

# St. Mary's County

## Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan



2022



**Approved by:**

*Agriculture, Seafood and Forestry Board, April 14, 2022*

*St. Mary's County Planning Commission, May 9, 2022*

*Commissioners for St. Mary's County, June 7, 2022*





## Acknowledgements

### Commissioners of St. Mary's County

James R. Guy, President

Eric Colvin, District 1

Michael L. Hewitt, District 2

John E. O'Conner, District 3

Todd B. Morgan, District 4

### Planning Commission

James Thompson, Chairman

Joseph L. Van Kirk, Co-Chair

William R. Hall III, Joseph C. Fazekas, Merl Evans, Patricia Robrecht, Kim Summers, Joseph A. St. Clair

### Recreation & Parks Advisory Board

Chanda Norton, Chairperson

Greg Weaver, Vice-Chairperson

Joe Longobardi, Christine Kaila, Donald DeGraves, Joshua Shaffer, Kathryn Weatherly, Glenn Larnerd

### Recreation and Parks Staff

Arthur Shepherd, Director

Christina Bishop, Project Manager

Roy Copsey, Parks Division Manager

Jessica Hale, Recreation Division Manager

Karen Stone, Museums Manager

Patrick Dugan, Golf Course Manager

### County Staff and Others

David Weiskopf, Interim County Administrator, St Mary's County

Laschelle McKay, Town Administrator for the Town of Leonardtown

William Hunt, Director, Land Use and Growth Management

Chris Kaselmis, Director, Economic Development

John Deatrick, Director, Department of Public Works and Transportation

Lori Jennings Harris, Director, Aging and Human Services

Donna Sasscer, Agriculture and Seafood Development Manager, DED

Sue Veith, Environmental Administrator, DED

# Table of Contents

Acknowledgments .....	5
<b>Section 1: Executive Summary .....</b>	<b>11</b>
1.1 Purpose of this Plan .....	11
1.2 Planning Process Summary .....	11
1.3 Key Issues Summary .....	12
1.4 Goals and Recommendations .....	12
<b>Section 2: Introduction and Planning Context .....</b>	<b>13</b>
2.1 Purpose of this Plan .....	13
2.2 Planning Process and Public Engagement .....	14
2.3 County Character and Existing System of Public Open Space .....	16
<b>Section 3: Parks and Recreation .....</b>	<b>27</b>
3.1 Section Summary .....	27
3.2 Existing System of Public Parks and Recreation Amenities .....	28
3.2.1 Operating and Capital Budgets .....	38
3.3 Participation in Parks and Recreation Activities .....	40
3.3.1 Covid-19 Pandemic and Recreation Going Forward .....	41
3.3.2 Economic and Health Benefits of Parks .....	41
3.3.3 Outdoor Recreation .....	42
3.3.4 Urban Park Revenue .....	43
3.3.5 Measured Participation in County Recreation Division Programs .....	43
3.3.6 Estimated Household Participation in Recreation, Sports, Fitness, and Leisure Activities .....	45
3.3.7 Children in Nature .....	46
3.3.8 Planning for Coastal Resiliency .....	48
3.4 Level of Service Analysis .....	48
3.4.1 Measuring the Current Level of Service of the Public Parks and Recreation System .....	48
3.4.2 Summary of Demographic and Recreation Participation Trends .....	49
3.4.3 Summary of Findings From Public, Stakeholder, and Staff Engagement .....	49
3.4.4 Summary of the Six Focus Group Meetings .....	51
3.4.5 Summary of Findings From the LPPRP Survey .....	52
3.4.6 Findings From GIS-Based Proximity/Access Analysis .....	53
3.4.7 Summary of Findings From All Level of Service Review Components .....	80
3.5 Goals and Recommendations .....	81
3.5.1 LPPRP Goals 2022 – 2027 .....	83
<b>Section 4: Natural Resource Land Conservation .....</b>	<b>87</b>
4.1 Introduction and Overview of St. Mary’s County Conserved Natural Resource Lands .....	87
4.2 Goals for Natural Resource Land Conservation .....	88
4.3 County Conservation of Natural Resource Land .....	90
4.3.1 Comprehensive Planning Process .....	90
4.3.2 Use of Resource Data and Inventories .....	95
4.3.3 Designated Conservation and Other Natural Resource Areas .....	97
4.3.4 Planning and Land Use Management Authority, Easements, and Funding .....	103
4.3.5 Other Regulatory or Management Programs .....	106
4.3.6 Eco-Tourism and Resource-Based Recreation .....	106

# Table of Contents

<b>4.4 Evaluation of the Natural Resource Land Conservation Program</b> .....	106
4.4.1 Strengths and Weaknesses of the Natural Resources Implementation Program .....	106
4.4.2 Summary of Needed Improvements in the Implementation Program .....	110
<b>4.5 Program Development Strategy for Natural Resource Conservation</b> .....	112
4.5.1 County Steps .....	112
4.5.2 Additional County and State Actions .....	113
<b>Section 5: Agricultural Land Preservation</b> .....	115
<b>5.1 Agricultural Industry and Farmland Preservation Overview</b> .....	115
5.1.1 Agricultural Industry in St. Mary’s County .....	115
<b>5.3 Current Program/Policy Implementation</b> .....	119
5.3.1 Designated Preservation Areas .....	121
5.3.2 MALPF .....	123
5.3.3 Rural Legacy Program .....	124
5.3.4 Land Trusts/Maryland Environmental Trust .....	124
5.3.5 Funding for Easement Acquisition .....	124
<b>5.4 Evaluation of Agricultural Land Preservation Program/Policy Implementation</b> .....	129
5.4.1 Overall Preservation Strategy .....	129
5.4.2 Funding .....	129
5.4.3 Land Use Management Tools .....	130
5.4.4 Combined Performance of Preservation Tools .....	133
5.4.5 Effects of Potential Development on Land Markets .....	134
5.4.6 Farming Assistance Programs .....	135
5.4.7 Summary .....	135
<b>5.5 Program Development Strategy for Agricultural Land Preservation</b> .....	136
5.5.1 Agricultural Land Preservation Goal .....	136
5.5.2 Land Use .....	136
5.5.3 Financial, Business, and Regulatory .....	137
<b>Appendix A: Statewide Goals</b> .....	139
A.1 State Goals for Parks and Recreation .....	139
A.2 State Goals for Agricultural Land Preservation .....	139
A.3 State Goals for Natural Resource Land Conservation .....	140
<b>Appendix B: St. Mary’s County Demographic Profile</b> .....	142
<b>Appendix C: Recreation Trends and Participation Estimates</b> .....	150
<b>Appendix D: 2021 Open Link Survey Summary Results</b> .....	182
<b>Appendix E: 2021 Recreation and Parks Site Inventory</b> .....	194
<b>Appendix F: Capital Improvement Recommendations</b> .....	200
<b>Appendix G: Park and Recreation Maps</b> .....	202
<b>Appendix H: Agriculture and Land Preservation Table</b> .....	208

## List of Figures

Figure 1: County Context .....	16
Figure 2: Projected Population Growth in St. Mary’s County, 2000 – 2030.....	17
Figure 3: Race Comparison for Total Population in St. Mary’s County .....	17
Figure 4: St. Mary’s County Health Rankings Overview.....	18
Figure 5: 2022 Public Parks and Recreation Network in St. Mary’s County.....	19
Figure 6: 2022 Parks and Recreation Density .....	24
Figure 7: County Governing Structure for Recreation and Parks.....	35
Figure 8: Park System Benefits Provided to People and Communities.....	42
Figure 9: The Seven Economic Benefits of Parks .....	43
Figure 10: Adult Participation in Outdoor Recreation .....	45
Figure 11: Adult Participation in Team Sports .....	46
Figure 12: Projected Growth of Households in St. Mary’s County .....	49
Figure 13: Driving Time to Any Parks and Recreation Facility or Site .....	54
Figure 14: Percentage of Population by Drive-Time .....	55
Figure 15: Residential/Population Density .....	59
Figure 16: Driving Time to Sites With Trails.....	60
Figure 17: Percentage of Population Drive-Time to Trails .....	61
Figure 18: Driving Time to Public Water Access at Public Landings and Parks With Water Access .....	63
Figure 19: Percentage of Population Drive-Time to Water Access .....	64
Figure 20: Driving Time to County Parks and Recreation Sites with Playing Fields .....	69
Figure 21: Percentage of Population Drive-Time to Athletic Fields .....	70
Figure 22: Driving Time to County Parks and Recreation Sites with Sport Courts (Tennis Courts, Basketball, and Other Courts) .....	72
Figure 23: Percentage of Population Drive-Time to Sports Courts.....	73
Figure 24: Driving Time to Historic/Cultural Sites .....	75
Figure 25: Percentage of Population Drive-Time to Historic/Cultural Areas .....	76
Figure 26: Driving Time to Sites With Picnic Opportunities.....	78
Figure 27: Percentage of Population Drive-Time to Picnic Opportunities.....	79
Figure 28: Important Natural Resource Lands.....	92
Figure 29: Planned Growth Areas and Conservation Areas.....	93
Figure 30: Development Lands and Green Infrastructure .....	94
Figure 31: County-Designated Conservation Areas .....	96
Figure 32: Proposed Patuxent Waters Conservation Area.....	103
Figure 33: Land Use on Farms – 2017.....	115
Figure 34: Farms by Acreage Size 1997, 2002, 2007, 2012, and 2017.....	116
Figure 35: Market Value of Production: 1997, 2002, 2007, 2012, and 2017 .....	117
Figure 36: Land Preservation Goal.....	118
Figure 37: Priority Preservation Area .....	120
Figure 38: Protected Lands as of 2021 .....	122
Figure 39: MALPF Easement Acres per Year .....	123
Figure 40: Land Preservation Spending .....	125
Figure 41: TDR Program Implementation.....	127
Figure 42: 2011 Trends – Preservation vs. Loss of Land in Farms.....	129
Figure 43: 2020 Patterns of Land Development and Land Preservation .....	131
Figure 44: Residential Lots Created by Planning Area .....	132
Figure 45: Projected Population Growth in St. Mary’s County, 2000 – 2030.....	142
Figure 46: Age Distribution in St. Mary’s Compared to Leonardtown and Maryland.....	143



## List of Figures

Figure 47: Educational Attainment in St. Mary’s County .....	146
Figure 48: Median Household Income Distribution, 2021 Estimates .....	147
Figure 49: St. Mary’s County Health Rankings Overview .....	149
Figure 50: Adult Participation for Fitness Activities.....	150
Figure 51: Adult Participation in Outdoor Recreation .....	151
Figure 52: Adult Participation in Team Sports .....	151
Figure 53: Overview of NRPA Park Pulse Report on Before- and After-School Care.....	157
Figure 54: Audubon Bird Guide App.....	158
Figure 55: Participation in At-Home Wildlife-Watching.....	158
Figure 56: Non-Traditional Services Desired in Community Centers.....	159
Figure 57: Park System Benefits Provided to People and Communities.....	165
Figure 58: Overview of NRPA Farmers Market Report .....	166
Figure 59: Common Barriers to Recreation Participation.....	170
Figure 60: Racquet Sport Participation from 2014 – 2019 .....	174
Figure 61: The Seven Economic Benefits of Parks .....	181
Figure 62: St. Mary’s Capital Budget Book .....	201
Figure 63: Park Equity Total Score (Census Tract).....	205
Figure 64: Park Equity Total Score (County).....	206
Figure 65: Park Equity Score – Park Amenities .....	207
Figure 66: Park Equity Score – Parks.....	207
Figure 67: St Mary’s – Rural Legacy Parcels.....	208
Figure 68: Maryland Agriculture Land Preservation Easements.....	209
Figure 69: Maryland Agriculture Land Preservation Easements (continued) .....	210
Figure 70: Local Protected Parcels.....	211
Figure 71: Forest Conservation Easements .....	212
Figure 72: Forest Conservation Easements (continued).....	213
Figure 73: Forest Conservation Easements (continued).....	214
Figure 74: Forest Conservation Easements (continued).....	215
Figure 75: Forest Conservation Easements (continued).....	216
Figure 76: Forest Conservation Easements (continued).....	217

## List of Tables

Table 1: Program Open Space Budget Statistics for St. Mary’s County.....	13
Table 2: Parks and Recreation Sites in St. Mary’s County .....	20
Table 3: Maryland Department of Natural Resources Properties in St. Mary’s County .....	29
Table 4: Operating Budget – Department of Recreation and Parks.....	38
Table 5: Five-Year Capital Improvement Budget – Department of Recreation and Parks.....	39
Table 6: Top Six Recreation Division Program Areas by Enrollment: 2019/2022 Average .....	44
Table 7: Parks and Recreation Inventory .....	55
Table 8: Sites with Trails Access.....	61
Table 9: Sites with Public Landings and Parks with Water Access .....	65
Table 10: Sites with Playing Fields .....	70
Table 11: Sites with Sports Courts .....	73
Table 12: Museum Sites Inventory .....	77
Table 13: Sites with Picnic Opportunities .....	79
Table 14: Watershed and Related Natural Resources Studies .....	99
Table 15: LPPRP Update.....	101
Table 16: St. Mary’s County Natural Resources Protection Requirements Summary.....	105
Table 17: Land in Farms and Market Value of Agricultural Products Sold – 2002 to 2017 .....	117
Table 18: Inventory of Protected Lands – as of October 2021.....	119
Table 19: Age Group Distribution from 2010 to 2021 .....	144
Table 20: Race Comparison for Total Population in St. Mary’s County .....	145
Table 21: Change in Race/Ethnicity Between 2010 and 2021 in St. Mary’s County .....	145
Table 22: Benefits of Community Gardens .....	161
Table 23: Emerging Technologies in Parks .....	177
Table 24: St. Mary’s Capital Projects Budget .....	200

## 1.1 Purpose of this Plan

St. Mary's County public parks, recreation, and open-space assets are critical pieces of public infrastructure that define the rural, coastal character of the peninsula and contribute to the high quality of life of residents. These resources preserve and celebrate the county's rich natural and cultural resources and provide opportunities for local engagement in healthy, active, and interesting activities known to increase public health and personal well-being and support the local economy.

The update of the St. Mary's County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan (LPPRP) serves two significant functions:

- This plan provides current information and establishes goals and recommendations to guide St. Mary's County in providing, improving, and best leveraging its system of public parks, recreation services, and open-space amenities to meet the growing needs and desires of residents and visitors.
- County update and adoption of this plan on a five-year cycle fulfills the planning requirement of Maryland's Program Open Space Local (*per Section 5-905[b][2] of the Natural Resources Article – Annotated Code of Maryland*). The county relies on annual Local funding for park land acquisition, capital improvements and on Local POS funding. The plan was last updated in 2017, and final review and approval of this update is anticipated in 2022.

## 1.2 Planning Process Summary

The planning process, led by the Department of Recreation and Parks along with GreenPlay/BerryDunn consisted of the following components:

- Strategic kickoff
- Review of existing plans, data, and materials
- Studies of trends, demographics, and estimated local economic impacts of recreation
- Public, staff, and stakeholder engagement
- Open Link (web based) survey
- Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping and analysis
- Draft Plan preparation and review by county and state
- Final Plan review and approvals by county and state

### Participation in the planning process:

- Staff Engagement
- 6 Focus Groups
- 2 Public Meetings
- 844 Survey Responses

## 1.3 Key Issues Summary

In planning to meet existing and future public demand on the county's system of public parks, recreation facilities, museums, and open spaces, and to best ensure the county's ability to utilize Program Open Space funding as effectively as possible to meet goals identified in this plan, the following two issues were identified as of critical significance:

### 1. **Maintain and grow public recreation and parks opportunities throughout St. Mary's County**

The continued, improved, and expanded provision of abundant and diverse opportunities for public participation in sports, recreation, fitness, culture, and leisure activities within the county is important to residents, stakeholders, and staff. The county's system of parks, recreation facilities, museums, and open spaces generally meets public needs; however, high demand for athletic fields, water access sites, trails, and pickleball courts occasionally outweigh the capacity of existing assets. Continued population growth and anticipated increases in visitor growth will increase usage and demand for facilities and services managed by the Department of Recreation and Parks. Substantial, sustained, and targeted investment in infrastructure, staff, and program resources is needed to best ensure public needs are met now and into the future.

**Over 13,000 acres**  
of public parks, natural areas,  
recreation facilities, and  
museums provide diverse  
recreation opportunities  
throughout St. Mary's County

### 2. **Continue use of Program Open Space to enhance public recreation opportunities**

St. Mary's County has utilized, and should continue to utilize, Program Open Space funds for regular improvements to parks and recreation amenities and strategic acquisition of land for future parks, recreation facilities, and open spaces. Program Open Space recently supported the county's acquisition of the Shannon Farm and the Snow Hill Park Farm properties. With these two major acquisitions, the county exceeded its acreage acquisition goal for parks and recreation. The development of public recreation amenities at these sites, including new public access to the Patuxent River, will depend on assistance from Program Open Space and will significantly contribute to satisfying long-standing recreation and land conservation goals of the state and county.

## 1.4 Goals and Recommendations

Over the next five years and beyond, St. Mary's County should continue to target investments in new amenity development, and renovation of existing assets to improve its parks, recreation, museum, and open-space system. To guide enhancement, the county should seek to:

- Continue to improve and enhance existing county facilities and amenities
- Continue to improve program and service delivery
- Continue to look for opportunities to develop new facilities and amenities
- Continue to improve organizational efficiencies

## 2.1 Purpose of this Plan

Public parks, recreation facilities, and open spaces are key pieces of community infrastructure that influence the quality of life of residents in St. Mary’s County. These resources preserve and celebrate the county’s rich natural and cultural resources, and provide opportunities for local engagement in healthy, active, and interesting activities that are known to increase public health, personal well-being, and support the local economy.

Natural resource lands contain the forests, wetlands, floodplains, stream buffers, and other sensitive natural features that help define the rural character of St. Mary’s County and provide ecosystem services that benefit the population.

Protection of agricultural lands is a key component of St. Mary’s County land conservation strategy. The Agriculture and Seafood Division manages the county’s agricultural programs, including land preservation. Agricultural land protection is complex because it involves leaving land in private hands with participation in programs being voluntary. Achieving its primary purpose (permanent protection of the productive land and its micro-climate resource for food production into the future), requires skilled farmers and farm families as well as a viable agricultural industry.

This update of the St. Mary’s County LPPRP serves two significant functions. First, it provides county and state agencies, and the public, with current information relevant to the provision of public parks, recreation services, and open-space amenities, now and into the future, in St. Mary’s County.

Second, updating the LPPRP on a five-year cycle is a prerequisite for county participation in Maryland’s Program Open Space (POS) Local (*per Section 5-905(b)(2) of the Natural Resources Article – Annotated Code of Maryland*). The POS Local Program provides annual grant funds that directly support land acquisitions for conservation and recreation and assist in funding facility improvements to the county’s parks, recreation, and open-space system. Every county in Maryland, and the City of Baltimore, participates in Program Open Space. St. Mary’s County has participated in Program Open Space since the program’s inception in 1969. Residents and visitors of have greatly benefited from the recreation, parks, and open-space services and amenities made possible in part by Program Open Space. The county has used these funds on 10 projects over the past six years, as summarized in *Table 1*.

**Table 1: Program Open Space Budget Statistics for St. Mary’s County**

Program Open Space	FY2017 Total	FY2018 Total	FY2019 Total	FY2020 Total	FY2021 Total	FY2022 Total
<b>Projects</b>						
Snow Hill Farm	\$ 948,359					
Snow Hill Farm	\$ 516,447					
Recreation Facility Imp (lighting-Lancaster Park)		\$ 226,431				
Community Park & Playground Program		\$ 200,000				
Three Notch Trail - Phase VII (construction)			\$ 110,000			
Chaptico Park Multipurpose Athletic Field Imp				\$ 540,000		
Dorsey Park Playground Replacement				\$ 300,000		
Lexington Manor Passive Park (LMPP)				\$ 600,000		
LMPP Park Planning Grant					\$ 25,000	
LMPP Park Planning Grant						\$ 25,000
Snow Hill Park						\$ 500,000
Bushwood Wharf Pier Repair						\$ 125,000
St. Inigoes Landing					\$ 250,000	
Recreation Facilities & Park Imp (Playgrounds)					\$ 350,000	
Infrastructure Funding (POS)						\$ 1,309,000
<b>Total POS Localside</b>	<b>\$ 1,464,806</b>	<b>\$ 426,431</b>	<b>\$ 110,000</b>	<b>\$ 1,440,000</b>	<b>\$ 625,000</b>	<b>\$ 1,959,000</b>

Source: St. Mary’s County Department of Recreation and Parks

## Relationship to the Comprehensive Plan, and Other County and State Plans

Upon adoption by the Commissioners of St. Mary's County, this updated LPPRP becomes part of the county's Comprehensive Plan by reference. The goals and recommendations of the LPPRP are supportive of the following county and state guiding plans and programs:



### County:

- 2010 St. Mary's County Comprehensive Plan
- Comprehensive Economic Development Study
- Tourism and Hospitality Master Plan
- St. Mary's County Transportation Plan
- 2020 Parks & Recreation Strategic Plan

### State:

- Maryland Land Preservation and Recreation Plan
- Maryland Program Open Space
- GreenPrint
- Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF) Program



## 2.2 Planning Process and Public Engagement

The county's Recreation and Parks Department and GreenPlay/BerryDunn led the preparation of this updated LPPRP county staff from the Department of Economic Development were the primary authors of the Natural Resource Land Conservation and Agricultural Land Preservation sections of this LPPRP. Generally, the update of this LPPRP incorporated the follow planning program:

- Information gathering and data review
- Public, stakeholder, and staff engagement
- Analysis and goal setting
- Draft Plan preparation and county review
- State Draft Plan review
- Finalization and county adoption of the plan

### Information Gathering and Data Review

The planning process began with a review of existing county and state plans, programs, and resources relevant to the provision of public parks, recreation, and open space in St. Mary's County. Current guiding documents, plans, and data sources considered during the update of the LPPRP included, but were not limited to:

- 2010 St. Mary's County Comprehensive Plan (update anticipated in 2022)
- County 2017 LPPRP
- County 2020 Recreation and Parks Strategic Plan
- Comprehensive Economic Development Study
- Tourism and Hospitality Master Plan

- 2019 Leonardtown Downtown Strategic Plan
- Maryland Land Preservation and Recreation Plan
- Maryland Department of Planning – Protected Lands Reporting Site
- Maryland Department of Agriculture – MALPF Program

### **Staff, Stakeholder, and Public Participation**

GreenPlay/BerryDunn collected information, ideas, and perceptions of the current parks, recreation, and open-space assets managed by St. Mary’s County Recreation and Parks Department through staff and stakeholder interviews, six focus group meetings, and two public meetings. Additionally, GreenPlay/BerryDunn hosted a SurveyMonkey, open link survey during the month of October 2021. The survey posed 17 questions regarding people’s perception of the current parks, recreation, and open-space assets in St. Mary’s County, and received 844 responses.

### **Summary of Staff Participation**

County staff, including department heads, program staff, and the County Administrator, and the Town Administrator for the Town of Leonardtown, provided input on the update of this LPPRP. County departments and offices that participated in the planning process included the Recreation and Parks Department; Land Use and Growth Management; and Economic Development, Tourism, and Agriculture and Seafood Divisions.

### **Summary of Stakeholder Participation**

GreenPlay/BerryDunn held six focus group meetings during the week of October 26, 2021. For the purposes of this LPPRP, stakeholders were public and private organizations, institutions, and individuals with direct ties to, and interests in, the county’s system of public parks, recreation amenities, and open spaces. Stakeholders invited to participate generally included representatives of sports programs and leagues that utilize, or would like to utilize, county fields; participants in, and providers of, outdoor recreation and natural resource-based sports and leisure activities; museums, cultural and historical amenity providers, and preservationists; and those involved with indoor sports, recreation, and leisure activities. Of those invited, 28 individuals participated, representing a variety of sports leagues, clubs, and groups as well as museums, cultural interests, and land conservation groups.

### **Public Participation – Public Meeting**

St, Mary’s County notifies community members that a public meeting would follow the focus group meeting to present the findings and get feedback from the public. GreenPlay/BerryDunn held the meeting on October 28, 2021. GreenPlay/BerryDunn also reviewed the draft plan with the Commissioners of St. Mary’s County following review from the state.

### **Public Participation – Open Link Survey**

To allow greater public participation in the LPPRP update planning process, GreenPlay/BerryDunn administered an online survey through the Recreation and Parks Department. The survey was open for the month of October 2021 and consisted of 17 questions focused on gauging respondents’ interest, usage, current barriers to use, perceptions of quality, and ideas for improving the current system of county-managed parks, recreation amenities, and cultural assets.

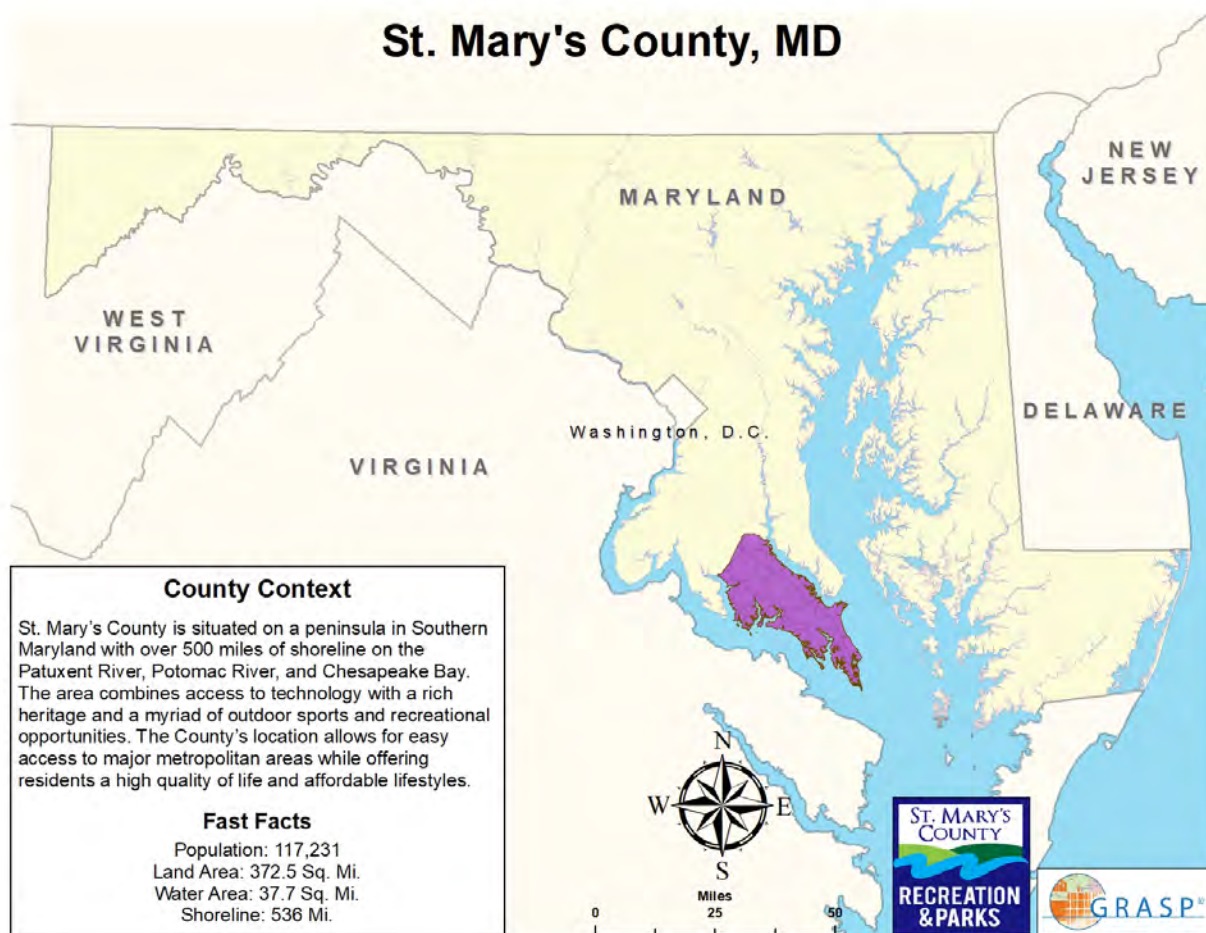
The survey received 844 responses. General survey findings are noted in *3.4.5 Summary of Findings from the LPPRP Survey* below. The Recreation and Parks Department has retained a comprehensive report of the survey results as a staff resource, and it is available for public review upon request. *Section 3.4 Level of Service Analysis* discusses key findings from staff, stakeholder, and public input processes.

## 2.3 County Character and Existing System of Public Open Space

### Geographic Character

St. Mary's County is located at the southern terminus of the peninsula that forms southern Maryland. Charles County borders it to the north, and it is surrounded by water on all other sides, including the Potomac River to the west, the Patuxent River to the east, and the Chesapeake Bay to the south. The county seat of Leonardtown is located approximately 90 miles south of the City of Baltimore, 70 miles south of Annapolis, and 60 miles south of Washington, D.C. The Town of Leonardtown is the only incorporated municipality in St. Mary's County. The town is situated on Breton Bay, which feeds into the nearby Potomac River and provides numerous aquatic and nature-based recreational amenities. *Figure 1* illustrates the general location of the county in the region.

Figure 1: County Context



Source: St. Mary's County Department of Recreation and Parks, and GreenPlay, LLC.

Since the county's establishment in 1637, residents have shared a close connection with St. Mary's 500+ miles of coastline and abundance of fertile, productive farmlands, woodlands, rivers, and wetlands. The earliest English settlers here founded the first colony in Maryland. The county is known as the birthplace of religious freedom in the nation, with St. Clement's Island being the site of the first known Catholic mass in the United States. Farming, fishing, and crabbing have been, and continue to be, important parts of the county's identity.

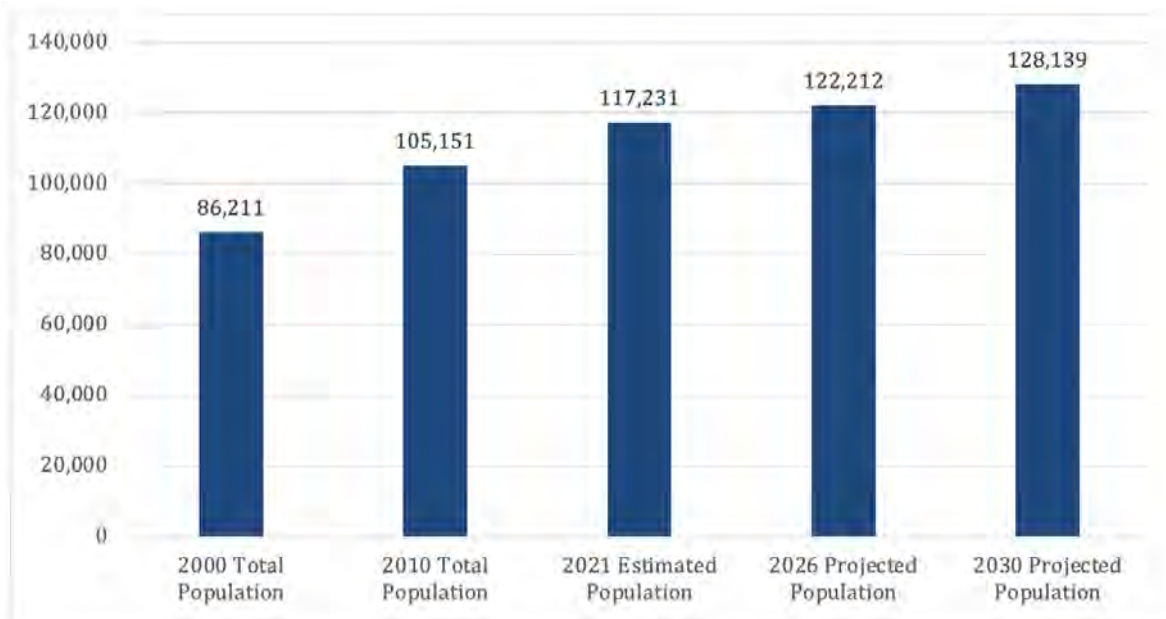


However, the county has been experiencing growth in population for decades, along with a shift in its economic base from agriculture and natural resources to the defense industry. With this shift has come an increase in new residents who are likely to commute to nearby urban areas, including Washington, D.C., for work.

### Current Demographic Character – A Growing Population

As noted in *Figure 2*, St. Mary’s County has experienced rapid growth in the past two decades. From a population of just over 86,000 in 2000, the county added over 31,000 new residents. In 2021, its estimated population was 117,231, with an anticipated 0.97% compound annual growth rate between 2021 and 2026. If this growth rate continues, the population could reach 122,212 or more in 2026. If this growth rate continues, the population could reach 128,139 or more in 2030.

**Figure 2: Projected Population Growth in St. Mary’s County, 2000 – 2030**



### Diversity in St. Mary’s County

Understanding the race and ethnic character of St. Mary’s residents is important because it can be reflective of the diverse history, values, and heritage of the community. This type of information can assist the county in creating and offering recreational programs that are relevant and meaningful to residents. In addition, this type of data when combined with the Level of Service Analysis can be used in finding gaps and disparities when it comes to equitable access to parks.

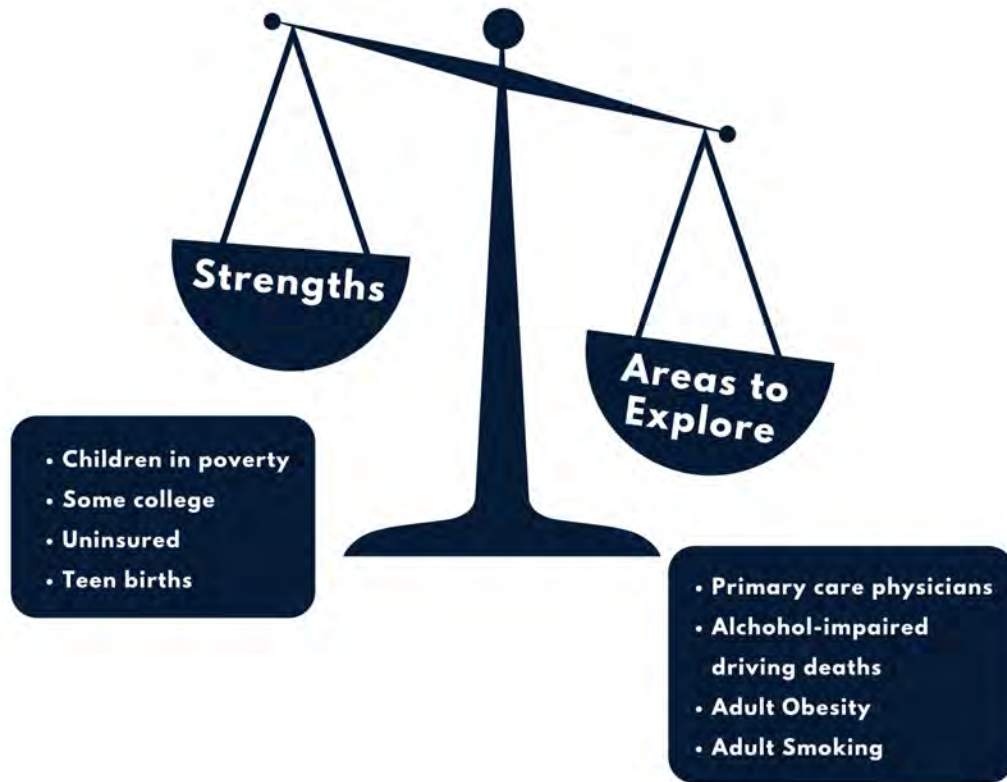
**Figure 3: Race Comparison for Total Population in St. Mary’s County**



Source: Esri Business Analyst, 2020

Based on historical data, the county is increasingly becoming more diverse. In 2010, only 3.8% of the population identified as Hispanic. This percentage increased to 6.2% in 2021, while the percentage of White residents decreased 2.70% in the county.

**Figure 4: St. Mary's County Health Rankings Overview**

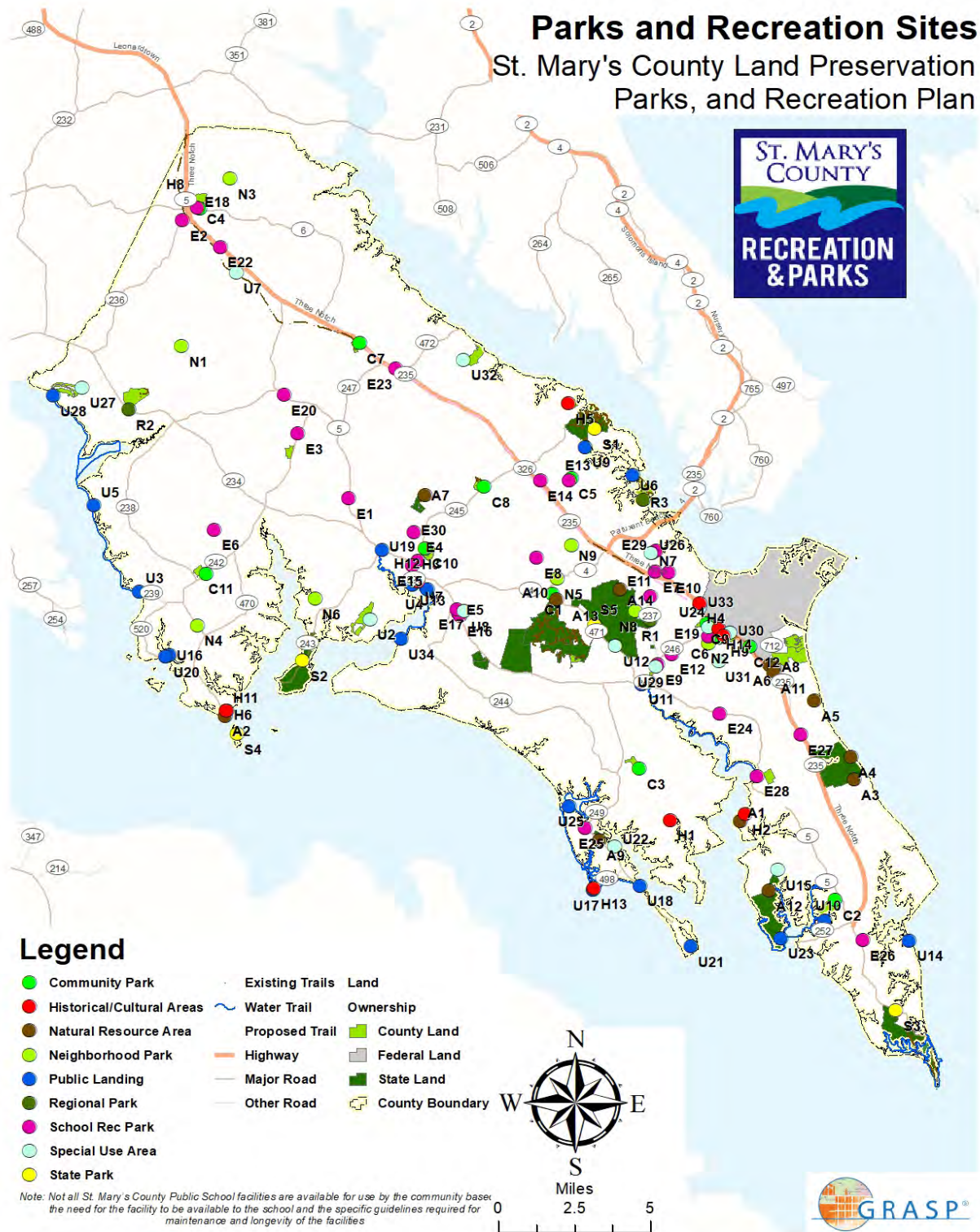


### **Existing Public Parks, Recreation, and Open Spaces**

The existing system of parks, recreation amenities, museums, and open spaces in St. Mary's County, as illustrated on *Figure 5*, consist of diverse assets and programs. These assets provide a range of opportunities for public participation in recreational, cultural, and fitness activities.

Assets that the county and/or the Maryland Department of Natural Resources manage are distributed so that from any given point in the county, at least one public recreation site is accessible within a 15-minute drive. Given the county's rural character, residents generally rely on an automobile to access local recreation opportunities. Participants in the LPPRP planning process expressed a strong preference for being able to access amenities and services within no more than a 15-minute drive. Based on this preference, the following analyses all center on the 15-minute drive time but also include a 5-minute drive for reference.

Figure 5: 2022 Public Parks and Recreation Network in St. Mary's County



Source: St. Mary's County Department of Recreation and Parks, and GreenPlay, LLC

Note: Location points have been placed nearest to the main park or facility entrance to minimize overlap of points and labels. A number of sites may have multiple offerings located across large parcels. This map is to generally show distribution across the county. For greater detail and more precise locations for water access points see Figure 18: Driving Time to Public Landings and Parks with Water Access.

**Table 2: Parks and Recreation Sites in St. Mary's County**

<b>State Parks</b>	
S1	Greenwell State Park
S2	Newtowne Neck State Park
S3	Point Lookout State Park
S4	St. Clement's Island State Park (Blackstone Isl.)
S5	St. Mary's River State Park
<b>Regional Parks</b>	
R1	Chancellor's Run Regional Park & Activity Center
R2	Chaptico Park
R3	Myrtle Point Park
<b>Community Parks</b>	
C1	Beavan Property
C2	Cardinal Gibbons Park
C3	George E. Cecil Memorial Park
C4	Fifth District Park
C5	Hollywood Soccer Complex
C6	John G. Lancaster Park at Willows Road
C7	John V. Baggett Park at Laurel Grove
C8	Judge P.H. Dorsey Memorial Park
C9	Nicolet Park
C10	Robert Miedzinski Park (Leonard Hall Rec. Center)
C11	Seventh District Park
C12	Carver Community Park & Rec. Center (former Carver Elem.)
<b>Neighborhood Parks</b>	
N1	Country Lakes Park
N2	Jarboesville Park
N3	Laurel Ridge Park
N4	Seventh District Optimist Park
N5	St. Andrews Estate Park
N6	St. Clements Shores Park
N7	Town Creek Park
N8	Tubman Douglas Field
N9	Wildewood Recreation Area

## School Recreation

- E1 Banneker Elementary School
- E2 White Marsh Elem. School
- E3 Chopticon High School
- E4 College of Southern Maryland
- E5 Dr. James A. Forest Career & Tech Center
- E6 Dynard Elem. School
- E7 Esperanza Middle School
- E8 Evergreen Elem. School
- E9 Great Mills High School
- E10 Green Holly School
- E11 Greenview Knolls Elem. School
- E12 GW Carver Elem. School
- E13 Hollywood Elem. School
- E14 Hollywood Rec. Center & Field (Old Hollywood School)
- E15 Leonardtown Elem. School/Park
- E16 Leonardtown High School
- E17 Leonardtown Middle School
- E18 Lettie Marshall Dent. School
- E19 Lexington Park Elem.School
- E20 Margaret Brent Middle School & Rec Center
- E22 Mechanicsville Elem. School
- E23 Oakville Elem. School
- E24 Park Hall Elem. School
- E25 Piney Point Elem. School
- E26 Ridge Elem. School/Park
- E27 Spring Ridge Middle School
- E28 St. Mary's College of Maryland
- E29 Town Creek Elem. School
- E30 WF Duke Elem. School/former Hayden Property

### Natural Resource Area

- A1 Chancellor's Point Natural History Area
- A2 Coltons Point Park
- A3 Elms Beach Park & Environmental Center
- A4 Elms Property
- A5 Facchina Property
- A6 Fenwick Property (County Rec Area)
- A7 McIntosh Run Wildlife Management Area
- A8 Palm Property
- A9 Piney Point Aquaculture Center
- A10 Salem State Forest
- A11 Shannon Farm Park
- A12 St. Inigoes State Forest
- A13 St. Mary's River Conservation Land
- A14 St. Mary's River State Park - Wildlands Area

### Historical / Cultural Areas

- H1 Drayden African American Schoolhouse
- H10 Point No Point Lighthouse
- H11 Little Red Schoolhouse
- H12 Leonardtown Arts Center
- H13 U-1105 Shipwreck Preserve
- H14 African American Monument and Freedom Park
- H2 Historic St. Mary's City
- H3 Old Jail Museum & Leonardtown Visitor Center
- H4 Patuxent River Naval Air Museum
- H5 Historic Sotterley
- H6 St. Clement's Island Museum
- H7 Tudor Hall Information Center
- H8 Ye Coole Springs
- H9 United States Colored Troop Memorial Monument

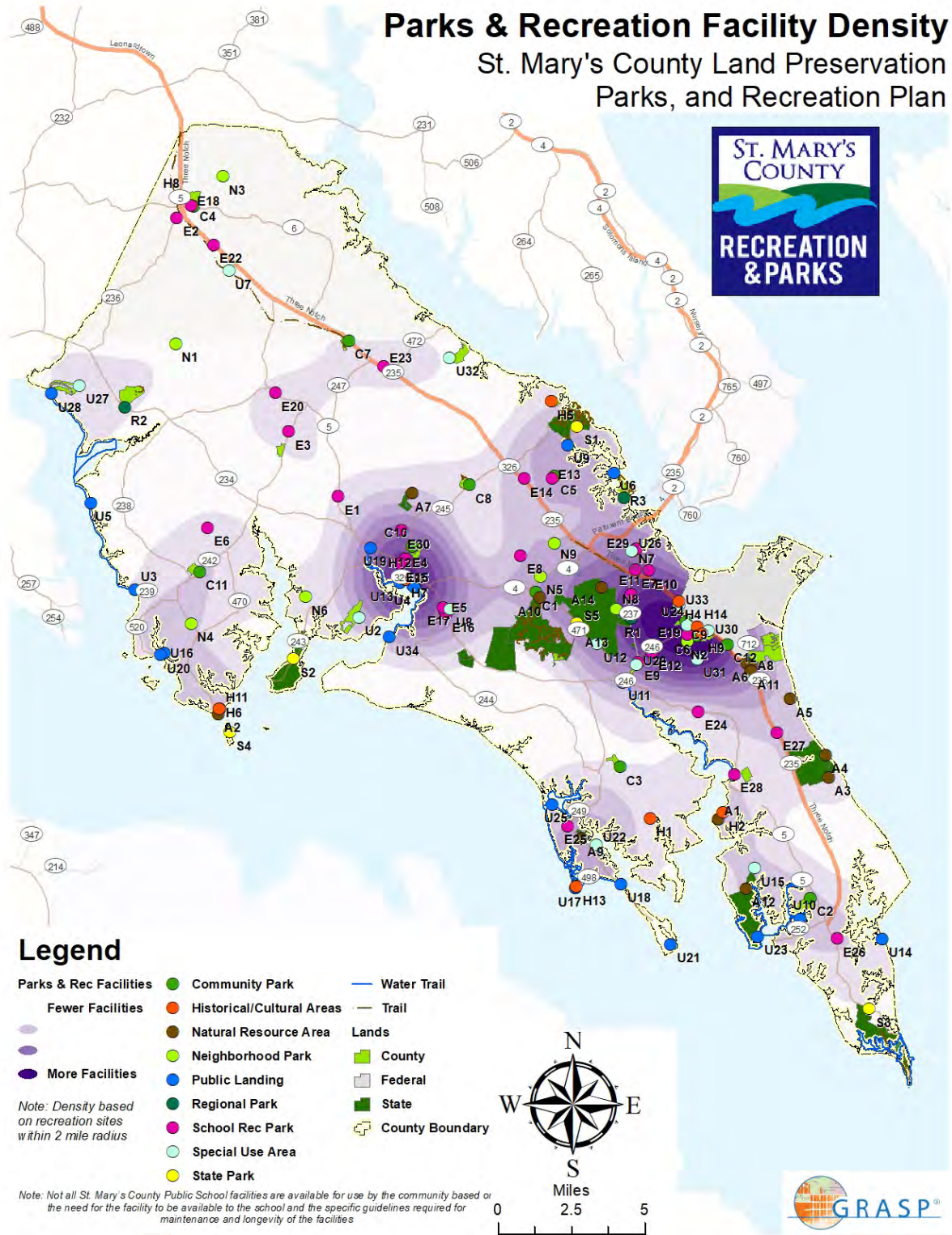
## Trail Corridor

T1 Three Notch Trail

## Special Use (Including Public Water Access)

- U2 Breton Bay Golf and Country Club
- U3 Bushwood Wharf
- U4 Camp Calvert Landing
- U5 Chaptico Wharf
- U6 Clarke's Landing
- U7 Dennison Property
- U8 Fairgrounds - St. Mary's County
- U9 Forest Landing
- U10 Fox Harbor Landing
- U11 Great Mills Canoe and Kayak Launch
- U12 Indian Bridge Road Watershed (St. Mary's River Conservation Land)
- U13 Leonardtown Wharf Park
- U14 Murry Road Waterfront Area
- U15 *Patuxent River Naval Air Station Webster Field*
- U16 Paul Ellis Landing
- U17 Piney Point Lighthouse Museum and Park
- U18 Piney Point Public Landing
- U19 Port of Leonardtown Park & Winery
- U20 River Springs Landing
- U21 St. George's Island Landing
- U22 St. Georges Park
- U23 St. Inigoes Public Landing
- U24 St. Mary's Gymnastics Center
- U25 Tall Timbers Landing
- U26 Town Creek Community Pool
- U27 Wicomico Shores Golf Course
- U28 Wicomico Shores Landing
- U29 Great Mills Pool
- U30 Lexington Manor Passive Park
- U31 Willows Recreation Center
- U32 Snow Hill Park
- U33 *Patuxent River Naval Air Station*
- U34 Abell's Wharf
- U35 St. Mary's City Park

Figure 6: 2022 Parks and Recreation Density



Source: St. Mary's County Department of Recreation and Parks, and GreenPlay, LLC

Note: Location points have been placed nearest to the main park or facility entrance to minimize overlap of points and labels. For greater detail and more precise locations for water access points see Figure 18: Driving Time to Public Landings and Parks with Water Access



Within defined growth areas, the county Comprehensive Plan emphasizes enhancing the walkability and access to community amenities without reliance on the automobile. As highlighted by the deeper purple shading on *Figure 6*, there is a concentration of parks, open spaces, and recreation sites in and around Leonardtown, California, and Lexington Park—three of the county’s key development districts and existing areas of concentrated development and population.



**Lexington Manor  
Passive Park**

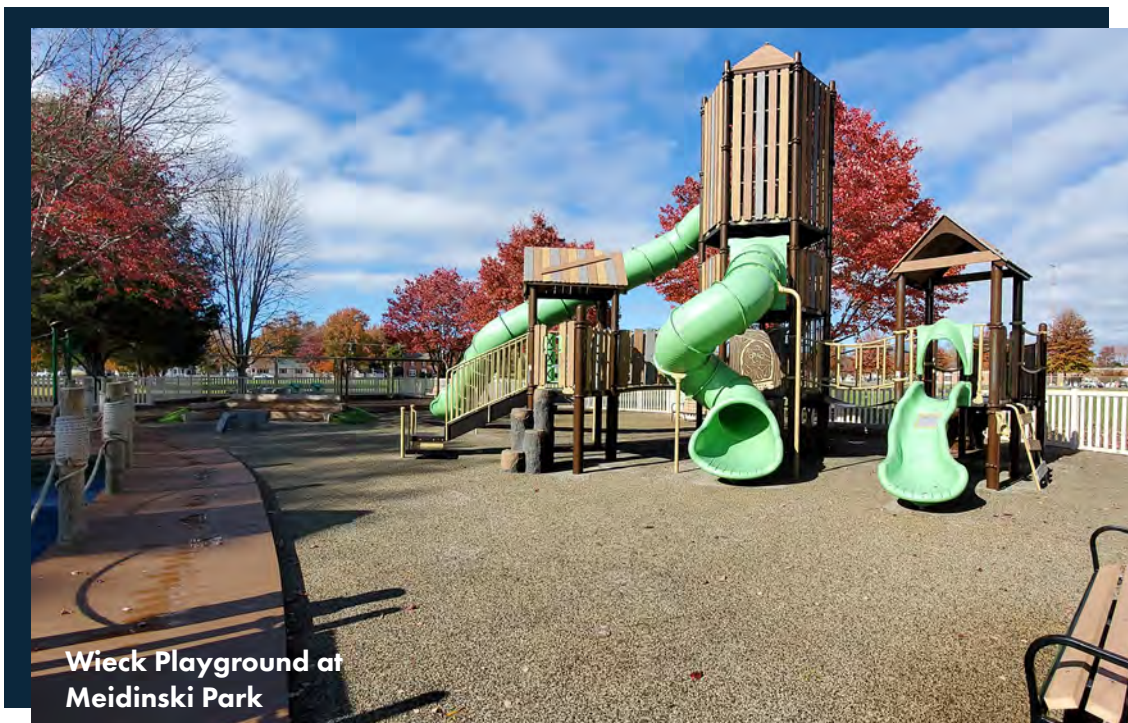
This page was intentionally left blank.

## 3.1 Section Summary

The existing system of public parks, recreation facilities, museums, and open spaces that the county Recreation and Parks Department manages is a key part of the infrastructure that supports the high quality of life, rural character, and opportunities for fitness, recreation, and leisure activities that residents and visitors treasure. The county generally appears to be meeting the current recreational needs of many residents and user groups. This LPPRP identifies opportunities for improving the quality, quantity, and accessibility of public parks, recreation facilities, museums, and open spaces.

Since the LPPRP's last update in 2017, the county has undertaken recreation, tourism, and economic development initiatives. These efforts, including completion of a Tourism and Hospitality Master Plan in 2017, highlight the significant role that the county's parks, recreation facilities, museums, and open spaces play in making the county a place where people want to live, work, visit, and play, and by doing so, contribute to the local economy. As the county moves toward developing a stronger tourism economy, there is no doubt that the system of public lands and facilities for sports, outdoor recreation, river and Chesapeake Bay access, and cultural interests that the Recreation and Parks Department manages will need to be critical components of any such efforts.

In 2020, the department developed its five-year Strategic Plan that includes new mission, vision, and goals. The plan also identifies recommendations and actions that are incorporated into this update. As the population of St. Mary's County continues to grow and as the county seeks to leverage its recreation, parks, open spaces, and museum assets as drivers for increasing tourism, the county will need to increase the capacity of the Recreation and Parks Department. Doing so will help provide and manage assets and services to meet the needs of the growing local and visitor user base through long-term strategic capital and operational investments.



**Wieck Playground at  
Meidinski Park**

## 3.2 Existing System of Public Parks and Recreation Amenities

### Public Parks, Recreation, and Open-Space System

As of 2022, the existing system of public parks, recreation amenities, museums, and open spaces in St. Mary's County included 13,345 acres of public parks, forests, waterfront areas, and public landings. *Figure 5* illustrates the location of these sites. The majority of the parks, recreation areas, and public open spaces in St. Mary's County were managed by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (9,807) and the county's Recreation and Parks Department (3,300). A detailed inventory of all public parks and recreation sites in St. Mary's County is included in *Appendix E*.

**Over 13,000 acres of parks, recreation facilities, museums, and open spaces were available to the public in St. Mary's County as of October 2021.**

### Federal Recreation Amenities in St. Mary's County

The National Park Service provides most of the federal recreation opportunities publicly available in the county. Although there are no national parks in St. Mary's County, several trails and driving routes that the National Park Service manages link historical, cultural, and environmental sites of interest that other providers, including the county's Recreation and Parks Department, manage. Additionally, active and retired members of the military and Department of Defense employees have access to recreation facilities and amenities at Navy facilities in the county. Federal recreation assets available for public recreational use include:

- National Park Service
  - Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail – Southern Maryland Potomac Heritage Trail Bicycling Route
  - Star Spangled Banner National Historic Trail
  - Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail
  - Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Water trails Network
- Department of Defense (Navy)
  - Naval Air Station Patuxent River and Webster Field – provides military and Department of Defense employee access/use of sport fields, athletic facility, fishing pier, and hunting area
- Federal Highway Administration
  - Religious Freedom National Scenic Byway

Each scenic and historic trail network the National Park Service manages highlights significant natural, cultural, and historic resources of the county, as well as the role they played during the nation's early development. Each national trail includes stops at places in the county, including Point Lookout State Park, St. Clement's Island, Leonardtown, and other coastal areas and historic sites. These national trails are not independent parks but rather highlight routes that link sites of cultural, historic, and natural resource interests that were integral in the early colonization of the area and later wars for independence.

St. Mary's County has also benefited from the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund. Administered by the National Park Service and Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Land and Water Conservation Fund grants have assisted in purchasing land and developing facilities that directly support

public outdoor recreation at sites, including St. Clement’s Island State Park. These federal grant funds assisted in purchasing land for the park and developing facilities that allow safe public access and recreational use of the site.

### State Parks and Resource Lands in St. Mary’s County

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources owns and manages several parks, forests, and natural areas that provide significant opportunities for participation in outdoor activities and natural resource-based recreation. St. Mary’s County is located in the department’s southern management region. As illustrated in *Table 3*, the department owns 11 properties in the county, totaling 9,045 acres. This equates to 19.5% of the 46,232 acres of land in the department’s southern management unit, which includes Anne Arundel, Prince George’s, Charles, Calvert, and St. Mary’s Counties.

**Table 3: Maryland Department of Natural Resources Properties in St. Mary’s County**

Maryland Department of Natural Resources Managed Properties	Acres
Elms Property	1,022
Greenwell State Park	596
McIntosh Run Wildlife Management Area	81
Newtowne Neck State Park	794
Piney Point Aquaculture Center	66
Point Lookout State Park	1,083
Salem State Forest	1,773
Sotterley (state parcel)	14
St. Inigoes State Forest	911
St. Mary’s River State Park	2,643
St. Clement’s Island State Park	62
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>9,045</b>

*Source: Maryland Department of Natural Resources Owned Lands Acreage Report – Fiscal Year 2021*

Over 98% of the land managed by the Department of Natural Resources in St. Mary’s County is a state park or state forest, which provide abundant opportunities for public participation in natural resource-based recreation activities. The remaining 2% of Department of Natural Resources’ lands are managed for aquaculture and wildlife management. The department’s properties in the county also serve to preserve, enhance, and make available to the public a sampling of the unique landscapes and natural resources that define the county’s rural and coastal character.

One unique property, the Piney Point Aquaculture Center, is home to the department’s Fisheries Service shellfish hatchery. This facility specializes in oyster production that supports aquatic habitat restoration projects throughout the Chesapeake Bay, the Marylanders Grow Oysters program, and the work of the Oyster Recovery Partnership. The department also

**Recreational opportunities in state parks and forests in the county include:**

- Hiking/Walking/Jogging
- Camping
- Hunting
- Fishing
- Swimming
- Boating (motorized/non-motorized)
- Nature Appreciation
- Horseback riding areas or equestrian trails

partners with the county to provide recreational opportunities at the Elms Property, and partners with non-profit groups to provide additional recreation, historic, and cultural engagement opportunities. State parks and forests in the county receive strong annual usage.



**Vision: A leader in cultivating exceptional leisure experiences in our community.**

**"To provide an enriched quality of life for the community through the preservation of natural, cultural, and historical resources, enhancement of parks and outdoor spaces, and promotion of a variety of leisure experiences."**

**Mission Statement – Department of Recreation and Parks**

### County Parks, Recreation Facilities, and Museums

The St. Mary's County Department of Recreation and Parks manages approximately 95 parks, public landings, recreation facilities, and museums, open spaces, and county government sites totaling over 3,200 acres. The majority of these various facilities can be divided into seven functional categories:

- 1. Regional Parks** – are typically 100+ acres, include a diverse array of public recreation facilities, and are designed to serve large areas of the county. These parks include natural areas with passive recreation opportunities and developed areas that support traditional field and court based sports. St. Mary's County has three regional parks:

#### Regional Parks

- R1 Chancellor's Run Regional Park & Activity Center
- R2 Chaptico Park
- R3 Myrtle Point Park

- 2. Community Parks** – are typically 15 – 100 acres and largely developed with facilities for field and court sports, playgrounds, and other active uses. Community parks are generally designed to serve populations that reside within relatively close proximity (a few miles, or a short drive away). St. Mary's County has 12 community parks:

#### Community Parks

- C1 Beavan Property
- C2 Cardinal Gibbons Park
- C3 George E. Cecil Memorial Park
- C4 Fifth District Park
- C5 Hollywood Soccer Complex
- C6 John G. Lancaster Park at Willows Road
- C7 John V. Baggett Park at Laurel Grove
- C8 Judge P.H. Dorsey Memorial Park
- C9 Nicolet Park
- C10 Robert Miedzinski Park (Leonard Hall Rec. Center)
- C11 Seventh District Park
- C12 Carver Community Park & Rec. Center (former Carver Elem.)

**3. Public School Recreation Areas** – sports fields and recreation facilities at local schools throughout the county can provide the public with recreation opportunities when these areas are not in use for school purposes and programs. Although the availability of school facilities for public recreation use differs per facility, in general, there tend to be opportunities available for public use on weekday evenings and weekends. Each school facility also charges a usage fee (excluding field use). In St. Mary’s County, 29 recreational facilities at schools provide this type of public use:

**School Recreation Areas**

- E1 Banneker Elementary School
- E2 White Marsh Elem. School
- E3 Chopticon High School
- E4 College of Southern Maryland
- E5 Dr. James A. Forest Career & Tech Center
- E6 Dynard Elem. School
- E7 Esperanza Middle School
- E8 Evergreen Elem. School
- E9 Great Mills High School
- E10 Green Holly School
- E11 Greenview Knolls Elem. School
- E12 GW Carver Elem. School
- E13 Hollywood Elem. School
- E14 Hollywood Rec. Center & Field (Old Hollywood School)
- E15 Leonardtown Elem. School/Park
- E16 Leonardtown High School
- E17 Leonardtown Middle School
- E18 Lettie Marshall Dent. School
- E19 Lexington Park Elem.School
- E20 Margaret Brent Middle School & Rec Center
- E22 Mechanicsville Elem. School
- E23 Oakville Elem. School
- E24 Park Hall Elem. School
- E25 Piney Point Elem. School
- E26 Ridge Elem. School/Park
- E27 Spring Ridge Middle School
- E28 St. Mary’s College of Maryland
- E29 Town Creek Elem. School
- E30 WF Duke Elem. School/former Hayden Property

**4. Neighborhood Parks** – are typically less than 15 acres and include open grassy areas for free play, playgrounds, tot lots, and in some neighborhood parks, hard-surfaced sport courts. St. Mary’s County has the following neighborhood parks:

**Neighborhood Parks**

- N1 Country Lakes Park
- N2 Jarboesville Park
- N3 Laurel Ridge Park
- N4 Seventh District Optimist Park
- N5 St. Andrews Estate Park
- N6 St. Clements Shores Park
- N7 Town Creek Park
- N8 Tubman Douglas Field
- N9 Wildewood Recreation Area

**5. Public Landings and Special Use Areas** – these include specialized public recreation facilities. The county has a variety of special use areas, including some locations with multiple public water accesses:

**Special Use (Including Public Water Access)**

- U2 Breton Bay Golf and Country Club
- U3 Bushwood Wharf
- U4 Camp Calvert Landing
- U5 Chaptico Wharf
- U6 Clarke’s Landing
- U7 Dennison Property
- U8 Fairgrounds - St. Mary’s County
- U9 Forest Landing
- U10 Fox Harbor Landing
- U11 Great Mills Canoe and Kayak Launch
- U12 Indian Bridge Road Watershed (St. Mary’s River Conservation Land)
- U13 Leonardtown Wharf Park
- U14 Murry Road Waterfront Area
- U15 *Patuxent River Naval Air Station Webster Field*
- U16 Paul Ellis Landing
- U17 Piney Point Lighthouse Museum and Park
- U18 Piney Point Public Landing
- U19 Port of Leonardtown Park & Winery
- U20 River Springs Landing
- U21 St. George’s Island Landing
- U22 St. Georges Park



- U23 St. Inigoes Public Landing
- U24 St. Mary’s Gymnastics Center
- U25 Tall Timbers Landing
- U26 Town Creek Community Pool
- U27 Wicomico Shores Golf Course
- U28 Wicomico Shores Landing
- U29 Great Mills Pool
- U30 Lexington Manor Passive Park
- U31 Willows Recreation Center
- U32 Snow Hill Park
- U33 *Patuxent River Naval Air Station*
- U34 Abell’s Wharf
- U35 St. Mary’s City Park

**6. Natural Resource Areas** – Areas of many county-managed recreation and park properties include acreage that has been purposefully managed for natural resource conservation and low-impact outdoor recreation activities, such as walking, hiking, biking, paddle boarding, and nature appreciation. For example, the county and St. Mary’s County Public Schools—through agreements with the Department of Natural Resources—operate the Elms Environmental Education Center, Elms Beach Park, and the county bow hunting area on 476 acres of the 1,020-acre Elms Property. The state manages the remaining 544 acres for natural resource conservation and hunting.

