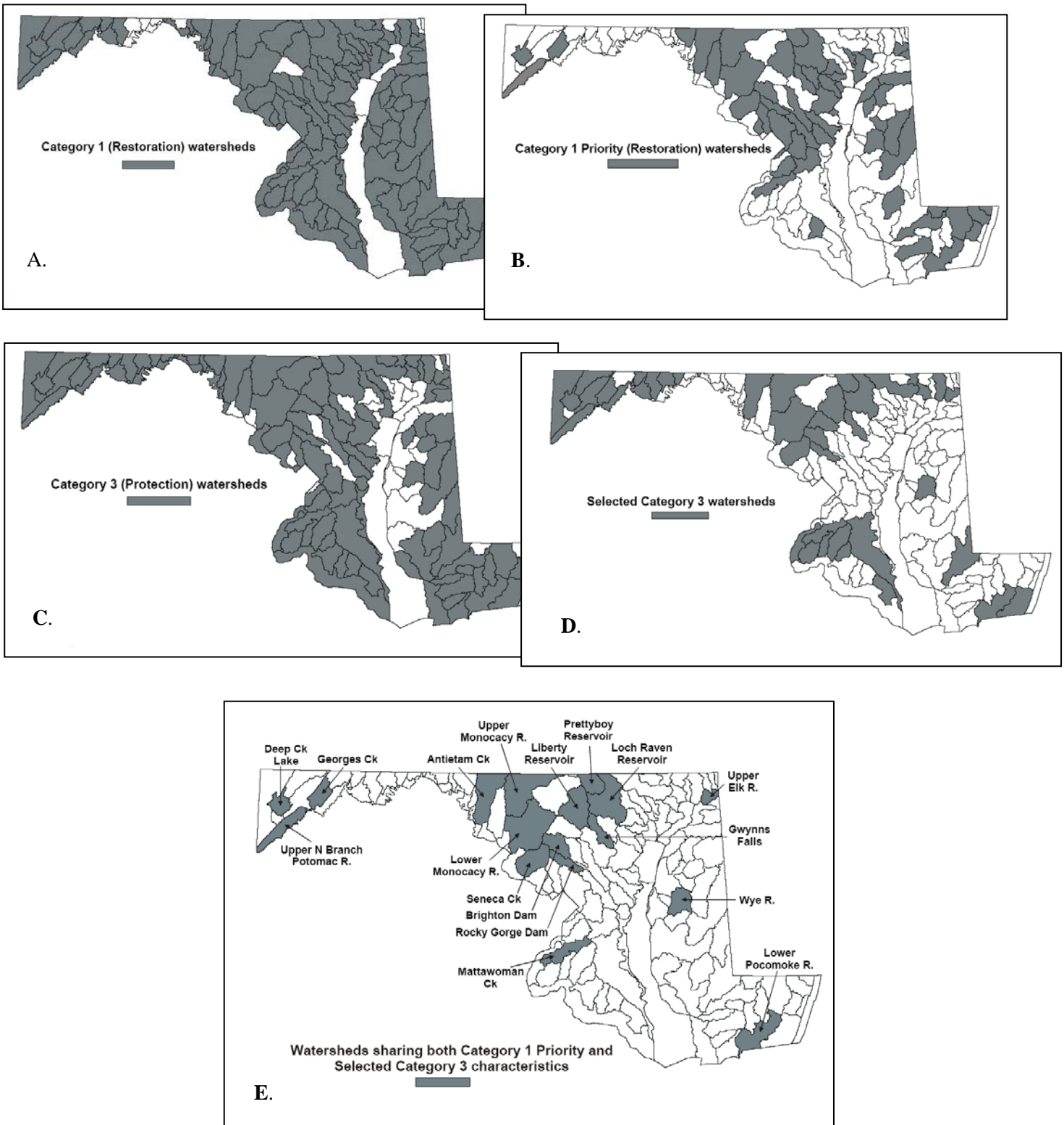
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<sup>1</sup> Final 1998 Report on Unified Watershed Assessment, Watershed Prioritization and Plans for Restoration Action Strategies, MD DNR.

**Table V-1 Cecil County Natural Resources Protection Regulations Summary**

Subject	Code Reference	Criteria
Environmental Standards	Zoning Ordinance Article IX, Sections 174-182	<p>For actual requirements, see Cecil County’s Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishes 110 foot natural perennial stream and 25 foot intermittent stream buffers, expandable to 160 feet if associated with hydric or highly erodible soils and slopes greater than 15 percent; dedication to the County is required if land is designated on Greenways Plan.</li> <li>• Requires a minimum 25-foot non-tidal wetlands buffer.</li> <li>• Prohibits development on slopes over 25 percent and restricts development on 15-25 percent slopes;</li> <li>• Protects all rare, threatened and endangered species designated in MD DNRs Natural Heritage Program; and</li> <li>• Requires meeting forest conservation standards.</li> </ul>
Chesapeake Bay Critical Area (CBCA)	Zoning Ordinance, Article XI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requires maximum protection of natural resources and shoreline areas within the designated CBCA by establishing minimum 110 foot buffers beyond the Critical Area boundary; applies to all land and water within 1,000 feet beyond private wetland and heads of tide boundaries</li> <li>• Many other requirements such as land use, density limits, habitat and greenway corridor protections, and buffer requirements apply in the CBCA’s three designated areas: Intensely Developed, Limited Development, and Resource Conservation Areas.</li> </ul>
Floodplains	Zoning Ordinance, Part III, Sections 224-244	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requires site plans, stormwater management, erosion and sediment control plans, and permits for all development within the 100-year flood elevations for tidal and non-tidal areas. Sediment and stormwater management and ground cover remediation plans are required for any disturbances to floodplains.</li> </ul>
Greenways	Zoning Ordinance Section 182	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requires any minor or major subdivision, or site plan, proposing development on land shown on the County’s Greenways and Unofficial Bikeways Map to dedicate the necessary portion of land for public use or provide an easement.</li> </ul>
Open Space	Zoning Ordinance Section 176	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requires open space in all major subdivisions over 10 units and all planned unit developments to serve recreational purposes, preserve significant site features and open space;</li> <li>• Must consider natural, and cultural/historic features. May include up to 40 percent nontidal or tidal wetlands;</li> <li>• May require dedication if deemed necessary for general public use.</li> </ul>
Cluster Subdivision	Subdivision Regs, Article VI, Section 6.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cluster subdivisions are intended to encourage the set aside of usable open space by allowing smaller lot sizes on land not preserved for open space. Cluster subdivision design is often used in the Northern and Southern Agricultural Residential zoning districts where preserving 60 percent of the subdivision as permanent open space is required.</li> </ul>
Forest Conservation	Subdivision Regs, Article VI, Section 7.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forested lands to be subdivided must have Soil Conservation District approved sediment control plans, County grading permits and must comply with specific reforestation and/or afforestation plans. The county has a Forest Conservation Technical Manual that establishes performance standards for preparing forest stand delineations and conservation plans.</li> </ul>

Figure V-2 Watershed Categories in Maryland's Clean Water Action Plan





## **Non-County Initiatives**

Several initiatives have been proposed by private organizations. These initiatives have not been endorsed by the County, but are included here as areas or initiatives in which the County could be a partner in the future (see Section D. Recommendations).

### *North Bay Conservation Alliance*

This group has as a mission to promote and assist implementation of conservation practices to improve water quality, sustainable communities, and restoration of wildlife habitat in the northern Chesapeake Bay region. The group supports a bottom-up, community-based approach to environmental policy, and members are involved in several of initiatives described in this section.

### *Principio Creek and Furnace Bay Conservation Corridor*

The Cecil Land Trust (CLT) initiated this effort to develop a watershed management plan for the Furnace Bay Watershed to improve water quality, protect diverse plant and wildlife habitat, the agricultural land base, and rural character. Research and data collection has taken place and initial identification of possible land use policy areas has been developed to show areas committed to development; areas with sensitive features (riparian corridors, wetlands, sensitive habitat and forested and agricultural zones); and areas where specific land use management policies might be applied. Such policies could be considered based on concentrations of agricultural uses, historic and sensitive habitat areas, as well as mineral extraction, residential and business uses (Figure V-3).

### *North Bay Habitat Restoration Project*

This project, also being pursued by the CLT, focuses on restoring submerged aquatic grasses and emergent marsh vegetation in the 25,000 Susquehanna Flats area where the Chesapeake Bay merges with the Susquehanna River, through uses of best management practices to improve water quality, restore waterfowl habitat, reduce shore erosion, and provide overall watershed protections against sprawl development.

### *Port Deposit Stormwater and Greenbelt Concept*

This project in the Rock Run watershed north of Port Deposit (part of the Lower Susquehanna River Watershed) is a combination of stormwater management and flood control supported by the Town of Port Deposit and the CLT. The project is also being discussed as part of a possible greenbelt around the Town, which would relate to and help implement the urban growth boundary identified in the County's Urban Growth Boundary Plan.

