

Fishery Management Areas — Bynum Run Pond and Forest Hill Lake (Harford County)

What is being considered?

The Department is considering formally transferring the ownership/management of two Fisheries Management Areas (FMAs) in Harford County from the Department's Fishing and Boating Services to the Harford County Government. The FMAs include Bynum Run Pond and Forest Hill Lake (see maps below).

The formal transfer of Bynum Run Pond and Forest Hill Lake FMAs will require removing both FMAs from the list of Fishery Management Public Fishing Areas detailed specifically within COMAR Section 08.02.01.13. Determination of public access hours and associated lawful uses will be transferred to the county. However, resulting from language within the existing deeds, Bynum Run Pond FMA & Forest Hill Lake FMA are subject to restrictive covenants requiring the county to maintain public and fishing access.

The covenants require that the lands be used for recreational purposes under the supervision of the grantee, its successor, and assigns, who shall construct and maintain an artificial lake or pond for the impoundment of water, propagation of fish for public fishing, and the use of the unsubmerged lands as a wayside park and picnic area, and for other such uses as may be consistent with the public recreational use and enjoyment of said lands.

Within the documents, the existing language “under the supervision of the grantee” will require that the Department of Natural Resources include additional language in any Deed of conveyance stating that the Department shall have access to inspect the operation and maintenance, as well as all remedies in law and in equity to enforce the above-referenced covenants.

The Maryland Department of Planning has their own process for transferring the properties. Information on their process and how to request a hearing may be found [here](#) (this links to a file download with additional documents).

Why is this change necessary?

Despite being state land, 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 views the formal transfer of ownership as a logical step.

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.

When would this be effective?

The Department projects that this change could become effective in the Spring of 2026. However, the exact date cannot be determined. If this concept moves forward, the Department

will follow its normal proposal procedures, including the required processes and permissions for land disposal through the Maryland Department of Planning and the Board of Public Works.

Has this change been discussed with stakeholders?

The potential transfer has been discussed with staff within the Harford County Department of Parks and Recreation. It was also scoped with the Sport Fisheries Advisory Commission and Tidal Fisheries Advisory Commission at their April 2024 meetings.

Forest Hill Lake



Bynum Run Park