#### Natural Resource Area

- A1 Chancellor’s Point Natural History Area
- A2 Coltons Point Park
- A3 Elms Beach Park & Environmental Center
- A4 Elms Property
- A5 Facchina Property
- A6 Fenwick Property (County Rec Area)
- A7 McIntosh Run Wildlife Management Area
- A8 Palm Property
- A9 Piney Point Aquaculture Center
- A10 Salem State Forest
- A11 Shannon Farm Park
- A12 St. Inigoes State Forest
- A13 St. Mary’s River Conservation Land
- A14 St. Mary’s River State Park - Wildlands Area

**7. Historic and Cultural Sites** – In addition to providing public recreation and parks amenities, the St. Mary’s Department of Recreation and Parks also manages three museum sites. These assets celebrate and seek to engage visitors with an understanding of important aspects of the history and culture of St. Mary’s County. The museums and cultural sites in the county include:

Historical / Cultural Areas	
H1	Drayden African-American Schoolhouse
H2	Historic St. Mary’s City
H3	Old Jail Museum
H4	Patuxent River Naval Air Museum
H5	Historic Sotterley Plantation
H6	St. Clement’s Island Museum
H7	Tudor Hall Information Center
H8	Ye Coole Springs
H9	United States Colored Troop Memorial Monument
H10	Point No Point Lighthouse
H11	Lil Red Schoolhouse
H12	Leonardtowntown Arts Center
H13	Black Panther Historic Shipwreck Preserve
H14	African-American Monument and Freedom Park

**Other Recreational Services Available to the Public**

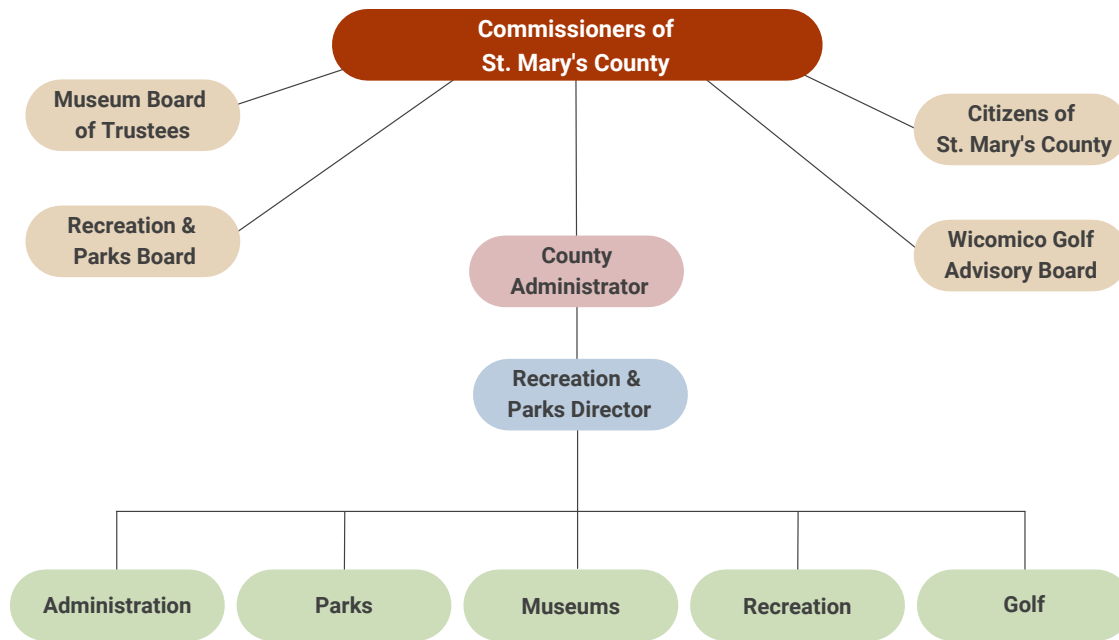
In addition to the parks, recreation, and cultural opportunities noted, public amenities, private providers, and public/private partnerships provide recreation opportunities. Private providers typically charge a fee for admission or participation. These facilities were also listed above in their appropriate classification. Some of these additional opportunities include, but are far from limited to:

- Breton Bay Golf and Country Club
- Historic St. Mary’s City
- Leonardtown Arts and Entertainment District
- Patuxent River Naval Air Museum
- Point Lookout Lighthouse and Civil War Museum
- Sotterley Plantation
- Tudor Hall and Old Jail Museum

**County Recreation and Parks System Administration and Operations**

The governing structure ultimately responsible for managing county parks, recreation facilities, open spaces, and museum sites is illustrated in *Figure 7*. The Department of Recreation and Parks’ operations are diverse but are guided by the department’s Mission Statement and comprehensive Parks Policies and Procedures Manual. Day-to-day operations are distributed between five internal divisions. Each division manages specific programs, facilities, or tasks that contribute to the public’s use and enjoyment of county-owned parks, recreation, museum, and open-space amenities. The department’s core team includes 40 full-time merit staff positions, with two of these positions being full-time contracted staff members. These employees are shared between the five divisions described in *Figure 7*.

**Figure 7: County Governing Structure for Recreation and Parks**



### Administration Division

Through the department’s Director, the Administration Division provides direction, management and supervision of the Recreation and Parks Department.

The Director or his designee serves as the staff liaison to three advisory boards—the Recreation and Parks Board, the Wicomico Shores Golf Advisory Board, and the Board of Trustees for the Museum Division. The Director recommends policy to the boards and, in turn, to the Commissioners of St. Mary’s County, who have ultimate policy authority.

The Director is also responsible for managing the activities of the department’s five divisions. Overall responsibilities include:

- Establishing departmental goals and objectives
- Developing the county’s comprehensive recreation planning document/parks and recreation master plan every five years—the LPPRP
- Developing and administering departmental budgets (operating, capital improvement projects, and two enterprise funds—Recreation and Wicomico Shores Golf Course)
- Managing personnel
- Overseeing recreational programs and facilities
- Determining operating policy and procedures
- Leading and promoting public relations

Two staff members provide project management and fiscal support to the Director and other divisions in the areas of project administration, personnel and payroll, and budget management and purchasing.

## Recreation Division

The Recreation Division of the Department of Recreation and Parks is responsible for planning, implementing, supervising, and evaluating a broad range of recreational programs, services, activities, events, and facilities for county residents of all ages and abilities.

The Division Manager and five program coordinators plan and implement activities in the Recreation Division. Responsibilities include:

- Providing instructional classes for youth and adults in art, drama, music, dance, crafts, exercise, therapeutic recreation, sports, and hobbies
- Coordinating youth and adult sports leagues (such as basketball, roller hockey, etc.)
- Planning and conducting summer day camps and before- and after-school care centers
- Producing numerous special events, bus trips, and family-themed activities
- Planning and conducting Therapeutic recreation programs for youth and adults and inclusion services
- Managing two leased facilities: St. Mary's Gymnastics Academy and the Wellness and Aquatics Center; the Leonard Hall, Margaret Brent, Hollywood, and Carver Recreation Centers; and the Great Mills Swimming Pool
- Assisting civic groups, schools and other organizations in providing community recreational services through partnerships and volunteer efforts.

All programs offered through this division are generally self-supporting and funded through the Recreation Enterprise Fund.



Wicomico Shores Wharf

## **Parks Division**

The Parks Division provides grounds, turf, and facility maintenance using established standards at 95 parks, public landings, and county buildings. The division is also responsible for maintaining and overseeing approximately 2,700 acres of county government property. This includes nearly 1,400 acres of parkland and 630 acres of grass-cutting by a contractor at county parks, public landings, and areas surrounding county buildings.

The division also maintains and/or manages:

- 22 county parks: 3 regional (typically 100+ acres), 13 community (15 to 100 acres); and 6 neighborhood (less than 15 acres)
- 15 county waterfront boat ramps and landing locations
- Nicolet Park skate park, spray ground, United States Colored Troops Memorial and Interpretive Center, and other recreational areas
- 118 athletic fields, multiuse areas, and practice areas
- 4 recreation centers (Margaret Brent, Leonard Hall, Hollywood, and Carver) and maintains the Gymnastics Center and Great Mills Pool
- Approximately 11.5 miles of the popular Three Notch Trail, available for pedestrians and bikers

## **Wicomico Shores Golf Course**

The Wicomico Shores Golf Course is a 145-acre recreational facility providing golf, food service, and banquet facilities. The operation is primarily self-supporting and is administered through an enterprise fund. Wicomico Shores includes an 18-hole golf course, practice facility, golf shop, and Riverview Restaurant and banquet room.

A golf course manager oversees operations and the overall complex, including:

- Offering affordable individual and/or group golf lessons and clinics
- Overseeing a junior golf program
- Overseeing league play, golf outings, and tournaments
- Managing golf cart fleet, full-service golf shop, and driving range

The golf course superintendent is responsible for:

- Maintaining the golf course, including turf management and chemical applications
- Maintaining equipment and facility repair
- Overseeing irrigation system operation and general course improvements

A food and beverage specialist oversees the restaurant and banquet operations, which include:

- Purchasing products and supplies
- Overseeing food preparation
- Training food and beverage staff and setting rules and procedures
- Handling daily receipts
- Promoting, booking, and managing functions in the banquet hall

## Museums Division

The Museum Division collects, preserves, researches, and interprets the historic sites and artifacts that illustrate the natural, cultural, and social histories of:

- St. Clement’s Island and the Potomac River
- Piney Point Lighthouse, Chesapeake Bay, and U-1105 Underwater Shipwreck Preserve
- Drayden African American and Charlotte Hall schoolhouses
- Elements of St. Mary’s County history that are not interpreted by other heritage attractions

The Museum Division serves as a resource, liaison, and community advocate for all St. Mary’s County public and private cultural assets.

Museum Division activities include:

- Designing and developing interpretive exhibits
- Collecting artifacts representative of the history and cultures of the southern Maryland and Chesapeake Bay regions
- Presenting educational events and activities
- Providing administration and maintenance of historic structures
- Maintaining a resource library in a manner consistent with the division’s national accreditation by the American Alliance of Museums (AAM)
- Helping to promote St. Mary’s County as a premier tourism destination

The AAM reaccredited the Museum Division in 2018. According to division staff, trustees, and the Friends of the Museum, “being accredited means that we have met the highest standards of the museum field as prescribed by the AAM. This increases our value in the eyes of our peers, shows that we are using best practices, and makes it possible for the sites to borrow items from other museums for inclusion in our exhibits.”

### 3.2.1 Operating and Capital Budgets

Table 4 and Table 5 below note the Recreation and Parks Department’s operating and capital improvement budgets as of July 2021.

**Table 4: Operating Budget – Department of Recreation and Parks**

Cost Centers	FY2019 Actual	FY2020 Actual	FY2021 Approved	FY2022 Approved
<b>County General Fund</b>				
Administration	\$ 1,153,068	\$ 1,211,429	\$ 1,282,973	\$ 1,303,764
Parks Maintenance	\$ 2,196,132	\$ 2,042,684	\$ 2,196,879	\$ 2,748,589
Non-Profit-Recreation & Parks	\$ 125,842	\$ 131,200	\$ 135,600	\$ 138,200
Grants	\$ 25,429	\$ 27,546	\$ 25,000	\$ 35,000
Chancellors Run Regional Park	\$ -	\$ 78,204	\$ 69,054	\$ 69,654
Museums	\$ 552,968	\$ 576,262	\$ 674,306	\$ 763,715
<b>County Funded Subtotal</b>	<b>\$ 4,053,439</b>	<b>\$ 4,067,325</b>	<b>\$ 4,383,812</b>	<b>\$ 5,058,922</b>
<b>Enterprise Funds</b>				
Recreation Activity Fund	\$ 2,618,715	\$ 2,281,164	\$ 4,042,587	\$ 4,239,311
Wicomico Shores Golf Fund	\$ 1,318,895	\$ 1,225,442	\$ 1,493,979	\$ 1,459,638
<b>Enterprise Fund Subtotal</b>	<b>\$ 3,937,610</b>	<b>\$ 3,506,606</b>	<b>\$ 5,536,566</b>	<b>\$ 5,698,949</b>
<b>Total Operating</b>	<b>\$ 7,991,049</b>	<b>\$ 7,573,931</b>	<b>\$ 9,920,378</b>	<b>\$ 10,757,871</b>

Source: St. Mary’s County Department of Finance and Dept. of Recreation and Parks

Funding for the operations managed by the Department of Recreation and Parks comes from two main sources. County funding through the general budget provides resources for the overall operation and maintenance of the majority of park, recreation, open space, and museum sites. Two department divisions—the Recreation Division and Wicomico Shores Golf Course—are operated as enterprise funds, charging fees for participation in programs, use of facilities, etc., with income generally covering all or most program and facility operational costs. Recreation Division facility improvements are dependent on funding from non-enterprise sources, such as the general fund, outside grants, and Program Open Space funding; however, until recently golf course facility improvements have traditionally been funded through the Golf Enterprise Fund.

**Table 5: Five-Year Capital Improvement Budget – Department of Recreation and Parks**

Parks and Facilities	FY2022 Total	FY2023 Total	FY2024 Total	FY2025 Total	FY2026 Total	FY2027 Total
<b>Capital Project</b>						
Central County Park	\$ -	\$ 350,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Elms Beach Park Improvement	\$ -	\$ 1,156,275	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Park Land and Facility Acquisition	\$ 246,431	\$ 246,431	\$ 246,431	\$ 246,431	\$ 246,431	\$ 246,431
Recreation Facility and Park Improvements	\$ 940,000	\$ 1,010,000	\$ 967,500	\$ 650,000	\$ 527,500	\$ -
Recreation/Community Center	\$ 450,000	\$ 581,000	\$ -	\$ 15,800,000	\$ -	\$ -
Shannon Farm Property	\$ -	\$ 2,743,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Snow Hill Park	\$ 3,000,000	\$ 3,000,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Sports Complex	\$ 150,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
St. Clement's Island Museum Renovations	\$ 770,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Three Notch Trail - Phase Eight	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5,100,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Total Capital Investment</b>	<b>\$ 5,556,431</b>	<b>\$ 9,086,706</b>	<b>\$ 6,313,931</b>	<b>\$ 16,696,431</b>	<b>\$ 773,931</b>	<b>\$ 246,431</b>

Source: St. Mary's County Department of Finance and Dept. of Recreation and Parks

### Program Open Space

A significant source of capital funding for the acquisition, development, and/or rehabilitation of parks, open spaces, and recreational facilities in St. Mary's County is the Local Program of Maryland's Program Open Space. As previously illustrated on *Table 1*, since 2012—and projected through 2017—the county has used (or plans to use) Local Program monies to fund an annual average of \$218,647 on land acquisition and \$151,417 on facility improvement projects that support the enhancement and expansion of the county's parks and recreation system and achievement of goals of this LPPRP.

The county's Annual Program for Proposed Program Open Space Acquisition and Development projects (fiscal year 2017) includes proposals to use POS Local funding to help fund parks and recreation enhancement projects throughout the county, including the continued development of the Three Notch Trail.

Over the past several years, the county has been very successful in acquiring land for recreation and conservation purposes with the assistance of Program Open Space. In March 2017, St. Mary's



**Three Notch Trail Phase VI – a project supported by Program Open Space**

*Photo Credit: St. Mary's Department of Recreation and Parks*

County achieved a major land preservation and recreation goal with the acquisition of the 163-acre Snow Hill Park property. The new park is located in the sixth election district and has approximately 1,500 feet of frontage along the Patuxent River. This important acquisition satisfied two county goals for acquiring land—to develop a Patuxent River Waterfront Park and Central Patuxent Public Landing (see *Appendix F: Capital Improvement Recommendations*).

Future development at the site is envisioned to include a waterfront park and public landing and provide facilities and amenities for diverse recreation opportunities for hiking and nature trails; forested/conservation areas and nature interpretation; fishing; canoeing and kayaking; motorized boat ramp and pier; picnic areas; playground; flexible-use practice athletic fields; parking; and restrooms. The purchase of the property was a partnership between St. Mary's County, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (Program Open Space Local and Stateside funding), and the U.S. Navy (Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration [REPI] funding).

Other sites recently acquired with Program Open Space assistance included the former Beavan property and Shannon Farm property, which were also major acquisitions. The county envisions developing these sites with passive and active recreation opportunities that the LPPRP identifies as needed.

Since 2017, the county has used over \$6 million in Local Program funds on projects to enhance existing recreation facilities, including improvements to lighting, playground improvements and replacements, and other functional amenities; construction of Phase VII of the Three Notch Trail; and the purchase of land to expand recreational opportunities and conserve natural land with outdoor recreation value. As it has for decades, the county will continue to rely on Program Open Space Local Program grants in working to meet the existing and future recreation needs of the county's population. Following major land acquisitions, the development and enhancement of recreation facilities and amenities will be a priority for the next five years.

**"Established under the Department of Natural Resources in 1969, POS symbolizes Maryland's long term commitment to conserving our natural resources while providing exceptional outdoor recreation opportunities for our citizens."**

**Maryland Department of Natural Resources –  
Program Open Space**

### 3.3 Participation in Parks and Recreation Activities

Residents and visitors in St. Mary's County participate in a wide array of recreation, fitness, and leisure activities, and according to recent survey results, most do so at public parks, open spaces, and recreation areas. Ninety-eight percent of survey respondents indicated they have visited a park in the last year. Survey respondents also indicated they participate in sports programs, fitness/wellness, special events, and St. Clement's Island Museum events the most. Through the county's system of parks, recreation facilities, and museums, the Department of Recreation and Parks offers a wide assortment of infrastructure and amenities that provide opportunities for a variety of self-directed and organized recreational endeavors. For example, public landings provide water access for fishing and boating; trails provide opportunities for hiking, walking, and cycling; and athletic fields annually host thousands of games and practices of various league sports.



### 3.3.1 Covid-19 Pandemic and Recreation Going Forward

Much of the data gathering and analysis of this report was conducted in 2019 and 2020, with final analysis and formatting in January 2022. During that time, the coronavirus global pandemic struck—the country’s most devastating pandemic in modern history. The World Health Organization officially declared the COVID-19 public health emergency as a global pandemic on March 11, 2020, and it continues to be a major global pandemic as of the writing of this report.

As stated by the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA), parks are essential, especially during a health crisis, and a recent survey found that 83% of adults find exercising at local parks and open spaces is essential to maintaining their mental and physical health during the COVID-19 pandemic. St. Mary’s County parks, open spaces, and recreation programs play an essential role in providing healthy and safe options for residents, staff, and visitors. For parks and open space and for recreation, this will shape the collective futures of our citizens and visitors in ways beyond those possibly anticipated, and likely beyond the recommendations of this report.

Unlike other forms of community infrastructure, parks, recreation, and open-space amenities combine both developed and natural elements that serve a wide variety of functions that benefit the public. The positive benefits of parks and natural areas are well documented, and public participation in recreation, sports, fitness, and leisure activities and opportunities that are made available by this infrastructure can have significant impacts on community identity, public health, and community well-being; preservation of natural ecological systems and services; and economic vitality.

### 3.3.2 Economic and Health Benefits of Parks

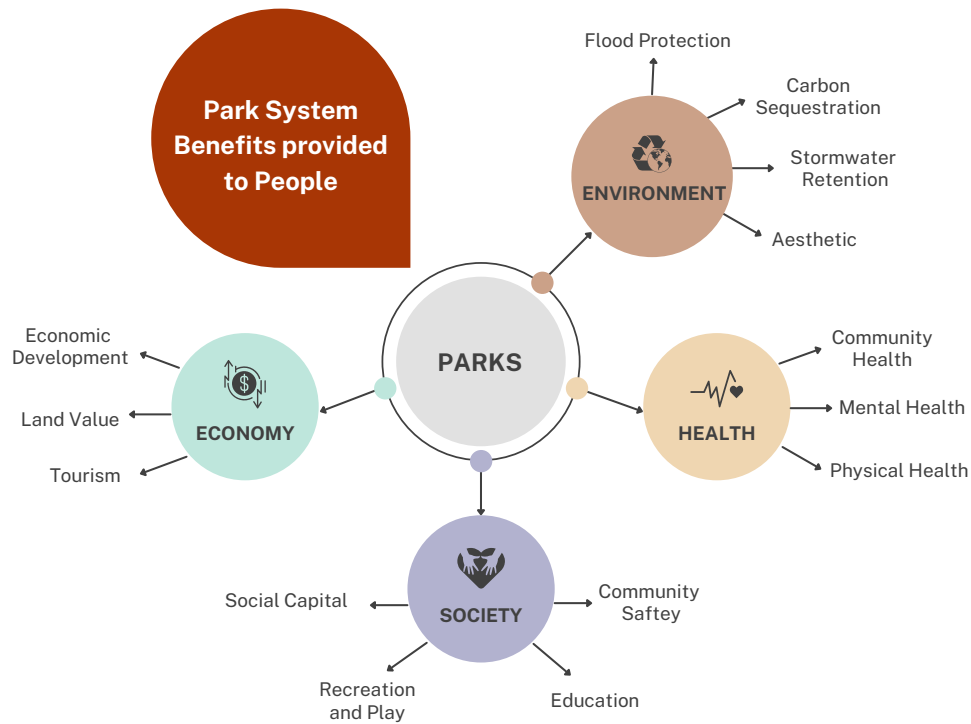
“The Benefits of Parks: Why America Needs More City Parks and Open Space,” a report from the Trust for Public Land, makes the following observations about the health, economic, environmental, and social benefits of parks and open space:<sup>1</sup>

- Physical activity makes people healthier.
- Physical activity increases with access to parks.
- Contact with the natural world improves physical and physiological health.
- Residential and commercial property values increase.
- Value is added to community and economic development sustainability.
- Benefits of tourism are enhanced.
- Trees are effective in improving air quality and act as natural air conditioners.
- Trees assist with stormwater control and erosion.
- Crime and juvenile delinquency are reduced.
- Recreational opportunities for all ages are provided.
- Stable neighborhoods and strong communities are created.

---

1 “Benefits of Parks White Paper.” The Trust for Public Land, 2018, [www.tpl.org/benefits-parks-white-paper](http://www.tpl.org/benefits-parks-white-paper). Accessed 30 Sept. 2021.

**Figure 8: Park System Benefits Provided to People and Communities**



Source: Earth Economics, 2011

### 3.3.3 Outdoor Recreation

Outdoor recreation has become a thriving economic driver, creating 4.3 million direct national jobs in 2020 and generating \$689 billion in consumer spending. The U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) estimated that the outdoor recreation economy comprised 1.8% of the current gross domestic product (GDP) in 2020, accounting for more than \$374.3 billion. The COVID-19 pandemic impacted the outdoor recreation industry. Although the full extent of that impact is not known yet, one of the primary data points is around outdoor recreation employment, which decreased in all fifty states in 2020. The top three conventional outdoor recreation activities according to the BEA in 2020 was boating/fishing, RVing, and hunting/shooting/trapping.<sup>2</sup>

In the State of Maryland, the outdoor recreation economy generates:



<sup>2</sup> "Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account, U.S. And States, 2020 | U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA)." Bea.gov, 2020, [www.bea.gov/news/2021/outdoor-recreation-satellite-account-us-and-states-2020](http://www.bea.gov/news/2021/outdoor-recreation-satellite-account-us-and-states-2020). Accessed 16 Nov. 2021.

### 3.3.4 Urban Park Revenue

Comprehensive and national studies continue to demonstrate the economic value of parks and recreation systems. The website [ConservationTools.org](https://www.conservationtools.org) has tools and research to make the case for conservation, including reports on the economic benefits of open space, wetlands, trails, water quality, outdoors, and more. According to a number of studies from market research firms, the Trust for Public Land, Active Living Research, the American Planning Association, among others, the primary key economic value of city park systems are detailed in *Figure 9* below.<sup>3</sup>

**Figure 9: The Seven Economic Benefits of Parks**



### 3.3.5 Measured Participation in County Recreation Division Programs

Through structured programming, the Recreation Division offers year-round recreation, sports, and leisure programming for people of all ages and abilities. A wide variety of programs are offered annually and include youth and adult sports, fitness, and leisure activities; leisure classes; arts and crafts; camps; trips; special events; school-age programs; and therapeutic recreation programs. The Recreation Division issues program guides quarterly, providing a full listing of current offerings, registration information, and customer service contacts. The current program guide is available at the Recreation and Department’s website ([www.stmarysmd.com/recreate](http://www.stmarysmd.com/recreate)).

The Recreation Division tracks annual enrollment of participants in the sports, recreation, and leisure programs it offers throughout the county, and the data indicates that a significant number of people participate in these programs annually. St. Mary’s County experienced a dramatic drop in participation from 2019 to 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic, as did other counties across America. The division’s FY2021 and FY2022 budget reports a 41% drop in registration—from 76,062 in FY2019 to 44,911 in FY2020 for its recreation programs. This number is estimated to drop another 35% for FY2021 before making a recovery in FY2022 to pre-pandemic numbers. Although the total number of individuals participating in division programs is unknown, it is reasonable to presume based on registration data that a high number of county households include members who participate in the Recreation Division’s programs.

<sup>3</sup> “Economic Benefits of Parks: Conservation Tools.” Conservationtools.org, 2021, [conservationtools.org/guides/98-economic-benefits-of-parks](https://www.conservationtools.org/guides/98-economic-benefits-of-parks). Accessed 30 Nov. 2021.

Programs offered by the Recreation Division are categorized by the following functional groupings:

- School-Age Care Programs
- Therapeutic Recreation Programs
- Sports Programs and Camps
- Leisure and Fitness Programs
- Special Facilities Programs

The majority of participants had enrolled in special facilities programs, sports programs and camps, or leisure and fitness programs. Overall, registration for programs at the Great Mills Pool complex was by far the highest. *Table 6* compares (by number of enrolled participants) enrollment figures for the past three fiscal years' division program offerings as well as the golf course and Museum.

**Table 6: Top Six Recreation Division Program Areas by Enrollment: 2019/2022 Average**

Recreation Programs	FY2019 Actual	FY2020 Actual	FY2021 Estimate	FY2022 Projected
<b>Programs</b>				
Camps	1,357	230	285	1,500
School Age Programs	316	311	30	350
Gymnastics	2,551	1,055	700	2,000
Leisure Classes	1,723	290	75	1,500
Special Events	7,658	257	-	6,000
Sports	15,479	10,765	250	20,000
Teens	751	-	-	800
Great Mills Pool Programs	29,880	17,431	18,850	40,000
Spray Park	1,697	510	200	2,700
Skate Park	500	1,150	1,000	1,200
Chancellor's Run Regional Park Activity Center	13,747	12,418	13,000	15,000
Therapeutic	403	494	-	500
<b>Wicomico Shores Golf Course</b>				
Rounds of Golf	25,352	19,410	24,331	25,000
Junior Golf	18	24	46	68
<b>Museums</b>				
Visitors	16,536	12,930	7,016	13,475
Museum Outreach Programs	999	281	150	500
Boat Passengers to St. Clements Island	3,098	2,736	2,560	3,250
<b>Total Participation</b>	<b>122,065</b>	<b>80,292</b>	<b>68,493</b>	<b>133,843</b>

Source: St. Mary's County Department of Recreation and Parks – FY22 Adopted Budget

Based on the data reviewed and feedback from staff, enrollment in the majority of department programs appears to be increasing to pre-pandemic participation. Comparing FY2020 actual participation to FY2022 projected participation, the county anticipates a 102% increase, this will restore it to FY2019 participation numbers and higher.

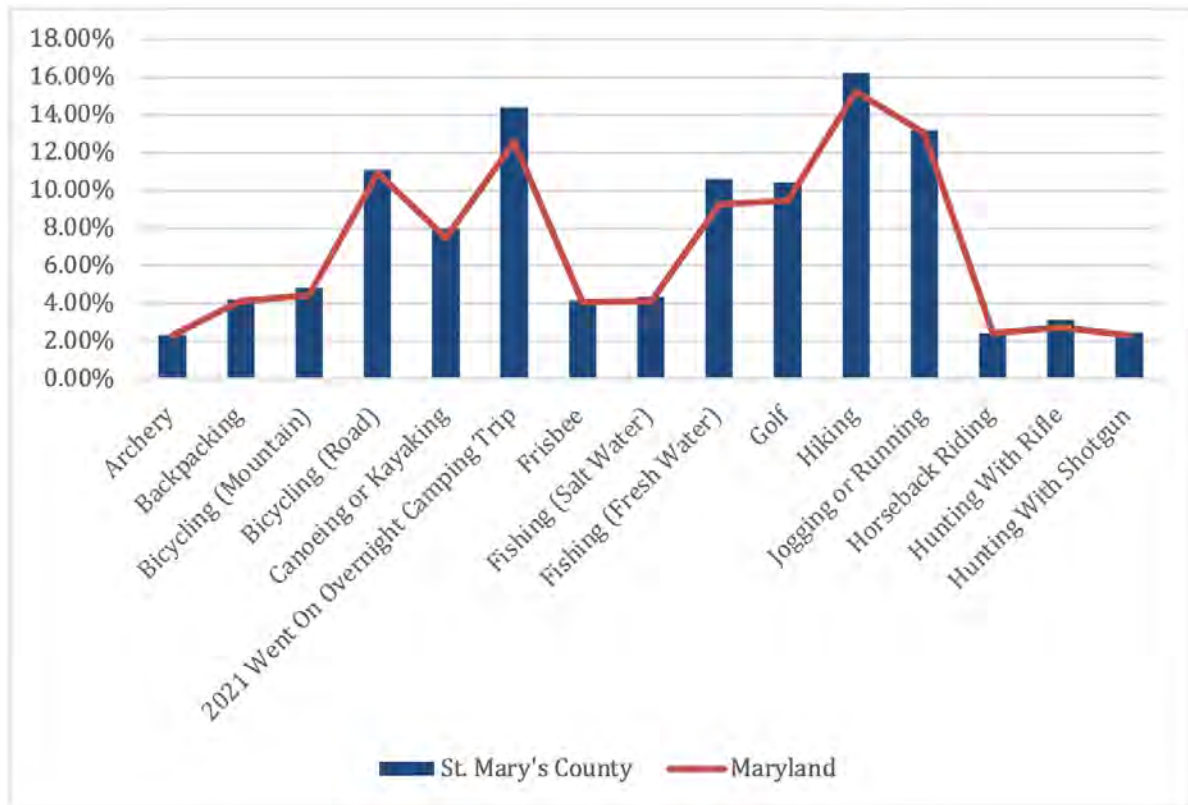
The statistics on recreation program participation and facility usage tracked by the Recreation Division are highly important to consider in decision-making. A significant portion of the community is known to utilize the diverse services the division offers, and staff report that their ability to grow and improve program offerings to meet increasing demands is heavily stifled by the limitations of the existing facilities in which the division operates. Several the division's key facilities are old, repurposed county school buildings and grounds that struggle to meet existing program demands.

### 3.3.6 Estimated Household Participation in Recreation, Sports, Fitness, and Leisure Activities

In addition to data from the Recreation Division, the overall participation rate of St. Mary's County households in a variety of recreation, sports, fitness, and leisure activities was estimated using data-driven models. This analysis used Esri Business Analyst models that combined demographic, lifestyle, and spending estimates and yielded insight into the general participation habits of county residents in recreation, fitness, and leisure activities. The models also estimated the countywide economic impact of spending by households on various recreation, fitness, and leisure activities. Data used in the analysis was the most currently available from Esri as of December 2021. The full findings of this analysis are included in *Appendix C*.

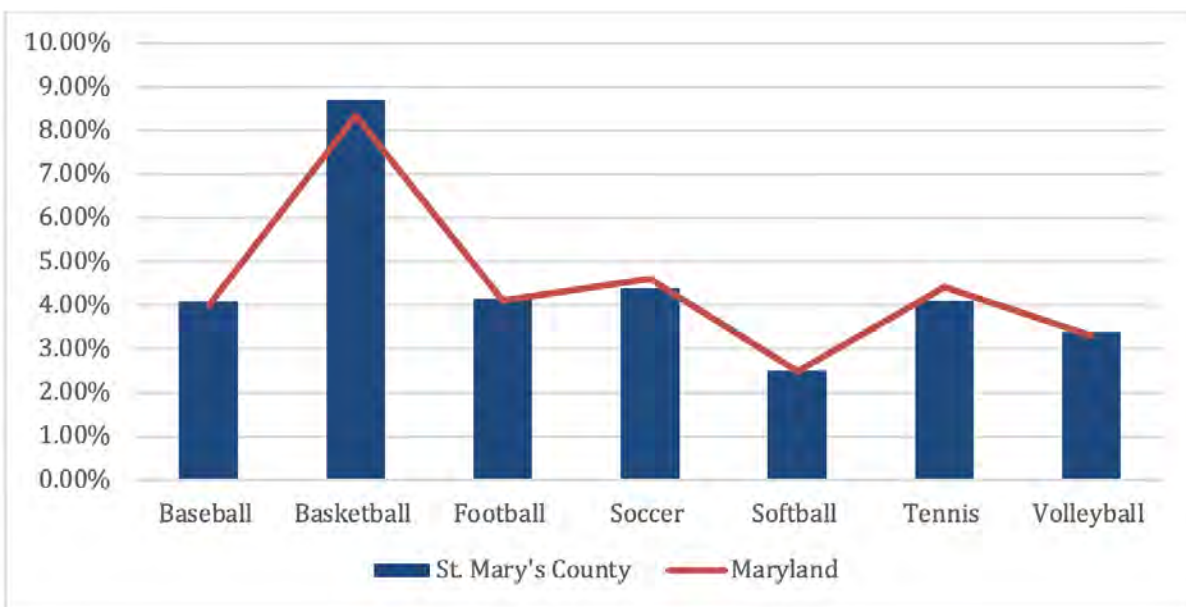
The figures below highlight the estimated participation rate of county households in a variety of outdoor recreation, sports, fitness, and leisure activities.

**Figure 10: Adult Participation in Outdoor Recreation**



Source: Esri Business Analyst

**Figure 11: Adult Participation in Team Sports**



Source: Esri Business Analyst

In addition to being enjoyable, participation sports, recreation, fitness, and leisure activities can have community-wide positive impacts, including in public health, maintaining community vitality, and supporting a diverse economic base. As further documented in *Appendix C*, Esri estimates that the average household in St. Mary’s County spends an average of \$1,163 annually on general fees and costs associated with participation in recreation, sports, and outdoor leisure activities. This equates to a total estimated annual countywide economic impact of over \$47.7 million.

### 3.3.7 Children in Nature

The majority of St. Mary’s County parks and open spaces provide opportunities for children and families to engage with nature. Even sites with developed recreation facilities—such as Lancaster Park and its heavily utilized athletic fields—often include undeveloped natural areas.

The one-mile perimeter loop trail at Lancaster Park was reported to be a popular amenity, often used by families while visiting the site for a child’s sports team practice. The Department of Recreation and Parks’ Recreation Division also provided programs for engaging children, youth, and teens with nature in parks and open spaces. Several programs run by the Recreation Division include:

- **Teens on the Go:** a six-week summer camp program for kids going into 8th grade through 12th grade that focuses on getting out and learning tools to explore St. Mary’s County. Campers geocache throughout the county, in parks, and through the woods to find small trinkets in hidden places.

**The Maryland Partnership for Children in Nature is a public and private partnership that has worked collaboratively to:**

- Provide opportunities for children to play and learn outdoors
- Promote environmental literacy
- Foster collaboration among educators
- Improve student and teacher outdoor learning experiences

- **Outdoor Camp:** a multiple-week youth camp spent outdoors learning about nature, survival skills, and the environment all while making new friends and lasting memories.
- **More to Explore Passport Program:** encourages children and adults to get outside and enjoy parks, historic sites, water trails, and farmers’ markets throughout the county, and to tour beautiful Leonardtown. Each location has a post with a marker for participants to do a rubbing in their passport and/or a password to enter on the online version. Participants who visit 12 of the 22 sites are entered into a prize drawing.

The Recreation and Parks Department’s Museum Division encourages youth engagement and learning about the county’s cultural and natural resources through interactive exhibits, events, nature scavenger hunts for children at the St. Clement’s Island Museum, and outreach programs and tours with county public schools.

In addition to programs the Recreation and Parks Department manages, several user groups manage the 1,020-acre state-owned Elms Property. About 476 acres are leased to St. Mary’s County for the St. Mary’s County Public Schools’ Elms Environmental Education Center and the Recreation and Parks’ Elms Beach Park (and separate county-managed bow-hunting area). Maryland Department of Natural Resources manages the remaining 544 acres for hunting and conservation purposes.

The Elms Environmental Education Center “Lifelines of the Chesapeake” teaches environmental ecology and related subjects to K-12 students year-round. The site includes a number of study areas such as pathways, bridges, beach areas, ponds, wetlands, and woods. The facility hosts over 7,000 students and over 1,000 chaperones annually; most are from St. Mary’s County, but some are from the southern Maryland region and Washington, D.C. Plans propose the creation of additional trails, field sites, and an outpost classroom.



### 3.3.8 Planning for Coastal Resiliency

With numerous waterfront parks and facilities spread along 500+ miles of coastline, St. Mary's County has undertaken measures in its capital planning and facility management of coastal resources that consider the rising sea level and increased potential for storm damage and flooding of shoreline areas. Some practices put into use at public landings and waterfront assets include new piers that are now being constructed at higher elevations, and installing floating docks where practical.

Low-impact development tools, such as raingardens and Bay-wise plantings, are being installed at coastal sites, including the Piney Point Lighthouse, to improve stormwater management and flood control. In other areas, the county seeks to mitigate damage caused by flooding by removing inappropriate land uses, naturalizing flood-prone areas, and installing a use/facility that is more appropriate to the site. For example, near the headwaters of the St. Mary's River, the county converted a flood-prone site—which included residential apartments—into the Great Mills Canoe and Kayak Launch.

The Recreation and Parks Department plans to take all practical opportunities to use these types of measures at coastal sites, and will continue to explore new ideas to address sea-level rise and other coastal concerns while seeking to maximize citizen access to waterfront areas. Future park Master Plans will contain research and plans to address environmental factors contributing to or in response to coastal resiliency. The county has used programs, including the State Waterway Improvement Fund, to improve public access to waterfront recreation opportunities and fund other shoreline improvement projects.

## 3.4 Level of Service Analysis

### 3.4.1 Measuring the Current Level of Service of the Public Parks and Recreation System

To measure the level of service provided by the existing system of public parks, recreation, and open space facilities in St. Mary's County, the analysis used a multifaceted approach that reviewed current perceptions and interests, the influence of existing user demand, the likely impacts of continued population growth, the Maryland Park Equity mapping, and a study of the general accessibility of park system assets throughout the county. The components of this level of service are listed below:

- Current demographic and recreation participation trends
- Analysis of perceptions and information from public, stakeholder, and staff engagement
- Analysis of open link survey data regarding current usage and satisfaction with the existing system of parks and recreation amenities
- GIS-based proximity and access analysis of public parks and recreation facilities
- Review of the Park Equity mapping
- Summary of findings and considerations for goals and recommendations

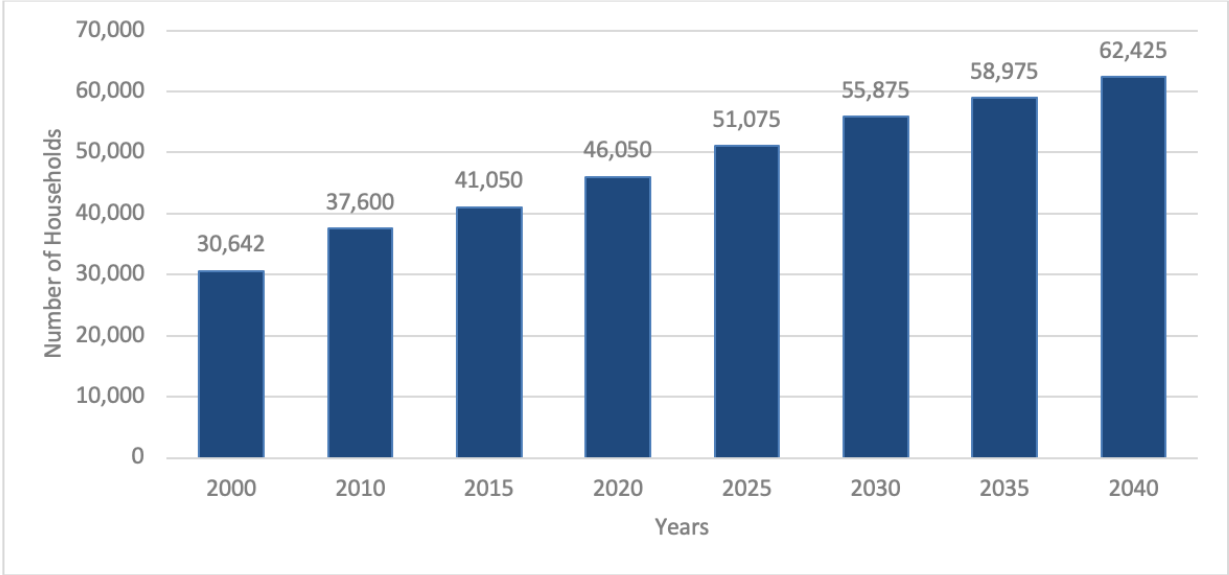
Each component of the level of service analysis contributes information, ideas, and perceptions that help create a comprehensive view of where, and how, the county should consider making strategic investments to improve public parks and recreation resources for the public benefit. Key findings from the review of all level of service components were used to develop goals and recommendations to guide the enhancement of county parks, recreation, cultural, and open-space amenities and delivery of associated public services.



### 3.4.2 Summary of Demographic and Recreation Participation Trends

As presented in demographics and recreation trends reports included as *Appendices B* and *C*, the overall population of the county has been growing, and that trend is projected to continue at a strong rate. *Figure 2* noted the projected population growth; *Figure 12* notes the projected household growth.

**Figure 12: Projected Growth of Households in St. Mary’s County**



Source: Maryland Department of Planning

As discussed in *Section 3.3 Participation in Parks and Recreation Activities*, current participation figures tracked by the Recreation Division, and data-driven estimates of household participation in recreation and sports-related activities indicate that publicly accessible programs, parks, and other recreation opportunities are important components of the quality of life in St. Mary’s County. Quite simply, there are tens of thousands of known participants in recreation activities provided by the Recreation Division, and Esri models estimate strong overall countywide household participation in a variety of sports, fitness, recreation, and outdoor activities. Based on this information, it is reasonable to assume that a significant percentage of residents and visitors of St. Mary’s County regularly utilize public parks, recreation amenities, public landings, cultural sites, and open spaces at their leisure. Currently, the county does not formally measure open usage of many of its amenities, but it is considering implementing some means of gathering additional usage data.

When considering the existing solid interest and participation in recreation activities—and high demand for facilities—in tandem with strong population growth, the county should expect to see an increase in use of, and demand for, public parks, recreation facilities, and programs.

### 3.4.3 Summary of Findings From Public, Stakeholder, and Staff Engagement

As part of the update of this LPPRP, GreenPlay/BerryDunn held conversations, focus group meetings, and public meetings with county elected and appointed officials, the Town Administrator for the Town of Leonardtown, county staff, stakeholders, and the public. All were invited to provide their feedback, ideas, and perceptions regarding the current public parks and recreation system in the county. The public and stakeholder engagement process used in the planning process is outlined in *Section 2.2 Planning Process*

*and Public Engagement.* The majority of staff and stakeholder feedback was received during multiple meetings, and six stakeholder focus group sessions were held in October of 2021. The majority of public feedback received during the planning process was from an internet-based survey. A summary of the key findings from staff and the six focus groups is as follows:

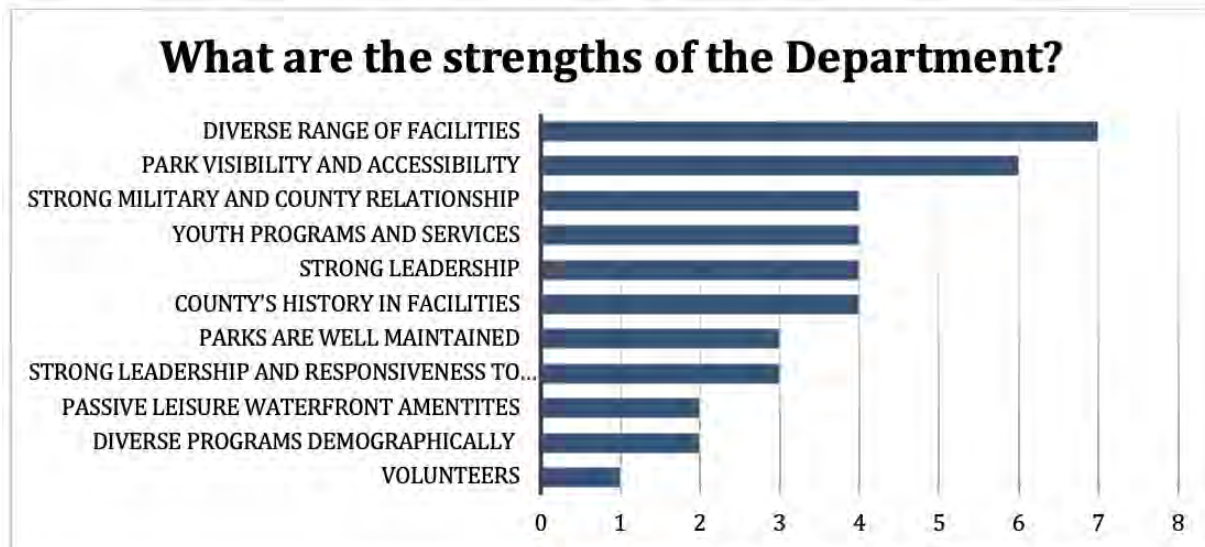
### **County Staff:**

- Recreation and parks facilities and programs receive heavy use, with demand for some resources exceeding program or facility capacity.
- The installation of synthetic turf fields at Chancellor’s Run Regional Park, Chaptico Park, and Lancaster Park has greatly increased the availability and usage of both rectangle and diamond fields. These upgrades have provided high-quality, playable fields for all user groups.
- Heavy usage and demand on athletic fields taxes the ability of the existing field maintenance program to keep the fields in high-quality, playable shape for users. Turf is not allowed adequate time to recover from intense usage, which degrades the quality of the facility.
- Much Recreation Division programming is operated out of former county schools, or civic buildings that were adaptively reused as recreation and activity centers. Most of these facilities are far past their practical useful lifespan and need repair, renovation, or replacement.
- The addition of the Wellness and Aquatics Center at the College of Southern Maryland’s Leonardtown Campus has filled a gap for aquatics and fitness and wellness programming. The facility includes a 25-yard competition pool, warm-water therapy pool with zero depth entry, a weight training room, and two group fitness/dance studios. The facility had opened just prior to the public engagement portion of this planning process.
- Increasing tourism activity is a current focus for county administration and elected officials. The Tourism and Hospitality Master Planning was completed in 2017. As part of that process, and logically so, the Recreation and Parks Department, and many of the facilities it operates, were identified as key components of any future tourism effort the county undertakes.
- Museums operated by the Recreation and Parks Department need additional staffing and capital resources to keep up with needed facility upgrades, enhancements, and maintaining and growing exhibits and special events.



### 3.4.4 Summary of the Six Focus Group Meetings

The figures below show the responses from the six focus group attendees to a variety of questions. GreenPlay/BerryDunn provided the full summary to the department and posted it on the department's website.



Focus group participants were also asked about challenges the department was facing. Their top five responses were:

- Lack of and age of indoor facilities
- Field maintenance
- Lack of trail and bike lane connectivity countywide
- Distribution of park amenities
- Market to the public

When asked about additional recreation activities, participants' top five responses were:

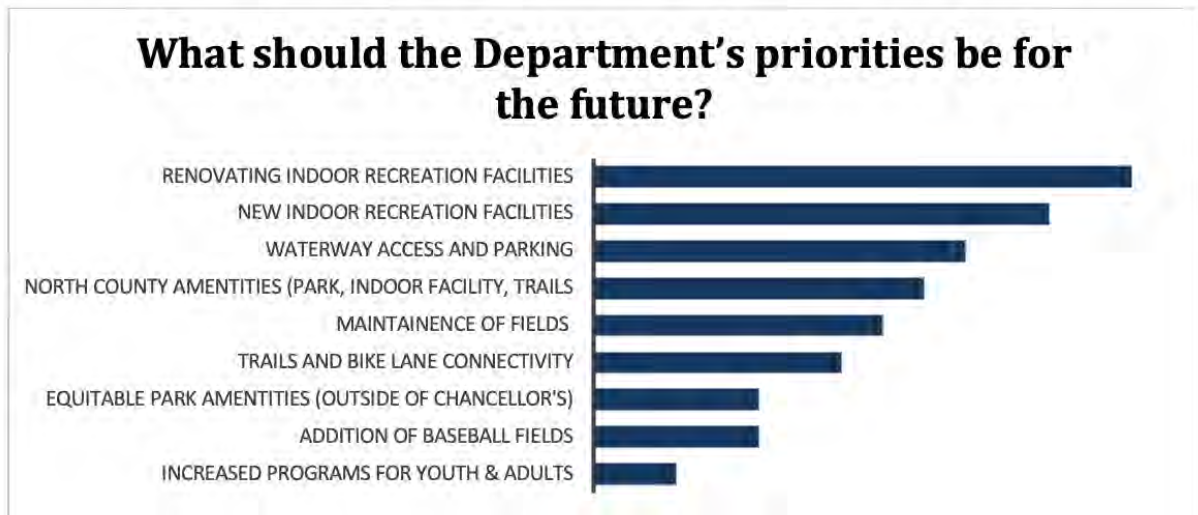
- Conservation education
- Rental of equipment (bikes, kayaks, paddleboards)
- Dance and music classes and programs
- Additional special event offerings
- More swimming opportunities

Participants were asked about new or additional facilities or amenities, and their top five responses were:

- Indoor recreational locations
- Additional baseball fields
- An outdoor event pavilion
- Indoor multisport complex
- Safe bike routes, extended trails

When asked about the impact of the growing population in the county, participants top concerns were:

- Lack of recreational amenities for the growing population demand
- Parking at central parks
- Traffic
- Tourism is flooding the parks and waterways
- Need for safe alternative modes of transportation
- Loss of agricultural land to development



### 3.4.5 Summary of Findings From the LPPRP Survey

A survey consisting of 17 questions focused on gauging people's perceptions of public parks, recreation opportunities, museums, and open space in St. Mary's County was open to the public for the month of October 2021. A similar survey was conducted for the 2017 LPPRP. Both surveys were hosted in an open-link, online format on the county Department of Recreation and Parks website. GreenPlay/BerryDunn sent invitations to participate in the 2021 survey to thousands of residents who are signed up for recreation programs, and publicized the survey on the Department of Recreation and Parks website and various social media accounts. The survey received 844 complete responses.

As was the case in 2012 and 2017, the 2021 survey was not intended to be statistically valid and was hosted in a fashion that allowed open participation. Unlike a statistically valid survey, the open method used in this process did not appear to capture a strong response from people who do not currently use county parks and recreation amenities. However, the overall results of the survey provide insight into the general attitudes and perceptions of self-identified county parks and recreation amenity users. The administration of a statistically valid survey in the future could be beneficial for capturing the opinions of residents who may not be regular users of county parks and recreation facilities and programs. A full report of the survey, including extensive comments submitted from respondents, was created as a resource document for the staff of the Department of Recreation and Parks. A full summary of key findings from each survey question is included as *Appendix D*.

The overall key findings of the survey are noted below:

- 844 responses were received October of 2021.
- 94% of survey respondents identified as residents of St. Mary's County.
- 98% of respondents indicated that they or a member of their household had utilized a county park, recreation facility, museum, or public landing, and 67% indicated visitation to Chancellor's Run Park in the past year.
- Respondents indicated that the facilities they visited most frequently in the past year were Chancellor's Run Park, Dorsey Park, Lancaster Park, Three Notch Trail, and John Baggett Park.
- The general condition of the facilities operated by the Department of Recreation and Parks was considered good by survey respondents.
- The majority of respondents indicated that the availability of county parks, recreation, and open-space opportunities is important, and the creation of new parks and open spaces along with expanded opportunities for recreation would enhance the community/county.
- Of the programs offered by the Recreation Division, sports programs had the highest levels of participation by survey respondents, followed by fitness/wellness and special events.
- When asked about getting information about programs and services, 51% of respondents indicated receiving information from the department website, followed by referral/word of mouth, Facebook, and the recreation program guides.
- When asked what future facilities the county should consider investing in to meet the needs of the growing population, 63% of respondents indicated an indoor recreation center, 55% noted more hiking and biking trails, 47% suggested more beach and water access, and 37% noted an outdoor sports complex.

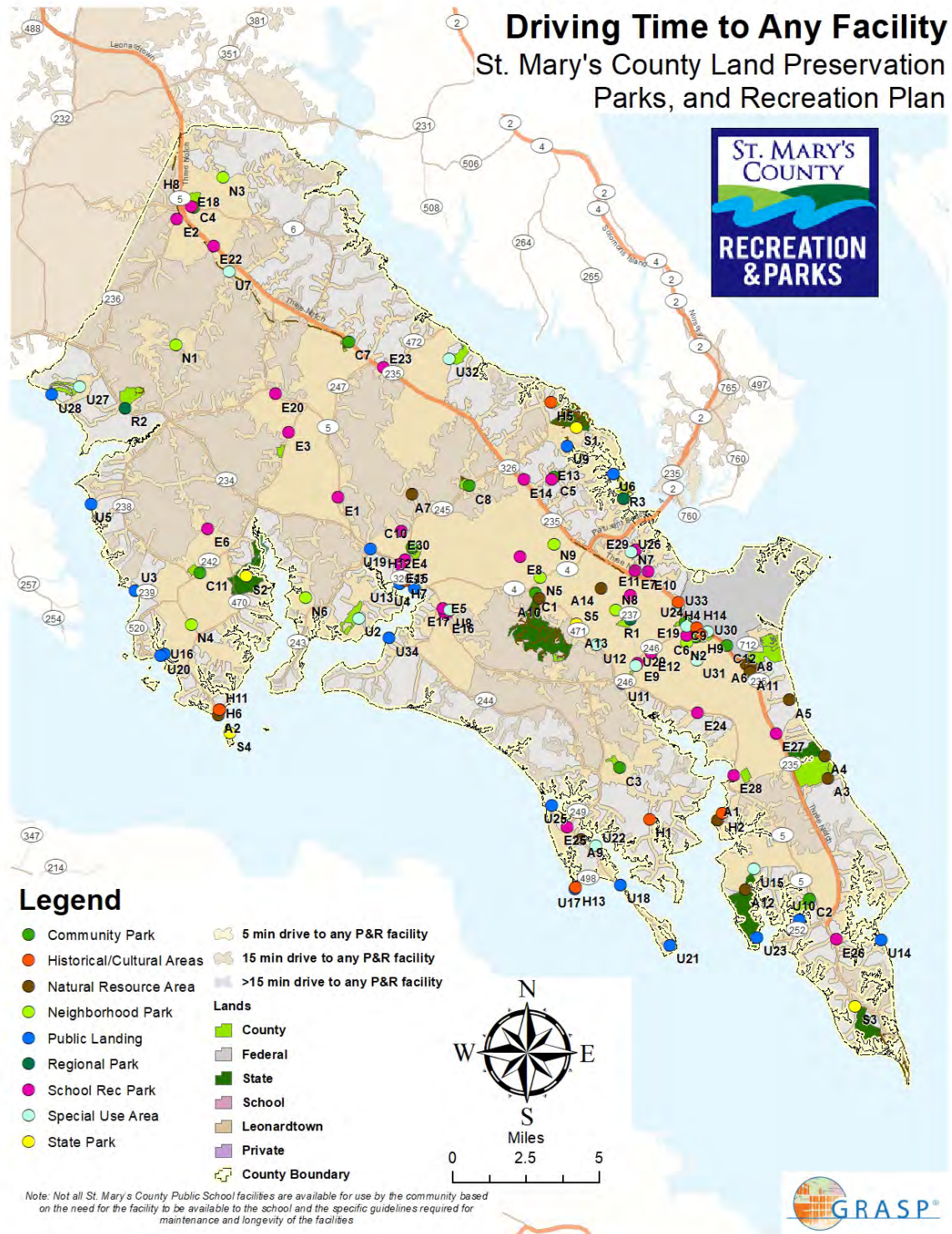
### 3.4.6 Findings From GIS-Based Proximity/Access Analysis

GreenPlay/BerryDunn measured general access to all county- and state-managed parks and areas that provide public recreation opportunities as part of this planning process. This analysis reviewed the distribution of these public assets throughout the county, the distribution of the county's population, and the estimated accessibility of parks and recreation assets. As a largely rural county, park facility users and program participants expect to travel by automobile to access recreation opportunities.

During the planning process, staff and stakeholders indicated a willingness to travel relatively short distances to use county parks. Access and proximity were estimated with areas of the county illustrated within a 5-minute drive or a 15-minute drive of parks or recreation facilities. (Drive-times were generated through Esri ArcGIS Online Data Enrichment tools.) In general, areas within five minutes of a park or recreation site were considered to have good access to that amenity. Areas within 5 – 15 minutes from a park or recreation facility were believed to have good-to-moderate access to these amenities. For areas greater than 15 minutes were low population areas and more rural so not indicating a deficiency or requiring acquisition of additional lands.

GreenPlay/BerryDunn conducted additional analysis of specific, county-managed park, recreation, and museum assets. Maps illustrating the distribution of public parks and recreation assets, and areas of the county with relatively easy access to these amenities are included in this analysis. Larger, foldout versions of these maps are available in *Appendix G*.

Figure 13: Driving Time to Any Parks and Recreation Facility or Site



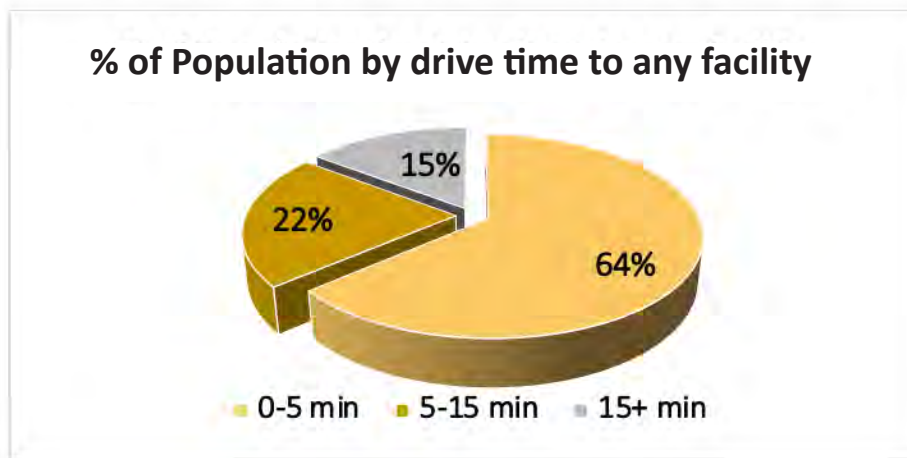
Source: St. Mary's County Department of Recreation and Parks, and GreenPlay, LLC

Note: Drive time analysis requires points to be located nearest a well known public road therefore location points have been placed nearest to the main park or facility. It is assumed that if a user has access to the main entrance they have access to all elements within the site. For greater detail and more precise locations for water access points see Figure 18: Driving Time to Public Landings and Parks With Water Access

Figure 14 illustrates the county's areas within short driving distances of all public parks, recreation, museums, and open spaces in St. Mary's County. As shown, at least one public recreation site, park, museum, or open space is accessible within a 15-minute drive of nearly every point in the county. Overall, residents and visitors appear to have relatively easy access to parks and places to enjoy sports, fitness, culture, and recreation activities.

Based on Esri's Data Enrichment tools that use U.S. Census data, the population percentage in each of the three drive-times (0 to 5 minutes, 5 to 15 minutes, and over 15 minutes) can be estimated using GIS analysis. The following pie chart displays the percentages for access to any facility. In this case, 64% of residents have access to a facility within a 5-minute drive; 22% must drive 5 – 15 minutes; and 15% must drive over 15 minutes to access a facility. Similar analysis will be applied to all of the following maps. Drive-time-colored regions on the maps are similar colors on the pie chart.

**Figure 14: Percentage of Population by Drive-Time**



Source: Esri Data Enrichment and US Census data

**Table 7: Parks and Recreation Inventory**

State Parks	
S1	Greenwell State Park
S2	Newtowne Neck State Park
S3	Point Lookout State Park
S4	St. Clement's Island State Park (Blackstone Isl.)
S5	St. Mary's River State Park
Regional Parks	
R1	Chancellor's Run Regional Park & Activity Center
R2	Chaptico Park
R3	Myrtle Point Park
Community Parks	
C1	Beavan Property
C2	Cardinal Gibbons Park
C3	George E. Cecil Memorial Park
C4	Fifth District Park

- C5 Hollywood Soccer Complex
- C6 John G. Lancaster Park at Willows Road
- C7 John V. Baggett Park at Laurel Grove
- C8 Judge P.H. Dorsey Memorial Park
- C9 Nicolet Park
- C10 Robert Miedzinski Park (Leonard Hall Rec. Center)
- C11 Seventh District Park
- C12 Carver Community Park & Rec. Center (former Carver Elem.)