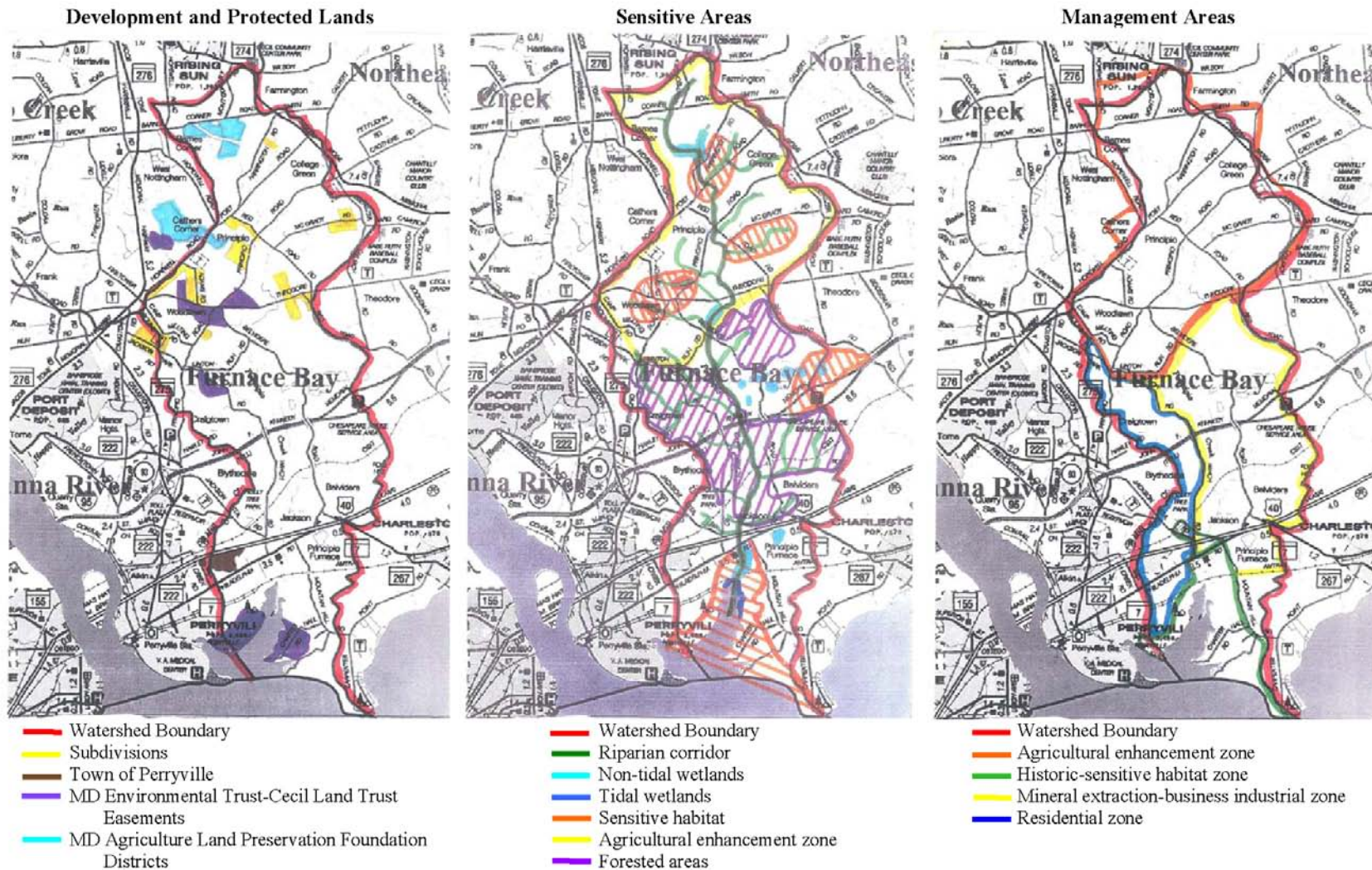
## **6. Other programs, Eco-Tourism and Resource-Based Recreation**

The Comprehensive Plan encourages both heritage tourism and resource-based recreation in support of State goals.

Both activities are complementary components to the County's natural resource conservation program strategy. The Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway Management Plan's incorporation into the Comprehensive Plan documents the Susquehanna River's cultural, natural and recreational resources and is designed to increase and enhance visitation in the region.

Cecil County has an active historic preservation program. There are approximately 1,500 historic sites and structures, of which 50 are listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Figure V-3 Furnace Bay Watershed Assessment



(Source: Cecil Land Trust, 2004)

## C. Evaluation of the Natural Resource Land Conservation Program

This section examines the ability of the County to achieve natural resource goals by evaluating strengths and weaknesses of both the County's and State's natural resource implementation strategies and programs.

### 1. Strengths and Weaknesses of the Natural Resources Implementation Program

#### a. *Comprehensive planning process*

##### Strengths

Natural resource conservation goals, objectives and polices are well integrated into the comprehensive planning process. Although qualitative in nature, they provide the framework in which to implement planning strategies, programs, regulations, and decision-making. Implementation of the Comprehensive Plan's policies and action items (page 11-9) seeks to ensure that standards derived from the Comprehensive Plan goals are measurable and can be translated into reality (see Table V-1 for a summary of standards used to regulate development). The County's natural resource goals and policies are compatible with the State's goals.

In the future, the County's Comprehensive Plan amendment process can also provide opportunities to incorporate new policies that can assist with natural resource conservation. There are currently no recommended revisions to the Comprehensive Plan, as the plan was adopted less than a year ago.

##### Weaknesses

The Comprehensive Plan is a countywide policy plan that establishes general goals and objectives. It does not provide detailed guidance to direct development in specific areas other than establishing general land use policies for the eleven districts designated in the Plan. The comprehensive planning program does not include more detailed small area planning efforts in which natural resource protection can be integrated into the broader planning scheme for development, agricultural preservation, and public facilities such as transportation, schools, and recreation. Presently, development proposals are only reviewed against existing zoning and subdivision regulations as they apply to individual properties, with little emphasis on tracking cumulative effects on a watershed or small area basis. Regulations and performance standards only apply to individual developmental submittals and do not facilitate comprehensive reviews based on area-wide objectives, such as tributary strategies or watershed impacts.

#### b. *Use of resource data and inventories*

##### Strengths

With limited resources, the County has built a commendable geographic information system (GIS) of relevant land use and natural resource inventory information. The County has a comprehensive, parcel-based GIS that can support and facilitate the type of small area or watershed-based planning that is recommended by the Comprehensive Plan and this plan. The County has the ability to easily create accurate maps showing environmental features such as wetlands, steep slopes, hydric and highly erodible soils in relation to other natural and man-made features.

##### Weaknesses

Although the County has a good working relationship with the Department of Natural Resources in tracking rare, threatened and endangered species impacts, the County has found that the review process is often not timely. Accordingly, there is a need to speed DNR's development review time for RTES.

*c. Designated conservation and other natural resource areas*

Strengths

The County's designated conservation areas together with other large protected natural resource areas form a good basis for the County's natural resource conservation efforts. Combined, these areas account for approximately one quarter of the County's land area and form a largely continuous north-south swath through the central portion of the County (Table V-2)

These areas can be connected with the greenways designated in the Comprehensive Plan and the stream buffer protection regulations to form an interconnected network of natural resource land, consistent with State goals for creating a green infrastructure network.(see Chapter VI).

**Table V-2 Summary of Designated Conservation and Major Natural Resource Areas**

	<b>Acres</b>
Fair Hill Rural Legacy Area	30,987
Sassafras Rural Legacy Area	8,244
Critical Area	25,800
Elk State State Forest	3,500
Elk State Park	2,218
Bohemia Manor Wildlife Management Areas	2,504
<b>Total</b>	<b>73,253</b>
<i>Total County</i>	<i>222,595</i>

Weaknesses

The major weaknesses in implementing the network described above are i) completing protection of the two rural legacy areas and ii) the need for better integration of the areas listed in Table V-2 with the greenways designated in the this plan (Figure III-4).

Approximately 28 percent of the Fair Hill RLA has been protected and 48 percent of the Sassafras RLA. Greater efforts and funding will be needed to protect these areas. The greenways designated in this plan are very conceptual in nature; essentially lines on the map following the stream valleys (Figure III-4). Policies need to be established regarding the proposed uses for these greenways (conservation versus recreation, for example) and more detailed maps need to be prepared showing areas already protected, and areas that should be targeted for protection.

*d. Easements and funding*

Strengths

Largely through the efforts of the MET and the CLT, some easements have been acquired on natural resource land but, as noted above, the County's resource lands easement acquisition efforts have been geared primarily to agricultural land preservation.

