

**Rural Legacy Advisory Committee
Minutes
June 20, 2023**

The Chair, Mary E. "Cricket" Goodall, called the annual meeting of the Rural Legacy Advisory Committee (RLAC) to order at 12:01pm on Tuesday, June 20, 2023. The Chair announced that the meeting is being recorded and asked any of the members objected to being recorded. Hearing no objections, the meeting proceeded to the Agenda. The Chair advised that the committee will consider the funding scenarios presented by the Rural Legacy Program Staff for FY 2024 Rural Legacy Program funding, as well as consider one Rural Legacy Area boundary change that has been proposed by the Sponsor. Staff introduced themselves, followed by roll call of the members and the sector that they represent.

The following members and staff were in attendance:

RLAC Members

Mary E. "Cricket" Goodall, Chair (Trustee of MALPF)
Elizabeth Carter (non-profit environmental organization)
Robert "Bob" Cissel (agricultural industry)
Steve Kline (non-profit land conservation organization)
Anthony DiPaolo (forestry industry)
Gregory Clinton Sterling, Jr. (county government Dept. of Recreation & Parks)
Michael Calkins (business organization)
Jane Evans (appears as Ortis Evans on screen) (private land owner)
Arshad Sayad (mineral resources industry)
David Jenkins (municipal organization)

Absent: None

Staff

Hilary Bell, DNR	Deborah Sward, MDP
Carrie Lhotsky, DNR	Chana Turner, MDA
Shawn Clotworthy, DNR	Dan Rosen, MDP
Katrina Tucker, DNR	
Kat Midas, DNR	

The Chair announced that the meeting is open to the public pursuant to the Open Meetings Act, Maryland Annotated Code, General Provisions Article 3-301. The public may observe the meeting and, at the specified time on the agenda, the committee will receive public comments if there is anyone present who wishes to speak.

The Chair informed the members that for the FY 2024 grant application cycle, the Rural Legacy program received applications from 23 of the 32 Rural Legacy Areas, requesting a total of \$85,702,000 in funds. The Rural Legacy program received \$33,424,164 in the FY 2024 budget as passed by the General Assembly. The Rural Legacy staff recommends reallocating a total of

\$1,258,996.30 in prior year unspent funds, bringing the total amount of funding to be allocated for FY 2024 to \$34,683,160.30.

The Chair invited any members of the public to speak at this time. Seeing no comments, the board continued with the agenda.

A PowerPoint Presentation (PPT) prepared by staff was shared with the RLAC, with Katrina Tucker going through each slide. Ms. Tucker started the presentation by giving a brief background of the Rural Legacy Program and explaining details of the Rural Legacy Process.

Ms. Tucker continued the PPT and explained that there was one request for expansion of the Rural Legacy boundary for the Mattapany Rural Legacy Area. The expansion request was for 246 acres, which would increase the total acreage of the Mattapany RLA by 0.7% from 33,914 acres to 34,160 acres. The expansion encompasses 6 undeveloped parcels under the same ownership, and the property is directly across MD Route 235 from the Naval Air Station Patuxent River. Approximately 47.5% of the proposed expansion is within St. Mary's County Air Installation Compatible Use Zone (AICUZ).

With the Mattapany boundary expansion, statewide Rural Legacy Area acres would increase from 1,152,163 acres to 1,152,409 acres.

The Chair asked if there were any motions to approve the boundary change. Bob Cissel made a motion to approve the boundary change, which was seconded by David Jenkins. The Chair asked if there was any discussion on the motion, and, hearing none, then asked for a vote on the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Tucker continued the PPT and reviewed the balances of unspent funds from prior grant agreements of three Rural Legacy Areas for which reallocations of funds was proposed. The combined recommended reallocations total \$1,258,996.30. The Chair asked if there was a motion to approve the reallocations. Michael Calkins made a motion to approve the reallocations, which was seconded by Clint Sterling. The Chair called for a vote on the motion, and the motion passed unanimously. Elizabeth Carter recused herself from the vote.

Ms. Tucker continued with the PPT and explained the scoring system for Rural Legacy. Ms. Tucker presented three funding scenarios.

Ms. Tucker advised that the committee can recommend one of the scenarios to the Board of Public Works for the grant awards, or move funding within any of the scenarios, or allocate the grant awards to areas and in amounts not included in the staff presentation. The Chair called for any questions or comments about the presentation.

Arshad Sayed asked how these scenarios consider the future instead of looking into the needs of the present. Ms. Tucker explained that comes in during the scoring process where there is a goal

to conserve 80% of land in each RLA, and scoring is affected by how close each RLA is to achieving that goal. Ms. Tucker asked Dan Rosen of the Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) to further explain, and he advised that part of MDP's scoring accounts for the percent of land conserved in each RLA. The percent preserved within each RLA is included in the analysis that MDP provides to the Rural Legacy Program staff.

Discussion and questions pertained to the amount of acreage that would be preserved in the second and third scenarios. Staff advised that with the third scenario a total of 7,514 acres would be protected, for the regional option 7,880 acres would be protected, and for the straight score scenario a total of 6,900 acres would be protected. Hilary Bell, Director of Land Acquisition & Planning, explained the acreage variations for each scenario are due in part to the regional differences in the land costs per acre.

In response to the inquiry, staff advised that the third scenario was their recommendation since under the straight score scenario there are RLA's that would not get funding, and staff would like for almost everyone who has applied to be able to fund at least one project. Staff is recommending the third scenario over the regional scenario after more closely examining ready-to-go projects and sponsors who have demonstrated the ability to spend prior grant awards. Staff advised that as noted in the PPT, the third scenario also includes multi-year funding of a large parcel in the Agricultural Security Corridor - Harvest Crescent RLA with ~\$5M acquisition, which would not be possible in the regional scenario.

Jane Evans expressed that she felt the statewide option seemed the most fair, but she wanted to make sure there wasn't a wide disparity between the acreage that would be protected in the three scenarios.

The Chair asked if there were any motions to approve the staff recommendation of funding by the statewide allocation presented in the third scenario. Jane Evans motioned to approve the statewide option, which was seconded by Mr. Cissel. The Chair called for the vote and the motion unanimously passed for the recommendation of the statewide allocation presented in the third scenario for the FY 2024 Rural Legacy grant awards. Anthony DiPaolo, Elizabeth Carter, and Steve Kline recused themselves from the vote.

The Chair asked if there are any members of the public present who would like to make comments or ask questions. Hearing none, the Chair asked if they were any further comments or questions from the members.

Mr. Cissel asked if it was possible to get a link to the PPT presentation. Ms. Tucker will email a pdf of the PPT to everyone after the meeting. Director Bell thanked everyone for participating in the meeting and expressed appreciation to all staff. Michael Calkins thanked everyone and announced he has been appointed by Maryland Department of Agriculture as a new Assistant Secretary and will be stepping down from the RLAC.

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The Chair thanked the members of the RLAC and concluded the meeting. The Chair asked for a motion to adjourn. Bob Cissel motioned to adjourn, seconded by Michael Calkins. Hearing no opposition to the motion, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 1:00 p.m.