#### **Neighborhood Parks**

- N1 Country Lakes Park
- N2 Jarboesville Park
- N3 Laurel Ridge Park
- N4 Seventh District Optimist Park
- N5 St. Andrews Estate Park
- N6 St. Clements Shores Park
- N7 Town Creek Park
- N8 Tubman Douglas Field
- N9 Wildewood Recreation Area

#### **School Recreation Areas**

- E1 Banneker Elementary School
- E2 White Marsh Elem. School
- E3 Chopticon High School
- E4 College of Southern Maryland
- E5 Dr. James A. Forest Career & Tech Center
- E6 Dynard Elem. School
- E7 Esperanza Middle School
- E8 Evergreen Elem. School
- E9 Great Mills High School
- E10 Green Holly School
- E11 Greenview Knolls Elem. School
- E12 GW Carver Elem. School
- E13 Hollywood Elem. School
- E14 Hollywood Rec. Center & Field (Old Hollywood School)
- E15 Leonardtown Elem. School/Park
- E16 Leonardtown High School
- E17 Leonardtown Middle School
- E18 Lettie Marshall Dent. School
- E19 Lexington Park Elem.School
- E20 Margaret Brent Middle School & Rec Center
- E22 Mechanicsville Elem. School



- E23 Oakville Elem. School
- E24 Park Hall Elem. School
- E25 Piney Point Elem. School
- E26 Ridge Elem. School/Park
- E27 Spring Ridge Middle School
- E28 St. Mary's College of Maryland
- E29 Town Creek Elem. School
- E30 WF Duke Elem. School/former Hayden Property

#### **Natural Resource Area**

- A1 Chancellor's Point Natural History Area
- A2 Coltons Point Park
- A3 Elms Beach Park & Environmental Center
- A4 Elms Property
- A5 Facchina Property
- A6 Fenwick Property (County Rec Area)
- A7 McIntosh Run Wildlife Management Area
- A8 Palm Property
- A9 Piney Point Aquaculture Center
- A10 Salem State Forest
- A11 Shannon Farm Park
- A12 St. Inigoes State Forest
- A13 St. Mary's River Conservation Land
- A14 St. Mary's River State Park - Wildlands Area

#### **Historical / Cultural Areas**

- H1 Drayden African-American Schoolhouse
- H2 Historic St. Mary's City
- H3 Old Jail Museum
- H4 Patuxent River Naval Air Museum
- H5 Historic Sotterley Plantation
- H6 St. Clement's Island Museum
- H7 Tudor Hall Information Center
- H8 Ye Coole Springs
- H9 United States Colored Troop Memorial Monument
- H10 Point No Point Lighthouse
- H11 Lil Red Schoolhouse
- H12 Leonardtown Arts Center
- H13 Black Panther Historic Shipwreck Preserve
- H14 African-American Monument and Freedom Park

## Trail Corridor

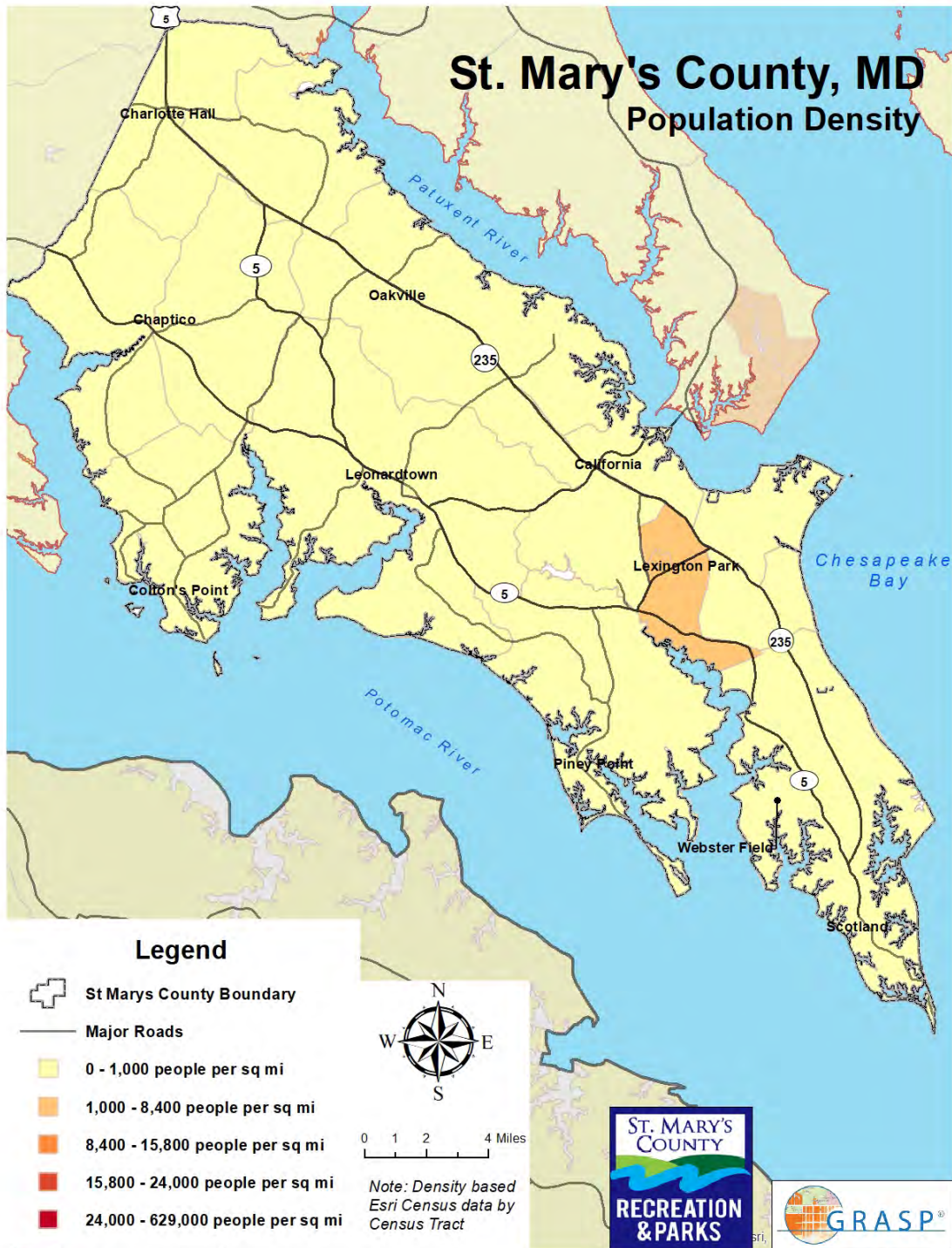
T1 Three Notch Trail

## Special Use (Including Public Water Access)

U2 Breton Bay Golf and Country Club  
U3 Bushwood Wharf  
U4 Camp Calvert Landing  
U5 Chaptico Wharf  
U6 Clarke's Landing  
U7 Dennison Property  
U8 Fairgrounds - St. Mary's County  
U9 Forest Landing  
U10 Fox Harbor Landing  
U11 Great Mills Canoe and Kayak Launch  
U12 Indian Bridge Road Watershed (St. Mary's River Conservation Land)  
U13 Leonardtown Wharf Park  
U14 Murry Road Waterfront Area  
U15 Patuxent River Naval Air Station Webster Field  
U16 Paul Ellis Landing  
U17 Piney Point Lighthouse Museum and Park  
U18 Piney Point Public Landing  
U19 Port of Leonardtown Park & Winery  
U20 River Springs Landing  
U21 St. George's Island Landing  
U22 St. Georges Park  
U23 St. Inigoes Public Landing  
U24 St. Mary's Gymnastics Center  
U25 Tall Timbers Landing  
U26 Town Creek Community Pool  
U27 Wicomico Shores Golf Course  
U28 Wicomico Shores Landing  
U29 Great Mills Pool  
U30 Lexington Manor Passive Park  
U31 Willows Recreation Center  
U32 Snow Hill Park  
U33 Patuxent River Naval Air Station  
U34 Abell's Wharf  
U35 St. Mary's City Park

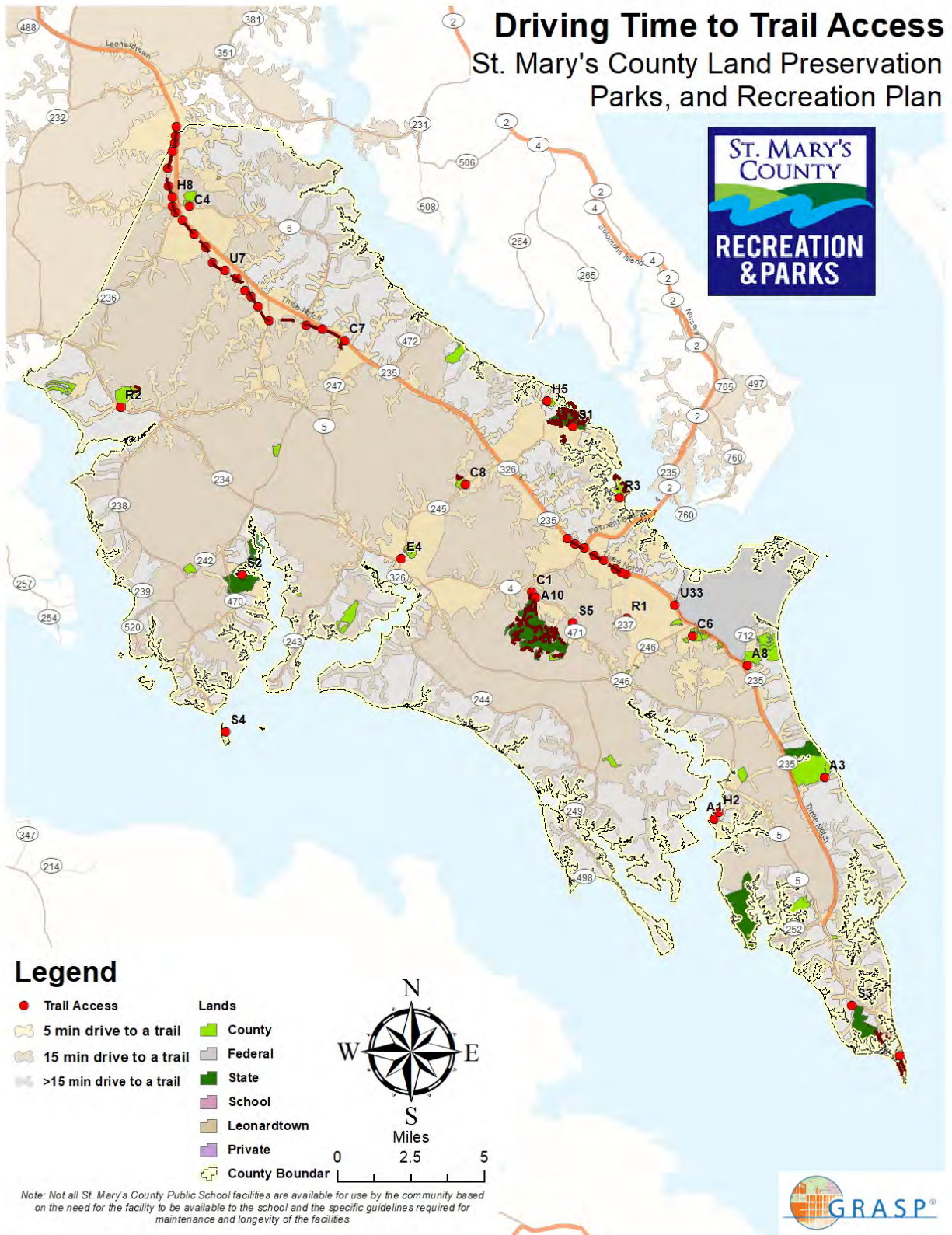
Figure 15 illustrates the population density, helping to gauge where county residents live. Darker shades represent greater population density concentrated in and around Charlotte Hall, California, Lexington Park, and Leonardtown. As previously shown on Figure 13, these higher-density areas also included a higher concentration of existing parks and recreation amenities available for the public.

**Figure 15: Residential/Population Density**



Source: Esri, US Census, St. Mary's County Department of Recreation and Parks, and GreenPlay, LLC

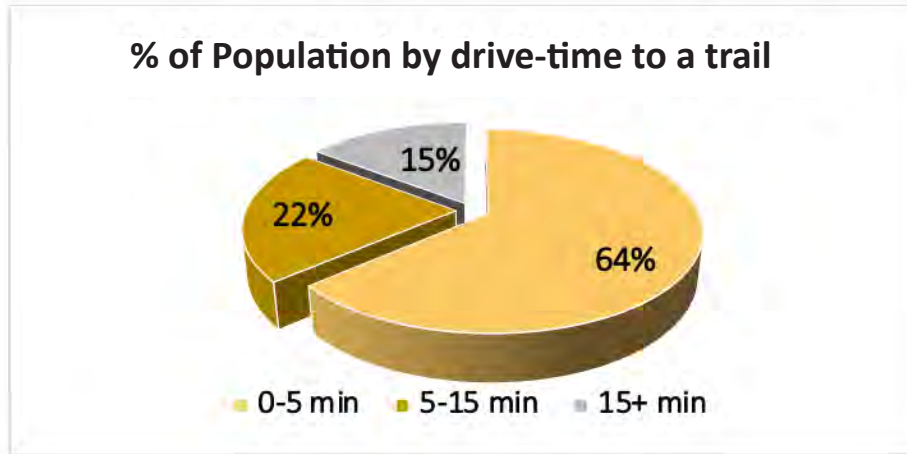
Figure 16: Driving Time to Sites With Trails



Source: St. Mary's County Department of Recreation and Parks, and GreenPlay, LLC

Figure 16 illustrates parks and open-space locations with developed trail systems for public use. For water trail access see Figure 18: Driving Time to Public Water Access at Public Landings and Parks With Water Access Sites with trails are noticeably more limited along the county’s western shoreline. The Three Notch Trail is St. Mary’s County’s most prominent trail and is being constructed on the county-owned Railroad Right-of-Way. When fully built, the trail will provide a dedicated pedestrian and bicycle corridor that will link local places where people live, work, shop, and play. As of 2022, approximately 11 miles of the trail were constructed, the majority in the county’s northern portion. The corridor has a number of formal and informal access points.

**Figure 17: Percentage of Population Drive-Time to Trails**



Source: Esri Data Enrichment and U.S. Census data

**Table 8: Sites with Trails Access**

Trail Corridor	
T1	Three Notch Trail
State Parks	
S1	Greenwell State Park
S2	Newtowne Neck State Park
S3	Point Lookout State Park
S4	St. Clement's Island State Park (Blackstone Isl.)
S5	St. Mary's River State Park
Regional Parks	
R1	Chancellor's Run Regional Park & Activity Center
R2	Chaptico Park
R3	Myrtle Point Park
Community Parks	
C1	Beavan Property
C2	Cardinal Gibbons Park
C3	George E. Cecil Memorial Park
C4	Fifth District Park
C5	Hollywood Soccer Complex

- C6 John G. Lancaster Park at Willows Road
- C7 John V. Baggett Park at Laurel Grove
- C8 Judge P.H. Dorsey Memorial Park

**School Recreation Areas**

- E4 College of Southern Maryland

**Natural Resource Area**

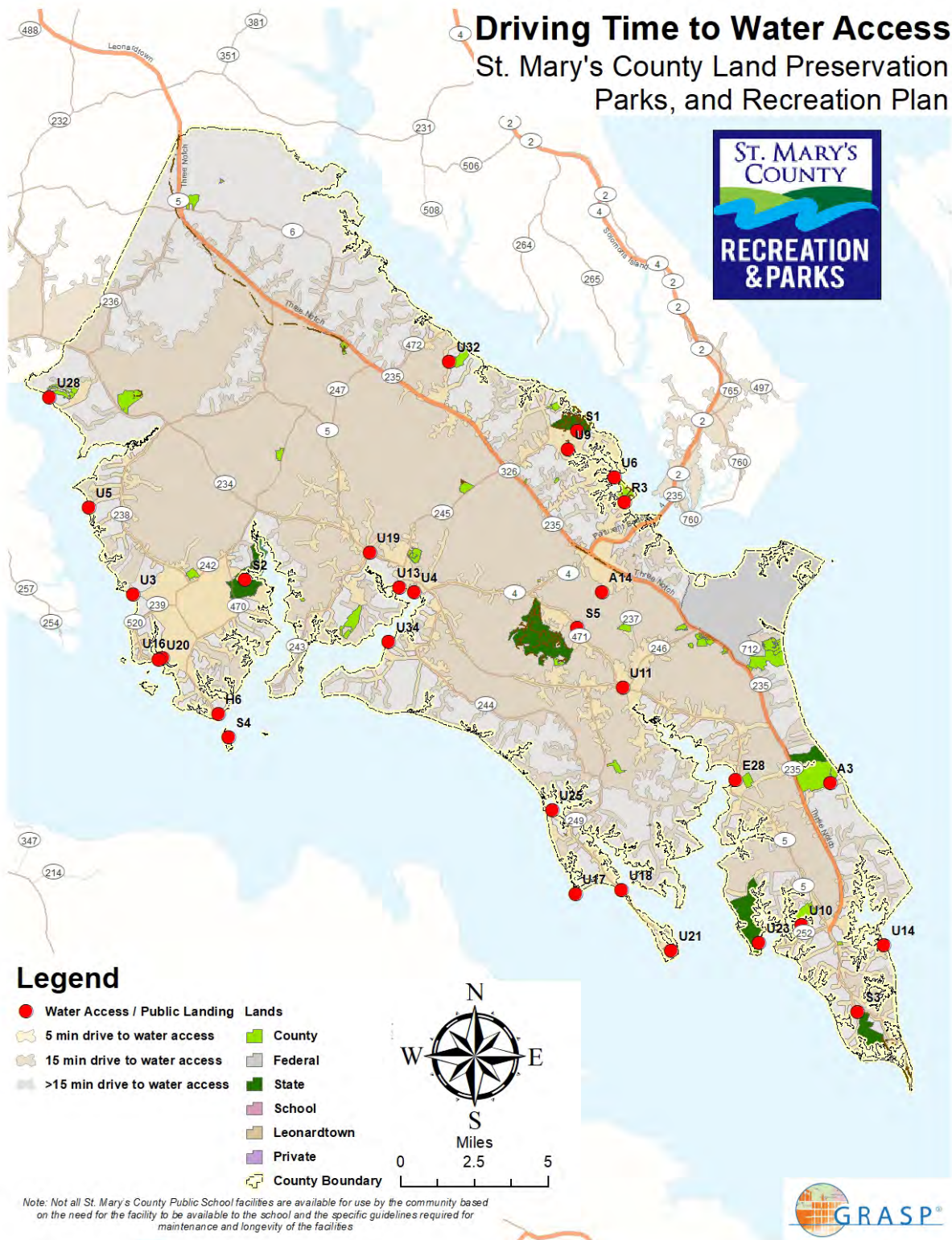
- A1 Chancellor's Point Natural History Area
- A3 Elms Beach Park & Environmental Center
- A4 Elms Property
- A8 Palm Property
- A10 Salem State Forest

**Historical / Cultural Areas**

- H2 Historic St. Mary's City
- H5 Historic Sotterley Plantation
- H8 Ye Coole Springs



Figure 18: Driving Time to Public Water Access at Public Landings and Parks With Water Access

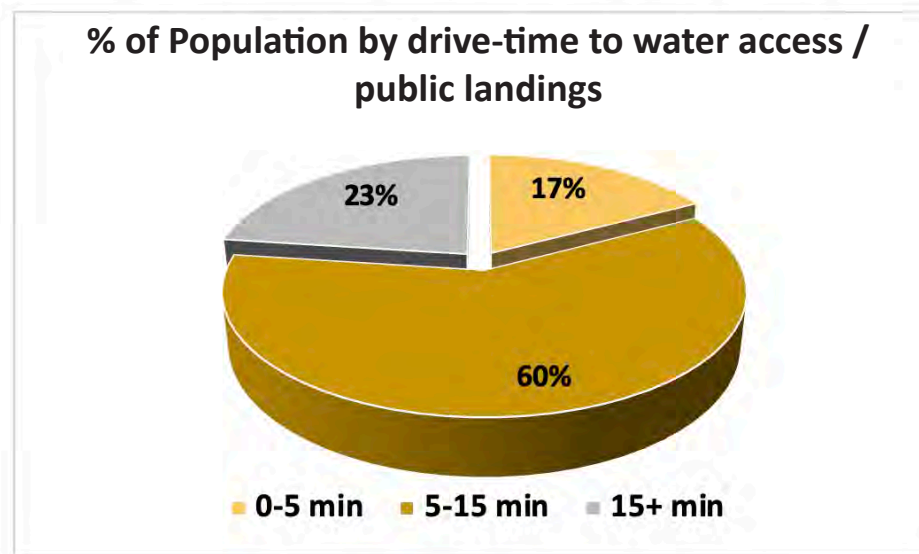


Source: St. Mary's County Department of Recreation and Parks, and GreenPlay, LLC

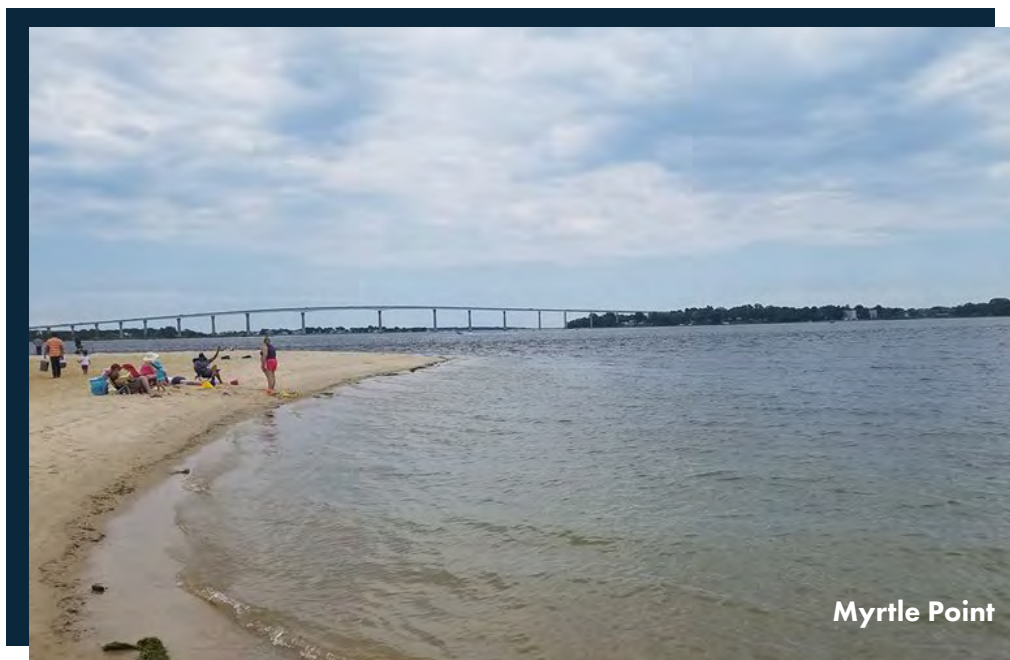
Figure 18 illustrates relatively good access to public landings and parks with water access on the Potomac River. Additionally, most areas in the southernmost portion of the county are within a 15-minute drive of at least one public landing. The opening of the 163-acre Snow Hill Park was a significant achievement toward fulfilling a long-standing need for additional public access to the Patuxent River. The addition of this site greatly improved public water access in the northeastern corner of the County.

Although Figure 19 illustrates a gap in service for public water access (areas further than a 15-minute drive from a water access site) in the northeastern corner of St. Mary's County, additional public water access sites in neighboring Charles and Calvert Counties are within a 15-minute drive of this area, including Gilbert Run Park, Benedict canoe/kayak launch, and Hallowing Point.

Figure 19: Percentage of Population Drive-Time to Water Access



Source: Esri Data Enrichment and U.S. Census data





**Table 9: Sites with Public Landings and Parks with Water Access**

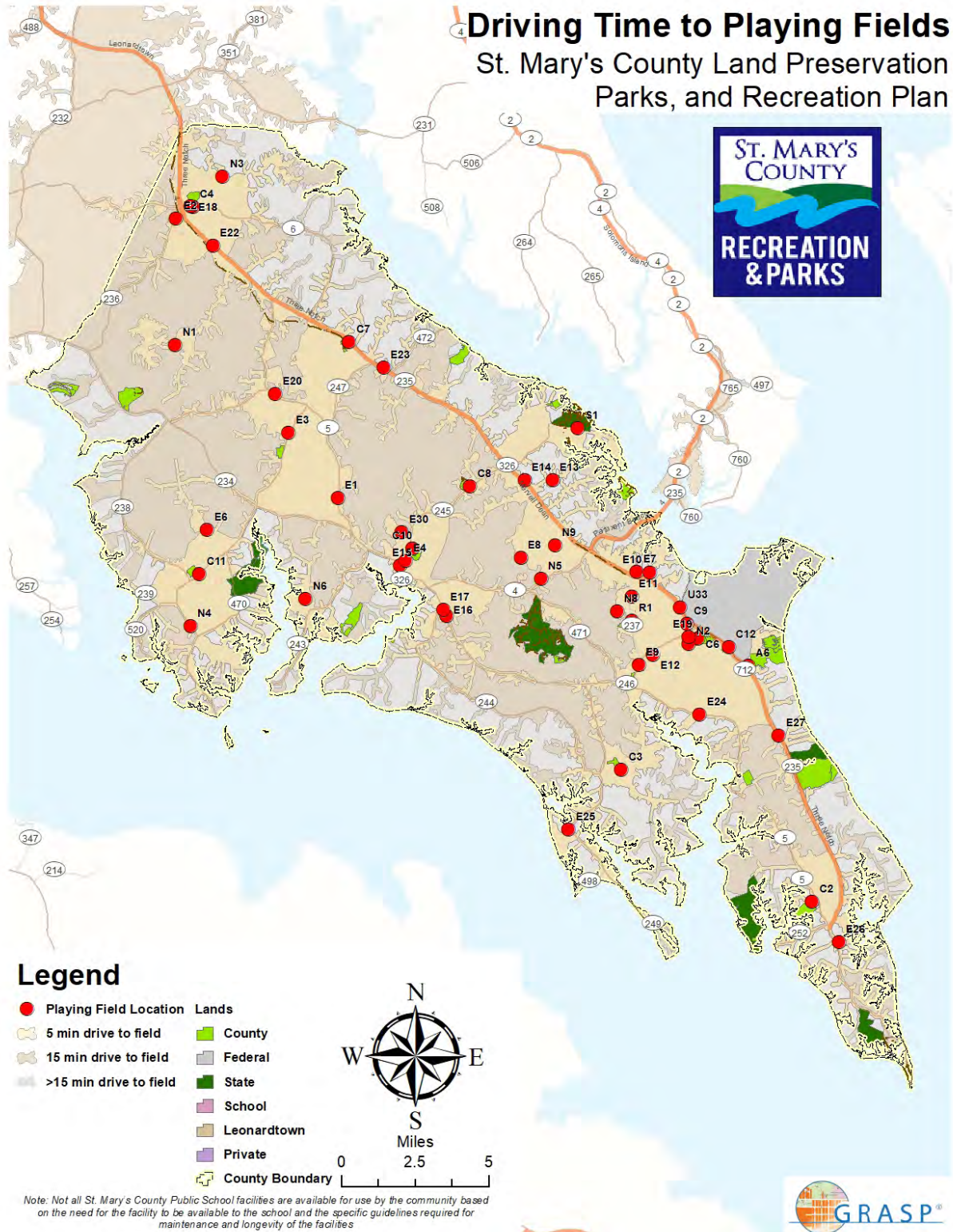
<b>Special Use (Including Public Water Access)</b>				
U34	Abell's Wharf - U34a		Water Access, Developed	Boat ramp and fishing pier. Access site features a floating 16' dock on pier and can accommodate large vessels (up to 26 feet).
	Abell's Wharf - U34b		Water Access, General	Beach. Non-motorized vessels launch from the sandy beach next to the boat ramp.
U3	Bushwood Wharf - U3a		Water Access, Developed	Boat ramp. This boat ramp can accommodate vessels up to 26 feet. Non-motorized vessels launch from the sandy beach area located beyond the fishing pier.
	Bushwood Wharf - U3b		Water Access, General	Non-motorized vessels such as kayaks and canoes launch from the beach area located beyond the fishing pier.
U4	Camp Calvert Landing		Water Access, General	Canoe and kayak launch. This water access site is for non-motorized vessels only. Parking at this site is extremely limited.
U5	Chaptico Wharf		Water Access, Developed	Boat ramp and pier
U6	Clarke's Landing		Water Access, Developed	Boat ramp
A3	Elms Beach Park		Water Access, General	School Environmental Ed. Ctr./County Park with beach, , 2 canoe launch areas, bay fishing
A4	Elms Environmental Education Center		Water Access, General	School Environmental Ed. Ctr./County Park with beach, , 2 canoe launch areas, bay fishing
U9	Forest Landing		Water Access, Developed	Boat ramp and pier. This site has 2 boarding piers and a floating dock adjacent to the pier on the left side.
U10	Fox Harbor Landing		Water Access, Developed	Pier and natural shoreline
U11	Great Mills Canoe and Kayak Launch		Water Access, Developed	Canoe and kayak launch
S1	Greenwell State Park		Water Access, Developed	Non-motorized craft can be walked in (approximately 200 feet) and launched from the beach area. There is also an accessible floating kayak and canoe launch that is wheelchair accessible and open to the public during regular park hours (sunrise to sunset)
U13	Leonardtwn Wharf Park -U13a	Leonardtwn Wharf Public Park (transient dock)	Water Access, Developed	This access site is a transient docking facility featuring a 191-Ft. floating dock with a 40' T-head. The dock can accommodate up to 9 vessels, depending on sizes. The term parking is very limited at this access site.
	Leonardtwn Wharf Park -U13b	Leonardtwn Wharf Public Park (soft access)	Water Access, Developed	The term parking is very limited at this access site.
U14	Murry Road Waterfront Area		Water Access, General	Waterfront passive recreation open space use area

<b>R3</b>	<b>Myrtle Point Park</b>		Water Access, General	Shoreline and beach
<b>S2</b>	<b>Newtowne Neck State Park</b>	Newtowne Neck State Park Paddle-In Campsite (East) -S2a	Water Access, Developed	This site is accessible only by boat and is one of two primitive paddle-in campsites at the Park. Paddle-in camp sites provide a quiet and secluded “backcountry” experience.
	<b>Newtowne Neck State Park</b>	Newtowne Neck State Park Paddle-In Campsite (West) -S2b	Water Access, General	This site is accessible only by boat and is one of two primitive paddle-in campsites at the Park. Paddle-in camp sites provide a quiet and secluded “backcountry” experience.
	<b>Newtowne Neck State Park</b>	Newtowne Neck State Park soft access -S2c	Water Access, General	The park has a natural surface (sand) canoe and kayak access point that is located in a protected cove. Two, primitive, paddle-in campsites.
<b>U16</b>	<b>Paul Ellis Landing</b>		Water Access, Developed	Boat ramp and pier This access site has a natural surface landing that is suitable for small, motorized boats and canoes/kayaks. There is a fixed pier and minimal parking.
<b>U17</b>	<b>Piney Point Lighthouse Museum and Park -U17a</b>		Water Access, Developed	Fishing pier
	<b>Piney Point Lighthouse Museum and Park -U17b</b>		Water Access, Developed	The park's kayak launch is located on the north campus next to the Potomac River Maritime Exhibit. It provides access to Piney Point Creek, a Potomac River tributary. Fishing and crabbing are not allowed.
	<b>Piney Point Lighthouse Museum and Park -U17c</b>		Water Access, General	Coast and Piney Point Bar. There is no boat ramp at this site, but the Piney Point Lighthouse Museum and Historic Park provides transient docking for visitors arriving by boat. The pier connects to the boardwalk .
<b>U18</b>	<b>Piney Point Public Landing</b>		Water Access, Developed	Boat ramp and more
<b>S3</b>	<b>Point Lookout State Park</b>	Point Lookout State Park - Boat Ramps -S3a	Water Access, Developed	A boat launch facility and fish-cleaning station are available for boaters. Canoe rentals and supplies are also available at the camp store.
	<b>Point Lookout State Park</b>	Point Lookout State Park - Camp Store -S3b	Water Access, General	The soft access is located at the sandy beach area behind the store.
	<b>Point Lookout State Park</b>	Point Lookout State Park - Green's Loop -S3c	Water Access, General	Point Lookout State Park - Green's Loop Paddle-in Camp Sites

S3	Point Lookout State Park	Point Lookout State Park - Marshland Nature Center -S3d	Water Access, Developed	Point Lookout State Park - Marshland Nature Center floating dock
S3	Point Lookout State Park	Point Lookout State Park - Pet Beach -S3e	Water Access, General	This site is a sandy beach area (north of the causeway) near the mouth entrance of Tanner Creek. Parking for this access point is along the road shoulder.
S3	Point Lookout State Park	Point Lookout State Park - Swimming Beach -S3f	Water Access, General	Swimming is available at the designated swim area from Memorial Day to Labor Day. The water trail connects to the swimming beach.
U19	Port of Leonardtown Park & Winery		Water Access, Developed	Canoe/Kayak launch and rentals. Leonardtown Winery, Wharf, and
U20	River Springs Landing		Water Access, Developed	Site has minimal parking.
U32	Snow Hill Park -U32a		Water Access, Developed	Pier, bridge, kayak launch This 163 acre park an informal soft access site located behind the barns off of the main road, and 500 feet of public beach along the Patuxent River.
	Snow Hill Park -U32b		Water Access, General	Beach and coast
H6	St. Clement's Island Museum		Water Access, Developed	Pier hours of operation are 8 am to 8:30 pm and there is no fee for using the pier. There is an entrance fee at this site. Parking at this site is limited.
S4	St. Clement's Island State Park		Water Access, Developed	St. Clement's Island is only accessible by boat. the park has a fishing area, hiking, trails, hunting, picnic pavilions (first come/first serve) and a boat dock.
U21	St. George's Island Landing		Water Access, Developed	Pier
U23	St. Inigoes Public Landing		Water Access, Developed	Boat ramp and pier. The term "large boats" is intended as a general reference to ramp capacity. Generally, vessels less than 16 feet in length are considered small and those greater than 16 feet as large.
U35	St. Mary's City Park		Water Access, Developed	The term parking is available off-site off of Old State House Road. The access point is at a sandy beach on the right hand side of Trinity Church Road.
U36	St. Mary's Lake		Water Access, Developed	A day-use service charge per vehicle is required. This Park has an ADA accessible bathroom and seasonal boat launching facility.
U25	Tall Timbers Landing		Water Access, General	This site is suitable for launching and retrieving non-motorized vessels only. The soft access site is the sandy beach next to the pier.
U28	Wicomico Shores Landing -U28a		Water Access, Developed	Pier and boat ramp. The small paved lot is for cars and the large unpaved lot adjacent to it is for trailers. Canoes and kayaks can be launched from the ramp. There are two piers. One is 52' and the other is 600' long.
	Wicomico Shores Landing -U28b		Water Access, General	

This page was intentionally left blank.

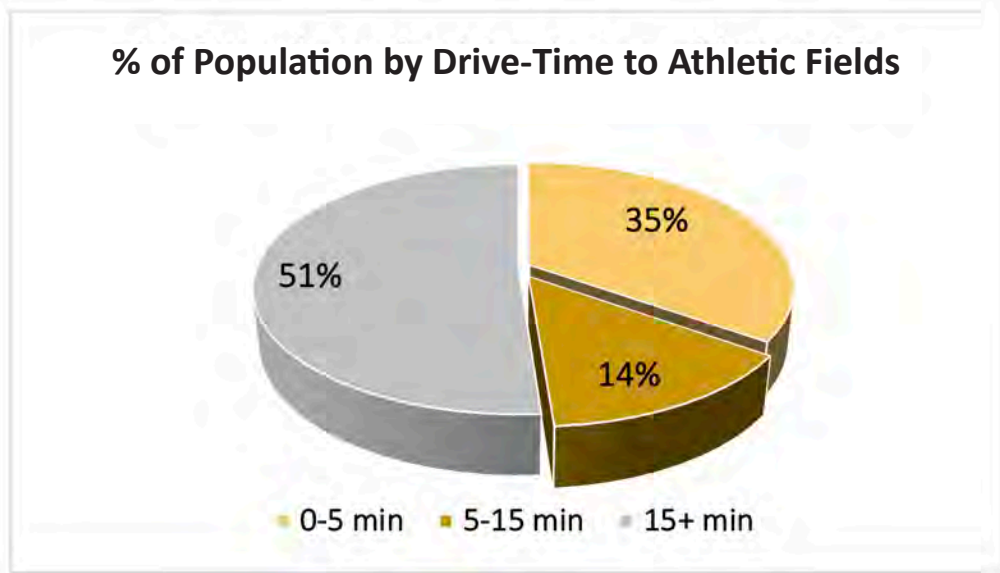
Figure 20: Driving Time to County Parks and Recreation Sites with Playing Fields



Source: St. Mary's County Department of Recreation and Parks, and GreenPlay, LLC

Figure 20 illustrates drive-time distances to county-managed parks and recreation properties and public schools, including playing fields for sports and athletic activities. At least one county park or recreation site with athletic fields is within a 15-minute drive from nearly any point in the county.

**Figure 21: Percentage of Population Drive-Time to Athletic Fields**



Source: Esri Data Enrichment and U.S. Census data

**Table 10: Sites with Playing Fields**

State Parks	
S1	Greenwell State Park
Regional Parks	
R1	Chancellor's Run Regional Park & Activity Center
R2	Chaptico Park
Community Parks	
C2	Cardinal Gibbons Park
C3	George E. Cecil Memorial Park
C4	Fifth District Park
C5	Hollywood Soccer Complex
C6	John G. Lancaster Park at Willows Road
C7	John V. Baggett Park at Laurel Grove
C8	Judge P.H. Dorsey Memorial Park
C9	Nicolet Park
C10	Robert Miedzinski Park (Leonard Hall Rec. Center)
C11	Seventh District Park
C12	Carver Community Park & Rec. Center (former Carver Elem.)
Neighborhood Parks	
N1	Country Lakes Park
N2	Jarboesville Park
N3	Laurel Ridge Park

- N4 Seventh District Optimist Park
- N5 St. Andrews Estate Park
- N6 St. Clements Shores Park
- N7 Town Creek Park
- N8 Tubman Douglas Field
- N9 Wildewood Recreation Area

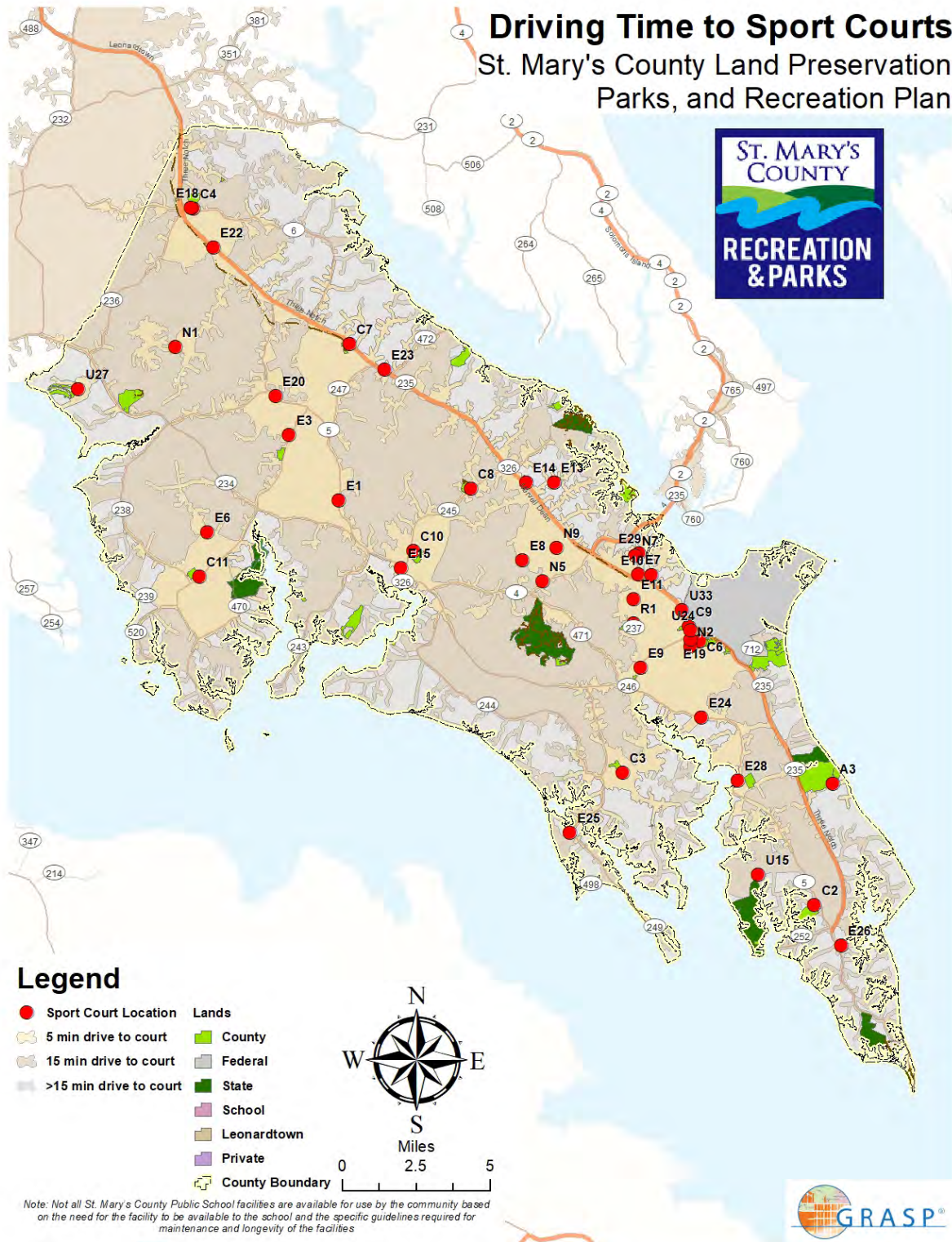
**School Recreation Areas**

- E1 Banneker Elementary School
- E2 White Marsh Elem. School
- E3 Chopticon High School
- E4 College of Southern Maryland
- E5 Dr. James A. Forest Career & Tech Center
- E6 Dynard Elem. School
- E7 Esperanza Middle School
- E8 Evergreen Elem. School
- E9 Great Mills High School
- E10 Green Holly School
- E11 Greenview Knolls Elem. School
- E12 GW Carver Elem. School
- E13 Hollywood Elem. School
- E14 Hollywood Rec. Center & Field (Old Hollywood School)
- E15 Leonardtown Elem. School/Park
- E16 Leonardtown High School
- E17 Leonardtown Middle School
- E18 Lettie Marshall Dent. School
- E19 Lexington Park Elem.School
- E20 Margaret Brent Middle School & Rec Center
- E22 Mechanicsville Elem. School
- E23 Oakville Elem. School
- E24 Park Hall Elem. School
- E25 Piney Point Elem. School
- E26 Ridge Elem. School/Park
- E27 Spring Ridge Middle School
- E28 St. Mary's College of Maryland
- E29 Town Creek Elem. School
- E30 WF Duke Elem. School/former Hayden Property

**Natural Resource Area**

- A6 Fenwick Property (County Rec Area)

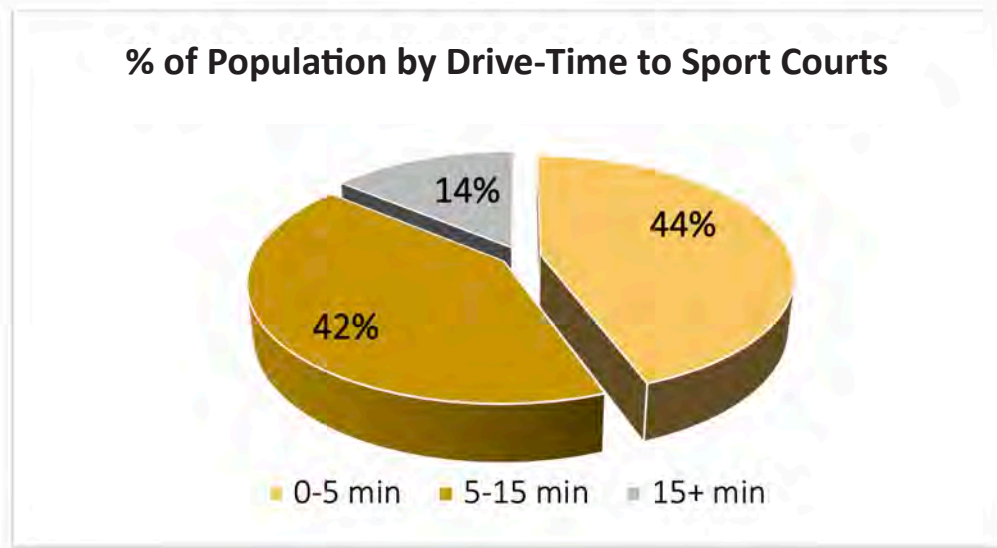
Figure 22: Driving Time to County Parks and Recreation Sites with Sport Courts (Tennis Courts, Basketball, and Other Courts)



Source: St. Mary's County Department of Recreation and Parks, and GreenPlay, LLC



**Figure 23: Percentage of Population Drive-Time to Sports Courts**



Source: Esri Data Enrichment and U.S. Census data

Figure 22 illustrates driving distances to public parks and recreation with sports courts, including tennis courts, basketball courts, and other courts. The majority of areas in the county are within a ten-minute drive or less of one of these sites. All areas of the county are within a 15-minute drive of at least one recreation and parks site with tennis courts. Sites with tennis court facilities are included in Table 11.

**Table 11: Sites with Sports Courts**

Regional Parks	
R1	Chancellor's Run Regional Park & Activity Center
Community Parks	
C2	Cardinal Gibbons Park
C3	George E. Cecil Memorial Park
C4	Fifth District Park
C5	Hollywood Soccer Complex
C6	John G. Lancaster Park at Willows Road
C7	John V. Baggett Park at Laurel Grove
C8	Judge P.H. Dorsey Memorial Park
C9	Nicolet Park
C10	Robert Miedzinski Park (Leonard Hall Rec. Center)
C11	Seventh District Park
Neighborhood Parks	
N1	Country Lakes Park
N2	Jarboesville Park
N5	St. Andrews Estate Park
N7	Town Creek Park
N9	Wildewood Recreation Area

### School Recreation Areas

- E1 Banneker Elementary School
- E3 Chopticon High School
- E6 Dynard Elem. School
- E7 Esperanza Middle School
- E8 Evergreen Elem. School
- E9 Great Mills High School
- E10 Green Holly School
- E11 Greenview Knolls Elem. School
- E13 Hollywood Elem. School
- E14 Hollywood Rec. Center & Field (Old Hollywood School)
- E15 Leonardtown Elem. School/Park
- E18 Lettie Marshall Dent. School
- E19 Lexington Park Elem.School
- E20 Margaret Brent Middle School & Rec Center
- E22 Mechanicsville Elem. School
- E23 Oakville Elem. School
- E24 Park Hall Elem. School
- E25 Piney Point Elem. School
- E26 Ridge Elem. School/Park
- E28 St. Mary's College of Maryland
- E29 Town Creek Elem. School

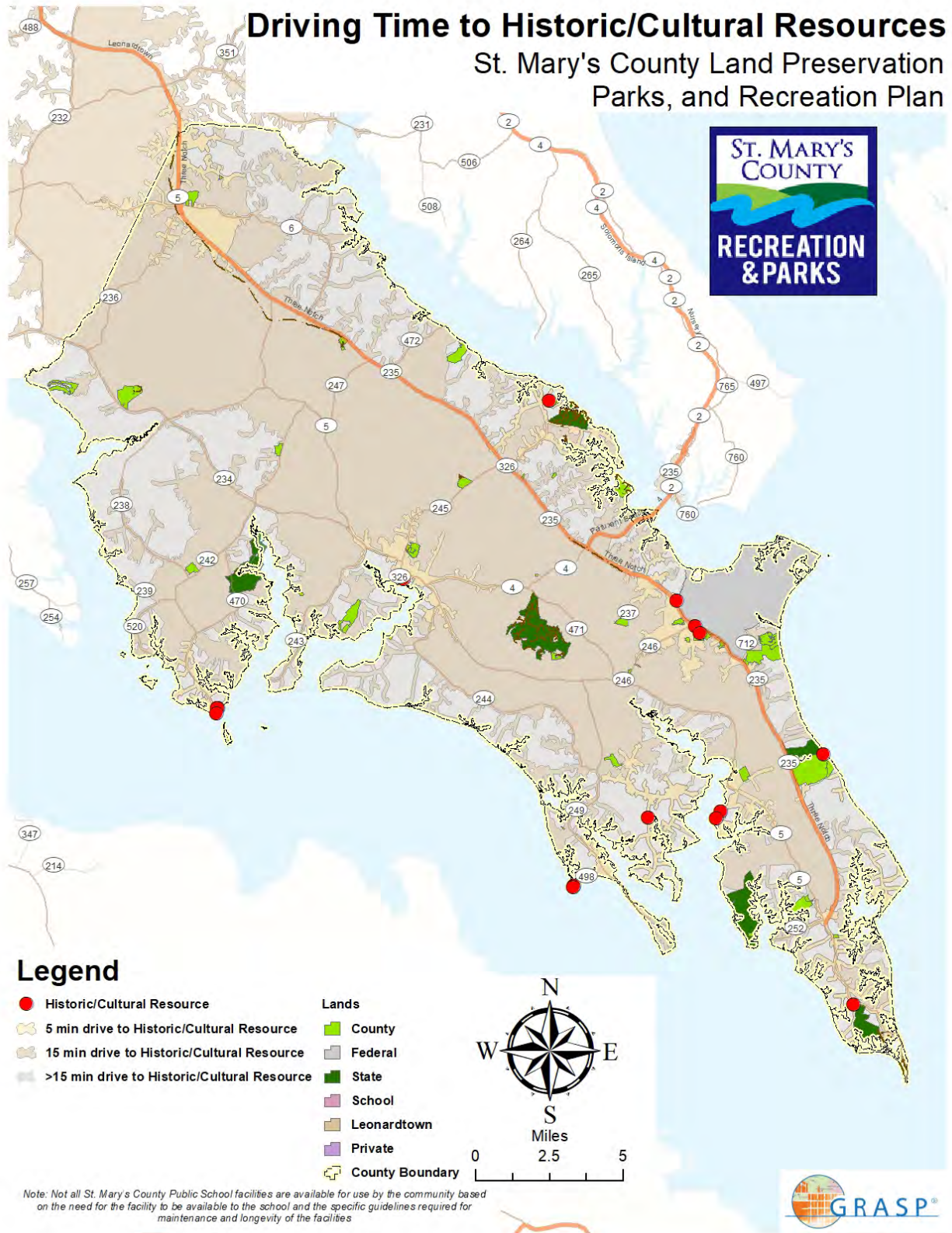
### Natural Resource Area

- A3 Elms Beach Park & Environmental Center

### Special Use (Including Public Water Access)

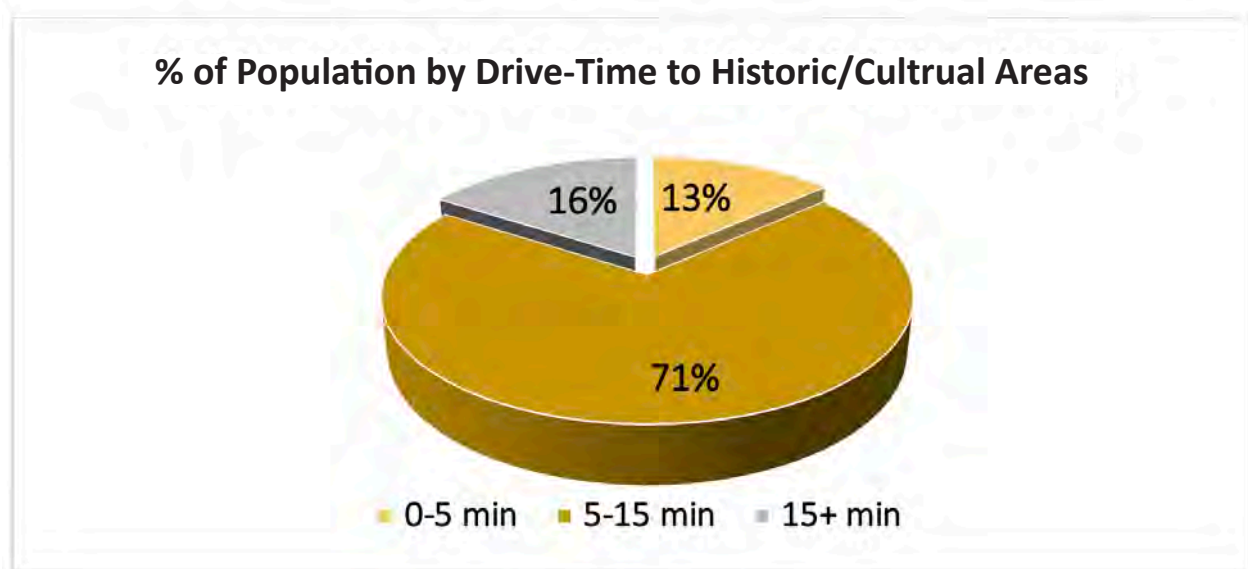
- U27 Wicomico Shores Golf Course

Figure 24: Driving Time to Historic/Cultural Sites



Source: St. Mary's County Department of Recreation and Parks, and GreenPlay, LLC

Figure 25: Percentage of Population Drive-Time to Historic/Cultural Areas



Source: Esri Data Enrichment and U.S. Census data

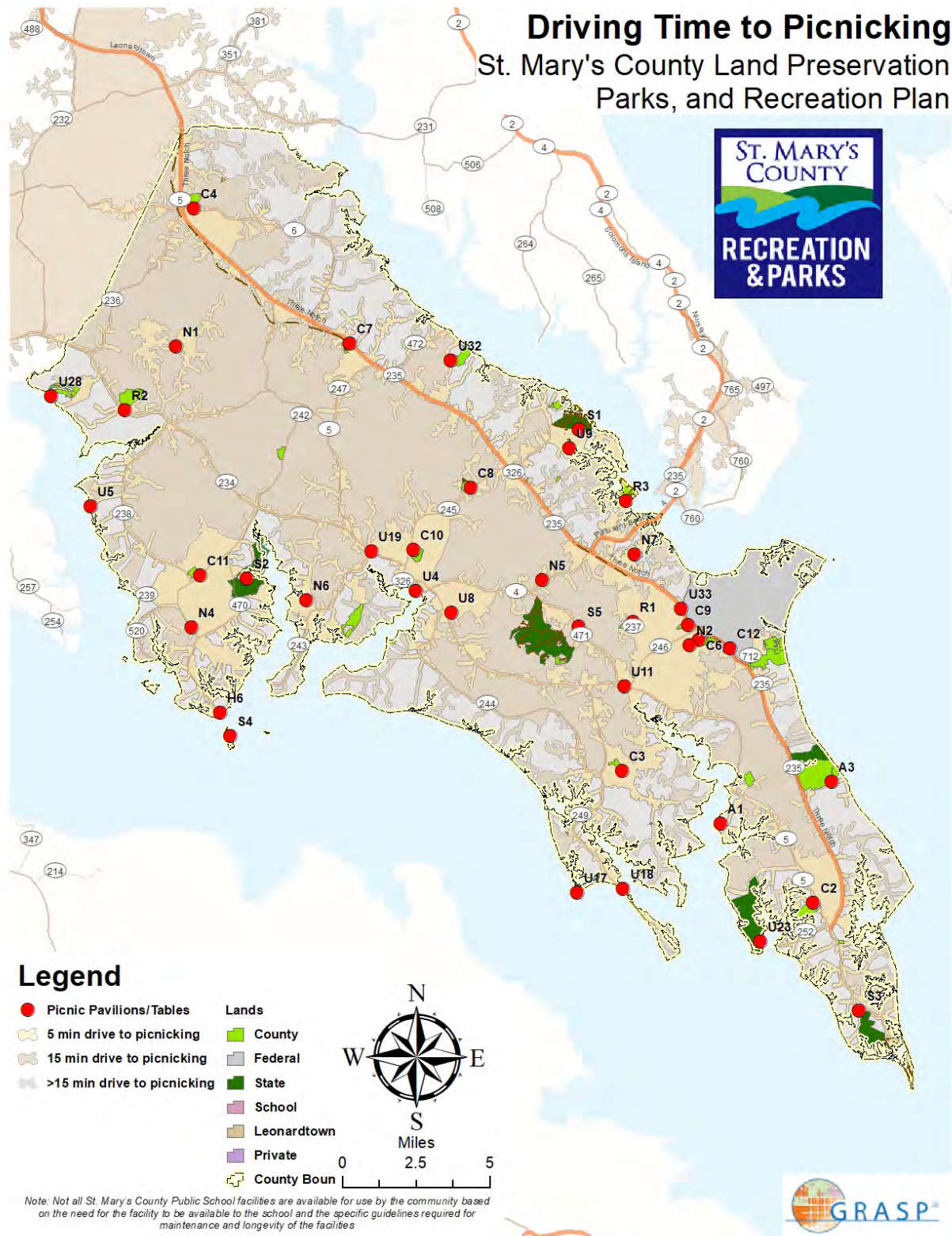
Figure 25 shows that the majority of the central county region is within a relatively short drive of a historic/cultural site. However, the northern portion of St. Mary's County noticeably lacks public museums or historic sites. Museums, cultural attractions, and associated recreation amenities are included in Table 12.



**Table 12: Museum Sites Inventory**

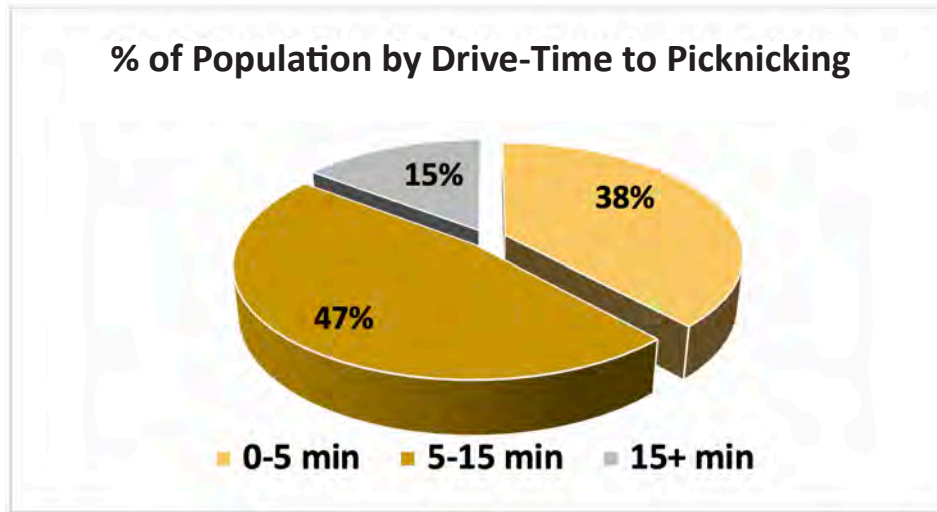
<b>Historical / Cultural Areas</b>	
H1	Drayden African-American Schoolhouse
H2	Historic St. Mary's City
H3	Old Jail Museum
H4	Patuxent River Naval Air Museum
H5	Historic Sotterley Plantation
H6	St. Clement's Island Museum
H7	Tudor Hall Information Center
H8	Ye Coole Springs
H9	United States Colored Troop Memorial Monument
H10	Point No Point Lighthouse
H11	Lil Red Schoolhouse
H12	Leonardtwn Arts Center
H13	Black Panther Historic Shipwreck Preserve
H14	African-American Monument and Freedom Park
<b>State Parks</b>	
S3	Point Lookout State Park
<b>Natural Resource Area</b>	
A1	Chancellor's Point Natural History Area
A2	Coltons Point Park
A3	Elms Beach Park & Environmental Center
A4	Elms Property
<b>Special Use (Including Public Water Access)</b>	
U17	Piney Point Lighthouse Museum and Park

Figure 26: Driving Time to Sites With Picnic Opportunities



Source: St. Mary's County Department of Recreation and Parks, and GreenPlay, LLC

**Figure 27: Percentage of Population Drive-Time to Picnic Opportunities**



Source: Esri Data Enrichment and U.S. Census data

**Table 13: Sites with Picnic Opportunities**

State Parks	
S1	Greenwell State Park
S2	Newtowne Neck State Park
S3	Point Lookout State Park
S4	St. Clement's Island State Park (Blackstone Isl.)
S5	St. Mary's River State Park
Regional Parks	
R1	Chancellor's Run Regional Park & Activity Center
R2	Chaptico Park
R3	Myrtle Point Park
Community Parks	
C2	Cardinal Gibbons Park
C3	George E. Cecil Memorial Park
C4	Fifth District Park
C6	John G. Lancaster Park at Willows Road
C7	John V. Baggett Park at Laurel Grove
C8	Judge P.H. Dorsey Memorial Park
C9	Nicolet Park
C10	Robert Miedzinski Park (Leonard Hall Rec. Center)
C11	Seventh District Park
C12	Carver Community Park & Rec. Center (former Carver Elem.)
Neighborhood Parks	
N1	Country Lakes Park
N2	Jarboesville Park

- N4 Seventh District Optimist Park
- N5 St. Andrews Estate Park
- N6 St. Clements Shores Park
- N7 Town Creek Park

#### School Recreation Areas

- E4 College of Southern Maryland

#### Natural Resource Area

- A1 Chancellor's Point Natural History Area
- A3 Elms Beach Park & Environmental Center  
Historical / Cultural Areas
- H6 St. Clement's Island Museum

#### Trail Corridor

- T1 Three Notch Trail

#### Special Use (Including Public Water Access)

- U4 Camp Calvert Landing
- U5 Chaptico Wharf
- U7 Dennison Property
- U8 Fairgrounds - St. Mary's County
- U9 Forest Landing
- U11 Great Mills Canoe and Kayak Launch
- U17 Piney Point Lighthouse Museum and Park
- U18 Piney Point Public Landing
- U19 Port of Leonardtown Park & Winery
- U23 St. Inigoes Public Landing
- U28 Wicomico Shores Landing
- U29 Great Mills Pool
- U32 Snow Hill Park
- U33 Patuxent River Naval Air Station

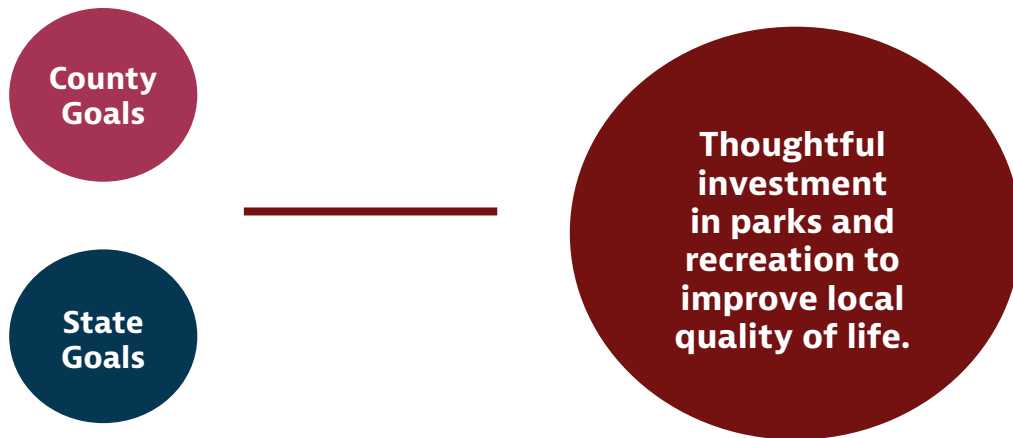
### 3.4.7 Summary of Findings From All Level of Service Review Components

In general, St. Mary's County appears to be well served by its existing system of public parks, recreation, museum, and open-space amenities. In reviewing all components of this level of service analysis, county-managed facilities and programs are well utilized, but are at a point where existing demand for some facilities and services exceeds current capacity. The general condition of most facilities and programs appears to meet user needs satisfactorily, but staff and the public are aware of, and see a need for, renovation or replacement of aged facilities, increasing opportunities for field and court sports, and better ensuring consistent playability of athletic fields. The expansion of trails, open spaces, athletic fields, and water access and associated recreational opportunities are improvements universally desired by participants of this planning process. Such enhancements would also be supportive of overall state and county land preservation, recreation, tourism, and economic development goals and initiatives.



The county should be aware of possible equity issues as shown in the Park Equity mapping and compare them to other analyses such as the drive time mapping, Parks and Recreation Density mapping, and Population Density across the county. But generally, we found that the state park equity mapping was not consistent with local parks and amenities. The county should continue to work with the state to update parks and park amenities to make more accurate mapping and analysis that would relate better to the county scale analysis.

Goals and recommendations developed in this LPPRP for enhancing the county’s system of public parks, recreation amenities, museums, and open spaces relied heavily on the overall findings of the level of service analysis.



### Statewide Goals for Parks and Recreation

- Make a variety of quality recreational environments and opportunities readily accessible to all of its citizens and thereby contribute to their physical and mental well-being.
- Recognize and strategically use parks and recreation facilities as amenities to make communities, counties, and the state more desirable places to live, work, play, and visit.
- Use state investment in parks, recreation, and open space to complement and mutually support the broader goals and objectives of local comprehensive/master plans.
- 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 to protect natural open spaces and resources.
- Complement infrastructure and other public investments and priorities in existing communities and areas planned for growth through investment in neighborhood and community parks and facilities.
- 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.

### 3.5 Goals and Recommendations

Both the county and the state have established goals or objectives for enhancing public parks, recreation amenities, and open spaces for the benefit of the public. The current County Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2010, established county goals. *Chapter 10, Section 2.D.* of that plan includes the county's objective and two supporting guiding policies for parks and recreation:

- **Objective:** Create new and enhanced parks and recreation facilities that link existing parks and communities to provide expanded recreational opportunities while preserving environmental, aesthetic, and cultural quality.
  - **Policy:** Guide the periodic preparation of an LPPRP.
  - **Policy:** Meet the existing and future demands for recreation and parks through state, local, and privately managed facilities that are consistent with the purposes of this plan.

