

FISHERIES MANAGEMENT AREAS – Bynum Run Pond and Forest Hill Lake

What was proposed?

The Department proposed to remove two Fishery Management Public Fishing Areas (FMAs) from the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR). The Department formally transferred ownership of Bynum Run Pond and Forest Hill Lake FMAs to the Harford County Government on December 17, 2025. As a result of the transfer, the Department no longer manages the areas; therefore, the proposed action removes both areas from the list of Fishery Management Public Fishing Areas described in COMAR 08.02.01.13.

When the properties were transferred, the determination of public access hours and associated lawful uses were also transferred to the county. However, covenants in the existing deeds for both areas require the county to maintain public and fishing access. The covenants require that the lands be used for public fishing and recreation. The Department included additional language in the deed of conveyance stating that the Department shall have access to inspect the operation and maintenance, as well as the ability to enforce the covenants.

Why is this change necessary?

The areas were transferred to the county because Harford County Parks and Recreation has successfully managed the upkeep of both Bynum Run Park and Forest Hill Lake for roughly three decades. Community members frequently use the parks, which are considered integral public spaces. Given ongoing and future management by the Harford County Government, the Department viewed the formal transfer of ownership as a logical step. Since both areas will continue to be managed as public fishing areas with Department oversight over fisheries resources, there will be no effect on the public.

Who will this affect?

As both FMAs will continue to be managed as public fishing areas with Department oversight over fisheries resources, there will be no effect on the public.

What is the specific regulatory action?

Amend Regulation .13 under COMAR 08.02.01 General — Fishery Management Areas.

Were these changes discussed with advisory bodies or other interested or impacted individuals?

1. This idea was scoped with the Sport Fisheries Advisory Commission (SFAC)/Tidal Fisheries Advisory Commission (TFAC) at their April 2024 meetings.
2. This idea was scoped with the general public from September 24, 2024 through October 13, 2024.
3. The transfer was completed in 2025 through the Maryland Department of Planning and Board of Public Works land disposal processes.

Regulatory Process

Fishing rules in Maryland may be created by either the General Assembly or the Department. When the Department creates a fishing rule, it is called a regulation. When the General Assembly creates a rule, it is called a statute. The Department often has to create a regulation to implement a statute. The regulatory process begins with scoping and the Department follows normal [procedures](#) as concepts move forward.

During the scoping process, the Department gathers suggestions and ideas from stakeholders and others about how to solve a fishery problem or address a need. The goal of scoping is to identify issues, potential impacts, and reasonable alternatives associated with the issues so that management actions can be developed. After the public has had an opportunity to comment on possible management actions during the scoping process, the Department considers these comments and develops an appropriate management strategy.

At the conclusion of the scoping process, the Department determined that the action is necessary and appropriate. The rules are being promulgated following the Administrative Procedures Act described in Title 10, Subtitle 1 of the State Government Article Annotated Code of Maryland.

- The General Assembly's Administrative, Executive, and Legislative Review Committee reviews the regulatory proposal for fiscal and legal analysis.
- The proposal was printed by the Division of State Documents in the Maryland Register on May 29, 2026.
- A 30-day public comment period began on the day of publication. The comment period ends June 29, 2026.
- After reviewing the comments, the Department may adopt the changes.
- If the Department adopts the changes, they become effective after a notice is published in the Maryland Register that announces the adoption and effective date.

When could this be effective?

The Department projects that this change could be effective in August of 2026. However, the exact date cannot be determined at this time.

Map of Forest Hill Lake FMA (Parcel GPS coordinates = 39.583516, -76.383263)



Map of Bynum Run Park FMA (Parcel GPS coordinates = 39.540614, -76.331118)