Weaknesses

Lack of funding for explicit natural resource conservation, especially for fee simple and easement acquisitions, is a major weakness.

- State funding for land conservation through programs such as Greenprint and Rural Legacy has been sharply reduced in recent years.

- Program Open Space (POS) funding has also been sharply reduced in recent years. Although the County would like to conserve natural resource lands through POS, it has primarily used these funds to acquire park land to meet the increasing demand for recreation.

The lack of measurable objectives for natural resource conservation is also a weakness. The State could assist in helping develop such objectives in coordination with the County.

*e. Planning and land use authority*

Strengths

The County's zoning and subdivision ordinance's natural resource protection requirements are generally effective in addressing impacts related to specific development projects. The regulations address all required sensitive resources, as summarized in Table V-1.

Weaknesses

Greenways are integrated into the County's planning process through the Comprehensive Plan and the zoning and subdivision ordinances. However, green infrastructure, watershed protection and restoration strategies and related initiatives are not. The County needs to develop better integration between these watershed protection and restoration goals and the comprehensive planning process. One way to begin to accomplish this would be for the County to develop Watershed Restoration Action Strategies (see below).

A number of grass roots natural resource protection initiatives have been recommended such the Principio Creek and Furnace Bay Conservation Corridor, and the North Bay Habitat Restoration Project (see above in Section B.5). Currently these initiatives receive little funding or staff support from the County, as the County has limited resources and cannot support every initiative.

*f. Other programs, eco-tourism and resource-based recreation*

Strengths

The County's historic sites, together with the many heritage tourism programs and projects contained in the Lower Susquehanna Greenway Management Plan, provide a solid base for eco-tourism and resource-based recreation.

The County's recreation sites inventory (Appendix D) includes many sites that either currently offer or could offer significant resource-based recreational opportunities (e.g., Cecil County Farm Museum, Elk Landing, Elk River Park, Stoney Run, Conowingo Park, Perryville Community Park, Hopkins Quarry, Wallace-Carter Mill Park, and the County's Greenway trails network).

Weaknesses

The major weakness is the slowness in implementing capital projects in the Susquehanna Heritage Area Management Plan, Town of Elkton, and other locations due to lack of funding and competing priorities. The Comprehensive Plan recommends developing a coordinated and proactive partnership among the State, County, and municipalities to attract tourists (see Table 11.2).

## **2. Summary of Needed Improvements in the Implementation Program**

The County has the basic physical structure and planning, and regulatory framework in place to achieve both its and the state's goals for natural resource conservation. The large State parks and forests, two Rural Legacy Areas, stream valleys, Chesapeake Bay Critical Area, and designated greenways provide the physical structure, while the Critical Area and other zoning and subdivision regulations provide the regulatory framework. Easement acquisition and other land preservation programs are in place but lack copious funding both from the State and the County.

In summary, the needed improvements in the implementation program are as follows:

- County support for small area planning efforts in which natural resource protection can be integrated into the broader planning scheme.
- Better integration of green infrastructure concepts, greenways, and watershed protection goals and policies into the zoning and subdivision ordinances.
- A more proactive, leadership role on the part of the County with respect to grassroots natural resource protection initiatives.
- Completing protection of the County's two rural legacy areas.
- Increasing funding for natural resource lands conservation.
- Increasing use of GIS data to support and facilitate small area and watershed-based planning.
- Improving coordination of development review for RTES with the Department of Natural Resources.
- Improving coordination among the State, County, and municipalities to attract tourism.

## **D. Program Development Strategy for Natural Resource Conservation**

This section describes Cecil County's program development strategy for natural resource conservation, based on the evaluation in this chapter. Recommended actions on the part of the State are noted.

### **1. Comprehensive planning**

- a. Adopt recommended revisions relating to comprehensive planning for natural resource protection into the zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations.*

As discussed in Section C.1, these revisions relate to watershed protection, groundwater resources, rural legacy areas, greenways, and smart growth.

- b. Incorporate small area and watershed-based planning into the County's comprehensive planning program. **STATE and COUNTY ACTION***

As discussed above, the County's comprehensive planning program does not include small area planning efforts in which natural resource protection can be integrated in a detailed fashion into the broader planning scheme for development, agricultural preservation, and public facilities such as transportation, schools, and recreation. This LPPRP recommends the County develop such plans. Planning efforts should begin with candidate areas that have demonstrated needs and that also have grassroots support.

MD DNR is promoting Watershed Restoration Action Strategies (WRAS) as a state and local partnership planning to protect and restore water quality and habitat to help implement Maryland's Clean Water Action Plan and meet the Chesapeake Bay Agreement goals. The WRAS program provides local governments with funding, staff support, and extensive technical watershed assessment services. More than half of Maryland's counties have developed or are developing WRAS. Based on the Clean Water Action Plan, the primary candidate watershed in Cecil County would be the Upper Elk River which, as noted above in Section B.5, is both a Category 1 Priority (Restoration) watershed and a Selected Category 3 watershed, one of only 17 such watersheds in the State (see above, Section B.5). Based on grassroots support, other candidate areas would be:

- Furnace Bay, where some planning and strategizing has already been conducted by the CLT, and

- Octoraro Creek, which was identified as a candidate watershed by the Cecil County Conservation Forum and the Upper Western Shore Tributary Strategy team.

*c. Adopt a broad, countywide approach to natural resource conservation.*

To date, the County’s approach to natural resource conservation has been largely site and area-specific – focused on protecting specific resources such as stream buffers. Through this LPPRP a broader strategy has been identified connecting the County’s existing protected areas (state parks and forests, Critical Areas, wildlife management areas) into a broader, interconnected framework of protected land (RLAs, greenways, agricultural lands, and parks and recreation areas). This framework is described in Chapter VI.

**2. Resource data**

*a. Develop a secure funding source for the geographic information system (GIS) data used to support and facilitate both small area and watershed-based planning*

With limited financial resources the County has developed a commendable wealth of GIS data related to development and natural resource protection. Securing a long term funding source for continued maintenance and upgrade of the data, and the GIS system as a whole, would enable the County to support small area and larger scale planning well into the future. Benefits would include the easy creation of accurate maps and analyses showing environmental features such as wetlands, steep slopes, hydric and highly erodible soils in relation to other natural and man-made features.

*b. Improve the coordination of development review for RTES with the Department of Natural Resources*

Although the County has a good working relationship with the Department of Natural Resources in tracking rare, threatened and endangered species impacts, the County has found that the review process is often not timely. Accordingly, there is a need to speed DNR’s development review time for RTES.

**3. Designated conservation and other natural resource areas**

*a. Complete protection of the County’s two rural legacy areas – Sassafras and Fair Hill **STATE and COUNTY ACTION.***

Efforts to protect the RLAs need to continue. Special emphasis should be placed on Fair Hill, which has a smaller percentage of overall area protected than the Sassafras Rural Legacy Area.

*b. Continue efforts to adopt urban growth boundaries. Explore greenbelt concepts in association with such boundaries*

Discussions between the County and the municipalities regarding implementing the 2000 Urban Growth Boundary Plan are ongoing. Implementing this plan is critical to achieving the County’s development and preservation goals. Once a basic boundary framework is agreed upon between the County and the individual town, greenbelt concepts around towns should be explored as a partial means of implementing the adopted growth boundaries. As discussed in Section B.5, the CLT and the Town of Port Deposit have been exploring the potential for a greenbelt around the Town.

#### **4. Easements and funding**

*a. Increase state funding for natural resource conservation **STATE ACTION.***

County funding for land preservation is very limited. Local funds that are allocated for land preservation are targeted to agricultural land preservation which, as discussed in Chapter IV, is in immediate need of attention. Increased state funding for natural resource conservation through programs such as POS and Greenprint is critical to increase the pace of natural resource conservation.

*b. Continue to support land trusts*

Land trusts have proven very effective in Cecil County with almost 6,000 acres of agricultural and natural resource land preserved by the MET, CLT, ESLC and others. Further, land trusts often protect land at little or zero cost, since easements are frequently donated.

*c. Develop measurable objectives to assess natural resource conservation implementation **STATE and COUNTY ACTION.***

Incorporate measurable objectives into County plans that can be used to assess natural resource conservation implementation and achievement of goals;

The State can help the County develop measurable natural resource objectives by working with the County to translate qualitative concepts such as those contained in the Chesapeake Bay 2000 Agreement and the tributary strategies into county-specific and area-specific objectives. Such objectives could be incorporated into future Comprehensive Plans or the zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations. This strategy has the added benefit of helping facilitate coordinated efforts to restore the Bay.