Over the past five years, the county has made significant progress toward achieving goals established in the 2017 LPPRP. Land acquisition and park and recreation facility enhancement projects completed toward achieving the 2017 LPPRP goals included:

- Recreational Facilities and Park Improvements
  - New playgrounds at Wieck/Miedzinski Park, Dorsey Park, St Andrews Estates, 5th District, Wicomico Shores Landing, and Hollywood Recreation Center
  - New restroom facilities at Dorsey Park
  - Restroom renovations at Wicomico Shores Landing, Cecil Park, Chancellors Run Regional Park, 5th District, Dorsey Park, Baggett Park, 7th District Park, and Lancaster Park
  - Tennis court lighting at Cecil Park
  - New ballfield fencing at Dorsey Park, 5th District, and Baggett Park
  - Resurfacing and/or renovation of tennis courts at Wicomico Shores, Baggett Park, and 7th District
  - New well and irrigation at 5th District Park, Dorsey Park, Chaptico Park
  - Upgraded irrigation at Lancaster Park
  - New entrance at Nicolet Park and spray park renovations
  - New bubble structure for the Great Mills Pool
  - Wicomico Shores Golf Club infrastructure improvements (\$1.7 million)
  - Numerous parking lot and walkway improvements
  - New lights at Baggett and 5th District baseball fields
  - New lighting and starting gate at BMX track/Chaptico Park
  - Asphalt overlay on Three Notch Trail
  - Numerous recreation facility upgrades – painting/HVAC
  - ADA improvements – walkways, dugouts
  - Additional street lighting at numerous parks
- Lexington Manor Passive Park
  - New restroom facility
  - Asphalt overlay

- New parking area
- New entrance
- Chaptico Park
  - Bermuda grass fields added to Chaptico (3), Dorsey (1), 5th District (1), and Lancaster Parks (1)
- Turf Fields
  - Two turf fields and lights – Chaptico Park
  - Two turf fields and lights – Lancaster Park
  - Two turf fields and lights – Field 2, Chancellors Run Park
- Other Projects
  - Master planning for Shannon Farm and Snow Hill Park
  - Design and engineering for Snow Hill Park Boat and Kayak Launch
  - Design and engineering Phase VII of the Three Notch Trail

The 2022 LPPRP provides a prioritized series of goals for maintaining and enhancing the system of county parks, recreation, museum, and open-space amenities, and provides a corresponding series of actionable recommendations for implementation over the next five years and into the future. The 4 goals established in this LPPRP are supportive of parks and recreation goals of both the State of Maryland and St. Mary’s County Comprehensive Plan and, if followed, are designed to assist the county in tangibly improving its system of parks, recreation, museum, golf, and open-space assets, from which so much of the county’s character and residents’ quality of life is tied. *Appendix A* lists the state’s goals for parks and recreation. As described below and in the tables in *section 3.5.1*, St. Mary’s County’s goals are consistent with, and supportive of, and provide a pathway to achieve Maryland’s statewide goals.

The Department of Recreation and Parks is the primary agency responsible for the planning, management, and enhancement of the county’s parks, recreation, museum, and open-space system. As the four goals for parks and recreation included in this LPPRP indicate, the county should continue to maintain its existing comprehensive approach to enhancing its system of public parks, recreation amenities, museums, golf courses, and open spaces through strategic investment in new facility development and enhancement of existing assets and programs.

Investment in land acquisitions since 2017, including the Snow Hill Park Farm and Shannon Farm properties, have satisfied the county’s short-term land acquisition goals and provided land holdings sufficient to support the development of new recreation amenities required to meet current and projected local needs. However, based on community and stakeholder input the county is still looking for suitable land acquisitions within the county, specifically, waterfront property and a property in the central county area.

### 3.5.1 LPPRP Goals 2022 – 2027

<b>Goal 1: Continue to improve and enhance existing county facilities and amenities.</b>	
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Timeframe to Complete</b>
<p><b>1.1.a</b> As new facilities and amenities are developed, adequate resources must be provided to best ensure the effective, safe, and efficient management of any development project, maintenance responsibility, or operational need.</p>	Ongoing Priority
<p><b>1.1.b</b> Continue to appropriate funds to renovate, remove, or replace facilities and amenities that are no longer functioning properly or safely or are at the end of the serviceable life. Examples of facilities commonly in need of renovation or replacement throughout any parks and recreation system include restrooms; lighting/security systems; parking facilities; fencing; minor drainage improvements; playgrounds; and small buildings, sheds, or support structures.</p>	Ongoing
<p><b>1.1.c</b> Continue to evaluate athletic field surfacing options for future renovation, replacement, or construction.</p>	Ongoing
<p><b>1.1.d</b> Assess the potential for continued facility renovations at the county-owned and -operated Wicomico Shores Golf Course. Facility improvements that are regularly needed include asphalt overlay on cart paths; sand trap drainage and rehabilitation; and continued greens and grounds enhancements.</p>	Ongoing
<p><b>1.1.e</b> Complete renovations at St. Clement’s Island Museum and continue to assess the county museum and heritage sites for preservation and interpretation.</p>	Short-Term
<b>Goal 2: Continue to improve programs and services delivery.</b>	
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Timeframe to Complete</b>
<p><b>2.1.a</b> Continue to look for opportunities to expand programs while working with other service providers within the county. Formalize partnership agreements in writing.</p>	Short-Term Priority
<p><b>2.1.b</b> Explore opportunities to provide introductory programs and access to equipment to become familiar with and be able to experience outdoor recreational opportunities in the county.</p>	Short-Term Priority
<p><b>2.1.c</b> As new programs and services are developed and implemented, continue to create a balance between passive and active recreation opportunities.</p>	Ongoing
<p><b>2.1.d</b> Continue to engage and partner with the municipalities, businesses, and state and federal agencies in the county in current and future program planning efforts.</p>	Ongoing

<b>2.1.e</b> Continue to look for opportunities to expand community special events throughout the county.	Mid-Term
<b>Goal 3: Continue to look for opportunities to develop new facilities and amenities.</b>	
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Timeframe to Complete</b>
<b>3.1.a</b> Continue to explore opportunities to acquire land suitable for the development of public water access facilities, and water-based recreation opportunities at the Patuxent River (priority focus area), Chesapeake Bay (secondary focus area), and Potomac River (third focus area).	Ongoing Priority
<b>3.1.b</b> Develop a large outdoor sports complex in a central location within the county. Such a facility should include multiple athletic fields and associated infrastructure capable of supporting league/tournament play for field-based sports.	Short-Term Priority
<b>3.1.c</b> Develop a large multiple-use recreation/community center at Nicolet Park or at a centralized location within the county. Such a facility should provide indoor recreation amenities, including multiple sport courts for basketball, tennis, and pickleball.	Mid-Term
<b>3.1.d</b> Continue working with other agencies and the municipalities in the county to provide regional connectivity to neighborhoods, schools, parks, and the community. Complete Three Notch Trail – Phase VII and start design and engineering for Phase VIII.	Mid-Term
<b>3.1.e</b> Consider the development of a countywide bicycling and pedestrian master plan, and associated steering committee, to guide the development of a connected and sustainable trails network.	Short-Term
<b>Goal 4: Continue to improve organizational efficiencies.</b>	
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Timeframe to Complete</b>
<b>4.1.a</b> Achieve and maintain Commission for the Accreditation of Parks and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) accreditation.	Short-Term Priority
<b>4.1.b</b> Develop and employ a strategy to increase and pursue additional partnerships with local youth athletic organizations, municipal parks and recreation departments, and the school systems to provide parks, trails, facilities, programs, and services.	Ongoing Priority
<b>4.1.c</b> Increase staffing levels. As the department’s responsibilities grow, new positions in recreation programming and maintenance will be required.	Ongoing
<b>4.1.d</b> Work with other municipalities and the school system to provide open space, recreation amenities, and programs to the community.	Ongoing

<p><b>4.1.e</b> Continue to engage the community in current and future parks, recreation, and open-space planning efforts.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p><b>4.1.f</b> Continue to promote and create awareness of the programs and activities through the parks and recreation website and social media.</p>	<p>Short-Term</p>

As outlined in *Table 1*, the Department of Recreation and Parks has developed a capital improvement program that strategically targets investment over the short, mid, and long range to enhance and expand recreational opportunities throughout the county in a realistic and achievable manner. As St. Mary's County has satisfied short-term land acquisition needs, the recommendations of the LPPRP focus on the development of site and facilities improvements, including the major, ongoing construction of the Three Notch Trail, as well as a series of proposed large and small enhancements for water access, sports and recreation facilities, and museums.



## 4.1 Introduction and Overview of St. Mary's County Conserved Natural Resource Lands

Natural resource lands contain the forests, wetlands, floodplains, stream buffers, and other sensitive natural features that help define the rural character of St. Mary's County and provide ecosystem services that benefit the population. The 2010 Comprehensive Plan identified the protection of forest resources, sensitive natural lands, and the stewardship of watersheds and waterfront lands as significant to the county. The 2022 Comprehensive Plan reiterates that significance.

The benefits of natural resource lands include defining rural character, maintaining the attractiveness of existing developed areas, providing wildlife habitat, natural filtration systems for pollutants, and opportunities for resource-based recreational pursuits. These lands provide the natural framework around which the built environment is planned and developed. In return, natural resource lands require few government services to operate, yet they serve needed functions. Publicly accessible natural resource areas create opportunities for direct interaction between people and the natural environment, offering economic benefits for eco-tourism and enhanced quality of life for visitors and residents. St. Mary's County's abundant natural resource lands are places where the "bonds between people and the natural world create a pattern of connectedness."<sup>4</sup>

An ongoing focus of natural resources conservation is the role conservation plays helping the county adhere to requirements of the Clean Water Act and meet the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) developed for nitrogen, phosphorous, and sediment pollutants in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Conservation of natural filters (forest, floodplains, and wetlands) and the management of development to reduce pollutant loads are the most cost-effective means to meet the TMDL.

### **Prior to 2022, St. Mary's County has preserved:**

- ❑ 4,186 acres through transfer of development rights
- ❑ 2,132 acres through Maryland Historical and Environmental Trusts

### **Benefits of Natural Resource Lands in St. Mary's County:**

- ❑ Ecosystem services filter air and water and support biodiversity
- ❑ Outdoor recreation opportunities
- ❑ Natural resource-based industries
- ❑ Community character
- ❑ Conservation of Chesapeake Bay

A Watershed Implementation Plan Phase III National Pollution Discharge Elimination System Small Municipal Storm Sewer System (Phase II MS4) Permit became effective in the county on October 31, 2018 and is being implemented to address pollutant load for the most developed areas of St. Mary's County. The more rural areas are assumed to meet the TMDL primarily through resource management, conservation to prevent watershed degradation, habitat enhancement, and stormwater management retrofit projects that will halt existing degradation and allow downstream natural systems to recover.

4 Management Plan for Hilton Run, by Citizens of St. Mary's County and the Hilton Run Team. 2003

## 4.2 Goals for Natural Resource Land Conservation

The following section discusses the interrelationship between the state's and county's goals for natural resource conservation and describes the rationale behind county goals.

### State Goals

*Appendix A* lists the state's goals for conservation of natural resource lands. As described below, St. Mary's County's goals are consistent with, and supportive of, Maryland's statewide goals for natural resource land conservation.

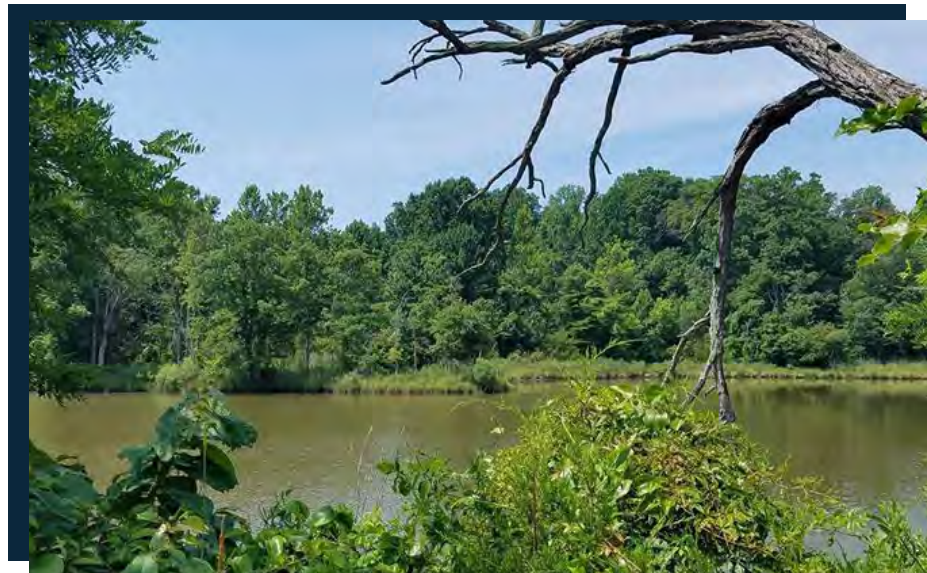
### County Goals

The Comprehensive Plan provides the framework for the county's natural resource conservation. The Comprehensive Plan goals for natural resource conservation form the basis for policies, regulations, and programs that implement a comprehensive strategy for natural resource conservation that help achieve the state goals for conservation of natural resource lands. The county's goals also support Maryland's 12 planning visions adopted in 2009 and more importantly reflect the longstanding vision expressed by county residents.

**"Preserve and enhance the quality of life by recognizing and protecting the unique character of St. Mary's County as a rural Chesapeake Bay peninsula."**

**County Comprehensive Plan's vision statement excerpt goals and strategies**

Residents' opinions have guided the vision and goals for natural resource land conservation in updates of the County's Comprehensive Plans since 1994. At a 1994 community character workshop soliciting resident input for updating the Comprehensive Plan, residents favored the concept of designing development around the natural environment



using clustering, agricultural overlay zones or an Amish overlay zone, and conservation of sensitive environmental areas. Residents also favored providing open-space linkages, greenways, and additional public water access points. In 1996, Comprehensive Plan update meetings and an associated citizen survey determined that residents favored maintaining rural character, clustering growth, minimizing the breakup of farmland and open space, and implementing a transferable development rights (TDR) program. In the 2010 County Comprehensive Plan update, the land use concept emphasized resource protection as one of its major policy areas.



This LPPRP recommends that the planned 2022 update of the Comprehensive Plan retain the 2016 Plan Visions for Environmental Protection and Resource Conservation including:

- **Environmental protection:** Carefully manage land and water resources, including the Chesapeake and coastal bays, to restore and maintain healthy air and water, natural systems, and living resources.
  - Land and natural features important to maintaining the environmental health of the county—which present constraints for development and which are critical to reducing damage to the Chesapeake Bay—are preserved from disturbance and enhanced to increase the effectiveness of their benefits for erosion control, filtering of sediments and nutrients, and provision of essential habitat for wildlife.
  - In return, residents receive the benefits of reduced construction costs, minimization of erosion and flood events, improved water quality for drinking and recreation, and increased property values from a more scenic living environment.
  
- **Resource conservation:** Conserve waterways, forests, agricultural areas, open space, natural systems, and scenic areas.
  - Farms and forest resources are preserved from urban or suburban encroachment, and the rural character and attributes of the county are maintained and enhanced. Landowner equity and property values have been enhanced by an active program of purchase and transfer of development rights.
  - Protection of the rural countryside and traditional economies and activities (fishing, farming, and forestry) are recognized as important components of the community and the county’s rural character. This rural character is worth maintaining not only for its scenic beauty but also because of its attraction as a setting for technology and service industries, which are concentrated near Naval Air Station Patuxent River.
  - A coordinated cross-county network of greenways and scenic easements is established, and waterfront access is enhanced to provide passive and active recreation and a heightened natural environment.
  - Large contiguous tracts of sensitive areas are outside designated growth areas and zoned for rural or resource protection. Specifically, the McIntosh Run natural area is excluded from the Leonardtown development district, and the St. Mary’s watershed natural area and lands westward thereof are excluded from the Lexington Park development district.

However, having defined a preferred future, the *2010 Comprehensive Plan’s Chapter II* noted several issues to be addressed to achieve environmental protection and natural resource conservation, including:

- Continue to evaluate the Annual Growth Policy and periodically adjust as needed to discourage excessive development of rural areas.
- Acquire environmentally sensitive areas and properties that may be used for passive recreational activities. Carefully develop county-owned properties constrained by sensitive areas to provide appropriate public passive recreational activities.
- Continue to identify and protect sensitive areas, including streams and their buffers; 100-year floodplains; habitats of threatened and endangered species; and steep slopes, tidal wetlands, submerged aquatic vegetation, waterfowl areas, colonial bird nesting sites, shorelines, tidal and nontidal floodplains, nontidal wetlands and their buffers, anadromous fish spawning areas, groundwater, mineral resources, and wildlife corridors. Also, identify and protect agricultural

land (green infrastructure gaps, buffers, open space, forest conservation mitigation) and forest lands (green infrastructure and forest interior dwelling species [FIDS] habitat) intended for resource protection and conservation as required by the state legislature.

- Consider hazard mitigation in the early stages of development and balance development goals with avoidance of known high-risk areas, such as floodplains, coastal erosion zones, and areas of known high risk due to natural hazards.
- Work to increase understanding of the watershed resources and the impacts on those resources that result from the activities of people who live, work, and recreate in the watershed.
- Require, when necessary, and promote, when possible, the stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay, its tributaries, and the land and watershed resources by using:
  - Regulatory programs (Critical Area Program, forest conservation regulations, stormwater regulations, requirements for open-space conservation and clustering, etc.)
  - Tax and funding incentive programs (agricultural districts, MALPF easements, a TDR program, installment purchase agreements, etc.)
  - Planning programs (Breton Bay and St. Mary's Watershed Restoration Action Strategies)
- Continue to develop and implement ordinances and programs that adequately protect sensitive areas; set and measure progress in meeting goals for preservation; enforce limitations on the allowable loss of resources; and work to ensure that mitigation for unavoidable impacts is the responsibility and duty of those who benefit from the impact.

## 4.3 County Conservation of Natural Resource Land

A major component of the county's implementation program is natural resources conservation, including conservation of the farms and large minimally developed residential tracts where natural resource lands predominate.

### 4.3.1 Comprehensive Planning Process

An updated Comprehensive Plan is anticipated in 2022 and will retain the 2016 Comprehensive Plan's vision and goals that establish the countywide framework and foundations for planning and regulatory functions related to integrating natural resources conservation and land use. The framework has four basic elements:

#### 1. Concentrating development in designated development districts, town centers, and village centers.

Growth areas continue to comprise about 20% of the county's land area. Concentrating development in these areas will limit the sprawl pattern of development into rural areas. *Figure 29* shows the primary areas where growth is directed—two development districts of Lexington Park and the Town of Leonardtown (both priority funding areas [PFAs]); four town centers of Hollywood, Mechanicsville, New Market, and Charlotte Hall (county-designated PFAs along Maryland Route 5); and the fifth town center of Piney Point. These areas are designated receiving areas for TDRs.

#### 2. Preserving open space, scenic, and rural character.

The 177,100-acre Rural Preservation District (RPD) contains prime farm and timberlands and low-density non-farm residential developments. Rural areas are to be preserved from urban or suburban encroachment to maintain the county's rural character and attributes, which are identified as important in attracting the service and technology industries located primarily in the Lexington Park Development District. Limited commercial and rural service centers are designated at major rural

crossroads. Since 2007, each parcel in the RPD may be developed by right with a single dwelling (subject to meeting all other zoning criteria). A landowner wishing to create additional homes on an RPD parcel must purchase additional TDRs or pay a fee-in-lieu of TDRs, as part of a proposal for the additional development.

### **3. Protecting sensitive areas.**

*Figure 28* shows natural resource lands in St. Mary's County protected by regulations. These lands contain sensitive areas (steep slopes, floodplains, wetlands, stream corridors, hydric soils, and natural habitats) where development would be detrimental or hazardous. These areas are designated sending areas for TDRs. *Figure 28* also shows boundaries of areas where federal and state laws may impose limits on development due to requirements for maintaining water quality and protecting habitats.

### **4. Preserving and conserving large contiguous natural areas.**

The county has several large and contiguous areas that contain both sensitive natural features and important habitat for rare, threatened, and endangered species (RTES). The five largest areas are:

- Portions of the St. Mary's River Watershed
- McIntosh Run Watershed
- Chesapeake Bay Critical Area (CBCA)
- Huntersville Rural Legacy Area
- Mattapany Rural Legacy Area

In addition to preserving natural landscapes within these areas, the county works to promote sustainable agricultural land practices and conservation techniques with the local farming communities.

*Figure 29* shows the relationship of the areas planned for development, and areas of focus for natural resource land conservation, including the St. Mary's River State Park and Wildland; the 8,950-acre Huntersville RLA; the 13,703-acre Mattapany RLA; other parklands; conservation easements; and the CBCA. Such areas contain significant natural, cultural, and historic resource areas that could be subject to loss or harm resulting from significant development, alteration, or inadequate protection from off-site development impacts. These are also sending areas for TDRs.

*Figure 30* illustrates green infrastructure in relation to both developed lands and the county's designated conservation areas. Since the green infrastructure mapping was completed, several areas have either been developed or been approved for future development, thereby compromising some of the connectivity that is so important to retaining the value of green infrastructure.

Maryland's Department of Natural Resources green infrastructure assessment identifies the largest green infrastructure hubs in St. Mary's County, which are:

- St. Mary's River Wildland and State Park
- Lands adjacent to the Three Notch Road in the 1st Election District
- Areas west and south of Maryland Route 6 near Huntersville
- Huntersville Rural Legacy Area
- McIntosh Run watershed northwest of the Town of Leonardtown

Figure 28: Important Natural Resource Lands

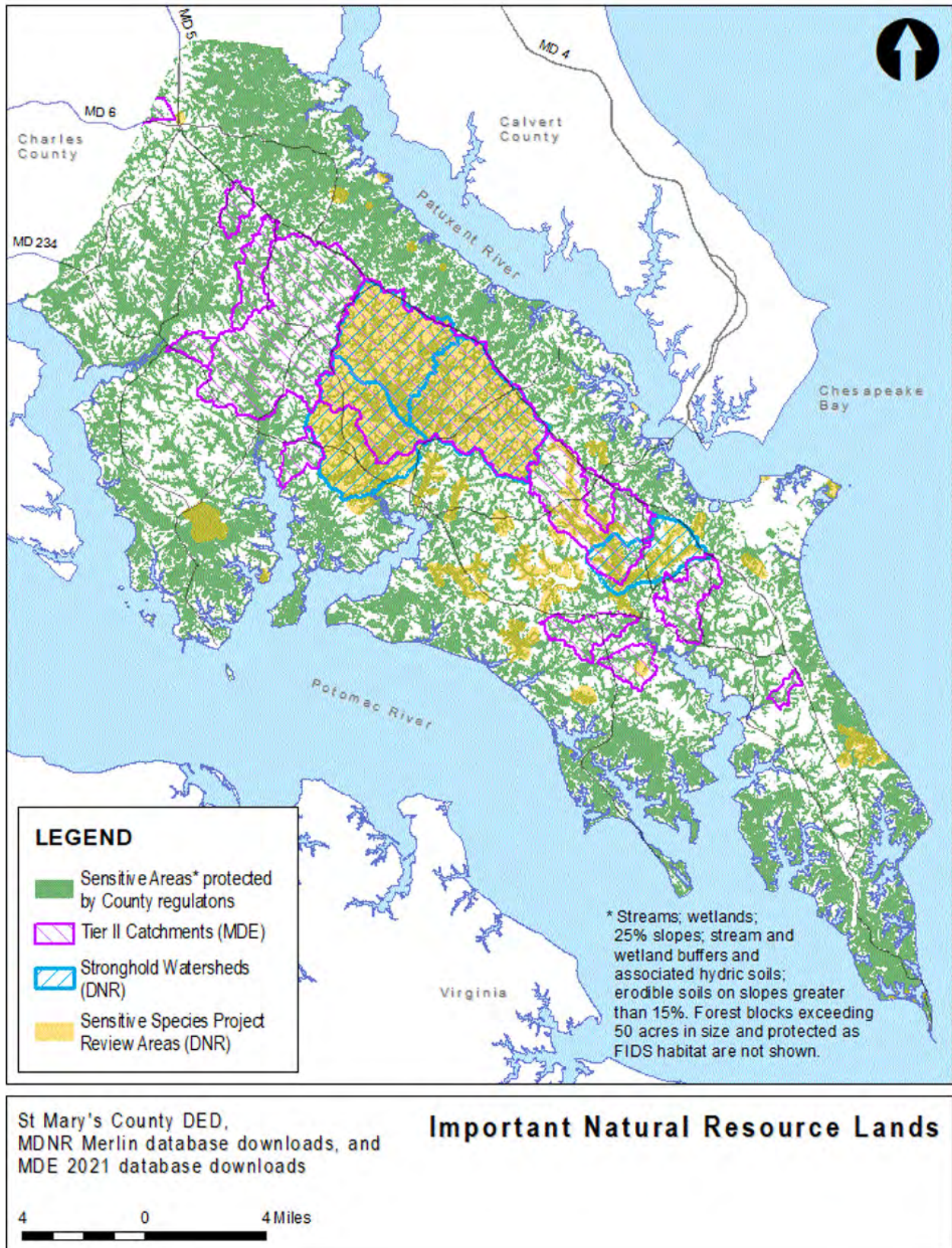


Figure 29: Planned Growth Areas and Conservation Areas

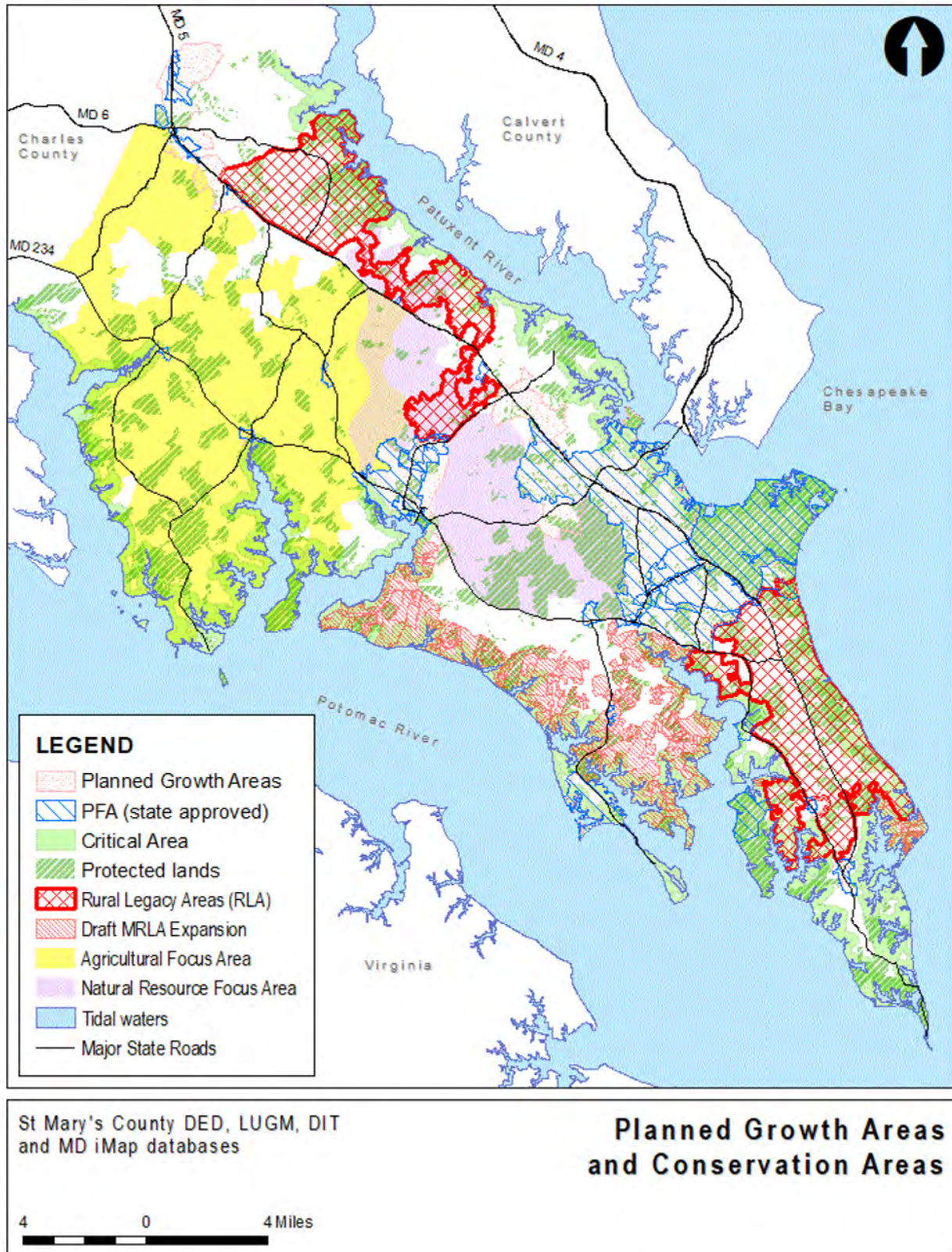
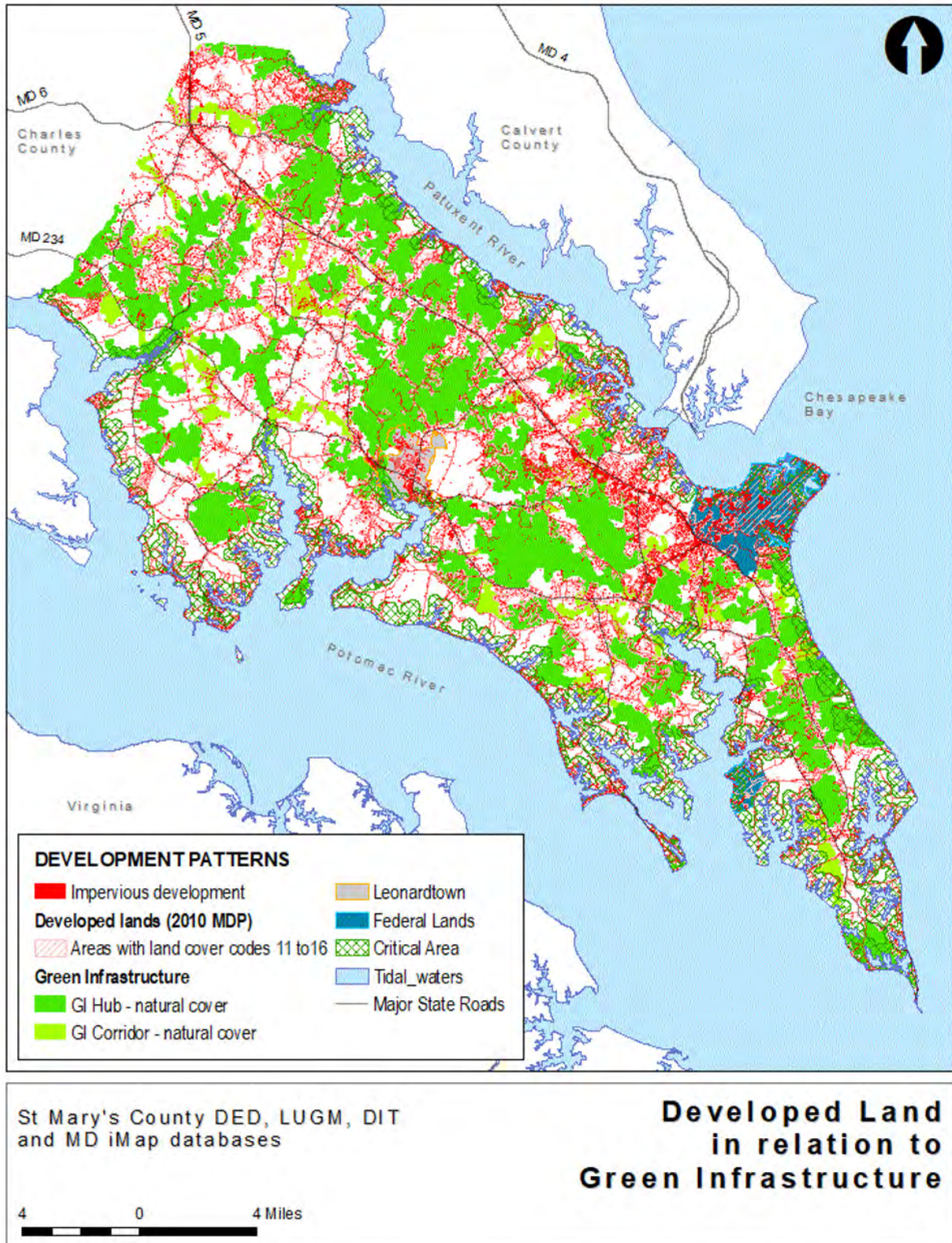


Figure 30: Development Lands and Green Infrastructure



### 4.3.2 Use of Resource Data and Inventories

County planners and development reviewers are required to use available state and county data inventories of land cover, natural resource lands, conservation areas, protected lands, and other environmental features for plan and project analysis. The county maintains a comprehensive GIS-based inventory of areas and information relevant to lands of natural resource significance, land use, and environmental planning. The county accesses the Maryland iMap GIS servers and the Maryland iMap data portal to download local copies of updated environmental resource datasets used for project and land preservation proposal analysis. Maryland iMap also provides information about Maryland's four most active state-operated land conservation programs: Program Open Space Stateside, the MALPF, the Maryland Environmental Trust, and the Rural Legacy Program.

The county used two important data sets for preservation planning. The first is the Maryland Department of Natural Resources' GreenPrint, which includes Targeted Ecological Areas, lands, and watersheds of high ecological value identified as conservation priorities. The green infrastructure assessment is cited in the Zoning Ordinance (*Article 7, Section 71.8 4.d [8]*) in reference to preserving FIDS habitat, and at *Section 71.8.7.a.(3)*, which requires minimized disturbance in forested areas by clustering development and maintaining corridors of existing forest or woodland to provide connections between wildlife habitat areas. GreenPrint information must be consulted and used to identify areas, at a minimum, where these natural resource corridors should be maintained.

The second data set is the Biodiversity Conservation Network (BioNet) of Maryland, which systematically identifies and prioritizes ecologically important lands to conserve Maryland's biodiversity (i.e., plants, animals, habitats, and landscapes). This dataset aggregates numerous separate data layers hierarchically according to the BioNet Criteria Matrix. The BioNet assessment was developed to provide decision support for Maryland's Department of Natural Resources' species and land conservation programs. These data provide the state and conservation partners with critical information to efficiently identify key lands for potential protection, and to improve land planning efforts. The BioNet data allows agencies to maximize the influence and effectiveness of public and private conservation investments, promote shared responsibilities for land conservation between public and private sectors, and guide and encourage compatible land uses and land management practices.

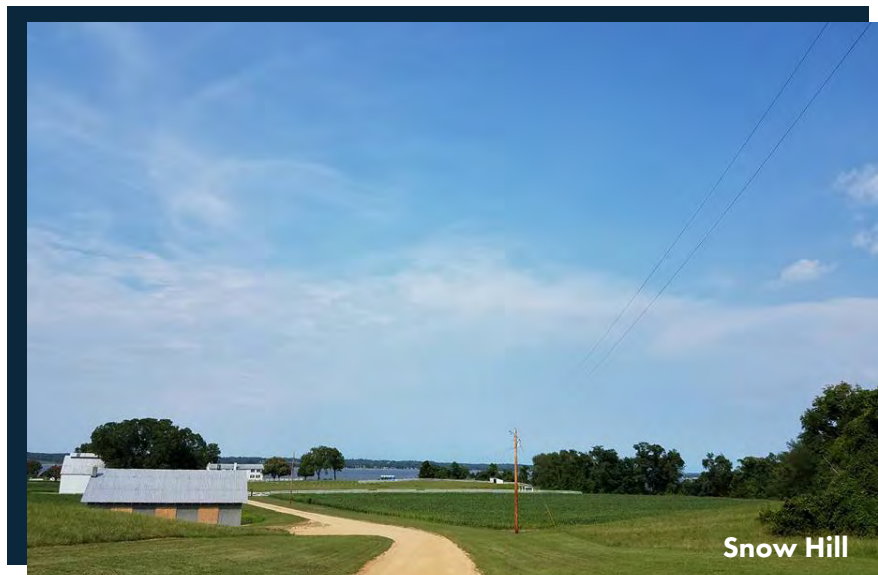
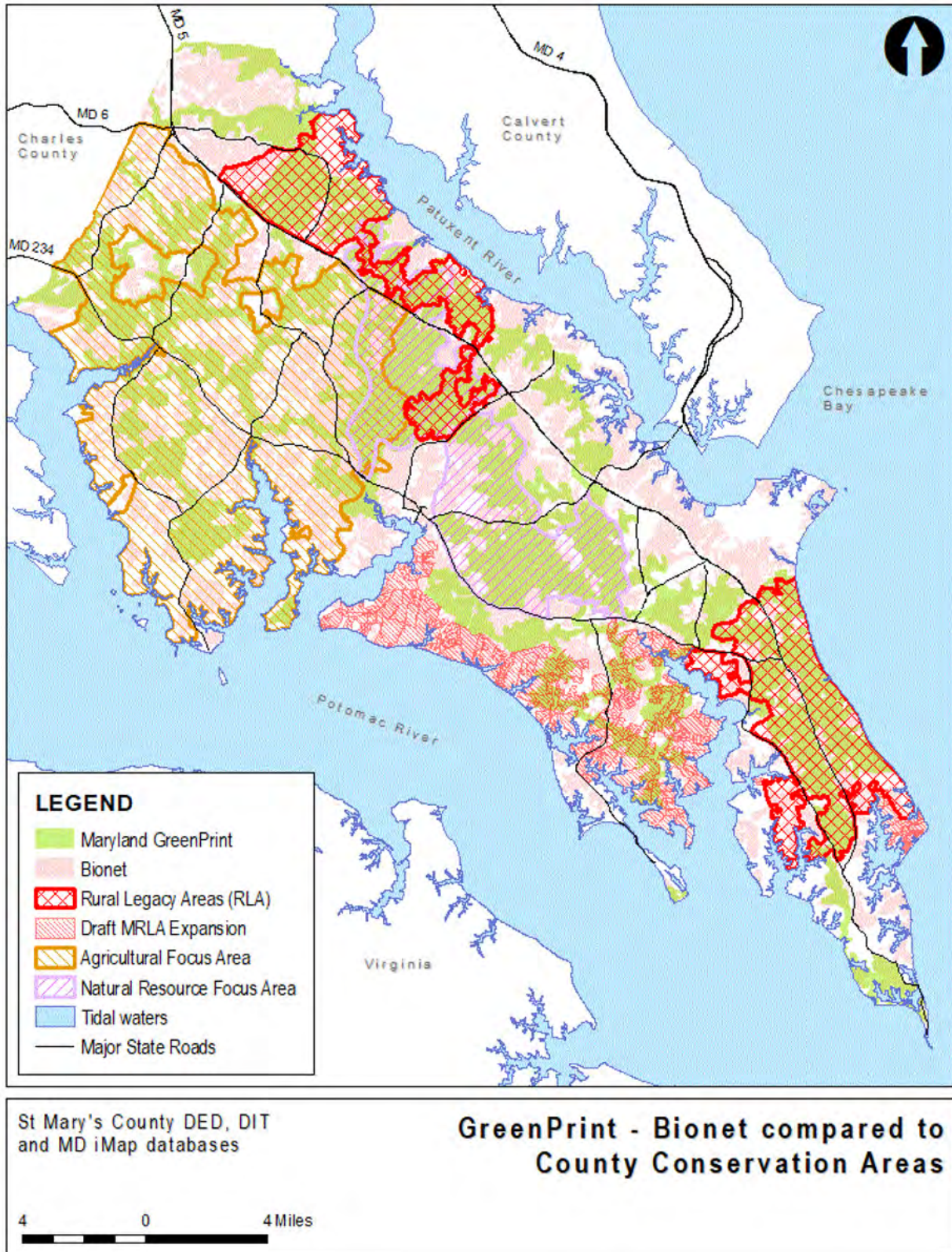


Figure 31: County-Designated Conservation Areas





### 4.3.3 Designated Conservation and Other Natural Resource Areas

The areas defined by St. Mary's County for natural resource preservation encompass a significantly larger area than is defined in GreenPrint mapping. This larger defined area is supported by county goals, policies, and programs, and by Maryland planning requirements.

The county has established a goal to retain St. Mary's County's rural character and economy through preserving 80% of the county's land area in its current rural state and focusing development in specified districts that total the remaining 20%. Growth areas are intended to enhance the quality of life and offer a small-town or urban character as appropriate for the county's "high-tech" economy. The county uses regulations to concentrate development in suitable areas planned for growth, and to achieve protection of important rural resource lands through requirements for sensitive areas conservation, mandatory open space and clustering provisions, CBCA program, and use of TDRs to permanently set aside large blocks of resource lands.


County programs to protect resource lands are intended to achieve wide-scale rural land conservation with minimal demand for local, state, or federal funding. To make best use of available funding, county-designated conservation areas have been adopted to target funding for specific purposes in specific areas. These areas are shown on *Figure 31* and include:

- Huntersville RLA, which protects natural, cultural, and agricultural resources in the north county area
- Mattapany RLA (under consideration for expansion in 2017), which protects natural, cultural, and agricultural resources and minimizes conflicts with Department of Defense operations in the southern county
- Agricultural Focus Area, which protects the county's highest concentrations of actively farmed parcels, including those in Amish and Mennonite communities
- Natural Resource Focus Area (described in detail below)

The Natural Resource Focus Area links the St. Mary's River Wildland and State Park to the Huntersville RLA and encompasses large portions of the McIntosh Run sub-watershed. This area includes one of the most heavily forested watersheds in southern Maryland and habitat for a number of RTES. The Natural Resources Focus Area includes important hubs mapped by GreenPrint and areas that are priorities for preservation by federal agencies and conservation organizations. The Natural Resources Focus Area offers an opportunity to maintain forest and riparian habitats connecting the Potomac and Patuxent watersheds and provides a defined greenspace between the county's two development districts in Leonardtown and Lexington Park. The Natural Resources Focus Area also contains key landscapes identified by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's "Landscape Conservation Design (LCD) for a Proposed Patuxent Waters Conservation Area."

The county's designated conservation areas are generally consistent with the state's GreenPrint conservation priorities (*Figure 31*). The most noticeable differences between county- and state-identified natural resource land conservation priority areas are:

- Where the large central Targeted Ecological Area extends east of Loveville Road/Point Lookout Road and the county's Natural Resources Focus Area, which starts east of the roads but also extends north of Three Notch Road
- Along the St. Mary's/Charles County border, where GreenPrint has a Targeted Ecological Area that is not a county-designated area



The county has not completed an independent inventory assessment of its green infrastructure. However, a considerable amount of natural resource and watershed inventory and assessment work has been completed. That work, in combination with the State’s GreenPrint mapping, provides a solid basis for implementing the county’s natural resource protection goals. *Table 14* summarizes this work.

**Table 14: Watershed and Related Natural Resources Studies**

Watershed	Report/Date/Author	Description, Findings, and Recommendations
<p><b>Sensitive Lands (RTES) – Countywide</b></p>	<p>Natural Resource Conservation Summary for St. Mary’s County, Maryland – U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, January 2003</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This document inventories potential conservation resources and is part of a series of investigations focused on watershed management and restoration in the county, as part of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers St. Mary’s River Feasibility Study. Three types of conservation resources are investigated: RTES; wetlands located beyond the limits of regulatory controls within the Lexington Park and Leonardtown Development Districts; and contiguous forest areas within the county.</li> <li>• This document inventories potential conservation resources as part of the Corps of Engineers St. Mary’s River Feasibility Study (25 sites of rare, threatened, and/or endangered species and their habitats; wetlands in the Lexington Park and Leonardtown development districts; and contiguous forest using 1995 Department of Natural Resources forest inventory map), including the St. Mary’s River Watershed and McIntosh Run Protection Area.</li> <li>• This document identifies countywide green infrastructure areas (hubs, corridors) and major forest blocks in the St. Mary’s River Watershed and McIntosh Run Protection Area.</li> <li>• Findings:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. McIntosh Run warrants highest level of protection from land use impacts.</li> <li>2. St. Mary’s River Bottomland needs its 5,000 acres of forest, open land, and aquatic habitat protected.</li> <li>3. Use contiguous forest mapping inventory during development review to maintain connections between hubs and corridors.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Countywide</b></p>	<p>Maryland’s Clean Water Action Plan (1998) – Clean Water Action Plan Technical Workgroup, December 1998</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clean water action plans are required by the federal government to identify watersheds not meeting clean water and other natural resource goals for purposes of developing restoration strategies. All Maryland watersheds were examined using a standard classification system to evaluate conditions and develop watershed restoration, protection, and preservation priorities. The three categories are: 1) watersheds not meeting clean water and natural resource goals; 2) watersheds meeting goals but needing preventive actions to sustain quality; and 3) pristine or sensitive watersheds meeting goals but needing extra levels of protection.</li> <li>• All seven county watersheds fail one or more clean water/natural resource goals. The St. Clement’s, Wicomico, and Lower Potomac Rivers watersheds meet two or more indicators of high quality and are classified as Category 3 watersheds, meaning an extra level of protection is needed to enhance positive indicators; St. Mary’s River, Gilbert Swamp, and Lower Patuxent watersheds meet four or more indicators of high quality and are classified as Selected Category 3 watersheds, again needing protection to enhance positive indicators. Breton Bay was added as a Selected Category 3 watershed after the action plan was released, because it was found to be both a Category 1 Priority (Restoration) watershed and a Selected Category 3 watershed—one of only 18 such watersheds in the state.</li> </ul>

<b>St. Mary's River</b>	Watershed Evaluation for St. Mary's River and McIntosh Run Watersheds – Watershed Assessment Plan – KCI Technologies, April 1998	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This document examines six sub-watersheds of the St. Mary's River watershed and five sub-watersheds of McIntosh Run (see Breton Bay Watershed below). The document identifies percent of watersheds unsuitable for development; areas with development constraints; areas for wetland and forest mitigation; and calculated watershed/land use carrying capacity (amount of acceptable impervious surface without effects on water quality).</li> <li>• Based on zoning and the amount of unsuitable lands (bad soils, slopes, etc.) conservation recommendations are made to reduce impacts and zoning/land use changes are suggested where necessary.</li> </ul>
<b>Lower Potomac River</b>	Tributary Strategies for the Lower Potomac Watershed Implementation Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To date, the portion of this watershed in St. Mary's County has been addressed only by Klein (1994)—see below in this table—and through the Tributary Strategies.</li> </ul>
<b>Wicomico River</b>	Wicomico Scenic River Study and Management Plan – Maryland Department of Natural Resources and Wicomico Scenic River Local Advisory Board, 1994	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This watershed is a designated Maryland Scenic and Wild River.</li> <li>• Extensive inventory of natural, historic, and cultural resources.</li> <li>• Numerous recommendations for compatible land use, agricultural, and conservation practices to enhance water quality; conserve soil resources; control source sewerage discharge; control urban nonpoint pollution, stormwater, and sediment loads; facilitate compatible forestry operations and maintain/restore riparian forest buffers; and conduct a full environmental impact study for restoring nine miles of channelized Gilbert Run.</li> </ul>
<b>Gilbert Swamp</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This watershed, a sub-watershed of the Wicomico River, is mostly in Charles County, where it has been studied intensely along with the Zekiah Swamp Run.</li> </ul>
<b>St. Clements Bay</b>	No watershed studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Soil Conservation Service has been very active in achieving soil conservation and water quality plan goals in the county's largest agricultural watershed. Plans have been approved on 15,187 acres out of a proposed 21,154 acres.</li> </ul>

**Table 15: LPPRP Update**

Watershed	Report/Date/Author	Description, Findings, and Recommendations
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Breton Bay McIntosh Run Tributary</b></p>	<p>Breton Bay Watershed Restoration Action Strategy (WRAS) – The Center for Watershed Protection in cooperation with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, July 2003; follow-up to the Breton Bay Stream Corridor Assessment Survey by Maryland Department of Natural Resources, January 2003</p> <p>Watershed Evaluation for St. Mary’s River and McIntosh Run Watersheds – Watershed Assessment Plan – KCI Technologies, April 1998 (developed as part of the St. Mary’s River Watershed Study)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 60-square-mile watershed that includes the 22,000-acre McIntosh Run watershed, its largest tributary, and a Natural Heritage Area with 80% forest cover (10,480 acres) and several RTES (plants and dwarf mussels).</li> <li>• The WRAS presents ways to reduce nonpoint source pollution and other impairments while conserving this unique, high-quality natural resource.</li> <li>• Severe channel, stream bank, and sites with inadequate buffers are identified for restorative action.</li> <li>• Findings:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reduce sediment/nutrient inputs via infrastructure upgrades; riparian buffer; and stream enhancements, stormwater retrofits, and sewerage plant upgrades</li> <li>2. Use best agricultural and forestry practices via conservation, protection, and stewardship (promote the McIntosh Run Land Conservation Partnership and Patuxent Tidewater Trust)</li> <li>3. Promote stewardship awareness (education/outreach, pollution prevention programs)</li> <li>4. Train development review staff and local development community and promote best practices in development</li> <li>5. Enhance aesthetic and recreational interactions (integrate town, county, civic, and homeowner association projects and promote water-oriented recreation)</li> </ol> </li> <li>• Examined five sub-watersheds of McIntosh Run regarding percent of the watershed and tributaries unsuitable for development, areas with development constraints, and areas for wetland and forest mitigation; produced watershed maps; and calculated watershed/land use carrying capacity (amount of acceptable impervious surface without effects on water quality).</li> <li>• Based on zoning and the amount of unsuitable lands (bad soils, slopes, etc.), conservation recommendations are made to reduce impacts and zoning/land use changes are suggested where necessary.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>St. Mary’s River – Hilton Run Tributary</b></p>	<p>Management Plan for Hilton Run – Citizens of St. Mary’s County and the Hilton Run Team, October 2003</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examines water quality degradation of this 2,230-acre sub-watershed to St. Mary’s River.</li> <li>• Recommendations encourage stewardship and best management practices by homeowners, neighborhoods, farm management, solid waste, and air quality.</li> <li>• Recommendations encourage enacting policy changes regarding stormwater management, site design, and building codes; promoting mixed-use development to combat sprawl; creating incentives for green design; enforcing regulations; and activating the St. Mary’s River Watershed Commission.</li> </ul>

<p><b>St. Mary's River and Tidal Creeks</b></p>	<p>Opportunities to Preserve and Enhance the Quality of the St. Mary's River and the County's Tidal Creeks – Richard D. Klein, Community and Environmental Defense Services, October 1994 St. Mary's River WRAS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examines land use and resulting water quality impacts on 56 tidal creeks, with emphasis on the St. Mary's River, Blake Creek, Cuckold Creek, Hickory Landing Creek, and Saint Jerome's Creek.</li> <li>• Findings:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Most tidal creeks have characteristics that inhibit tidal flushing.</li> <li>2. Stormwater regulations need improvement to control runoff pollution and maintain groundwater discharge.</li> <li>3. Cluster development is encouraged in tidal creeks that do not flush well.</li> <li>4. Allow TDRs from cropland located on highly erodible soils and from crops/forest in creek watersheds that flush poorly.</li> </ol> </li> <li>• Status: The WRAS is scheduled for completion in 2011. Projects identified will be incorporated into county programs via capital projects and grant-funded implementation projects and will be included in the Watershed Implementation Plan Phase II in development for approval by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Maryland Department of Environment.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Lower Patuxent River</b></p>	<p>Patuxent River Feasibility Study – U.S. Army Corps of Engineers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential problems, needs, and opportunities for restoration identified.</li> <li>• No projects in St. Mary's County pursued to date, although many issues have been addressed through Soil Conservation District projects or through individual permits as development has proceeded.</li> <li>• Recommendations for better management of highly erodible soils implemented through amendments to the zoning ordinance.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Patuxent Waters Conservation Area</b></p>	<p>U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and others</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of reference species in 2016 and boundaries necessary for habitat protection to be recommended for approval in 2017.</li> <li>• Through conservation easements, land acquisition, and partnerships within the recommended boundary, federal agencies will work with conservation partners and local communities to identify and protect the most ecologically significant, resilient, and water quality enhancing natural areas remaining in the landscape.</li> <li>• Funding for some federal acquisition of land and easements from willing sellers is proposed, but the bulk of additional protection is planned to come through creative partnerships with private and public landowners.</li> </ul>

#### 4.3.4 Planning and Land Use Management Authority, Easements, and Funding

The key components of the county’s planning strategy to implement natural resource goals is its land use management, zoning, and subdivision authorities. *Table 16* summarizes fundamental regulations.

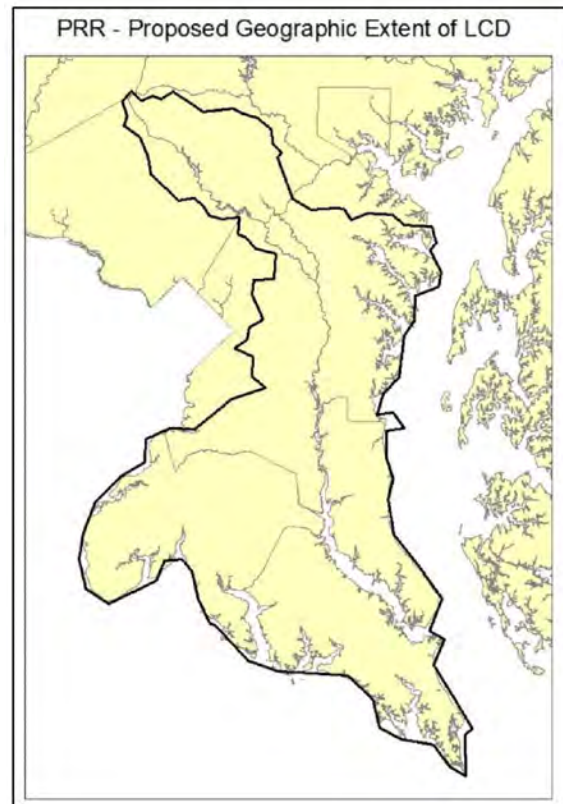
As development occurs, these regulations help protect sensitive resource lands and provide an opportunity to fill gaps in green infrastructure. To date, the county’s easement acquisition efforts have focused on agricultural land preservation. The Rural Legacy Program and other easement programs discussed in *Section 5 Agricultural Land Preservation* of this LPPRP are valuable in that they have enabled the conservation of both farmland and natural resource land. Agricultural land preservation also serves to protect natural resources from development. However, funding specifically for natural resource land conservation is generally limited. Program Open Space is generally used for parks and recreation land acquisition and development projects, some of which conserve natural resource lands and make outdoor recreation opportunities available to the public.


The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services initiative, “Landscape Conservation Design (LCD) for a Proposed Patuxent Waters Conservation Area,” is in process and is anticipated to make significant new funds available for land conservation in southern Maryland and in St. Mary’s County. In 2011, the Director of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services approved a preliminary proposal to expand the acquisition boundary for the Patuxent Research Refuge in Laurel, Maryland. The proposed expanded boundary (area within the heavy outline shown in *Figure 32* includes the Patuxent River watershed and other ecologically and economically important watersheds in central and southern Maryland, including Mattawoman Creek, Nanjemoy Creek, Zekiah Swamp, McIntosh Run, and the headwaters of the South and Severn Rivers. This was the first step in a three-step process that, if approved, will create a landscape-scale refuge on the western shore of the Chesapeake Bay.

Through conservation easements, land acquisition, and partnerships within the proposed boundary, the Patuxent Research Refuge will work with conservation partners and local communities to identify and protect the most ecologically significant, resilient, and water quality enhancing natural areas remaining in the landscape. While this may include federal acquisition of land and easements from willing sellers, the bulk of the additional protection is anticipated to come through creative partnerships with private and public landowners.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services expects to complete the Patuxent Waters Conservation Area Plan by January 2017. Once the LCD is completed and approved, it is anticipated that new federal funding will be made available to support land conservation goals totaling 280,000 acres in the defined areas. Protection efforts would seek 15,000 acres fee simple acquisition and 25,000 acres of easements per year in the five southern Maryland counties using partner funds, donated easements, fee simple purchase from willing

**Figure 32: Proposed Patuxent Waters Conservation Area**





landowners, and local zoning protection (floodplains, sensitive areas, etc.). The Conservation Landscape funds can be used as a match for many funding sources (including state, local, private, and other federal sources) to preserve land.



**Table 16: St. Mary’s County Natural Resources Protection Requirements Summary**

(NOTE: Planned ordinance updates to implement the 2010 Comprehensive Plan and the 2016 Lexington Park Development District Master Plan may modify the regulation or the referenced Zoning Ordinance citation.)

Subject	Zoning Ordinance	Criteria (For actual requirements, see St. Mary’s County Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance)
<p>Natural Resources Conservation (streams, wetlands, hydric soils, floodplain, steep slopes, erodible soils, habitat protection, shoreline resources)</p>	<p>Chapter 71 Sections 1 – 9</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Streams</b> – maintain natural stream buffers (replant if needed) of 100-foot width from edge of bank for perennial streams and intermittent streams within the Critical Area (CBCA) and 50-foot width from edge of bank outside of Critical Area for intermittent streams; maintain fish movement; and prohibit disrupting stream flow with riprap or other artificial means.</li> <li>• <b>Wetlands and hydric soils</b> – 100-foot buffer for tidal wetlands with expansion for steep slopes, highly erodible soils and hydric soils; 25-foot buffer for non-tidal wetlands (expanded up to 100 feet for adjoining hydric soils); mitigation required for any disturbance.</li> <li>• <b>100-year floodplain protections</b> – establishes environmental review procedures and minimum floodplain protection standards, such as prohibiting any new development within floodplains; requiring permits for any work within floodplains; requiring easements for all floodplain areas; and requiring 50-foot buffers around edges, reduced to 25 feet with approved water quality plan.</li> <li>• <b>Steep slopes/erodible soils</b> – no disturbance on slopes over 25%; on highly erodible soils with greater than 15% slope; no grading on steep slopes within 50 feet of streams in CBCA and stream buffers (many detailed requirements for each).</li> <li>• <b>Highly erodible soils</b> – Soil Conservation Service review required for disturbed soils and wetlands; Critical Area Buffer, stream buffers, and wetland buffers expand to extent of steep erodible soils or 300 feet (whichever is greater) include these soil types; requires use of infiltration, flow attenuation, stormwater retention, or detention.</li> <li>• <b>Habitat protection</b> – required for expanded CBCA buffer, FIDS habitat for contiguous forests generally 50 acres or more and adjacent to Maryland Department of Natural Resources’ green infrastructure network, habitats for RTES, colonial water bird nesting areas, historic waterfowl concentration areas, Natural Heritage Areas, anadromous fish propagation waters; (many detailed requirements for each).</li> </ul>
<p>Forest Conservation (timber, forest, and woodlands)</p>	<p>Chapter 72 Sections 1 – 5</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Timber Harvests</b> – forest management plans required for over one acre in CBCA, plus sediment control plan; all harvesting subject to review; no cutting in buffer; harvested lands must remain in forest reuse, with regeneration, for minimum of five years.</li> <li>• <b>Forest/Woodland Protection</b> - CBCA mitigation required to offset clearing/cutting impacts (many other requirements); mitigation-banking allowed with approved plans for native species reforestation or afforestation.</li> </ul>
<p>Forest Conservation</p>	<p>Chapter 75 Sections 1 – 12</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regulations for cutting and clearing certain forests and requiring forest stand delineations and conservation plans for sites greater than 20,000 square feet for many development activities.</li> </ul>
<p>Floodplain Regulations</p>	<p>Chapter 76 Sections 1 – 6</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishes standards and regulations related to development within floodplains; requires site plans and permits for any disturbance; establishes flood elevation and location standards for structures; numerous other county, state and federal permits and procedures required.</li> </ul>
<p>CBCA</p>	<p>Chapters 41, 72, 73, and 74 Sections 22.5 and 24.4</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applies to all land and water within 1,000 feet beyond heads of tide boundaries and private tidal wetlands (many more requirements for Intensely Developed Areas, Limited Development Areas, and Resource Conservation Areas).</li> </ul>

### 4.3.5 Other Regulatory or Management Programs

The county's TDR program contributes to the county's natural resource land conservation strategy. As of 2010, the TDR program permanently protected 2,846 acres, retiring 1,107 development rights on 134 tracts (may include multiple lots in common ownership). The subdivision ordinance provides for protection of natural features in the RPD by requiring major subdivisions to cluster development. In subdivisions that create more than five lots, at least 50% of the tract must be preserved in open space. The subdivision regulations also allow the provision of greenways where they preserve or establish sections of designated green infrastructure corridors or routes listed in the Maryland Greenways Atlas.

The county's recreation and parks land acquisition program is another means of conserving lands with high natural resource values and making them accessible for appropriate public use and interaction with nature. For example, Myrtle Point Park is evolving into a center for resource-based recreation including environmental education, supplementing the excellent program at the St. Mary's Public Schools Environmental Education Center at the Elms.

### 4.3.6 Eco-Tourism and Resource-Based Recreation

The Comprehensive Plan encourages heritage tourism and resource-based recreation. Both activities are complementary components to the county's natural resource conservation program. In 2003, St. Mary's County adopted a regional Heritage Tourism Management Plan designed to increase and enhance visitation in southern Maryland and seek National Park Service designation of southern Maryland as a National Heritage Area. In 2016, the county completed a new tourism master plan. Findings and vision for that plan identify multiple assets and opportunities for enhancing county-managed parks, recreation, and cultural resources as attractions for potential visitors. St. Mary's County also manages an active historic preservation program, with an inventory of 700 historic sites and structures, including 30 sites on the National Register of Historic Places.

## 4.4 Evaluation of the Natural Resource Land Conservation Program

This section presents county staff evaluation of the ability of St. Mary's County to achieve natural resource goals through an evaluation of strengths and weaknesses of the state's and county's current natural resource land conservation implementation strategies, programs, and processes.

### 4.4.1 Strengths and Weaknesses of the Natural Resources Implementation Program

#### Comprehensive Planning Process

##### *Strengths*

- Natural resource conservation goals, objectives, and policies are well integrated in the comprehensive planning process. They provide a framework to implement relevant planning strategies, programs, regulations, and decision-making. The goals are grounded in the Comprehensive Plan's vision statement and are compatible with the state's goals for natural resource land conservation.
- The 2010 Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance incorporates many of the Comprehensive Plan's natural resource conservation and protection recommendations. While some of the regulations go beyond minimum state or federal requirements, the increased standards will be necessary for the county to meet water quality improvement goals, assist in hazard mitigation planning, protect life and property, and make the county eligible for participation in programs such as the National Flood Insurance Program's Community Rating System, which has the potential to reduce flood insurance costs for residents.

### ***Weaknesses***

- The county has not established measurable objectives to evaluate growth and development impacts, other than the regulatory criteria contained in the Zoning Ordinance and subdivision regulations. Such regulations and criteria only apply to individual developmental submittals and do not facilitate comprehensive reviews based on area-wide objectives. Development of measures to evaluate impacts at a watershed level will be needed for the Phase II & III Watershed Implementation Plan and any future “Accounting for Growth” actions in the county.
- The state can assist with development of measurable objectives by working with the county to create measurable natural resource planning objectives relating to Chesapeake Bay TMDLs, National Pollution Discharge Elimination System permitting, and state planning objectives and Smart Growth goals. General objectives, incorporated into the 2010 Comprehensive Plan update, facilitate coordinated efforts to restore the Bay and follow through on the Watershed Implementation Plan, and for the two-year implementation milestones necessary to remove the Bay and tributaries from the impaired waters list by 2025. It will be necessary to incorporate those detailed objectives and milestones in updates of the Capital Improvements Program, the Comprehensive Plan, and functional plans, such as this LPPRP.
- Watershed strategies and related studies are not fully integrated into the comprehensive planning process. Plans—such as the Breton Bay WRAS, a St. Mary’s River WRAS prepared by county residents, and the Management Plan for Hilton Run—recommend changes in land use and development practices that the county should consider in comprehensive and functional plans.

## **Use of Resource Data and Inventories**

### ***Strengths***

- The county has developed a comprehensive GIS-based system that includes natural resources data, which the county uses in small area planning and in day-to-day subdivision and site plan review. Extensive analysis of this data was used to update the Natural Resources Element of the Comprehensive Plan.

