



## Maryland's Land Conservation Programs

**Maryland Environmental Trust (MET)** was established by the Maryland General Assembly in 1967 as a free-standing state agency with its own board of trustees. Today, as a valued unit of the Department of Natural Resources, MET works with local land trusts, governmental partners and Maryland citizens to protect land forever. MET's purpose is twofold: to conserve and maintain Maryland's natural, agricultural, scenic, and cultural resources for future generations; and to inspire and engage the public to take responsibility for care of these natural resources that sustain all Marylanders. MET provides grants to non-profit organizations for environmental education projects through its Keep Maryland Beautiful Program. MET promotes the protection of land through its Conservation Easement Program, Stewardship Program and Land Trust Assistance Program. It seeks to conserve farms and forests, wildlife habitat, natural areas, historic sites, and valuable scenic features. MET prioritizes conservation easement donations on lands greater than 25 acres. Conservation easement donations are accepted throughout the year. A landowner may benefit from a donated conservation easement by the federal income tax deduction, the Maryland property tax credit, the Maryland income tax credit, and through estate tax savings.

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**Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF)** was established by the Maryland General Assembly in 1977 and is part of the Maryland Department of Agriculture. The Foundation purchases agricultural preservation easements that forever restrict development on prime farmland and woodland. The mission of the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation is: to preserve productive farmland and woodland for the continued production of food and fiber for all of Maryland's citizens; to curb the expansion of random urban development; to protect wildlife habitat; and to enhance the environmental quality of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. If you are the owner of eligible farmland and/or woodland, the Foundation can help you by purchasing an agricultural preservation easement on your property. This will ensure that your property remains agricultural in perpetuity.

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**Maryland's Rural Legacy Program** was created in 1997. This Program is located within the Department of Natural Resources and seeks to set aside large blocks of rural lands for the protection of natural and scenic resources and the fostering of natural resource economies such as agriculture and forestry. Landowners may apply at any time to local sponsors (county government or a local land trust), and the sponsors apply annually for funding. The minimum property size for Rural Legacy funding is 25 acres, though this may vary by locality. To qualify for participation, the property must be located within a State-approved Rural Legacy Area.

[dnr.maryland.gov/land/pages/rurallegacy/home.aspx](http://dnr.maryland.gov/land/pages/rurallegacy/home.aspx)

**Maryland's Program Open Space (POS)** Established in 1969, Program Open Space (POS) symbolizes Maryland's long-term commitment to conserving natural resources while providing exceptional outdoor recreation opportunities. Program Open Space Stateside preserves natural areas for public recreation and watershed and wildlife protection across Maryland through fee simple and conservation easement acquisitions. Fee simple acquisitions are managed by the department as State Parks, Forests, and Wildlife and Fisheries Management Areas. The Department of Natural Resources evaluates all potential land acquisitions using a process that balances protection of conservation attributes with practical land management needs for public recreation.

[dnr.maryland.gov/land/Pages/ProgramOpenSpace/home.aspx](http://dnr.maryland.gov/land/Pages/ProgramOpenSpace/home.aspx)



**Maryland's Forest Legacy Program** is a federal program established under the 1990 Farm Bill that seeks to promote the long-term integrity of forest lands. Its purpose is to protect environmentally and commercially important forest lands that are threatened by conversion to non-forest uses. The Program purchases conservation easements from willing sellers on forested properties located within approved Forest Legacy Areas. Forest Legacy applications are handled by the local office of the Department of Natural Resources Forest Service. Forest Legacy easement acquisitions are contingent upon federal funding availability and national project ranking.

[dnr.maryland.gov/forests/pages/programapps/forestlegacy.aspx](https://dnr.maryland.gov/forests/pages/programapps/forestlegacy.aspx)

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**Maryland Historical Trust (Trust)** was created in 1961 and is an agency within the Maryland Department of Planning. The Trust's mission has grown to include the review of state undertakings on historic properties, assistance to non-state historical and cultural museums, cultural conservation, underwater archeology, and heritage tourism activities. It grants easements to protect the state's valued historic structures and preserve local heritage. Eligibility stems from owning property listed on, or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places or in a locally certified historic district. State and federal tax benefits are available. In such cases, the perpetual, historical easements are bestowed as a gift to the Maryland Historical Trust. While this agency is primarily concerned with historic structures, the land associated with the setting of such structures can be, and often is, preserved to maintain the integrity of the historic landscape.

[mht.maryland.gov](https://mht.maryland.gov)

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**Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)** is administered by the Natural Resource Conservation Service and offers financial and technical help to assist participants install or implement structural and management practices on eligible agricultural land. Provides incentives in the form of cost share payments to implement conservation practices including forestry management practices on non-industrial private forestland. Program focus is geared towards livestock and agricultural production interests. The majority of practices will likely be funded at 50%. Limited resource producers and beginning farmers and ranchers may be eligible for cost-shares up to 90%. Agricultural producers, individual or entities engaged in livestock, agricultural production or forestry management may participate in EQIP. Eligible land includes cropland, rangeland, grassland, pasture and private non-industrial forestland.

[dnr.maryland.gov/forests/Pages/programapps/costshareprograms.aspx](https://dnr.maryland.gov/forests/Pages/programapps/costshareprograms.aspx)

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**Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)** administered through the Natural Resource Conservation Service, seeks to secure conservation easements and provide cost-share assistance to restore, protect and enhance wetlands and eligible buffers.

[nrcs.usda.gov/conservation-basics/conservation-by-state/maryland#programs](https://nrcs.usda.gov/conservation-basics/conservation-by-state/maryland#programs)

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