

Board of Public Works
Department of Natural Resources – Real Property
Supplement
January 8, 2020



DNR 3

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3A. RURAL LEGACY PROGRAM GRANTS
Fiscal Year 2020

Recommendation: The Department of Natural Resources recommends that the Board of Public Works approve:

1. Six Rural Legacy Area expansion requests; and
2. Allocation of \$18,852,009 in FY 2020 grants

Background: The Rural Legacy Program is designed to preserve large blocks of contiguous open space that are among the State's most valuable because of the existence of a multitude of agricultural, forestry, natural and cultural resources. To protect these resources, the Rural Legacy Program, acting through local government or private land trust sponsors, purchases conservation easements from willing property owners, based on Rural Legacy Plans that have been reviewed by the Rural Legacy Advisory Committee and approved by the Rural Legacy Board.

DNR will submit individual contracts to purchase conservation easements to the Board of Public Works as the specific transactions arise.

Authority: *Rural Legacy Program*, Subtitle 9A, Natural Resources Article, Annotated Code of Maryland.

Agricultural Security Corridor Rural Legacy Area:
Caroline, Cecil, Dorchester, Kent and Talbot Counties

Grant: \$970,123 to acquire conservation easements to protect a range of resources that includes forests, farmlands, wetlands, historic sites, and endangered species habitat in the Agricultural Security Corridor in five counties on the Eastern Shore. Conservation of property in this Area will support the local resource-based economy, including agricultural production of grains, hay, dairy, beef and poultry operations. The Board originally designated the Agricultural Security Corridor Rural Legacy Area in 1998.

Expansion: The Eastern Shore Land Conservancy is splitting the Agricultural Security Corridor (ASC) into three separate and distinct Rural Legacy Areas as well as expanding all three.

- ASC – Eastern Shore Heartland RLA (formerly Marshyhope Focus Area):
Expand 44,365 acres to connect two non-contiguous portions.
- ASC – Harvest Crescent RLA (formerly Sassafras Focus Area):
Expand 55,333 acres to open new preservation opportunities by Millington Wildlife Management Area.
- ASC – Tuckahoe RLA (formerly Tuckahoe Focus Area):
Expand 28,931 acres to open new preservation opportunities near Denton.

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3A. **RURAL LEGACY PROGRAM GRANTS** *(cont'd)*
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Coastal Bays Rural Legacy Area *Worcester County*

Grant: \$250,382 to acquire conservation easements to protect forest, agricultural, natural areas and shoreline in Worcester County’s coastal bays. This Area includes important tidal marshland areas, forests, and farmland, which provides one of the most ecologically diverse and outstanding wildlife habitat in the State. The Board originally designated the Coastal Bays Rural Legacy Area in 1998.

Deer Creek Rural Legacy Area *Harford County*

Grant: \$1,482,382 to acquire conservation easements within the watershed of Deer Creek River, a State-designated Scenic River, and adjacent to Rocks and Susquehanna State Park to protect historic farmland, forests, natural and cultural areas. This Area is located within the Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway, a certified Maryland Heritage Area. The Board originally designated the Lower Deer Creek Rural Legacy Area in 1999.

Dividing Creek Rural Legacy Area *Somerset and Worcester Counties*

Expansion: Add 27,877 acres to increase ability to conserve forest and habitat connections between Pocomoke State Forest and Nassawango Creek Preserve.

Fair Hill Rural Legacy Area *Cecil County*

Grant: \$1,044,382 to acquire conservation easements to protect farmland, forests, natural areas and historic sites in the northeast corner of Cecil County contiguous to Fair Hill Natural Resources Management Area. Conservation of property in this Area will support the local resource-based economy, including equestrian activities. The Board originally designated the Fair Hill Rural Legacy Area in 1999.

Foreman Branch Rural Legacy Areas *Queen Anne’s County*

Grant: \$659,793 to acquire conservation easements to protect environmentally significant tributaries of the Chester and Corsica Rivers, including farmland, forest land, wetlands and wildlife habitat. The Board originally designated the Foreman Branch and Lands End Rural Legacy Areas in 1998.

Expansion: Add 1,095 acres to increase connectivity to Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation protected lands and additional adjacency to the Land’s End RLA (also in Queen Anne’s County); and create a greenbelt north of the Town of Church Hill.

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3A. **RURAL LEGACY PROGRAM GRANTS** *(cont'd)*
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Huntersville Rural Legacy Area *St. Mary's County*

Expansion: Add 5,956 acres to connect the Potomac and Patuxent River watersheds and expand opportunities for partnership with the U.S. Navy's Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration Program.

Little Pipe Creek /Upper Patapsco Rural Legacy Areas *Carroll County*

Grant: \$740,382 to acquire conservation easements to protect farmland, woodland, natural and cultural land within the Little Pipe Creek and upper Monocacy River Watersheds. Conservation within the Area will provide water quality benefits not only for the two watersheds, but also for the underground aquifers that supply many residents with drinking water. The Board originally designated the Little Pipe Creek Rural Legacy Area in 1998 and Upper Patapsco Rural Legacy Area in 2004.