### ***Weaknesses***

- The current county soil survey from 1978 was focused on the agricultural and forest capability and less on the development aspects of soils in the county and is therefore not as accurate as may be needed for development review purposes. The county and state have shifted to the digital soil survey, which simplified obtaining relevant data. Aspects of the survey still need to be updated to facilitate regulation of erodible soil protection requirements, especially as they pertain to steep slope protection.
- The county has been working with the state to more easily access the state’s secured inventory of sites with RTES areas. However, timeliness of reviews remains an issue for addressing RTES issues in land development applications as they go through county development review and permit processes. Early identification is essential to provide adequate protection to sensitive habitats and minimize impacts to RTES while also continuing to protect data to minimize habitat resource destruction before development applications are submitted for approval.

## Designated Conservation and Other Natural Resource Areas

### *Strengths*

- The Huntersville Rural Legacy Area (RLA), established in 1998, and the Mattapany RLA, established in 2004, have been successful in concentrating easement purchases and protecting large contiguous natural resource land areas. The county expanded the Huntersville RLA twice, in 2004 and 2017. The Mattapany RLA was expanded in 2009 to facilitate added land protection efforts near Naval Air Station Patuxent River, and a second expansion is proposed for 2022.
- The St. Mary's River Wildland is an important designated protection area in the central part of the county and serves as the anchor for conservation efforts in the St. Mary's River Watershed. The county has identified an extensive sensitive area network centered on streams, floodplains and wetlands, the surrounding steep slopes, and sensitive soils, and has established regulations to protect and enhance these resources.

### *Weaknesses*

- The county's designated conservation areas (CBCA, Huntersville RLA, Mattapany RLA, and St. Mary's River Wildland) have been criticized as being too small in overall area to effectively meet state goals to create a network of contiguous green infrastructure and focus conservation and restoration activities on priority areas. The 2017 expansion of the Huntersville RLA included portions of the Comprehensive Plan designated resource focus area to provide an implementation tool to link areas designated for resource conservation.
- Feedback mechanisms in the RLA review process need improvement so local applicants (land trusts and the county) have direction regarding the status of applications. Prompt feedback is important so the local community can use its resources to respond to evolving opportunities.
- The sensitive areas protected by regulations are not always adequately monitored to ensure that protected lands remain as such. While lands protected by regulation accomplish many resource, habitat, and services goals, the regulations can be changed to weaken protection, and privately protected land is not available to create a coordinated network accessible to the public for recreation or tourism purposes. The county could consider negotiating limited public access into future private easement agreements.

## Planning and Land Use Management Authority, Easements, and Funding

### *Strengths*

- Implementation of the county's zoning and subdivision ordinances' natural resource protection requirements should be effective in addressing impacts related to specific development projects. The regulations address all sensitive resources.
- Environmental planners and review staff are plugged in procedurally to the development review process, facilitating their input into subdivision and site plan review.
- Local funds for land preservation have remained stable since 2001 when the county dedicated a portion of its increased recordation tax to conserve rural lands.

### *Weaknesses*

- An urban and environmental planner in the Department of Economic Development assists in land preservation efforts. Presently, the county only has two environmental planners performing site plan and subdivision review, including floodplain and CBCA program implementation. Additional staff with the specialized training required to cover the diverse range of necessary environmental planning and review functions are needed. There is no environmental planner

in the Comprehensive Division, which appears to leave a gap in staffing to perform tasks such as maintaining environmental inventories, planning and research, grant writing, project implementation, training, and coordination with state and federal agencies on environmental programs. The result is that environmental review is often not conducted in sufficient detail, items are missed, and opportunities to make connections and close feedback loops are lost.

- Weaknesses exist in the county’s ability to protect portions of green infrastructure using its planning authority. In the zoning and subdivision regulations, the county has linked protection of sensitive habitats, such as FIDS habitat, to green infrastructure. However, the requirements are only one of several ways in which an applicant may meet the plan approval requirements. Green infrastructure, policies for watersheds, and habitat identification and protection, need to be better integrated with local and state regulations. Better integration would allow county staff to work more directly with land developers to help ensure that adequate protections are incorporated into their development plans.
- Continued efforts are needed to fund natural resource conservation, especially for fee simple and easement acquisitions.
- Implement HB 462 to restore and protect state funding to transfer tax-funded land conservation, preservation, and recreation programs by providing \$60 million in new funding (\$20 million in 2017 and \$40 million in 2018) for programs (MALPF, Rural Legacy, and Program Open Space); allocate funds for state land and park development, maintenance, and recreation; repay \$90 million in past transfers from General Funds starting in 2018; and appropriate additional repayments starting in 2021, totaling \$152 million.
- The county’s Agricultural and Land Preservation Program has been primarily used to match state funds to preserve agricultural lands. While this has also helped natural resource conservation, such as in the Huntersville RLA, few resources are dedicated primarily for natural resource land conservation.
- Add other programs working to preserve land as partners to the REPI agreement for southern Maryland, to allow additional funding sources to be matched with REPI funds.

## **Other Regulatory or Management Programs**

### ***Strengths***

- The county’s suite of programs for natural resource protection is comprehensive and includes sensitive area protection regulations, a TDR program, and cluster development requirements. A special strength is the 50% minimum required open space provision for major subdivisions in the RPD and residential zones in growth areas through which natural resource land and farmland is protected as part of a development project.
- The county has established development application and review procedures to incorporate more detailed environmental comments earlier in the plan design and review process.

### ***Weaknesses***

- St. Mary’s County is a non-delegated county for sediment and erosion control. The county has relied on the Soil Conservation Service to review sediment and erosion plans, and on the Maryland Department of Environment to inspect sites for compliance. There are insufficient Maryland Department of Environment staff to adequately oversee all development activity in the county, which reduces regulatory effectiveness and has meant that only major projects and “complaints” are adequately addressed. Since 2012, the county has hired staff and consultants to perform reviews and erosion control inspections, and for stormwater management construction and maintenance inspections of smaller projects.

## Eco-Tourism and Resource-Based Recreation

### *Strengths*

- St. Mary's County actively promotes its rural character and cultural heritage as a participant in the Southern Maryland Heritage Area program. Both the county and state have done a good job documenting and promoting the area's rich natural and historic resources.
- In 2009, Maryland purchased two large tracts, Kits Point (St. Inigoes State Forest) and Newtowne Neck, and in 2015, several parcels known as the Walton Lumber tract were added to the Salem State Forest adjacent to St Mary's Lake. These lands provide significant cultural and natural resource assets in the county. Current efforts are underway to promote new ecotourism and resource-based recreation opportunities.
- Passive recreation and water access in the county will be greatly enhanced by the development of a walking trail/boardwalk in design for the Shannon Farm parcel on the Chesapeake Bay and passive/eco-focused recreational development of the Snow Hill Park property on the Patuxent River.
- Development of a South County tourism plan that will focus on culture and water-based activities.
- The Patuxent River Commission sponsored an effort to promote and expand water-focused ecotourism in the Patuxent River watershed.
- Tourism can increase with the promotion and expansion of agritourism and of equine operation.
- Federal, state, and local agencies have worked to develop resources for the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail.

### *Weaknesses*

- A significant weakness is the sluggishness in implementing the capital projects and program development activities set forth in the Heritage Tourism Management Plan.

## 4.4.2 Summary of Needed Improvements in the Implementation Program

Resource protection is a key component of the county Comprehensive Plan's vision statement that establishes a strong policy foundation for implementation strategies. Overall, the County has made good progress in inventorying, mapping, and understanding its natural resources. The county, residents, and other individuals have made substantial progress in analyzing resources and the impacts of development in most county watersheds. The Zoning Ordinance has been updated to incorporate environmental and conservation criteria. Easement programs (MALPF, Maryland Environmental Trust, MHT, and RL) have permanently preserved over 26,895 acres of agricultural and natural resource lands.

The county's suite of programs for natural resource protection is comprehensive, but some areas for improvement in processes appear to exist. Based on analysis of natural resource land conservation programs, county staff identified the following key areas for improvement:

- Objective criteria and development review requirements have yet to be established to consider the overall impact of developments on county natural resource areas. Current tools and criteria do not allow the evaluation of the cumulative impacts of multiple projects on a resource or weighting impacts on the health and function of the natural resource area. Past plans have cited the need to account for the cumulative impact of multiple projects on the health and function of county natural resource areas. Improved assessment and tracking of development impacts on natural resources, ideally on a sub-watershed level, would allow the county to better target preservation efforts and evaluate the cost and benefit of decisions made at the local level. Many new tools and criteria have been developed at federal, state, and regional levels that the county can use to create objective and better-integrated project review criteria to meet this need, but use of these tools has yet to be realized. Increased staff with background and knowledge of environmental planning will be important for implementation of the recommendation during development review.
- No group or entity has yet demonstrated the range of capabilities necessary to move natural resource conservation efforts forward—to market conservation programs, identify or generate funds for land acquisition and protection, or initiate fee simple and easement acquisitions. As a result, resource protection is only provided to the minimum extent required by local ordinance.
- Inadequate resources (staff and funding) are viewed to inhibit strategic targeting and acquisition of easements or fee simple land to conserve. The county primarily responds to offers brought by willing landowners.
- The county proposes a FY2023 capital project to fund an Urban Legacy Program to provide a source of dedicated funding for easements and administrative costs for projects initiated and funded inside designated urban area. These funds can be matched with Department of Defense funds to provide resource protection where such protection also benefits maintenance of operations at local military installations.
- Capacity to oversee easements and manage lands and facilities once acquired has been an ongoing issue. A request by Maryland that Patuxent Tidewater Land Trust act as sole sponsor for the Huntersville RLA with Resource Conservation and Development, Inc. (RC&D) as sole sponsor for the Mattapany RLA led to capacity improvements that have streamlined and accelerated outreach, acquisition, and monitoring of Rural Legacy easements. Patuxent Tidewater Land Trust has strengthened its volunteer board, and RC&D added a dedicated land preservation planner to work on conservation projects. Continued evaluation of capacity and performance is needed to assure continued success of programs.

## 4.5 Program Development Strategy for Natural Resource Conservation

### 4.5.1 County Steps

The county has taken steps to overcome weaknesses and achieve state and local goals for natural resource land conservation, including:

- The 2010 Comprehensive Plan includes a natural resource conservation focus area connecting the St. Mary's River Watershed and Wildlands, through the Breton Bay watershed to the Huntersville RLA. This focus area identifies where public investment could be leveraged for maximum effect and further the state's goal of concentrating conservation and restoration activities in priority areas. In addition to several properties in the focus area having been acquired by the state and managed by the county since 2010:
  - The first property protected in the planned McIntosh Run Watershed Conservation Area is managed under an agreement with the State of Maryland.
  - The Huntersville RLA expansion in 2017 included portions of the natural resource conservation focus area and Patuxent LCD, and several easement acquisitions have occurred in the expansion area.
    - A proposal for expansion of the Mattapaney RLA to encompass Potomac watershed lands between the St Mary's River and Breton Bay is being considered for approval in 2022.
    - County and land trust partnership with the Department of Defense provides added funding that matches county and state funding and allows an increase in easement acquisition and fee simple land conservation in the Huntersville and Mattapaney RLAs.
- The Comprehensive Plan maps important habitat and sensitive areas as a land use and includes a solid accounting of the extent of protected resource lands in St. Mary's County. While county zoning districts do not show these areas, in response to state legislation, the county must conduct environmental reviews of proposed land development projects as part of the detailed review for compliance with Comprehensive Plan criteria. This detailed environmental review of all projects uses updated GIS resource data layers, green infrastructure, and FIDS habitat and other habitat and water quality data from state agencies to help ensure that plats and site plans accurately show resources and are prepared in accordance with regulatory requirements.
- Specific Rural Subdivision Design guidelines require protection of agricultural lands, as well as natural landscapes and habitats, as components of the overall rural character of the county.
- The county's TDR program is being used successfully to establish permanent easement protection on natural resource lands countywide.
- Green infrastructure has been integrated into comprehensive planning and development review processes. The current Comprehensive Plan and the zoning ordinance contain provisions to help ensure that green infrastructure corridors are protected, and eventually consolidated, to provide deeded and dedicated greenways in growth areas, and an easement protected network in rural areas.



## 4.5.2 Additional County and State Actions

This following recommended strategies are intended to improve natural resource land conservation in St. Mary's County.

### County

- Continue to update and use the Water Resources Element of the plan and Watershed Implementation Process to better integrate watershed restoration strategies and tracking into the comprehensive planning, development review, and inspection processes.
- Implement the Breton Bay WRAS and the St. Mary's River WRAS.
- Increase staff and/or fund contract services for environmental planning, development review, and stormwater management maintenance and inspections, to ensure responsive and effective implementation of county programs and regulations developed to meet local, state, and federal mandates.

### State

- Implement Maryland legislation to restore and protect state funding to transfer tax-funded land conservation, preservation, and recreation programs; provide new programs (MALPF, Rural Legacy, and Program Open Space); allocate funds for state land and park development; and provide for maintenance and recreation. Use general funds to repay past transfers and appropriate funds for additional repayments starting in 2021.
- Identify measurable natural resource planning objectives that can be credited in the state's Watershed Implementation Plans.
- Streamline the easement acquisition and Rural Legacy application process to make it more responsive to county and land trust needs.
- Increase access to the state's RTES inventory to flag development sites and improve RTES habitat review.
- Increase the number of Maryland Department of Environment inspectors for sediment and erosion control inspections and compliance.

This page was intentionally left blank.

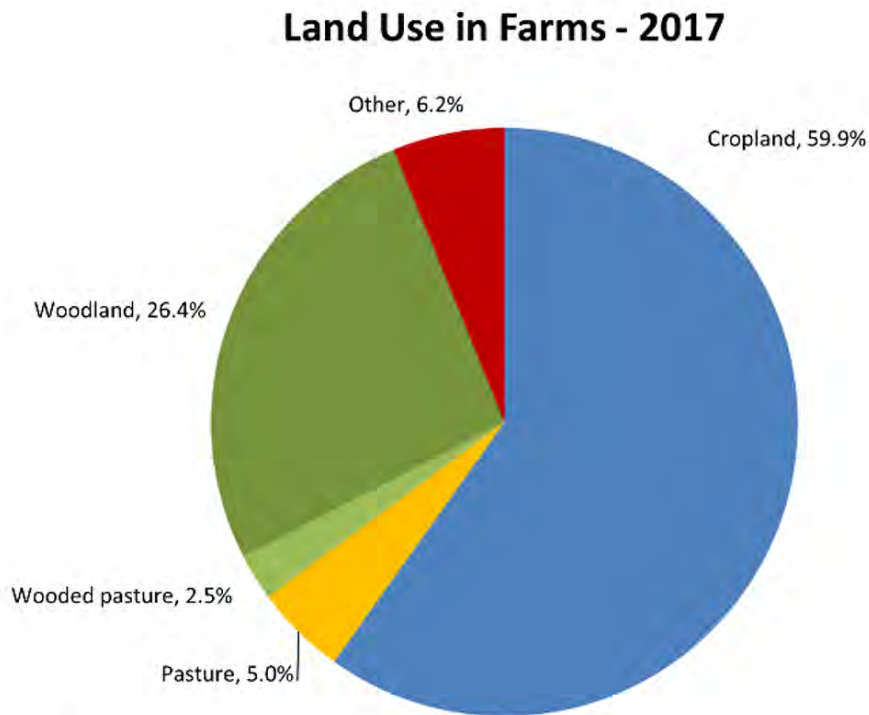
## 5.1 Agricultural Industry and Farmland Preservation Overview

Protection of agricultural lands is a key component of St. Mary's County land conservation strategy. The Agriculture and Seafood Division manages the county's agricultural programs, including land preservation. Deliberately setting aside land for public benefit (for any purpose) has commonalities, and land conservation efforts need to be coordinated. However, agricultural land protection is often far more complex because it involves leaving land in private hands with participation in programs being voluntary. Achieving its primary purpose (permanent protection of the productive land and its microclimate resource for food production into the future), requires skilled farmers and farm families as well as a viable agricultural industry. No other form of land conservation needs to accommodate an economic activity as relatively intense as agriculture.

### 5.1.1 Agricultural Industry in St. Mary's County

The U.S. Department of Agriculture Census of Agriculture (Census) 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." The Census asks farmers about the amount of land on their farms. The Census consistently reports more land in farms than is reported by the Maryland Department of Planning's 2007 Land Use Mapping for agricultural land uses, which interprets satellite imagery and does not identify forestland on farms.

Figure 33: Land Use on Farms – 2017



Source: USDA Census of Agriculture, 2017

In 2017, the Census counted 61,803 acres of land in farms in St. Mary's County, down from 67,086 acres in 2012. The 2017 Census also showed that the average size of farms decreased slightly (from 108 acres in 2012 to 100 acres in 2017) and that the number of farms in 2017 had decreased (from 632 farms in 2012 to 615 farms in 2017). This reduction in farms reversed the trend seen from 2002 to 2012.

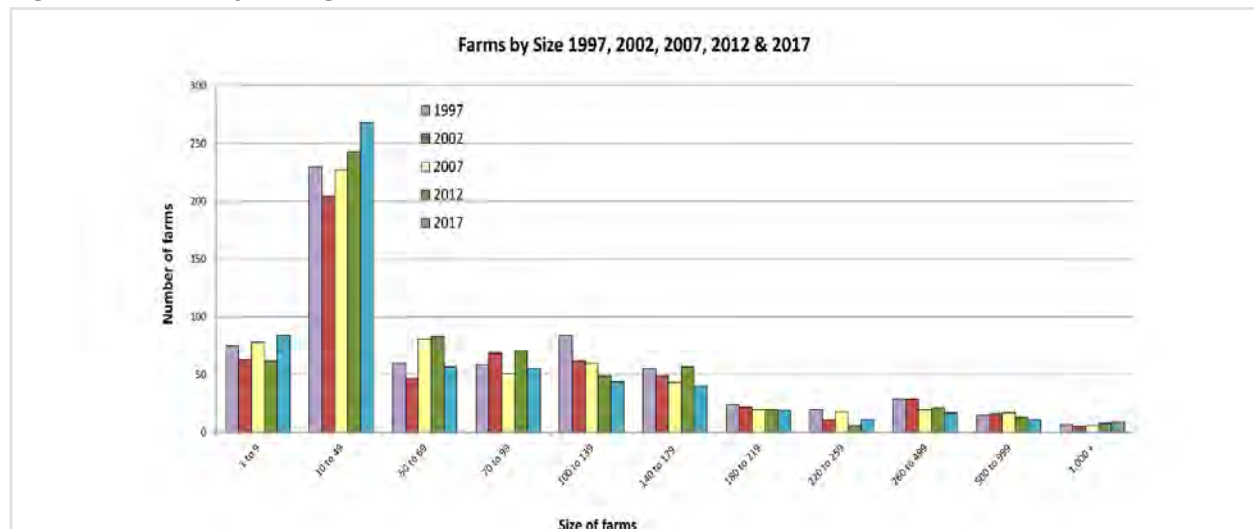
Land in farms tends to be in a mixture of agricultural uses, including cropland, pasture, woodland, and structures. However, cropland is the most dominant use, with most St. Mary’s County farms growing soybeans, corn, wheat, hay, and barley. Pastureland is primarily used for beef cattle. Nursery greenhouse products are now second to grains in sales value, and tobacco has dropped from second in sales value (after grains/soybeans), to sixth in sales value in the county. Vegetables, cattle for meat, milk, and dairy products now rank third to fifth respectively in value.

In 2017, the average county farm size was 100 acres, down slightly from 108 acres in 2012. Charting the distribution of farms by size shows a preponderance of farms between 10 and 49 acres (*Figure 34*).

In 2017, slightly greater than 75% of all farms were less than 100 acres and encompassed just under 24% of the land in farms. Slightly less than 25% of farms were between 100 and more than 1,000 acres and contained more than 76% of farmland.

The county’s history of tobacco cultivation, which can generate a high-value product on relatively small acreages, allowed tobacco farms to be subdivided into small-sized but economically viable operations. The percentage of farms producing tobacco has declined primarily due to Maryland’s Tobacco Buyout Program, which paid farmers to cease growing tobacco in perpetuity. Of the Maryland farms in six counties producing tobacco in 2017, St. Mary’s County ranked first in number of farms (29 of 40) and in value of tobacco production (\$1.09 million in 2017, up from \$683,000 in 2012). Since 2017 the local UMD Extension staff have noted that there has been a shift in the type of tobacco desired by product manufacturers, and the trend for value in tobacco production appears likely to resume its decline as more farms shift out of tobacco production.

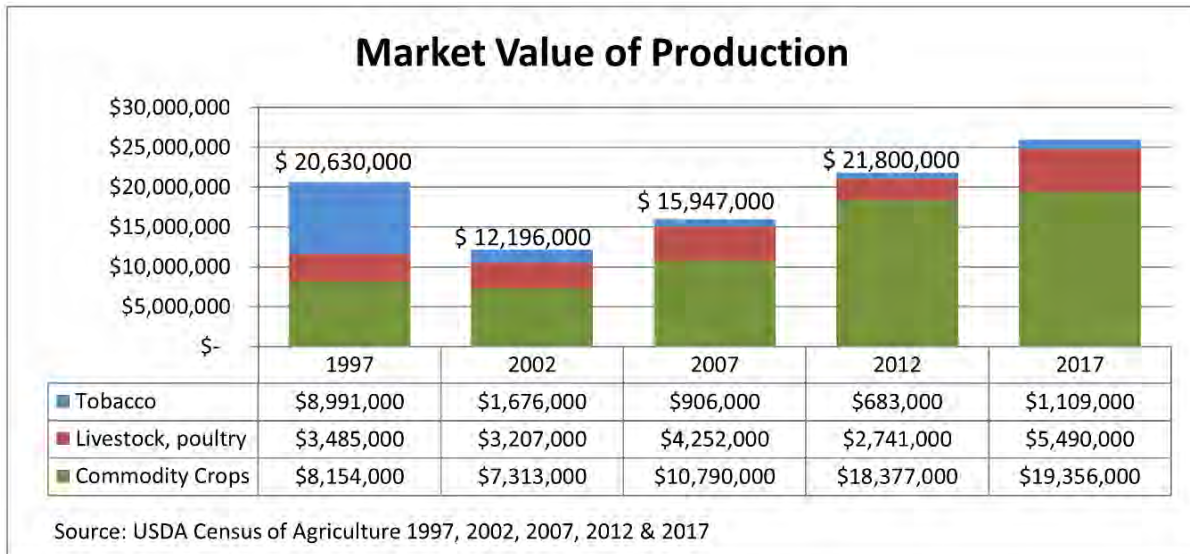
**Figure 34: Farms by Acreage Size 1997, 2002, 2007, 2012, and 2017**



Source: St. Mary’s County Agriculture and Seafood Division

As shown in *Figure 35*, this downward trend affected the total market value of agricultural production in the county in the mid-2000s, but overall production values rebounded as farmers shifted to producing other crops and products.

**Figure 35: Market Value of Production: 1997, 2002, 2007, 2012, and 2017**



As *Table 17* shows, St. Mary’s County has lost a lower percentage of farmland in the 15 years between 2002 and 2017 than the southern Maryland region and a higher percentage than the State of Maryland. In terms of the market value of agricultural products sold, St. Mary’s percentage value increased, and by higher percentages than either the southern Maryland region or the state generally. This means that the county and southern Maryland region are experiencing a greater increases of agricultural value than the State as a whole.

The increase in values over the 15-year period represents a significant industry readjustment, in large part due to strong regional efforts to address changes in the agricultural industry, including help provided to former tobacco farms to shift away from tobacco products to alternative crops, value-added products, and farm-to-table direct sales. Local and regional efforts have greatly enhanced the economic viability of the farm economy in the region.

**Table 17: Land in Farms and Market Value of Agricultural Products Sold – 2002 to 2017**

	Land in Farms		Market Value of Agricultural Products Sold		
	2012 – 2017		2007 – 2017 (1,000 Constant \$)		
	Acres change	% Change		Value change	% Change
Maryland	-87,508	-4.21%	Maryland	+\$1,269,502	105.5%
So. Maryland Region	-22,265	-14.82%	So. Maryland Region	+\$420,065	1,924.8%
St. Mary's County	-6,350	-9.32%	St. Mary's County	+\$291,788	2,392.5%

## 5.2 Farmland Preservation Goals

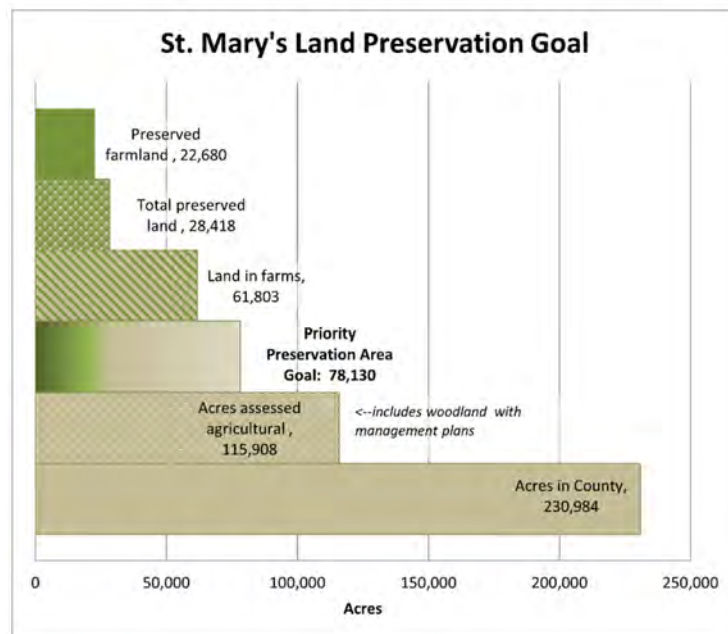
In 1995, as part of its agricultural land preservation program certification, St. Mary's County set a goal to permanently protect 60,000 acres of farmland. The goal was based on a desire to protect nearly all existing productive land base in the county and was reaffirmed in the 2010 Comprehensive Plan. No time frame accompanied this goal, but the creation of a local purchase-of-development rights program was proposed (but has not been funded) to augment participation in the MALPF Program. In addition, the county adopted a stronger TDR program in 2007.

The 61,803 acres (26.7% of the county) identified as land in farms by the 2017 Census is a subset of the 115,908 acres currently assessed as agricultural for tax purposes (2021).

Woodlands with forest management plans are eligible for agricultural assessment. Farms in the county often contain a mixture of cropland, pasture, and woodland. Of the 61,803 farm acres in St. Mary's County, the Census identified 41,681 acres (67.4%) as cropland, pasture, or wooded pasture.

As of the end of 2021, 28,418 acres of land in farms have been permanently protected by easements (13,873 acres through the MALPF Program; 6,966.8 acres of farmland through the Rural Legacy program; 2,627 acres through the Maryland Environmental Trust; 303 acres via the Maryland Historical Trust; and 134 acres through Maryland Program Open Space or Department of Defense REPI-funded Patuxent Tidewater Land Trust easements). An additional 4,514 acres have been protected through TDR easements.

**Figure 36: Land Preservation Goal**



The qualitative goals of the State of Maryland for agricultural land preservation are shared by St. Mary's County. These goals are explicitly stated in the 2010 Comprehensive Plan, and many of them underpin the programs currently being implemented. For example, the state's goal of protecting high-quality productive land in contiguous blocks is reflected in the eligibility requirements for district creation and purchase of development rights programs. It is reinforced in the ranking formula for prioritizing properties sent to the MALPF Program for easement purchase. The goal of protecting natural, forestry, and historic resources, as well as rural character is met by the typical presence of these additional elements on St. Mary's County farms applying for preservation programs.

The purpose of the RPD, in which most of the farms and preserved lands fall, is "to foster agricultural, forestry, mineral resource extraction, and aquaculture uses, and protect the land base necessary to support these activities." As such, St. Mary's County shares the state's intention to protect its natural resource-based industries. In terms of land management goals, the 2010 Comprehensive Plan adopted a Priority Preservation Area Element, which states the county goals for agricultural resource protection.

### 5.3 Current Program/Policy Implementation

A diverse group of organizations and agencies contribute to farmland protection in St. Mary’s County. Significant attention is given both to direct protection of private farmland through conservation easement acquisition, and to economic development support of the agricultural industry itself. This complementary approach is carried out at state and local government levels, as well as with regional organizations and private non-profit initiatives. The approach includes voluntary participation of landowners in statewide programs such as MALPF and Rural Legacy (both purchase-of-development rights programs). The county contributes local tax dollars to staffing and easement purchase, as well as enforcing land-use and right-to-farm regulations.

County boards—such the Agricultural Land Preservation Advisory Board and the Agriculture, Seafood, and Forestry Commission—along with residents oversee programs and initiatives. The regional Tri-County Council works on agricultural economic development to benefit all southern Maryland. The Patuxent Tidewater Land Trust, a local land trust formed by St. Mary’s County residents, solicits and holds conservation easements donated by landowners in exchange for tax benefits. Additionally, St. Mary’s County is home to a significant number of Amish and Mennonite families who have multigenerational commitments to agriculture.

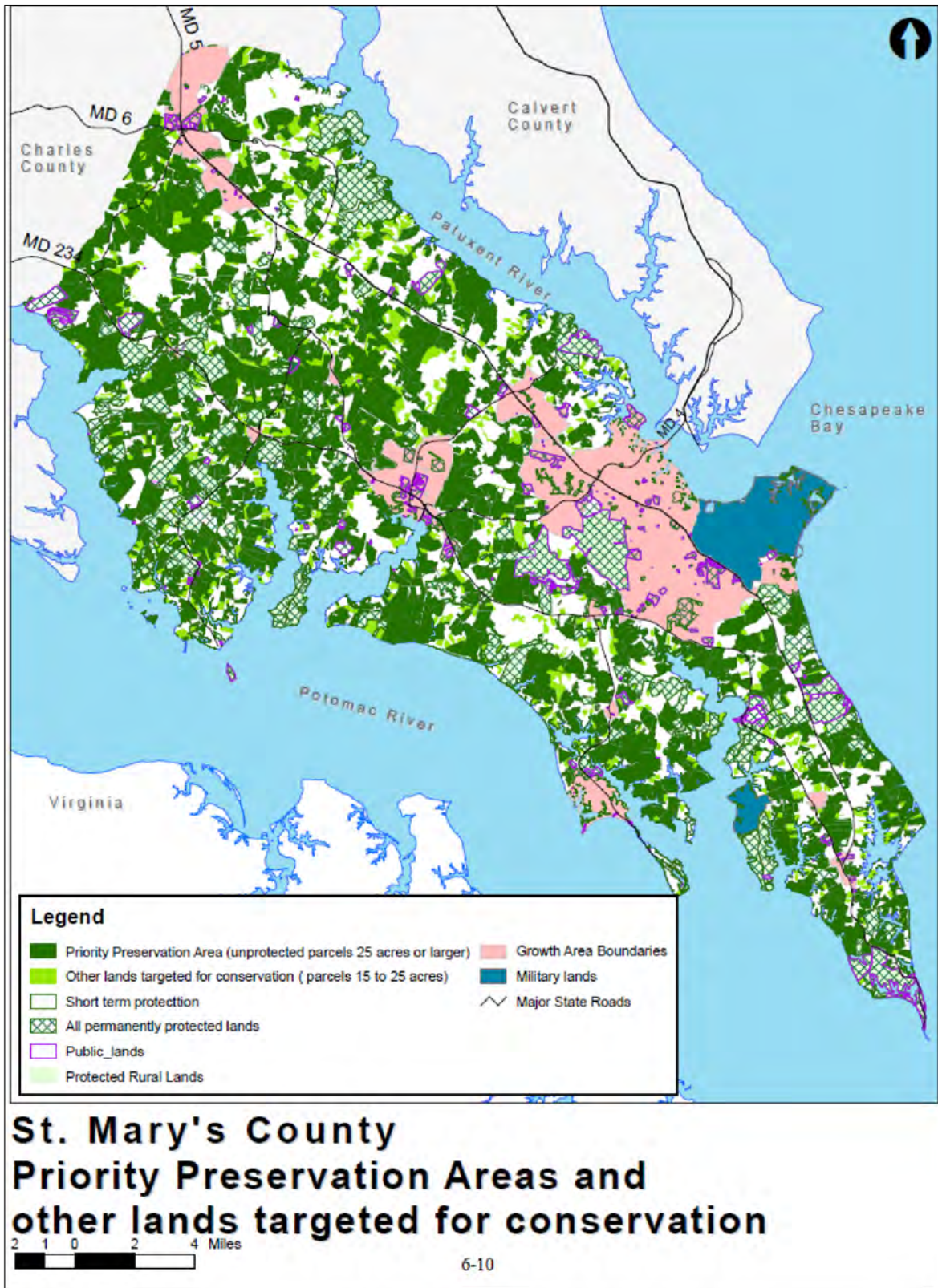
The following is a description of the programs these groups and organizations employ to preserve farmland and support the agricultural industry. *Table 18* below summarizes their accomplishments in permanently protecting private lands with conservation easements as of May 2017.

**Table 18: Inventory of Protected Lands – as of October 2021**

Program	Properties	Acres
MALPF	136	13,872.6
Rural Legacy Easements	54	6,966.8
Maryland Historical Trust Easements	1	303.0
Maryland Environmental Trust Easements	16	2,627.0
Patuxent Tidewater Land Trust	2	133.9
TDR Sending Sites (parcels lifting TDRs on >15 acres)	237	4,092.9
TDR Sending Sites (environmentally constrained subdivision lots from which TDRs were lifted regardless of parcel/lot size)	364	421.3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>810</b>	<b>28,418.5</b>

Source: St. Mary’s County Departments of Economic, Community Development, and Land Use & Growth Management

Figure 37: Priority Preservation Area



Source: St. Mary's County Comprehensive Plan



### 5.3.1 Designated Preservation Areas

*Chapter 6 of the 2010 County Comprehensive Plan* established a designated Priority Preservation Area (PPA) and, in accordance with state guidelines, anticipates protection of 80% of the designated land using a variety of means. The PPA (illustrated in *Figure 37*) is parcel-based and includes lands of 25 acres or larger located in the RPD that were unprotected as of 2010.

Currently, the PPA encompasses 97,660 acres and recognizes other lands targeted for conservation (parcels 15 acres to less than 25 acres, encompassing an additional 14,990 acres), which about PPA parcels. The lands in the PPA have existing concentrations of profitable agricultural and forestry enterprises or have the capacity for reestablishing these activities. The PPA and the parcels targeted for conservation are large enough to support commodity crops (predominately corn, wheat, and soybeans), fodder and feed operations, small- to medium-scale livestock operations, equine operations, and specialty farm operations, including organic farming.

The PPA includes lands owned by Amish and Mennonite community members, who are not likely to participate in formal land conservation programs but whose agrarian heritage is central to their communities and to the county's rural character. PPA lands also surround existing concentrations of MALPF and Rural Legacy easements and include many parcels that were enrolled in five-year Agricultural Land Preservation Districts.

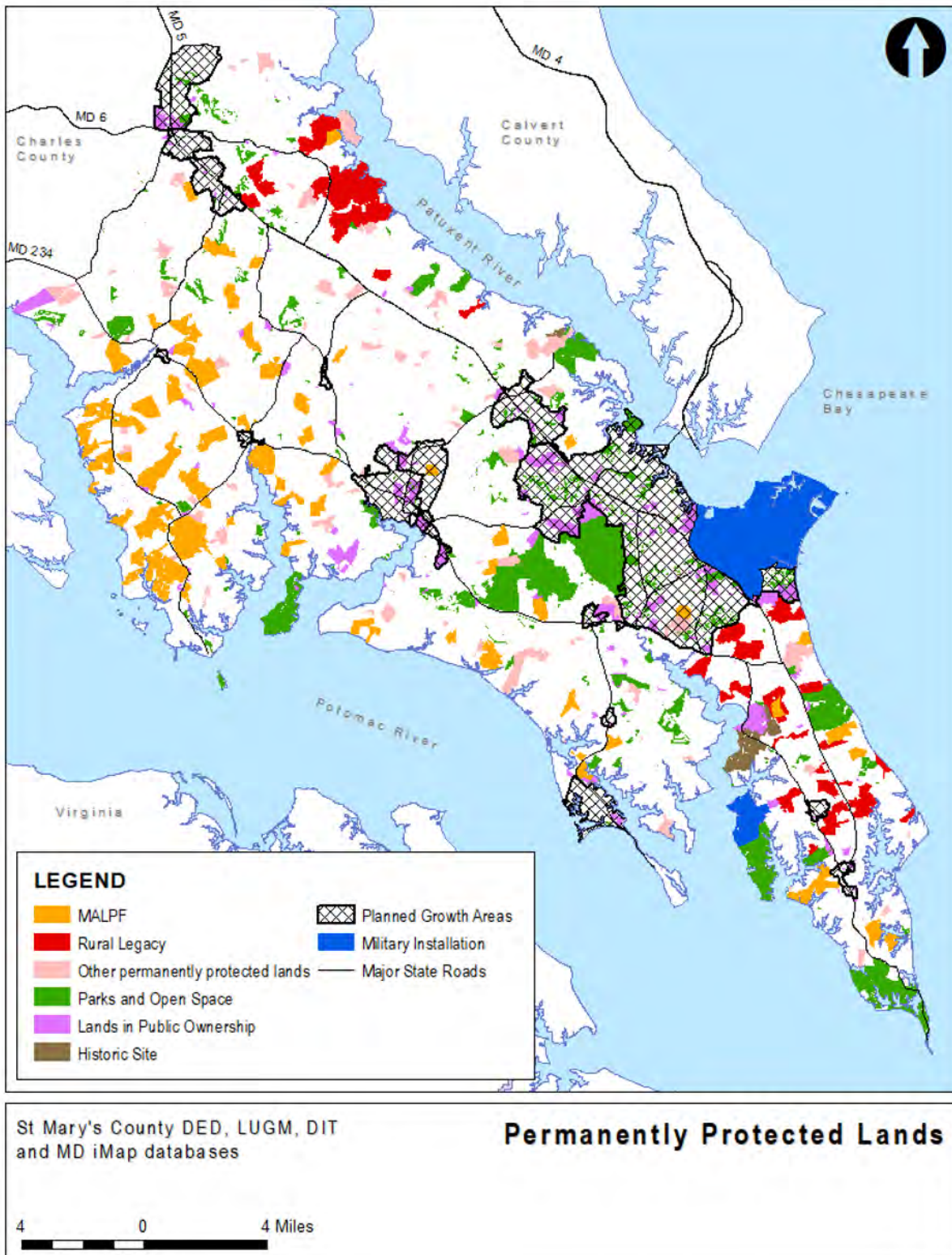
The various easement acquisition programs do not, as a rule, compete to preserve the same parcels of land. Property eligibility differs among them, and benefits to landowners vary. However, because conservation easement efforts are often in competition with developers who want to buy the land outright for development, the county updated its TDR program in 2007 to require use of TDRs for all but the first dwelling on a parcel in the RPD. Landowners may use their own acreage to satisfy the TDR requirement, effectively lowering the rural density countywide to one dwelling per 10 acres. Outside of RLAs, landowners may achieve development densities up to one dwelling per three acres, with substantial conservation of land under the TDR program. While the economic downturn reduced overall development pressure, the TDR program change appeared to slow the development of agricultural and resource lands for large rural residential developments and increased the attractiveness of participation in easement programs. Although the Sustainable Growth and Agricultural Preservation Act of 2012 limited rural landowners to seven-lot minor subdivisions, it did not negate land preservation contribution at increased rates via the county's TDR program when rural development occurs.

To meet the goal of protecting 80% of the undeveloped land in the PPA, the county must protect 78,130 acres. The limitation for creation of minor lots effectively removed the clustering of rural development on 50% of a parcel and, after accounting for existing protected lands, resulted in an estimated 7,000 possible rural lots at rural-residential buildout. Within the "targeted lands," there will be 11,500 acres of protection provided by ordinance provisions. Currently, approximately 33,984 acres are in permanent agricultural and open space protection outside the PPA. The acreage of planned and existing land preservation in the rural planning districts is 121,660 acres, which is 60% of the total rural area in the county.<sup>5</sup> This goal remains valid although the implications of the Sustainable Growth and Agricultural Preservation Act of 2012 have not yet been fully assessed. The assessment is planned to be accomplished in the next County Comprehensive Plan Update.

---

<sup>5</sup> Note: the PPA acreage figures in this section are consistent with the 2010 Comprehensive Plan and update the figures provided in the county's 2009 application for Agricultural Land Preservation Program recertification.

Figure 38: Protected Lands as of 2021

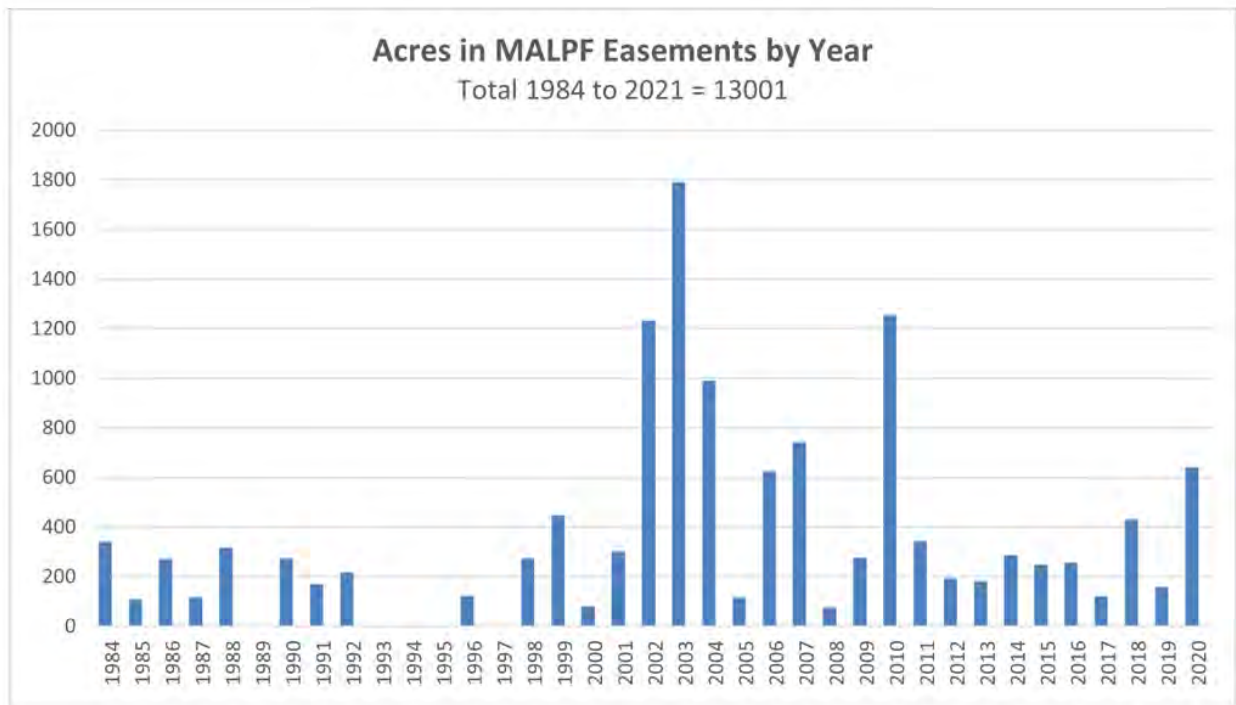


### 5.3.2 MALPF

St. Mary's County has participated in the MALPF Program since 1984. As shown in *Figure 39*, easement purchases have protected significantly more land since 2002. This was due to additional local and state funding sources, including use of a portion of the local recordation tax dedicated in 2001 to agricultural land preservation. Shortage of funding from the state budget, as well as decreases in land transfer tax revenues as land sales have not rebounded from the economic downturn, have resulted in fluctuations in land and easement acquisitions since 2007. However, the County has partnered with the Department of Defense (Navy) through its Readiness and Environmental Protection Initiative (REPI) to fund land preservation easements of mutual interest.

In 2017, the county's agricultural land preservation program, originally certified in 1995, was recertified by the Maryland Department of Agriculture and the Maryland Department of Planning, enabling St. Mary's County to continue to hold back a larger percentage (75% instead of 33%) of agricultural transfer tax for use as matching funds to leverage state MALPF dollars.

**Figure 39: MALPF Easement Acres per Year**



Source: St. Mary's County Department of Economic and Community Development

Most MALPF easements are in the northwest quadrant of the county, where farming is the predominant land use. The average price per acre over that last five years has been \$6,261. Landowners' interest in selling easements has always exceeded the availability of funds. A deterrent to landowners' acceptance of easement offers from the state has been the amount of time between application and offer, a process that has taken up to two years in some cases. Landowners have also been discouraged to participate by low MALPF offers that have been tied to low appraisal values prepared by appraisers who are not local and viewed as unfamiliar with local land values. In addition, the state has mandated a cap of easement values to 75% of the appraised value.

### 5.3.3 Rural Legacy Program

The Rural Legacy Program, run by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, consists of two concepts: first, delineation of a specific geographic area of the county in need of focused land conservation efforts, and second, the acquisition of easements from willing landowners within that area. The county has partnered with the Patuxent Tidewater Land Trust, Southern Maryland Resource Conservation and Development to place easements on properties in the Rural Legacy Areas.

In 1998, the county established the 5,800-acre Huntersville RLA, which was expanded in 2004 to 8,950 acres due to its success and interest among larger landowners in preventing sprawl from Mechanicsville. In 2010, land was removed from the Mechanicsville town center in contemplation of including the down-zoned land in the Huntersville RLA. Currently, the Rural Legacy Program protects 14 properties in this area, encompassing 3,029 acres in the Patuxent River watershed. An additional 603 acres in this area are protected by MALPF, Maryland Environmental Trust, and the TDR program, bringing the total land preserved in the 8,360-acre Huntersville RLA to approximately 3,632 acres. This represents 65% of the original RLA, and 40% of the expanded RLA.

In 2006, the Mattapany RLA, which encompasses 13,703 acres, was established with the aim to protect 6,500 acres with Rural Legacy funds, and an additional 2,000 acres by other means, for a total of 8,500 acres (62% of the Mattapany RLA). The Commissioners of St. Mary's County purchased the first property preserved in this RLA, referred to as the Fenwick Property. This site is now home to a thriving Home Grown Farm Market. Currently, the Rural Legacy Program protects nine properties in the Mattapany RLA—encompassing over 4,187 acres in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. An additional 1,107 acres in this area are protected by MALPF, Maryland Environmental Trust, and the TDR program, bringing the total land preserved in the 13,703-acre Mattapany RLA to approximately 5,294 acres.

The Mattapany RLA is seeking to expand to incorporate parcels that had been outside the RLA but can take advantage of REPI funds from the Navy. Preserving agriculture areas adjacent to but outside the RLA is beneficial for preserving contiguous tracts of farm and forest lands.

### 5.3.4 Land Trusts/Maryland Environmental Trust

Local land trusts are non-profit organizations that interested residents create to accept, monitor, and enforce conservation easements donated by landowners in exchange for significant tax benefits. The Patuxent Tidewater Land Trust and the Southern Maryland Resource and Conservation Development, Inc. partner with St. Mary's County as sponsors of RLA proposals and solicitors of purchased easements. In the Huntersville and Mattapany RLAs, the Patuxent Tidewater Land Trust and Southern Maryland Resource and Conservation Development, Inc. "co-hold" easements with the Maryland Environmental Trust, the statewide quasi-public land trust, and the Department of Defense (when REPI funds are used).

### 5.3.5 Funding for Easement Acquisition

Placing conservation easements on private land from willing owners is the chief mechanism for permanently protecting agricultural land in St. Mary's County. The vast majority of these easements have been purchased through MALPF or Rural Legacy, with the State of Maryland providing the majority of needed funding (*Figure 40*). A number of sources generate local funds used to match state dollars, including those listed below.

#### **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 to which the land was subject during 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. Because St. Mary’s County has an agricultural preservation program certified by Maryland Department of Planning and Maryland Department of Agriculture, the county may hold back 75% 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. However, this source of revenue is self-limiting, because as the amount of farmland diminishes, so does the tax on conversion to non-agricultural use. Conversely, increased collection of agricultural transfer tax funds indicates rapid loss of the farmland this money is meant to protect.

### Recordation Tax

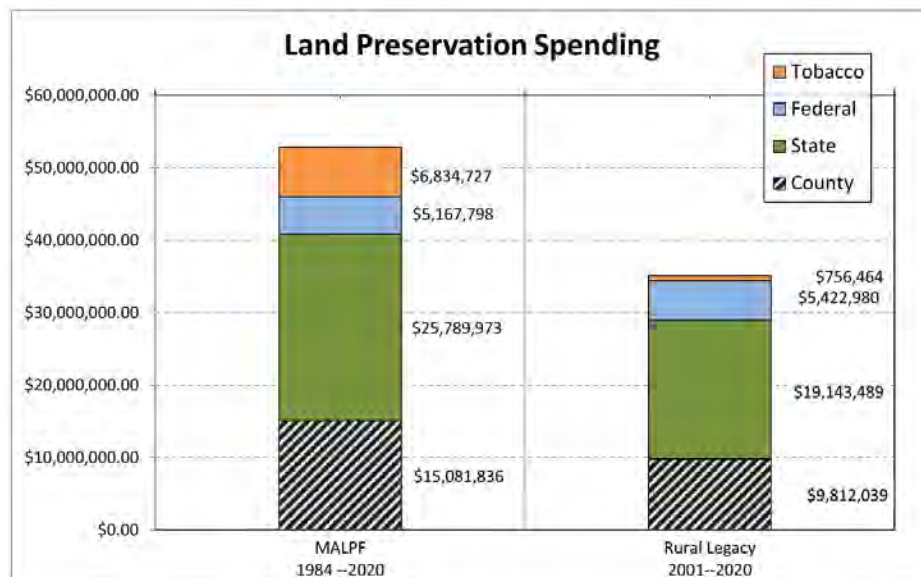
In 2001, St. Mary’s County increased the recordation tax, a tax paid when documents are recorded with the Clerk of the Circuit Court. At the same time, the county dedicated a portion of that revenue to “conserve and protect rural lands” specifically noting, “the purchase of development rights that will preserve agricultural lands.” This revenue source adds varying amounts each year to the county’s contribution to land protection.

### TDR Fees-In-Lieu Funds

In lieu of purchasing development rights from a sending parcel for use in developing a receiving parcel, a person may pay a fee to the county, which the county holds in a separate Open Lands Trust Fund for use in purchasing development rights from owners of sending parcels and other related purposes as defined in the subsections below. A schedule of the fees-in-lieu for the Open Lands Trust is established annually at least 120% of the average fair market value paid for TDRs in “arms-length” intermediate transactions in the previous fiscal year, as calculated by the County Department of Economic Development Director. The County Commissioners reserve the right to increase or decrease the fee in lieu.

Those applicants who pay the fee in lieu may apply credits received for said payments to develop land in a receiving parcel at an additional density or intensity of use through the same provision as TDRs. Payments the county receives as fees in lieu of purchasing development rights from sending zones are used by the St. Mary’s County Agricultural Preservation Commission to acquire property having high agricultural value or to replenish the Critical Farms Programs. The county can resell such purchase of development rights. As of June 2011, the fee-in-lieu program had collected \$234,000.

**Figure 40: Land Preservation Spending**



Source: St. Mary’s County Department of Economic and Community Development

## Discretionary Local Funds and Bonds

In addition to the agricultural transfer tax and portion of the recordation tax, which are required by law to be spent on land preservation, St. Mary's County has also contributed money from the General Fund, the local Transfer Tax, and the sale of bonds to augment both the MALPF Program and Rural Legacy. These amounts have varied over time, based on fiscal conditions in the county budget.

## Federal Funds

Since 1998, the federal government has made relatively small amounts of funding available for the purchase of development rights on farmland through the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resource Conservation Service's Farmland Preservation Program. However, since 2013, the county has partnered with the Department of Defense's REPI program to target and fund land purchases and easements on farm and forest lands.

Another new potential source of funding is an active effort led by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to create a Patuxent Waters Conservation Area. If approved (2017 approval projected), this program could make new federal funds available for purchase of conservation easements on farm and natural resource lands that are significant wildlife habitats in the Coastal Plain region. It is anticipated that funds from this program may be matched with funds from other federal programs, as well as from local, state, and private sources.

## Agricultural Districts

St. Mary's County offers a tax credit to landowners who enroll in the County Agricultural District Program, which requires a five-year commitment from the landowner to refrain from developing their land without a provision for creating children's lots or agricultural subdivisions. Landowners in these districts receive a 100% credit on the county portion of their tax bill for their agriculturally assessed land and farm buildings. After five years, they can renew or dissolve agreement. If they do not fulfill the five-year commitment, they must repay the credited taxes plus interest and penalties. The program has had success, and the county now has 14,058 acres in 115 districts.

## Land Use Management Authority

### 1. Zoning

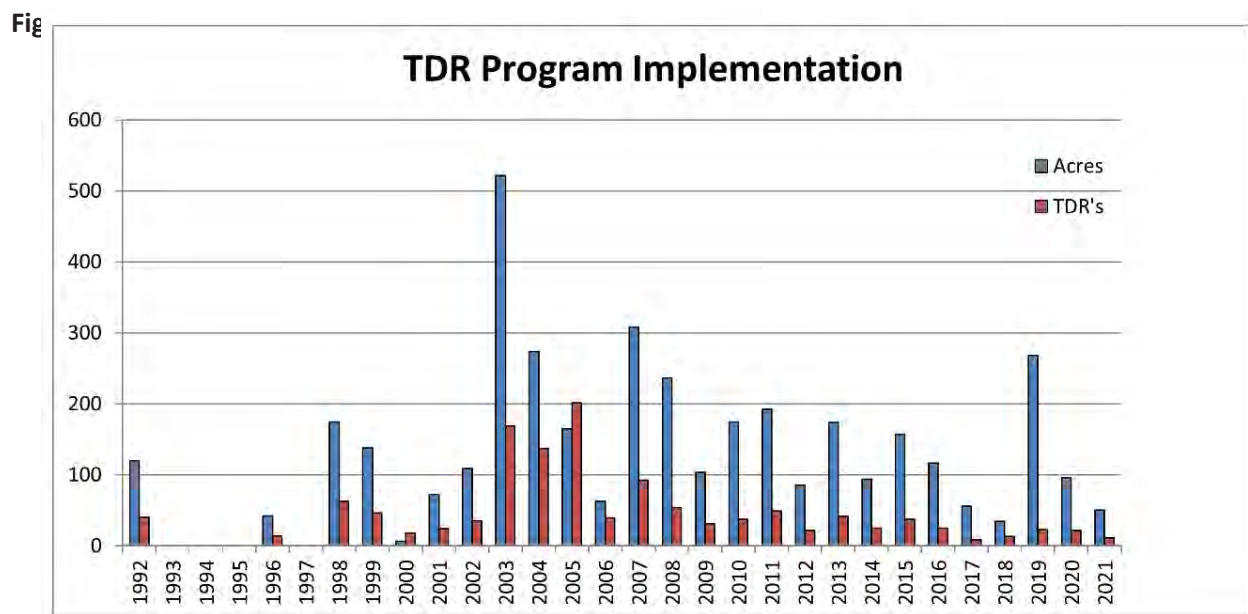
The vast majority of county acreage that lies outside the development districts and PFAs is zoned as RPD. The RPD is approximately 178,000 acres, and virtually all of the county's permanently protected private lands are located within it. The purpose of this district is "to foster agricultural, forestry, mineral resource extraction, and aquaculture uses, and protect the land base necessary to support these activities." Residential development is permitted at a density of one dwelling unit per five acres (1:5) with provisions to achieve 1:3 outside of RLAs, subject to the landowner's purchase of transferred development rights for the additional units. Major subdivisions (greater than seven lots) must cluster development on 50% or less of the parent parcel.

### 2. Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)

St. Mary's County has adopted a unique TDR program. From 1992 through 2002, the program was similar to traditional programs and was minimally used. In 2002, the TDR program and base zoning regulations were revised. This increased the need for TDRs and allowed the retirement of environmentally constrained RPD lots. *Figure 41* illustrates the significant increase in the implementation of TDRs after 2002.

The large number of TDRs lifted in relation to the amount of land protected from 2002 to 2007 reflects the retirement of numerous small grandfathered lots on which development was difficult or impossible due to severe environmental constraints. The 2002 TDR program changes increased the need and ability to use TDRs in growth areas, but did not adequately reduce rural development or protect larger tracts of rural land. The changes also placed most of the financial burden for rural land protection on landowners.

A 2007 amendment of the TDR program simplified calculation of TDRs, mandated use of TDRs, and required retirement of land or payment of a fee-in-lieu for all but the first development right on a rural parcel. The amendment also eliminated the buyback provision and specified allowed uses on TDR-protected parcels. Current zoning allows the RPD base density of one dwelling per five acres (at the cost of one TDR per unit) to be increased, and outside the RLAs zoning now allows up to one unit per three acres. Those units above base density require an increased number of TDRs per unit, which is intended to increase overall land protection.



Source: St. Mary's County Department of Economic and Community Development

Since the 2007 TDR program revisions, major RPD subdivisions (with more than seven lots per parcel) have nearly halted. The lifting of TDRs has continued at a moderate pace, with greater land area protected per TDR and more total acres protected than prior to 2007. Buildout of existing rural lots has continued at a moderate pace, and subdivision of larger lots for family members continues. Modest rural growth can continue at a manageable pace with the TDRs, which is anticipated to continue the steady protection of farmland without using public funding. The TDR fee-in-lieu funds are collected (at an amount equal to at least 125% fair market value) to maintain the market value of TDRs.

### 3. Right-to-Farm Ordinance

The county's zoning regulations contain general right-to-farm provisions for landowners in the RPD. Because agriculture, aquaculture, and silviculture are the preferred land uses in the district, the ordinance attempts to limit "the circumstances under which agriculture and forestry operations may be deemed to interfere with the reasonable use and enjoyment of adjacent land."

## Farming Assistance Programs

St. Mary's County participates in the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC). SMADC focuses on land preservation in southern Maryland, agribusiness development, and outreach to help area farmers grow and thrive. The following initiatives are part of SMADC's outreach/education program:

- **SMADC Grant Programs:** Targeted grants provide help for farms transitioning into new agricultural ventures that would otherwise be perceived as risky and/or cost prohibitive. Grants have been provided to the St. Mary's County and Prince Georges County Farm Bureaus to purchase freezer trailers and refrigerated cases to promote the purchase of local meats. Grants have also been provided to purchase conservation equipment and specialized equipment for vegetable production.
- **Retaining and Recruiting New Farmers:** SMADC's Maryland FarmLINK provides mechanisms for farmland transfer, mentoring connections, and business partnerships for current and future farmers. Maryland FarmLINK strives to keep Maryland farmland in agricultural usage via a property exchange function that allows farmers to list farmland for sale. It also includes a farmer forum and a "person to person" feature to connect farmers, and future farmers, with mentors, apprentices, etc.
- **Resources, Networking, and Education/Training for Farmers:** A seminar and conference program, interactive web sites, and various networking events are all part of SMADC's extensive efforts to provide farmers with tools to help their operations. Resource links on the web site provide information like a Step-by-Step Acidified Foods Guide and listings of farm equipment for rent.
- **Access to Fresh and Local Food:** SMADC works with farmers' markets, hospitals, schools, and other institutions to expand access to fresh and local farm foods.
- **Public Outreach and Education:** Creative and adaptive marketing and outreach programs are changing consumers' buying habits. Programs like So Maryland, So Good help consumers "find the farms that fit their needs."
- **The Southern Maryland Trails:** Earth, Art, Imagination connects farms, the arts, and the broader cultural tourism community. The annual Buy Local Challenge highlights the value of local farms to families, communities, and the planet.
- **Educating the Next Generation:** Today's young people are tomorrow's farmers—and tomorrow's educated and healthy consumers. SMADC's children's programs teach children about farms, give them access to locally grown foods, and bring future farmers together to interact and learn. Programs like Cornelia and the Farm Band teach children about the diversity and importance of farms to the economy, to our nation's health and safety, and to an active, healthy lifestyle.

St. Mary's County sponsors three retail farmers' markets—one in Charlotte Hall, another in California, and the third in Lexington Park. The county is relocating the Charlotte Hall Farmers Market to a larger location. In addition, Sotterley and Jubilee Farms sponsor their own farmers' markets.

Farm stands are also set up weekly at the Governmental Center Complex and the St. Mary's County Hospital to make local produce available to county staff and the public in these locations. Additionally, the county assisted the Mennonite community in setting up a wholesale produce auction in Loveville and assisted the local Amish community in setting up the first cheese dairy in St. Mary's County. The county has also assisted other local farmers to license their business to process farm foods, including meat, baked goods, acidified foods such as beets and relish, and jams and jellies. The county also worked with a local farmer in establishing a U.S. Department of Agriculture-approved mobile slaughterhouse facility and is helping another local meat producer seek U.S. Department of Agriculture approval for a new on-site facility.



## 5.4 Evaluation of Agricultural Land Preservation Program/Policy Implementation

### 5.4.1 Overall Preservation Strategy

St. Mary's County's overall preservation strategy contains all the elements to be effective in securing a land base for the agricultural industry, and in doing so, protect the heritage and rural character of the county.

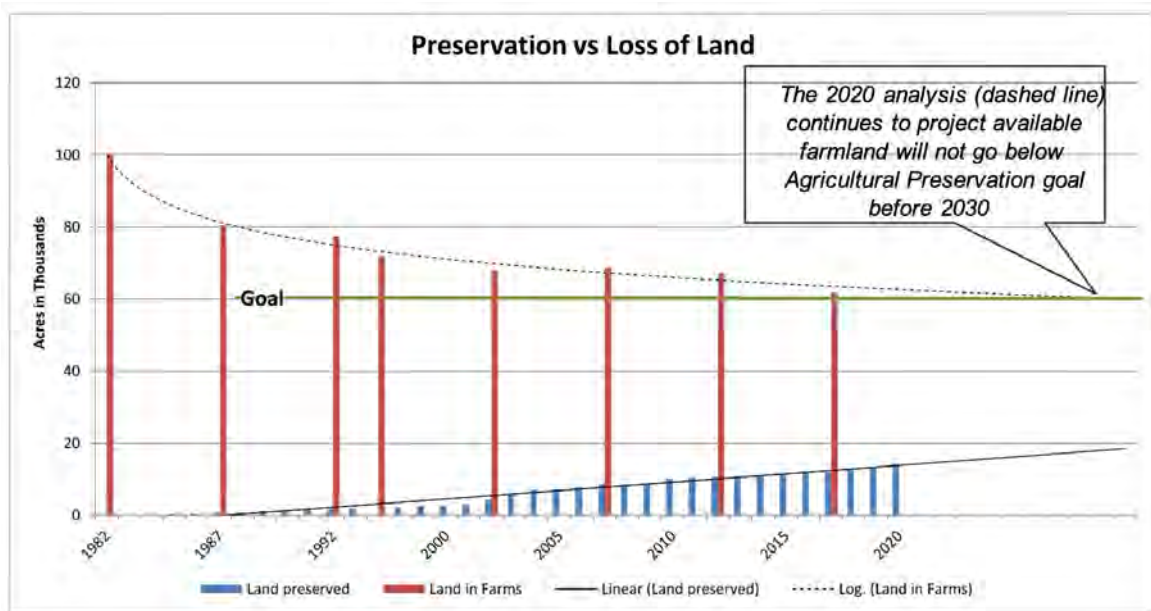
In 2016, the county adopted the Priority Preservation Element in the Comprehensive Plan. Its intent is to broadly protect farmland and forests outside designated growth areas. Rather than designating a geographic focus of all program and policy implementation, the county believes that landowners who desire to continue farming and forestry operations should be eligible for programs that increase the likelihood of meeting shared goals.

The 2016 St. Mary's County Comprehensive Plan retains the RLAs and a Natural Resource Focus Area and suggests the option to develop an Agricultural District Overlay. Designation of these areas allows the county to pursue federal, state, and other sources of funding to assist in implementing programs that work to preserve the county's agricultural heritage and rural character.

### 5.4.2 Funding

Local sources of revenue have increased in recent years with the initiation of the recordation tax and are intended to create a larger and more consistent level of funding compared to other sources. The recordation tax augments the funds coming from the agricultural transfer tax. However, recordation tax funds replaced contributions from the general fund, local transfer tax contributions, and bonding, which are less frequently used in funding agricultural land preservation than in previous years. The addition of federal REPI funds could double land preservation efforts in the Mattapany RLA. With the exception of MALPF, REPI funds can be matched by county contributions from a wide variety of other funding sources.