#### **5. Planning and land use authority**

*a. Integrate greenways and the State's Green Infrastructure concepts more comprehensively into the County's planning and development review processes.*

While greenways designated in the Comprehensive Plan are integrated into the County's zoning and subdivision ordinances, the level of integration is limited. As discussed in Section C.1.c. the greenways concept needs to be expanded beyond the simple lines on a map to:

- Establish uses for these greenways (conservation versus recreation, for example),
- Incorporate the state's green infrastructure concepts, and
- Form the basis for a stronger emphasis on greenways in subdivision and land development review and approvals.

#### **6. Eco-tourism and resource-based recreation**

*a. Develop a coordinated and proactive partnership among the State, County, and municipalities to attract tourists.*

This recommendation is consistent with Table 11.2 of the Comprehensive Plan.



## CHAPTER VI – SYNTHESIS

A primary purpose of this LPPRP is to provide greater integration and coordination between recreation, agricultural preservation, and natural resources conservation policies so that the three elements of land preservation and recreation work together, support each other, and achieve state and local goals, including ensuring a good return on public investment in various land preservation and recreation programs. This chapter provides a synthesis of chapters III, IV, and V.

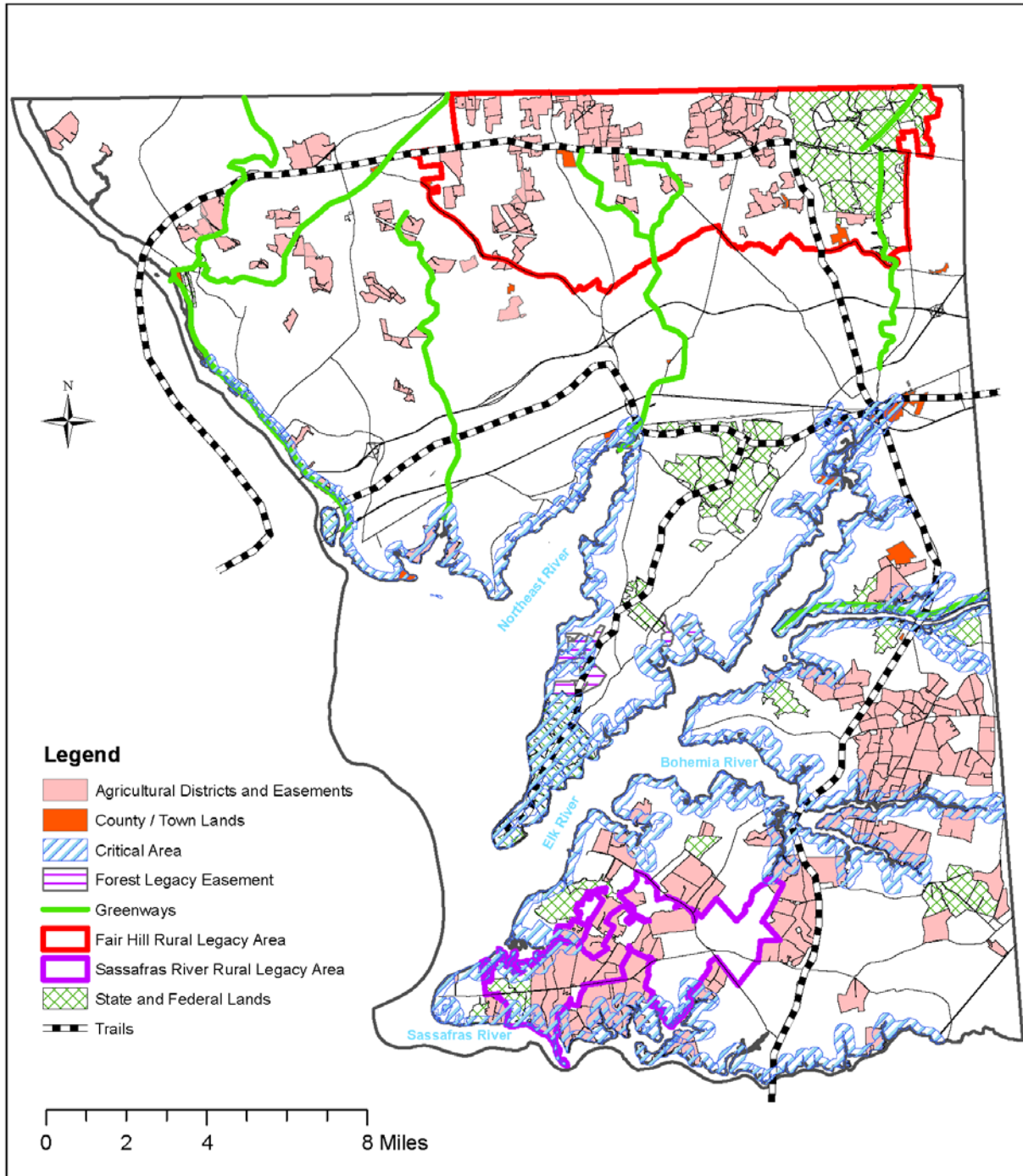
Figure VI-1 brings together the three key maps from chapters III, IV, and V. The following elements stand out on Figure VI-1.

1. The extensive amount of protected land in large blocks south of the C&D Canal and on the Elk Neck Peninsula. There is a very strong foundation here to build on.
2. The somewhat scattered pattern of protected lands in the Rural Conservation District north of I-95 except in the Fair Hill Rural Legacy Area. While there are a good number of agricultural districts outside the RLA in this area, little agricultural land is permanently protected although there are several agricultural districts. Major efforts will be needed to preserve significant blocks of land in this area.
3. The relatively minor contribution of county and town park land to overall land preservation except in the immediate vicinity of Elkton. While recreation land can and should support broader land preservation efforts, its contribution will likely remain small.
4. The extensive Critical Area, almost 12 percent of the County, and particularly extensive south of Elkton.
5. The potential to interconnect the large blocks of agricultural and natural resource lands via natural corridors (green infrastructure) and the greenways designated in the County's Comprehensive Plan. While these connections look feasible on the map, actually creating these interconnections on the ground will take considerable effort.
6. The potential to create an extensive on-road and off-road recreational trail system serving much of the County and connecting many of the County's large blocks of protected lands. This system has the potential to be a major asset to the County, but again will take a significant effort to make real on the ground.

Cecil County is at an important crossroads:

- By 2020, the County's population is projected to top 129,000 the highest of any of the Eastern Shore counties. Cecil County is no longer a small, rural County. The rate of growth and development is projected to continue, putting pressure on farmland protection efforts and on resource land, and creating new demands for recreation.
- The next few years will be critical to the farmland protection effort which must increase substantially if Cecil County is to achieve its farmland protection goal of 55,000 acres. The amount of farmland in Cecil County was relatively stable between 1987 and 1997, but loss of farmland was over 9,000 acres between 1997 and 2002. If this trend continues, some time around 2025 the County will no longer have even a pool of farmland sufficient to meet its goal.
- The County's past rate for open space acquisition will likely not provide an adequate level of recreation service for the County's population.
- Through the Comprehensive Plan the County has agreed conceptually to pursue watershed plans, groundwater protection, and greenways. While there is significant grassroots interest in the County in watershed planning and protection and in natural resource conservation initiatives, the County has yet to define in detail the direction it will take on natural resource conservation.

**Figure VI-1  
Synthesis  
Cecil County Land Preservation,  
Parks, and Recreation Plan**



By pursuing the program development strategies set forth in Chapters III, IV, and V Cecil County will be able to move towards meeting both its and the State's goals for recreation, agricultural land preservation, and natural resource conservation.