Lands End Rural Legacy Area *Queen Anne's County*

Grant: \$419,716 to acquire conservation easements and fee simple interests to protect environmentally significant tributaries of the Chester and Corsica Rivers, including farmland, forest land, wetlands and wildlife habitat. The Board originally designated the Lands End Rural Legacy Area in 1998.

Mattapan Rural Legacy Area *St. Mary's County*

Grant: \$2,508,762 to match Navy Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) funds to acquire conservation easements to protect the Area's rich farmland, forests, wetlands, historic sites, and wildlife habitat. Conservation within the Area will provide water quality benefits to the Chesapeake Bay and the St. Mary's River watershed. The Board originally designated the Mattapan Rural Legacy Area in 2006.

Mid-Maryland Frederick/Carrollton Manor Rural Legacy Areas *Frederick County*

Grant: \$1,259,332 to acquire conservation easements to protect farmland, forestland, Civil War historic sites and a greenbelt around the historic Town of Burkittsville. Conservation of property in the Area will protect the view surrounding the Appalachian Trail and South Mountain Battlefield State Park, which are nationally significant natural and cultural resources. The Board originally designated the Mid-Maryland Frederick Rural Legacy Area in 1998 and the Carrollton Manor Rural Legacy Area in 2004.

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Mid-Maryland Montgomery Rural Legacy Area

Montgomery County

Grant: \$658,822 to acquire conservation easements and fee simple interests to protect farmland, open space, and natural areas. The Area protects farmland, open space and natural resources located within the heart of the County's Agricultural Reserve. The Area contains large contiguous tracts of rural lands, numerous agricultural operations, and forest resources rich in both aquatic and terrestrial wildlife. Conservation within the Area provides water quality benefits to the Potomac River, a Maryland designated Scenic River. The Board originally designated the Mid-Maryland Montgomery Rural Legacy Area in 1998.

Expansion: Add 8,462 acres to complete the area boundary around Poolesville.

Mid-Maryland Washington Rural Legacy Area

Washington County

Grant: \$1,502,982 to acquire conservation easements to protect farmland, forests and Civil War sites within view of Washington Monument State Park, South Mountain Battlefield State Park, Antietam National Battlefield and its approaches. Conservation within the Area will provide water quality benefits to the Potomac River, a Maryland designated Scenic River. The Board originally designated the Mid-Maryland Washington Rural Legacy Area in 1998.

Mountain Ridge Rural Legacy Area

Allegany County

Grant: \$1,654,882 to acquire conservation easements of significant woodland, farmland and wetlands. Situated within the Ridge & Valley Physiographic Province where it meets the Allegheny Front, the Area includes large blocks of unbroken forest, pristine ecologically significant areas and historic sites. The Area includes an important migration corridor and the most significant golden eagle flyway in the State. The Board originally designated the Mountain Ridge Rural Legacy Area in 2010.

Expansion: Add 19.94 acres to align the boundary adjacent to a 357 acres property currently under easement.

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3A. **RURAL LEGACY PROGRAM GRANTS** *(cont'd)*
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Nanticoke Rural Legacy Area *Dorchester County*

Grant: \$1,100,382 to acquire conservation easements to protect forest, agricultural, natural areas and shoreline in Dorchester County. The Area includes one of the most pristine and ecologically significant watershed basins on the mid-Atlantic. It includes exemplary plant and wildlife habitat and over 16 miles of shoreline along the Nanticoke River and Marshyhope Creek. The Area will provide a greenbelt around the rural historic village of Vienna. The Board originally designated the Nanticoke Rural Legacy Area in 2001.

Piney Run Rural Legacy Area *Baltimore County*

Grant: \$1,238,382 to acquire conservation easements to protect farmland, forests, natural areas and historic properties within and near National Register Historic Districts. Conservation within the Area will provide water quality benefits to the Prettyboy and Loch Raven Reservoirs, two of the drinking supply reservoirs for the Baltimore Metropolitan Area. The Board originally designated the Piney Run Rural Legacy Area in 1998.

Upper Patuxent Montgomery *Montgomery County*

Grant: \$2,046,442 to acquire conservation easements in the County's agricultural district to protect farmland, open space, and natural resources. The Board originally designated the Upper Patuxent Montgomery Rural Legacy Area in 1998.

Zekiah Rural Legacy Area *Charles County*

Grant: \$1,314,863 to acquire conservation easements to protect farmland, forests and natural and historic properties contiguous to Zekiah Run. This Area contains the largest natural hardwood swamp in the State and is considered by the Smithsonian Institute to be one of the most important ecological areas on the East Coast. The Board originally designated the Zekiah Watershed Rural Legacy Area in 1998.

Fund Source: Outdoor Recreation Land Loan 2020, Chapter 565, Acts of 2019
Rural Legacy Program Source Code: 20012 \$18,852,009

BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS THIS ITEM WAS:

APPROVED DISAPPROVED DEFERRED WITHDRAWN

WITH DISCUSSION WITHOUT DISCUSSION