Figure 42: 2011 Trends – Preservation vs. Loss of Land in Farms



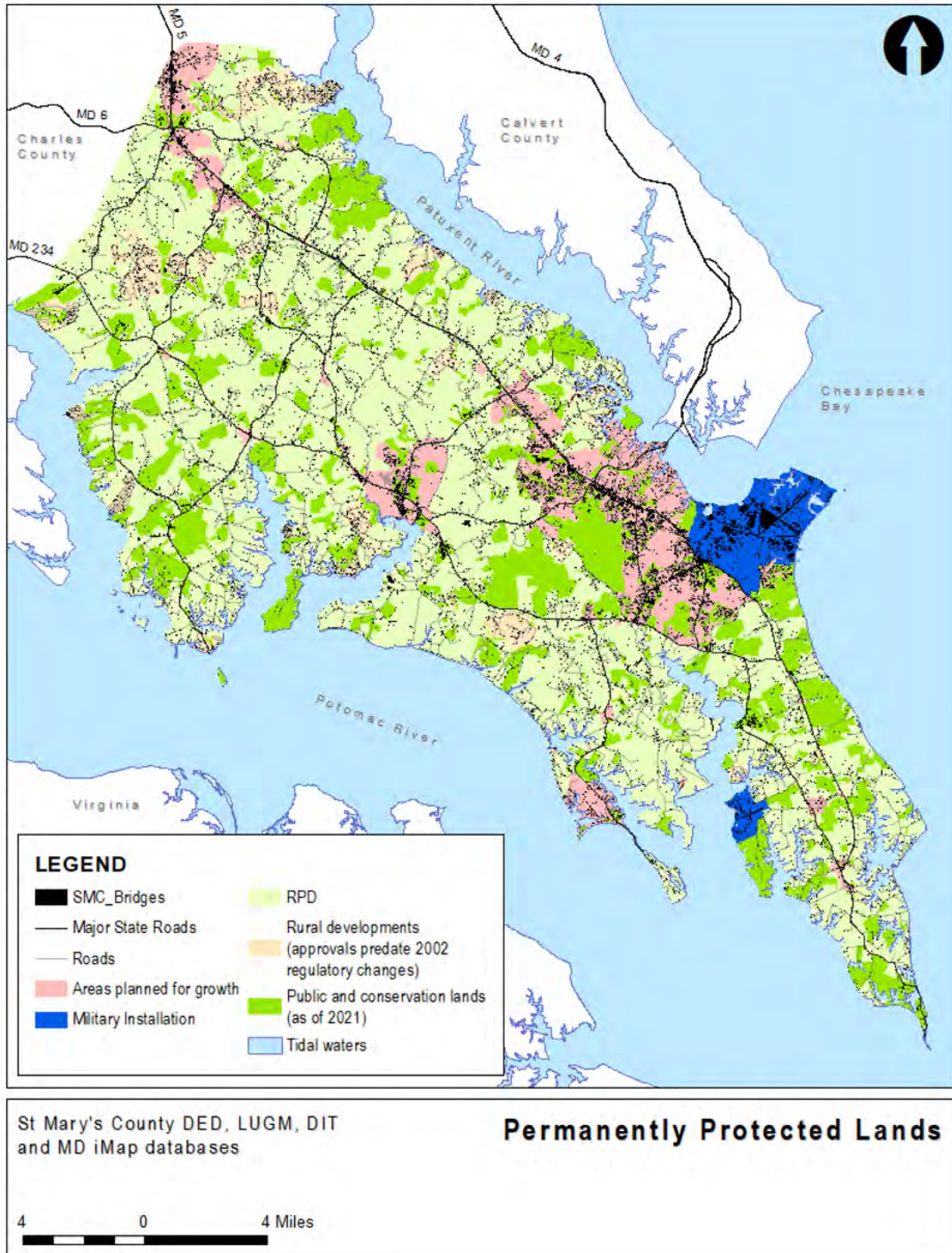
Source: St. Mary's County Department of Economic and Community Development

### 5.4.3 Land Use Management Tools

Between 2005 and 2007, when the county examined the intention of the RPD to protect the land base for the natural resource-based industries in the county, a look at the location of residential lots suggested that zoned density and TDRs had done little to direct growth away from areas intended for preservation and that residential development continued to be scattered across the rural landscape, creating conflicts with farm and forestry economic activities. This and other planning analysis efforts, combined with residents' concern, prompted changes to the TDR to establish open-space conservation requirements for development and rural subdivision design standards to preserve farm and forest land and minimize impacts from development on agricultural and forestry operations on minimally developed rural parcels 15 acres or greater.

The TDR program changes were positive, and the program became successful. It is now a key tool for land conservation in St. Mary's County. TDR program changes limit rural by-right development to the first dwelling and require one TDR for each additional dwelling on a parcel developed, up to one dwelling per five acres base density, and with additional TDRs required to exceed the 1:5 base density. The revised TDR program more evenly distributed the financial costs and rewards for rural development among landowners. Those who want to develop can do so, but the market for TDRs was expanded so that those who do not wish to develop have a demand for their TDRs. The program also allows landowners to use their own excess development rights to meet the TDR requirement necessary to add lots to their parcel to supplement farm income or provide lots for homes for family on the farm or forested tract.

Figure 43: 2020 Patterns of Land Development and Land Preservation



The mandatory open-space provisions for major subdivisions in the RPD and Rural Legacy zones ensured that when a site is developed with more than five lots, a minimum of 50% of the parcel is set aside as a contiguous block of open space. The provisions also require an increase in development density proportionate to the proposed number of units to be developed; as more units are proposed, the lot sizes for the units must decrease. Criteria require that a high percentage of the prime farm and forestry soils must be protected in this open space.

In 2010, Zoning Ordinance changes established rural subdivision design criteria for major subdivisions in the RPD to conserve productive farmland and minimize the impacts of proposed developments on farm operations. Other 2010 Zoning Ordinance amendments addressed the following items, which allowed for new types of agricultural activities in the county that are assisting local farmers with diversifying operations and better securing the local farm economy:

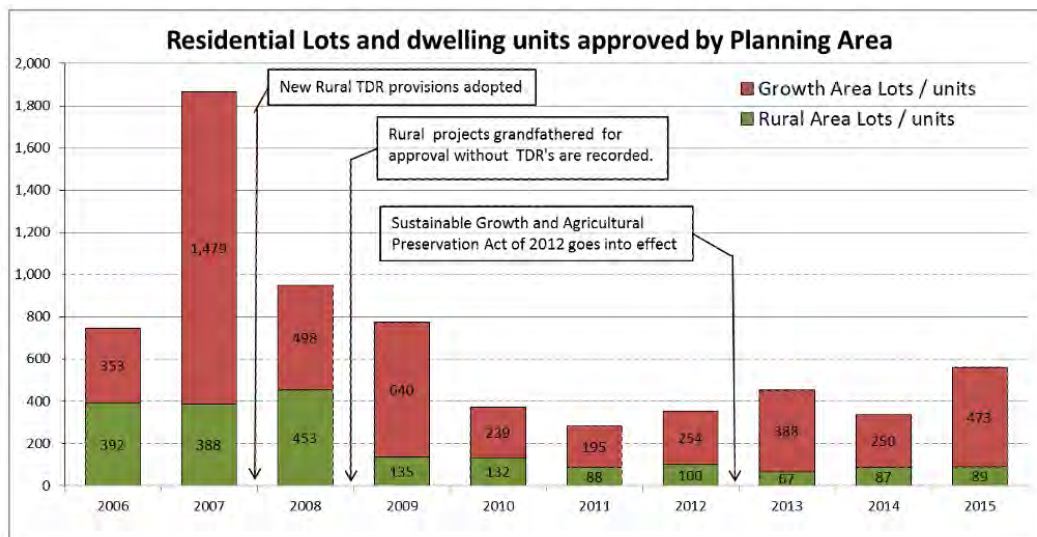
- Define “agritourism”
- Allow the operation of wineries and equestrian facilities
- Expand programs to support local production of value-added farm products

The right-to-farm provisions in the Zoning Ordinance provided clear definitions, processes, and a proactive approach to potential land use conflicts.

Tracking of development no longer identifies lots as rural versus growth areas. Planning Commission reports show that from 2016 through 2020, 592 lots and 1,006 dwellings were constructed in county PFAs, and 264 lots and 545 dwellings constructed outside of PFAs. Portions of the non-PFA areas are common areas within the county’s planned growth areas.

However, the trend from 2007 through 2015 (*Figure 44*) continues to show new lots concentrated in growth areas. Rural construction is primarily on preexisting lots in rural residential development (most platted and developed prior to 1990) or on new family lots in rural areas. The county has applied land preservation efforts broadly outside development districts to ensure that rural character and economies remain functional across the entire rural areas (*Figure 44*).

**Figure 44: Residential Lots Created by Planning Area**



Source: St. Mary’s County Department of Land Use and Growth Management

#### 5.4.4 Combined Performance of Preservation Tools

At the beginning of the last decade, St. Mary's County was losing agricultural land at a high rate. Many local farms had traditionally farmed tobacco and found it difficult to remain in operation or to diversify their operations after the implementation of the state's tobacco buy-out program. This (combined with residential growth in the Washington metropolitan area and expansion of operations at Naval Air Station Patuxent River) created a ready market for new homes and much rural land was lost to new subdivisions. Between 1987 and 2002, the county lost 15% of its active farmland, roughly 12,000 acres.

Determined to save its agricultural heritage, the community came together, creating a Rural Preservation Task Force. Between 2002 and 2010, the county implemented a number of land use reforms that curbed the residential development of agricultural lands.

The latest available data indicates that the overall acreage of agricultural land in St. Mary's County has remained relatively steady; however, the value of local farm products has increased. The county accomplished this turnaround with the following six tools, each of which reinforces the overall program:

- **Strong rural zoning:** Of county-owned land, 80% is in a rural preservation zone where agriculture is the preferred use. Only one dwelling unit can be built by-right on a parcel, regardless of its size. Additional dwellings can only be built by purchasing TDR. Subdivisions must be designed to protect prime soils for continued farming, buffer farming operations from houses, and protect rural character.
- **TDR program:** TDRs reduce future development in the rural zone. Owners of rural land are encouraged to extinguish development rights by selling them to developers. Residential development in the rural area (above one unit per parcel) requires the use of TDRs. Development in non-rural areas can increase density by purchasing TDRs from rural properties. The result is a win-win for farmers. If they wish to continue farming, they can sell TDRs from their land and receive cash. If they wish to develop their land, they have to purchase TDRs from other farmers who thereby give up the right to develop, or use TDRs from their own parcel, thus reducing overall parcel buildout. The TDR program is intended to eventually extinguish all non-agricultural development in the rural zone. Through this program, along with other easement programs, the county expects to preserve 122,000 acres, which is more than half its land mass.
- **Institutionalizing funding for land preservation:** Mechanisms to generate funding for land conservation programs are built into the land development process. The county dedicates 0.5% of the recording tax from property sales as a source of funding for land preservation programs. Within the TDR program, the county established a fee-in-lieu option, which provides a source of funds for easement purchase. As development permitting increases, the amount of funding for land conservation also increases.
- **Growth-management policy:** The amount of development in the rural zone is rationed on a year-by-year basis. The county limits residential growth countywide to about 2% per year, with only 30% of growth permitted to occur in the rural zone. This limits the amount of growth in the rural area and steers most development to non-rural areas. Use of this tool has not been necessary recently, and the county has suspended this policy until development pressure makes it necessary again.
- **Right-to-farm ordinance:** The county adopted a strong right-to-farm ordinance. Agriculture is established by law as the "preferred land use" in the rural zone. To ensure that the farmer's ability to continue farming will not be compromised by residential subdivisions, farms are given a protected right to:

- Conduct normal agricultural operations
- Operate farm machinery at any hour
- Emit agricultural noise and odors
- Sell farm products directly from the farm

To build community understanding of the right-to-farm ordinance, a notice outlining its provisions is given to every purchaser of real estate and is mailed annually to all residents with their tax bill. People who move to the rural area are thereby placed on notice that farming operations are a protected aspect of the rural community they have joined.

- **Zoning incentives for new forms of agriculture:** The county helps farmers find new sources of farm income. Market forces have reduced the profitability of many traditional farm products in the county. Grain production is less profitable than in the past, and tobacco production is almost extinct. Farmers need new ways to farm.
  - Zoning ordinance revisions and other county policies seek to achieve the following:
    - Establish vineyards and wineries in the rural zone
    - Promote construction and operation of stables and equestrian centers
    - Establish new farmers’ markets and farm auction houses
    - Promote local farm products through “buy local” campaigns
    - Assist county farmers to market their products locally and in the region

While each element of the strategy is important, the real genius of the St. Mary’s County program is the contemporaneous implementation of all six measures. Working together, the measures have nearly stopped the loss of farmland and bolstered the agricultural economy. This occurred even though development pressures were extremely high during the 2002 – 2006 real estate boom.

Key to the county’s success was the involvement of multiple stakeholders, including those who comprise the Agriculture, Seafood, and Forestry Board. The board members consist of local farmers, developers, environmentalists, and other community representatives, with support from the Department of Land Use and Growth Management, Department of Economic Development, and Commissioners of St. Mary’s County.

#### 5.4.5 Effects of Potential Development on Land Markets

No studies have been done in St. Mary’s County to measure the impact of development on land markets, but it is widely known that land prices have remained high, in part due to the development pressure resulting from the growth of Patuxent River Naval Air Station. The county has acted to limit pressure for rural development through the TDR program and the annual growth policies discussed above.

### 5.4.6 Farming Assistance Programs

The county's farming assistance activities are vigorous, diverse, and bolstered by the regional approach of the Tri-County Council. These partners include the Soil Conservation District, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Maryland Department of Agriculture, the Farm Services Agency, the University of Maryland Cooperative Extension Service, and the Department of Economic and Community Development.

The Department of Economic Development's Agriculture and Seafood Division coordinates activities that support the local agricultural industry. Recent farmland preservation activities the division managed include:

- **Local Efforts** – The division provided staff support to the Agriculture, Seafood, and Forestry Board.
- **MALPF Program** – The division assisted landowners in program enrollment. This included assisting with applications, coordinating with the Soil Conservation District to qualify the farms for participation, presenting application information to the local Agriculture Land Preservation Advisory Board and the St. Mary's County Planning Commission, preparing legal notices, and conducting public hearings before the Board of County Commissioners.
- **Rural Legacy** – The division conducted research and provided staff support in helping the Patuxent Tidewater Land Trust and Resource Conservation & Development Council apply for Rural Legacy grants. The division continues to assist the land trust in the easement acquisition and grant applications.
- **St. Mary's County Farmers' Market** – Over 50 farmers currently participate in St. Mary's County Farmers' Markets located in Charlotte Hall, California, and Lexington Park, generating an estimated \$1 million of economic activity or more annually.
- **Southern Maryland Wine Growers Cooperative** – The division continued to support this cooperative and its venture at the Port of Leonardtown Winery.
- **Loveville Produce Auction** – Staff continued to help market this Mennonite-based auction.
- **Right-to-Farm Ordinance** – The right-to-farm ordinance was updated in 2011 to further support the county's commitment to its agricultural heritage.

### 5.4.7 Summary

The loss of farmland has essentially reached an equilibrium, and the county experienced a small decrease in actively farmed land between 2007 and 2012. While the economic slowdown of past years reduced development pressure, the county believes that appropriate measures have been put in place to prevent future conversion of vast portions of the RPD to suburban home sites, and to support existing and future agricultural economic activity. Together, these efforts are intended continue the trend toward meeting county goals for agricultural land preservation and retaining farm and forestry as important components of the county's economy and character.

## 5.5 Program Development Strategy for Agricultural Land Preservation

This section highlights steps the county can take to achieve its goals for farmland protection and to protect the public investment already made in easement purchases.

### 5.5.1 Agricultural Land Preservation Goal

Analysis of the TDR program, open-space requirements, and current land protection programs has confirmed that the county's current goal of 60,000 acres—adopted in 1995 as part of its agricultural land preservation certification—is realistic and achievable for permanent protection of land actively farmed or in managed woodland. Agricultural land preservation goals for 2017 largely intentionally mirror goals the county established in its 2012 LPPRP. These preservation goals are lofty and designed to be implemented over a long period. Achievement of land use and financial goals was hampered by the sluggish real estate market, economic recession, and reduction in available funding resources that impacted the county beginning in approximately 2008. However, as the county budget situation has stabilized, funding of farmland preservation has become economically viable again.

### 5.5.2 Land Use

The county has designated a Priority Preservation Area (all unprotected RPD parcels greater than 25 acres as of 2009) with a secondary focus on adjacent parcels that are at least 15 to 25 acres. The county also established an agricultural focus area to target funding for preserving parcels. However, future improvements to consider include:

- Enact a local PDR program with the goal of:
  - Creating a nimble tool to allow the county to act in pursuing preservation opportunities beyond what the current MALPF Program allows.
  - Leveraging funds to buy easements while the land is still available. Consider another dedicated revenue source, the establishment of installment purchase agreements, or zero coupon bonds, and direct funds toward actions to meet Priority Preservation Area goals.
- Explore the possibility of a local land trust acting as an intermediary with the Amish and Mennonite communities to conserve lands without direct government action or participation. Considering reviewing the work of the Lancaster Land Trust in Pennsylvania, which has been successful in working with these communities ([www.savelancasterfarms.org](http://www.savelancasterfarms.org)).
- Conduct annual reviews of development in the RPD and consider additional zoning ordinance revisions to further protect agricultural land and operations in the RPD as determined necessary.
- Continue to preserve the farmable land-base in areas outside the agricultural preservation area, through the creation of new RLAs or use of other land conservation measures.



### 5.5.3 Financial, Business, and Regulatory

Demand to sell agricultural easements exceeds available funding through the MALPF Program. This resource limitation stifles the county's work to achieve goals for permanent agricultural land preservation. Areas for improvement to consider include:

- Increase state funding for the MALPF Program, consistent with the final report of the Task Force to Study the MALPF (Final Report January 2005). Landowners' interest in selling easements has consistently exceeded program funding. Additional funding would enable the county to increase its pace of easement acquisition, and the county believes the MALPF should revert to the use of an annual easement cycle instead of biannual. In addition, the cap on the number of applicants from each county should either be eliminated or increased so that all matching funds from a county can be utilized as high-quality preservation projects are identified. In addition to increasing state funding, the MALPF Program should address outstanding challenges that prohibit its funds from being matched with those from the federal REPI funding program, and U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Conservation Easement Program.
- Revise the MALPF Program to remove disincentives to participation, including long timelines for completing agreements, appraisal methodologies, and the lack of inclusion of certain farm practices that participants consider a by-right activity in MALPF agreements.
- Continue to amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow auxiliary commercial enterprises on farms. These types of businesses are an integral part of the Mennonite and Amish communities, which are, in turn, critical to St. Mary's County agriculture.

# Appendix

Appendix A: Statewide Goals .....	139
Appendix B: St. Mary's County Demographic Profile .....	142
Appendix C: Recreation Trends and Participation Estimates .....	150
Appendix D: 2021 Open Link Survey Summary Results.....	182
Appendix E: 2021 Recreation and Parks Site Inventory.....	194
Appendix F: Capital Improvement Recommendations.....	200
Appendix G: Park and Recreation Maps .....	201
Appendix H: Agriculture and Land Preservation Table .....	207

## Appendix A: Statewide Goals

### A.1 State Goals for Parks and Recreation

1. Make a variety of quality recreational environments and opportunities readily accessible to all residents 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, play, 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 and priorities in existing communities and areas planned for growth through investment 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.

### A.2 State 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. 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.
6. Work with local governments to achieve the following:
  - a. Establish preservation areas, goals, and strategies through local comprehensive planning processes that address and complement state goals.

- b. In each area designated for preservation, develop a shared understanding of goals and the strategies to achieve them among rural landowners, the public, and state and local government officials.
- c. 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.
- d. Use local land use management authority effectively to protect public investment in preservation by managing development in rural preservation areas.
- e. 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.

### **A.3 State Goals for Natural Resource Land Conservation**

1. Identify, protect, and restore lands and waterways in Maryland that support important aquatic and terrestrial natural resources and ecological functions, through combined use of the following techniques:
  - a. Public land acquisition and stewardship.
  - b. Private land conservation easements and stewardship practices through purchased or donated easement programs.
  - c. Local land use management plans and procedures that conserve natural resources and environmentally sensitive areas and minimize impacts to resource lands when development occurs.
  - d. Support incentives for resource-based economies that increase the retention of forests, wetlands, or agricultural lands.
  - e. Avoid impacts on natural resources by publicly funded infrastructure development projects.
  - f. Respond with appropriate mitigation, commensurate with the value of the affected resource.
2. Focus conservation and restoration activities on priority areas, according to a strategic framework such as the Targeted Ecological Areas in GreenPrint.
3. Conserve and restore species of concern and important habitat types that may fall outside designated green infrastructure (e.g., rock outcrops, karst systems, caves, shale barren communities, grasslands, shoreline beach and dune systems, mud flats, non-forested islands).
4. Develop a more comprehensive inventory of natural resource lands and environmentally sensitive areas to assist state and local implementation programs.

5. Establish measurable objectives for natural resource conservation and an integrated state/local strategy to achieve them through state and local implementation programs.
6. Assess the combined ability of the state and local programs to achieve the following:
  - a. Expand and connect forests, farmland, and other natural lands as a network of contiguous green infrastructure.
  - b. Protect critical terrestrial and aquatic habitats, biological communities, and populations.
  - c. 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.
  - d. Adopt coordinated land and watershed management strategies that recognize critical links between growth management and aquatic biodiversity and fisheries production.
  - e. Support a productive forestland base and forest resource industry, emphasizing the economic viability of privately owned forestland.

## Appendix B: St. Mary's County Demographic Profile

St. Mary's County demographic profile was developed to analyze household and economic data in the area, helping to understand the type of parks and recreation components that may best serve the community. GreenPlay/BerryDunn worked with the county to identify the best source for population data and estimates. Data referenced throughout this report was primarily sourced from Esri Business Analyst as of December 2021, utilizing redistricting data when available from the 2020 Census. In addition, when applicable, other sources were referenced, such as the American Community Survey and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's County Health Rankings for data related to health outcomes.

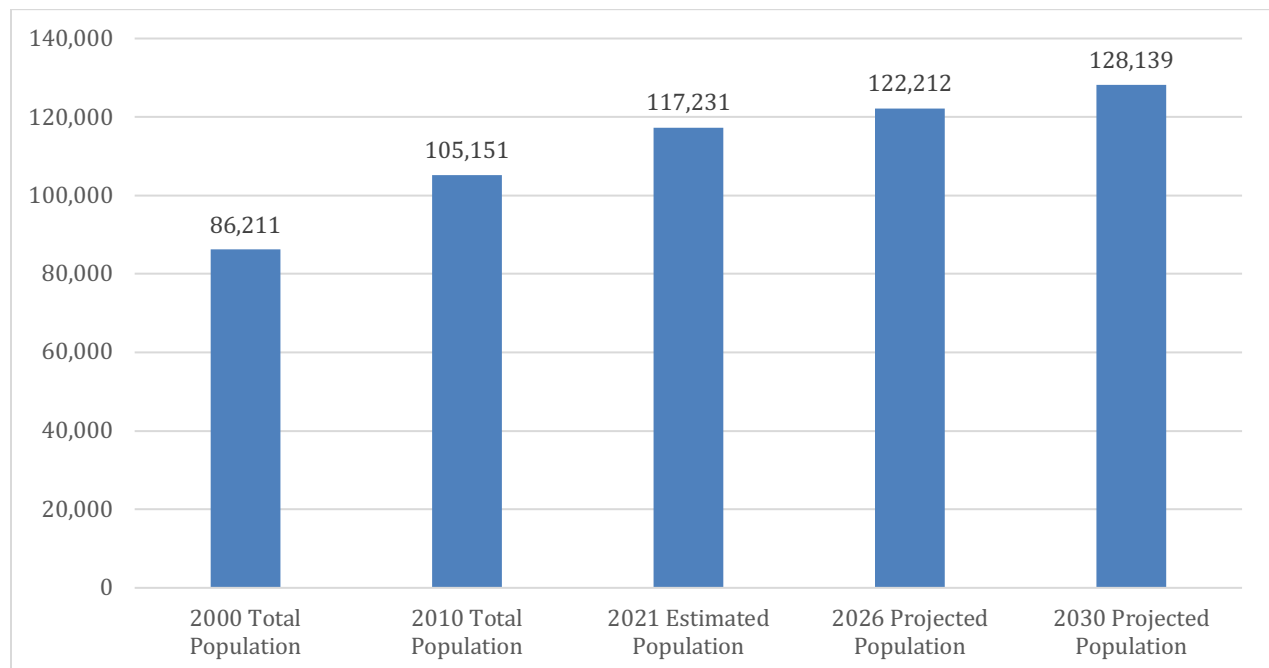
Comparisons to Leonardtown, the State of Maryland, and the United States were referenced to provide additional context and understanding to the demographic composition of St. Mary's County.

### Population

St. Mary's County has experienced rapid growth in the past two decades. From a population of just over 86,000 in 2000, the county added over 31,000 new residents. In 2021, the population was estimated at 117,231—with an anticipated 0.97% compound annual growth rate between 2021 and 2026. If this growth rate continues, the population could reach 122,212 or more in 2026.



Figure 45: Projected Population Growth in St. Mary's County, 2000 – 2030



Source: Esri Business Analyst

## Age

According to Esri Business Analyst, the median age in St. Mary's County was 37.3 years in 2021, younger than Leonardtown (38.3) and the State of Maryland (39.6). The median age in the county is projected to increase to 38.2 by 2026.

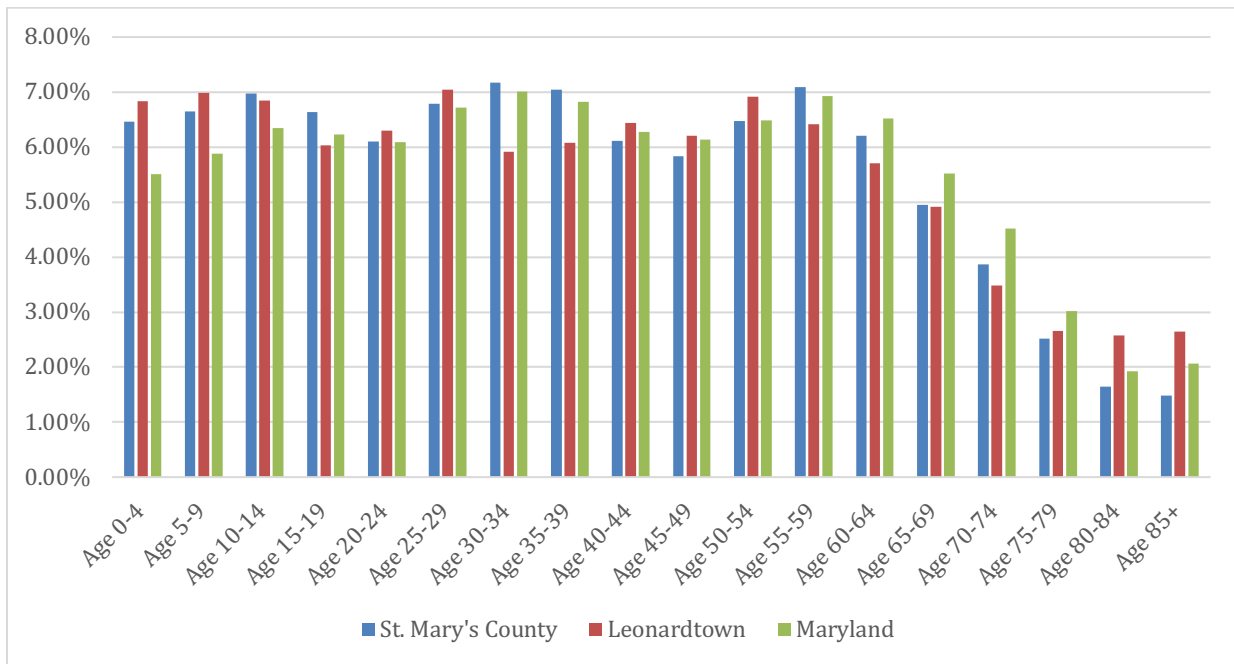
# 37.3

## Median Age

Source: 2021 Esri Business Analyst

The age distribution in St. Mary's County in 2021 was relatively evenly distributed with a mix of younger families, middle-age adults, and senior population. In general, the State of Maryland had a higher population of older adults than the county had, with those 60+ making up a larger percentage of the statewide population.

**Figure 46: Age Distribution in St. Mary's Compared to Leonardtown and Maryland**



Source: 2021 Esri Business Analyst

**Table 19** below demonstrates the change in age groups among residents. From 2020 to 2021, those between the ages of 45 to 49 had the largest decline in population (-2.8%), while those between 55 and 75 years old experienced more growth of over 1% in each age cohort.

**Table 19: Age Group Distribution from 2010 to 2021**

	<b>2010</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>% Change</b>
<b>Age 0 – 4 (%)</b>	7.2%	6.5%	-0.8%
<b>Age 5 – 9 (%)</b>	7.3%	6.7%	-0.6%
<b>Age 10 – 14 (%)</b>	7.3%	6.9%	-0.3%
<b>Age 15 – 19 (%)</b>	7.5%	6.6%	-0.9%
<b>Age 20 – 24 (%)</b>	6.9%	6.1%	-0.8%
<b>Age 25 – 29 (%)</b>	6.6%	6.8%	0.2%
<b>Age 30 – 34 (%)</b>	6.1%	7.2%	1.1%
<b>Age 35 – 39 (%)</b>	6.4%	7.0%	0.7%
<b>Age 40 – 44 (%)</b>	7.7%	6.1%	-1.6%
<b>Age 45 – 49 (%)</b>	8.6%	5.8%	-2.8%
<b>Age 50- – 54 (%)</b>	7.6%	6.5%	-1.1%
<b>Age 55 – 59 (%)</b>	5.9%	7.1%	1.2%
<b>Age 60-64 (%)</b>	4.8%	6.2%	1.4%
<b>Age 65 – 69 (%)</b>	3.5%	4.9%	1.5%
<b>Age 70 – 74 (%)</b>	2.5%	3.9%	1.4%
<b>Age 75 – 79 (%)</b>	1.8%	2.5%	0.8%
<b>Age 80 – 84 (%)</b>	1.3%	1.7%	0.4%
<b>Age 85+ (%)</b>	1.2%	1.5%	0.3%

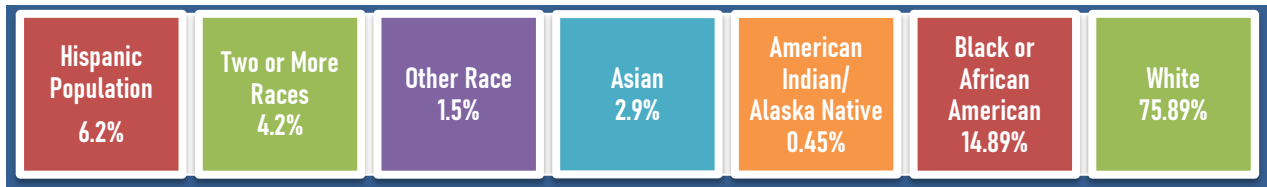
*Source: Esri Business Analyst*



## Diversity in St. Mary's County

Understanding the race and ethnic character of St. Mary's residents is important because it can be reflective of the diverse history, values, and heritage of the community. This type of information can assist the county in creating and offering recreational programs that are relevant and meaningful to residents. In addition, this type of data when combined with the Level of Service Analysis can be used in finding gaps and disparities when it comes to equitable access to parks.

**Table 20: Race Comparison for Total Population in St. Mary's County**



Source: Esri Business Analyst, 2020

Based on historical data, the county is increasingly becoming more diverse. In 2010, only 3.8% of the population identified as Hispanic. This percentage increased to 6.2% in 2021, while the percentage of White residents decreased 2.70% in the county.

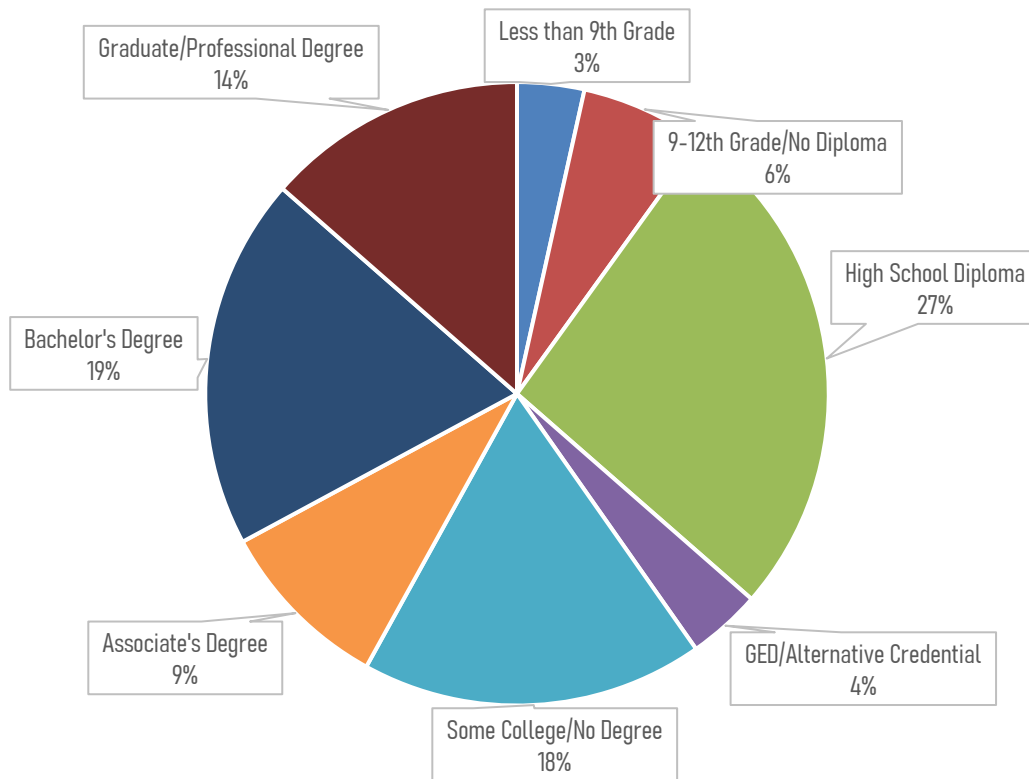
**Table 21: Change in Race/Ethnicity Between 2010 and 2021 in St. Mary's County**

Variable	2010	2021	% Change
White Population	78.59%	75.89%	-2.70%
Black/African-American Population	14.29%	14.89%	0.60%
American Indian/Alaska Native Population	0.40%	0.45%	0.05%
Asian Population	2.47%	2.94%	0.47%
Pacific Islander Population	0.07%	0.12%	0.05%
Other Race Population	1.00%	1.53%	0.53%
Population of Two or More Races	3.17%	4.18%	1.01%
Hispanic Population	3.78%	6.15%	2.37%

## Educational Attainment

Figure 47 shows the percentage of residents (25+) who obtained various levels of education in St. Mary's County. Only 3.5% of the residents had not received a high school or equivalent diploma. Over 19.3% had completed a bachelor's degree, and 13.6% had obtained a graduate or professional level degree. This is lower than the State of Maryland overall (19.3%) but on average with the United States overall (13%).

Figure 47: Educational Attainment in St. Mary's County

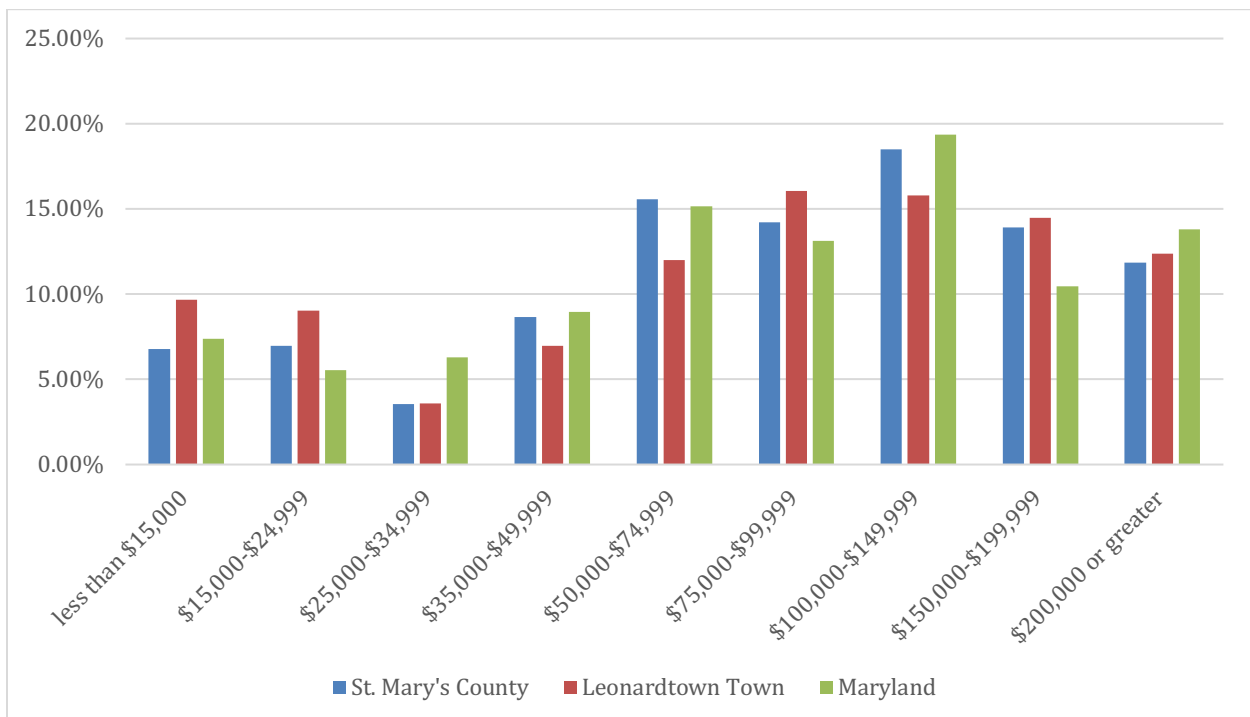


## Household Overview



According to the American Community Survey, approximately 7.33% of county households were under the poverty level, with a median household income of \$88,186. The household income in the county was higher than that of the State of Maryland (\$86,104) and of the United States (\$64,730). Approximately 18.5% of St. Mary's households made between \$100,000 and \$149,999, as seen in **Figure 48**. Only 6.8% of households made less than \$15,000 per year.

**Figure 48: Median Household Income Distribution, 2021 Estimates**



Source: Esri Business Analyst

## Employment

In 2021, an estimated 3.6% of St. Mary's County's population was unemployed, lower than the percentage for the State of Maryland (6.3%) and the United States (6.2%). Approximately 70% of the population was employed in white-collar positions, which encompass jobs where employees typically perform managerial, technical, administrative, and/or professional capacities. About 19% of the county's population was employed in blue-collar positions, such as construction, maintenance, etc. Finally, 11% of residents were employed in the service industry. An estimated 82.3% of working residents drive alone to work, while 18% of residents spent seven or more hours per week commuting.



3.6%

Unemployment  
Rate

Source: 2021 Esri Business  
Analyst

## People with Disabilities



10.1%

Live with a Disability

Source: American Community  
Survey

According to the American Community Survey, 10.1% of St. Mary's population in 2020 experienced living with some sort of disability. This is lower than the state average of 11.2% but still reaffirms the importance of inclusive programming and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) transition plans for parks and facilities.

Respondents to the American Community Survey who report any one of the six disability types (identified below) are considered to have a disability. Likewise, an individual may identify as experiencing more than one disability. Therefore, the percentages below do not equal the total percentage of individuals who live with a disability in the county.

Types of disabilities within St. Mary's County:

- Hearing difficulty – 4.2%
- Vision difficulty – 2.6%
- Cognitive difficulty – 4.5%
- Ambulatory difficulty – 5.8%
- Self-care difficulty – 1.9%
- Independent living difficulty – 3.8%

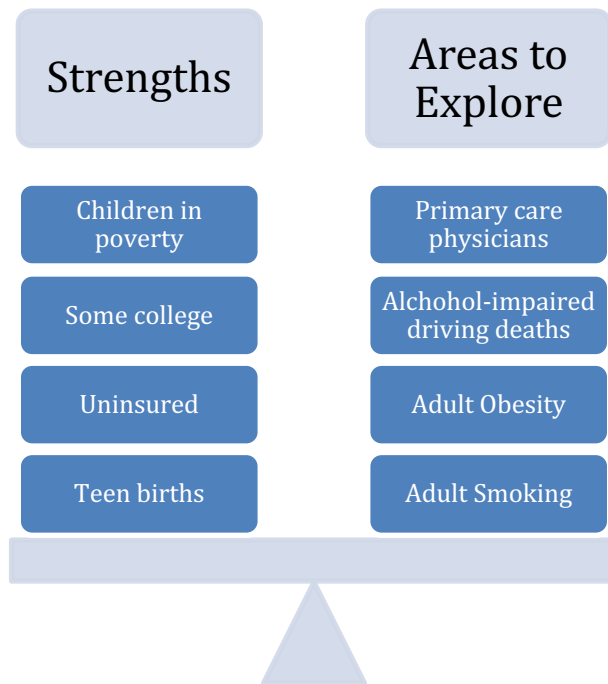
## Health and Wellness

Understanding the status of a community's health can help inform policies related to recreation and fitness. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's County Health Rankings and Roadmaps provides annual insight on the general health of national, state, and county populations. St. Mary's County was ranked among the healthiest counties in Maryland; in 2020, it ranked 8<sup>th</sup> out of 23 Maryland counties for health outcomes.

**Figure 49** below provides additional information regarding the county's health data as it may relate to parks, recreation, and community services.<sup>1</sup> The strengths indicated below are those areas where St. Mary's County ranked higher than top U.S. performers or the State of Maryland. The areas to explore are those where the county ranked lower than the state or top U.S. performers.



**Figure 49: St. Mary's County Health Rankings Overview**



Source: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's County Health Rankings and Roadmaps

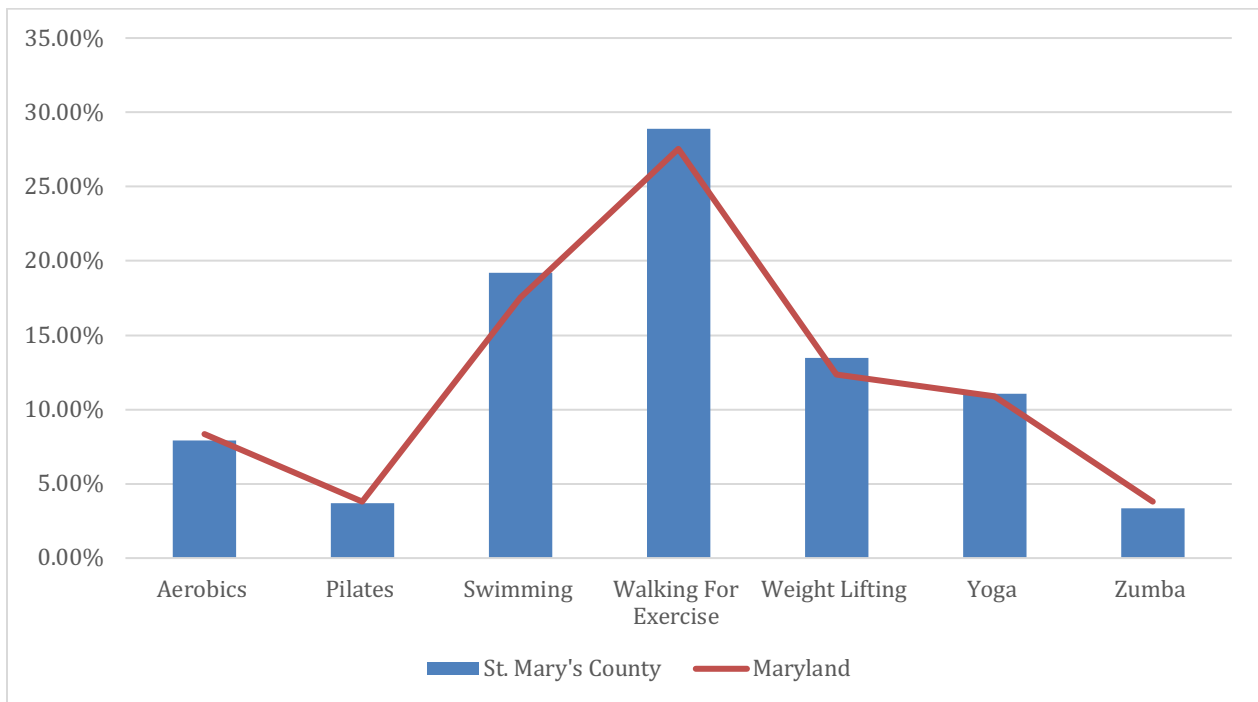
<sup>1</sup> Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, *County Health Rankings 2020*, <http://www.Countyhealthrankings.org>

## Appendix C: Recreation Trends and Participation Estimates

The following pages summarize some of the key trends that could impact the St Mary's County LPPRP over the next 5 – 10 years.

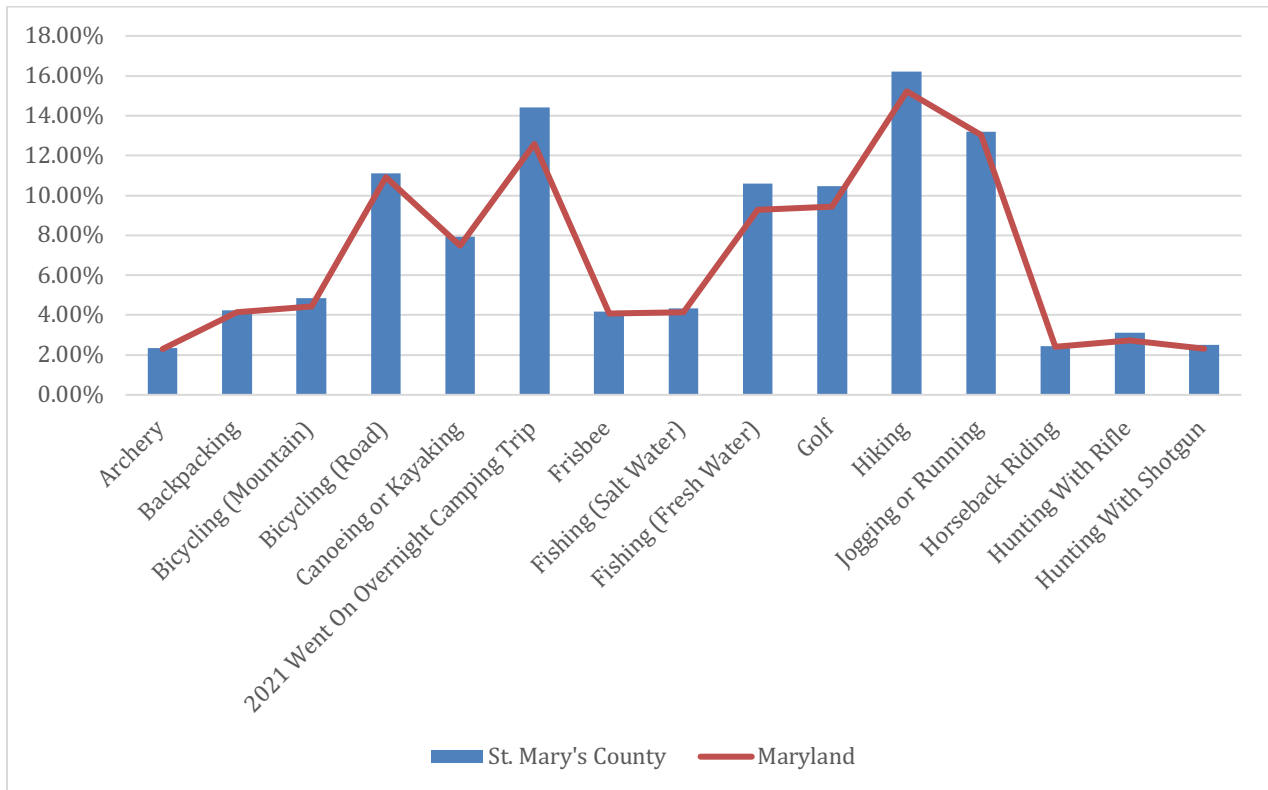
In addition, Esri Business Analyst provides estimates for activity participation and consumer behavior based on a specific methodology and survey data to make up what Esri terms the Market Potential Index. The following figures showcase the participation in fitness activities, outdoor recreation, and sports teams for adults 25 and older, compared to the State of Maryland. The activities with the highest participation include walking for exercise, swimming, hiking, jogging/running, and weightlifting.

**Figure 50: Adult Participation for Fitness Activities**



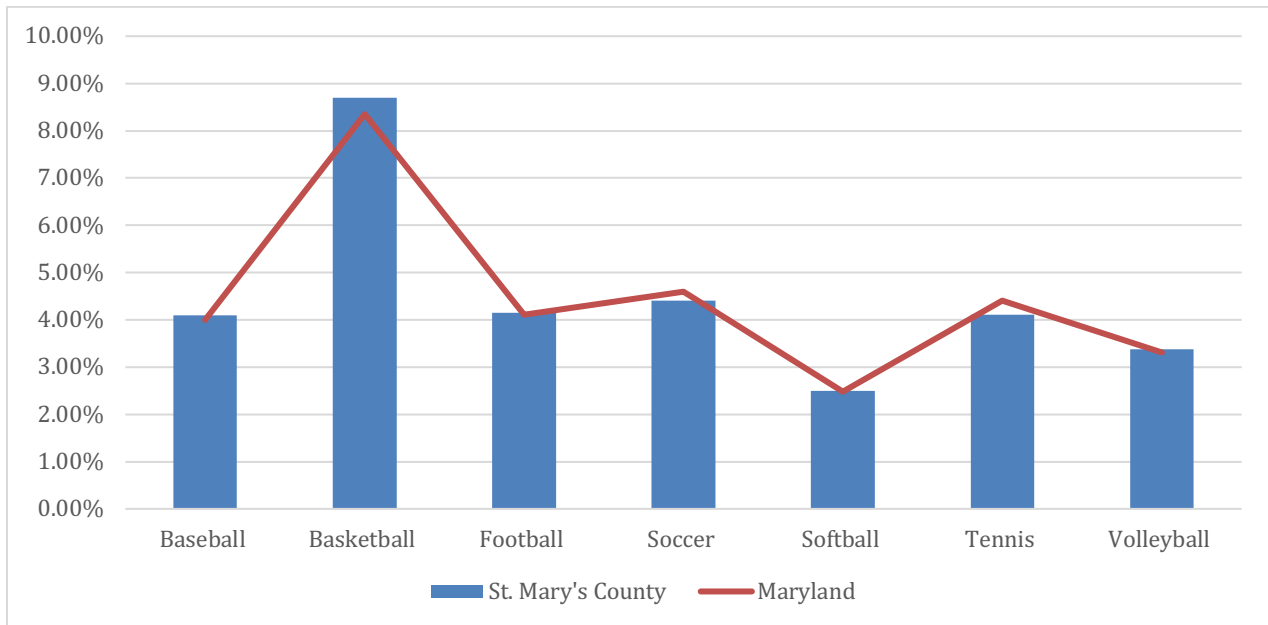
Source: Esri Business Analyst

**Figure 51: Adult Participation in Outdoor Recreation**



Source: Esri Business Analyst

**Figure 52: Adult Participation in Team Sports**



Source: Esri Business Analyst

## Active Transportation

In many surveys and studies on participation in recreational activities, walking, running, jogging and cycling are nearly universally rated as the most popular activities among youths and adults. These activities are attractive as they require little equipment or financial investment to get started and are open to participation to nearly all segments of the population. For these reasons, participation in these activities is often promoted as a means of spurring physical activity, and increasing public health.

The design of a community's infrastructure is directly linked to physical activity—where environments are built with bicyclists and pedestrians in mind, more people bike and walk. Higher levels of bicycling and walking also coincide with increased bicycle and pedestrian safety and higher levels of physical activity. Increasing bicycling and walking in a community can have a major impact on improving public health and life expectancy.<sup>2</sup>

*Public health trends related to cycling and walking include:*

- Quantified health benefits of active transportation can outweigh any risks associated with the activities by as much as 77 to 1, and add more years to life than are lost from inhaled air pollution and traffic injuries.
- Regular cyclists took 7.4 sick days per year, while non-bicyclists took 8.7 sick days per year.
- The proportion of children who live within a mile of school has decreased overtime. In 1969, 48% of children walked or biked to school, compared to 2009, when 35% of children walked or biked to school.<sup>3</sup>

*National cycling trends:*

- There has been a gradual trend of increasing bicycling and walking to work since 2005.
- Infrastructure to support biking communities is becoming more commonly funded in communities.
- Bike share systems, making bicycles available to the public for low-cost, short-term use, have been sweeping the nation.

---

<sup>2</sup> "Parks & Recreation | Active Living Research." Activelivingresearch.org, 2015, [activelivingresearch.org/taxonomy/parks-recreation](https://activelivingresearch.org/taxonomy/parks-recreation). Accessed 30 Sept. 2021.

<sup>3</sup> "SRTS Guide: The Decline of Walking and Bicycling." Saferoutesinfo.org, 2011, [guide.saferoutesinfo.org/introduction/the\\_decline\\_of\\_walking\\_and\\_bicycling.cfm](https://guide.saferoutesinfo.org/introduction/the_decline_of_walking_and_bicycling.cfm). Accessed 1 Nov. 2021.



## ADA Compliance

On July 26, 1990, the federal government officially recognized the needs of people with disabilities through the ADA. This civil rights law expanded rights for activities and services offered by both state and local governmental entities (Title II) and non-profit/for-profit entities (Title III). Parks and recreation agencies are expected to comply by the legal mandate; which means eliminating physical barriers to provide access to facilities, and providing reasonable accommodations in regard to recreational programs through inclusive policies and procedures.<sup>4</sup>

It is a requirement that agencies develop an ADA Transition Plan, which details how physical and structural barriers will be removed to facilitate access to programs and services. The ADA Transition Plan also acts as a planning tool for budgeting and accountability.

## Administrative Trends in Parks and Recreation

County parks and recreation structures and delivery systems have changed and more alternative methods of delivering services are emerging. Certain services are being contracted out and cooperative agreements with non-profit groups and other public institutions are being developed. Newer partners include the health system, social services, justice system, education, the corporate sector, and community service agencies. These partnerships reflect both a broader interpretation of the mandate of parks and recreation agencies and the increased willingness of other sectors to work together to address community issues.

The relationship with health agencies is vital in promoting wellness. The traditional relationship with education and the sharing of facilities through joint-use agreements is evolving into cooperative planning and programming aimed at addressing youth inactivity levels and community needs.<sup>5</sup>

In addition, the role of parks and recreation management has shifted beyond traditional facility oversight and activity programming. The ability to evaluate and interpret data is a critical component of strategic decision-making. In an article posted in *Parks and Recreation Magazine*, February 2019, several components that allow agencies to keep up with administrative trends and become agents of change, including:<sup>6</sup>

1. Develop a digital transformation strategy – How will your agency innovate and adapt to technology?
2. Anticipate needs of the community through data – What information from your facilities, programs, and services can be collected and utilized for decision-making?

---

<sup>4</sup> “Changes Are Coming to ADA – New Regulation Standards Expected for Campgrounds, Parks Beaches.” *Recmanagement.com*, 2012, [recmanagement.com/feature\\_print.php?fid=201211fe03](https://www.recmanagement.com/feature_print.php?fid=201211fe03). Accessed 30 Sept. 2021.

<sup>5</sup> Brian Stapleton, “The Digital Transformation of Parks and Rec” *Parks and Recreation*, February 2019; <https://www.nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2019/february/the-digital-transformation-of-parks-and-rec/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2019/february/the-digital-transformation-of-parks-and-rec/>

3. Continuous education – How can you educate yourself and your team to have more knowledge and skills as technology evolves?
4. Focus on efficiency – In what ways can your operations be streamlined?
5. Embrace change as a leader – How can you help your staff to see the value in new systems and processes?
6. Reach out digitally – Be sure that the public knows how to find you and ways that they can be involved.

### **Adventure Programming**

Many people used to look to travel or tourist agencies for adventurous excursions. However, more government agencies have started to offer exciting experiences such as zip lining, challenge/obstacle courses, and other risk-taking elements on a local level. These agencies may form partnerships with specialized companies to provide adventure packages. Private companies may hire and train their own staff, maintain equipment, and develop marketing campaigns. A lease agreement may grant the county a certain percentage of gross revenues.

### **Agency Accreditation**

Parks and recreation agencies are affirming their competencies and value through accreditation. This is achieved by an agency's commitment to 150 standards. Accreditation is a distinguished mark of excellence that affords external recognition of an organization's commitment to quality and improvement.

The National Recreation and Parks Association administratively sponsors two distinct accreditation programs: the Council on Accreditation of Parks, Recreation, Tourism and Related Professions approves academic institutions, and the Commission for Accreditation of Parks and Recreation Agencies approves agencies. CAPRE is the only national accreditation of parks and recreation agencies and is a valuable measure of an agency's overall quality of operation, management, and service to the community.

### **Aquatics and Water Recreation Trends**

Aquatic facilities are locations where individuals may get exercise, participate in sports, and have competitive fun. Aquatic centers and county waterparks are one of the fastest-expanding divisions of the water leisure industry, according to the World Waterpark Association.<sup>7</sup> According to the 2021 Aquatic Trends Report, "some 16.7% of rec centers in 2020 said they had built a new aquatic facility in the past several years, compared to 6.1% in 2019."<sup>8</sup>

Even though these centers are one of the fastest-growing segments in the water leisure industry, their budget will still decide their ability to maintain their equipment, which facility design trends are implemented, and their ability to meet the needs of the community.

---

<sup>7</sup> "Press." *Waterparks.org*, 2020, [www.waterparks.org/web/Press.aspx](http://www.waterparks.org/web/Press.aspx). Accessed 30 Sept. 2021.

<sup>8</sup> Tipping, E. (2021, February). *Just Keep Swimming: The 2021 Aquatic Trends Report*. Recreation Management. <https://recmanagement.com/feature/202102SU01>.

Fortunately, even with the impact that the pandemic has had, park and camp respondents predict their average running costs to be the same in 2021 as they were in 2019.<sup>9</sup>

Opportunities could include aquatic therapy and aerobics, which can also assist in the healing process from injuries. These facilities can greatly transform a person's health, which is why the World Health Organization has stressed that "children's physical and social environments are significant determinants of their overall health and well-being." Having access to an aquatic area often improves someone's overall health when they take part in swimming, water aerobics, Stand Up Paddleboard (SUP) yoga, Aqua-Yoga/Balance Programs, and/or water basketball, volleyball, or water polo.

The ADA mandates accessible access to aquatic centers. People with disabilities are able to use aquatic facilities with the assistance of zero-entry pool access, ramps, or chair lifts. Another water accessibility issue is one of racial disparity. Studies have shown that "64 percent of black children and 45 percent of Hispanic children have little to no swimming ability, compared with 40 percent of white children." Many facilities have outreach programs focused primarily on low-income, ethnic, and water-phobic populations to address these discrepancies and reach people who lack swimming skills due to a fear of water.<sup>10</sup>

Splash pads are a great service that can remedy situations where people are not eager to submerge themselves into the water but are still looking to cool off. This type of facility is more cost efficient as it requires no lifeguard, uses less water than a pool, requires less maintenance, and the initial construction of splash pads also costs less than swimming pools. Splash pads oftentimes have longer hours and seasons than pools, so, not surprisingly, parents who were interviewed when frequenting parks expressed that they wished that wading pools had longer hours of operation as well as a longer outdoor season.

Another comparison between pools and splash pads is how they can improve revenue. A straightforward way to add revenue to an already existing splash pad is by building a pavilion for large parties for utilization for rentals.

Pools can also add elements such as pool zip lines, "ninja" climbing nets, and poolside rock climbing walls to increase their revenue. The AquaZip'N, AquaNinja, and AquaClimb are examples of these safe adventure elements that are trending. In addition, aquatic centers can consider less-permanent amenities such as log rolls, giant inflatable obstacle courses, and screen projectors for "dive-in" movies.

---

<sup>9</sup> Tucker, P., Gilliland, J., & Irwin, J. D. (2007). Splashpads, Swings, and Shade. *Canadian Journal of Public Health*, 98(3), 198–202. <https://doi.org/10.1007/bf03403712>

<sup>10</sup> Amico, L. (2019, April 10). 3 Emerging Trends in Aquatic Adventure Recreation. AquaClimb. <https://www.aquaclimb.com/blog/2019/4/10/3-emerging-trends-in-aquatic-adventure-recreation>.

## Before- and After-School Care Programs

Many parks and recreation agencies offer before- and after-school care programs. These programs may include fitness/play opportunities, a healthy snack, and tutoring/homework services. According to a National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) poll, 90% of U.S. adults believe that before- and after-school programs offered by local parks and recreation agencies are important.<sup>11</sup> According to the 2018 Out-of-School Time Report, approximately 55% of local parks and recreation agencies offer after-school programming. Parks and recreation professionals consider the top five benefits of afterschool programs provided to youth are:<sup>12</sup>

- Safe spaces to play outside of school
- Free or affordable places for health and wellness opportunities
- Opportunities to network and socialize with others
- Experience nature and outdoors
- Educational support and learning opportunities

---

<sup>11</sup> Parks and Recreation: The Leaders in Before and Afterschool Care, *National Recreation and Parks Association*. Accessed December 2019. <https://www.nrpa.org/publications-research/park-pulse/parks-and-recreation-the-leaders-in-before-and-after-school-care/>

<sup>12</sup> 2018 Out-of-School Time Report, *National Recreation and Parks Association* Accessed February 2020: <https://www.nrpa.org/contentassets/c76ea3d5bcee4595a17aac298a5f2b7a/out-of-school-time-survey-results-report-2018.pdf>

Figure 53: Overview of NRPA Park Pulse Report on Before- and After-School Care

## NRPA PARK PULSE

### Parks and Recreation: Preferred Provider of Before- and After-School Care


**90%** of adults believe it's important for park and recreation agencies to provide affordable before- and after-school care to children and young adults.

These services include tutoring and homework help, fitness and play opportunities, and the availability of healthy snacks.

Regardless of income, age, education or having children in the household, people agree, providing affordable before- and after-school care for our nation's youth is important!

Each month, through a poll of 1,000 U.S. residents focused on park and recreation issues, NRPA Park Pulse helps tell the park and recreation story. Questions span from the serious to the more lighthearted. The survey was conducted by Wakefield Research ([www.wakefieldresearch.com](http://www.wakefieldresearch.com)).

Visit [nrpa.org/park-pulse](http://nrpa.org/park-pulse) for more information.

 **NRPA** National Recreation and Park Association  
*Because everyone deserves a great park*

Source: NRPA Park Pulse Report

## Bird Watching

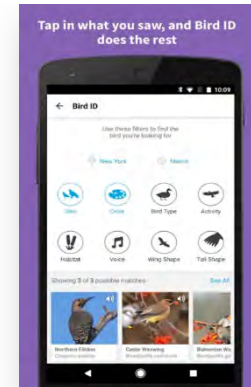
In 2016, an estimated 45.1 million people participated in bird-watching, according to the latest U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife Associated Recreation.<sup>13</sup> Of all participants, 86% observed wild birds around their homes.

The most popular activity was feeding birds and other wildlife, at 70%, while observing birds and photographing them were also favored.

Approximately 30.5 million people participated in wildlife photography in 2016. Pennsylvania, located in the Mid-Atlantic region, was one of the highest populations that watched wildlife at 35% participation, as seen in **Figure 55**.

Smart phone apps offered from organizations, such as the National Audubon Society and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, offer beginners and birding veterans the opportunity to identify hundreds of bird species by size, color, activity, habitat, wing shape, voice, and tail shape. These tools offer unique new programming opportunities for passive recreation.