## Appendix A Definitions

### Recreation and Park Definitions:

- **Non-Resource Based Recreational Land:** Land on which the primary recreational activities do not depend on the presence of natural resources. This land supports activities that can occur in the absence of intact natural resources, and are generally more dependent on site improvements than on natural resources. Examples are: Pool swimming, basketball, and baseball.
- **Natural Resource Based Recreational Land:** Land on which the primary recreational activities depend on the presence of natural resources. Activities generally do not occur without the presence of natural resources. Examples are: Beach swimming, backpacking and camping in the woods, and hiking on forested trails.
- **Resource Land:** Land and/or related water areas for which natural resource protection, conservation, or management is of primary importance. This land may support agricultural, recreational, economic, or other uses to the extent that they do not conflict with protection or preservation of the natural resource.
- **Community Park:** A site that is larger and broader in purpose than a neighborhood parks. The focus is on meeting the recreational needs of several neighborhoods or larger sections of the community, as well as preserving unique landscapes, open spaces, and natural resources. The site's size is dependent on the activities it accommodates, but is generally between 30 and 50 acres.
- **Historical/Cultural Area:** Land on which the primary recreational activities depend on the presence of one or more cultural, historical, or archaeological sites, structures, or resources which are of a type or quality that is designated as important for protection or preservation.
- **Large Urban/Regional Park:** A park designated to serve the needs of multiple communities. Like the community park, the focus is on recreation as well as preserving unique landscapes, open spaces, and natural resources. The site is usually a minimum of 50 acres.
- **Mini-Park:** The smallest park classification used to address limited or isolated recreational needs. In residential areas such a site serves as a pocket park and/or tot lot. These sites may be located in places such as commercial areas, public transit stops, and scenic overlooks and address unique recreational needs. They are generally between 2,500 square feet and one acre in size, but could be up to 5 acres.
- **Natural Resource Area:** An area where natural processes predominate and are not significantly influenced by either deliberate manipulation or accidental interference by man. Such an area may also have unique scenic, geological, cultural, or ecological value, or a combination of such values. The area may offer limited recreational uses to the extent compatible with the natural values of the site.
- **Neighborhood Park:** The recreational and social focus of a neighborhood. These are parks developed for both active and passive activities, accommodating a wide variety of age groups within the service area. The site is generally between 5 and 10 acres in size, but may be up to 30 acres.
- **Other Public Land:** These sites include public institutions that may contain significant acres of open space and natural resource lands such as hospitals, prisons, and National Guard and other military installations.
- **School Recreation Park:** A portion of a local public school, or other local public educational institution, that is available for general public recreation under a POS joint use, or similar, agreement. Depending upon size, these areas often serve the same function as neighborhood or community parks.
- **Special Use Area:** An area oriented towards a single purpose such as: camps, golf courses, marinas, etc.
- **Sports Complex:** A consolidation of heavily programmed community-wide athletic fields and associated facilities.

- **State Fish Management Area:** An area with a primary objective of propagating, protecting, managing, and maintaining fish populations.
- **State Forest:** A tract of land whose dominant forms of vegetation are trees, shrubs, and associated plants, which are managed and used to promote the coordinated use of the site's varied natural resources and values. The area may provide opportunities for natural environmental recreation, wildlands experiences, research demonstration areas, and outdoor education.
- **State Natural Environment Area:** An area that is generally 1,000 acres or larger that contains significant natural attractions or unique geological, botanical, or biological features of significance. Site development is generally confined to trails, interpretive facilities, limited parking, water and sanitary facilities, and picnicking facilities.
- **State Natural Heritage Area:** A site that contains one or more threatened or endangered species (plant or wildlife) in need of conservation, and has a unique blend of geological, hydrological, climatological, or biological features that are among the best statewide examples of their kind.
- **State Natural Resource Management Area:** An area where multiple-use management practices are employed for the maximum use of the natural resources of the area. Such an area is not committed to specific uses until they have been studied, and management plans are developed. A variety of interim uses may be allowed, including recreation as long as these do not conflict with the protection or management of the area's natural resources.
- **State Park:** An area with natural resources or topographic and physiographic characteristics that is suitable for recreational development and use. Such an area is managed with the primary objective of providing outdoor recreational opportunities for the public in a natural setting.
- **State Wildlife Management Area:** An area whose primary objective is to protect, propagate, and manage wildlife populations. It may provide recreational opportunities for sportsmen and other wildlife enthusiasts or may provide an undisturbed refuge for wildlife.
- **Undeveloped Park:** Land reserved for future development as a recreational park or facility.

#### **Natural Resource Definitions:**

- **Agricultural Land:** Land and/or related water areas that primarily support farming.
- **Buffer:** A natural or established vegetated area on all lands (measured from the top of the bank) on any perennial or intermittent stream or waterway and within a specified distance (measured from the outside perimeter edge) of any nontidal wetland.
- **Floodplain:** A low-lying area along a stream or river course that is regularly inundated by flood waters. The 100-year floodplain as defined in the Environment Article of the Annotated Code should be used.
- **Forest Land:** Land covered by a more or less continuous growth of deciduous or coniferous trees.
- **Hydric Soils:** Hydric soils exhibit physical and chemical properties that are commonly associated with being wet for long periods of time (i.e., those that support wetlands).
- **Lake:** An inland body of water created by an impoundment, which is normally too deep in the middle for the growth of rooted aquatic vegetation.
- **Open Meadow/Field:** An open area with grasses, shrubs, or similar low vegetation.
- **Pond:** An inland body of water, smaller than a lake. Typically, it is shallow enough for rooted aquatic vegetation to grow, even in its deepest areas.
- **Protected Habitat:** An area which, due to its physical or biological features, provides an environment for protection, including that for maintenance, expansion, and long-term survival of threatened and endangered species.
- **Shoreline:** Ocean, bay, river, and stream frontage.
- **Steep Slope:** An area with slopes greater than 15%.

- **Stream:** A flowing body of water that provides habitat for small plant and animal life.
- **Wetland, Tidal:** An area of state or private tidal wetlands, marshes, submerged aquatic vegetation, lands and open water affected by the daily and periodic rise and fall of the tide, as defined by the Maryland Tidal Wetlands Act.
- **Wetland, Nontidal:** An area that is saturated by surface water or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions, as defined by the Maryland Nontidal Wetlands Act.

**Funding Definitions:**

- **Coastal Zone Management:** Funds from the Coastal Zone Management Program.
- **Donations:** Gifts, volunteer support, or contributions from individuals or corporations.
- **ISTEA/TEA-21:** Funds received through the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 or the 1998 Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century.
- **L&WCF:** Funds received through the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund.
- **Local Funding:** Local government funding (e.g., general revenue, bonds, impact fees, transfer taxes).
- **POS:** Funds received through Program Open Space.
- **Waterway Improvement Fund:** Funds received through the Waterway Improvement Program.
- **Maryland Environmental Trust:** Funds received through the Maryland Environment Trust (MET).
- **Other Land Trusts:** Funds received through Land Trusts other than MET.

## **Appendix B Recreational Facilities Needs Analysis Tables (Supply, Demand, and Needs)**

All counties are required to complete a needs analysis for recreational facilities based on a common methodology prescribed by the state. The analysis is required to estimate needs for 2010, 2020, and 2030 and beyond. Counties are given flexibility to measure their own facility and activity needs, season length for an activity, daily carrying capacity or participation rates at a facility and acreage required for facilities. The analysis is based on results from two statewide recreational use surveys<sup>1</sup>, county specific information or trends, population and demographic projections and other local County and municipal experience or insights into facility use experience. Mandatory activities common to all counties must be evaluated; baseball/softball diamonds, basketball and tennis courts, and multi-purpose fields. Other activities identified in the tables were evaluated because a need or interest had been expressed for such recreational facilities or activities.

Private or quasi-public facilities have been included in the facility supply analysis because they help satisfy the demand for recreation facilities. However, they are excluded from the acreage inventory analysis because they are not in public ownership. Likewise, most state and federal properties are included for purposes of calculating facility supply, but are excluded from the acreage analysis.

The analysis consists of three tables: supply, demand and needs. The supply report lists 14 recreational activities. Four were required to be analyzed by the State; the other 10 were selected by the Department of Parks and Recreation. The result of the analysis is an expression of the surplus or deficit of facilities to support the particular recreational activity in 2010 based on current population, and in 2010, 2020, and 2030 based on projected population. The results are shown on the needs table and summarized in Table III-3.

Notes following the three tables explain how the various demand and supply factors were derived.

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<sup>1</sup> *2003 Participation in Local Park and Recreation Activities in Maryland and State Parks and Natural Resource Areas in Maryland: A Survey of Public Opinion.* These scientific surveys accessed a total of 400 households in Cecil, Talbot, Caroline, Kent, and Queen Anne's counties that were drawn at random to reflect the distribution of households among these counties.

<b>SUPPLY REPORT - CECIL COUNTY</b>						
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Facility types</b>	<b>Number of facilities 2004 (1)</b>	<b>Season length (2)</b>	<b>Daily carrying capacity per facility (2)</b>	<b>Annual carrying capacity (3)</b>	<b>Total supply of all facilities (4)</b>
Baseball/Softball	Diamonds	47	220	30	6,600	310,200
Basketball (indoor)	Courts	34	161	30	4,830	164,220
Tennis	Courts	54	220	16	3,520	190,080
Field sports (football, soccer, lacrosse, field hockey)	Multi-purpose fields	54	210	27	5,670	306,180
Trails: hike, bike, jog, walk, nature (State/Fed. Parks)	Trail miles	114	270	128	34,560	3,939,840
Trails: County/Municipal Parks	Trail miles	6	270	128	34,560	207,360
Swimming Pools (indoor/outdoor)	Pools	1	335	830	278,050	278,050
Swimming Beach	Miles beach	0.17	98	704	68,992	11,729
Playgrounds (Tot Lots)	Playgrounds	39	270	30	8,100	315,900
Picnic Pavilions	Shelters	22	180	40	7,200	158,400
Golf (18 holes)	Courses (public)	5	220	360	79,200	396,000
Fishing from pier	Fishing spots (8 feet per spot)	19	240	3	720	13,680
Boating ramps/ launching areas	Ramps	13	185	51	9,435	122,655
Equestrian Trails	Trail miles	100	256	60	15,360	1,536,000
Notes:						
(1) Facility counts derived from MEIRS reports.						
(2) Generally, season length and daily carrying capacity (number of individual "uses" per day) are those used in the 1993 <i>Maryland Land Preservation and Recreation Plan</i> or the 1998 <i>County LPRP</i> .						
(3) Annual Carrying Capacity derived by multiplying Columns 3 and 4.						
(4) Total supply (derived by multiplying Columns 2 and 5) represents the total number of occasions/uses per year that a facility is used by all participants.						