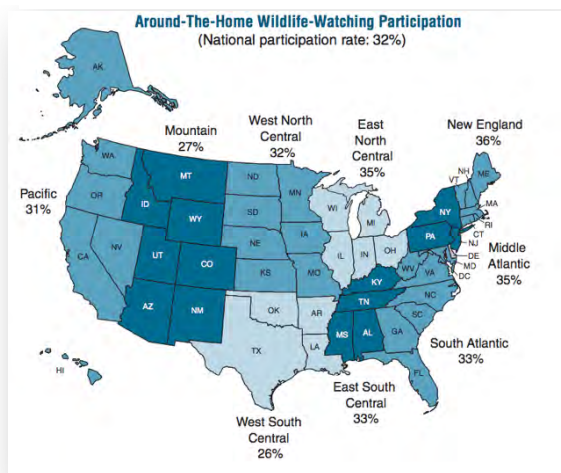
**Figure 54: Audubon Bird Guide App**



Source: Audubon Bird Guide App, National Audubon Society

## Community Centers

**Figure 55: Participation in At-Home Wildlife-Watching**



Source: 2016 U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service National Survey

Community centers are public gathering places where community members can socialize, participate in recreational or educational activities, obtain information, and seek counseling or support services, among other things.<sup>14</sup> Several studies have found a correlation between the outdoor leisure involvement that community centers provide and a person's greater environmental concern. The main impact from the addition of these centers is the improvement in community health, social connectivity, and mental well-being.

A national long-term study conducted of over 17,000 teens who frequented recreation facilities found that they were 75% more likely to engage in the highest category of

moderate to strenuous physical exercise. Because these activities that they partake in involve a considerable amount of effort, the benefits have been shown to include "reduced obesity, a

<sup>13</sup> 2016 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife Associated Recreation [https://wsfrprograms.fws.gov/Subpages/NationalSurvey/nat\\_survey2016.pdf](https://wsfrprograms.fws.gov/Subpages/NationalSurvey/nat_survey2016.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> *Community centers*. County Health Rankings & Roadmaps. (2020, January 21). <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/take-action-to-improve-health/what-works-for-health/strategies/community-centers>.

diminished risk of disease, an enhanced immune system and most importantly, increased life expectancy.”<sup>15</sup>

Clubs and sports offered by community centers also strengthen social connections and reduce social isolation.<sup>16</sup> Along with an increase in social connectivity brought by community centers comes a sense of satisfaction with a person’s choice of friends and perceived success in life. The evidence strongly suggests that this satisfaction can rise to much higher levels if participation in outdoor recreation begins in childhood.

The following infographic demonstrates the potential for community services in offering non-traditional services.

Figure 56: Non-Traditional Services Desired in Community Centers



Source: NRPA Park Pulse

<sup>15</sup> National Association of Community Health Centers, Inc. (2012, August). Powering Healthier Communities: November 2010 Community Health Centers Address the Social Determinants of Health.

<sup>16</sup> *Community centers*. County Health Rankings & Roadmaps. (2020, January 21). <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/take-action-to-improve-health/what-works-for-health/strategies/community-centers>.

## Community and Special Events

Community-wide events and festivals often act as essential place-making activities for residents, economic drivers, and urban brand builders. Chad Kaydo describes the phenomenon in the *Governing Magazine*: county and municipal officials and entrepreneurs “see the power of cultural festivals, innovation-focused business conferences and the like as a way to spur short-term tourism while shaping an image of the host city as a cool, dynamic location where companies and citizens in modern, creative industries can thrive.”<sup>17</sup>

According to the 2020 Event Trends Report by EventBrite, the following trends are expected to impact event planners and community builders in the coming years:<sup>18</sup>

- **Focus on sustainability:** Zero-waste events are quickly becoming an expectation. Some of the primary ways of prioritizing environmental sustainability include e-tickets, reusable, or biodegradable items, offering vegan/vegetarian options, encouraging public transport and carpooling, and working with venues that recycle.
- **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:** Ensuring that the venue is not only inclusive to all abilities by offering ADA facilities, but also welcoming to all races, ethnicities, and backgrounds through signage, messaging, and the lineup of speakers. Ways to incorporate a focus on inclusivity include planning for diversity through speakers, talent, and subject matter, enacting a code of conduct that promotes equity, and possibly providing scholarships to attendees.
- **Engaging Experiences:** Being able to customize and cater the facility to create immersive events that bring together culture, art, music, and elements of a county’s brand will be critical in creating a more authentic experience

## Community Gardens

Communities around the country are building community gardens for a number of far-reaching environmental and social impacts. According to GreenLeaf Communities, which supports scientific research in environmental and human health, community gardens offer multiple benefits, including those listed in **Table 22**.<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> Kaydo, Chad. “Cities Create Music, Cultural Festivals to Make Money.” *Governing*, *Governing*, 18 Dec. 2013, [www.governing.com/archive/gov-cities-create-music-festivals.html](http://www.governing.com/archive/gov-cities-create-music-festivals.html). Accessed 30 Sept. 2021.

<sup>18</sup> “The 2020 Event Trends Report- Eventbrite.” Eventbrite US Blog, 2020, [www.eventbrite.com/blog/academy/2020-event-trends-report/](http://www.eventbrite.com/blog/academy/2020-event-trends-report/). Accessed 30 Sept. 2021.

<sup>19</sup> Katie DeMuro, “The Many Benefits of Community Gardens” *Greenleaf Communities*, <https://greenleafcommunities.org/the-many-benefits-of-community-gardens>, accessed January 2019



**Table 22: Benefits of Community Gardens**

<b>Benefits of Community Gardens</b>	
<b>Environmental</b>	<b>Social</b>
Reducing waste through composting	Increasing intake of vegetables and fruits
Improving water infiltration	Promoting relaxation and improving mental health
Increasing biodiversity of animals and plants	Increasing physical activity
Improving air and soil quality	Reducing risk of obesity and obesity-related diseases

Some studies show that community gardens can improve the well-being of the entire community by bringing residents together and creating social ties. This activity can reduce crime, particularly if gardens are utilized in vacant lots. In fact, vacant land has the opposite effect of community gardens, including increased litter, chemical and tire dumping, drug use, and decreased property values.

By creating community gardens, neighborhoods can teach useful skills in gardening, food production, selling, and business. The NRPA published an in-depth guide to building a community garden in parks through the Grow Your Park Initiative, which can be found on NRPA’s website.<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> Laurie Harmon and Laurel Harrington, “Building a Community Garden in Your Park: Opportunities for Health, Community, and Recreation.” National Recreation and Park Association, [https://www.nrpa.org/uploadedFiles/nrpa.org/Grants\\_and\\_Partners/Environmental\\_Conservation/Community-Garden-Handbook.pdf](https://www.nrpa.org/uploadedFiles/nrpa.org/Grants_and_Partners/Environmental_Conservation/Community-Garden-Handbook.pdf), accessed January 2019.

## Conservation

One of the key pillars of parks and recreation is the role that it plays in conservation. Managing and protecting open space, providing opportunities for people to connect with nature, and educating communities about conservation are all incredibly important. A key component of conservation is addressing climate change. Local parks and recreation can help by building climate-resilient communities through water management, green infrastructure, and sustainability.

A report by NRPA in 2017 titled “Park and Recreation Sustainability Practices” surveyed over 400 parks and recreation agencies and found the top five ways that local departments are taking action on conservation and climate change include:

- Alternative Transportation – 77% reduce carbon footprint through offering transportation alternatives
- Watershed Management – 70% adopt protective measures for watershed management
- Air Quality – 53% plant and manage tree canopy that improves air quality
- Sustainable Education – 52% educate the public about sustainability practices
- Stormwater Management – 51% proactively reduce stormwater through green infrastructure<sup>21</sup>

## Cycling Trends

Cycling activities are attractive as they require little equipment or financial investment to get started and are open to participation to nearly all segments of the population. For these reasons, participation in these activities is often promoted as a means of spurring physical activity and increasing public health.

The design of a community’s infrastructure is directly linked to physical activity—where environments are built with bicyclists and pedestrians in mind, more people bike and walk. Higher levels of bicycling and walking also coincide with increased bicycle and pedestrian safety and higher levels of physical activity. Increasing bicycling and walking in a community can have a major impact on improving public health and life expectancy.

---

<sup>21</sup> NRPA, “NRPA Report: Park and Recreation Sustainability Practices,” 2017. <https://www.nrpa.org/our-work/Three-Pillars/conservation/climate-resilient-parks/>

### *Additional National bicycling trends:*

- Bicycle touring is becoming a fast-growing trend around the world, including the United States and Canada. “Travelers are seeking out bike tours to stay active, minimize environmental impact, and experience diverse landscapes and cityscapes at a closer level.”<sup>22</sup>
- Urban bike tours, popular in cycle-friendly cities in Europe, are taking hold in the United States as well. Bikes and Hikes LA, an eco-friendly bike and hike sightseeing company founded in September 2014 offers visitors the opportunity to “see the city’s great outdoors while getting a good workout.” In New York, a hotel and a bike store has partnered to offer guests cruisers to explore the city during the summer of 2014.<sup>23</sup>
- One of the newest trends in adventure cycling are “fat bikes,” multiple speed bikes that are made to ride where other bikes cannot be ridden, with tires that are up to five inches wide and run at low pressure for extra traction. Most fat bikes are used to ride on snow, but they are also very effective for riding on any loose surface like sand or mud. They also work well on most rough terrain or just riding through the woods. This bike offers unique opportunities to experience nature in ways not possible otherwise.<sup>24</sup>

Agencies around the country are working to proactively regulate Electric Assist Bikes, known as e-bikes, on their trails and greenways. In September of 2019, land agencies—including the National Park Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and the Bureau of Reclamation—were ordered to allow e-bikes where other types of bicycles are allowed. According to this policy, e-bikes are no longer defined as motorized vehicles.

Statewide, there are also regulations that should be considered at a local level in regard to allowing e-bikes on bike paths, pedestrian paths, and multipurpose trails. Agencies such as Boulder County in Colorado are implementing pilot programs to test the potential of e-bikes on trails and the impact that they have to the environment, other trail users, and wildlife.<sup>25</sup>

E-bikes are becoming commonplace on both paved and non-paved surfaces. For commuters, this option allows a quick, convenient, and environment-friendly method of transportation. Speeds vary based on the types of e-bikes, which are typically broken down into two classes:

- Class 1 e-bikes provide electrical assistance only while the rider is pedaling. Electrical assistance stops when the bicycle reaches 20 mph.

---

<sup>22</sup> Hope Nardini, “Bike Tourism a Rising Trend,” *Ethic Traveler*, <http://www.ethicaltraveler.org/2012/08/bike-tourism-a-rising-trend/>, accessed March 2021

<sup>23</sup> Michelle Baran, “New Trend: Urban Bike Tours in Los Angeles and New York,” *Budget Travel Blog*, <http://www.budgettravel.com/blog/new-trend-urban-bike-tours-in-los-angeles-and-new-york,11772/>, accessed March 2014

<sup>24</sup> Steven Pease, “Fat Bikes, How to Get the Most Out of Winter Cycling,” *Minnesota Cycling Examiner*, <http://www.examiner.com/article/fat-bikes-the-latest-trend-adventure-cycling>, February 1, 2014.

<sup>25</sup> “E-bikes on Open Space,” Boulder County, <https://www.bouldercounty.org/open-space/management/e-bikes/>, Accessed December 28, 2020

- Class 2 e-bikes provide electrical assistance regardless of whether the rider is pedaling. Electrical assistance stops when the bicycle reaches 20 mph.

## Dog Parks

Dog parks continue to see high popularity and have remained among the top planned addition to parks and recreational facilities over the past three years. They help build a sense of community and can draw potential new community members and tourists traveling with pets.<sup>26</sup>

*Recreation Management* magazine<sup>27</sup> suggests that dog parks can represent a relatively low-cost way to provide an oft-visited popular community amenity. Dog parks can be as simple as a gated area or more elaborate with “designed-for-dogs” amenities like water fountains, agility equipment, and pet wash stations, to name a few. Even “spraygrounds” are being designed for dogs. Dog parks are also places for people to meet new friends and enjoy the outdoors.

The best dog parks cater to people with design features for their comfort and pleasure but also with creative programming.<sup>28</sup> Amenities in an ideal dog park might include the following:

- Benches, shade and water – for dogs and people
- At least one acre of space with adequate drainage
- Double-gated entry
- Ample waste stations well-stocked with bags
- Sandy beaches/sand bunker digging areas
- Custom-designed splashpads for large and small dogs
- People-pleasing amenities such as walking trails, water fountains, restroom facilities, picnic tables, and dog wash stations.

## Economic and Health Benefits of Parks

“The Benefits of Parks: Why America Needs More City Parks and Open Space,” a report from the Trust for Public Land, makes the following observations about the health, economic, environmental, and social benefits of parks and open space:<sup>29</sup>

- Physical activity makes people healthier.
- Physical activity increases with access to parks.

---

<sup>26</sup> Joe Bush, “Tour-Legged-Friendly Parks, *Recreation Management*, February 2, 2016.

<sup>27</sup> Emily Tipping, “2014 State of the Industry Report, Trends in Parks and Recreation,” *Recreation Management*, June 2014.

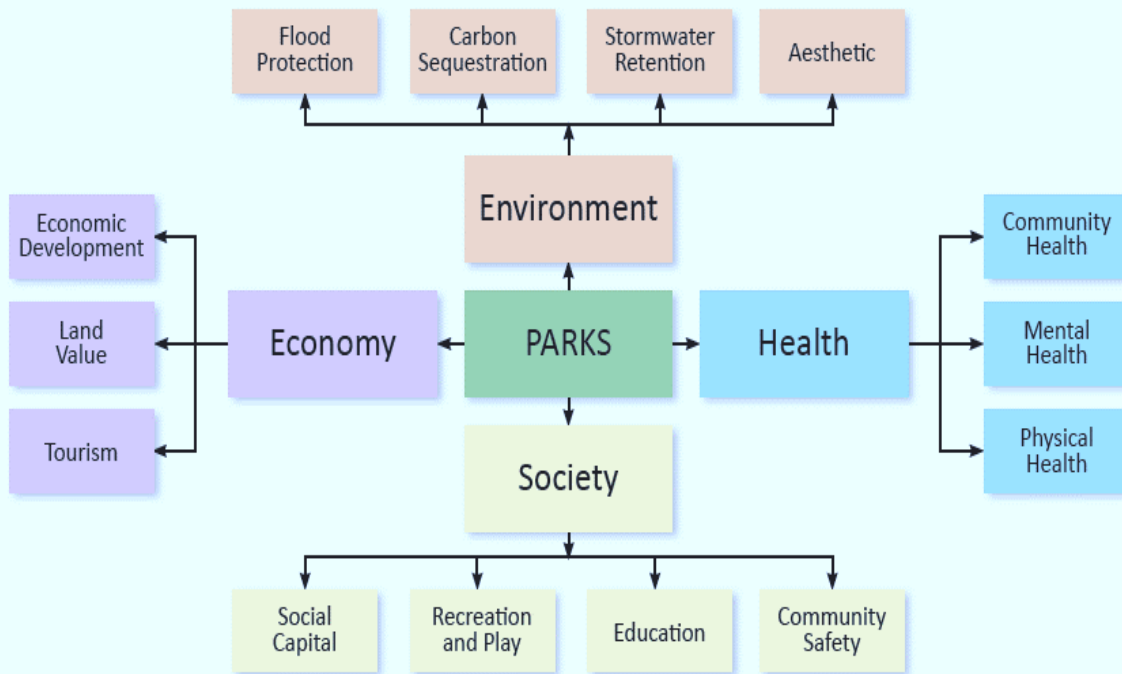
<sup>28</sup> Dawn Klingensmith “Gone to the Dogs: Design and Manage an Effective Off-Leash Area”, *Recreation Management*, March 2014. ([http://recmanagement.com/feature\\_print.php?fid=201403fe02](http://recmanagement.com/feature_print.php?fid=201403fe02)).

<sup>29</sup> “Benefits of Parks White Paper.” The Trust for Public Land, 2018, [www.tpl.org/benefits-parks-white-paper](http://www.tpl.org/benefits-parks-white-paper). Accessed 30 Sept. 2021.

- Contact with the natural world improves physical and physiological health.
- Residential and commercial property values increase.
- Value is added to community and economic development sustainability.
- Benefits of tourism are enhanced.
- Trees are effective in improving air quality and act as natural air conditioners.
- Trees assist with storm water control and erosion.
- Crime and juvenile delinquency are reduced.
- Recreational opportunities for all ages are provided.
- Stable neighborhoods and strong communities are created.

**Figure 57: Park System Benefits Provided to People and Communities**

### Park System Benefits provided to People



Source: *Earth Economics, 2011*

### Farmers' Market

Parks and recreation agencies often have the role of connecting communities to local, fresh foods. In fact, many local agencies are the largest providers of federally funded meals for the public. One in five agencies manages a farmers' market.

Providing farmers' markets in the community creates many benefits. Beyond providing fresh foods to the public and promoting agricultural and economic benefits for farmers and vendors, they also bring culture-building and engagement on a consistent basis.

According to a study by the NRPA in 2019 of 296 agencies, approximately 67% of organizations host farmers markets once a week, with 21% offering it two or three times a week.

Approximately four in five agencies use partnerships with nonprofits, farmers' organizations, other local government departments, community development organizations, and the local extensions office to enhance the success of the farmers' market.

Figure 58: Overview of NRPA Farmers Market Report



Source: 2019 NRPA Farmers Market Report

## Food Trucks

Food trucks are estimated to be a \$1 billion industry. In the United States, over 32,000 businesses operated out of food trucks in 2021, employing more than 38,000 people.

Popularity has increased since the late 2000s, but even more so from 2016 to 2021. This boom can be sourced back to the surge of gastronomy and new types of cuisine.<sup>30</sup> According to the 2015 Harvard Kennedy School article “On the Go: Insights into Food Truck Regulation,” the rise of food trucks placed a responsibility on city officials to regulate and enforce policies related to four main areas: economic activity, public health, public safety, and public space.



In regard to public space, many cities established a set of regulations that promote economic development by encouraging the use of vacant lots. These vacant lots are turning into “food truck hubs,” which help improve the aesthetics of the area and deter crime. Information and regulations are easily found online, which facilitates the creation of new food truck businesses. Centralizing the permitting process for mobile food vendors also assists with getting new businesses on the road.

## Generational Changes

Activity participation and preferences tend to vary based on several demographic factors but can also differ based on generational preferences. According to the Pew Research Center, the birth years in **Table 22** identify generational categories.

**Table 22: Generation by Age**

Generation	Birth Years
Silent Generation	1928 – 1945
Baby Boomers	1946 – 1964
Generation X	1965 – 1980
Millennial	1981 – 1996
Generation Z	1997 – 2016
Alpha Generation	2017 – 2024

*Source: Pew Research Center*

<sup>30</sup> “IBISWorld – Industry Market Research, Reports, and Statistics.” Ibisworld.com, 2016, [www.ibisworld.com/united-states/market-research-reports/food-trucks-industry/](http://www.ibisworld.com/united-states/market-research-reports/food-trucks-industry/). Accessed 17 Dec. 2021.

### *The Silent Generation*

The Silent Generation began life in some of the most difficult conditions, including the Great Depression, the Dust Bowl, World War II and economic and political uncertainty. This generation is conservative, careful, and conscientious. The members of this generation also often are thrifty respectful, patriotic, loyal, and religious. This generation may be challenged by technology. The youngest have reached 75 years old and can be greatly assisted by the social interaction that takes place at senior centers or with senior programs.

### *Baby Boomers*

As Baby Boomers enter and enjoy retirement, they are looking for opportunities in fitness, sports, outdoors, cultural events, and other activities that suit their lifestyles. With their varied life experiences, values, and expectations, Baby Boomers are predicted to redefine the meaning of recreation and leisure programming for mature adults. Boomers are second only to Generation X and Millennials in participation in fitness sports in 2019.<sup>31</sup>

Boomers will look to parks and recreation professionals to provide opportunities to enjoy many lifelong hobbies and sports. When programming for this age group, a customized experience to cater to the need for self-fulfillment, healthy pleasure, nostalgic youthfulness, and individual escapes are important. Recreation trends are shifting from games and activities that boomers associate with senior citizens. Activities such as bingo, bridge, and shuffleboard will likely be avoided because boomers relate these activities with old age.

### *Generation X*

Many members of Generation X are in the peak of their careers, raising families, and growing their connections within the community. As suggested by the “2017 Participation Report” from the Physical Activity Council, members of Generation X were “all or nothing” in terms of their levels of physical activity, with 37% reported as highly active, and 27% reported as completely inactive. As further noted in the report, over 50% of Generation X was likely to have participated in fitness and outdoor sports activities. An additional 37% participated in individual sports.

### *The Millennial Generation*

The Millennial Generation is generally considered those born between about 1981 and 1996, and in April 2016, the Pew Research Center reported that this generation had surpassed the Baby Boomers as the nation’s most populous age group.<sup>32</sup>

Millennials tend to be a more tech-savvy, socially conscious, achievement-driven age group with more flexible ideas about balancing wealth, work, and play. They generally prefer different park amenities, and recreational programs compared to their counterparts in the Baby Boomer

---

<sup>31</sup>Physical Activity Council, Participation Report, 2019: <http://www.physicalactivitycouncil.com/pdfs/current.pdf>

<sup>32</sup> Richard Fry, “Millennials overtake Baby Boomers as America’s Largest Generation”, *Pew Research Center Fact Tank*, April 25, 2016, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/04/25/millennials-overtake-baby-boomers/>, accessed May 2015



generation. Engagement with this generation should be considered in parks and recreation planning. In an April 2015 posting to the National Parks and Recreation Association's official blog, *Open Space*, Scott Hornick, CEO of Adventure Solutions suggests the following seven considerations to make your parks Millennial friendly:<sup>33</sup>

1. Group activities are appealing.
2. Wireless internet/Wi-Fi access is a must – being connected digitally is a Millennial status-quo and sharing experiences in real time is something Millennials enjoy doing.
3. Having many different experiences is important – Millennials tend to participate in a broad range of activities.
4. Convenience and comfort are sought out.
5. Competition is important, and Millennials enjoy winning, recognition, and earning rewards.
6. Facilities that promote physical activity, such as trails and sports fields, and activities such as adventure races are appealing.
7. Many Millennials own dogs and want places they can recreate with them.

In addition to being health conscious, Millennials often look for local and relatively inexpensive ways to experience the outdoors close to home—on trails, bike paths, and in community parks.<sup>34</sup>

### *Generation Z*

As of the 2010 Census, the age group under age 18 forms about a quarter of the U.S. population. Nationwide, nearly half of the youth population is ethnically diverse and 25% is Hispanic.

Generation Z, the youth of today, have the following characteristics:<sup>35</sup>

1. The most obvious trait for Generation Z is the widespread use of technology.
2. Generation Z members live their lives online and love sharing both the intimate and mundane details of life.
3. They tend to be acutely aware that they live in a pluralistic society and tend to embrace diversity.

---

<sup>33</sup> Scott Hornick, "7 Ways to Make Your Park More Millennial Friendly", *Parks and Recreation Open Space Blog*, August 19, 2015, <http://www.nrpa.org/blog/7-ways-to-make-your-parks-millennial-friendly>, accessed May 2016

<sup>34</sup> "Sneakernomics: How The 'Outdoor' Industry Became The 'Outside' Industry", *Forbes*, September 21, 2015, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/mattpowell/2015/09/21/sneakernomics-how-the-outdoor-industry-became-the-outside-industry/2/#50958385e34d>, accessed May 2016

<sup>35</sup> Alexandra Levit, "Make Way for Generation Z", *New York Times*, March 28, 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/29/jobs/make-way-for-generation-z.html>, accessed May 2016

- They tend to be independent. They do not wait for their parents to teach them things or tell them how to make decisions; they Google it.

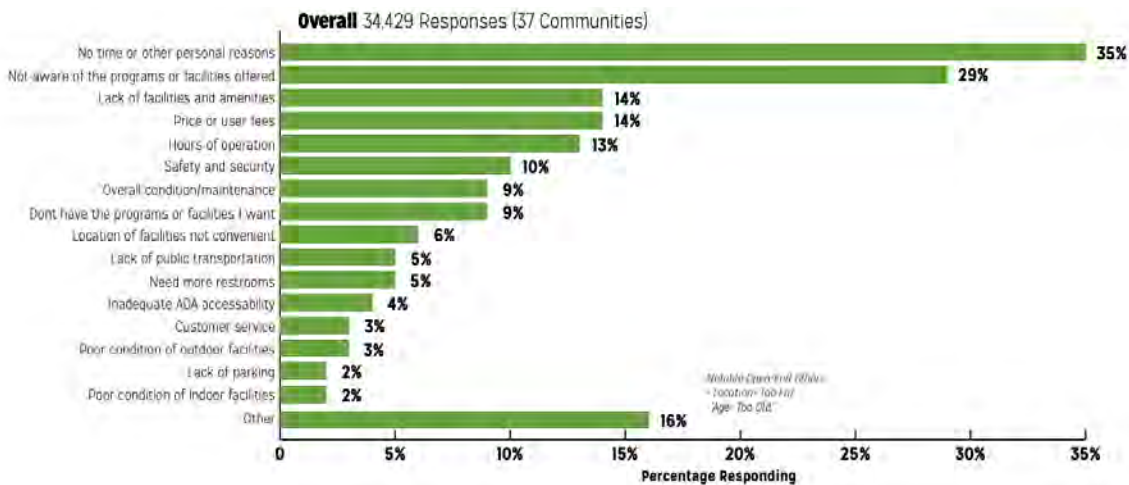
### Generation Alpha

Children born in this generation are children of Millennials which will be born entirely in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and considered the most technological demographic to date. Also known as iGeneration, they will grow up in a world that interacts with artificial intelligence and smart voice assistance in a completely natural way—not able to understand a world without such technology. By the time this generation reaches their twenties, they are likely to recreate the way they interact with their environments. They will have little to no fear of technology. Artificial intelligence is expected to be mainstream by the time the first Alphas reach their twenties. Their generation is expected to have significantly more leisure time than any other to date. Near the end of the planning horizon for this master plan, the Alpha generation will be reaching teen years. Every effort to accommodate this generation with high-quality, state-of-the-art technology in facilities and with programs will be necessary to reach this group.

### Marketing and Social Media

Awareness of parks and recreation services is critical to the success of any agency. According to a study in collaboration with the NRPA and GP RED of approximately 35,000 responses, one of the primary reasons patrons do not participate in programs and services is lack of awareness.

**Figure 59: Common Barriers to Recreation Participation**



Source: NRPA Park Awareness Summary Report

In today’s modern world, there is ample opportunity to promote and market parks and recreation services. Marketing activities begin with a needs assessment that details how the community prefers to receive information. Then, a marketing plan should be developed that is catered to the agency’s resources, including staff, time, and budget. This plan should guide the agency for one to three years.

Technology has made it easier to reach a wide, location-dependent audience that can be segmented by demographics. However, it has also caused a gap in the way parks and

recreation agencies are able to communicate. Agencies around the country have previously not dedicated substantial funding to marketing; however, it is becoming a critical piece to receiving participants.

Without dedicated staff and support, keeping up with social media trends—which seem to change daily—is difficult. Furthermore, with an overarching desire to standardize a county’s brand, there may be limitations to the access and control that a parks and recreation agency has over its marketing. Professionals must become advocates for additional resources, training, and education. Having a strong presence on social networks, through email marketing, and through traditional marketing will help enhance the perception from the community.<sup>36</sup>

### **Older Adults and Senior Programming**

Many older adults and seniors are choosing to maintain active lifestyles and recognize the health benefits of regular physical activities. With the large number of adults in these age cohorts, many communities have found a need to offer more programming, activities, and facilities that support the active lifestyle this generation desires.

Public parks and recreation agencies are increasingly expected to be significant providers of such services and facilities. The NRPA developed the Healthy Aging in Parks initiative to support parks and recreation agencies in serving older adults in the community. This initiative is based on the needs of older adults, including physical fitness, socialization, transportation, and other quality of life desires. Some of the primary strategies of the Healthy Aging in Parks initiative are as follows:

- Promote participation in physical activity through providing social engagement
- Provide safe environments—both inside and outside—that limit barriers for participation
- Utilize evidence-based interventions to increase support and manage chronic diseases

Parks and recreation agencies can assist the aging demographic in staying healthy through providing programs and facilities. According to an NRPA survey, nine in ten local parks and recreation agencies offer services for older adults. Surveys reveal that agencies are most likely to offer the following services:

- Exercise classes (91%)
- Field trips, tours, vacations (70%)
- Arts and crafts classes (67%)
- Opportunities to volunteer in recreation centers (58%)
- Special events and festivals (58%)

---

<sup>36</sup> “The NRPA Park and Recreation Marketing and Communications Report | Research | Parks and Recreation Magazine | NRPA.” Nrupa.org, 2015, [www.nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2020/january/the-nrpa-park-and-recreation-marketing-and-communications-report/](http://www.nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2020/january/the-nrpa-park-and-recreation-marketing-and-communications-report/). Accessed 16 Nov. 2021.

- Group walks (53%)
- Opportunities to volunteer in parks (48%)
- Paid job opportunities to lead exercise classes or work in recreation centers or at parks (47%)

For underserved older adults, parks and recreation agencies can be a critical resource, providing low-cost meals, low-cost or free fitness programs, and transportation services. However, many organizations are faced with barriers that inhibit the ability to offer these programs, with the top responses being facility space shortage (58%) and inadequate funding (50%). To overcome these obstacles, agencies will often develop relationships with partners in the community that might specialize in serving the older adults. Some primary partners include:

- Area agencies on aging (58%)
- Retirement communities (44%)
- Senior meals providers (42%)
- Hospitals and doctors' offices (39%)
- Local health departments (39%)
- Health insurance companies (38%)
- Community-based organizations (faith based, YMCAs, etc.) (38%)

### **Outdoor Fitness Trails**

A popular trend in urban parks for health, wellness, and fitness activities is to install outdoor fitness equipment along trails. The intent of the outdoor equipment is to provide an accessible form of exercise for all community members, focusing on strength, balance, flexibility, and cardio exercise. These fitness stations—also known as “outdoor gyms”—are generally meant for adults but can be grouped together near a playground or kid-friendly amenity so that adults can exercise and socialize while supervising their children. The fitness equipment can also be dispersed along a nature trail or walking path to provide a unique experience to exercise in nature. Educational and safety signage should be placed next to equipment to guide the user in understanding and utilizing the outdoor gyms.

### **Outdoor Recreation**

Outdoor recreation has become a thriving economic driver, creating 4.3 million direct national jobs in 2020 and generating \$689 billion in consumer spending. The U.S. BEA estimated that the outdoor recreation economy comprised 1.8% of the current GDP in 2020, accounting for more than \$374.3 billion.

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted the outdoor recreation industry. Although the full extent of that impact is not known yet, one of the primary data points pertains to outdoor recreation employment, which decreased in all fifty states in 2020. According to the BEA, the top three

conventional outdoor recreation activities in 2020 were boating/fishing, RVing, and hunting/shooting/trapping.<sup>37</sup>

In the State of Maryland, the outdoor recreation economy generates:



### Pickleball

Pickleball continues to be a fast-growing sport throughout America. Considered a mix between tennis, ping-pong, and badminton, the sport initially grew in popularity with older adults but is now expanding to other age groups. According to the American Council on Exercise (ACE), regular participation in pickleball satisfied daily exercise intensity guidelines for cardio fitness for middle-aged and older adults.<sup>38</sup>

The sport can be temporarily played on existing indoor or outdoor tennis courts with removable equipment and taped or painted lining. This lining, if painted on tennis surfaces, may interfere with requirements for competitive tennis programs or tournaments. Agencies will need to look at their communities' tennis and pickleball participation to determine the benefits and costs of constructing new pickleball courts versus utilizing existing tennis ball courts. Best practices regarding pickleball setup and programming can be found on usapa.com, the official website for the United States Pickleball Association.

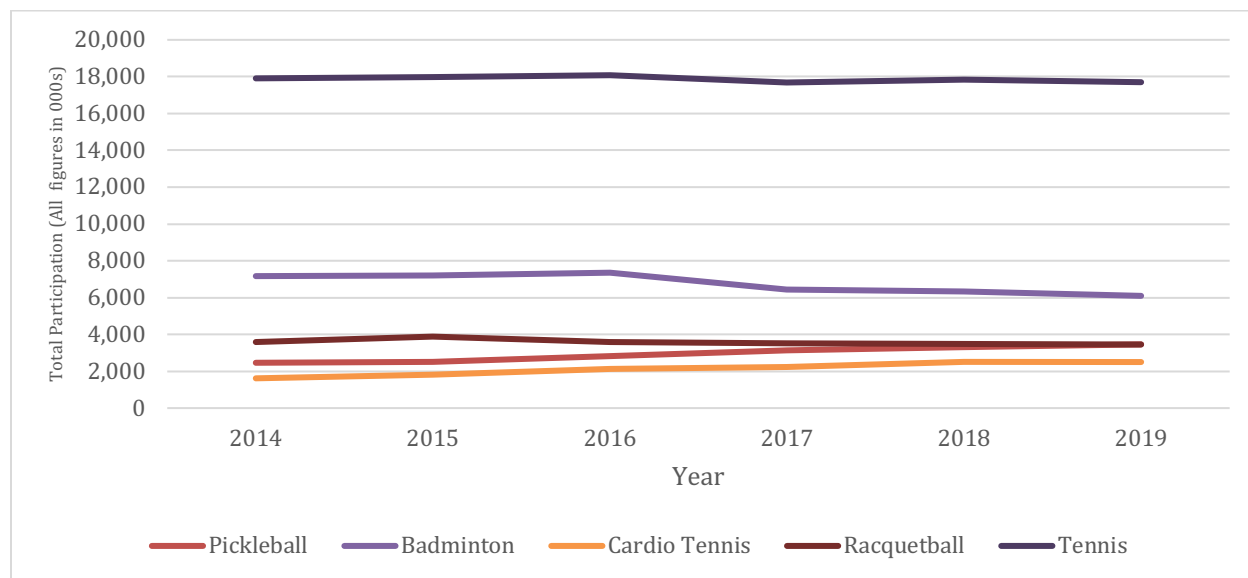
According to the 2020 SFIA Topline Report, from 2014 to 2019, total participation in pickleball increased 7.1% on average each year. From 2018 to 2019, the sport grew 4.8%. Out of the most common racquet sports, pickleball and cardio tennis are the only sports that have seen

<sup>37</sup> "Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account, U.S. And States, 2020 | U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA)." Bea.gov, 2020, [www.bea.gov/news/2021/outdoor-recreation-satellite-account-us-and-states-2020](http://www.bea.gov/news/2021/outdoor-recreation-satellite-account-us-and-states-2020). Accessed 16 Nov. 2021.

<sup>38</sup> Green, Daniel, August 2018. "ACE-Sponsored Research: Can Pickleball Help Middle-aged and Older Adults Get Fit?" American Council on Exercise. Accessed 2020. <https://www.acefitness.org/education-and-resources/professional/certified/august-2018/7053/ace-sponsored-research-can-pickleball-help-middle-aged-and-older-adults-get-fit/>

positive growth on average from 2014 to 2019. Tennis was still the most popular racquet sport by far, although participation growth has slowed during the same period.<sup>39</sup>

**Figure 60: Racquet Sport Participation from 2014 – 2019**



Source: 2020 SFIA Topline Report

### Riparian and Watershed Best Practices

The ability to detect trends and monitor attributes in watershed and/or riparian areas allows planners opportunities to evaluate the effectiveness of their management plan. By monitoring their own trends, planners can also identify changes in resource conditions that are the result of pressures beyond their control. Trend detection requires a commitment to long-term monitoring of riparian areas and vegetation attributes.

The U.S. EPA suggests the following steps to building an effective watershed management plan. See [water.epa.gov](http://water.epa.gov)<sup>40</sup> for more information from the EPA.

- Build partnerships
- Characterize the watershed
- Set goals and identify solutions
- Design and implement a program
- Implement the watershed plan

<sup>39</sup> “SFIA Sports, Fitness and Leisure Activities Topline Participation Report” February 2020. Sports & Fitness Industry Association. Accessed 2020.

<sup>40</sup> “Implement the Watershed Plan – Implement Management Strategies,” U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, <http://water.epa.gov/type/watersheds/datait/watershedcentral/plan2.cfm>

- Measure progress and make adjustments

### **Signage and Wayfinding**

To increase perception and advocacy, a parks and recreation professional needs to prioritize opportunities that impact the way the community experiences the system. This can start with signage, wayfinding, and park identity.

The importance of signage, wayfinding, and park identity to encourage awareness of locations and amenities cannot be understated. A park system impacts the widest range of users in a community, reaching users and non-users across all demographic, psychographic, behavioral, and geographic markets. In a narrower focus, the park system is the core service an agency can use to provide value to its community (e.g., partnerships between departments or commercial/residential development, high-quality and safe experiences for users, inviting community landscaping contributing to the overall look or image of the community). Signage, wayfinding, and park identity can be the first step in continued engagement by the community, and a higher perception or awareness of a park system, which can lead to an increase in health outcomes.

### **Sports Trends**

The “2020 Sports, Fitness, and Leisure Activities Topline Participation Report” details the changes in fitness, team, and individual sports over the last decade. Fitness activities—such as aquatic exercise, impact/intensity training, rowing machines, stationary cycling, swimming for fitness, yoga, etc.—are the most participated activity and have been for the past five years. For the first time since 2016, team sports increased in participation. An increase in basketball (the most played team sport) and outdoor soccer (the third most played team sport) has helped fuel this growth. Overall, team sports have over 29 million youth participants. BMX biking is one of the fastest growing extreme sports, gaining 10% participation in 2019, followed by skateboarding (increase of 7%).<sup>41</sup>

### **Synthetic Turf**

Demand for fields has risen with the popularity of youth and adult sports. Synthetic turf can solve many challenges because they can withstand the constant use from players. They require less maintenance and are not easily damaged in wet weather conditions. Synthetic turf requires periodic maintenance which includes brushing the turf to stand up the fibers, allowing it to wear better; adding infill in high-traffic areas (soccer goals, corner kicks, etc.); and an annual deep cleaning. However, synthetic turf costs significantly more upfront and requires replacement about every 10 years. The frequency of replacement can have a large environmental and economic footprint unless the products can be recycled, reused, or composted.

Safety concerns primarily stem from the chemicals found in crumb rubber. For the last 20 years, crumb rubber has been the common choice for fields. It often has distinct plastic smell and can

---

<sup>41</sup> “2020 Sports, Fitness, and Leisure Activities Topline Participation Report.” *Sfia.org*, 2020, [www.sfia.org/reports/802\\_2020-Sports%2C-Fitness%2C-and-Leisure-Activities-Topline-Participation-Report](http://www.sfia.org/reports/802_2020-Sports%2C-Fitness%2C-and-Leisure-Activities-Topline-Participation-Report). Accessed 1 Nov. 2021.

leach chemicals, like zinc, into downstream waters. There are also concerns about off-gassing of crumb rubber and the potential health impacts of this material. Fortunately, advances in technology have allowed innovative products to be developed without crumb rubber. Innovations have allowed athletes to use more sustainable and safer synthetic turf and have removed the negative perception. In the future, shock pads—the layer under the turf that can absorb an impact and reduce the chance of a concussion—may become commonplace. The incorporation of non-rubber infills will continue to grow.

## Technology Trends

### *Administrative*

Technology has moved at a rapid pace in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, impacting all areas of business operations. Agencies must consider effective ways of incorporating technology into the everyday workflow. Several questions can empower agencies to keep up with administrative trends and become agents of change:<sup>42</sup>

1. How will your agency innovate and adapt? Consider developing a digital transformation strategy to keep up with technology trends.
2. What information from your facilities, programs, and services can be collected and utilized for decision-making? This data can assist with anticipating the needs of your community.
3. How can you educate yourself and your team to have more knowledge and skills as technology evolves? Continuous education for both personal and professional development can level up your agency.
4. In what ways can your operations be streamlined? Develop a list of processes that could be improved through new systems.
5. How can you help your staff to see the value in technology? Be a leader that embraces change.
7. How can your agency increase your online presence? Use a marketing plan to enhance public perception and increase participation in programs and services.

### *Parks*

Technology can be integrated into the design of parks. The SMART Parks Toolkit, developed by UCLA Luskin, provides in-depth tactical strategies for achieving equitable access, energy

---

<sup>42</sup> “The Digital Transformation of Parks and Rec | Community Center | Parks and Recreation Magazine | NRPA.” *Nrpa.org*, 2015, [www.nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2019/february/the-digital-transformation-of-parks-and-rec/](http://www.nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2019/february/the-digital-transformation-of-parks-and-rec/). Accessed 30 Nov. 2021.



efficiencies, and effective operations. A full list of technologies can be found in the toolkit, but a shortened list to provide a high-level overview is below.<sup>43</sup>

**Table 23: Emerging Technologies in Parks**

Category	Technology
Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Automatic lawn mowers</li> <li>• Near-infrared photography</li> <li>• Green roofs</li> <li>• Green walls</li> <li>• Air-pruning plant containers</li> <li>• Vibrating pollinators</li> </ul>
Irrigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smart water controllers</li> <li>• Low-pressure and rotating sprinklers</li> <li>• Subsurface drip irrigation</li> <li>• Smart water metering</li> <li>• Graywater recycling</li> </ul>
Stormwater	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engineered soils</li> <li>• Underground storage basins</li> <li>• Drones</li> <li>• Rainwater harvesting</li> </ul>
Hardscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cross-laminated timber</li> <li>• Pervious paving</li> <li>• Piezoelectric energy-harvesting tiles</li> <li>• Self-healing concrete</li> <li>• Photocatalytic titanium dioxide coating</li> <li>• Transparent concrete</li> <li>• Daylight fluorescent aggregate</li> <li>• Carbon upcycled concrete</li> </ul>
Activity Spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interactive play structures</li> <li>• High-performance track surfaces</li> <li>• Pool ozonation</li> <li>• Energy-generating exercise equipment</li> <li>• Outdoor DJ booths</li> <li>• Hard-surfacing testing equipment</li> </ul>

<sup>43</sup> “SMART Parks Toolkit Receives National Award – UCLA Luskin Center for Innovation.” *UCLA Luskin Center for Innovation*, 4 Apr. 2019, [innovation.luskin.ucla.edu/2019/04/04/smart-parks-toolkit-receives-national-planning-award/](https://innovation.luskin.ucla.edu/2019/04/04/smart-parks-toolkit-receives-national-planning-award/). Accessed 30 Nov. 2021.

Category	Technology
Urban Furniture and Amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smart benches</li> <li>• Solar shade structures</li> <li>• Solar powered trash compactors</li> <li>• Restroom occupancy sensors</li> <li>• Smart water fountains</li> <li>• Digital signs</li> <li>• Automatic bicycle and pedestrian counters</li> </ul>
Lighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Motion-activated sensors</li> <li>• LEDs and fiber optics as art</li> <li>• Off-grid light fixtures</li> <li>• Digital additions to LED fixtures</li> <li>• Lighting shields</li> </ul>
Digiscapes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wi-Fi</li> <li>• GIS</li> <li>• Application Software (Apps)</li> <li>• Sensor Networks and the Internet of Things</li> </ul>

Source: SMART Parks Toolkit, UCLA Luskin

## Marketing

Digital marketing trends are changing rapidly, and many parks and recreation agencies may struggle to understand how to incorporate these new strategies. Agencies should define their target market—or the specific group of people whom the agency wants to offer their programs and services. Fully understanding the needs and desires of their target market will provide valuable insight to improve an agency’s marketing efforts.

In addition, consider the following platforms and how to best implement some of the following trends:

- **Brand:** A brand should be reflective of the “personality” of the agency. A brand strategy can help tie together all elements of an agency that are visible to the public, including uniforms, signage, website graphics, and social media.
- **Social Media:** An agency’s social media accounts should inform and entertain, but the primary purpose should be as an engagement tool. Effective social media strategies incorporate interaction with their audience and show a “behind-the-scenes” look at an agency’s operations. Instagram stories, twitter polls, and live videos on Facebook are all examples of interactive content designed to engage an audience. Influencer marketing—which relies on partnerships with well-known social media accounts—provides additional opportunities for agencies to extend their reach beyond their typical audience.

- **Website:** An agency’s website should be mobile-friendly, utilize best practices for search engine optimization (SEO), and be oriented to reach an agency’s conversion goals. Conversion goals are objectives that an agency sets based on an action it wants visitors to take. Common conversion goals for parks and recreation agencies might include program registrations, membership sign-ups, or downloads of online recreation guides. An agency should set goals based on its overall operation’s objectives.
- **Application Software:** Many agencies develop apps (either in-house or through a third-party developer) entirely accessible from mobile devices. The purpose of these apps varies, but they can be used for residents to report maintenance issues, create interactive activities through augmented reality (AR), or find parks through online GIS. Agencies need to consider the upfront and ongoing resources it takes to develop and maintain this type of system.

## Teen Programs

Local parks and recreation agencies are often tasked with finding opportunities for teen programming beyond youth sports and interacting with those of their own age. Many agencies are developing creative multi-generational activities that might involve seniors and teens assisting one another to learn life skills. Activities such as meditation, yoga, sports, art, and civic engagement can help teens develop life skills and engage cognitive functions.

Agencies that can help teens build career development skills and continue their education are most successful in promoting positive teen outcomes and curbing at-risk behavior.<sup>44</sup> As suicide is the second highest causes of deaths among United States teens, mental health continues to be a priority for this age group.

## Therapeutic Recreation

The ADA established that persons with disabilities have the right to the same access to parks and recreation facilities and programming as those without disabilities. The National Council on Disability issued a comprehensive report, “Livable Communities for Adults with Disabilities.”<sup>45</sup> This report identified six elements for improving the quality of life for all citizens, including children, youth, and adults with disabilities. The six elements are:

1. Provide affordable, appropriate, accessible housing
2. Ensure accessible, affordable, reliable, safe transportation
3. Adjust the physical environment for inclusiveness and accessibility
4. Provide work, volunteer, and education opportunities

---

<sup>44</sup> Kardys, Jack “Park Afterschool Programs: A Vital Community Resource” National Recreation and Park Association. June 2019, <https://www.nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2019/june/park-afterschool-programs-a-vital-community-resource/>.

<sup>45</sup> National Council on Disability, *Livable Communities for Adults with Disabilities*, December 2004, <http://www.ncd.gov/publications/2004/12022004>.

5. Ensure access to key health and support services
6. Encourage participation in civic, cultural, social, and recreational activities

Therapeutic recreation bring two forms of services for persons with disabilities into play—specific programming and inclusion services. Individuals with disabilities need functional skills as well as physical and social environments in the community that are receptive to them and accommodating individual needs. Inclusion allows individuals to determine their own interests and follow them.

Many parks and recreation departments around the country are offering specific programming for people with disabilities, but not as many offer inclusion services. In “Play for All – Therapeutic Recreation Embraces All Abilities,” an article in *Recreation Management* magazine,<sup>46</sup> Dana Carman described resources for communities looking to expand their therapeutic recreation services.

Therapeutic recreation includes a renewed focus on serving people with the social/emotional challenges associated with “invisible disabilities” such as ADHD, bipolar disorders, spectrum disorders and sensory integration disorders. A growing number of parks and recreation departments are making services for those with “invisible disabilities” a successful part of their programming as well. When well done, these same strategies improve the recreation experience for everyone.<sup>47</sup>

### **Trails and Health**

Studies have shown a direct correlation between how close people live to a connected system of trails and their level of physical activity in a community. Trails can provide a wide variety of opportunities for being physically active, such as walking/running/hiking, rollerblading, wheelchair recreation, bicycling, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing, fishing, hunting, and horseback riding. Active use of trails results in positive health outcomes and is an excellent way to encourage people to adopt healthy lifestyle changes. In a study released in 2014, results indicate benefits for those who lived up to 2.5 miles from a biking or walking infrastructure; those who lived within one mile were getting 45 minutes more exercise per week on average.

The American Heart Association has found that for every \$1 spent on building trails, \$3 is saved medical costs. The health benefits are equally as high for trails in urban neighborhoods as for those in state or national parks. Data from the American Trails Association indicates that all trail use is beneficial for physical health.<sup>48</sup> A trail in the neighborhood creating a “linear park” makes it easier for people to incorporate exercise into their daily routines, whether for recreation or

---

<sup>46</sup> *Recreation Management*, February 2007, <http://recmanagement.com/200710fe03.php>, accessed on February 25, 2015.

<sup>47</sup> Kelli Anderson, “A Welcome Inclusion”, *Recreation Management*, October 2010, <http://recmanagement.com/201010fe03.php>, accessed on February 26, 2015.

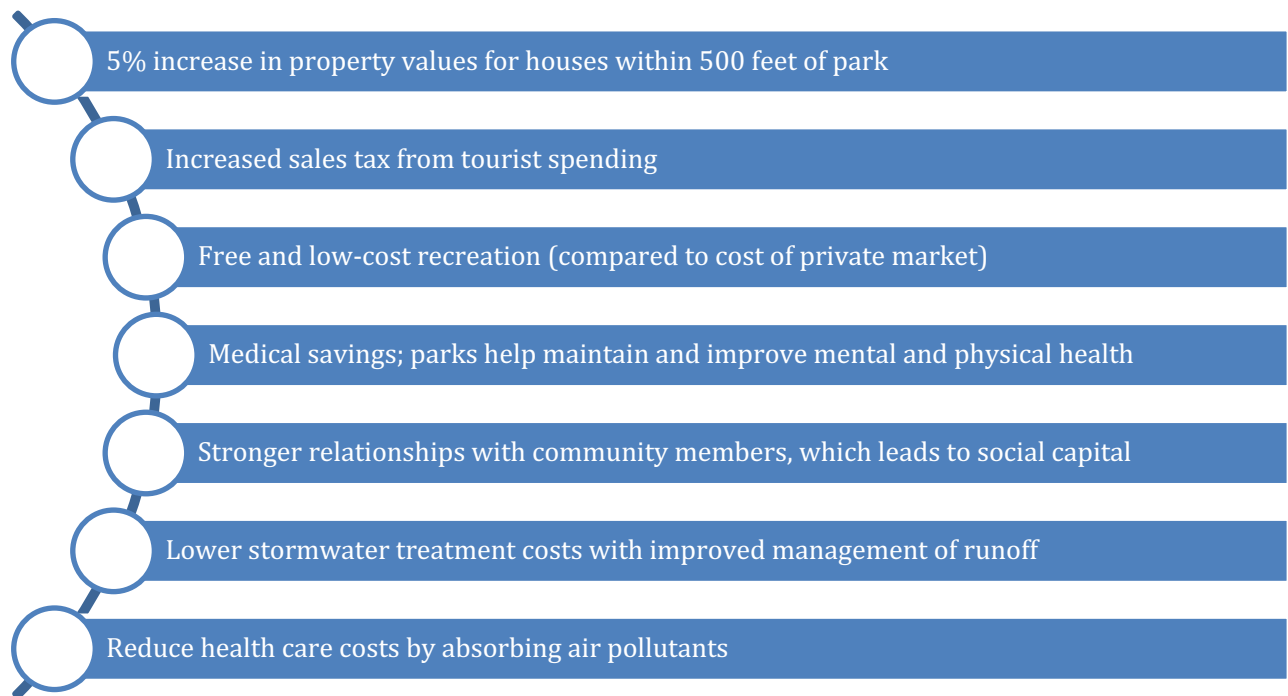
<sup>48</sup> “Health Benefits of Trails – American Trails.” Americantrails.org, 2014, [www.americantrails.org/health](http://www.americantrails.org/health) benefits. Accessed 1 Nov. 2021.

non-motorized transportation. Urban trails need to connect people to places they want to go, such as schools, transit centers, businesses, and neighborhoods.

### Urban Park Revenue

Comprehensive and national studies continue to demonstrate the economic value of parks and recreation systems. The website ConservationTools.org has tools and research to make the case for conservation, including reports on the economic benefits of open space, wetlands, trails, water quality, outdoors, and more. According to a number of studies from market research firms, the Trust for Public Land, Active Living Research, the American Planning Association, among others, the primary key economic value of city park systems are detailed in **Figure 61** below.<sup>49</sup>

**Figure 61: The Seven Economic Benefits of Parks**




<sup>49</sup> "Economic Benefits of Parks: Conservation Tools." Conservationtools.org, 2021, conservationtools.org/guides/98-economic-benefits-of-parks. Accessed 30 Nov. 2021.

## Appendix D: 2021 Open Link Survey Summary Results

# St. Mary's County Recreation Survey

Monday, November 22, 2021

Powered by  SurveyMonkey

# 844

Total Responses

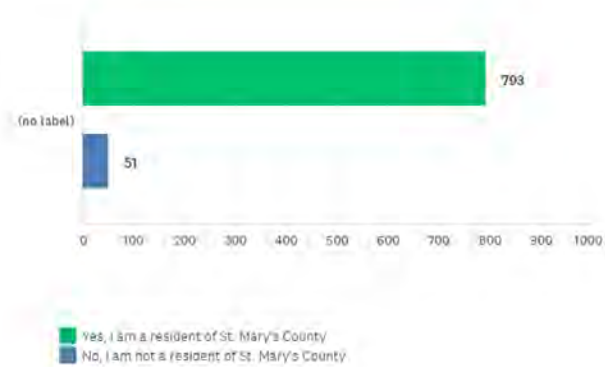
Date Created: Wednesday, September 29, 2021

Complete Responses: 844

Powered by  SurveyMonkey

**Q1: Do you reside in St. Mary's County? If not a St. Mary's County resident, but a user of our parks and recreation system, where do you reside?**

Answered: 844 Skipped: 0



Powered by SurveyMonkey

**Q1: Do you reside in St. Mary's County? If not a St. Mary's County resident, but a user of our parks and recreation system, where do you reside?**

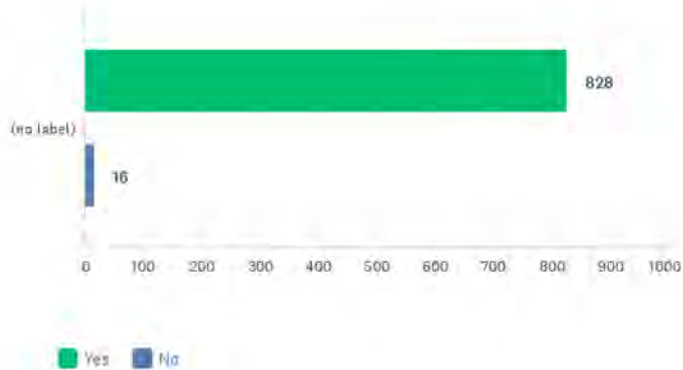
Answered: 844 Skipped: 0

	YES, I AM A RESIDENT OF ST. MARY'S COUNTY	NO, I AM NOT A RESIDENT OF ST. MARY'S COUNTY	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	93.96% 793	6.04% 51	844	1.06

Powered by SurveyMonkey

**Q2: Did you or any other members of your household visit a St. Mary's County owned/operated park, recreation facility, museum, or waterfront public landing in the past twelve months?**

Answered: 844 Skipped: 0



Powered by SurveyMonkey

**Q2: Did you or any other members of your household visit a St. Mary's County owned/operated park, recreation facility, museum, or waterfront public landing in the past twelve months?**

Answered: 844 Skipped: 0

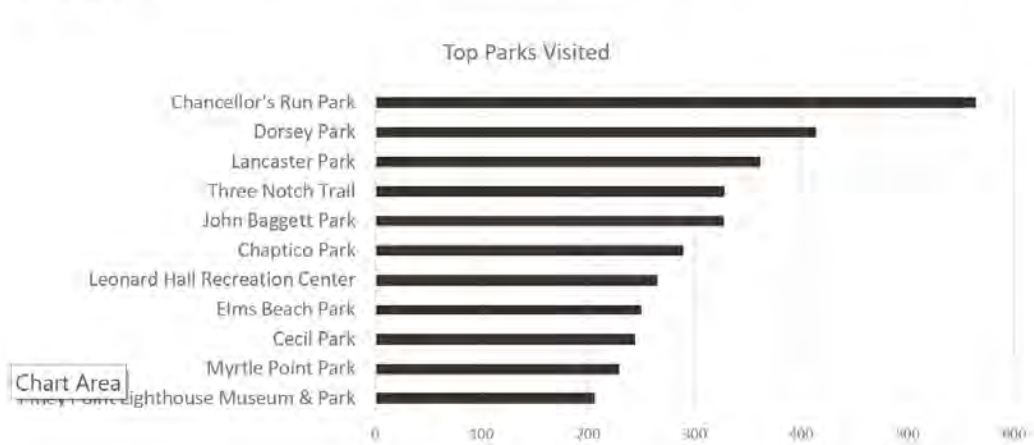
	YES	NO	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	98.10%	1.90%		
	828	16	844	1.02

Powered by SurveyMonkey



**Q3: If yes, which park(s), facilities, museums or public landings did you visit and approximately how many times did you visit.**

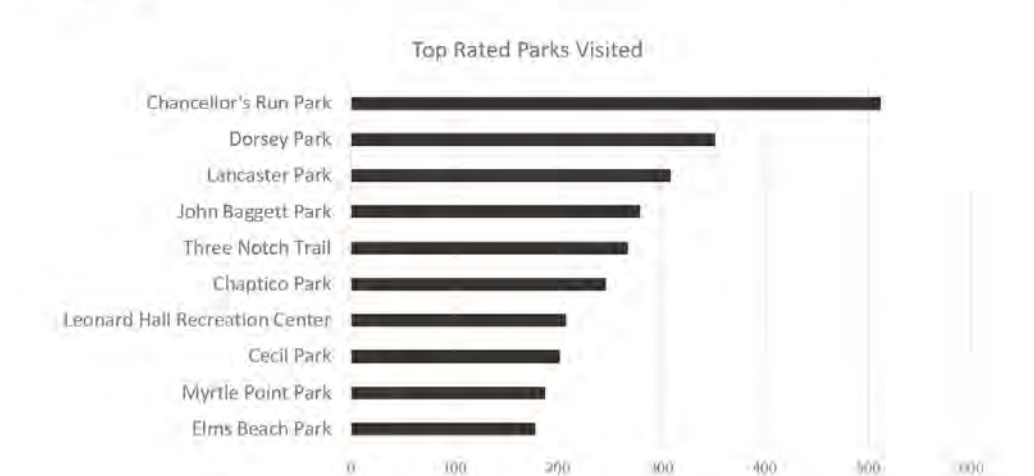
Answered: 831 Skipped: 13



Powered by SurveyMonkey

**Q4: Of the parks, recreation facilities, museums or public landings that you or your household members have visited, please rate their condition.**

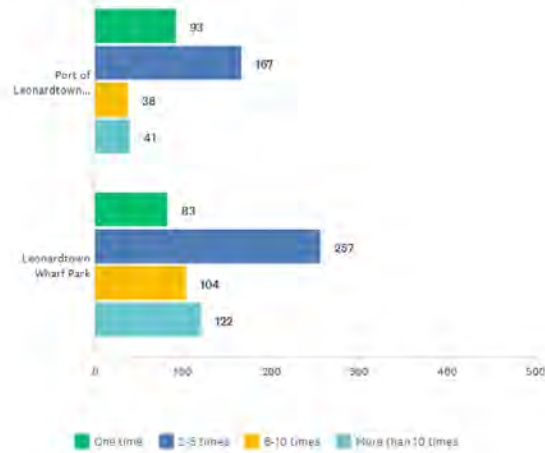
Answered: 806 Skipped: 38



Powered by SurveyMonkey

## Q6: Have you or members of your household visited a Town of Leonardtown managed park or public landing in the past twelve months?

Answered: 602 Skipped: 242



Powered by SurveyMonkey

## Q6: Have you or members of your household visited a Town of Leonardtown managed park or public landing in the past twelve months?