**DEMAND REPORT - CECIL COUNTY**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Activity	2005 Projected Population (1)	Individual Participation Rate (%) (2)	Frequency of Participation Rate (2)	2005 Demand (3)	2010 Population	2010 Demand	2015 Population	2015 Demand	2020 Population	2020 Demand
Baseball/Softball (diamonds)	95,650	0.182	23.73	413,099	101,200	437,069	106,600	460,390	111,450	481,337
Basketball (courts)	95,650	0.102	25.12	245,078	101,200	259,299	106,600	273,135	111,450	285,562
Tennis (courts)	95,650	0.07	13.21	88,448	101,200	93,580	106,600	98,573	111,450	103,058
Field sports (football, soccer, lacrosse, field hockey) (multipurpose fields)	95,650	0.167	28.03	447,739	101,200	473,718	106,600	498,996	111,450	521,699
Trails: hike, bike, jog, walk, nature (State/Fed. Parks) (miles)	95,650	0.809	23.25	1,799,105	101,200	1,903,496	106,600	2,005,066	111,450	2,096,291
Trails: County/Municipal Parks (miles)	95,650	0.809	23.25	1,799,105	101,200	1,903,496	106,600	2,005,066	111,450	2,096,291
Swimming Pools (indoor/outdoor)	95,650	0.417	13.06	520,912	101,200	551,137	106,600	580,546	111,450	606,959
Swimming Beach	95,650	0.497	7.9	375,551	101,200	397,342	106,600	418,544	111,450	437,586
Playgrounds (tot lots/playgrounds)	95,650	0.352	9.39	316,150	101,200	334,494	106,600	352,343	111,450	368,373
Picnic Pavilions (shelters)	95,650	0.363	4.2	145,828	101,200	154,290	106,600	162,522	111,450	169,917
Golf (courses)	95,650	0.114	14.92	162,689	101,200	172,129	106,600	181,314	111,450	189,563
Fishing from pier (fishing spots per feet)	95,650	0.108	6.14	63,427	101,200	67,108	106,600	70,689	111,450	73,905
Boating ramps/ launch areas (power, sail, canoe, kayak) (ramps)	95,650	0.399	8.86	338,136	101,200	357,756	106,600	376,846	111,450	393,991
Equestrian Trails (miles)	95,650	0.044	15.92	67,001	101,200	70,889	106,600	74,671	111,450	78,068

Notes:

- (1) 2005, 2010, 2015 and 2020 population estimates prepared by Maryland Department of Planning, Planning Data Services, May 2004.
- (2) Individual participation rates and frequency of participation rates obtained from a May 2003 publication by the Maryland Institute for Policy Analysis and Research, Participation in Local Park and Recreation Activities in Maryland, A Survey of Hous
- (3) Demand for July 2005 (Column 4) is derived by multiplying Columns 1, 2 and 3. Demand for 2010, 2015 and 2020 is derived by multiplying respectively Columns 5, 7 and 9 by Columns 2 and 3.

**NEEDS REPORT - CECIL COUNTY**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Activity	2004 Supply	Annual Carrying Capacity	2005 Demand	2005 Unmet Need (1)	2010 Demand	2010 Unmet Demand (2)	2010 Unmet Need (3)	2015 Demand	2015 Unmet Demand (4)	2015 Unmet Need (5)	2020 Demand	2020 Unmet Demand (4)	2020 Unmet Need (5)
Baseball/Softball (diamonds)	310,200	6,600	413,099	(16)	437,069	(126,869)	(19)	460,390	(150,190)	(23)	481,337	(171,137)	(26)
Basketball (indoor courts)	164,220	4,830	245,078	(17)	259,299	(95,079)	(20)	273,135	(108,915)	(23)	285,562	(121,342)	(25)
Tennis (courts)	190,080	3,520	88,448	29	93,580	96,500	27	98,573	91,507	26	103,058	87,022	25
Field sports (football, soccer, lacrosse, field hockey) (multipurpose fields)	306,180	5,670	447,739	(25)	473,718	(167,538)	(30)	498,996	(192,816)	(34)	521,699	(215,519)	(38)
Trails: hike, bike, jog, walk, nature (State/Fed. Parks) (miles)	3,939,840	34,560	1,799,105	62	1,903,496	2,036,344	59	2,005,066	1,934,774	56	2,096,291	1,843,549	53
Trails: County/Municipal Parks (miles)	207,360	34,560	1,799,105	(46)	1,903,496	(1,696,136)	(49)	2,005,066	(1,797,706)	(52)	2,096,291	(1,888,931)	(55)
Swimming Pools (indoor/ outdoor)	278,050	278,050	520,912	(1)	551,137	(273,087)	(1)	580,546	(302,496)	(1)	606,959	(328,909)	(1)
Swimming Beach (beach miles)	11,729	68,992	375,551	(5)	397,342	(385,613)	(6)	418,544	(406,815)	(6)	437,586	(425,857)	(6)
Playgrounds (tot lots/playgrounds)	315,900	8,100	316,150	(0)	334,494	(18,594)	(2)	352,343	(36,443)	(4)	368,373	(52,473)	(6)
Picnic Pavilions (shelters)	158,400	7,200	145,828	2	154,290	4,110	1	162,522	(4,122)	(1)	169,917	(11,517)	(2)
Golf (courses) (6)	396,000	79,200	162,689	3	172,129	223,871	3	181,314	214,686	3	189,563	206,437	3
Fishing from pier (fishing spots per feet)	13,680	720	63,427	(69)	67,108	(53,428)	(74)	70,689	(57,009)	(79)	73,905	(60,225)	(84)
Boating ramps/ launching areas (ramps)	122,655	9,435	338,136	(23)	357,756	(235,101)	(25)	376,846	(254,191)	(27)	393,991	(271,336)	(29)
Equestrian Trails (miles)	1,536,000	15,360	67,001	96	70,889	1,465,111	95	74,671	1,461,329	95	78,068	1,457,932	95

Notes:  
 (1) 2005 Unmet Need derived by subtracting Column 3 from Column 1 and dividing by Column 2. Parenthesis indicates a facility/activity deficit. A number without parenthesis indicates a facility surplus (e.g., 2005 unmet  
 (2) 2010 Unmet Demand derived by subtracting Column 5 from Column 1.  
 (3) 2010 Unmet Need derived from subtracting Column 5 from Column 1 and dividing by Column 2.  
 (4) 2015 and 2020 Unmet Demand derived from subtracting respectively Column 8 and Column 11 from Column 1.  
 (5) 2015 and 2020 Unmet Need derived from subtracting respectively Column 8 and Column 11 from Column 1 and dividing by Column 2.  
 (6) There are five private golf courses in the county and no public courses.

## Table Notes

### Supply Table:

1. The County used its own season length and daily carrying capacity factors in instances where the County or a municipality had more detailed program knowledge or experience with actual demand and usage for multi-purpose fields, ball diamonds, basketball courts, and other facilities or activities. When state data yielded results that were at variance to County or municipal experience, a closer examination was made to more closely estimate either season length or daily carrying capacity. Adjustments to season length were made for basketball and field sports because of limitations on facility availability and competing demands among different sports. Adjustments were also made for playgrounds and picnic pavilions to reflect reasonable season length. Factors for other recreation activities were taken from the county's 1998 LPPRP or from the earlier 1993 state LPPRP.

2. Daily carrying capacity is the estimated number of individual "uses" or occasions that can be accommodated at a facility per day. These factors are obtained from the county's 1998 LPPRP, the 1993 state LPPRP, or are based on County or municipal experience and knowledge. Daily carrying capacity is affected by competing demands for facilities from sport leagues, school and community functions, and availability. Annual carrying capacity (average number of total users/ occasions accommodated during the year) is obtained by multiplying season length by daily carrying capacity per facility. Total supply is obtained by multiplying number of facilities by annual carrying capacity.

3. Carrying capacity supply data for baseball/softball assumes 30 participants per game (15 per team), playing one evening game each weekday evening on unlighted fields and three games on Saturday for a total eight weekly games per facility. Over six days this equates to 1.33 games per day and yields a daily participation carrying capacity of 40 users per day lower than the capacity of 54 used in the 1993 State LPRP. Assigning 42 days of individual team practice and two 100-day match regular seasons, the combined daily capacity is 30. Field availability is extremely short during practice season when one team uses a field.

4. Carrying capacity supply data for basketball reflects a facility capacity of 40 per day. This assumes 4 teams of ten players or 2 practice sessions of 20 per team. A 25 percent reduction was made to reflect lack of availability of courts and the fact that facilities are shared with other indoor sports (soccer and hockey). Indoor courts are mostly limited to school gyms and are only available during certain days and times as they must accommodate school and other community activities. Leagues continually express need for more weekly practice time. The 13 outdoor courts are only used for school and non-organized community pick-up games.

5. Carrying capacity supply data for field sports reflect 54 existing multi-purpose fields. Existing fields are shared among different sport teams for weekly practices and Saturday games. Season length reflects shared and competing use of fields for all sports by different sport leagues. Also, most of the athletic fields in the Town of Elkton are unusable on a regular basis because of wet field conditions or flooding.

6. Carrying Capacity for fishing from a pier assumed a total of 150 feet of fishable pier length at both Elk Neck State Forest and Herring Snatchers Park with eight feet of length assigned per angler. This yields 19 fishing spots and assumes accommodation of three anglers each in a 12 hour period.

7. Carrying capacity for boat ramps assumes approximately one boat per 15 minutes over a 12-hour period.

8. A deficit in golf courses is due to no publicly owned courses in Cecil County. However, there are five private courses that are open to the public for a small fee.

### Demand Table:

1. Population projections for 2005, 2010, 2015 and 2020 were prepared by the Maryland Department of Planning Data Services, May 2004.

2. Baseline demand data for individual participation rates and frequency of participation rates is obtained from the two state surveys. Baseball/softball and multipurpose field participation and frequency rates combine rates for baseball/softball and individual sports of football, soccer, lacrosse, field hockey and other field sports because of cross usage of fields for multi-sport activities. Demand is obtained by multiplying population for respective years by individual participation rates and frequency of participation factors.

3. The demand for boat ramps was discounted to reflect the fact that much boating demand is met by persons with slips or using private launching facilities.

### Need Table:

1. Need is determined from the supply and demand estimates. Unmet need is determined by subtracting demand for respective years from 2004 total supply and dividing the difference by annual carrying capacity.

## Appendix C Maryland Electronic Inventory of Recreation Sites (MEIRS) Recreational Facility Groupings

The following table summarizes the recreational facilities in Cecil County based on the MEIRS database maintained on an ongoing basis by the Maryland Department of Planning.

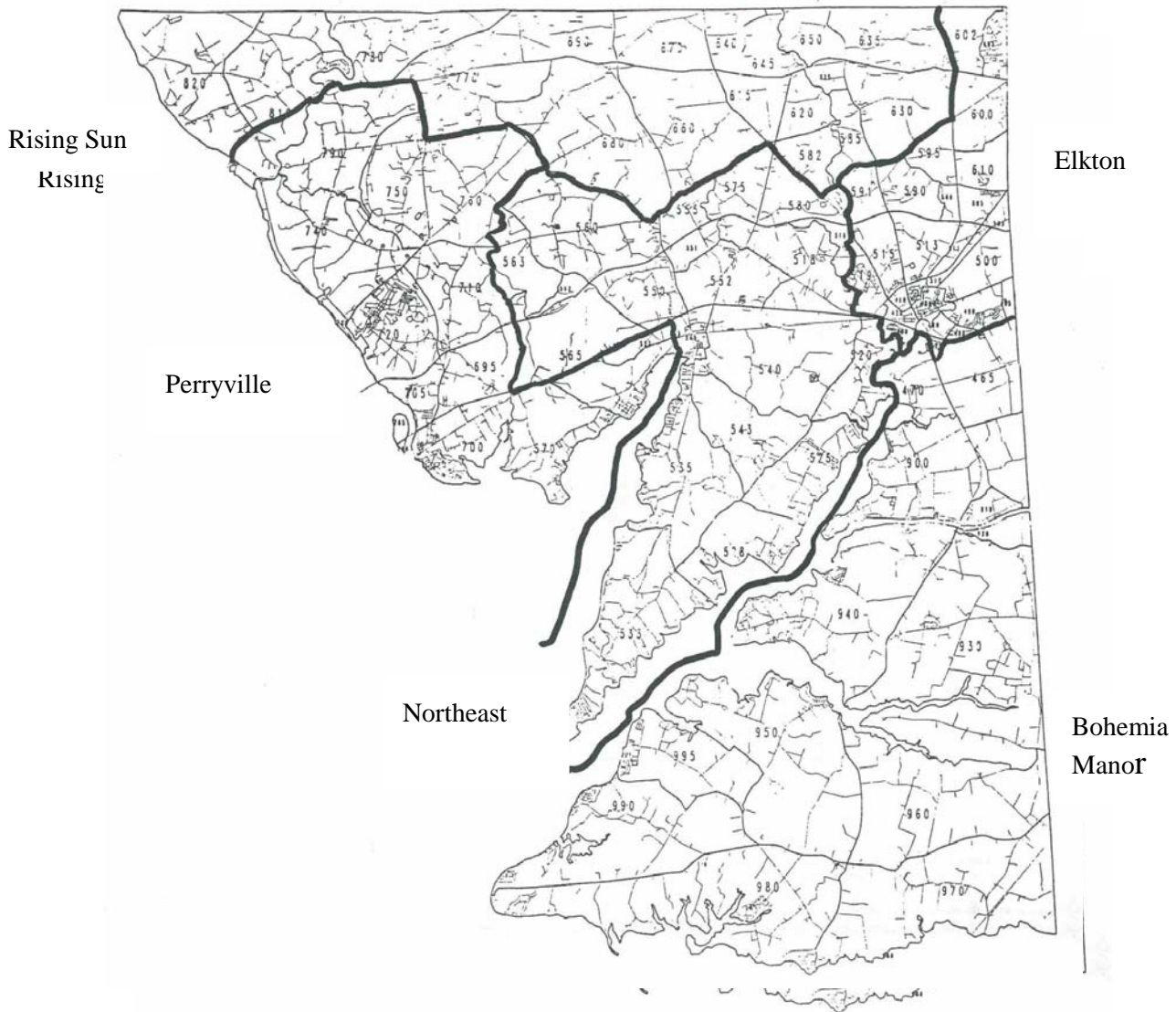
	<u>Count of Sites</u>	<u>Number of Units</u>
<b>Baseball/Softball</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>46</b>
FIELD, BALL DIAMOND	22	35
FIELD, BALL DIAMOND, LIGHTED	5	11
<b>Basketball</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>127</b>
COURT, BASKETBALL	42	51
COURT, OTHER	13	21
FIELD, MULTIPURPOSE	34	48
FIELD, MULTIPURPOSE, LIGHTED	6	7
<b>Boating</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>12</b>
BOAT RAMP, LARGE	4	8
BOAT SLIP	1	4
<b>Camping</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>291</b>
CAMPSITE, GROUP	2	8
CAMPSITE, RV	1	268
CAMPSITE, TENT	2	15
<b>Canoe/Kayak</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>908</b>
BOAT RAMP, SMALL	4	4
CANOEING	1	3
FISHING, ESTUARINE	3	60
FISHING, POND_LAKE	6	827
FISHING, STREAM	2	14
<b>Concert/Theater</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1,020</b>
OUTDOOR STADIUM	6	1,000
OUTDOOR THEATER	1	20
<b>Cycling</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>110</b>
TRAIL, MULTIPLE USE	3	110
<b>Education</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>
ARTS CENTER	2	2
ENVIRONMENTALEDFACILITY	1	1
FACILITYOTHER	3	4
RECREATION CENTER, INDOORS	2	2
VISITOR CENTER	2	2
<b>Equestrian</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
TRAIL, EQUESTRAIN	1	1
<b>Field Sports</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>58</b>
FIELD, MULTIPURPOSE	34	48
FIELD, MULTIPURPOSE, LIGHTED	6	7
FIELD, OVERLAY	3	3
<b>Fishing</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>1,051</b>
FISHING, ESTUARINE	3	60
FISHING, PIER	2	150
FISHING, POND_LAKE	6	827
FISHING, STREAM	2	14
<b>Maintenance/Support/Operations</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>160</b>
ACCESS CONTROL	55	72
ADMINISTRATION BUILDING	8	8
BATH HOUSE	1	12
CONCESSION	9	11
FACILITYOTHER	3	4
MAINTENANCE BUILDING	9	11
REST ROOM	14	42
<b>Mountain Biking</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>112</b>
TRAIL, MULTIPLE USE	3	110
TRAIL, OFFROAD VEHICLE	2	2
<b>Parking</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>2,205</b>
PARKING	37	2,205
<b>Picnic</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>182</b>
PICNIC PAVILION	14	21
PICNIC TABLE	13	161
<b>Playgrounds</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>58</b>
COURT, OTHER	13	21
TOT LOT	25	37
<b>Shooting</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>21</b>
SHOOTING, RANGE	1	20
SHOOTING, SKEET	1	1
<b>Swimming</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>
BEACH	2	0
SWIMMING POOL, INDOOR	1	1
<b>Tennis</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>48</b>
COURT, TENNIS	13	48
<b>Trails</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>121</b>
TRAIL, EQUESTRAIN	1	1
TRAIL, HIKING_NATURE	4	8
TRAIL, MULTIPLE USE	3	110
TRAIL, OFFROAD VEHICLE	2	2
<b>Volleyball</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
COURT, VOLLEYBALL	2	3
RECREATION CENTER, INDOORS	2	2
<b>Walking/Jogging/Fitness</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>118</b>
TRAIL, HIKING_NATURE	4	8
TRAIL, MULTIPLE USE	3	110