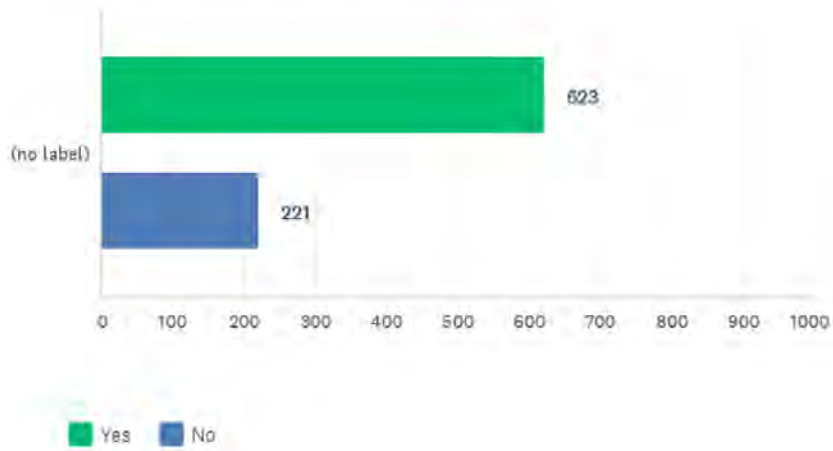
Answered: 602 Skipped: 242

	ONE TIME	2-5 TIMES	6-10 TIMES	MORE THAN 10 TIMES	TOTAL
Port of Leonardtown Public Park & Canoe/kayak launch	27.43% 93	49.26% 167	11.21% 38	12.09% 41	339
Leonardtown Wharf Park	14.66% 83	45.41% 257	18.37% 104	21.55% 122	566

Powered by SurveyMonkey

**Q7: Did you or any other members of your household visit a State park located in St. Mary's County in the last year?**

Answered: 844 Skipped: 0



Powered by SurveyMonkey

**Q7: Did you or any other members of your household visit a State park located in St. Mary's County in the last year?**

Answered: 844 Skipped: 0

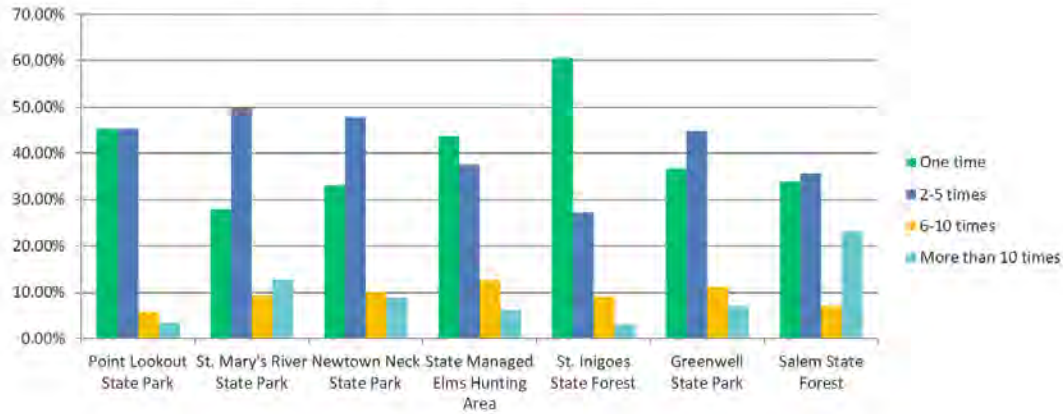
	YES	NO	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	73.82%	26.18%		
	623	221	844	1.26

Powered by SurveyMonkey

## Q8: If yes, which park(s) did you visit and approximately how many times did you visit?

Answered: 614 Skipped: 230

### How many times did you visit?



Powered by SurveyMonkey

## Q8: If yes, which park(s) did you visit and approximately how many times did you visit?

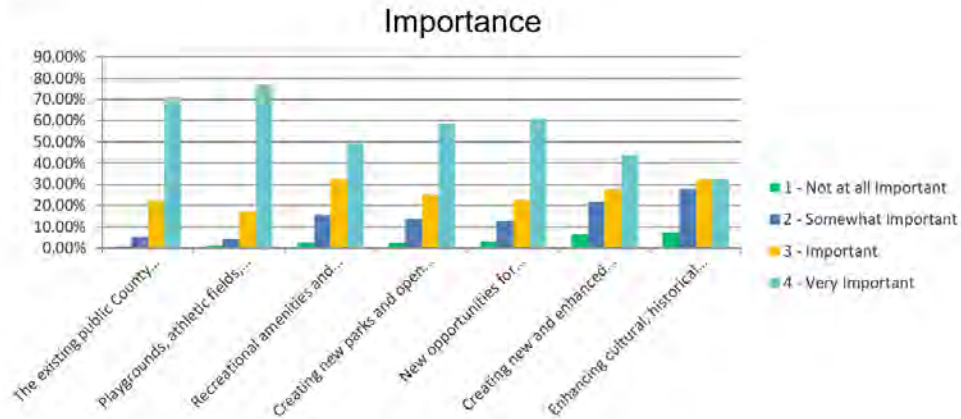
Answered: 614 Skipped: 230

	ONE TIME	2-5 TIMES	6-10 TIMES	MORE THAN 10 TIMES	TOTAL
Point Lookout State Park	45.36% 171	45.36% 171	5.84% 22	3.45% 13	377
St. Mary's River State Park	27.97% 99	50.00% 177	9.32% 33	12.71% 45	354
Greenwell State Park	36.77% 114	44.84% 139	11.29% 35	7.10% 22	310
Newtown Neck State Park	33.07% 85	47.86% 123	10.12% 26	8.95% 23	257
Salem State Forest	33.93% 19	35.71% 20	7.14% 4	23.21% 13	56
St. Inigoes State Forest	60.61% 20	27.27% 9	9.09% 3	3.03% 1	33
State Managed Elms Hunting Area	43.75% 7	37.50% 6	12.50% 2	6.25% 1	16

Powered by SurveyMonkey

**Q9: On a scale from 1 to 4, where 4 is very important and 1 is not at all important, please indicate how you rate the importance of each of the following parks, recreation and open space statements in terms of how they impact your quality of life as a County resident.**

Answered: 841 Skipped: 3



Powered by SurveyMonkey

**Q9: On a scale from 1 to 4, where 4 is very important and 1 is not at all important, please indicate how you rate the importance of each of the following parks, recreation and open space statements in terms of how they impact your quality of life as a County resident.**

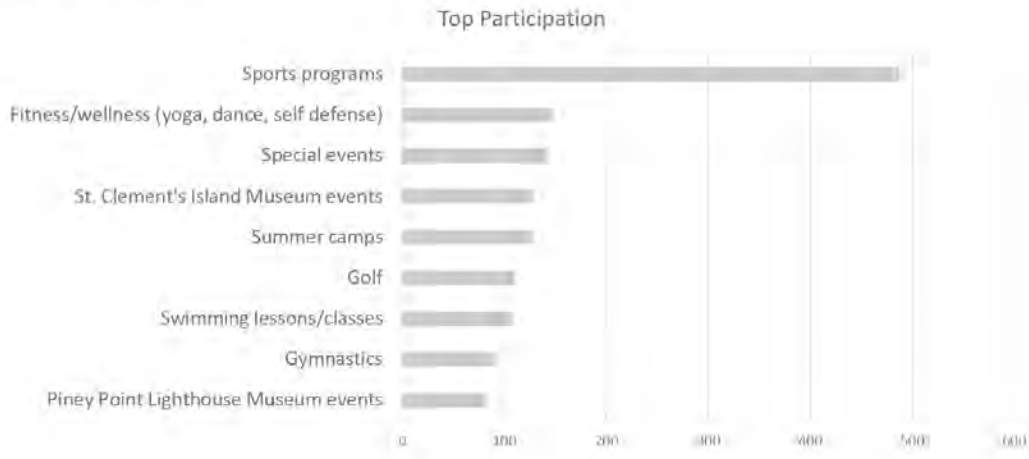
Answered: 841 Skipped: 3

	1 - NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT	2 - SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	3 - IMPORTANT	4 - VERY IMPORTANT	TOTAL
The existing public County parks, recreation and open space opportunities available to me in St. Mary's County are important.	0.72% 6	5.51% 46	22.40% 187	71.30% 596	835
Playgrounds, athletic fields, golf courses, and other recreational opportunities for youth are important.	1.20% 10	4.32% 36	17.27% 144	77.22% 644	834
Recreational amenities and programs for adults are important.	2.40% 20	15.36% 128	32.81% 273	49.40% 411	832
Creating new parks and open spaces, and providing new recreational opportunities for residents would enhance the community/County.	2.40% 20	13.67% 114	25.06% 209	58.87% 491	834
New opportunities for walking, hiking, running and bicycling would enhance the community/County.	3.36% 28	13.07% 109	22.78% 190	60.79% 507	834
Creating new and enhanced waterfront access for water-based recreation such as fishing, swimming, and boating is important.	6.46% 54	21.95% 182	27.61% 230	44.06% 367	833
Enhancing cultural, historical and museum opportunities in the County would be beneficial.	7.36% 61	27.86% 231	32.33% 268	32.45% 269	829

Powered by SurveyMonkey

**Q10: What recreational programs offered through St. Mary's County Recreation and Parks have you or your household members participated in during the last 24 months?**

Answered: 707 Skipped: 137



Powered by SurveyMonkey

**Q10: What recreational programs offered through St. Mary's County Recreation and Parks have you or your household members participated in during the last 24 months?**

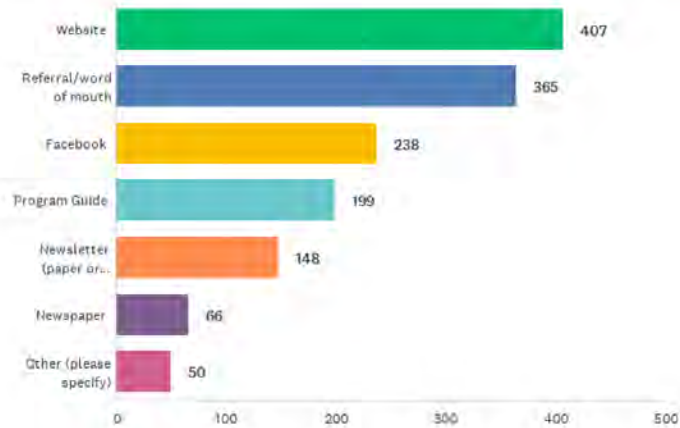
Answered: 707 Skipped: 137

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Sports programs	68.89% 487
Fitness/wellness (yoga, dance, self defense)	20.79% 147
Special events	20.08% 142
St. Clement's Island Museum events	18.10% 128
Summer camps	17.96% 127
Golf	15.56% 110
Swimming lessons/classes	15.28% 108
Gymnastics	12.87% 91
Piney Point Lighthouse Museum events	11.60% 82
Other (please specify)	9.76% 69
Arts & crafts	8.49% 60
Trips and tours	6.36% 45
Before/After school care	5.66% 40
Therapeutic recreation	3.96% 28
Educational (sign language, seminars)	2.40% 17
Dog obedience training	2.26% 16
Total Respondents	707

Powered by SurveyMonkey

## Q11: How did you learn about the recreational, cultural and leisure services offered through St. Mary's County Recreation and Parks?

Answered: 795 Skipped: 49



Powered by SurveyMonkey

## Q11: How did you learn about the recreational, cultural and leisure services offered through St. Mary's County Recreation and Parks?

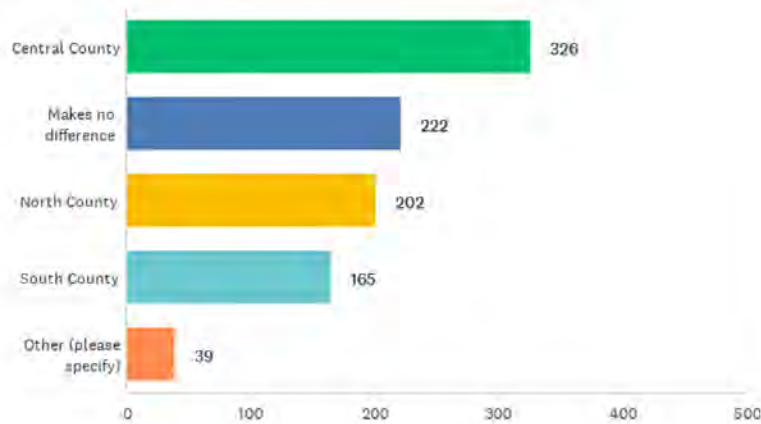
Answered: 795 Skipped: 49

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Website	51.19%	407
Referral/word of mouth	45.91%	365
Facebook	29.94%	238
Program Guide	25.03%	199
Newsletter (paper or electronic)	18.62%	148
Newspaper	8.30%	66
Other (please specify)	6.29%	50
Total Respondents: 795		

Powered by SurveyMonkey

### Q13: In what geographic area of the County would you like to see these recreational programs, facilities or services?

Answered: 747 Skipped: 97



Powered by SurveyMonkey

### Q13: In what geographic area of the County would you like to see these recreational programs, facilities or services?

Answered: 747 Skipped: 97

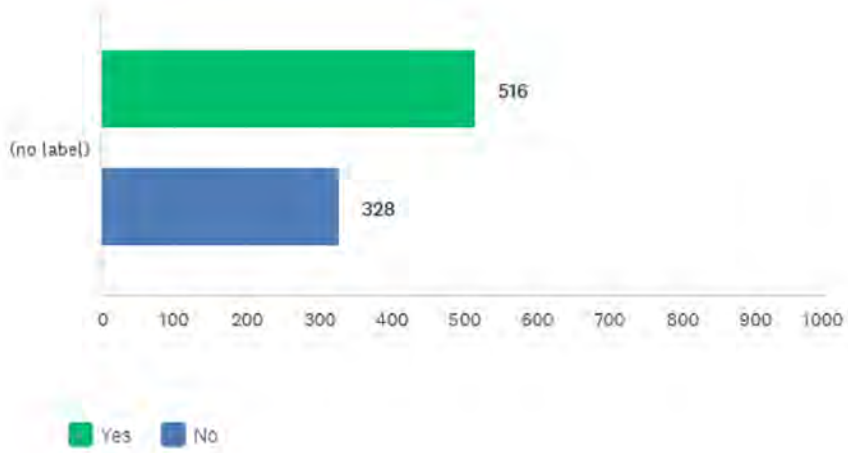
ANSWER CHOICES	PERCENTAGE	RESPONSES
Central County	43.64%	326
Makes no difference	29.72%	222
North County	27.04%	202
South County	22.09%	165
Other (please specify)	5.22%	39
Total Respondents: 747		

Powered by SurveyMonkey



**Q14: Do you or members of your household use recreation services and facilities in other Maryland counties?**

Answered: 844 Skipped: 0



Powered by SurveyMonkey

**Q14: Do you or members of your household use recreation services and facilities in other Maryland counties?**

Answered: 844 Skipped: 0

	YES	NO	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	61.14% 516	38.86% 328	844	1.39

Powered by SurveyMonkey

## Appendix E: 2021 Recreation and Parks Site Inventory

### Community Resources Open Space, Facilities, and Programs

#### SMCR&P Regional Parks

- Chancellor's Run
- Chaptico Park

#### SMCR&P Community Parks

- Beavan Property
- Cardinal Gibbons Park
- Cecil Park
- Fifth District Park
- Hollywood Soccer Complex
- John G. Lancaster Park
- John V. Baggett Park
- Judge P.H. Dorsey Memorial Park
- Lexington Manor Park
- Nicolet Park
- Robert Miedzinski Park
- Seventh District Park

#### SMCR&P Neighborhood Parks

- Jarboesville Park
- Laurel Ridge Park
- Seventh District Optimist Park
- St. Andrews Estate Park
- St. Clements Shores Park
- Town Creek Park

#### SMCR&P Recreation Centers

- Chancellors Run Activity Center
- Carver Heights Community Center
- Great Mills Pool
- Hollywood Rec. Center & Field
- Leonard Hall Recreation Center

- Leonardtown Middle School Annex
- Margaret Brent Recreation Center
- St. Mary's Gymnastics Center

### **SMCR&P Special Use Areas**

- Abell's Wharf
- Bushwood Wharf
- Camp Calvert Landing
- Chaptico Wharf
- Clarke's Landing
- Dennison Property
- Elms Beach Park
- Forest Landing
- Fox Harbor Landing
- Great Mills Canoe/Kayak Launch
- Hollywood Soccer Complex
- Myrtle Point Park
- Paul Ellis Landing
- Piney Point Landing
- River Springs Landing
- Shannon Farm Park
- Snow Hill Park
- St. George's Island Landing
- St. George's Park
- St. Inigoes Landing
- Tall Timbers Landing
- Three Notch Trail
- Wicomico Shores Golf Course
- Wicomico Shores Landing

### **Historical/Cultural Areas**

- African-American Monument and Freedom Park
- Black Panther Historic Shipwreck preserve
- Drayden African-American Schoolhouse
- Historic St. Mary's City
- Historic Sotterley Plantation
- Leonardtown Arts and Entertainment District
- Little Red Schoolhouse
- Old Jail Museum
- Patuxent River Naval Air Museum
- Piney Point Lighthouse Museum
- Point No Point Lighthouse
- St. Clement's Island Museum
- United States Colored Troop Memorial Monument

### **State Parks**

- Greenwell State Park
- Newtowne Neck State Park
- Point Lookout State Park

- St. Clement's Island State Park
- St. Mary's River State Park

### **Independent Sports Leagues**

- Admirals Boys Lacrosse
- American Legion Junior & Senior Baseball
- Cougars Elite Cheerleading
- Eliminators Lacrosse
- Hughesville Hustle Softball
- JETS Girls Lacrosse
- Leonardtown Wildcats Football
- Mechanicsville Braves Football
- Mechanicsville Youth Lacrosse
- Patuxent River Rugby
- Pax River Raiders Football
- Southern Maryland BMX
- Southern Maryland Elite Baseball
- Southern Maryland Osprey's Fastpitch
- Southern Maryland Velocity Fastpitch
- Southern Maryland Warriors Baseball
- St. Mary's Babe Ruth
- St. Mary's County Tennis Association
- St. Mary's Girls Lacrosse League
- St. Mary's Lacrosse Club
- St. Mary's Little League
- St. Mary's NFL Flag Football
- St. Mary's Regional Adult Co-Ed Soccer
- St. Mary's Soccer
- St. Mary's T-Ball
- St. Mary's Wrestling Club
- Sunday Youth Basketball League
- USTA Jr. Team Tennis

### **Public School Recreation Areas**

- Banneker Elementary School
- Chopticon High School
- Dynard Elementary School
- Esperanza Middle School
- Evergreen Elementary School
- Great Mills High School
- Green Holly Elementary School
- Greenview Knolls Elementary School
- GW Carver Elementary School
- Hollywood Elementary School
- Leonardtown Elementary School/Park
- Leonardtown High School
- Leonardtown Middle School
- Lettie Marshall Dent Elementary School
- Lexington Park Elementary School
- Margaret Brent Middle School
- Mechanicsville Elementary School
- Oakville Elementary School
- Park Hall Elementary School
- Piney Point Elementary School
- Ridge Elementary School/Park
- Spring Ridge Middle School
- Town Creek Elementary School

- WF Duke Elementary School

- White Marsh Elementary School

### **Natural Resource Areas**

- Chancellor's Point Natural History Area
- Coltons Point Park
- Elms Beach Park & Environmental Center
- Elms Property
- Facchina Property
- Fenwick Property
- Indian Bridge Road Watershed
- Leonardtown Wharf Park

- McIntosh Run Wildlife Management Area
- Murry Road Waterfront Area
- Palm Property
- Piney Point Aquaculture Center
- Salem State Forest
- St. Inigoes State Forest
- St. Mary's River Conservation Land
- St. Mary's River State Park – Wildlands Area

### **St. Mary's County – Other Parklands**

- American Legion Field – Ridge
- Anderson's Bar Field
- Back Road Inn Field
- Brass Rail Field
- Breton Bay Golf and Country Club
- Captain Sam's Field
- Charlotte Hall Firehouse Field
- Chestnut Hills Recreation Area
- Country Lakes Park
- Cryers Field
- Dean Ball Field
- Duke Property
- Dr. James A. Forest Career & Tech Center St. Mary's College of Maryland
- Fairgrounds – St. Mary's County
- Farmers Market Fields
- Father Andrew White field
- Forrest Farm/Pembroke Fields
- Golden Beach Athletic Field
- Hall Estates Field

- Kingston Recreation Area
- Laurel Glen Field
- Lewis Estates Field
- Little Flower Fields
- Mechanicsville Rescue Squad Field
- Miller Property
- Moose Lodge Field
- Mother Catherine Academy Field
- Mt. Zion Church Field
- North Town Creek Fields
- Patuxent River Naval Air Station
- Patuxent River Naval Air Station – Webster Field
- Port of Leonardtown Park & Winery
- Riverside Farm Fields
- Ryken High School Fields
- Seventh District Optimist Park
- St. Mary's Hospital Field
- St. Michaels Field
- Tanavage Property
- Tippetts Field

- Token Oak Farm Field
- Tubman Douglas Field

### **St. Mary's County – Clubs and Organizations**

- 4-H Club
- Chesapeake Bay Running Club
- Lions Club
- Masonic Lodges
- Moms Club of St. Mary's County
- Moose Lodge
- Optimist Club
- Patuxent River Tri Club
- Pax Velo
- Rotary Club
- Sanner's Lake Sportsman's Club
- Southern Maryland Boat Club
- Southern Maryland Disc Golf Club
- Southern Maryland Mountain Bikers
- Southern Maryland Volleyball Club
- St. Mary's County ARA
- St. Mary's County Camera Club
- St. Mary's County Sierra Club
- St. Mary's County Woman's Club
- St. Mary's Garden Club
- St. Mary's Kiwanis Club
- St. Mary's Riding Club

### **St. Mary's County – Private Recreational Program Opportunities**

- Action Taekwondo Fitness Center
- American Martial Arts Gym
- Artful Playhouse
- Ballet Caliente
- Bella Music School
- Black Belt Academy
- Boards and Brush
- Carrie Patterson Drawing and Painting Studio
- Charlotte Hall Jazzercise
- Club Pilates
- College of Southern Maryland
- Craft Guild Shop
- Cross Fit Lakias
- Cross Fit Pax
- Deans Okinawan Martial Arts
- Evolve Yoga
- Fit U Training 360
- Flat Broke Shooters LLC
- Gracie's Guys and Dolls Dance Studio
- Joy of Pilates
- Knowledge Boxing Center
- Lineage BJJ
- Master Gardeners of St. Mary's
- Melrose Art Studio
- Planet Fitness
- Patina and Stone Studio
- Patuxent Fitness
- Pax River Aikikai
- Power Explosion Studio Dance
- Quality Street Kitchen
- Results Health and Fitness
- Salt Cycle Fitness
- Southern Maryland BMX
- Southern Maryland Music Lessons
- Special Olympics
- Spice Fitness
- St. Mary's Arts Council

- St. Mary's College of Maryland
- St. Mary's Dance Academy
- St. Mary's Fit Body Bootcamp
- SUP Fitness
- Vertical Dance Company
- Willows Recreation Center
- Wine and Design
- World Gym
- Yellow Door Art Studio

## Appendix F: Capital Improvement Recommendations

**Table 24: St. Mary's Capital Projects Budget**

Parks and Facilities	FY2022 Total	FY2023 Total	FY2024 Total	FY2025 Total	FY2026 Total	FY2027 Total
Capital Project						
Central County Park	\$ -	\$ 350,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Elms Beach Park Improvement	\$ -	\$ 1,156,275	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Park Land and Facility Acquisition	\$ 246,431	\$ 246,431	\$ 246,431	\$ 246,431	\$ 246,431	\$ 246,431
Recreation Facility and Park Improvements	\$ 940,000	\$ 1,010,000	\$ 967,500	\$ 650,000	\$ 527,500	\$ -
Recreation/Community Center	\$ 450,000	\$ 581,000	\$ -	\$ 15,800,000	\$ -	\$ -
Shannon Farm Property	\$ -	\$ 2,743,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Snow Hill Park	\$ 3,000,000	\$ 3,000,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Sports Complex	\$ 150,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
St. Clement's Island Museum Renovations	\$ 770,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Three Notch Trail - Phase Eight	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5,100,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Total Capital Investment</b>	<b>\$ 5,556,431</b>	<b>\$ 9,086,706</b>	<b>\$ 6,313,931</b>	<b>\$ 16,696,431</b>	<b>\$ 773,931</b>	<b>\$ 246,431</b>



Figure 62: St. Mary's Capital Budget Book

Land Acquisition, Facility Development and Rehabilitation Recommendations						Est. Short-Range (2022-2027) Cost (\$1,000s)			Est. Mid-Range (2028-2032) Cost (\$1,000s)			Est. Long-Range (2032 and Beyond) Cost (\$1,000)			Park and Recreation Goals Served	
Project	Location (Election Dist)	Description	Total Estimated Cost (\$1,000s)	Fiscal Year Programmed	Acres to be Acq	Acq	Capital Dev	Rehab	Acq	Capital Dev	Rehab	Acq	Capital Dev	Rehab	State	County
<b>Acquisition and Development Projects</b>																
Lower Patuxent Public Landing	8th	Acquire & develop a public landing with boat ramp, pier and restroom	2,000	FY29 and beyond	3-5 ac					1,500	500				2, 4	3
Central Patuxent Public Landing	6th	Acquire (easement) & develop public landing with boat ramp and pier	2,000	FY29 and beyond	3-5 ac					1,500	500				2, 4	3
Wicomico Shores Landing Parking	4th	Acquire & develop additional parking by existing public landing	300	FY29 and beyond	1-2 ac					200	100				2, 4	1
Lexington Manor Passive Park	4th/5th	Continued work on Master Plan items; garden areas, new trees, trails etc.	500	FY29 and beyond	33 acres					500					4, 6	
Indoor Recreation Center	5th	Multisport facility with spaces for programs, classes and community gatherings	1500	FY32 and beyond									1500		4	
<b>Total Acq &amp; Dev Costs for projects:</b>			<b>6,300</b>							<b>3,200</b>	<b>1,100</b>					
<b>Cost of land Acq only for projects:</b>			<b>4,300</b>													
<b>Facility Development Projects</b>																
Three Notch Trail Phases 7, 8, 9, and portions of Phase 3	California/Lex Park Area	Continue to develop trail from Wildewood north to Baggett Park in Mechanicsville, complete areas of Phase 3 from First Colony to WalMart (Phase 7 A/E FY15)	11,721	FY23 and beyond			5,100								1, 2, 4, 5	3
Central County Park	California/Lex Park (8th)	Develop athletic fields, recreation facilities, tennis complex	3,760	FY24 (Design) FY25 (Dev)			350			3,410					2, 4, 5	1
Myrtle Point Park	California (8th)	Develop park facilities per master plan	3,400	FY24 (A&E)			125								1, 4, 5	1
Elms Beach Park	Lexington Park (8th)	Develop park facilities per master plan	2,319	FY23(Design) FY24 Development			1,000								1, 4, 5	1
Shannon Farm Park	Lexington Park (8th)	Design and construct a community park in Lexington Park	4,611	FY22(Master Plan) FY23 (A/E) FY24 Development			4243								1, 2, 4, 5	3
Snow Hill Park	Mechanicsville (6th)	Develop park facilities per master plan	5,075	FY22 (A/E) FY23-24 Development			1500								1, 4, 5	1
Sports Complex	Leonardtown (3rd) or California (8th)	Build multi-field sports complex in Leonardtown or California area	7,442	FY23(A/E)											1, 2, 4, 5	3
YMCA- Great Mills	Lexington Park (8th)	Construct a multi use community center that may include gym, fitness center, locker rooms, meeting rooms and social hall.	22,106	FY23 (A/E) FY24/25 Development			21,581								1, 2, 4, 5	3
<b>Total Facility Development Project Costs:</b>			<b>60,434</b>				<b>33,899</b>			<b>3,410</b>			<b>0</b>			
<b>Facility Rehabilitation and Development Projects</b>																
Recreation Facility and Park Improvements and renovation	Countywide	Parks, Rec Centers, Facilities and Golf Course. ADA upgrades, Painting, lighting, fencing, irrigation, field improvements, parking lot lights and repair, asphalt overlay, other improvements ( <b>Dog Parks, Northern Area Skate Park</b> , spray ground, pickleball courts, skate park, playgrounds, restrooms etc.) at select locations	27,132	FY23-27			10,632				8,250			8,250	1, 2, 4, 5	1
St. Clement's Island Museum Renovation	Colton's Point (7th)	Design and construct new facilities and exhibits	4,436	FY17 - FY23				1,892							2, 4, 5	1, 3
St. Inigoes Landing	St. Inigoes (1st)	Replace bulkhead, finger piers and concrete pad. Dredge	605					355							1, 2, 4, 5, 6	1
Bushwood Wharf	7th	Replace bulkhead	125					125							1, 2, 4, 5, 6	
<b>Total Facility Rehab and Development Projects:</b>			<b>32,298</b>													
<b>GRAND TOTAL:</b>			<b>99,032</b>													

## Appendix G: Park and Recreation Maps

### Maryland Park Equity Mapper

The Maryland Park Equity Mapper application combines demographic and environmental health data from a variety of sources and maps that data onto Maryland census block groups in order to identify disparities in park access and quality. This application allows users to evaluate the green space available in their community and see how it compares to the rest of Maryland. City planners and park officials can use the Park Equity Mapper to identify communities in need of green space revitalization. Currently there are four categories of data:

1. Park Equity Scores
2. Park Equity Factor Layers
3. Maryland EJScore
4. Context Layers

### Park Equity Score

This data category includes two-point indicators that map locations for parks and public transportation, and one count indicator that measures the number of park amenities. The eight remaining park equity indicators have scores that are organized into five bins or quintiles.

## Park Equity Layers

<p><b>Parks (Context)</b></p>	<p>This layer shows all park and open spaces reported in the 2019 – 2023 LPPRP. It includes state parks, state forests, natural resource management areas, natural environmental areas, wildlife management areas, state wildlands, and some federal lands.</p> <p><i>People-powered recreation</i> – So-called "active" recreation areas whose main purposes are to provide space for physical activities or social gatherings. Parks with this indicator have more people-powered amenities (see next layer) than nature-based amenities.</p> <p><i>Nature-based recreation</i> – Recreation areas whose main purpose is the preservation and promotion of the natural ecosystem or whose main attraction is nature itself. Parks with this indicator have more nature-based amenities than people-powered amenities.</p> <p><i>People-powered and nature-based</i> – Parks with this indicator have an equal number of Nature-based amenities and People-powered amenities.</p>
<p><b>Park Amenities (Context)</b></p>	<p>Facilities and/or equipment that enhance the usability of parks. Amenities include access to:</p> <p><i>Nature-based</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nature areas</li> <li>• Water recreation</li> <li>• Trails</li> <li>• Hunting</li> <li>• Fishing</li> </ul> <p><i>People-powered</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Picnicking</li> <li>• Playgrounds</li> <li>• Sports facilities</li> <li>• Waste receptacles</li> <li>• Restroom facilities</li> <li>• No fees/reservation required</li> </ul>
<p><b>Public Transit (Context)</b></p>	<p>Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) access via local buses, metro subway, and the Maryland Area Regional Commuter (MARC) train. This data is based upon the winter 2014 schedule. For more information, see: <a href="http://mta.maryland.gov/marc-train">http://mta.maryland.gov/marc-train</a>.</p> <p>This layer also includes interstate public transit [services] such as Amtrak rail stops and WMATA bus and Metrorail stops.</p>

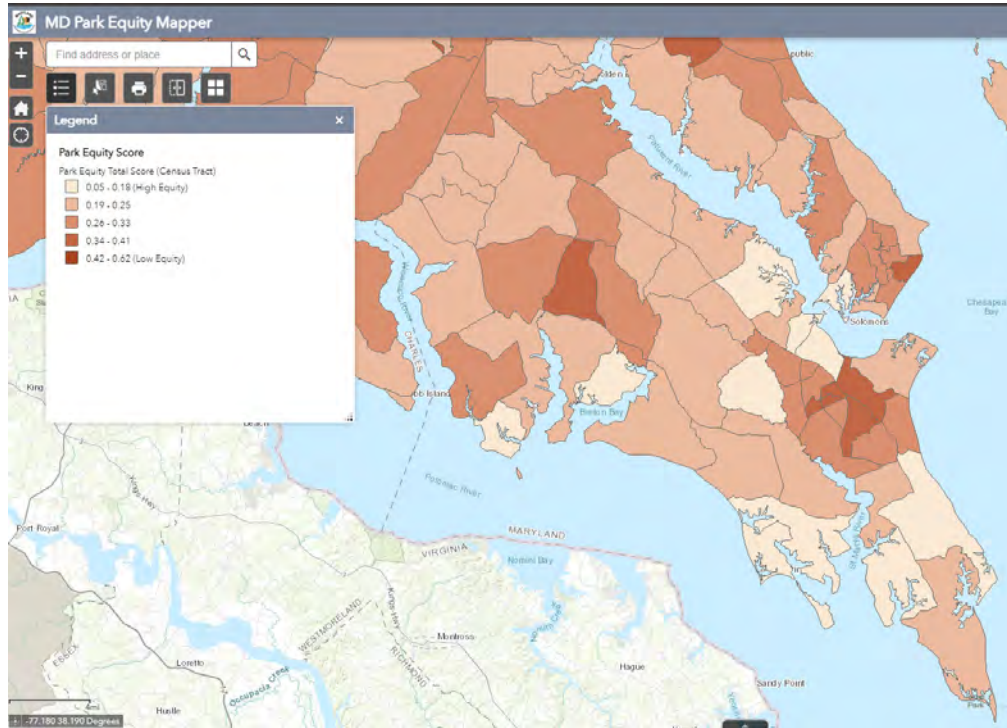
<b>Park Equity Score</b>	This is a combination of the layers below
<b>Population Density Score</b>	Number of residents per residential acres (as defined by urban lands in the 2002 Maryland Department of Planning land use/land cover data). Higher density equals a higher score (between 0 – 10) x 2.
<b>Low Wealth Score</b>	The ratio of household at or below 185% of the county poverty level. The higher ratio equals a higher score. (0 – 10).
<b>Children Under 18 Score</b>	Ratio of the number of children age 17 and under relative to the total population. The higher ratio equals a higher score. (0 – 10).
<b>Adults 65 and Older Score</b>	Ratio of the number of adults age 65 and older relative to the total population. The higher ratio equals a higher score. (0 – 10).
<b>Non-White Score</b>	Ratio of non-white to white individuals in that census tract compared to the average ratio of the state. The higher ratio equals a higher score. (0 – 10).
<b>Park Distance Score</b>	An average of distances of each location in a block group to the closest park.
<b>Public Transit Distance Score</b>	The Public Transit Distance Score is based on the Accessibility Index from the U.S. EPA. This is an index of the relative accessibility of a block group compared to other block groups in the same metropolitan region, as measured by travel time to the working-age population via transit. Higher values indicate more accessibility.
<b>Walkability Index Score</b>	<p>The Walkability Index Score is based on the U.S. EPA, model which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Walkability Index (relative metric, higher values indicate conditions generally more conducive to pedestrian travel)</li> <li>• Employment and household entropy</li> <li>• Eight-tier employment entropy (denominator set to the static eight employment types in the CBG)</li> <li>• Street intersection density (weighted, auto-oriented intersections eliminated)</li> <li>• Distance from population weighted centroid to nearest transit stop (meters) but significant transit capacity has been added since the date of source data used in this analysis (TRAX green line, extensions to other lines, FrontRunner south, etc.).</li> </ul>
<b>Linguistic Isolation Score</b>	The Linguistic Isolation Score is a measure of the number of households in which every member over the age of 14 speaks a non-English language and none speaks English "very well."

*"Source: MD Park Equity Mapper (umd.edu)"*

## Park Equity Total Score (Census Tract)

Darker areas on the figure have lower equity than lighter-colored areas.

Figure 63: Park Equity Total Score (Census Tract)

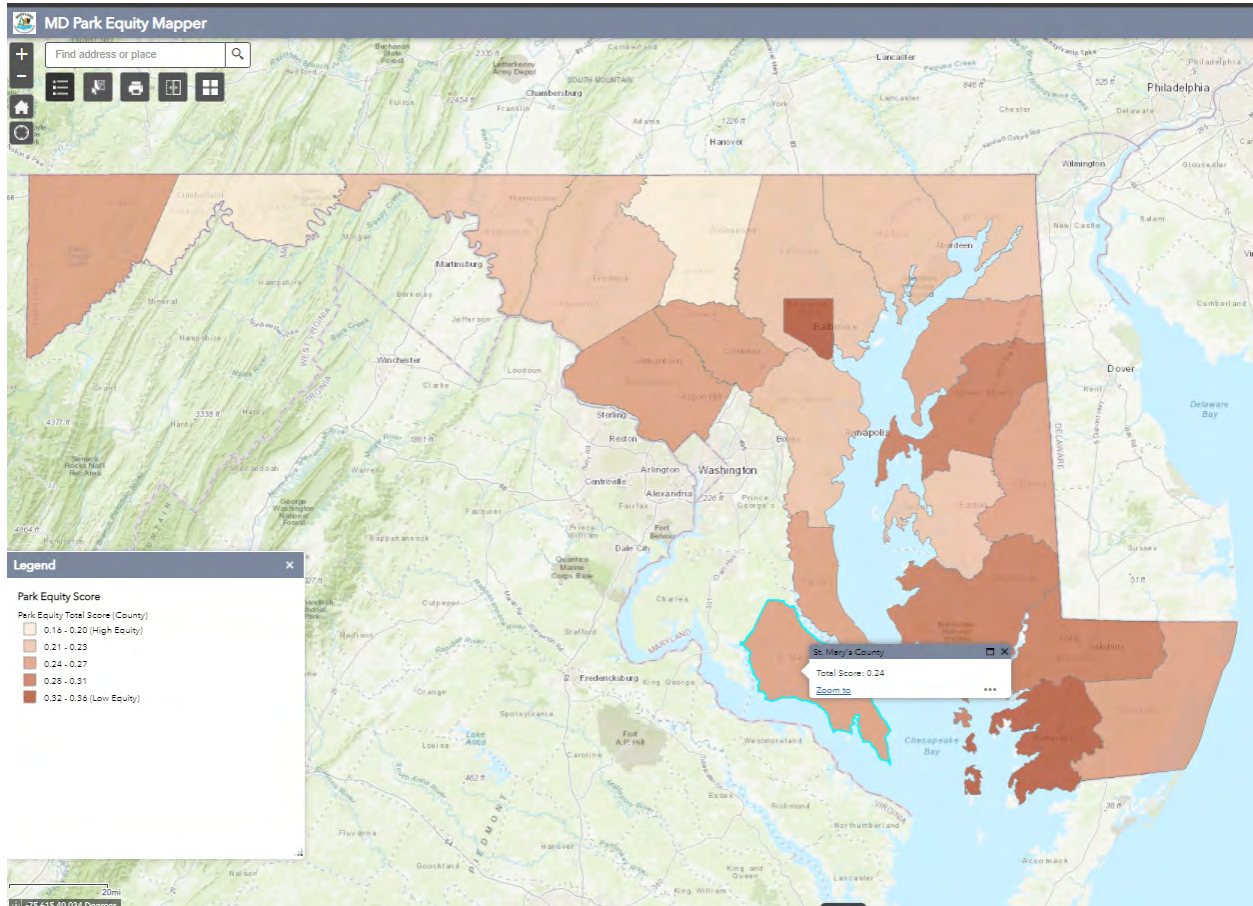


Source: MD Park Equity Mapper ([umd.edu](http://umd.edu))

## Park Equity Total Score (County)

This statewide comparison shows St. Mary's County at a total score of 0.24 in Park Equity Total Score. Comparison can be made to other counties based on the darkness of the shading. Note: Prince Georges and Charles Counties are not currently registering a color value.

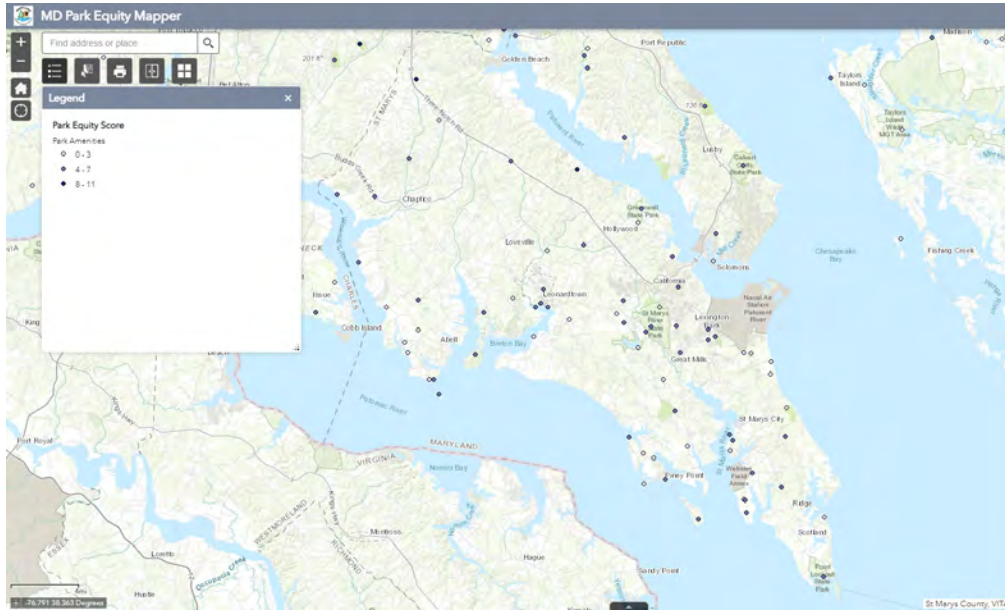
Figure 64: Park Equity Total Score (County)



Source: MD Park Equity Mapper (umd.edu)

## Park Equity Score – Park Amenities

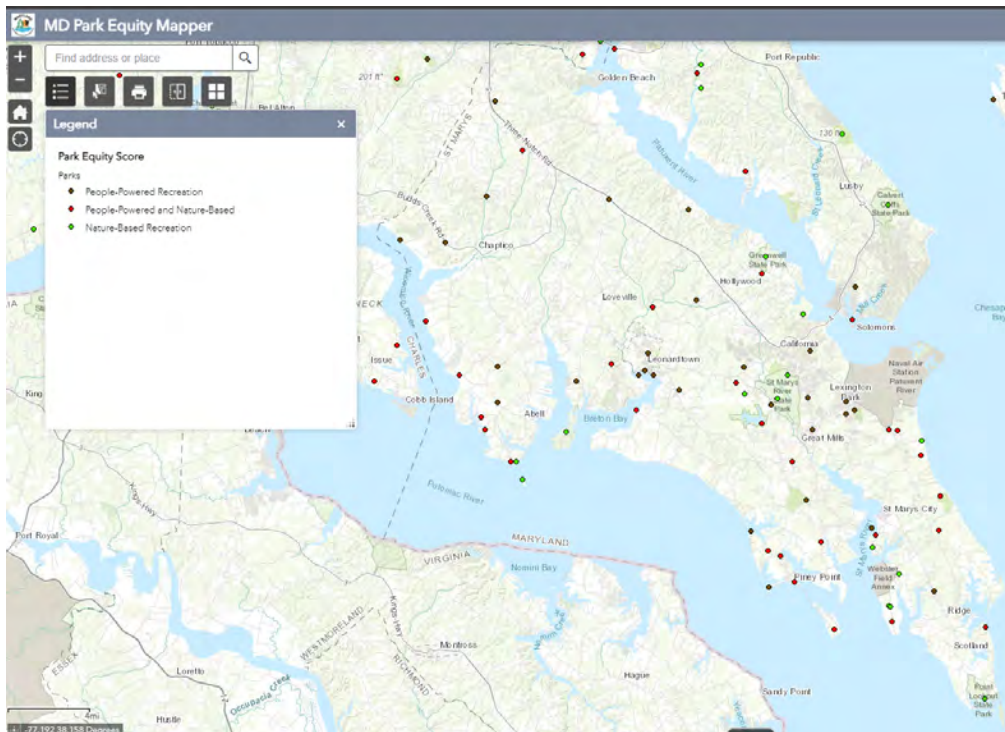
Figure 65: Park Equity Score – Park Amenities



Source: MD Park Equity Mapper (umd.edu)

## Park Equity Score – Parks

Figure 66: Park Equity Score – Parks



Source: MD Park Equity Mapper (umd.edu)









**Figure 70: Local Protected Parcels**

This table does not include all land permanently protected in density parcel, openspace parcels or local protection of sensitive areas.  
 St Mary's County has initiated a project in 2022 to review historical County plats and correct boundaries, acreage, and fill in the missing data for local protected lands

Liber	Folio	Plat_Acres	Map	Block	Parcel	Lot	Year_Est	Date_Est	GISAcres	Type	Submittal	Date	Name
46	31	2.000	31	16	161		1998	4/22/1998	2.044	Density parcel	1998	4/22/1998	STONE'S WHARF FARM
48	42	0.878	13	14	412		1999	7/23/1999	0.878	Open Space Parcel	1999	7/23/1999	Hidden Acres
48	43	0.755	13	14	412		1999	7/23/1999	0.755	Open Space Parcel	1999	7/23/1999	Hidden Acres
48	43	3.650	13	14	412		1999	7/23/1999	3.646	Open Space Parcel		7/23/1999	Hidden Acres (SMECO ROW)
53	41	0.128	13	14	412		2001	12/10/2001	0.029	Open Space Parcel	2001	12/10/2001	Hidden Acres
		147.040	18	6	229		2001	1/18/2001	7.593	Open Space Parcel	2001	1/18/2001	Church Crossing
67	83	9.000	31	16	161		2009	8/25/2009	9.102	Density parcel	2009	8/25/2009	STONE'S WHARF FARM
71	66	0.830	50	12	292		2013	8/2/2013	0.823	Local Protected Lands	2013	8/2/2013	ELIZABETH HILLS
71	22	8.020	9	8	369		2013	3/20/2013	7.996	Density parcel	2021	3/21/2013	MULTIFLORA ESTATES
72	66	10.450	50	15	87	5	2014	7/8/2014	10.567	Density parcel	2014	7/8/2014	PAW PAW HOLLOW FARM -
74	38	2.810	53	7	140		2016	4/21/2016	2.832	Density parcel	2016	4/21/2016	LOW COUNTRY FARM
77	41	10.340	34	6	752		2019	6/26/2019	10.310	Open Space Parcel	2019	6/26/2019	WOODS AT MYRTLE POINT
78	69	9.000	31	16	161		2020	12/16/2020	9.047	Density parcel	2020	12/16/2020	STONE'S WHARF FARM
78	64	5.210	70	3	300	5000A	2020	11/20/2020	5.086	Density parcel	2020	11/20/2020	LOT 5000-A - UPPER JUTLAND
78	37	8.000	17	18	43	500-A	2020	9/14/2020	8.022	Density parcel	2020	9/14/2020	FARMSTEAD 500-A - THOMAS PROPERTY
78	31	21.100	30	18	37		2020	8/21/2020	20.936	Density parcel	2020	8/21/2020	FARMSTEAD 500-1 - ST. DOUGHERTYS
78	100	4.000	27	1	222		2021	4/19/2021	3.983	Density parcel	2021	4/19/2021	LOT 500-4A (INCLS D - SOTTERLEY ESTATES -
THE W	83	4.300	34	6	726		2021	1/28/2021	4.287	Open Space Parcel	2021	1/28/2021	WOODS AT MYRTLE POINT
78	86	33.220	9	8	369		2021	2/5/2021	33.588	Density parcel	2021	12/13/2018	MULTIFLORA ESTATES
79	7	24.640	20	3	444		2021	7/8/2021	23.636	Density parcel	2021	7/8/2021	COLES CREEK SUBDIVISION
78	103	0.465	27	6	53		2021	4/28/2021	0.465	Local Protected Lands	2021	4/28/2021	BILDMAN resub parcel 53

**Figure 71: Forest Conservation Easements**

NOTE: Missing data in the table is due to prior reporting of entire parcels rather than the easement areas to the state. GIS acres include land outside of the actual areas of protected land. St Mary's County has initiated a project in 2022 to review historical County plats and correct boundaries, acreage, and fill in the missing data for lands protected by Forest Conservation Easements and to maintain and report that data into the future.

Liber	Folio	Plat_Acres	Map	Block	Parcel	Lot	Year_Est	Date_Est	GISAcres	Type	Submittal	Date	Name
									8.399	Forest Conservation Easement	2016		Edward Springer
									95.477	Forest Conservation Easement	2013		
									65.058	Forest Conservation Easement	2016		Turkey Hill
									0.345	Forest Conservation Easement	2015		
									1.621	Forest Conservation Easement	2011		
									12.824	Forest Conservation Easement	2016		Trossbach
									13.118	Forest Conservation Easement	2010		Unknown
									18.622	Forest Conservation Easement	2011		
									52.545	Forest Conservation Easement	2016		St. Inigoes Cell Tower
									27.822	Forest Conservation Easement	2011		
									3.010	Forest Conservation Easement	2017		Elizabeth Reynolds Property
									0.237	Forest Conservation Easement	2011		
									10.017	Forest Conservation Easement	2016		St. Elizabeths Manor
									5.228	Forest Conservation Easement	2017		Wolf Property
									4.250	Forest Conservation Easement	2016		Springhaven Homes
									4.014	Forest Conservation Easement	2016		Whispering Pines
									5.178	Forest Conservation Easement	2017		Long Property
									4.768	Forest Conservation Easement	2018		Hunter Property
									46.067	Forest Conservation Easement	2011		
									0.001	Forest Conservation Easement	2011		
									2.024	Forest Conservation Easement	2017		Rogers Property
									2.860	Forest Conservation Easement	2017		Mark Cullison Property
									13.089	Forest Conservation Easement	2017		Zack Hall Property
									17.773	Forest Conservation Easement	2016		Frank Katzenberger
									67.595	Forest Conservation Easement	2015		
									3.151	Forest Conservation Easement	2015		
									14.521	Forest Conservation Easement	2016		Telecom Capital Group
									0.629	Forest Conservation Easement	2013		
									0.371	Forest Conservation Easement	2013		
									3.949	Forest Conservation Easement	2016		Ruth Rowe
									1.603	Forest Conservation Easement	2015		
									2.132	Forest Conservation Easement	2010		Unknown
									2.444	Forest Conservation Easement	2011		
									164.174	Forest Conservation Easement	2016		Poplar Creek Estates
									1.958	Forest Conservation Easement	2015		
									25.424	Forest Conservation Easement	2016		Blair's Purchase
									3.163	Forest Conservation Easement	2018		Wentworth-Choporis Property
									3.275	Forest Conservation Easement	2015		
									31.862	Forest Conservation Easement	2013		
									0.947	Forest Conservation Easement	2017		Sanders Property
									2.235	Forest Conservation Easement	2010		Unknown
									7.709	Forest Conservation Easement	2011		
									5.001	Forest Conservation Easement	2016		Heards Hardship
									0.002	Forest Conservation Easement	2011		
									1.884	Forest Conservation Easement	2017		Mack Property

**Figure 72: Forest Conservation Easements (continued)**

NOTE: Missing data in the table is due to prior reporting of entire parcels rather than the easment areas to the state. GIS acres include land outside of the actual areas of protected land. St Mary's County has initiated a project in 2022 to review historical County plats and correct boundaries, acreage, and fill in the missing data for lands protected by Forest Conservation Easements and to maintain and report that data into the future.

Liber	Folio	Plat_Acres	Map	Block	Parcel	Lot	Year_Est	Date_Est	GISacres	Type	Submittal	Date	Name
									0.545	Forest Conservation Easement	2011		
									15.087	Forest Conservation Easement	2016		Malatesta
									0.001	Forest Conservation Easement	2011		
									0.706	Forest Conservation Easement	2017		Patuxent Cove
									0.000	Forest Conservation Easement	2015		
									8.504	Forest Conservation Easement	2011		
									3.387	Forest Conservation Easement	2011		
									0.184	Forest Conservation Easement	2015		
									0.006	Forest Conservation Easement	2016		Koterwas
									1.317	Forest Conservation Easement	2016		Koterwas
									1.332	Forest Conservation Easement	2010		Unknown
									0.511	Forest Conservation Easement	2013		
									0.143	Forest Conservation Easement	2015		
									18.693	Forest Conservation Easement	2010		Unknown
									1.202	Forest Conservation Easement	2017		Lot 500-1 Esperanza Comm. Park
									0.897	Forest Conservation Easement	2010		Unknown
									10.552	Forest Conservation Easement	2016		Lexington Park Ford
									1.026	Forest Conservation Easement	2017		Patuxent Cove
									4.201	Forest Conservation Easement	2011		
									34.746	Forest Conservation Easement	2017		Trevino Property
									0.000	Forest Conservation Easement	2015		
									0.328	Forest Conservation Easement	2013		
									0.143	Forest Conservation Easement	2013		
									4.342	Forest Conservation Easement	2010		Unknown
									0.250	Forest Conservation Easement	2015		
									14.997	Forest Conservation Easement	2016		Hills Farmsteads
									35.118	Forest Conservation Easement	2017		Williams Refuge Farmstead 1
									6.854	Forest Conservation Easement	2010		Unknown
									7.015	Forest Conservation Easement	2015		
									0.567	Forest Conservation Easement	2013		
									2.537	Forest Conservation Easement	2016		Robert G. Anderson
									8.744	Forest Conservation Easement	2010		Unknown
									0.264	Forest Conservation Easement	2010		Unknown
									8.197	Forest Conservation Easement	2013		
									0.888	Forest Conservation Easement	2013		
									0.309	Forest Conservation Easement	2013		
									0.418	Forest Conservation Easement	2013		
									3.654	Forest Conservation Easement	2017		RG Mattingly Property
									31.637	Forest Conservation Easement	2013		
									2.514	Forest Conservation Easement	2013		
									3.208	Forest Conservation Easement	2017		Dollar General
									2.171	Forest Conservation Easement	2016		Pathway Renovations
									22.046	Forest Conservation Easement	2016		Hollywood Commercial Center
									3.338	Forest Conservation Easement	2015		
									0.929	Forest Conservation Easement	2011		

**Figure 73: Forest Conservation Easements (continued)**

NOTE: Missing data in the table is due to prior reporting of entire parcels rather than the easement areas to the state. GIS acres include land outside of the actual areas of protected land. St Mary's County has initiated a project in 2022 to review historical County plats and correct boundaries, acreage, and fill in the missing data for lands protected by Forest Conservation Easements and to maintain and report that data into the future.

Liber	Folio	Plat_Acres	Map	Block	Parcel	Lot	Year_Est	Date_Est	GISAcres	Type	Submittal	Date	Name
									0.005	Forest Conservation Easement	2011		
									11.970	Forest Conservation Easement	2013		
									0.000	Forest Conservation Easement	2013		
									0.024	Forest Conservation Easement	2011		
									1.074	Forest Conservation Easement	2011		
									32.911	Forest Conservation Easement	2011		
									1.868	Forest Conservation Easement	2017		Joy Subdivision
									0.802	Forest Conservation Easement	2011		
									5.077	Forest Conservation Easement	2017		Essex South Management
									0.260	Forest Conservation Easement	2015		
									0.540	Forest Conservation Easement	2015		
									71.807	Forest Conservation Easement	2016		Abells Content Deed
									10.647	Forest Conservation Easement	2013		
									0.766	Forest Conservation Easement	2011		
									9.407	Forest Conservation Easement	2011		
									0.002	Forest Conservation Easement	2011		
									5.097	Forest Conservation Easement	2011		
									20.534	Forest Conservation Easement	2016		Martin Farm
									32.378	Forest Conservation Easement	2011		
									0.431	Forest Conservation Easement	2017		Joy Subdivision
									1.640	Forest Conservation Easement	2010		Unknown
									20.391	Forest Conservation Easement	2017		Talon LLC Property
									0.030	Forest Conservation Easement	2011		
									0.388	Forest Conservation Easement	2015		
									27.530	Forest Conservation Easement	2016		Woodmore Subdivision
									10.574	Forest Conservation Easement	2011		
									4.809	Forest Conservation Easement	2017		Stevens Property
									7.790	Forest Conservation Easement	2011		
									0.106	Forest Conservation Easement	2011		
									0.110	Forest Conservation Easement	2011		
									0.457	Forest Conservation Easement	2011		
									0.100	Forest Conservation Easement	2018		
									1.102	Forest Conservation Easement	2011		
									0.005	Forest Conservation Easement	2011		
									2.398	Forest Conservation Easement	2016		Oliver Subdivision Lot 5
									76.090	Forest Conservation Easement	2018		William and Zachary Estates
									3.695	Forest Conservation Easement	2011		
									1.447	Forest Conservation Easement	2017		Carter Property
									0.000	Forest Conservation Easement	2011		
									0.033	Forest Conservation Easement	2011		
									56.835	Forest Conservation Easement	2017		Widow's Plantation
									0.135	Forest Conservation Easement	2011		
									0.707	Forest Conservation Easement	2017		Widow's Plantation
									0.518	Forest Conservation Easement	2011		
									0.002	Forest Conservation Easement	2011		

Figure 74: Forest Conservation Easements (continued)

NOTE: Missing data in the table is due to prior reporting of entire parcels rather than the easment areas to the state. GIS acres include land outside of the actual areas of protected land. St Mary's County has initiated a project in 2022 to review historical County plats and correct boundaries, acreage, and fill in the missing data for lands protected by Forest Conservation Easements and to maintain and report that data into the future.

Liber	Folio	Plat_Acres	Map	Block	Parcel	Lot	Year_Est	Date_Est	GISAcres	Type	Submittal	Date	Name
									50.993	Forest Conservation Easement	2011		
									0.511	Forest Conservation Easement	2018		
									8.822	Forest Conservation Easement	2010		Unknown
									0.229	Forest Conservation Easement	2018		
									0.680	Forest Conservation Easement	2011		
									8.123	Forest Conservation Easement	2013		
									15.727	Forest Conservation Easement	2010		Unknown
									0.022	Forest Conservation Easement	2018		William and Zachary Estates
									7.082	Forest Conservation Easement	2011		
									0.669	Forest Conservation Easement	2011		
									0.796	Forest Conservation Easement	2011		
									0.119	Forest Conservation Easement	2011		
									0.002	Forest Conservation Easement	2011		
									0.564	Forest Conservation Easement	2011		
									0.220	Forest Conservation Easement	2011		
									3.983	Forest Conservation Easement	2017		Harpers Property
									0.049	Forest Conservation Easement	2010		Unknown
									1.026	Forest Conservation Easement	2010		Unknown
									0.181	Forest Conservation Easement	2017		Wentworth Property
									1.557	Forest Conservation Easement	2010		Unknown
									6.336	Forest Conservation Easement	2017		Wagner Property
									0.506	Forest Conservation Easement	2010		Unknown
									2.675	Forest Conservation Easement	2017		Keller Property
									11.404	Forest Conservation Easement	2017		Leeland Subd. Farmstead 3
									3.857	Forest Conservation Easement	2017		Andrea Murphy Property
									0.287	Forest Conservation Easement	2010		Unknown
									0.000	Forest Conservation Easement	2010		Unknown
									0.533	Forest Conservation Easement	2010		Unknown
									0.077	Forest Conservation Easement	2010		Unknown
									0.268	Forest Conservation Easement	2010		Unknown
									0.320	Forest Conservation Easement	2010		Unknown
									0.070	Forest Conservation Easement	2010		Unknown
									9.475	Forest Conservation Easement	2017		Cardova Property
									0.394	Forest Conservation Easement	2013		
									0.029	Forest Conservation Easement	2010		Unknown
									0.699	Forest Conservation Easement	2010		Unknown
									0.144	Forest Conservation Easement	2017		
									1.522	Forest Conservation Easement	2010		Unknown
									0.486	Forest Conservation Easement	2010		Unknown
									0.408	Forest Conservation Easement	2010		Unknown
									7.282	Forest Conservation Easement	2016		Stephanie Goad
									0.280	Forest Conservation Easement	2010		Unknown
									2.805	Forest Conservation Easement	2013		
									0.394	Forest Conservation Easement	2010		Unknown
									1.093	Forest Conservation Easement	2017		

Figure 75: Forest Conservation Easements (continued)

NOTE: Missing data in the table is due to prior reporting of entire parcels rather than the easment areas to the state. GIS acres include land outside of the actual areas of protected land. St Mary's County has initiated a project in 2022 to review historical County plats and correct boundaries, acreage, and fill in the missing data for lands protected by Forest Conservation Easements and to maintain and report that data into the future.

Liber	Folio	Plat_Acres	Map	Block	Parcel	Lot	Year_Est	Date_Est	GISAcres	Type	Submittal	Date	Name
									0.435	Forest Conservation Easement	2010		Unknown
									0.300	Forest Conservation Easement	2010		Unknown
									0.218	Forest Conservation Easement	2010		Unknown
									0.158	Forest Conservation Easement	2017		Wentworth Property
									0.963	Forest Conservation Easement	2017		Wentworth Property
									1.050	Forest Conservation Easement	2010		Unknown
									0.389	Forest Conservation Easement	2010		Unknown
									0.171	Forest Conservation Easement	2010		Unknown
									0.111	Forest Conservation Easement	2010		Unknown
									2.793	Forest Conservation Easement	2017		Dales Farm
									0.098	Forest Conservation Easement	2010		Unknown
									0.180	Forest Conservation Easement	2010		Unknown
									10.765	Forest Conservation Easement	2016		Middleshift Estates
									20.599	Forest Conservation Easement	2016		Middleshift Estates
									5.503	Forest Conservation Easement	2017		Dye Property
									2.212	Forest Conservation Easement	2017		Cook Property
									9.017	Forest Conservation Easement	2016		Middleshift Estates
									10.834	Forest Conservation Easement	2015		
									2.208	Forest Conservation Easement	2017		Lloyds Rest
									2.010	Forest Conservation Easement	2017		Sacadura Property
									1.637	Forest Conservation Easement	2017		Winters Property
									2.099	Forest Conservation Easement	2016		Lavender Hills
									1.930	Forest Conservation Easement	2017		Holder Property
									1.463	Forest Conservation Easement	2017		North Indian Creek Est. Lot 4
									0.591	Forest Conservation Easement	2017		Ferrante Property
				51	7		619		78.827	Forest Conservation Easement	2016		East Run (FCP only)
41	112	20.850	6	19	49		1996	3/13/1996	20.194	Forest Conservation Easement	1996	3/13/1996	Cellar Hill Estates
47	3	31.360	17	6	35		1998	11/2/1998	32.902	Forest Conservation Easement	1998	11/2/1998	John Wayne Estates
48	28	7.015	34	23	689		1999	7/2/1999	7.015	Forest Conservation Easement	1999	7/2/1999	First Colony
48	28	25.283	34	23	689		1999	7/2/1999	25.283	Forest Conservation Easement	1999	7/2/1999	First Colony
48	28	1.209	34	23	689		1999	7/2/1999	1.209	Forest Conservation Easement	1999	7/2/1999	First Colony
48	28	1.658	34	23	689		1999	7/2/1999	1.658	Forest Conservation Easement	1999	7/2/1999	First Colony
48	28	0.349	34	23	689		1999	7/2/1999	0.349	Forest Conservation Easement	1999	7/2/1999	First Colony
48	43	51.260	13	14	412		1999	7/23/1999	66.001	Forest Conservation Easement	1999	7/23/1999	Hidden Acres
47	75	6.850	9	24	361		1999	2/9/1999	7.553	Forest Conservation Easement	1999	2/9/1999	GREENMOUNT SUBDIVISION lot 2
		134.110	18	6	229		2001	1/18/2001	136.181	Forest Conservation Easement	2001	1/18/2001	Church Crossing
		147.040	18	6	229		2001	1/18/2001	0.445	Forest Conservation Easement	2001	1/18/2001	John Wayne Estates
56	41	54.034	63	11	49		2003	10/7/2003	52.653	Forest Conservation Easement	2003	10/7/2003	KESSLER FARMSTEADS
41	112	3.890	6	19	3		2004	4/13/2004	3.890	Forest Conservation Easement	2004	4/13/2004	Picket Hill hills lot 1
59	1	17.000	34	11	595		2005	4/22/2005	16.991	Forest Conservation Easement	2005	4/22/2005	Woods at Myrtle Point
		9.070					2009	3/16/2009	9.080	Forest Conservation Easement	1996	18991230	Indiantown woodland
69	101	5.620	50	12	36		2011	10/18/2011	5.459	Forest Conservation Easement	2011	10/18/2011	Elizabeth Hills
		33.564	9	9	270		2011	3/15/2011	32.470	Forest Conservation Easement	2011	3/15/2011	Multiflora Estates
70	77	6.460	34	11	595		2012	7/27/2012	6.460	Forest Conservation Easement	2012	7/27/2012	Woods at Myrtle Point
71	66	5.480	50	12	292		2013	8/2/2013	5.452	Forest Conservation Easement	2013	8/2/2013	Elizabeth Hills



**Figure 76: Forest Conservation Easements (continued)**

NOTE: Missing data in the table is due to prior reporting of entire parcels rather than the easment areas to the state. GIS acres include land outside of the actual areas of protected land. St Mary's County has initiated a project in 2022 to review historical County plats and correct boundaries, acreage, and fill in the missing data for lands protected by Forest Conservation Easements and to maintain and report that data into the future.

Liber	Folio	Plat_Acres	Map	Block	Parcel	Lot	Year_Est	Date_Est	GISAcres	Type	Submittal	Date	Name
71	22	142.700	9		47		2013	3/20/2013	145.254	Forest Conservation Easement	2021	3/21/2013	MULTIFLORA ESTATES
72	16	10.460	50	12	36		2014	1/31/2014	10.402	Forest Conservation Easement	2014	1/31/2014	Elizabeth Hills
74	116	11.390	50	12	292		2014	1/31/2014	10.751	Forest Conservation Easement	2014	1/31/2014	Elizabeth Hills
72	35	93.410	63	11	49		2014	3/21/2014	92.038	Forest Conservation Easement	2014	3/21/2014	KESSLER FARMSTEADS
			2	14	114		2014	1/31/2014	30.270	Forest Conservation Easement	2013	1/31/2014	UNDERWOOD MEADOW FARM
73	37	1.040	50	12	292		2015	4/17/2015	1.035	Forest Conservation Easement	2015	4/17/2015	Elizabeth Hills
73	16	5.615	34	11	585		2015	2/19/2015	5.626	Forest Conservation Easement	2015	2/19/2015	Woods at Myrtle Point
74	38	8.630	53	7	140		2016	4/21/2016	8.768	Forest Conservation Easement	2016	4/21/2016	Forest Conservation Easement
74	47	32.460	16	5	53		2016	5/13/2016	32.412	Forest Conservation Easement	2016	18991230	Faith Estates
76	60	37.180	33	15	23		2018	8/16/2018	37.183	Forest Conservation Easement	2018	8/16/2018	SUNSET RIDGE
77	41	4.300	34	6	752		2019	6/26/2019	4.296	Forest Conservation Easement	2019	6/26/2019	Woods at Myrtle Point
			26	14	121		2019	6/7/2019	154.839	Forest Conservation Easement	2021	6/7/2019	HOLCOMB PROPERTY -
							2019	12/16/2019	9.611	Forest Conservation Easement	2020	12/16/2019	Lot 2 Whirlwind Farmstead subdiv
78	70	8.970	32	2	398		2020	12/21/2020	8.648	Forest Conservation Easement	2020	12/21/2020	WINDWARD ACRES
78	58	25.340	33	15	23		2020	11/6/2020	25.344	Forest Conservation Easement	2020	11/6/2020	SUNSET RIDGE
78	52	5.960	19	15	149		2020	10/30/2020	5.969	Forest Conservation Easement	2020	10/30/2020	LOCUST GREEN -
78	15	15.030	20	17	432		2020	6/5/2020	15.016	Forest Conservation Easement	2020	6/5/2020	THOMPSONS RUN SUBDIVISION
77	113	0.920	17	14	795		2020	1/24/2020	0.932	Forest Conservation Easement	2020	1/24/2020	BURDETTS NECK
79	45	51.970	40	8	118		2021	10/28/2021	51.095	Forest Conservation Easement	2021	10/28/2021	BRETON KNOLLS SUBD
78	83	1.510	34	6	726		2021	1/28/2021	1.511	Forest Conservation Easement	2021	1/28/2021	Woods at Myrtle Point
78	77	21.050	34	6	752		2021	1/14/2021	20.952	Forest Conservation Easement	2021	1/14/2021	Woods at Myrtle Point
77	28	9.230	9	4	44		20190	5/31/2019	8.956	Forest Conservation Easement	2019	5/31/2019	Holly Subdiv lot 3