01/13/2005

## Appendix D Cecil County Recreation Sites and Facilities Inventory

Appendix D contains the same information as in the Maryland Electronic Inventory of Recreation Sites (MEIRS), but is maintained by the County and is organized by recreation service areas that are approximately equivalent to high school attendance areas. The appendix shows an “at a glance” listing of all sites and facilities in the County. Minor discrepancies may exist between Appendix D and E based on when data was updated.

*Figure III-3 Recreation Service Areas*



## Appendix E Public Meetings

<b>Meeting Attendees,</b>	
<b>September 17, 2009</b>	<b>October 21, 2011</b>
Clyde VanDyke, Director	Clyde VanDyke, Director
Cindy Cantor, Superintendent	Cindy Cantor, Superintendent
Ed Slicer, Grants Admin	Doug Lort
Doug Lort	Steve Minor
Dave Vanaskey	Linda Snyder
Linda Snyder	Chris Hersl
Bernie Brown	Don Harmer
Steve Minor	Kelly Schaible
Jennifer Smith	
Kelly Schaible	
Clive Graham	
Derek Myers	
John Fellows	

**Public Meeting**  
**Cecil County 2005 Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan (LPPRP)**  
**Wednesday May 26, 2004**  
**County Administrative Building**  
**107 North Street, Elkton**

**Minutes**

- I. Welcome: Douglas Lort, Chairman Cecil County Board of Parks and Recreation 7:00 p.m.
- Chairman Lort introduced the members of the Board of Parks and Recreation:  
Don Struble, Vice Chairman, Robert Cameron, Steve Minor, Sue Strobel and Linda Snyder.

II. Introduction

- A. Purpose of the LPPRP
- B. Relationship of the LPPRP to County Planning and Planning by the Towns.
- C. Status of the County Comprehensive Plan Amendments

Eric Sennstrom, Director Cecil County Department of Planning, Zoning, Parks and Recreation

- Discussed the purpose of the plan.
- Six year plan with greater emphasis on Agricultural Preservation and Natural Resource Conservation.

Sandra Trent, Assistant Regional Administrator, Program Open Space, Maryland Department of Natural Resources

- Value of Program Open Space as the only funding source for the park land acquisition and facility development.
- No transfer tax funding for the program in fiscal 2005 only bond funding.

Edward W. Slicer, Jr., Manager, Cecil County Division of Parks and Recreation

- Encouraged support for Program Open Space.
- Need for the County and Towns to work and plan together.
- Introduced Clive Graham, Senior Planner, Environmental Resources Management.

III. The 2005 Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan

- Clive Graham asked if any elected officials were in the audience. Mr. Sennstrom introduced them.
- Perryville Commissioner Barbara Brown asked if their administrator could speak, since he had a flight to catch.
- Eric Morsicato, Perryville Administrator spoke about the astronomical growth rate in the Perryville-Port Deposit area, 12,000 new people expected in 10 years.
- The Perryville Community Park has a usage of 70% non town residents; about as developed as possible in the original 40 acre section.
- Perryville needs an athletic complex, the town is now working with the schools to utilize their facilities and land.
- Mr. Morsicato said the \$50,000-\$200,000 his town could receive in any one year from Program Open Space is not adequate.
- There is a need for a Capital Improvement Program; rotating funding from town to town so bigger projects can be completed.
- Need for a Professional Recreation Planner.
- Mr. Graham, some towns have a park plan; Elkton has a plan and a department.
- Plans must set policies and actions for a 5-10 year time period.
- Mr. Graham, the 1998 plan was centered on parks and recreation, whereas the 2005 plan is divided into thirds: Parks and Recreation, Agricultural Land Preservation and Natural Resources Conservation. The plan will tell us where we should spend our money.
- Mr. Graham believes the state has many programs for those three major areas and needs to determine the effectiveness of them –this is the overarching need for the plan.
- The state's integrated /holistic approach makes sense.
- The plan process reviews the county's goals and objectives and how these can be met. Also if there is a need to change the goals.

- This meeting's purpose is to obtain responses from a broad spectrum of people to the key questions (on the reverse of the agenda).
- Mr. Graham conducted a short power point program on the key points (copies of the program pages are attached).
- Mr. Sennstrom spoke on the comprehensive plan review process, adequate public facilities, greenways and agricultural preservation utilizing several large county maps.
- Mr. Graham explained the green infrastructure hubs and connectors.
- Public comment will be taken during this meeting. A preliminary document will be developed for reaction at a September public meeting.
- The draft plan will be developed by October.
- A draft plan must be submitted to the State by January 2005.
- County Commissioners may review the draft plan by the end of the year.
- The final plan is due to the State by July 2005.

#### IV. Public Comment Utilizing Key Questions (copy attached)

- Commissioners President Nelson Bolender asked Parks' Board Chairman for a reaction to Eric Morricato's suggestion. Mr. Lort said letters would go out to towns requiring their Program Open Space requests by November; the Board would review their requests in December and January and make a final decision in the early spring, preference would be given to ongoing projects. additional funding is needed.
- Bill Kilby spoke on agricultural preservation and suggested green belts around the towns for use as recreation areas. Planning by watersheds provides more opportunities for both agricultural preservation and green infrastructure.
- Carl Walbeck, Chairman of the Planning Commission, was pleased that the plan guidelines included more interest in agricultural, land preservation and preventing sprawl. He spoke about the lack of goals and objectives, identification of weakness in the comprehensive plan.
- Mr. Walbeck felt the November Program Open Space schedule may not mesh with the plan schedule.
- John Bolinski, spoke about the hiking trails from North East to Elk Neck, compensation for land owners providing land for the trails. Trails are good for creating wildlife corridors.
- Mr. Bolinski emphasized the need for action on the gypsy moths which are destroying tress (forty-eight 100 year old tress on the North East to Elk Neck trail)
- Also, Mr. Bolinski believes small farms less then 50 acres should be able to participate in programs.
- Carl Walbeck believes the Greenway Program needs teeth to allow for the objection to some types of development.
- Jeff McQuerrey, President, Elk Mills Civic Association said if he could get the County to take over the mowing on the community's small park, He could encourage the volunteer companies doing some of the parks mowing to provide cash for a Program Open Space match for the purchase of new playground equipment. 99% of the community's resources go to mowing.
- David Ore, President, Rising Sun Little League, Spoke on the rapid expansion of the Sunshine Baseball Program. More cooperation is needed between organizations and the Board of Education.
- Joe Tanner, President, Cecil Soccer, has 2,200 names going through soccer each year, growing at 10% per year. Organizations need to get together and discuss issues. Partnership problems at Bard Cameron Sports Complex related to Junior Football not working on their field. Central coordination is needed, get together and talk, share facilities. The Board of Education would not let soccer mow the field at Cherry Hill Middle; they didn't cut the grass either, so the field couldn't be used. Better coordination is needed.
- Linda Snyder, Parks Board member and President of the Cecil County Holly Tree, Inc. suggested planning for our aging population, places to walk and addressing their needs.
- Bob Cameron, Parks Board Member spoke about sharing and meeting the demand, planning and an organization to control how facilities are used.
- Joe Tanner felt central control in Harford County was a failure, facilities were not maintained.
- Linda Snyder said we should find out why it's not working.
- Douglas Lort talked about groups working together and not losing volunteer energy.
- A question was asked if there would be a survey. Mr. Graham believes the State's scientific survey would supplement group meetings.
- Mr. Lort asked about the next workshop.
- Mr. Graham believed the next meeting should be in September.
- Mr. Lort asked that any recommendations be sent or e-mailed to Mr. Slicer.

This meeting ended at 8:25 p.m.



Insert invitation letter here.